AN INTERVIEW WITH

LEIGH BECK

by

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Vallejo, California

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Figure 1: Leigh Beck while working in the Northeastern Area, c. 1989.

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Interview History

Jacqueline S. Reinier interviewed Leigh Beck at Beck's home in Vallejo, California on June 10, 11, and 13, 2002. Dr. Reinier is a former professor and director of the Oral History Program at California State University, Sacramento. She has taught Oral History Interviewing in the Capital Campus Public History Program at California State University, Sacramento and at Vista College in Berkeley, California. She and her students have done previous interviewing of Region 5 USDA Forest Service employees in California. She also has conducted interviews with women in the Forest Service, including Wendy Herrett, Geri Vanderveer Bergen and Clara Johnson. Prior to these interviews she was able to conduct research in materials furnished by Linda Lux, Forest Service Historian for Region 5, and in the library of the Pacific Southwest Regional Office of the USDA Forest Service in Vallejo, California.

The interview was conducted in Beck's home overlooking the Carquinez Strait during the portions of each day that she could spare from her demanding job. Although a charming and cooperative interviewee, she was concerned about sharing information while she was still on the job. At intervals throughout the interview the tape recorder was turned off while Beck thought through exactly how she wanted to relate her story. Those moments are indicated by the word "Interruption" surrounded by brackets in the text of the transcript. Beck began her career as an investigator for the Civil Service Commission in Atlanta, Georgia, shortly after she graduated from college. In 1978, she transferred to the Forest Service in the field of Organization Management in State and Private Forestry. As a young woman with skills in training personnel, she quickly became involved in the process of change already occurring in the agency. Coordinating a workshop on the Changing Roles of Women and Men, in fact, was one of her early ventures. Working with State Foresters in the Southeast, Beck excelled at forming partnerships and building teams. Often the only woman in a workshop she was leading, she gained confidence and honed her skills. Beck's emphasis on teamwork has been well suited to the field of State and Private Forestry. Advancing quickly in her various jobs, she became Staff Assistant to the Deputy Chief in State and Private Forestry in the Washington Office prior to taking her first position as a line officer as Deputy Director for State and Private Forestry in the Northeastern Area. After working for a period of time on implementation of the Consent Decree in Region 5, she moved to California, where she continued to administer various programs in Cooperative Forestry. She also was able to write her Master's thesis for her degree in Organization Management on her experience with the Regional Forester Team while they were engaged in reorganizing the Regional Office. Beck currently holds the position of Director of State and Private Forestry in Region 5. Throughout her career she has been an agent of change, introducing her own collaborative style of management in her various positions, and building partnerships with groups outside the Forest Service through her ongoing work in State and Private Forestry.

Carol Niehus transcribed the interview in Berkeley, California. Reinier edited the transcript, first checking the verbatim manuscript against the original tape recordings, and then editing it for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling and verifying proper names. Insertions by the editor are bracketed. The interviewer also prepared the introductory materials and names list. In October 2002, Beck was forwarded a copy of the transcript for her approval. She provided proper names of individuals and made a few changes in the transcript.

Beck's personal papers are still in her possession. The original tape recordings of the interview, the draft transcript annotated by Beck, and additional copies of the final transcript are located at the Forest History Society, Inc., 701 Vickers Avenue, Durham, North Carolina, 27701.

Biographical Summary

Born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1952, Leigh Beck grew up in a stable Southern family with roots extending to the American Revolution. An avid reader who also loved playing the piano, she was not particularly inclined to outdoor activities. An excellent student, she graduated from Northside High School in 1970 as a National Merit Scholarship winner at the top of her class. At Southern Methodist University she excelled in Spanish, and was able to spend her junior year abroad, studying and traveling in Spain. Upon graduation from SMU, she took a job in Atlanta as an investigator for the Civil Service Commission, running background clearances on people who were applying for sensitive jobs with the federal government. After three years she returned to Spain, hoping to find a job abroad. But on her return she was offered another job more suited to her interests and talents with the Civil Service Commission, designing and teaching courses for employees in federal and state agencies. In 1978 she transferred to the Regional Office of the USDA Forest Service in Atlanta, working in Organization Management Assistance in State and Private Forestry.

Very quickly Beck was caught up in changes that were already underway in the Forest Service. Under the direction of Edie of Seashore of the National Training Labs, who she greatly admired, she coordinated a workshop on the Changing Roles of Women and Men that was picked up by several regions of the Forest Service, including Region 5 in California. She also conducted personnel workshops with state foresters, helping them develop management structures. Often the only woman in a room full of men, she gained confidence and honed her skills, learning the art of public speaking. She also worked with programs in State and Private Forestry that were authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978. In 1982, when the Organization Management Assistance unit in Atlanta was eliminated from the presidential budget, Beck transferred to the Washington Office of the USDA Forest Service.

In Washington Beck was exposed for the first time to the National Forest System, and helped train people on Productivity Improvement Teams established to find ways to streamline and save money. She also continued with forest supervisors the training and consulting work she had done previously with state foresters. When the Administrative Management Staff was disbanded, Beck was selected as the key staff assistant to Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry, Allen J. West. In this position, she worked closely with the various programs of State and Private Forestry, wrote speeches, and collaborated with outside groups. Without having assiduously planned her career moves, she found herself as a young woman in a GS 14-level job. And she was able to take advantage of career training opportunities through participation in the Management Policy Seminar and the Director's Young Executive Program.

In 1989 Beck took her first line position in the Forest Service as Deputy Director for the Northeastern Area in State and Private Forestry. Working with the state foresters of twenty states in the Northeast and Midwest, she coped with responsibilities of decision making and being a young woman in a position of authority. At the age of thirty-seven, she was the first GS-15 woman in the Senior Executive Service in the Northeastern Area. Her focus became programs in Urban and Community Forestry and Forest Stewardship developed under the umbrella of President George H.W. Bush's America the Beautiful Program. While in the Northeastern Area, she also worked on detail as Acting Assistant Director for Administration for the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station. During this period Beck spent time in California helping to implement the court-ordered Consent Decree on hiring and promotion of women and minorities in Region 5.

In 1992 when Beck became engaged to someone who lived on the West coast, she decided to move to California. After a short period of time, she took a detail position as Deputy Director of State and Private Forestry in Region 5. Within seven months she was offered the permanent position of Assistant Director for State and Private Forestry, with the responsibility of supervising programs in Cooperative Forestry. After riots following the trial of policemen charged with beating Rodney King in Los Angeles, the Urban and Community Forestry program targeted grant dollars to inner L.A. communities, providing for the establishment of urban gardens as well as jobs for inner city youths in the Angeles National Forest. As a result of the decline of timber production in Northern California, the Rural Community Assistance program helped towns dependent on the timber industry revive their economies. Beck also helped direct such programs to Native Americans and worked with issues of Conservation Education. Through the Forest Stewardship program she aided private landowners in managing the forestlands on their property. In addition, she worked with state foresters in the West as a board member of the Council of Western State Foresters. Such programs of State and Private Forestry extend throughout Region 5, which includes Hawaii, and U.S. territories and affiliated countries in the Pacific, as well as California.

Beck's decision to work toward a Master's Degree in Organization Management at Pepperdine University provided her with the opportunity to analyze processes in the Forest Service for her thesis. Consulting with the Regional Forester Team reorganizing the regional office in Region 5, she studied the role of leadership in changing from a functionally-based organization to a team-based organization. In 1999, she put her ideas into practice as Co-Director of State and Private Forestry for Region 5, working as an administrative team with another employee. After serving as Acting Deputy Regional Forester for a short time, she was appointed Director of State and Private Forestry in Region 5, the position she held at the time of this interview.

SESSION I, JUNE 10, 2002

Tape 1, Side A: Family background—Growing up in Atlanta, Georgia—Attending college—Junior year abroad in Spain—Working as an Investigator with the Civil Service Commission in Atlanta.

REINIER: Leigh, I understand that you were born in Atlanta, Georgia.

BECK: That's right. I was, fifty years ago. This is my fiftieth birthday year, which came awfully quick.

REINIER: Tell me about your family.

BECK: My parents were also both from the South. My father [M. Linwood Beck] was a native Atlantan, so I was actually about third generation native Atlantan. My father, when I was growing up, worked with the Georgia Heart Association in Atlanta. My mother [Agnes Brown Beck] was born in East Tennessee and grew up in North Carolina and then met my father after she had moved to Atlanta, probably after World War II. They actually for their time period married somewhat late in life. My father had been married once before and his first wife [Lillian Beck] died in childbirth, so my parents were in their mid-thirties when they were married in 1950. At that point that seemed to be an older set of parents than a lot of my friends [had]. I grew up with an older half brother [Linwood Beck, Jr.] from my father's first marriage. Then I was my parents' first child together and I have a younger sister [Lane Beck] who came along after me. So that was our family growing up.

REINIER: Do you go all the way back to the Confederacy in the South?

BECK: Well, actually, most branches of my family--I know this because both my sister and my father have really been into genealogy--most of the branches of my family that we can trace actually go back, many of them, as far back as the Revolutionary War. Probably the most recent European immigrant [Sarah Robinson Sentelle] we were able to trace down came in around 1800 from Ireland. So a lot of branches of my family have been in this country for quite a number of years. I think probably in the South from fairly early on. Probably the very earliest immigrants came into New England. And then we quite possibly do have some Native American heritage that we've never been able to actually pin down, but my sister's tried very hard.

REINIER: Would you know what group that would be?

BECK: I'm trying to remember. She has a suspicion about that. My sister is an anthropologist, so she's very interested in a lot of these things. I'm thinking it would have been a tribe that was in the Southern U.S. [United States] and I'm thinking possibly Creek or Crow, but I'm not sure. That's her belief from what research she's been able to do.

REINIER: Oh, that's fascinating. So now was your father a doctor?

BECK: No, he was not. He actually had worked with the American Heart Association and he founded the Georgia Heart Organization as a fundraising organization. So, he worked with a lot of doctors, a lot of cardiologists, but he was running the fundraising side for Georgia Heart.

REINIER: Did your mother work?

BECK: She had worked prior to their getting married. In fact, during World War II, she worked in Washington. She moved there from North Carolina partly to get involved in the war effort, worked for a while in the old south agriculture building, where I later worked when I worked in Washington, and then continued to work after she moved to Atlanta. Now, she did, as I guess was also maybe typical at that time, quit working when she and my father got married. I always think that was not what she really wanted to do. I think she had enjoyed working and missed it, but at that time that was kind of the thing people did. I think she always regretted not continuing and having a career.

REINIER: Were there other relatives who influenced you in your growing up?

BECK: I certainly remember both of my grandmothers [Eulalie Beck and Agnes Sentelle Brown] quite well. Again they were older than many of my friends' grandparents; we tended to have long generations. I remember them through a lot of my childhood as being, both of them I thought, fairly remarkable women. My grandfathers [Anderson Milton Beck and Walter Brown] both died younger. My mother's father actually died before she was born, of malaria. Then my father's father passed away. I don't recall how old he was, but it would have been when I was maybe ten years old. So I didn't know my grandfathers as well, but both of my grandmothers lived to be 99 years old, each of them. So I remember being very, very impressed as I was growing up at just the length of time and the number of events in history they had personally lived through and observed during almost a century. And so I would say they influenced me just by virtue of being... I saw both of them as strong women. They lived on their own up until they were probably in their early nineties, each of them did, and were very capable and seemed to be able to adapt to a lot of the change they saw during those long lifetimes.

REINIER: Do you think you had a fairly traditional childhood?

BECK: I would say probably so for the '50s in the South. It certainly seemed typical at the time. I grew up watching "Leave It to Beaver" and stuff like that and felt, yeah, like we were a pretty typical family.

REINIER: Were you aware of race difficulties or relations at that time?

BECK: Very much so. I recall when I was growing up just being aware of segregation. I do think my parents worked very hard to help us see that people should be treated the same and that a lot of what was still the culture in the South at that time really was not right. But I definitely remember the signs on the buses saying, "Colored people go to the back of the bus," and separate water fountains around places in Georgia. It's remarkable to me now to think back on that and think there was a time that just seemed like the way things were. But it certainly was and, as I said, I think my parents tried to help us as we were growing up see that that was not right. And so, I do recall as things began to change. When I was in high school, I went to a public school, but it was a high school on the side of town in Atlanta that was pretty exclusively white. It was in a probably middle to upper-middle class type of neighborhood. There was starting to be busing going on at a lot of places in the South. One of the things I recall with my high school is that there was a group of, I think, probably relatively wealthy and established black families that chose to send their kids to this public high school in the interest of integration.

This was not a forced busing, but a voluntary busing by some of the prominent black families in Atlanta at that time. One was Ralph Abernathy, and his daughter came to our high school. One of my father's colleagues was a cardiologist, a prominent African-American cardiologist. His daughter [Jeanne Brown] came to our school and became quite a good friend of mine. So that was an interesting phenomenon to have that be something that that group was choosing to try to make a contribution to integrating the schools. But I definitely remember a lot of different stages along the way in race relations in the South, and it, certainly now looking back, seems like a long time ago that things were so segregated. But I did live through a lot of that change.

REINIER: What did you like to do as a child?

BECK: I was an avid reader, really enjoyed reading. I started studying piano when I was five years old. I really enjoyed music quite a bit. I'm not sure I enjoyed practicing the piano all that much, but I did enjoy playing; I enjoyed music. It's interesting that a lot of my activities when I was growing up probably were a little more indoor activities, which is interesting. My mother was a great outdoors type of person and always tried to get our family out to go camping, to go hiking, to be out in the woods. And I remember always being the one who wanted to be in with my books or my music. So, it's interesting that I ended up in such an outdoors type of life and career.

REINIER: Maybe there's a little unconscious influence, do you think?

BECK: Probably more than unconscious because my mother, actually, when she was a young woman, would have wanted to be a forest ranger. She would refer to that. Of course, in her era it was a time that I don't believe women even thought of going into forestry or that the Forest Service had women rangers of any sort. But that was always something she had thought just sounded like a wonderful thing to do. And so I certainly grew up influenced by my mother and her love of the out of doors. I got into Girl Scouting quite early and, despite myself, did go out and hike and camp and spend a lot of time in the out of doors. But, yeah, I think my mother's interest in that kind of a life probably influenced me quite a lot.

It's interesting because I didn't go into forestry though. I did not choose a natural resource career. I came into the Forest Service by an unusual path. I had been then working for another federal agency as an employee development specialist. The Forest Service was hiring an employee development specialist, and I'm sure part of my attraction to the agency was the mission of the agency even though I wasn't a forester or a natural resource person by profession at that point in time.

REINIER: You were such a good student. I was very interested--and now we're getting on to college--but in college you majored in history.

BECK: Um hmm. I did.

REINIER: But before that, what was your favorite subject, for example, in high school?

BECK: Actually, what I was really interested in and thought I was going to major in was foreign languages and especially Spanish. I early on got exposed to some language study even in grade school and found I loved it, and was quite good at languages and especially Spanish, and wanted to teach Spanish; that was what I had planned to do with my life. I always enjoyed history as a subject, but hadn't thought about that as a major. What happened is when I got to college and started out as a Spanish major, one of the things I wanted to do through my university, which was Southern Methodist University [SMU] in Dallas, was to do a junior year abroad year in Spain. SMU had a branch campus in Madrid, and so I planned to do that. Now I was also still thinking I

wanted to teach in high school, so I was planning to get teaching credentials. By a strange, just kind of fluke of scheduling and what kind of courses were available, when I got to Madrid I was planning to just stay one semester in Spain and to come back to get the teaching credentials and finish my degree. I was going to major in Spanish with history as a second teaching field. I got over to Spain and within a couple of weeks decided I didn't want to come back after one semester, that this was going to be a lot better education than going back to Dallas. And so I actually kind of, not kind of, I blew off doing the teaching credentials and decided I would reassess what I wanted to do career wise because I would have had to go back after one semester to do that. I was kind of starting to realize there were other things to do in the world, and while that would be a wonderful thing to do, it wasn't the only one. And then just by chance based on what courses I already had and what was available over through this branch campus program, it turned out that I could get the courses I needed for a major in history, but not in Spanish, because I had already taken a lot of the advanced courses that were being offered there. So I switched my major to history.

REINIER: I see.

BECK: And ended up with a major in history and no teaching credentials setting out to face the world. So that's how that happened.

REINIER: Well now, at Northside High School you just raked in the honors. I see that you graduated in 1970 with the H.O. Smith award for the senior with the highest academic standing.

BECK: That's right.

REINIER: Were you valedictorian of your class?

BECK: Actually, we didn't have a valedictorian that was appointed by grade average. What we did in my high school was people could try out to give the commencement speeches. I was pretty shy at the time and I didn't even try out. But I did have technically the highest academic grade point. Actually, there were several of us that graduated with a four-point grade average, but mine was actually a notch higher because some of our honors courses were broken into A 1, 2, and 3. So I came out on that end, but I was too chicken to give the commencement address. I didn't even try out for that.

REINIER: And then, I see that you were a National Merit Scholarship winner.

BECK: That's right. That's right.

REINIER: So, how did that work out? Is that what paid your way to go to SMU?

BECK: Well, it paid a very small portion of it. It was through one of the many sponsors who provides scholarships through the National Merit Foundation. It paid what at that point was a contribution to my freshman year tuition, but certainly not my full education. But it was an honor just to win one.

REINIER: What made you choose SMU?

BECK: I'm not always sure. I had applied to, I think, probably six different schools before I applied to SMU and been accepted to all of them. I guess none of them were feeling like the right fit. Someone mentioned SMU to me and I, of course, at that time was planning on being a Spanish major. Its Texas location, I think, made me tend to think it would have a good Spanish-language program. And I went out and visited the campus and it seemed to be kind of the right

size of a school I wanted to go to. So it was actually kind of a last minute decision to go there. It was the last one I applied to.

REINIER: Were you raised as a Methodist?

BECK: No, no I wasn't. And even though SMU is affiliated with the Methodist church, it isn't really a church school in that sense.

REINIER: Well now, I think it's very exciting that you had that year in Spain. Do you want to tell me a little bit more about what you did in Spain and where you were?

BECK: I really just enjoyed the experience of living in another country. In fact, I got a travel bug in my system that I still have. I guess the very initial orientation part of the year was in Barcelona for a couple of weeks. I fell deeply in love with Barcelona, enjoyed walking around the city, the food, the people; that's a wonderful port city. And met a lot of Spanish students and found it was quite easy actually--this was in the early '70s--but really rather easy to meet folks there during that first orientation. We actually stayed in a dorm and so met a lot of students. And that continued when we moved to Madrid for the remainder of the program, which is where we really were for the bulk of it. One of the things that the program administrators did to help us get settled was to link us up with guides or students who were there to help us see things around the city and get oriented to it. So we found it very easy to meet folks and have a lot of Spanish friends. I did not live with a family there. I, actually, the first semester lived in, not really a boarding house, but several of us lived with a fairly young woman who rented rooms out to students. And then the second semester I had an apartment with a few other women who were in my program from the U.S. But by that time we knew a lot of Spanish kids, most of us were dating Spanish guys, and so we didn't feel like were losing out on the experience of really knowing the people and doing things.

[Interruption]

REINIER: Also in college you just raked in the honors. Phi Alpha Theta your freshman year. That, of course, I know well; that's the history honorary.

BECK: Right. Right.

REINIER: Oh, that wasn't your freshman year; no, that was probably later on.

BECK: No, that would have been probably senior year or somewhere later in the process.

REINIER: Yes, because you have to be a major by that time. And also the Spanish honorary, Sigma Delta Pi. But here's your freshman one. Alpha Lambda Delta, freshman women's honorary. Dorothy Amman Sophomore Award? What was that?

BECK: That's an award at SMU that was given to the sophomore woman with the highest academic standing at that point in time.

REINIER: So do you still have a straight A average?

BECK: I believe I did at that point in time. In fact, I don't think I blew that until my first semester in Spain, which was probably a good thing. I remember my parents. I remember being devastated myself because I think I got a couple of Bs that semester, and I remember my parents saying, "Well, we're so glad. We're glad to know you're doing something other than studying for a change." So, I thought, probably not too many people's parents would give them

that accolade for busting their perfect average, but mine did. I think that was pretty good that that's how they felt about it.

REINIER: That's great. But you still graduated with the Highest Honors.

BECK: Yes.

REINIER: And you made Phi Beta Kappa. That's a wonderful academic record. Are there any professors that you particularly remember?

BECK: I remember several, probably mostly the ones that I knew in Spain. That was such a significant year, and there were several folks who were professors with our program over there that actually ended up being friends. But some of them are actually rather young themselves and are folks that then I knew for a while, and certainly was influenced by.

REINIER: Did you have any role models at this point in your life? Anybody you wanted to be like?

BECK: Oh, I may have. I don't recall that at this stage. I don't remember having anyone that I thought of in that category.

REINIER: Well now, when you graduated in 1974, you weren't going to be a teacher...

BECK: No.

REINIER: No longer! So how did you get started in your professional career?

BECK: Interestingly, when I was home at spring break my senior year of college, I was wondering what I was going to do at this point as I was getting close to graduating with a degree in history. And when I was visiting my folks in Atlanta we went up, as a family, to Kennesaw Mountain park up in northern Georgia. And there, at that point, the park service had just recently launched their living historian program and they had folks doing living history up at Kennesaw National Park. I thought that was pretty fascinating, and it combined both my interest in history and my interest in drama, which was a strong interest in more of a hobby than a career type of way. So I decided I wanted to check that out, and I went and took what at that time was the Federal Service Entrance Exam, which was how at that point in time you got on a register for federal jobs. And so I did that; again, that would have been in that spring.

When I graduated from college in June, I started hitting the job market. As far as federal jobs, interestingly enough that program [living history] was not hiring at the time, but I did get inquiries from several other federal agencies that were. And I went and interviewed for a few jobs and actually ended up accepting a job, again, that was not anything I would have envisioned doing at all. It was as an Investigator with the Civil Service Commission, which, of course, was the predecessor if the Office of Personnel Management. And what I did was to run background clearances on people who were applying for sensitive jobs with the federal government. So, it was a very different thing than I thought I would be doing. I think I was attracted to it partly because I liked the people who interviewed me when I went in and it sounded like something so different. I think I was still probably pretty shy at the time, and I think there was a part of me too that thought this would probably be good for me to have to get out and interview people. So for whatever combination of reasons, that was the job I chose to accept and start out with. So that's what did get me into the federal government.

REINIER: Did you enjoy doing that kind of work?

BECK: I learned a lot from it. I can't really say I enjoyed it. It probably wasn't a fit for me, and my style. But I did learn a lot. It was good experience to have to get out and meet a lot of different people. I traveled all over the South. That was both interesting and also very exhausting. I would be away for three weeks or more at a time on the road. Of course, for someone young that's not so terrible, except that you're not home and having your life there. And from the time I started that job, we were on mandatory twelve hours a week overtime, so you were working a lot of extra hours and a lot of it out of town. So it was a very consuming job.

REINIER: Yeah, yeah.

BECK: And the other thing I didn't really like was knowing that often when you were doing your job the best is when you were finding out things that might be a problem for someone in terms of their job. That wasn't always the case. You can certainly do a good investigation that was clear, and more of them were clear than not. But I guess it just wasn't something I enjoyed doing to be going out and looking for any problems that might be there. So, at some point I finally decided I just I needed to make a change.

REINIER: Were you living at home?

BECK: I was when I first took the job, partly because I didn't know if I'd be staying in Atlanta. They were hiring several new investigators at that time, a number of us right out of college. It seems as though the plan had been that they were going to reassign one or more of us to the Knoxville, Tennessee, office, which is where they were doing a tremendous amount of work right then doing clearances for folks working at the Oak Ridge Atomic Energy facility. And as it turned out, I was not one that got reassigned there. So I did stay in Atlanta and ended up, actually, sharing an apartment with one of the other female investigators, actually one of the folks who had interviewed me for the job. She and I shared an apartment and became great friends and still are. I'm godmother to her son, and so that's a friendship that's endured for a lot of years.

REINIER: That's great. It looks like you did that for three years…

BECK: Right, right.

REINIER: …and then you were promoted to Associate Director of the Personnel Management Training Institute.

BECK: Actually, the Training Institute was another branch of the Civil Service Commission. I had been interested in that even when I was working as an investigator. I had a detail assignment into the training center. Probably picked up on a lot of my old interest in teaching, and I found I really enjoyed that more than I enjoyed the investigative work. I had been hoping to get a job there, and there were not any openings at the time I decided I needed to make a change from investigations. I actually quit the job in investigations. I just decided that I needed to refocus. I was just a few years out of college, so I thought, well, I need to change my direction of my career here because this isn't what I want to do for long term. So I actually did resign from the job and went back to Spain for a few months. I had a friend who was getting married in Spain, so traveled back there with another friend.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

Tape 1, Side B: Working for the Regional Training Center of the Civil Service Commission—Transferring to the Forest Service in Organization Management Assistance in State and Private Forestry—Workshop on the Changing Roles of Women and Men in the Forest Service—Becoming acquainted with Forest Service culture—Working with State Foresters.

REINIER: You were talking, on the other side of the tape, about the interval between jobs when you went to Spain.

BECK: Right, which was about maybe two and a half months. My plan was to start job hunting again when I got back. I had been job hunting some in Europe, but pretty quickly found out that I wasn't going to find what I wanted that way. I would have loved to have worked in Europe, but of course at that point I didn't have a green card or whatever the equivalent was there, so there weren't a lot of jobs really open to me as an American in Spain right then. So I came back kind of nervous about what do I do next and starting over. My roommate picked me up at the airport and said, "Well, the Regional Training Center's been calling. They want to offer you a job in the Training Division." So that kind of fell right into place and my job search was short because that's what I'd been wanting to do when I left; there just hadn't been an opening then. So I went back to the Civil Service Commission in the Training Division.

REINIER: And so you designed and taught training courses? What was that?

BECK: Yes. I had a curriculum of courses I was responsible for. I inherited them from a previous program manager, so I didn't really design them from scratch. They were personnel management-related, a lot of them, in areas of equal employment opportunity, some in counseling and interviewing skills for managers. There were a number of things, probably some in employee relations, but they were personnel management-related types of courses for supervisory personnel and other employees. So I did enjoy that.

REINIER: Of the Civil Service Commission, that was internal?

BECK: No, government-wide.

REINIER: Oh, I see.

BECK: Yeah, the Training Center there, as the Training Centers with the Office of Personnel Management, provide inter-agency training really for all federal agencies in a lot of basic types of courses, and also some for state and local government.

REINIER: So did you go from agency to agency?

BECK: More often we would hold a general offering. If we had a course that was, for example, Interviewing and Counseling Skills for Managers, we would offer that course several times a year and people from different agencies could attend. We would sometimes be asked by an agency to put on just a single-agency course if they had enough folks to fill it up. So we did it both ways, and that job, too, involved a lot of travel around the Southeast, especially to do the special agency courses.

REINIER: This is the late '70s; was this stimulated by the Equal Employment Opportunity legislation?

BECK: Certainly some of the courses I worked with were. Yes. They were existing courses before I went to work there. The training center had been in place for a while and the courses, I'm sure, were updated periodically to deal with whatever were the major government personnel-type of emphasis at the time. So certainly in that era, a lot of it was Equal Employment Opportunity-related and those were relatively newer programs at the time. We did training for EEO counselors, we did programs for women's special emphasis coordinators, and Hispanic special emphasis coordinators and various other groups of that nature, so there was quite a package of courses that were in the general civil rights and EEO area.

REINIER: Were you working for workplace diversity yet?

BECK: Well, certainly, yeah. I remember a lot of discussion around diversity and some of the courses that I worked with. Now whether – I'm trying to remember...

REINIER: The emphasis really would have been women at that point.

BECK: A lot of it was. I'm trying to think now. Again we were in the South, so certainly there was emphasis on Hispanics and African-Americans, and so there were ethnic and racial diversity perspectives in there, too, maybe not as wide a range of diversity as we think of now when we look at a diverse workplace. I don't know that there was emphasis at that time on people with disabilities. Certainly some of the current legislation had not come about at that time.

REINIER: And did you use your Spanish?

BECK: Not very much on the job, I probably did a little bit. I do remember putting on a few courses in Miami where we had a quite high Hispanic attendance in our course. I think we were doing some of the courses on the Hispanic Employment Program. Every now and then I'd have a chance to use my Spanish, but it wasn't a primary skill I used on the job.

REINIER: Well now, you also edited a regional newsletter.

BECK: That was, yeah, part of my job in the training center. I put out a little newsletter for trainers in different federal agencies. And we did do at least one column in that we did a Spanish translation for.

REINIER: So you used it a little bit.

BECK: A little bit, yeah.

REINIER: And then you did that for a year before you transferred to the Forest Service in 1978; is that about right?

BECK: That's about right, yeah.

REINIER: So what brought about your transfer to the Forest Service?

BECK: Well, once again there was an effort underway to transfer a number of folks out of our regional office there in Atlanta to some field offices around the Southeast. I was not real excited about leaving Atlanta at that point in time. So like several of my colleagues, I was looking around for other possible jobs that would keep me in Atlanta or at least would give me more choice about where I might end up, instead of just taking my chances on where I could get reassigned. And at that point in time there, I became aware of a job with the Forest Service at

their regional office in Atlanta. It was an employee development specialist job but very different than what I'd been doing at the Civil Service Commission. This one was in a program of the Forest Service called State and Private Forestry, interestingly enough. And there was a program at that time called Organization Management Assistance. Basically what that program provided was assistance, especially technical assistance, to state forestry organizations in a whole array of organization and management areas.

The State and Private Forestry program overall is the external branch of the Forest Service in terms of working with people and communities outside of the National Forest System lands, and many of our programs are delivered through the state forestry organizations. So at that time, in addition to some of the natural resource-types of technical assistance that was being provided to the state organizations, this program had a small group of people who actually did things like management, supervisory training, organization and personnel studies, and similar things to really help them build up their organizations.

So my job, or the job I was hired to do, was the management and supervisory training piece of that. So I was really hired to do that type of training for state employees of forestry organizations and also to be kind of a mentor and coach for training officers in the state forestry organizations. Now that kind of quickly grew into a broader, organization development type of a job, because our group there, the whole Organization Management Assistance unit, was becoming something more of an organization development group in terms of helping organizations deal with change and the whole array of organization issues. So we essentially were consultants to the state foresters in the Southeast at the time.

REINIER: You did participate in a workshop on changing roles of women and men in the Forest Service and I'm interested in that. Were those roles changing at that time?

BECK: They were. I'm trying to remember the real origin of this coming up as a need. It had come to the attention certainly of my boss and some other folks in that Organization Management Assistance group. This was more of an internal Forest Service project than external with our state partners, but I think, at that point in time, which again was late '70s, the Forest Service as a whole was beginning to see women in some different types of roles. Some of the things I remember hearing people say had triggered the need to look at this were things like, "Well, women are out traveling in the field with men and folks aren't quite sure how to handle that." That was new at the time; being out in the woods together in different kinds of jobs was a new experience for the Forest Service, both for the men and women that were involved in it. "What were spouses going to think?" and things like that. So those kinds of issues coming up were part of what triggered the desire to do a pilot workshop on changing roles.

At that time, through National Training Labs [NTL], which is a very good organization that deals a lot in training and interpersonal issues and management issues, at the time, I believe the title would have been the president of NTL, was a woman named Edie Seashore, who had developed a really powerful workshop on the changing roles of men and women in organizations. I believe either my boss had gone to that workshop or had heard a lot about it, but had approached Edie Seashore about working with the Forest Service to develop an internal course that would help us look very specifically at our issues. Edie was intrigued, I think, with the Forest Service. I think, basically what she told Bruce [Courtright], who was my boss at the time, was, "You really can't afford me, but…" because she was quite a well-known consultant at the time and still is. She said, "You can't really afford my usual fee, but I have some interns that I would like to have a chance to get some experience in facilitating this workshop with groups. If you will let me use the Forest Service as a training ground for my interns, I will waive my consulting fee and we will help you develop this pilot session."

And I just happened to come along right at the time to get the assignment to have the lead on coordinating this workshop, which was a wonderful experience. Working with Edie was very powerful. You were asking earlier about mentors, and I would say probably in the field of organization development, Edie became a mentor of mine, and someone I very much admired and still do. She did help us develop this workshop. It was piloted in the South and then really did not get picked up nationally, as we had hoped it would. But several regions of the Forest Service did pick it up, one being the region out here that is headquartered in California.

REINIER: Region 5.

BECK: Yes, Region 5...

REINIER: ...Interesting.

BECK: ...did; I believe also Region 6 maybe even was the first one that picked it up.

REINIER: Regions 6 and 5 were really quite in the leadership of promoting women in the Forest Service; is that right? That is what I understand. Would you agree with that?

BECK: I don't know if I was aware of that at the time. I think very often Regions 5 and 6 do find themselves hitting a lot of social issues and a lot of change kinds of issues both in terms of natural resources and human issues before some other parts of the country, just by nature, things seem to hit early out here. So I don't know what was going on at that time. I imagine partly there probably were more, I can't say for sure, but there may have been more diversity in the workplace. Certainly, there were issues that were surfacing, and so probably those regions were more attuned to the fact that they really needed to do something to address what was going on. I know in Region 5 that effort in terms of working with the Changing Roles Workshop was spearheaded by someone who I had actually worked with in Region 8, who was part of our original team for that pilot workshop. A man named Mack Moore, who then moved out to Region 5 and brought several of us out to help train facilitators internally in this region to put that workshop on. And then Region 5 used it quite extensively for several years.

REINIER: Oh, really?

BECK: Now this was also on the very early years of the consent decree that you have probably heard about in Region 5. I think it was before a lot had really happened with the courts there. Some of this history is fuzzy for me; I was not here at the time.

REINIER: 1983, I think is the...

BECK: Yeah. The consent decree, when it was originally set up, there were several years that it was there, but at least my impression again from what I hear now looking back is that things weren't really all getting done the way they should. The region and the secretary of agriculture or whoever up the line--this part's all a little fuzzy--were found in contempt of court. And that's when a lot of things got put in place that were more directly looking at implementing that consent decree. And I think it was probably in those early years when it quite hadn't quite gotten to that point...

REINIER: ...Yes, I think that's true.

BECK: ...yet was when Mack and some of the other folks he was working with were saying, "Let's take a proactive... The consent decree's telling us some things we've got to do, but let's

also look at what can we do to advance understanding of issues around diversity and changing roles in some other ways too." And that was when they brought this workshop in.

REINIER: It's interesting; how were you thinking about yourself and your own career at this point? Were you anticipating that you would have this long career in the Forest Service?

BECK: Not at all! I probably was still early enough in my career I wasn't really sure where I was wanting to go long term. I knew I really enjoyed the employee development and the organization development work and I anticipated staying with that. But interestingly, when I first came into the Forest Service, I didn't really think there would be many places for me to go in the Forest Service. At that point in time, largely because I did not have a degree in natural resources or forestry or anything related, pretty much what I was told is that there's only so far you can really advance because all the top positions, the higher grade positions, tend to be foresters. And in fact, I remember, not really laughing about it, but it seemed to be even just accepted that positions that weren't ones that would call for a forestry degree often were held by foresters. I remember the personnel officers were often foresters.

REINIER: That was the case. Yeah. Yeah.

BECK: So people kind of accepted that. I remember my boss who hired me, who was a man...

REINIER: ...Bruce Courtright?

BECK: ...This is Bruce Courtright. He felt that there was a glass ceiling. We didn't use that term then, but for him, he said "I can't go all that far because I'm not a forester." So I certainly never thought I could at that point in time. You didn't look around and see women in very high-level positions at all. And so I just never really thought that I would be finding places to go in the Forest Service at higher levels. And I kind of accepted that at the time. I liked the Forest Service. It felt like a good place to work. Probably what I liked about it the best was that people were there because they cared about the mission of it. It felt very different than the agency I had come from in terms of people who were there because they felt good about what the Forest Service did overall. Many of them had come up with forestry degrees, and it's all they'd ever even thought about doing. You just felt like people liked their work. So I liked the Forest Service, but I, at least early on, accepted what I was being told that there won't really be any place for you to go here long term. So I always expected I would probably move on at some point to a different agency.

REINIER: Did you find there to be a Forest Service culture when you came into it?

BECK: Oh, yes. Definitely. And some of it probably was founded even in what I was just saying. People liked what they did. They cared about the mission. There was of course the "can do" part of the culture. You don't say no.

REINIER: Oh, really?

BECK: You can always make something happen. We're the Forest Service and we're strong and we can get things done. It all felt to me kind of quasi-military too. Folks wore the uniforms and there was a lot of structure and chain of command and things that people just accepted. Even at that stage in my career, people still talked about Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the Forest Service and how Gifford would have done things. And so there was definitely a lot of history. "We're the Forest Service and we do things this way." It's hard to delve back into a lot of specifics, but those are just a few of the things I remember hearing.

REINIER: Were you comfortable with that?

BECK: I wasn't uncomfortable with it. Again, generally, I liked the Forest Service. It may have seemed a little overly structured to me, but it didn't bother me in any big way. I think our group was probably a little different by virtue of the nature of the work we did. Again my boss, Bruce, was certainly a non-typical Forest Service person.

REINIER: Yes, tell me about Bruce. He sounds interesting.

BECK: He is quite interesting, a very creative guy. Again he came--I'm not sure what his field was; it actually might have been personnel management--but he came into the Forest Service at some stage probably through a different route. He wasn't a natural resource professional. The word "no" had no meaning to Bruce, but in a different way than the can-do culture. It's just there was nothing he thought was impossible, I think, and probably no rule that he wouldn't break. [Laughing] And certainly in that whole field of training and organization development, he was very creative. He encouraged us to get out and really work and be helpful with the states. He loved doing training and was a pretty creative teacher himself and liked doing the workshops. We did things like teambuilding with the state foresters, which at that point was probably, I wouldn't say necessarily a stretch, but it was working in that people arena at the kind of thing a lot of folks did, and even still do, consider "touchy-feely." It was for organizations that were very, very structured and not necessarily out on that edge around the interpersonal types of things. That was probably a little frightening. And yet we did that with a lot of state forestry organizations and internally in the Forest Service.

REINIER: Did you travel around the country to do this?

BECK: Yes, principally in the Southeast at that time because that was the territory our region covered, Southeast and Puerto Rico [and the Virgin Islands], but there were occasionally times that I got to travel to other parts of the country to do some of the same kind of work. I remember coming out to South Dakota because there was a management training session out there that some of our counterparts in the West were putting on, and this gave me a chance to come out and work with them. So there were occasional trips outside of the Southeast, but pretty much we worked with the thirteen southeastern states and got to know those state foresters and their staffs pretty well.

REINIER: Those must have been men that you were working with.

BECK: Yes, almost exclusively in the state organizations.

REINIER: Were there any women that you were working with?

BECK: I don't remember any women in jobs other than clerical jobs as I look back, in the states. There were some in the Forest Service, mostly in administrative types of roles, in personnel or some of the other administrative staffs, but not very many. At that point in time it was not at all unusual for me to be the only woman in the room; in fact, I expected it more often than not. And I think, again, at least at that point in time and in the Southeast, the states probably were moving slower towards having women in their organizations than the Forest Service. But we weren't far ahead. [Laughter]

REINIER: There are a couple things that come to my mind, first of all, the states. As I understand it, the state foresters are very important in the Southeast.

BECK: Yes, yes.

REINIER: They're powerful figures in fact.

BECK: Right.

REINIER: So that must have been a factor. They must have had a very strong sense of self.

BECK: Many of the state foresters in the South were and still are, I think, probably very involved politically in their state. It varies from state to state. Some definitely are more career civil servant jobs, some are politically appointed. That's true around the country, but I think of the Southern group of state foresters as having a lot of political ties. At the time I was working there many of them were almost legendary folks who had been there for many years and, yes, were quite, quite powerful in their organizations. It was an interesting group to be exposed to. Certainly I went in there to do training, but I learned probably as much or more than I taught every time I went out. I really got some good grounding from those state foresters and their staffs in terms of just what natural resource organizations are about and what their issues are and challenges and how they operated. So it was a real valuable education.

REINIER: Well, as the only woman, you must have learned how to deal effectively with a group of men.

BECK: Well, I did kind of have to. Now I wasn't the only woman on our staff. In our group--again, remember we were a little unusual--there were several women. We wouldn't necessarily go out together when we were traveling or putting on training. I do remember being told, not by anyone in our regional office, but by a counterpart of Bruce's who worked up in the Northeast at that time, I remember him really counseling me early on that I would probably have a hard time being accepted by the state foresters because they weren't used to seeing a woman in that role and many of them weren't used to seeing women professionals.

REINIER: And you were young.

BECK: I was young, yes.

REINIER: You were in your twenties.

BECK: Yes, so for me to be standing up teaching in front of some of those groups I'm sure did give some people pause. I don't really recall ever having major problems with that though. I'm sure there were people out there thinking "What is she doing up there and what could she possibly have to teach us?" But I don't remember ever feeling really rejected by them. Some of that may have been the politeness of the South, but I also felt like they did respect me. There were no times I felt really unwelcome or like I shouldn't be there because I was a young woman.

REINIER: Are there dos and don'ts though that you came to understand in being a young woman in that position?

BECK: Oh, I don't know if I would say really dos and don'ts so much as certainly I would never have presumed to be arrogant about what I was going in to teach them. I thought of my role as being helpful as opposed to prescriptive. I do remember sometimes being uncomfortable at gender-related jokes and things like that and even shocked at the kind of things that were still said at some places at that point in time. But I don't remember any kind of incidents or really uncomfortable things. I remember feeling very good at one point--this was several years in--when one of the state foresters, who was one of the legendary ones and one who I, early on,

had been told just was not very supportive of women in professional jobs. I remember at some point that I had been working with him for a while on a new work planning and performance system, and I remember this state forester saying, "Well, finally! This is one of the best things that we've had introduced. I think this is going to really help us address some of our problems" or something like that. And that to me felt so good after the very early suggestion that this state forester in particular was not going to be very open to having a woman consultant come in and work with his organization. I remember those years very fondly. It was a real learning time for me. It was fun to be out there and working with the state folks and with our small group of trainers and consultants. Usually there were at least a couple of us along on a job, not always, but generally, and sometimes more if we were putting on major workshops. So we got to be good friends and we were friends with most of the state folks that we worked with.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

Tape 2, Side A: Developing management structures—Learning to speak before groups—Transfer to the Washington Office—Working in Administrative Management—Conducting workshops and training sessions—Working with Chief Max Peterson—Becoming Staff Assistant to the Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry.

REINIER: Leigh, at the end of Tape 1 we were talking about some of the content of the workshops that you were leading. And I guess what I'm really interested in finding out is what were the goals of your group at that time?

BECK: Probably, the overall goals would have been helping state forestry organizations really develop good systems for management and human resource development and other types of management structures. When this program was initiated, at least my understanding of it is that forestry organizations in many of the states were either relatively new or they didn't really have a lot of infrastructure in place around the organization side of things. So this program was, I think--and this is was before my time with it--but I think the program was kind of someone's brainchild that said, "We're providing a lot of help in the technical parts of forestry and we're providing financial assistance. We should also be helping them develop good systems and good organizations for carrying out their goals." Because the states, I think, like the Forest Service itself, were probably very good in forestry and what they did and in natural resources, maybe coming to it though with less background in people management, people skills, how to run an organization. Many of the people who were going into forestry didn't have that as part of their curriculum in school, and I would say that was true both for the Forest Service and the states. Especially if you're in an organization that promotes from within, as again both organizations did, and where people moving up into managerial roles and administrative roles and personnel officer roles often came out of a forestry background and hadn't had exposure to some of the management and interpersonal skills development types of things that people who had studied those things in school might have.

So a lot of what we were doing was trying to bring some of those skills to them and also, from the organization development standpoint, help them build internal capacity to deal with change, as organizations always really need to do. It's very easy for an organization to find something that works and to stay with it for year after year after year. Again, I also think that there certainly have been real times in both the Forest Service and state forestry organizations' history where, especially because of the lot of the tradition and just the fact that these organizations come out of a lot of history of being the experts in their field and knowing how to do things and doing them the right way, they may even have had more of that tendency to stay the same as opposed to be looking at how do we need to continue to change to be relevant to the needs out there and the changing population. And I think that's only become more visible in recent years. It may not have been as visible in the late '70s and early '80s when I was doing this kind of work, but certainly as all organizations do, we and states have needed to be looking out and seeing how we need to change to continue to do our jobs.

REINIER: So, you're changing quite a bit in this time period. Now from someone who you said was shy and even bookish perhaps as a child, you're teaching and engaging in public speaking.

BECK: Yeah. And I remember being quite surprised at myself at the time that I found I really liked getting up in front of groups as long as I knew my subject matter. In fact I used to get kidded about that, especially from Bruce, who could wing anything, about my need to always be so prepared. But I did; I loved it. I liked getting up and teaching or even giving talks to large groups, and it surprised me that that would be something I enjoyed so much.

REINIER: You did interesting work of this sort in Florida, talking to the Florida Personnel Officers Association and the Florida Department of Agriculture.

BECK: Right. We got involved with them actually through forestry because agriculture was the parent organization there of forestry as it is in the federal government. So often, by virtue of working with the forestry groups, we would be invited to also work with the agriculture departments. And with that group that was probably my largest ever speaking engagement, and it has quite a story to go with it. Bruce and I were invited to give a talk, it must have been to the annual meeting of the Florida Personnel Officers Association, on stress management. This turned out to be a group of about 1500 people, which was certainly my largest audience to date at that time. I was just a little tad nervous, speaking of stress, but I got up there and was introducing a film that was part of our presentation and then walked over to the edge of the stage to sit down while we showed this short film. The stage was about three feet high and my chair was not balanced and I went careening off the side of the stage in front of 1500 people.

REINIER: Oh, no!

BECK: And did not hurt myself at all, but as you can imagine, I was kidded for years every time I went down to Florida about taking swan dives off the stage and things like that.

REINIER: I should say!

BECK: So that I remember and it [stress] was certainly an appropriate topic for something like that to happen. Since only one half of the auditorium could see it, as soon as the film was over, I got up and announced to the rest of the group what had happened. So, I figured no one should have missed that. [Laughter]

REINIER: And showed them how to deal with stress!

BECK: Right, right, yeah. But they were quite kind about it. All the ribbing was in good faith.

REINIER: Yes, I'm sure. Well now, it's interesting. You're getting visibility then. But you still are thinking in terms of a glass ceiling, that this isn't really promoting you in terms of a career. Is that right?

BECK: Yeah, yeah, I guess so. Again, I don't think we really even used the term glass ceiling at that time, but I wasn't really thinking of where I could go with this internally in the Forest Service.

REINIER: Yes, it wasn't like you were thinking about being trained for something...

BECK: ...No, no.

REINIER: ...or other people were thinking about training you.

BECK: No, no, certainly. I liked what I was doing in this kind of work. I probably thought more about staying in that type of work, in the organization development field, than I thought about staying in the Forest Service. And again I assumed that the two would not be compatible after some point. I did receive several promotions in place within that Organization Management Assistance group. So I was moving up a bit in terms of grade level and level of responsibility, but I always assumed there would be an end to that.

[Interruption]

REINIER: You were saying that you were promoted several times in this job.

BECK: Right, it was really internal jobs still within that Organization Management Assistance unit. So I really came in as a trainee when I was initially hired, but then I was promoted to higher-level jobs doing some of the same kind of work but with greater levels of responsibility. But I think it was with saying, "Yes, but still there seemed to be a ceiling." Certainly, the top of it would have been my boss's job although I don't think I ever even saw myself having that job. Somehow I think that just maybe didn't cross my mind; maybe I thought he'd be there forever or something. At one point while I was there still in Atlanta in that Organization Management Assistance group, I think I had hit a GS-13 level, which was probably much higher that I expected to get in the Forest Service when I started. But certainly at that point was as far as I thought I was going.

REINIER: In 1980, you became a training officer. And then in 1981, a management analyst...

BECK: ...Right, right.

REINIER: ...according to your record.

BECK: ...yes. And really those were all jobs within this same group. I just had different sets of assignments and again different levels of responsibility within the program.

REINIER: While we're still talking about this time period, I think we should talk a little bit about State and Private Forestry because it was developing largely due to the legislation of 1978 at this time, wasn't it?

BECK: The programs that were part of State and Private Forestry at that time, yes, had been authorized, or at least part of them were authorized, under the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act in 1978. Now there always has been a state and private forestry component of the Forest Service. In fact, way back, even I think before there were national forest reserves that later became the national forests, some of the earliest programs of the Forest Service were designed to provide assistance to private landowners to manage private lands, which is still a core of what the State and Private Forestry program does. So, the Forest Service has always focused on forestlands that are outside of the National Forest System boundaries in one way or another. I think, for many years those programs have been less well known by the public and even by people within the Forest Service than the National Forest System programs, which are, of course, much larger now, and both in funding and in dealing with the national forests themselves are better known by many segments of the public.

REINIER: So, what was the purpose of the legislation in 1978? Was it to define more clearly? Or did it expand the programs?

BECK: I'm sure it did expand existing programs. Again, I was so new in 1978--I think I had just come into the Forest Service and I might have come in after this legislation was passed--so I wasn't really aware of what triggered it as authorizing legislation. But I do know many of the programs that we still work with were probably initially outlined and authorized in that piece of legislation.

REINIER: Okay, so we'll get back to talking more about that later as we go on.

BECK: Okay.

REINIER: Yeah. So, here you are working in this job, what brought about your transfer to Washington in 1982?

BECK: Well, quite frankly, my job in Atlanta was abolished, as was our whole staff for Organization Management Assistance [OMA]. Several things were going on at that time. One was an internal organization study that did some combining of units, but more critically for the OMA program was that the funding for that program was eliminated out of the president's budget, I believe in '82, for the first time.

REINIER: Okay, this was [President Ronald] Reagan.

BECK: This was Reagan. This was the first budget of the Reagan administration. Of course, some of the things at that point that were themes, one was, I'm not sure states rights is the right term, but returning programs to the states that the federal government might have been administering. While these programs were assistance to the states, I think there were some of them that were seen as possibly not things that this administration wanted to fund as the federal role. This was one of the programs that fell off the budget block in '82, and so our entire group were looking for other things to do.

Around that time also the internal reorganization had combined what was a separate Southeastern Area for State and Private Forestry and a regional office for the National Forest System that were co-located in the same building there in Atlanta. So there had been actually two organizational structures. The only other place that situation existed was in the Northeast where it still exists. There is still a separate Northeastern Area from the Northern Region of the Forest Service. But at this particular point in time a study looked at the Southeast and said, "We think we can have some savings and some streamlining by combining these two field organizations under one regional forester." So that was done. Many of the State and Private Forestry staff groups were being reshuffled and combined with staffs that worked in the region. And so a number of us were looking for, "Well, what's our next step?" It happened that my boss, Bruce, was transferred into a job in Washington.

REINIER: I thought you went there with him, actually.

BECK: Yes, I actually did. I followed him. He went first, but he did have a job on the staff he was reassigned to there that I applied for and was selected for. And so that was what took me to Washington. Now, this was an internal administrative staff there—in fact, that was its name, Administrative Management--but it was not working with the states or externally. The group that Bruce headed was called Management Improvement, and, essentially, did a lot of management analysis and studies internally in the Forest Service. Bruce, as I have said, being the creative type he was and loving the organization development work, introduced that component into it. And so a lot of what I did during my time on that staff was internal organization development consulting. So some of the same work I'd done with state foresters I did internally with Forest Service managers.

That was the first time I really was exposed to the National Forest System because some of my internal clients were forest supervisors. We had had groups called Productivity Improvement Teams that were set up at this point in the early '80s to look for internal ways to streamline and save money. One of my colleagues on the staff there, Bill Delaney, really developed the Productivity Improvement Team concept. I got involved with them by helping train and facilitate the people that were on the teams. They were brought in from around the country, both line officers and staff specialists, to take on a particular area. I remember one that I worked with was the Timber Sales Productivity Improvement Team, looking for ways to find

efficiencies and save dollars in our timber sale process. And through doing that I met and worked with a number of our supervisors and district rangers. A number of them later asked me to come work with them and their management teams to do teambuilding or work planning or things of that nature. So, as with the state foresters in the South, I learned a lot about the internal Forest Service system by doing the training and consulting work with forest supervisors. Because, of course, in order to be effective for them I needed to understand the nature of their work and what was important to them and what their issues were.

REINIER: So, now, if you're going out to a forest with a forest supervisor to give workshops or training sessions, what would that be like? What would you do?

BECK: Usually what I would do if this were a teambuilding or some kind of work planning session personalized for the staff, which was what I did more often, usually I would get out there a day or two before the actual workshop and interview people on the staff about their jobs, about how the organization worked, about what were areas they would see that were where things could work more effectively, and I would design a workshop for them, basically, around their own issues. "Here are some of the things where we're either having internal problems or barriers to what we want to accomplish," and then through the course of the workshop we would pick off some of those major issues and just work through them as a team.

REINIER: What kinds of issues were coming up at that time?

BECK: Oh, oh goodness. Now you're making me really stretch back in my head. Well, I would say probably one that came up then that always comes up with groups you work with were problems around communications, both internally with their groups and between them and other levels of the organization. Some of the things that we worked with would have to do with some of their working relationships internally, and how to get work done more effectively as a team. And then, of course, they would bring up resource issues too that we'd try to problem solve on or look at how to make some of their internal processes work better. While some of their issues would deal with the resources, the skill I would bring to them would be how to look at their processes and their systems to make changes that they wanted to make.

REINIER: I've heard a lot in talking to the people from the Forest Service about really what one would think were relationship problems, a lot of labeling someone in a negative way or problems with staff relationships. Did you work with those kinds of relationships?

BECK: Yeah, I think certainly you run into that kind of thing with working with groups like this. We talked earlier about the Forest Service being pretty traditional and having a lot of pretty set ways of doing business. I'm not remembering a lot of real specific things that I've worked with groups on, but certainly you would find, especially if someone came in who had a very different style than was the typical Forest Service style, that sometimes they would have a hard time being accepted in a group. Or people would have a hard time understanding where they were coming from that was so different. You would certainly see that more with people coming in from other agencies who weren't engrained in the Forest Service culture and weren't sure what it was. I think that in the early days of my working with the Forest Service, that didn't happen that much. That's something that we see a lot more of now, people coming in from other agencies at higher levels. I remember especially even during the era we're talking about that that was more the exception than a common thing to see someone come in from another organization at even a midpoint in their career. So it was unusual.

REINIER: But there were a lot of professionals coming in at that time, who may have had a different point of view.

BECK: Right, yes. Certainly we were beginning to hire more disciplines. When you hear people refer to the "ologists," that was something different. It wasn't just foresters and engineers who for a long time had been probably the mainstream fields that you saw in the Forest Service. Yeah, there were beginning to be a wider range of disciplines and people who had a different background and maybe were coming in at higher than an entry-level position. So that's been a big part of Forest Service change over the last maybe fifteen to twenty years. I keep forgetting how long I've been there.

REINIER: And you're beginning to find women, during this time period, in line positions for the first time.

BECK: Beginning to.

REINIER: First female district ranger in 1982, I think.

BECK: Was it that early? I did not remember that, but I know it was certainly still not very widespread during that time. I kind of vaguely remember a first female forest supervisor. And I remember when the class of female district rangers was small enough to be in a small group shot. [Laughter]

REINIER: Yes, yes, it was. I've seen those pictures.

BECK: So, yeah, and it would have been during the '80s.

REINIER: Did you work with any of them at that time?

BECK: When I was coming out to Region 5 to work with the Changing Roles workshops here, and that was during the time I worked out of Washington, I do remember then, probably the first female district ranger I met was Susan Odell, who still works in our Washington office in State and Private now, I'm pleased to say. And I remember meeting Susan in one of those very early Changing Roles facilitator-training cadres. I can't recall when I first worked with a female forest supervisor; it might not have been till many years later. I was aware when the first ones of them began being named.

REINIER: Geri [Vanderveer] Bergen was the first one.

BECK: That's what I was going to guess; it was Geri, I think.

REINIER: I think it was about 1985, if I remember correctly.

BECK: Right, so, yeah. It was a novel thing at first.

REINIER: Yeah, very novel, yeah.

BECK: Of course, now it's much more common.

REINIER: Now, the consent decree [in Region 5]. From the Washington office did you have anything to do with the consent decree?

BECK: At that time period, no. I'm sure there were people in the Washington office that were involved with it. I was not from that administrative management role. I heard of it only when I came out to California. So, it's not something that I think was known of widely in the Forest Service in those early years of it. It became certainly more known in some of the later stages

and with some of the findings of being in noncompliance. But, especially in those early '80s, I wasn't hearing a lot about it in Washington.

REINIER: And [R.] Max Peterson was chief then.

BECK: Yes, he was.

REINIER: So, did you have any contact with him in the Washington office?

BECK: I did. I felt very fortunate to get to work with Max. He was, of course, a very personable chief and very approachable. I did, in that role in the Management Improvement group, have occasions to do some work with the chief and staff group. Some of that was around the Productivity Improvement Teams. When they would come do their report outs, I was often their coach and helper in that, and so had chances to sit in on the chief and staff meetings when that was happening. So I did have some occasion to work with Max and with a number of the deputy chiefs at that point. In fact, I actually did transition meetings for several of the deputy chiefs during that time period when they were coming in new. I worked with them and their staff directors that would be reporting to them to do an initial transition session looking at what does the new boss need to know, what are the key first 90 days kind of issues, and what's this new person's style, what do you need to know about each other to get off to a running start with a new boss coming in. So that was quite interesting.

REINIER: Who were some of those deputy chiefs that you remember?

BECK: Probably the first one of those I did was with Jeff Sirmon when he came in to be deputy chief for programs and legislation. And then not too long after that I did kind of two in tandem with the incoming deputy chief for research who was, at that time, John Ohman, who was leaving the State and Private deputy chief job. He transferred back into research, which I think was his love. And then [Allen J.] Al West, who had been the associate deputy chief in programs and legislation under Jeff came in as State and Private deputy. And that was quite interesting kind of back-to-back to do the session with John Ohman going over to research and leaving State and Private and with Al coming into State and Private, and kind of getting to work with the dynamics of those two groups and watching that transition in leadership with the two teams.

REINIER: How did you like the Washington office?

BECK: I found it very interesting. I learned a lot while I was there. Just the opportunity to see what happened with the department level, to get some insight into the political side of things and realize what happened between the Forest Service and the department and Capitol Hill was very interesting. And actually, the time that I had most opportunity to get involved with those things was when I moved out of the administrative management staff and back into State and Private. Actually, once again, I had my job abolished out from under me. This was starting to be a pattern, but again due to reorganization, the Administrative Management staff was actually disbanded and the functions in it were moved to other existing staffs. So actually, my job was targeted to move into Human Resources to continue doing the organization development kind of work.

About that time the staff assistant job to the deputy chief for State and Private Forestry came open. I applied for that and was selected and became the key staff assistant then to Al West who was the deputy chief at that point. And in that role I kind of did everything including the kitchen sink, you might say. I prepared briefing papers and speeches for Al and organized responses between all of State and Private Forestry staffs. I, in some ways, served a little bit like a chief of staff for the other staff folks who worked for Al. But I was also just kind of chief cook

and bottle washer for everything from going across the hall with Al to brief the undersecretary of agriculture to making Xerox copies and stapling things together. So it was a Jill of all trades kind of job.

REINIER: Sounds like an exciting job.

BECK: It was. It was quite a lot of fun and again a chance to broaden my knowledge of programs because I worked closely with all of the staff directors for the various State and Private Forestry staffs. So that was a broader exposure. Of course, when I worked with Organization Management Assistance, I was aware of other State and Private Forestry programs, but certainly not working with them hands on. At this point I really again had to get to know their programs for Cooperative Forestry, and what was then called Forest Pest Management, now Forest Health Protection, and then Fire and Aviation Management, which included all of the National Forest System Fire and Aviation as well as the Cooperative Fire part. So once again it kind of broadened my knowledge of Forest Service programs and certainly of dynamics with the department and the Hill and how budgets were put together and who a lot of the players were at that level. So it was a very interesting job. It was also a very busy job. I kind of had my tongue dragging the ground a lot of the time.

REINIER: Yeah. And you did that for three years, didn't you?

BECK: Right.

REINIER: Yeah, that's extremely exciting.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

<u>Tape 2, Side B</u>: More on State and Private Forestry in the Washington Office—Developing cooperative relationships—Working with the National Association of State Foresters—Working with Chief Dale Robertson—Advancing in the Forest Service as a young woman—Attending the Management Policy Seminar.

REINIER: Did you work with the legislative programs or with legislation while you were there?

BECK: I became familiar with the legislative affairs staff and had a chance again to see what they did. At that time period we weren't very actively involved with legislation in State and Private Forestry. Again, the Coop Forestry Assistance Act was in place, which was our guiding legislation, and it was later amended in 1990 through the 1990 Farm Bill. But there wasn't a lot of legislative activity at that point that involved our programs. I was probably more aware of the budget side and the appropriations process.

REINIER: Were you involved in that in any way?

BECK: Again, just as a member of the staff I was. There was a budget coordinator on the staff who had the lead on that, but again I became more familiar with how that process worked and what was going on with our State and Private Forestry budget.

REINIER: So, you were just kind of just the right hand person for Al West.

BECK: In a lot of ways, so it got me in the middle of a lot of things...

REINIER: ...Yeah, yeah...

BECK: ...and that was interesting, yeah.

REINIER: Was he a good person to work with?

BECK: Oh, I very much liked working with Al.

REINIER: Tell me a little bit about him.

BECK: He had a lot of energy. Again, came into State and Private Forestry from Programs and Legislation and before that with most of his history in the National Forest System. So he did not come out of the State and Private background, but I think he brought enthusiasm for it. I remember him talking early on about remembering the time he'd been a forest supervisor on the Los Padres National Forest and trying to work with issues across the national forest boundary, and feeling that, at least at that point in time, that forest supervisors didn't have a lot of awareness or consciousness of what they needed to do to be working across those boundaries. It wasn't something that had been really raised to their attention as something they should be worrying with or concerned with that much, is my sense of what he was saying then. And part of what he wanted to do as the deputy chief for State and Private was raise that awareness of working beyond our boundaries, with our boundaries being the National Forest System boundaries. And I think that still is the key thing that's part of the State and Private mission is working across boundaries whether they're geographic or organizational or political to affect the whole landscape. To realize that we need to work with our partners and we need to work with

all ownerships to accomplish some of the landscape-level things that are important for the natural resources.

REINIER: That must mean a lot of cooperative relationships...

BECK: ...Very much so, which is critical...

REINIER: ...with other groups.

BECK: Yeah.

REINIER: Can you explain that just a little bit? You must be working with private associations and state associations and units and agencies...

BECK: Oh, oh, absolutely, yeah. And of course the most important part of that is it's a different role when you're working collaboratively with partners. So often the Forest Service culture has grown up around management of the national forests where we are in charge. We make the decisions. We do what's right for the land on the national forests. When you're working with partners, the relationship changes. It's not about being in control or having all the answers and telling people what needs to be done on other land ownerships. It's sitting down together and saying, "What are some things we have in common? What are some goals that we might have for this whole watershed? And what can we each bring to the table?" It's building a relationship in a different way that is different from when you're managing a piece of property that you have more direct control over.

The interesting thing is that, of course, now, one of the things that I think we are learning in the Forest Service is, even with managing the national forests, that a lot of that partnership relationship is important because communities, certainly here in California, are very concerned with how their public lands are managed and are wanting to be invited in and to have some say about how the public lands are managed. So I think that relationship and partnership skills are important to us across all of our programs.

It's essential in State and Private forestry. We can't do anything without it. Our very primary and key partners are the state forestry organizations. Many of our programs, our cooperative programs, actually are delivered through them. In many cases, we provide them a grant, actual financial assistance—dollars--which they match out of their own state budgets, and they are the delivery system often to private landowners and communities. There are also just a whole array of other partners out there at all levels of government: communities both urban and rural, Resource Conservation Districts, other federal agencies, other state agencies, nonprofit groups, RC&Ds.

REINIER: Sure.

BECK: The key to partnerships is recognizing that everyone's coming to the table bringing ideas and expertise and in some cases resources, and you're in it together. No one has to run the show. It's actually a position, I think, of greater strength, but sometimes it's hard for us in the Forest Service to let go of that control because our culture brought us up thinking that that was our role.

REINIER: Well, it's interesting to me. Your skills in personnel that you've been developing are exactly the skills that you need in these cooperative relationships.

BECK: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

REINIER: So you're really well suited for that.

BECK: I find it really exciting. It's a very fun part of the Forest Service's mission.

[Interruption]

REINIER: Can you tell me more about working in the Washington office and the work that you did there?

BECK: One of the memories that just jumps in right away is just how busy it always was, yet my impression talking with people who work there now is that's just increased many fold. It seemed, even at that time, that we were always responding to requests from the department or the Hill. You would go in in the morning and find yourself doing often very different things than you thought you were going to be doing that day because of requests for information or things that you would get called on to do. I really do believe that that's even more so now with folks in our Washington office. So it was exhausting. It was very interesting because of the kind of things you got to do, but it was exhausting.

I liked the exposure to different staffs too. I often was representing the state and private deputy area with people from some of the other deputy areas, so again I got to work across program lines. I got to work with the chief and staff. I occasionally wrote speeches for the chief. At the time I was in this job that was Chief Dale Robertson. Although one thing about Dale was that he usually would go home and rewrite his own speeches the night before. So you almost felt kind of honored if some of your words actually came out in one of Dale's speeches. He liked to really put his personal touch in it. But it gave you a chance to talk with him and find out what he wanted, what messages he wanted to deliver. Occasionally I wrote speeches for the undersecretary of natural resources and environment. So again it just it gave me a chance to work with some of those people and find out what was important to them.

I also represented the Forest Service and State and Private with some external groups. There was a group called the National Council on Private Forests that Al West was a member of as deputy chief, but I was his back up in that role and got to attend those meetings and was often representing him there. That group included people from all sectors really, private and public sector, who had interest in private forest lands, whether it was the National Association of Consulting Foresters, the Society of American Foresters, the National Association of Woodland Owners. And so I worked with people from nonprofits and the private sector at that level who were interested in what was happening on the nation's private woodlands.

REINIER: Would that include the lumber companies, for example, who must have owned a lot of that land?

BECK: Well, the focus with the State and Private Forestry programs really is the non-industrial private forestland.

REINIER: Oh, I see.

BECK: So, while certainly there are, yes, interactions and connections with the industrial, the timber companies, a lot of the focus with these groups were the smaller, noncommercial woodland owners who might have a small parcel of land that they wanted to learn how to manage either for timber production, or for wildlife habitat, or for just the aesthetics of it, or for good water quality. So that was a lot of what the State and Private program did and continues to focus on are the non-industrial private lands, both for what they can contribute overall to the

nation's forested land, but also in terms of helping the private land owners accomplish the goals they have for their own property, whatever those goals may be, and doing it in a healthy, sustainable way that's good natural resource management.

REINIER: So much of what the Forest Service does is planning. Could you be engaged in planning with groups like that?

BECK: Certainly, and with a couple of things that I'll talk about. One, there has been at various times in the state and private program a planning component that basically has helped the state forestry organizations with their forest resource planning. That's another program area that's not a major emphasis or a major funded program at this point in time. But some of the emphasis in some of the Cooperative Forestry programs, and specifically the Forest Stewardship Program, is to help private landowners develop forest resource plans or stewardship plans as they're called for their property. So that's really what the objective of that program is, to get those non-industrial private lands under a good stewardship management plan. And that's done both through providing technical assistance: some of those dollars that we pass through to the state organizations, some of that goes into the state's providing technical assistance to landowners, whether it's training or having a state service forester go out and help them develop a plan for their land or helping them get in touch with a consulting forester who can do that. And then there sometimes is also financial assistance that may be subgranted out to landowners or groups of landowners to do planning. So those are some of the ways that we're involved with planning on the private lands.

REINIER: And then you also worked with the National Association of State Foresters [NASF].

BECK: Yes, yes. And that is the group that's the professional organization for all of the heads of the forestry organizations in the 50 states and also in the U.S. territories and affiliated countries, both Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands and in the Pacific territories and nations that are in compacts of free association with the U.S. Those are now part of the program area I work with. So that's a group that, I think, between the states and territories is a total of 59 members, includes the District of Columbia too. And that is the state foresters' professional organization. They actually are quite influential often on legislative issues. They have a quite active legislative agenda trying to identify issues and program areas that are of importance to the states. They are quite, of course, interested in our State and Private Forestry program since they're our major partner in delivering a lot of those programs. So they are an active association. They meet once a year in the fall, hosted by a different state. They have a slate of officers and a number of committees that really work on issues whether they be resource issues, policy issues, specific program issues. They are a very active group. And as you can imagine, a group that's serving 50 diverse states and territories as far flung as the Republic of Palau and the Virgin Islands, the range of issues that they deal with as a body is pretty vast.

REINIER: And so did you attend that every year, that conference?

BECK: I did. When I was working in the Washington office I went. I was like the staff support and liaison to that group for the deputy chief. I have continued to attend those meetings off and on in various of the roles that I have had since then working in different parts of the country because the state foresters are again my major partner group. There were probably some years in there that I missed, but I always go to those meetings again now.

REINIER: And that would be true also of the National Council on Private Forests?

BECK: No, no.

Figure 2: Leigh Beck at a National Association of State Foresters (NASF) meeting in Texas, 1989, with Hawaii State Forester, Michael Buck, NASF Executive Director, Terri Bates, and an unidentified retired State Forester and his wife.

REINIER: Oh, I see.

BECK: That was really a Washington-based group.

REINIER: Oh, I see.

BECK: It continues to function. I just have not had the role of working with them since I left Washington.

REINIER: Yeah. Well, I'm interested that you were working with Dale Robertson. Can you tell me a little bit more about working with Dale and what he was like?

BECK: Well, Dale, of course, followed Max Peterson; he had been the associate chief under Max. One of the things I remember working with him on, and to me this says something about Dale, was that he started an effort that came to be called the pilot forests initiative. It came out of, I think there'd been a meeting in chief and staff where someone who was working with him as a consultant had mentioned the fact that the Forest Service was always adding more processes and systems, but rarely let go of any. We had more rules and red tape and processes piled on processes than we knew what to do with. And just as a suggestion, at least the story I hear is, this consultant said, "Why don't you take a few national forests and let them loose of all the rules? Let them manage any way they want to, as long as it's not illegal, immoral, or fattening for awhile and see how that affects their productivity." And Dale said, "I like that idea." And he actually did it. I think he identified three national forests and one research station as pilots and they could request waivers of processes and procedure. Dale's promise to them was, "Anything that I can that is in my power to say, 'Yes, I can waive that,' I will. There are things that are going to be above my purview and some of those I'll fight for, but we'll see." And one of the interesting things was that in the process of beginning to send in requests for waivers, what a lot of the forests actually found that were involved in this is, they didn't even have to ask beyond themselves. Many of the things that they were doing and thought they were required to follow were of their own discretion. They didn't even have to ask up to a regional level much less to Dale to be exempted from them. So that was very interesting.

REINIER: It is interesting, yeah.

BECK: But I saw that as something that Dale was willing to take a risk to do in terms of internal management, to say, "Yeah, we'll really try that. We'll let go of some of our own perceptions of what processes and procedures we've got to follow." So, I thought that was quite interesting. And I think he did take an interest in state and private. I remember him going to the NASF meetings and meeting with the state foresters. I think he was the first chief I heard describe himself as sitting around the table with a group of other forestry leaders as opposed to "I'm the chief of the Forest Service and you guys are the state foresters." I remember him making that point of saying, "I'm one of 50 or so forest organization leaders around this table."

REINIER: Interesting. So it sounds like his management style is beginning to change more in the direction of some of the things that you were working with.

BECK: Well, I certainly saw some of that. People might react differently to that depending on who you did talk to. I think you know, of course, Dale himself did get caught in some political buzz saws and people had different opinions about how he was operating, who he was collaborating with or not. But I thoroughly enjoyed working with him. Especially as regards some of the internal things, I saw him as paying attention to some of the people issues. I

probably worked with him more in those kinds of arenas than on some of the resource issues that I know at later points in his career he found himself in some pretty stressful situations.

REINIER: Yeah. A lot of people, women that I've talked to, have found it a little difficult to work in the Washington office. Did you find that to be the case? Were there other women working there when you were working there?

BECK: There were beginning to be. I will say that probably this was the time period and some of it was that I moved into a more mainstream part of the Forest Service during that time or a mainstream kind of job. I do remember, well, a couple of ways I'll talk about it. When I first got to the Washington office--we talked earlier about being a young woman and doing a lot of the training and leading meetings--I can remember when I was first getting there I would tend to get reactions that were kind of like, I remember one time someone saying to me, "You know, it's so amazing that you're not just a woman, you're the youngest one here and you're leading the meeting." And it was a compliment. What I tended to get then were things that were like, "Gee, you've really gotten a long way despite the fact you're a woman." That was the nature of what came through sometimes.

But then when I did go into that staff assistant job in the deputy chief's office, several things were happening. One, it was a different time. It was an era of when the Forest Service was beginning to really start to look to promote women and I think was probably getting some pressure to from the department. "You just don't have women in 14 and 15[GS]-level jobs and certainly not SES." So there was starting to be a real emphasis on looking at promoting women. Also, for me, I had come out of these jobs like Organization Management Assistance and Administrative Management and doing the internal organization development work, again the touchy-feely stuff. I probably wasn't even noticed by a lot of people until I got to a relatively high level in the organization. Because I wasn't going up through those chairs that are the traditional ones and that people really compete for, and suddenly I found myself in a pretty plum, key job in that staff assistant job. Those were jobs where people wanted to go through there to get their ticket punched and get back out into a forest supervisor job or even a regional forester job. Out of some of them, mine wasn't quite at that level. And I remember feeling something very different when I moved into that job mostly from my male colleagues in some of those jobs. One of the things I remember that most kind of shocked me when I went in the first day was I had barely gotten my chair warm and folks were going, "Well, what do you think your next move is going to be?"

REINIER: Okay.

BECK: And I wasn't thinking of it as a career move to go somewhere else.

REINIER: Yes.

BECK: But I also had the feeling there too that there certainly were people who, for what I think was the first time, maybe I wasn't aware of it, but for the first time I was certainly aware that there were some people who assumed I had gotten the job only because I was a woman. Whereas just a few years before I had been getting the feedback that was more like, "Gosh! You got here despite the fact that you're a woman." And part of that was the time and what had shifted. And the fact that people knew, yes, now the Forest Service is being asked to really consider promoting women. And some of it was I'd moved into a desirable, competitive, visible job.

REINIER: A-ha!

BECK: So, yeah. It was a little different then. Again, I don't remember feeling uncomfortable by it. Sometimes I'd be not necessarily angry but a little just irritated that they would think that what I was trying to do was steal their jobs or something. But it was different.

REINIER: So, this is where you moved into the Forest Service career orientation.

BECK: Yeah. And again, it was into a much higher position than I ever thought would be available to me in Forest Service. It was one that certainly, whether I was thinking about it yet at that time period or not, that was a jumping off place to some pretty significant career places if I wanted to go there.

REINIER: Some women have been troubled in the Washington office by the dichotomy between the white male Forest Service staff members and the African-American clerical staff. Did that bother you or did you have any difficulties with that?

BECK: Well, I certainly remember that, yeah. That was a lot of that feature there in a lot of those staffs and jobs, I guess probably based on the kind of the recruiting pool in Washington at that time for a lot of the clerical ranks. And that a lot of the staff, especially in some of those higher-level roles, were folks who'd come up through the chairs. At that time, because of who'd been in the chairs in previous years, it was very heavily white male. Beginning to change, but yeah. Yeah.

REINIER: So did you work closely with the clerical people in the Washington office?

BECK: Well, I did certainly in State and Private Forestry because, again, some of my role was a little bit of managing the staff for the deputy chief. So often I was working with the clerical group there. Certainly, because I was the key assistant to him, I worked a lot with his personal secretary and the secretary to the associate deputy chief.

REINIER: Did you like living in Washington?

BECK: Oh, yeah. Actually I did. I actually lived in Alexandria, but I found Washington to be a very exciting town.

REINIER: Yeah.

BECK: So, I enjoyed it. I liked the international feel to it. I liked the restaurants and the culture and, again, the nature of being around the Capitol and the dynamics and the stuff that went on there.

REINIER: Now, it's interesting. In this position where you are moving more into a career orientation in the Forest Service, and maybe we could say that glass ceiling is just, shall we say is getting a little thinner perhaps, you're receiving additional training. You are being groomed now; is that the case?

BECK: Yeah, yeah. I certainly remember going to things like the Management Policy Seminar, which was the Forest Service's really key and very good, has been--I think it's being retooled now--but it has always been a very, very good session for getting folks exposed to the political side of things, the legislative side, the politics, the Washington office dynamics.

REINIER: How did that work? Did you have a series of meetings with a group of people?

BECK: I know it's being kind of redone and updated now, so this is the way it was fifteen years ago.

REINIER: Yeah, how did it work for you?

BECK: It was a two-week session and it was somewhat competitive. It targeted folks at I think Grades 13 and 14-level, largely from the field. I think each region would get maybe a few slots. We always tried to get one or two state foresters into it also, which I think was good mix for them and us both. And so, it was a class of maybe 25 or 30 people. It would always start out up at Grey Towers, the National Historic Monument that was Gifford Pinchot's home, and was an introduction really to the legislative process, to Capitol Hill, to the Forest Service budgeting process, to the Washington office itself, to the different deputy areas. Usually there'd be some kick-off at Grey Towers and then folks would come into Washington for a couple weeks and have just a wide range of speakers that might include some current members of congress, might include members of the press, lobbyists, people who worked on Capitol Hill in various roles to talk about what goes on there. And then some time spent actually in the Washington office meeting with each deputy chief and their staff to find out about the program areas. So, it was just to me a very good exposure to the Washington office role basically for people who either were going to work there or, if they were working the field in a line job or a key staff job, sure needed to understand how those processes worked.

REINIER: Did you apply for that?

BECK: Yes, yes.

REINIER: And so you decided on your own that you wanted to do that?

BECK: Well, I think it was probably suggested to me by I think the associate deputy chief for state and private at the time as something I should do, but certainly I enjoyed it quite a bit. I think the other thing that you often find with that group is folks who go through it together in a class tend to build some relationship and know each other through the years as they go into other roles.

REINIER: That was in March of 1987, and you also went to a management development seminar in Oakridge, Tennessee the following year.

BECK: That was part of the management curriculum that the Office of Personnel Management provides. So, I went back to my roots. That was management training sponsored by OPM at the time.

REINIER: I see. And then you went to the Director's Young Executive Program.

BECK: That was a really unique opportunity.

[End Tape 2, Side B]

SESSION II, JUNE 11, 2002

Tape 3, Side A: Participating in the Director's Young Executive Program—Becoming Deputy Director for State and Private Forestry in the Northeastern Area—The Grey Towers National Historic Landmark—Working in a line position for the first time.

REINIER: Leigh, yesterday when we stopped taping we were talking about your really being groomed for advancement in the Forest Service. And we just began to talk about the Director's Young Executives Program.

BECK: Right, that was a real special opportunity I had. Maybe I'll just back up first. When we were talking about me being groomed, I don't know that I was being specially groomed more than other folks. A lot of the things we talked about, Management Policy Seminar and some of the other management training, I think, were things pretty much available to folks at the level I had gotten to at that time. At least I certainly never felt like I was being specifically groomed, but I was beginning to get those kind of opportunities that people who hit that level find available to them. So, I'd maybe frame it in that context.

REINIER: Uh-huh. Good.

BECK: Certainly also I think since I was working in the deputy chief's office, I probably had additional chances to get involved in some of those kind of training opportunities because I needed them to do the job I was in. So I think that was a factor too. The Director's Young Executive Program was actually initiated by the woman who was the director of the Office of Personnel Management [OPM] at the time that I participated in it. I am not remembering her name. She was, I think, relatively new at this time and she had wanted to develop a program to expose up-and-coming young people in a range of agencies again to some of the key figures in Washington. It wasn't similarly structured to the Management Policy Seminar, but in a similar way brought in speakers from various different cabinet agencies and parts of the government to address this multi-department group of relatively young folks who were in management positions.

The way I got involved with it is that I had done some work when I was in Administrative Management for the assistant secretary of administration, USDA [United States Department of Agriculture]. I'm trying to think if it was really teambuilding, some kind of management and work planning facilitation that I had done with his staff. And he, of course, was the contact for USDA when the notice of this program came out. Basically they were asking for one person from each department to participate in it. And so John Franke, who was the assistant secretary for administration at the time, had contacted our deputy chief for administration, Bill Rice, who I had also worked with, and asked Bill if there was someone in the Forest Service who might be good to participate in this program. Well, Bill thought they were in the process of designing it and he knew I had background in training and facilitation, and so he suggested me to John Franke from that standpoint, thinking I would have some skills to help design a program. Well, it turned out the program already was designed; they were looking for someone to go through the program, so I got to be the USDA representative to this program...

REINIER: ...Great!

BECK: ...which was a wonderful opportunity.

REINIER: Yeah.

BECK: I don't remember how long it lasted, maybe over a period of eight to ten weeks, or maybe it was scheduled every other week, but we would go in just for maybe a couple of hours usually over at the OPM office in the director's conference room. We would have speakers like Caspar Weinberger, and I think Trent Lott spoke to us. There were a number of other folks who were in positions either in the agencies or in congress who were active in things going on in Washington at that time, who would come and speak to us either about their agency or about what was going on in congress or committees they were on. Two of the sessions that I unfortunately missed... Sometimes they were scheduled without much lead-time because they would try to line up opportunities and they weren't always able to contact all the participants in time for them to get there, especially if you were on travel. But one session was held at the White House in the Oval Office, and the group had a chance to go in and meet folks there; they met with the chief of staff at the time. I think that was [U.S. Senator] Howard Baker.

REINIER: Is this the first [President George H. W.] Bush administration?

BECK: Yes. There was another one that was held over at the Supreme Court that I also missed. So I missed a couple of those field trip type sessions, unfortunately, but was able to go to the others. It was a good chance, again, to not only hear from some of the people who were in high-level positions in government at the time, but have interaction with them and with people from other departments around government.

REINIER: Did you learn things that you didn't already know?

BECK: I don't remember learning things in terms of the basics of what the different agencies did that were new and different, but I think what was fascinating to hear was to hear the people in the really influential roles talking about the kinds of things they were involved with and the kind of decisions they were having to make day-to-day. That was the part of it that was unique, that you couldn't really learn somewhere else, was to be able to hear people talk about what their jobs were really like. So that was a fascinating opportunity.

REINIER: Oh, it sounds fascinating.

BECK: Yeah.

REINIER: Now, this is 1987-88. Do you think that women are being singled out at this time and given advantages so they can advance?

BECK: Well, I certainly think there was a focus on helping women get into positions where they could advance, where they could compete for jobs that really they had not been seen as candidates for that much in the past or maybe hadn't been in a position to apply for them. Whether they were being given special grooming or not is hard to say or if they had more opportunities, but they were certainly having opportunities, yes. And there was focus on being sure that there were women in the candidate pools for the jobs that were coming up at higher levels in the organization.

REINIER: Now, had you joined the Society of American Foresters [SAF]?

BECK: At that point I had not. I think I did not join SAF until I think about 1990; for some reason that date sticks in my head. I know I had left Washington. I was in the Northeastern Area, I think, at the time I first became a member of SAF.

REINIER: Okay, we'll wait then until you get there.

BECK: Yeah.

REINIER: Was there any particular person that was helping you or mentoring you?

BECK: I don't really remember having a mentor at that time. Jackie, it may be because I was so glad to be where I was at that point I wasn't really thinking about where am I going and how do I need to prepare myself for my next step in that sense. I was certainly aware there were other opportunities out there. I probably talked some with Al West about what I needed to do in terms of my development. I do remember at one point talking with him about maybe having an opportunity to do a shadowing assignment with someone up in the Northeastern Area and that never materialized. I had wanted to do a shadowing role with either the area director, or the deputy area director. Just interestingly--which was not my plan at the time when I'd been interested in that--the job I did end up getting when I left Washington was the deputy area director job in the Northeast. So I was certainly interested in what those jobs were like. I don't think I was ever planning how did I need to develop myself specifically to get that job, but it was interesting that at one time I had wanted to do a shadowing assignment.

REINIER: What is a shadowing assignment?

BECK: That's an opportunity for someone to actually be with a leader who's in a particular position for a period of time--it might be a day, might be a week--and simply go through their day with them, like you're a shadow. Attend meetings with them, see what their day is like, what kind of decisions they're making, who they're dealing with. Really to be the fly on the wall, in a sense, with them for a time period to see what the nature of the job is and what someone in that type of a leadership position does.

REINIER: That's interesting. Yeah. Now where was Bruce Courtright?

BECK: Bruce had retired actually before I came back into State and Private Forestry. There was a major buy-out opportunity in the Forest Service; I believe it was 1986. No, buy-out isn't right. I think this was just an early retirement opportunity. There were some buy-outs later in the Forest Service. But around the time that I moved back into State and Private, because it was also at the time that some of the reorganization was going on when the administrative management staff was disbanded, Bruce decided to take the early retirement opportunity and go out and do some consulting on his own. So he left at that point, as did a number of other folks I knew in the Forest Service.

REINIER: Is there anything else that you'd like to add about your time in Washington?

BECK: Oh, I, can't really think of anything right now. We've covered a lot. It was an interesting place to work.

REINIER: It was such an exciting job.

BECK: Well, certainly it was one that gave me a chance to get involved in a lot of things I would not otherwise have had a chance to do or be exposed to.

REINIER: Yeah.

BECK: I felt fortunate.

REINIER: You mentioned just a few minutes ago that you did then become the deputy director for the Northeastern Area for State and Private Forestry.

BECK: Yes.

REINIER: How did you move to that position?

BECK: Well, I applied for the job when it became open when the deputy director there retired. I was interested in it. I think I may have partly surprised myself that I was thinking of that type of job. It was a line job, real different change for me. I had been interested in the Northeastern Area because it was the only really still focused field organization for State and Private Forestry at the time. Certainly, when I was working in Washington there was a lot of interest and activity in what went on in the Northeastern Area. The other parts of the country--now I have worked in all three of the major areas with State and Private Forestry in the field--and they're all structured a little bit differently, probably for good reasons in terms of meeting the needs of those different parts of the country. But with the Northeast, there was, as I said, this separate organization structure that was headquartered in Pennsylvania. The regional office that dealt with the National Forest System programs that covered the same twenty states is located in Milwaukee, so they're actually not even in the same geographic area.

REINIER: Does the Northeastern Area include what we call the Midwest?

BECK: Yes, it actually does. It's twenty states in the Northeast and Midwest and also includes the District of Columbia for delivery of these programs.

REINIER: Big area.

BECK: Yeah, yeah. Another reason I was probably interested in the job at that time was there was a relatively new director of the area, Michael [T.] Rains, who's someone I had known when I worked in Atlanta and in Washington and was someone I saw as someone who was going to put a lot of energy and life in the program up there and someone I would enjoy working with. Certainly Michael has been a real major leader in the State and Private Forestry program, was at that time and has continued to be. So that might have been one of the reasons too that I decided I wanted to apply for the deputy job at that point.

REINIER: Now, where's the regional office located?

BECK: The regional office is in Milwaukee.

REINIER: You said Milwaukee, that's right.

BECK: Yeah, and the State and Private office actually, at the time, was located in the town of Broomall and then moved to Radnor during the time I was there. Recently it's moved again to Newtown Square, Pennsylvania. So it kind of has hopped around the map, but all in the far flung suburbs of Philadelphia.

[Interruption]

REINIER: What were your responsibilities as deputy director?

BECK: Well, the deputy role there really is one that's something of an alter ego to the director. As you can imagine, it's a big program working with twenty states. We had all the parts of the State and Private mission area there, the Cooperative Forestry programs, the program that now

Figure 3: Leigh Beck in her Northeastern Area Office, Radnor, Pennsylvania, c. 1990.

is called Forest Health Protection. When I first went there it might have still been called Forest Pest Management, but soon became Forest Health Protection, dealing with insects and diseases and the broader picture of what makes for a healthy forest. And then we also had the Cooperative Fire program, working with the states and their fire programs. The National Forest System fire staff was located in Milwaukee with the regional office, but we had the Cooperative Fire program. So, I worked with the directors for those three staffs. They actually reported to me. Of course, that was essentially reporting to the director and the deputy as a block, but I provided a lot of supervision to them.

I, with Michael, shared roles in being contacts with the state foresters around the twenty states. I represented the area with a number of subregional groups and coalitions. One I particularly remember was the Lake States Forestry Alliance, which was up in the lake states area. Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota were the three states involved. Members of that group included private sector nonprofits, industry representatives, the three states involved, and then line officers from the National Forest System, Forest Service Research, and State and Private Forestry. I think Michael was technically the member of that, but I was really his representative to that group and had a good opportunity to work with them and enjoyed it. And then I worked with some of the other subregions of the area there in trying to get various types of coalitions and groups established, and that was also something I enjoyed.

REINIER: I saw the Mid-Atlantic Forest Resources Coalition.

BECK: Right.

REINIER: Was that one of those?

BECK: Yes, that was a group that really was just forming when I got there. The state foresters that worked with it, that were part of the states involved with that, were wanting to develop a coalition to kind of look at sharing resources, common issues. It was a slightly different kind of body, I think, than the Lake States Forestry Alliance in terms of its goals, but I helped them establish and get that group initially formed.

REINIER: Were they involved in planning then? Were those basically planning projects?

BECK: I think there probably was planning involved in it. I think a lot of what they were trying to do was identify what are some issues that we especially face in our part of the country. Certainly in an area like the Northeastern Area that covers, as we said, New England and the Midwest and the Mid-Atlantic there're different subregional issues. So I think a lot of that was looking at identifying those issues for them, maybe looking at how to share resources and partner across state boundaries and identifying funding needs, those types of things.

REINIER: The Grey Towers National Historic Landmark was right there, wasn't it?

BECK: Right. It was in northern Pennsylvania.

REINIER: I'd like to hear more about that.

BECK: Well, of course, Grey Towers was the summer home of Gifford Pinchot and is in a beautiful place up in northern Pennsylvania. It was where Gifford, as the first chief of the Forest Service and also during the time too that he was governor of Pennsylvania--he played a lot of pretty influential roles--lived there at least part of the time. I don't know if that was his full-time residence. I know the family later used it as a summer residence. I'm not remembering all my history--Carol [Severence] would be upset with me--but certainly it was his residence at least for

parts of the year and is a beautiful place. He came from a quite wealthy family. It's a beautiful old home on some extensive grounds. A lot of the trees that are on those grounds are ones he planted himself. As a young man he developed an interest in forestry and went to France for his forestry education and brought it back, really brought forestry to the United States in a major way. He hosted many meetings and gatherings at his home of influential people, and probably there was a lot of strategy and policy hatched around Grey Towers at various times. So being there you have a real sense of the history of it. I don't recall exactly when it became a national historic monument. I'm thinking it was in the early '60s because I believe John Kennedy dedicated it when he was president. And the family at that point essentially donated it to the Forest Service to be managed as a national historic landmark.

REINIER: So it is managed by the Forest Service?

BECK: Yes, yes. There's a director of Grey Towers who is a Forest Service employee, and there is a staff there that do some interpretive work. That's actually where Carol [Severence] worked when I first knew her. She was a historian there on site at Grey Towers. And then there're people who do work with the grounds and people who host programs there. There are a number of activities in the local community that are available to people around the country in terms of that site as both an interpretive site and also a place that often hosts conferences or other types of events.

REINIER: Now, is there a Pinchot Institute for Conservation Studies? Is that located there?

BECK: It's not really headquartered there. It's affiliated with it. It's kind of a sponsoring group that's a nonprofit.

[Interruption]

REINIER: As deputy director you really were working very closely with the director. Was your earlier training valuable to you in management and personnel in this new line position?

BECK: Well, definitely there was a lot that I could draw on out of my training and work in organization development. I think though it's always true that it's very different to be in one of those roles than to learn about them or to even work with other people who are in them. And I do remember having time periods I wanted to throw everything I thought I'd learned before out the window because it wasn't working so well. I actually have found in my career that, now that I've done it several times, it's been very valuable to me to go back and forth between working in management from the standpoint of a consultant and a helper to managers and to actually being a manager or, in this case, a line officer, because each time I learn something I can take back to the other role. And while I'd done some program management before, this was the first time I had been in anything even comparable to a line officer role. So I think there were things that you could only learn by doing it that I had the opportunity to learn when I was up there.

REINIER: How was it different to be a line officer?

BECK: A major piece of that is, I think, was the real responsibility for decision making, especially in the Forest Service that has only a few line levels. There really is a lot of the buck stops here kind of authority that's vested in those roles in terms of policy decisions, budget decisions, people looking to you to have the answers. That can certainly be heady, but I think it also carries a lot of sense of real responsibility. There were times that it felt like some pretty heavy responsibility in terms of the things that you felt accountable for, and the need to be making the right decisions, and dealing with all of both the natural resource issues and the people issues that go into making good decisions.

REINIER: What was it like to be a woman in a line position at that time? Making these decisions?

BECK: Yeah. I think that there were various components to that. There were some ways it was uncomfortable, especially when I first went into the role. Probably the hardest part of that was working with some of the staff that directly reported to me, who were not used to working with a woman in a line position. And wondering what they thought about me, wondering if they wondered why I got the job. So some of the discomfort I probably created for myself in terms of wondering how I was perceived by my immediate staff, all of whom were white males and actually, I believe, all older than I was at the time, at least by a few years, and wondering what their perceptions of me were. I also knew I was in a new and different role and I wasn't doing everything perfectly because a lot of it I was trying out for the first time.

I think, interestingly though, in some other settings I was quite comfortable with it. I think maybe because I was used to being, through most of my Forest Service career, either the only or one of only a few women in the room I, interestingly enough, was maybe even more comfortable working with our clients and partners, the state foresters, in that role than I was working internally in the organization. It's funny, I hadn't really thought about that until you asked, and again it may be because I was quite accustomed to that. From my very first job in the Forest Service I had worked with state foresters in a consulting role and other kinds of roles being up in front of them at meetings. I knew that I had their respect and I found it quite easy to work with them in that role.

Maybe the discomfort was more internally and probably because, at that point in time, I was one of the first women at that grade level, and certainly at that grade level in a line position. And I knew people were all watching me and wondering how I would perform. And I also knew I was pretty green at it.

REINIER: Did your staff cooperate with you?

BECK: I would say they definitely did. I ended up having some really good support from some of the assistant directors who were at the group that reported directly to me. Even though I'm sure some of them did look a little skeptically at me coming in, I found that they supported me. They helped me get up to speed while I was there. Some of them, especially, that I did work with over a period of years, I think we ended up having very good working relationships. But certainly at the very outset I felt some discomfort with that.

REINIER: Were you the first woman line officer the Northeastern Area had had?

BECK: Yes, yes. In fact, as I said too, at that time, while there were some other women line officers in the Forest Service, I think there were very few anywhere at that level.

REINIER: What was your level? You were a GS...?

BECK: That was a GS-15 level.

REINIER: 15.

BECK: And so it was very unusual for staff and other people to see a woman in that position at that time. Now that changed very shortly thereafter. I think even within the first year I was there, there were one or two women in Senior Executive Service that came on. It was the

beginning of that wave. So it was still a time that people were surprised to see you in that role. Yes, certainly, for the Northeastern Area it would have been the first time.

REINIER: And you were young, too. You were still quite young.

BECK: Yes, again, for that level of position. I was in my later thirties. I think I was 37, so I wasn't a spring chicken, but yeah. In terms of typical ages of being in that kind of position [in the Forest Service] and certainly being younger than many of the staff that I supervised was still a factor, I'm sure.

REINIER: Well, now, at that point, you were still working out a management style, in a line position anyway. How did that work? What kind of a management style were you able to work out in this position?

BECK: Well, I think my style was probably also different from what might have been the expected or the customary or the most often seen style for a line officer at that time in the Forest Service. I think I was much more people oriented in the sense of involving people in decisions.

[End Tape 3, Side A]

Tape 3, Side B: Developing a management style—Implementing programs in Urban and Community Forestry and Forest Stewardship—Working with Native Americans—Working on detail as Acting Assistant Director for Administration for the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station—The Consent Decree in Region 5—Working on processes to implement the Consent Decree—Assessment of the Consent Decree.

REINIER: On the other side of the tape we were talking about your management style in this position.

BECK And certainly at this point I was still developing it in terms of a management style for a line officer. Again I'd managed programs but certainly not in a line role. And I'd led teams. I'd actually really never supervised people before, so it was quite unusual to be at that level before having a direct supervisory role. So I was learning a lot about how to do that and taking what had been the style I'd had in other jobs and trying to translate it into being a line officer at that level in the organization. So a lot of that had to deal with balancing decisiveness versus involvement of people. When was the point to close on a decision where you had enough input and enough opportunity for people to feel that they'd been considered and involved, and when it was time to close on a decision and move on. Getting a feel of who are the right people that needed to be involved in different things. That involved both making the decisions and the fact the work we do in State and Private is very much involved with partnerships, and knowing that often a good decision in a program better involve all of the right partners or you wouldn't have a strong collaborative approach. So I do think that the style that I was developing and have continued to develop through the years is one that leans very heavily towards collaboration and partnerships, which is partly the nature of the work I have done and also probably partly my natural style in terms of having a lot of value for people's input and feeling that things work better if people feel they've been involved, and that you usually come out with a better decision also.

REINIER: Was this in conflict with the more traditional style in the Forest Service of decision making?

BECK: I think it was different. It probably was not the typical style at the time. I'd seen a range of management styles during my time in the organization, so I don't think there was one style. But I do think the more traditional Forest Service style's been much more, I hate to use the word autocratic, but I hear it used a lot. More the boss makes the decisions and that runs down the chain of command and people jump and things like that. And I think the Forest Service came out of a history of that. Again, we talked earlier about it being kind of quasi-military in a sense of its structure and was designed to be that way in terms of the line officer structure and the chain of command, which can be very important in some parts of our mission. An example of that is the fire organization where you sure better have a real tight chain of command and people who are going to respond to orders. That's not one of those situations that you get everybody together and say, "Let's see how we all feel about attacking this fire." [Laughter] You do it. So I think there's some reasons that some of that style has been there in the Forest Service and there's some places in the Forest Service it's still very appropriate. But I do feel that increasingly, not only in our State and Private parts of our mission, but in many of the things the Forest Service does in working with communities near the national forest, and with our publics who care about what's happening on their public lands, that we're needing to have, as an agency, a much more collaborative, involving style. Not just internally with our employees, but with our publics and the communities that we serve.

REINIER: Now, were other people uncomfortable with your style?

BECK: I'm sure that they were. I think there probably were people who would have liked to have seen me just make a lot of quick decisions. That could have ranged from employees who weren't used to being asked for their input into a decision. Again, I don't know that partners were uncomfortable with that. I think they expected to be asked. My style was very different from Michael's [Rains] in a lot of ways. I think we initially made a very good team partly because of our differences. I brought different things into the mix, and probably more the orientation around the people side of things. Later, there were times that we were in conflict over that and that our styles did not mesh that well. And I'm sure there were many times Michael would have liked to see me be more decisive and less involving in terms of taking time to come to a decision.

[Interruption]

REINIER: In this line position, did you feel that, as a woman, that you had access to informal networks of information?

BECK: I think I did. I'm sure there were some that I wasn't part of or that I didn't even know about. There were networks of people that I talked to and who knew me. There were, I'm sure, lots of informal systems and connections and communication lines that were going on around me that I might have been missing. I know there were networks that Michael had that sometimes I was not a part of. There were just different information loops, so I think I could usually find information if I needed it. Probably there were things that I missed because I didn't know they were out there.

REINIER: As deputy director, were you involved in all the aspects of the program?

BECK: I was from time to time. That varied. As I mentioned initially, the role as we initially defined it was as an alter ego to the director. There were some major chunks of time while I was there that I had the lead on special initiatives or projects that really became my focus and took me out of some of the other aspects of the programs. One example of that would be when the 1990 Farm Bill was passed and there were some new major programs in State and Private Forestry that needed to be developed for implementation. They were under the umbrella of the president's America the Beautiful Initiative. There were new programs in Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Stewardship, that built on previous programs, but really were venturing into some new areas. And so when those programs came out, I had the lead for developing the area's implementation plan for those programs. And that really became a full-time job for me for a while, working with a team both internally and including state partners and someone from our research branch to look at how we would implement those programs in the Northeastern Area.

REINIER: One part of your work that seems really fascinating to me is your work with Native Americans. Was that an aspect of your job in the Northeastern area?

BECK: Actually, really near the end of the time I was in the Northeastern Area, I got involved in a very interesting project dealing with tribes. It was an idea that was initiated by one of the forest supervisors who worked in the region at the time. I forget what forest he was with. His name was Jack Blackwell and, interestingly, he's now the regional forester out here in Region 5, but at the time he was on one of the national forests in the Midwest. Jack approached me at some joint meeting with the region and State and Private and said, "You know, we should look at pulling together folks in a conference or a workshop to really look at how our programs and the things that we're doing in the Forest Service, both in research and on the national forests and State and Private, how those programs are available to tribes and how we can interact with them."

At this point in time, now, the present, I think the whole area of tribal relations and working with tribes is a very big thing on the Forest Service's screen of awareness. I think you didn't hear it talked about as much then. Certainly, we did work with them and they would be eligible for many of our State and Private Forestry programs. Certainly, they always had a lot of issues and concerns around what was happening on national forest land since much of it had been traditional tribal land at one time. But people weren't talking about it as much as they are now, and Jack was suggesting that we try to get folks together to talk about just that type of thing.

And so we got a group together to try to plan the workshop that included some tribal leaders and some folks from the national forests, some from research, from State and Private, and we began to talk about what we'd like to do in a workshop like that. Somewhere in the early part of this, Jack got a job in Washington and went back East, but a group of us continued to work on this. Just the process of designing the workshop was a major learning experience in working across cultures. We realized that even the way that we in the Forest Service would go about designing a workshop and the way some of the tribal leaders and members that we were working with would do that were quite different. There were differences probably in our pace; for example, I would see the Forest Service folks wanting to jump right into designing the agenda and get something on paper quick where a lot of the tribal members said, "Let's pull back a little. Let's talk about this more. Let's get to know each other better and be more aware of what it is we are wanting to accomplish with this." And we worked back and forth probably across our cultural styles of putting a meeting together for over a period of several months, which I think was a very powerful experience. And we did come out, I think, with a design for a workshop that was quite effective. And so that to me was a significant experience that was near the end of the years that I was up in the Northeast. I remember working both across those programs in the Forest Service and with the tribal partners in a way that felt very good at that time.

REINIER: What particular tribes were you working with?

BECK: Well, I know the Chippewa tribe was certainly was one of the tribes up in that part of the country. I don't know if I remember which other specific ones were involved with that workshop, but they would have been the lake-area tribes in generally the lake states, Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin, that area.

REINIER: Fascinating.

BECK: It was. It was quite interesting.

REINIER: Now, while you were in the Northeastern Area, you did go on a detail as acting assistant director for administration for the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station. That was in 1991. What were your duties in that position and why did you go on that detail?

BECK: Well, the Northeastern Station there, which is part of the Research branch of the Forest Service and the Northeastern Area for State and Private Forestry, were co-located in the same headquarters office, and the administrative staffs that served both the station and the area reported to the station director [Denver Burns]. So the assistant director for administration was the key member of his [the station director's] management team that supervised all of the administrative functions: the human resources, financial management, budget, acquisitions, and all of the administrative functions for both field organizations, the State and Private and the Research. That position became vacant at one point while I was there. At first, it seems like there were some short-term acting assignments of people filling in. I'm fuzzy in terms of whether the incumbent, the person who'd been in that job [Christine Pytel], had left permanently for another job or was just gone on extended assignment herself because it seems there were some

short-term fill-ins. But then the station director and Michael as the area director asked me if I would take that role on for I think it was about a four-month period, maybe not quite that long, to provide some consistency in leadership to the administrative staffs while that position was vacant. So that was an interesting change of pace in terms of the nature of the programs that I was managing, since these were the administrative support programs dealing with the issues for both Research and State and Private on the personnel side, on the financial side, and just was an interesting opportunity too to work with different group of people for awhile.

REINIER: So it was mostly an administrative position?

BECK: Administrative in the sense of the nature of the work of those staffs, yes, it was the administrative side of the organization in terms of the internal functions of the organization and the programs that supported those.

REINIER: And so what kind of research was being done at the station? Was it, for example, scientific research mostly that was being done?

BECK: Yes. The Research component of the Forest Service is a scientific branch. They do a range of research in all of the program areas that we work with whether it's fire-related research, research related to almost any of our programs, timber and vegetation management. At that time under that particular research station there was a small unit that did research in urban and community forestry that was in part of the area, which has become, I think, a bigger focus now. There're several units that work with that program now in the Forest Service. But really anything crossing any of the natural resource programs that the Forest Service works with, the Research branch does have that mission to do scientific research to further our knowledge and ability to provide good service to the public in any of those areas.

REINIER: During this time period you also came out to California for a while to work with the consent decree.

BECK: Yes. This was at a time that the consent decree... I don't know if we've talked on this tape about what that was, Jackie, have we?

REINIER: Well, let's do talk about it a little bit.

BECK: Okay. This actually was a court-ordered consent decree that had been in place in Region 5 of the Forest Service, that's the Pacific Southwest region and the Pacific Southwest Research Station. I forget the exact date it started but it was in the '80s.

REINIER: I think it was '83 when the new plan...

BECK: ...Right. Right.

REINIER: ...was delivered by the judge that had to be implemented.

BECK: Yes, and the consent decree was a court decision based on a class action lawsuit that actually initiated in the Pacific Southwest Research Station, but was done as a class action suit on behalf of all women in both the research station and the region at the time. The case it was based on had been a situation, and my details are a little fuzzy on this, but I think it was issues over preferential hiring and women not really being given the opportunities for advancement into higher-level positions. We're talking about the timeframe now that was the early '90s, and, as you say, this consent decree had been in place for, at that point, at least eight years. It'd gone through a lot of years. There were some early on findings of noncompliance on the part of the

Forest Service and the USDA. There was a court-appointed monitor who worked with the region and the station over a number of years to try to help assure that the agreements in the consent decree, which did require the Forest Service to do some very specific things, were being carried out and that there was progress being made in terms of preparing women to be in these kinds of jobs.
I did deal with providing developmental opportunities and chances for women to have experiences that would help prepare them better. There was quite a lot to it and it had been going on for quite a long time by the early '90s. It was just about at the winding up stage then.

There was a task group of people from around the Forest Service who were asked to come out and be part of various teams that would look at how do we both wrap this up and, in a sense, institutionalize some of it. What do we put in place to assure that the gains that had been made under the consent decree and while there were some very, very specific court-mandated programs and activities in place, how to assure that the progress that had been made would not be lost and that some of the things that the Forest Service had learned could be continued. That some of the things that were in some of those agreements that had been effective tools for diversifying the workforce would continue to be used. And good processes would remain in the region that would continue to make it a place that supported diversity, not just in terms of women but diversity across the board in terms of the workforce.

And so I was asked to come out and be part of that group, specifically to help lead a part that was going to be looking at, well, there were several parts of it. One was exit interviews. How do we gather the information from folks leaving the organization about what their experience in the Forest Service was, why they left. We did quite a bit of analysis of some existing interview data and looked at how do we set up a system that's going to be useful in the future. Another part dealt with developing a sponsorship program for new employees coming into the organization. How do you bring someone in, especially someone who may be coming in at a midpoint in their career from another organization, and help them get up to speed quickly on what the Forest Service is about, what is the Forest Service culture like, what do I need to know about the Forest Service. And we were looking at a sponsorship kind of program that would somewhat formalize that process. And there were several other pieces I think that my team looked at. One dealt with childcare and some other kind of training aspects. So, that was one of several other kind of teams looking at the various human resource and other processes that had been in place in the region, and how to glean the best out of what had been learned and put things in place that would help the region transition out of the consent decree but into continuing to move forward with workforce diversity issues.

REINIER: What was your assessment of how the consent decree was affecting the Forest Service?

BECK: It had a range of effects. Certainly, it was a very difficult experience for the region to go through. Initially, I think, people didn't expect that it was going to be enforced as strongly as it was. There were some very specific things in the settlement agreement and in the first few years the region was found in noncompliance by the court. The judge who looked at that felt the Forest Service hadn't taken it seriously enough. I think that shocked a lot of people. There was certainly a lot of reaction, I think, on the part of men in the region, especially white males who felt that the consent decree actually was setting up a system that was going to give women extremely preferential opportunities. I think many men who were in the region at that time felt their careers were essentially over because the consent decree even had some real specific targets for hiring. I think many of them looked at that and said, "Our day is over at least in this region and maybe in the Forest Service." So, there were a lot of dynamics that were created out of that that were painful for the region and probably to some degree are not entirely gone now.

I think also there were reactions from other parts of the Forest Service. I think a lot of people looked at Region 5 and said, "I don't want to go work there." And that included women. I remember feeling this way at one point, "Gee, I don't want to go to Region 5. It's hard enough having people think you only got here because you're a woman, and in Region 5 that perception is magnified many times." So I think there were other parts of the country that became afraid that something similar would happen to them as what had happened with the consent decree. So there was a lot of stuff that was stirred up from it. A lot of that was very painful. And as I said, I think in some ways there's still stuff that is not entirely healed from that. Actually, right now the region has a new settlement agreement on another class action complaint that also was filed on behalf of nonsupervisory women in the region that dealt with issues of backlash from that initial consent decree. So that in itself is evidence that the effects of that time period are still things that the region is experiencing and living with and that individual employees in the region are dealing with.

REINIER: Do you think women, especially in supervisory positions in the Forest Service, have to deal with this issue that many people perhaps think that they wouldn't be in that position if they weren't a woman?

BECK: I think that that perception is out there still. I think it's certainly less than it was in the earlier years when it was more unusual to see women in those roles. And I think there certainly are many examples out there now of very competent women in line and staff jobs alike. And so I think that the just because you're a woman part is not as widespread as it was. I do think that probably there are a lot of woman who experience, and it's probably valid in a lot of cases, maybe more scrutiny like, "You better be pretty damn good or we are gonna' know that you didn't deserve that job." And I do think that sometimes women are criticized for their mistakes based on their gender or a supposed lack of experience. They may have had just as much experience as an incompetent man who got the job, but if they are an incompetent woman, it is maybe more likely to be blamed on their gender. And, of course, we know there are incompetent women as well as incompetent men all over the place.

I very early on mentioned Edie Seashore who was a mentor of mine in the organization development field, who we worked with on the Changing Roles of Women and Men workshop. I remember being struck by something Edie said once in a planning meeting. There were a group of us who were designing a workshop that would partly deal with issues of women in the workplace, and we were brainstorming what would be the goals that we want as women or the things that we want to be trying to accomplish. I remember one woman speaking very eloquently about our need for excellence, that we have to be at the top of our game. Excellence in everything we do is really important to show that women can be competent. And Edie's take on that was, "Let's think of that another way. What we really are striving for is when a mediocre woman has the same chance as a mediocre man to get a job." [Laughter] And that always struck me. It wasn't about we have to be better; we can't let anything slip. What we really want to accomplish is where whatever your abilities are, whether you are at the absolute top of your game or somewhere in the middle of the pack or maybe even further down, that at least you've got the same fighting chance as someone of another gender or another ethnic group or another race, that really equality is where we have the same chance as others of our own ability, not that either group has the edge.

REINIER: Excellent. So then you decided to come out to Region 5 in 1992. What prompted you to make that change?

BECK: Well, I actually had been looking for a change for a little while. I was feeling ready to leave the Northeastern Area. I wasn't really sure I wanted to continue being in a line officer position. I felt that I could do a line job, but I didn't feel like it was the best match for me or that

I enjoyed it as much as some of the other work I'd done. So, I'd actually been looking for a while for a different fit for me. I looked at some possible opportunities in Washington or other regions. And while I was out in California doing that work with the consent decree, I happened to get engaged to someone I'd been seeing who lived on the West coast. So that made my decision for me rather quickly that California would be a place I would like to at least consider coming. And I did actually move out to California on a temporary basis, and then was asked after I was out here to do a detail with the State and Private Forestry staff in the region, and then eventually was offered a permanent job on that staff.

REINIER: Yes, you did the detail as a deputy director again.

BECK: Well, it was a different position. It wasn't the same type of job as the deputy area director. I don't know if there was a formal title to it that was a deputy, but essentially, the woman who was at that time the director of the State and Private Forestry staff, which is the job I now hold, asked if I would come work with her and essentially function in a deputy role to her. She was looking for some support and help. She originally had come into the Forest Service actually from another agency.

[End Tape 3, Side B]

Figure 4: Leigh Beck at the Atlanta Summer Olympics, checking out urban tree planting projects by Trees Atlanta.

Tape 4, Side A: Moving to California—Working on detail in Region 5, supervising Cooperative Forestry programs in State and Private Forestry—Urban and Community Forestry in Los Angeles after the Rodney King riots—Rural Community Assistance programs in the Northwest—Tribal Relations with Native Americans—Conservation Education.

REINIER: Leigh, we were talking about your detail, when you first came to Region 5 in 1992, and you were working with a woman who was director...

BECK: ...Right.

REINIER: ...of State and Private Forestry in this region.

BECK: That's correct. And I think what I was starting to say was that Jean Hall, who was the woman, had recently come into the Forest Service from the Tennessee Valley Authority. She had actually been looking for some help doing strategic planning with her staff out here, and I think had approached our Washington office at some point asking for that. I think at some point along the line, too, she was wanting to have someone come and do some work with her who had a stronger grounding in some of the Cooperative Forestry programs in particular. The staff out here included all of the Cooperative Forestry programs and the Forest Health Protection programs, the Forest Pest Management, but especially on the Cooperative Forestry side I think Jean was feeling the need for someone to provide some leadership to those programs and finding that it was difficult for her in her role to be hands on with all those individual programs. And so at some point I think I had already come out here to be with my fiancé and someone, probably Al West in the Washington office, had mentioned to Jean that I was out here and might be a good person to come help her with some of that and with some of the workload.

So she approached me about doing a detail with her and at that time I was really ready to get back to work. I had taken a few months off trying to figure out what my next steps were between getting married and maybe changing career direction and things like that. But I was pretty antsy, I think, to get back into doing something at that time and so it was kind of a good fit. I did have a background through the organization development work in strategic planning. So that was what Jean and I worked out, that I would take the lead on the strategic planning for the staff, would also take on the supervision of the Cooperative Forestry program managers, and would act as a back-up or deputy to her for awhile. So that's what I did for actually about seven months when I came in on that detail.

Then I think Jean had decided that she really did need that additional position, supervising the Co-op Forestry programs. The other major program area, the Forest Pest Management program, was a much larger program and there was someone in what was essentially an assistant director position for that program. So I think what Jean was looking for--even though there were a number of separate Cooperative Forestry programs, they were mostly one-person programs and those program managers were at a lower organization grade level than the Forest Pest Management program--so essentially she was seen setting up a second assistant director position that would be the counterpart of the Forest Pest Management assistant director. She did eventually create that job and offered it to me. So that was how I permanently came into Region 5. It was a slightly different role than what the detail had been, but then we had a group there and became a management team of three between Jean and the two of us as assistant directors. So that was my move to California. [Laughing]

REINIER: Well, I think the program sounds fascinating and I'd like to know a little bit more about those and the kind of things that you did in them. For example, this Urban and Community Forestry, is that the one in which you worked with people on the Angeles National Forest?

BECK: Yes. And let me just kind of generally describe that program first and then talk specifically about some of the projects in the L.A. area. That program is designed to help communities of all sizes. There are some components of it that really look at major urban areas, but it's really designed to be able to help communities of any size become involved with their natural resources within the city limits or the community. It's not focused on wildland forestland, but essentially on the forest ecosystem, the trees, the water, the urban wildlife that actually is part of a city. Sometimes people don't really think of a town or a city as having an ecosystem, or having a forest, but it does. Often cities, especially older cities, weren't really designed in a way that cared for that natural environment in the city. So this program was to both foster greater understanding that there is a part of our cities that is the natural world and also to get communities to take their own initiative and lead to care for that ecosystem. This program, again in partnership with the state forestry organizations--many of our programs are actually delivered in partnership with the state forestry organizations--this program was designed to try to get both grant dollars and technical assistance and educational opportunities to people in communities of all sizes to help them learn to care for their natural resources in their communities on a sustainable basis.

The kinds of projects that might be supported through it might be tree planning opportunities that involve school kids, or helping a community group develop their own non-profit organization that would be an ongoing group to work with urban forestry in their area. So it has a lot of flexibility, but again focused on the community involvement part of it as opposed to the Forest Service going and taking care of those urban trees, for example. So it's heavily involved with existing community groups and existing non-profit groups that are involved with urban forestry.

You asked specifically about the events in L.A. There was an opportunity that came partly through this program following the Rodney King riots that were right around the time I was first out here. The Forest Service did get some dollars that were targeted to that L.A. area actually in several different programs. The part that came through the Urban and Community Forestry program was targeted at L.A. inner city areas with a specific objective involving diverse community groups in the Urban and Community Forestry programs. There was like a one-time influx of grant dollars--I forget the amount but it was fairly substantial--that was specifically targeted to those inner L.A. communities. A lot of folks got involved and helped with that. I remember one of the things that we did to get the word out there to those diverse communities was the flyers that announced the community grants were done in, I believe, five different languages. So there was a real effort to say we want to reach the diverse and perhaps often underserved urban publics there. Again the range of groups that did participate in that program was pretty wide. An interesting piece of it that we did get involved with, that seemed to fit the needs of some of those communities, was establishment of urban gardens, which was a little bit of a stretch for this program. I'm talking about urban vegetable gardens.

REINIER: Yeah.

BECK: You're looking at communities where people are looking at even some subsistence off of their green spaces in the city. We probably stretched the definition of agro-forestry a little to do this, but urban agro-forestry to us seemed to make sense. If you've got a system that's involving trees along with other types of fruit-producing plants, you're looking at agro-forestry. So some of the projects that came in were looking at urban gardens and then involvement of the local

community of people in caring for and maintaining those gardens and harvesting fruits and vegetables from them, but also learning about the trees in the process, the trees that were a part of those gardens. One of the things that we learned from the people that we worked with down there who were members of some of those communities was I think the very healing kind of aspect sometimes for folks who've not done it of getting out and getting your hands in the dirt and caring for growing things. And so I think some of those programs have some benefits that were more than what initially met the eye in terms of greening the city. I think the actual title of the program was "Greening L.A." or something like that.

Now at the same time there were also some dollars that came down, I believe, through the recreation program of the Forest Service that went to the Angeles National Forest, which is right there in the backyard of the city, for something called "Opportunity L.A." It was basically targeted at bringing young people and kids out of those same inner city areas that were being served by the grant dollars, out on to the Angeles National Forest to get involved in clean-up projects and other things. To learn about the environment there and to be participating, helping, doing educational activities for other forest visitors and getting them involved in the national forest. What we did to work across those two programs was develop an initiative called "Green Link" that was looking at what's the link between the inner city urban environment and the national forest in its back yard. And how can the people who are living in the city but may be the primary visitors to this national forest, what can they learn in those places, in their own downtown community, in their own urban garden, and out on the national forest that can be linked up for them in terms of understanding and valuing their environment. So it was a special opportunity for a while.

REINIER: That's fascinating. And it's a place where the Forest Service really touches people's lives in a way that not very many people associate with it. It's quite remarkable.

BECK: I was starting to say in recent years, but it's been quite a few years now, there are a group of the national forests that have identified themselves as urban national forests because of their proximity to major urban areas. They are doing a lot of real looking at how do we, as the neighbors of major urban areas, what is different in terms of some of the ways we operate with those communities than out in a very rural area? How can we serve those urban populations?

REINIER: The population's become more diverse.

BECK: Oh, absolutely.

REINIER: They use the forest differently.

BECK: Right. Right.

REINIER: Another one of these Cooperative Forestry programs that seems to be very fascinating is the Rural Development program.

BECK: Right. Actually a lot of what we have done with that whole program area in this part of the country is relatively recent since the 1990 Farm Bill. It was actually in a different title of that farm bill, the Rural Development title, but it did put new focus on working with rural communities. There is a whole suite of programs called the Economic Action Programs. It's really the umbrella title. I want to clarify that because under it there are different components. There is Rural Development through Forestry that would actually help focus on economic opportunities through forestry in terms of developing forest industry. A special initiative that's not really under that program but related to it is what started out as the Timber Bridge Program back in the Northeast

that looked at how can we utilize timber better, replacing old bridges that had been metal, and uses of wood products.

Now there's another component of the Economic Action Programs that became very big in the Pacific Northwest, so it's one that we've been heavily involved with here. We work with the Rural Development component, too, but the big impact for us, especially when I was first in the region but also continuing, came through what is called the Rural Community Assistance program and specifically the Economic Recovery program. These things were tied to the dynamics in the Pacific Northwest that dealt with a downturn in the timber industry that initially was happening due to things starting with endangered species, Northern Spotted Owl, and issues over habitat. The forests of the Pacific Northwest that had been the major timber forest for so long found that their ability to produce timber was not just dropping but dropping off quite dramatically.

REINIER: Yes, especially in Region 6.

BECK: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. And it had major impacts, of course, on the rural communities, many of whom had their economies very closely tied to national forest timber production. The mills were there. People in the communities worked in the mills, so jobs were tied to that. So when the timber industry plummeted in that part of the country, these communities were in many cases really impacted heavily in terms of their sustainability. So the economic recovery programs, this was a component really of President [William Jefferson] Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan. He did come out and do a forest summit out here, and it came out with a forest plan that had several components, many dealing with the national forests themselves in terms of how they did continue to manage and have a sustainable program, but of course at a very different level. And then there was a lot of focus on involving communities.

The economic recovery component actually provided an opportunity to help those communities look at how they could diversify their economies, still tied to the natural resources that they were adjacent to, but away from the large timber industry whose days really were gone. The way that program operated, unlike many of our programs that are delivered through the state forestry organizations, this one really was delivered through the national forests. It was also tied into working with a number of other both federal and state agencies in terms of how are the different agencies working together to be sure their programs are serving these communities well.

So what our program did would first help communities develop what was called a community action plan, outlining their own objectives for "Here's the direction we'd like to go in terms of sustaining our economy or building it back up here." Then communities could apply through the national forest for grants to fund specific projects that were in their community action plans. Now where the multi-agency group came in, actually there's a regional one that covered all the Pacific West--Oregon, Washington, Northern California. But then each of those three states had a state Community Economic Revitalization Team [CERT] that had members from all the federal agencies who might be involved in rural development. It included the Forest Service, the Rural Development Agency, Small Business Administration and others. And the counterpart agencies through the state: Trade and Commerce in California, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. And then people at the county level, country supervisors and other members of the community, and local folks. These groups would meet, again to try to look at what do we really want to accomplish across these communities in the state. They also played a role in triaging projects that would come in because many times there would be projects and it wasn't really clear which agency could fund them the best. Sometimes there would be things the different agencies could pick up different pieces of. So this group really attempted to make that delivery a little bit easier for the communities, less confusing, more

one-stop shopping in a sense, by bringing those agencies together to say, "We're going to work on this together and decide what agency's the lead, but how do we work together to help this community accomplish what it wants to." That certainly was, I think, an exciting program, an exciting kind of way to begin working with communities and across organizational lines.

REINIER: And do you think that had some practical effect in those communities?

BECK: Oh, I think it has tremendously, yes.

REINIER: Have you see concrete things that have happened?

BECK: Yes. There's some communities that we've been working with over a number of years that have become quite self-sustaining and real leaders. There's a group up in the community of Hayfork that actually developed a Watershed Center that has provided job training to a number of people. We certainly still are funding different kinds of projects through them, but they have grown and expanded and developed. Many other partnerships have provided models and pilots that other communities can follow. I think there are many other examples like that where from getting started with a few ideas and a few really motivated people who had visions for their community, they've been able to work with our programs and other programs to put together some really pretty exciting things for their communities. There's still a lot to be done. But I think there have been a lot of real success stories.

REINIER: This seems a lovely fit for you with your background in getting groups of people together and working with collaboration.

BECK: Well, yeah. Again I think it's really what the State and Private Forestry programs are all about.

REINIER: Yeah.

BECK: They're looking across the boundaries, whether they're geographic boundaries or political boundaries or even philosophical boundaries, social and economic boundaries. That's what it's about, is bringing people together and partnerships. I was talking this morning with a group of folks. Because I still hear a lot of times when people in the Forest Service who aren't as familiar with these groups of programs talk about "How can we do any work outside of the national forests? It's not really our job, and besides we can't control it, so how can we be effective?" And yet, these programs are not about control. They're really about letting go of control and working together to identify common goals. I find that usually once people begin doing that they find that you're not losing a thing by not being in control. In fact, you're gaining an awful lot because you have a greater richness of ideas and resources. I remember someone who was making a presentation about the fact that we needed to move more towards this way of operating say "We've got to learn that it's okay to not have all the answers." I thought, Boy! is it okay! In fact, I can't imagine the stress of feeling like I did have to have all the answers. Because when you work in this kind of a partnership situation you realize that there are many answers out there. It's really quite a relief to not have to have them all in your own small brain!

REINIER: Well now, another one that just leaps off the page to me is again Tribal Relations.

BECK: Um hmm.

REINIER: What's happening with that in California?

BECK: Actually it's a rather important area in California. There are over 100 federally recognized tribes in the state of California and many more that are not on the federally recognized list. So the need to be really aware of issues that the tribes have on national forest lands and needs that they have in terms of working with their own lands are not something you can ignore. They're a key part of the constituency in the state--as in others--but here it's really major. I would say that a very big part of the Tribal Relations work in the region is in dealing with consultation with tribes on decisions on national forest land because again many of those lands have been either sacred to them or were traditional hunting or gathering areas. There still are essentially treaty rights that they have had through a number of years around use of some of those resources. And so it's critical that our national forests consult with them in terms of decisions they make that might change a pre-existing agreement.

One that comes to mind that is that some of the traditional gathering is materials for basketry. A lot of the ways that the baskets are woven sometimes involve moistening the strands that are going to be used in the baskets in your mouth and things like that. So not only is there the protection of the gathering areas and their rights to gather there, but there's looking at how we're using pesticides in that area or toxic materials. So there's just a number of things around land use on the national forests that through traditional agreements we really are bound to consult with the tribes on in addition to the fact that it's the neighborly thing to do. [Laughing] It's not really a choice. And so it's an important area in California.

There also are many tribes that participate in especially the Rural Community Assistance program that we were just talking about. They are certainly eligible to participate in State and Private programs across the board. That's the one probably where we see most activity is in the Rural Community Assistance and economic development. Right now, nationally, one of the things that's really being looked at is how tribes have access to the State and Private Forestry programs. Especially with the programs that have been delivered through the state forestry organizations, kind of the traditional way of looking at it was they could apply for those sub-grants through the state foresters the way any other community did. But there is certainly a feeling on the part of many of the tribes that that really is not appropriate because they are actually sovereign governments into and of themselves. Their relationship with the Forest Service really should be one-on-one as a sovereign government, which is actually true, that they are sovereign nations. Especially where there are reservation lands, they geographically are within a state, but that land is really technically separate land. It's not part of the state body of land or of the federal lands.

REINIER: Yeah, years ago [United States Supreme Court Chief Justice] John Marshall called them "domestic sovereign nations."

BECK: Um hum. So there are many aspects to the way we deal with tribes that have changed through the years and are certainly being looked at very closely now in terms of where we go in the future. In fact, there's being nationally additional emphasis put on a tribal relations program at the national level, so I think we'll be seeing more change in some of these efforts over the next few years, certainly increased emphasis.

REINIER: The archaeologists also get involved with issues when they discover, for example, artifacts and bones. Have you had controversies of that sort about what's to be done with Indian remains?

BECK: Oh, yeah, that definitely is a national issue and much bigger than the Forest Service. In fact, my sister works with that as an anthropologist. She works with it a great deal because she is on a university museum staff. She has quite a bit of expertise in issues around repatriation of Indian remains. There are very clear requirements in that under the Historic Preservation Act

and some other things that many organizations right now are having to be cognizant of. The Forest Service does have a cultural resources program that actually is involved, not just with that issue but overall, in being sure that when actions are taken on national forest ground that there is adequate knowledge of what types of cultural resources might be disturbed in that process. That crosses more than just the tribal issues there.

REINIER: Another one I would like to know more about is Conservation Education.

BECK: Well, Conservation Education certainly is something that I think floats across a lot of our programs. The Forest Service long ago had the various kinds of programs in Information and Education, Environmental Education.

REINIER: Jane Westenberger was working in this years ago.

BECK: Yeah. Yeah. And it traditionally, too, was really spearheaded out of our Public Affairs part of the organization, which was where Jane was. A number of years ago the state foresters nationally banded together and said we would like to put some renewed emphasis in this whole area of conservation education along with the Forest Service and try to see to promote getting an actual appropriated program that would provide additional funding to educate the public.

[End Tape 4, Side A]

Tape 4, Side B: More on Conservation Education—Forest Stewardship—Impact of reduction in timber production—Working with private landowners—Working with State Foresters in the West—Council of Western State Foresters—Developing coalitions and partnerships—Society of American Foresters.

REINIER: We were talking about conservation education on the other side of the tape.

BECK: Yes. At any rate there was a national program created called Natural Resource Conservation Education. There was not any appropriated funding for it as there really hadn't been for the Environmental Education, I don't believe. Environmental Education was a Public Affairs program that contributed to a range of programs, and this Natural Resource Conservation Education program similarly, when it was started, was funded off of the top of programs at the national level for the first year or two with the hope and the intent on the state forester's part and the Forest Service's part that hopefully there would be support gathered for an actual appropriated program. At least that's what the state foresters were hoping. The chief of the Forest Service agreed to fund it off the top of the Forest Service budget to get it started. Well, the appropriated program never really did come about, but the Conservation Education as a renewed program continued to be there and be funded various ways.

One of the things that happened through that is that it pulled together some of what the Forest Service had been doing through the national forests in Environmental Education closer together with some of the things the state foresters were wanting to do through their programs. They had always had Information and Education functions too. It involved State and Private Forestry in some new ways because there were grant dollars associated with it that then were administered through state and private to the states, and actually even in some cases there were grants to communities that went through the National Forest System, but again the dollars in a lot of cases came through State and Private because we have expertise in grant administration, for one thing. So the nature of the program changed some. Some regions really all stayed in Public Affairs. Other places it was split. In our region it really all came through State and Private Forestry although the Public Affairs office really said, "Well, what we'll do is the older, the more traditional environmental education program really. We'll leave that at the forest level, but at this point it doesn't really need the leadership out of the regional office." So State and Private picked up the new program, which was doing the grants to states and communities, and the old environmental education activities really were left to the forests to manage. Many people are still doing a lot of really wonderful environmental education work at the forest level.

I think this program as a whole is kind of struggling right now nationally with its identity because again there's never really been appropriated funding for it. There's a lot of stuff going on both on the national forest and in the state organizations that is educational through a number of programs. There are educational components of our recreation program, wildlife program. There are a lot of things being done out of Public Affairs offices on the forest. The state foresters have really tended to focus their programs on the K through 12, the school-aged kids.

REINIER: I wondered if you worked with the schools.

BECK: Yeah. Yeah. And, of course, some of the programs through the national forest do too. But in a sense there is some perception now that there two components of the program, the national forest part and the state forester's part. It needs to get clarified how each of those is going to continue into the future and how they'll be funded into the future. I think there is right now a recommendation out of a recent review that the state foresters did with our national office

in State and Private, “Hey, let’s really look at this program and reassess how we’re operating it and how it can be most effective in the future.”

REINIER: And there must be controversies over what conservation means.

BECK: Oh, well, certainly. Yes.

REINIER: That’s changed so much…

BECK: …Right, right.

REINIER: …in recent years.

BECK: Yeah. I’m not sure that that’s a controversy within this program as much as maybe that one of its goals is to try to help clarify some of the questions about what really is good conservation, and what’s a healthy forest, what’s good natural resource management, what does it take to sustain our national resources in the future, and getting people interested and involved in those issues.

REINIER: And then Forest Stewardship is the last of these [programs].

BECK: That actually was another of the programs that was new under the 1990 Farm Bill, but it built on some older programs. It’s really part of the family of programs called the Land Owner Assistance programs. They’re targeted at individual non-industrial, private landowners with the ultimate goal of helping them both learn how to manage their forested land, even if it’s a relatively small family forest, and also to develop good plans for their forest. The Forest Stewardship Program itself is actually targeted at helping land owners develop a forest management plan for their land that meets really a range of objectives that focus on what that land owner wants to do with their property, whether it’s to manage it for timber or for wildlife habitat or just for aesthetics, to enjoy. But helping them develop a plan for how to do that that is also balanced in terms of good ecosystem management. That was one of the key factors when the stewardship program came in behind some other programs. It wasn’t focused really just on timber production or one objective, but it had a requirement that a land owner really look at multiple values for their property and be sure that what they might do to manage for timber was not doing any harm to wildlife values or other kind of values and vice versa, that they were accounting for different values and good ecosystem management, good stewardship management of their land in the development of their plan.

Now there used to be an accompanying program called a Stewardship Incentives Program that actually provided cost share dollars to landowners to implement some of the practices under their forest stewardship plans. That program really has just dropped out of the bottom of the funding bucket in recent years. Some states have been able to supplement it with their state program. But there’s been a real need and emphasis by folks involved with these programs, especially the state foresters, on the need for a new incentives program. There was one that was just authorized in the most recent Farm Bill, the one that was just passed. It’s called the Forest Land Enhancement Program, similar to the Stewardship Incentives Program but a little broader, more flexible; it does have some different provisions. And so there’s a lot of real hope out there for what it’s going to be able to do in partnership with some of these other programs to help private landowners. And certainly that non-industrial private land, even though some of it’s in relatively small parcels, is an overall part of our forested land base in this country and one that we need to pay attention to both in terms of what it can contribute and the fact that it can disappear easily in the face of development and with changes in ownership.

REINIER: And pests can move. Pests don't know about boundaries; they can move from one set of trees to another.

BECK: Oh, sure. No, they don't. Right. Right.

REINIER: Now we were talking earlier, when we were talking about the Rural Community Assistance program, about how rural communities were affected by federal designations of endangered species that really cut down timber production. But the Forest Service itself was also very much affected by cutting down the timber production...

BECK: ...Oh, certainly...

REINIER: ...in the 1990's.

BECK: Yeah. It certainly has had major impacts on the Forest Service budget. It's resulted in shifts in program emphasis and staffing, certainly. Again, one of the things we were talking about some this morning is, just in a sense, bringing in some different culture too in terms of the program shifts. In addition to just the fact that there was a lot of focus on endangered species, there also was the real rise and emphasis on ecosystem management, which again was not really a totally new concept. The Forest Service has always been called a multiple use organization. It always looked at more than just timber production. But I think there certainly through the years were different peaks and valleys in what goods and services produced by the national forests, what the values and the relative emphasis were. There was a time that timber was a pretty driving value in some parts of the country. And I think that the coming in of the focus on ecosystem management, which was definitely looking at a very balanced approach that dealt with all parts of the ecosystem, all the different values, was a factor driven not only by some of the threatened and endangered species issues, but by other values as well: needing to look at water, at wildlife habitat in general, whether for endangered species or not. It's soil and air, forest health over all, and being sure that--and I guess maybe a term that has been heard more often too in recent years-- is its sustainability for future generations. Which is not to say that there can be no timber production or other commodity production off the forests, but that what we're looking for is sustainability of the range of uses and goods and services that our national forests can provide.

Of course, when I look at ecosystem management, to me it's always been clear that we can't look at just the part of the ecosystem that's on the national forest. We need to be looking across at other ownerships and again working with partners, working with other land owners, on how are we managing, how are we affecting the health of the larger ecosystem and the sustainability across ownerships.

REINIER: And so many of the national forests are these checkerboard maps.

BECK: Certainly in this part of the country they are, yes.

REINIER: Yes, and in the South too or in other parts of the country as well. And now do you work with what I would think of as the white areas [color on the maps], or the people who live within the boundaries of the national forest?

BECK: We can. Certainly through programs like the Forest Stewardship program, I think some of those lands are ones that are especially important to try to bring those landowners into those programs. Again, that would be through the state forestry organization. But those are good examples of how their management on their lands and the way the adjoining national forest system lands are managed can't really be entirely separated. I think there have been times in

our history we've managed them as though they were separate, but we certainly can't. The topic we were talking about [in the office] this morning was hazardous fuels management, which is again a good example. If you're clearing up the hazardous fuels in your own backyard and your neighbor's got a bad hazardous fuel situation, then only half the job is done and you're still vulnerable. So those are things we've got to work together with the cross ownerships.

REINIER: And that comes under your area of State and Private Forestry?

BECK: Yeah. Certainly the programs and the tools that can help with the private lands are under State and Private Forestry. We also have many authorities and tools that help us do the collaborative and the partnership building pieces of that. We work with many of the other agencies and other landowners and communities and groups that can affect what happens on the non-federal lands. So I think we're in a position to be able to help across the boundaries.

REINIER: So what are the tools? Are they, for example, meetings? Workshops? When you talk about the tools of working with other groups, how do you work with other groups?

BECK: Well, certainly all the things you mentioned, yes. I talked earlier about the Community Economic Revitalization Team and getting together with groups like that. I think when I was talking a little earlier about tools, I was thinking about some of our program authorities, the fact that we have dollars that can be spent off of the national forest land. We work through grants and agreements very heavily to provide financial assistance that is always matched. It isn't money that just goes to directly fully pay for things on other ownerships. Many of our programs initially are administered as grants to the state forestry organization, which matches them once and then may administer a program like the Forest Stewardship Program where they are then even sub-granting those funds, which may be matched again by a landowner or a community group. So we have the authorities with our dollars and programs where we can leverage funds, where we can provide seed money, but always in combination with other sources of funding, to build joint programs.

And again, we do meet regularly with a number of agencies and partners. We work with non-profit groups; we work with the Resource Conservation Districts [called Soil and Water Conservation Districts in some parts of the country] that are very effective grass roots level groups for bringing community people together to deal with things like their watershed issues. We just have a lot of experience in working in a fashion that is collaborative and partnership-based as opposed to directly managing land and making all the decisions on one piece of land that you have total control over.

REINIER: Well, as you talk, it really interests me that these are really issues of federalism, the way that the national government works through the states in a very practical kind of way.

BECK: Right. Right.

REINIER: Tell me about the state foresters in the West. We talked about the fact that they were important political figures, people of real stature in the Southeast, is what we were really talking about. Is that the case in the West to the same extent?

BECK: I think it varies state by state. Again, as I said about the South, some places the jobs are more an internal career position. Many of them are by definition political appointments, as is the case in California. This is a state where that position will change with changes in administration. That's true to varying degrees in some of the other western states. Something that's interesting about the western state foresters is just that the West is such a big, diverse place. In some ways the southern group of state foresters probably are--of course, every state is

different--but probably they are a little more homogenous in terms of their issues and what would be their priority programs. To a lesser degree the Northeast and Midwest because of course there too you've got a big range of kinds of programs. Probably the one that has the widest range of differences in terms of resource issues, population, climates, just the nature of what they're dealing with in forestry, is the western group. It includes seventeen states that run from Kansas, well of course to California, but then on out into the Pacific: Hawaii and U.S. territories in the Pacific.

REINIER: Yes, and they're in your region!

BECK: They're in my region. I have the biggest and the smallest partners probably in the country for our programs, and probably the most sophisticated in California, and the least sophisticated in some of the islands in terms of their internal capacity and size of their organization and what they are needing from our programs. So the West includes all those. It includes Alaska. Again it's up to the northern border, so you've got all the Pacific Northwest issues that we talked about for Oregon, Washington, and Northern California. California itself probably has enough sub groups with different issues to be more complex than many individual states. Again, we're just all over in terms of major urban areas in Southern California and very, very rural states, the plains states. So when that group of state foresters comes together, they have different kinds of issues on their plates.

One thing they have really done over the last number of years, and I think very effectively, is try to say, "How do we need to work together across this western landscape, and not just us but working with the different Forest Service regional foresters in the West," because here there are seven Forest Service regions. In the South there's one region. In the Northeast there's a whole organization devoted to them [the state foresters]. There is also a region [in the Northeast]. And I think some of the challenge there is how to coordinate across those Forest Service programs with different structures. But the state foresters have a very focused organization to work with there. The state foresters in the West have had to deal with seven different regional foresters, who for a long time really had major priority on the national forest lands, because the other difference in the West and the East is that the percentage of federal land is much higher in the West. That's why the regions out here are designed the way they are. They're smaller in terms of number of states, but they're dealing with more national forests in those few states. The percentage of private, non-industrial land is higher in the East, which is why there is a Northeastern Area that focuses on that. That's why I think I mentioned at some point earlier that the three parts of the country have different structures, and for some valid reasons, in terms of how they grew up.

But the state foresters in the West have felt like they needed to band together in a little more, both in terms of raising western issues to greater visibility and perhaps competing a little better for dollars or having more strength as a body. So they started working a number of years ago to try to engage the seven regional foresters and eventually the three research station directors out here with them in really a west-wide kind of body, to look at how do we do that, how do we identify our common issues across the West, and the ways we can work together, and maybe get a little more power and visibility behind our western issues.

REINIER: What is that body?

BECK: It's called the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition. It's really just about a year old in its current incarnation. It went through quite a number of years of struggling to develop it and figure out what it would like. There used to be, and still is, a Council of Western State Foresters, of which membership is the state foresters and territorial foresters themselves. For many years they invited the regional foresters to come to that meeting and tried to get them to engage. At

some point the group as a whole said, "We really need to be one body." So there's still a Council of Western State Foresters, but now there is also a Western Forestry Leadership Coalition that includes the regional foresters and the station directors, and they do meet together as one group. They still have caucus meetings where they split out to deal with the state and federal issues, but they really are looking at--and we certainly have a lot of the same issues on federal and non-federal land--how do we identify the ones that we really want to put the emphasis on across the West and across land ownerships. And then how are we going to work together to try to put some things in motion to better address those issues.

REINIER: Is it part of your job working for that group?

BECK: Yes. I, certainly, since I've been out here, have been involved with the Council of Western State Foresters. Because many folks in staff roles like mine really were the ones who attended those meetings with the state foresters before they got the regional foresters to the table, so to speak, we've continued to be involved with that. And I was involved partly out of interest in it, some of the final development of what this coalition might look like, and looking at some of the operating guidelines. Actually this just started because my predecessor retired on us here recently, but I'm also going to be on the board of directors of the coalition [as a board member] for the next couple of years. Their governing structure is a board of directors that includes four state foresters and four Forest Service representatives. The state foresters would be the chair of their council, the chair of the Western Council of State Foresters, and the immediate past chair. And then there is a treasurer and probably the other position is a secretary. I'm not sure, but it's the officers of their council. And then on the other side there's a lead regional forester, an immediate past lead regional forester, one station director, and one representative of the staff directors for State and Private Forestry. That's the position I'm moving into. I'm looking forward to that because I'm a great believer in this coalition. It was a struggle getting to it; a lot of folks worked hard at it. But I think once it really was created there's been a lot of good feeling about it and good hope that it really is going to help us strengthen the West and do some exciting things. But there's a lot of challenge still in terms of how to do that.

REINIER: Is there rivalry between the national and state foresters?

BECK: Between the...

REINIER: The regional foresters, for example, and the state foresters. Is that always a cooperative relationship or is it hard to make that a cooperative relationship?

BECK: I certainly would not characterize it as rivalry. I think probably the issues for a long time in the West, at least through the state foresters' eyes, were that the regional foresters were, and understandably so, focused on the National Forest System issues. That was the big thing on their plate, and the State and Private programs were not as visible or not as high a priority for them. Of course, the flip side of that for the regional foresters would be "Well, yeah, that's what's biting my butt the most. The State and Private programs are fine, but you guys take care of that one." [Laughter] But I do think increasingly we're in an era where we can't manage different lands separately and achieve the goals either group wants, where working with partnerships and communities is just becoming increasingly important to the national forest system as well as the states. I think it's a time period that the value of working collaboratively in partnership is, if anything, increasing and becoming more apparent. Certainly some of the kinds of issues that are talked about in this Western Coalition clearly deal with both the National Forest System programs and the State and Private Forestry programs.

A major one is the National Fire Plan, which certainly has components that deal with fire fighting and preparedness, which of course is something that we do share with the states. Fire, just like we talked about, like insects and diseases, knows no boundaries that we draw on a map. There has been, for quite a long time, then a very interagency approach to fighting fire. There's also definitely a joint issue in the components of this National Fire Plan around restoration of damaged watersheds through fire damage. There's a major community assistance part that we're involved in through the Economic Action Programs that we talked about earlier, and through the Cooperative Fire program, which is a part of the overall fire staff, but again works through the state forestry organization. That's the way we do it. And between their programs and some of the things that we have to offer in State and Private Forestry, we're looking at how can we with an influx of emphasis and dollars under the National Fire Plan, how can we do even more with communities and with dealing with things like hazardous fuels issues that cross ownership. And that's [the National Fire Plan] one of the big issues that the Coalition has identified as a priority across the West. It's easy to see how it has relevance for all members of the Coalition and beyond, and other partner agencies.

REINIER: This brings to my mind the Society of American Foresters, which we started to talk about and then didn't. Is that group helpful to you at all in getting groups together and providing a forum?

BECK: Certainly the Society for American Foresters is a very good and a strong organization. Its membership is members of the forestry community.

REINIER: State and Forest Service.

BECK: It does get those groups together. I don't see it really as a tool for doing the kind of things that we've been talking about with our programs although the same kind of issues we're talking about I know are discussed there and with many of the same players. Again, I think it's a good organization. I don't really utilize it or rely on it as a tool for the place to have the discussions on these programs. But I'm sure they're talked about there; it's not necessarily the forum for doing the work on it. I think it's probably a place more that brings people together to learn from each other and be looking at the forestry profession and where it's heading. We haven't relied on it as a forum for doing the actual program work in too many instances.

REINIER: Has it been helpful to you personally to be a member?

BECK: It has, I think, just mostly be keeping me tied in with the larger forestry community. I need to just confess to you I'm not a very active SAF member. I would never choose to end my membership; it just hasn't been something that time wise I've put a lot of priority on. I'm always aware of it and what its doing and I read the newsletter and the magazine, so I know what's going on nationally, but I'm not a very active member in terms of my own participation.

[End Tape 4, Side 2]

Figure 5: Leigh Beck with Forest Health Protection and Cooperative Forestry Directors in Alaska during a Forest Health field trip, c. 1994.

Figure 6: Leigh Beck being interviewed for the evening news about forestry issues in Guam.

Figure 7: Leigh Beck in American Samoa with members of the Samoan forestry staff and Forest Service State and Private Forestry staff, 2000.

Figure 8: Leigh Beck at a Pacific Islands Committee meeting in Saipan, 2001, with David Limtiaco, Territorial Forester of Guam; Nancy Lollar, Regional Grants Coordinator, Region 5; and Jim Lawrence of the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition.

SESSION III, JUNE 13, 2002

Tape 5, Side A: Taking a permanent job in Region 5 as Assistant Director in State and Private Forestry—Consulting with the Regional Forester Team in reorganization of the Regional Office in Region 5—Blending this work with studying for a Master's Degree in Organization Deveopment—Factors affecting a leadership team in a government agency—Keeping the self healthy and in balance—Dealing with the influence of political leadership on career leadership.

REINIER: Leigh, on the last tape we talked a little bit about the effects on the Forest Service of the cuts in timber production and the necessity to downsize. I see that you had a detail to re-organize the regional office in Region 5 in 1995.

BECK: Well, yes, related to some re-organization that was going on. I'm thinking, Jackie, maybe I should back up a little bit too because there were some things leading up to that assignment that I probably want to refer back to. I will say, yes, that downsizing was happening throughout the Forest Service during this time, and certainly one of the major factors, not the only one, but one, was the downturn in the timber program. There also were other budget issues and there was a need really across the agency to be looking at reducing numbers of employees.

The other piece I just wanted to talk about leading up to that was what was happening actually in our State and Private staff right before that. I think I had mentioned that when I did first come in in a permanent job there was a director of State and Private Forestry and two assistant directors, myself as the assistant for Cooperative Forestry and an assistant director for Forest Health Protection. His name was John Neisess. At some point along the line, I'd probably been there for two or three years, the director of the staff, who was Jean Hall, was actually asked to take an assignment as the acting deputy regional forester. The woman who had been in that role actually had had a stroke on the job and left quite suddenly. This was in the middle of some of the development of the Pacific Northwest Plan and the community assistance part of that. So the regional forester asked Jean to move into that assignment for a period of approximately a year.

At this time there already had been some work done on re-organization in the regional office, trying to reduce the number of staffs in the regional office. Actually a proposal that had been developed but never implemented was looking at reducing from eighteen staffs in the region down to nine staffs. Also as part of the effort to do some downsizing in government, there had been a buy-out opportunity that was taken by a lot of Forest Service employees, and in our region, actually, a number of people who took that option were staff directors. Many of them were eligible for retirement and it gave them an opportunity to retire with a little extra bonus. So out of those eighteen staffs, a number of them had ended up without a permanent director in place. Many of them had people who were in acting positions, and the typical thing was to put someone in an acting role for 120 days and then to rotate a different person in.

The reason I wanted to talk about that was it was during that time period that Jean left for this assignment and she asked the two of us assistant directors, who were there, what we wanted them to do with the State and Private Forestry staff. Did one of us want to be acting, did we want to rotate back and forth as acting, did they want us to bring someone else in, or how would we like to handle that. Our choice at the time because what we were seeing was a lot of disruption and lack of continuity with staffs that were turning over in their leadership every several months, so we said let us do something a little different. What we'd like to do is run the staff like a board of directors with the two of us and then also our chief administrative person, Nancy [Lollar], who was our grants manager and did some other administrative things. So let us be a board of directors for the staff. And that's what we did for a while; it actually was very successful. The two of us really had the greater leadership role. We were the ones that had to go to the leadership meetings and things like that, but Nancy also sat with us as a board member when we made decisions for the staff. We learned more about each other's programs. We had a much better flow and continuity than if we were actually handing off the leadership role completely every month or every several months. So we found it to be really successful during that time of real turmoil and lack of continuity in the region.

Then after we had been doing that for some time, maybe even more than a year, the actual implementation of this reorganization was still somewhat on hold; I think there was a freeze on filling positions was the reason. So the regional forester, who at that time was Lynn Sprague, had a proposed organization he wanted to implement on the books but could not fill the staff director position. So that's why it had been in limbo. Finally Lynn decided, and I think about the time a lot of people in the staffs were proposing this too, and Lynn himself said, "We just need to get on with it. Even if we can't fill those positions permanently, let's start moving into the new organizational configuration, the nine staffs as opposed to eighteen." Many of those were combining existing staffs. "Even if we'll have to have acting directors for awhile, let's go ahead and begin the implementation." At that point in time I think the regional forester and the team of him and his deputies, who call themselves the Regional Forester Team, realized that they really needed to look at how they managed that transition into a very different staff configuration. Initially Jean appointed a group of folks to be a transition team working with her to identify what are some of the needs around that. One of the things that that group and the Regional Forester Team were recommending is, you probably really need someone who is either a transition manager or almost an internal consultant working with you on this effort. You need someone who's full-time watching how this process is working and advising you, not necessarily running the reorganization, but being the transition advisor almost to this Regional Forester Team about how to make this major organization change.

Also right about at this time, this is on the personal side for me, I had just started working on a Master's Degree in Organization Development, which again was my old field from back when I first worked for the Forest Service. And I met with the Regional Forester Team and facilitated them through a day of looking at what they really wanted out of this transition, how they wanted it to operate, and what they hoped they would have at the end of it. And they did ask me at the end of that session if I would be willing to take an assignment working with them as the transition manager or the transition consultant, again for a temporary period, maybe not to exceed a year or eighteen months. Of course, I was delighted to do that because I was just getting back into that field academically and wanted to get my hands on to do that kind of work again. So I moved into that role at that time, again working for the Regional Forester Team and moving back into that field of internal consulting. So that was how that came about. The role was not really to reorganize the region but to help the organization manage that transition and that major change into an organization that wasn't just configured differently but was designed around some different concepts of teamwork and different reasons for putting certain staff functions together and some things that that group wanted to see happen.

REINIER: What were some of those new ways or new concepts of organizing the staff?

BECK: Well, again, a real driving goal for the Regional Forester Team and for Lynn in particular was around using teamwork in a different way, and especially looking at the group of directors that would be the heads of these nine staffs as a team in a different way than they had been. The Forest Service has historically tended to operate rather functionally in terms of people really taking care again of the function they're responsible for, not always operating across programs in as integrated a way as we could. So one objective was to organize in a way that really was maybe not forcing but creating more opportunity for that cross program integration and teamwork. Also another aspect of the team concept for Lynn was he wanted that group of nine directors to really be a team with each other and with him. He wanted to change the title from staff directors to assistant regional foresters with the idea that they would actually be representing him across all program areas if they were out at a meeting. If it were me and I was just being the director of State and Private Forestry, I might really just be representing my program. But he wanted both to give the person in my role the concept you're responsible for more than that and also to give that message to people I might be meeting with. "Leigh is not just representing the State and Private program area, she's representing the regional forester for all regional programs even though her area of most expertise is State and Private Forestry." So those were some of the things that Lynn was trying to accomplish, and his team working with him, to make it a more integrated program for the region as a whole and also to foster a team way of working together among that new group of assistant regional foresters. It was a good opportunity because right about that time the freeze was being lifted on hiring, so they were actually bringing in, in most cases, new people into those positions because almost all of them had been vacated by that time. I think maybe only a couple of people, who had been there as part of the old group, were still there at the time the positions got filled. So it was a unique time that way for doing that.

REINIER: Do you think that's worked pretty well, that new concept?

BECK: I think there were parts of it that worked. It didn't really get all the way there in terms of what the Regional Forester Team originally envisioned. And, interestingly, in more recent years many of the staff combinations that that team had designed have been undone, mostly by direction from the Washington office. So the organization itself kind of had some entropy or something that pulled it back. It may have been because from the Washington office the staffs there were looking at "Where's my counterpart staff there? I'd rather have it separate than in a combination with some other groups." So it may have been resistance to change or something like that, but many of those have been undone. That may have been the right decision or not, I don't know; the times are different again now. But long-term even the structure didn't sustain itself. I do think there was progress made in some ways around the roles changing in that group working together as a team. It worked in some areas and other areas we never quite got there.

One of the difficult areas probably was developing the regional budget as a team. [Laughter] There's nothing that brings out functionality quicker than talking about money. But I do think there were a lot of things that worked. I think people learned and grew through it. But did we really get all the way where we were trying to get? I'd have to say no.

[Laughter]

REINIER: Did this fit into your master's degree then; did this become a project?

BECK: Yes, actually, the work that I did with the Regional Forester Team became the subject of my master's thesis in my program. What I really focused on was not the overall effort but that team themselves and how they managed the change. The title of my thesis was "The Role of

Leadership in Changing from a Functionally-Based Organization to a Team-Based Organization." I'm not sure that was exactly the words I used, but that was the concept. What's leadership's role in making this happen, especially in a government agency? So I looked at things that were around leadership behaviors. I looked at things that had to do with what might be different or not different about a government agency from the private sector. And overall, what are the behaviors and the factors that would make this team successful or not at making the changes that they wanted to make.

Some of the things that emerged in that, there were about nine themes that came up that I would say were some of those factors that were important to succeeding or not. Some of them were very predictable like communications, priority setting, decision-making, those kinds of things. I think the interesting thing to me was that there were two themes that emerged as being pretty critical in terms of helping them succeed or not succeed that were something of a surprise. One of those themes was around health and balance of the team members themselves, the whole personal taking care of yourself as a leader piece of it. And that one actually emerged partly because many of the members of that team--it was a small team; it was like a five-person team, actually maybe a little larger than that because there were a few other members of it in addition to the Regional Forester Team and deputies--but several of them had serious health problems arise during the course of the time they were working on this effort. All of them, when we would do data gathering, either individually with them or when I worked with them as a group and they were identifying what our issues are, a big one was always around "Do I have enough time to do what I need to do? Am I putting enough time in?" They would tend to say, "I'm probably the only one on the team that feels this way, but I just feel overloaded and out of balance." And so as a group we kind of identified this is a major theme for this team. It was a major factor in their ability to do what they needed to do, keeping the self healthy and in balance if you're a leader so that you're able then to lead. They as a group recognized that that was something that was important to them.

Actually, I'll just mention this because it again was one of the factors that brought a lot of that home. It's a very unfortunate thing, but one of the health issues that came up was that one of the deputies, and this was Jean, my boss from State and Private who was there just acting temporarily in that job, discovered very shortly into our work together on the transition that she had terminal cancer. She left almost immediately and actually did pass away within six months. That was a major impact both on that team and on the region as a whole in terms of their looking at what can happen to someone, the fragility of life and the fact that there are important things that you need to be paying attention to other than just work. Especially with that happening to Jean when she had come in to replace the woman who left with a stroke that occurred on the job, who was also a relatively young woman, I think had a lot of impact on that team and on many people around the region in terms of just making them kind of stop and think some about their values and their balance between their personal life and work life.

REINIER: That's extremely interesting. Did that affect you personally? Did that change your personal priorities in any way?

BECK: Well, it certainly impacted me in some of the ways that I was just talking about and maybe especially because Jean had also been a personal friend of mine. Interestingly, especially when we had been working together on the staff, one of the things she and I talked about quite a bit was this whole balance issue and how difficult it was. We both talked about things we wanted to do outside of the job, so I knew a lot of her goals and her interests and things she wanted to do after she retired. She was just within about a year of retirement. So I knew the things she was planning, the ways she was wanting to restructure her life, to have more balance and more time to do the things she wanted to do. Of course, she did not have the chance to do

those things. So yeah, I thought a lot about that, especially in light of the conversation she and I had had before she found out she was ill.

REINIER: This is an interesting issue for women because as women have advanced in their careers and put time into their careers, it has affected women's health in a negative way. I think there are studies on that…

BECK: …Yeah. Yeah.

REINIER: …that show that to be true.

BECK: Certainly I believe stress can be a major factor in health. Certainly, also, when you just are in a very demanding job, I think you often leave off doing some of the things you would otherwise do to take care of yourself. I see that pattern a lot in women. And men! Men also, this is not gender specific. I think women may be noticing it more as they find themselves in more roles that are demanding and they have to make those choices of how to approach the job and personal life balance.

REINIER: You talked earlier about the "can do" attitude in the Forest Service.

BECK: Right, right.

REINIER: Does that make it more difficult to be able to take care of yourself?

BECK: I think it certainly can. I think there are positive and negative sides of the can-do philosophy depending on how you take it to heart or not. But I do think that certainly is still a part of our culture. I think you can be a can-do person in the sense of getting things done, being results oriented, without it absorbing your whole life. I do think very often there are people and especially leaders in the Forest Service that may take it to the step of "I just have to keep going even when I'm overloaded." It's very hard, I think, for a lot of leaders in our organization to say "no" to things or to stop loading themselves up with more and more responsibilities when they really already have a full plate. I see that pattern, certainly not in all leaders in the Forest Service but with a lot of them. I see people, especially at the regional forester level, and at the deputy regional forester level, I'm sure, to a lesser but still pretty intense degree, who have a hard time putting time on their personal life. They're traveling a lot, they're always loaded, they work long days, they take work home. It is something reinforced by our culture in our beliefs that you need to do that at those levels. It's very hard for people in those positions to say, "No, I've really got to focus on taking care of myself." Some of them are able to do that better than others.

Our current regional forester [Jack Blackwell], who hasn't been with us long, one of the things he shared with us right off the bat was he really believed in balance and people taking time for their families. While he would expect people to work hard, he would not expect them to give more than they really should and certainly not to ignore their family responsibility. So I think he's coming with a real strong belief that way which is nice to hear.

REINIER: Have you done things differently in your own life as a result of this work?

BECK: I think I've tried to; I can't say I've succeeded. I've probably again done better at some points along the way than others. Probably the reason I was speaking about what I see a lot of our leaders get caught up in is I've gotten caught up in it myself through a number of jobs, so I know what that feels like. I see it in other people and I see it in myself. I know it's a hard

pattern to break just based on expectations both that we think other people have of us and probably that as much as anything we have of ourselves.

REINIER: Were there other points that you discovered other than that in doing the study?

BECK: Well, I mentioned that there were two things that popped out that had been less expected in terms of being the real impacts on this team. The other one was the influence of the political side of government on their ability to accomplish what they wanted to. This is certainly something government organizations have always dealt with because they essentially have two leadership channels. They have the career leadership of agencies and organizations and then they have political leadership that turns over periodically and has a predictable time window in which they need to accomplish some goals of a new administration. The two are certainly connected, but political leadership has influence on the career leadership. The Forest Service for a long time was, well, always, subject to those pressures. Certainly, there were people who would say the Forest Service didn't used to be a political organization--a government agency can't be unaffected by the political process. But I think the Forest Service for a long time had managed to stay less directly impacted than many other agencies. In fact, for a long time we actually were the last agency that people said really had a career chief and career leadership all the way up. Actually, the chief who was coming in right at the end of the time that we were doing this transition and re-organization was the first really politically appointed chief from outside the organization. He wasn't politically appointed in the sense of having to be confirmed by congress, but he was not someone who had come up through the ranks in the Forest Service; he was selected from outside by the administration and was essentially a political appointee.

REINIER: That was Mike Dombeck?

BECK: That was Mike Dombeck, yes, and that was a change for the Forest Service to have the chief appointed in that way from outside of the organization. That was happening right near the end of this time period, but what we were seeing during the year or two before that was really increased political influence down to the regional level on decisions and things being overturned, what felt like much more, we can use the term "micro-management," political micro management of the field, than had been previously experienced. The Forest Service has always prided itself in being a very de-centralized organization with the line officers at the regional level and on down having a lot of authority and ability to make decisions. While you're never doing that in a vacuum, I think what was being felt was an increased level of decisions from the regional forester level that were either being very closely scrutinized or overturned or stopped. That was the other factor that, I think, this team didn't expect when they started this to have that much of that happen. So by the end of the time that we were working on it, that was one of the things they were identifying that was a priority, was needing to really look at what the influences might be from the political level and how to work with them more effectively in order to accomplish what they were trying to do. So it had surfaced during that time as a priority where it hadn't been that much even on their radar screen as a factor that was going to be important when we started the effort.

REINIER: Now this was during the Clinton administration?

BECK: Yes. Yes.

REINIER: And could I ask just a little bit more specifically how those political decisions were felt at the regional level?

BECK: Well, I'll maybe give one as an example that I remember because it happened right when were in the middle of a meeting with this team working on some other things. We came in

that morning and there was a major press release that was about to be issued that day on a decision that had been made by the regional forester. It had been approved up through channels to a certain point. We walked into the meeting and the regional forester got a phone call saying hold off, that can't go out, this is being halted, it's stopped indefinitely, or something of that nature. I don't remember all the details. But it was that type of thing where a decision that had been moving forward then would get reversed or at least halted or stopped at the USDA level, the department level, above the chief. So those were the kinds of impacts and the things that were happening that hadn't been anticipated before that.

REINIER: Well, how do people feel about that?

BECK: Usually frustrated. And disappointed often because something had been moving forward that people had been working on for a while and it would get stopped.

REINIER: Did that disrupt the planning process? There are so many plans in the Forest Service.

BECK: Right, right.

[End Tape 5, Side A]

Tape 5, Side B: More on politicization of the Forest Service—Skills of working with different publics--Learning to collaborate in partnerships—Master's program in Organization Development at Pepperdine University—Sharing responsibilities as Co-Director of State and Private Forestry in Region 5—Working on detail as Acting Deputy Regional Forester in State and Private Forestry in Region 5.

REINIER: We were talking just on the other side of the tape about the political situation that the Forest Service found itself in. Is there anything else that you would like to explain about that?

BECK: I think just that some of the change towards greater politicization of the Forest Service is something that has continued. It wasn't like a one-time thing. That doesn't mean that chiefs will all in the future be politically appointed from outside the agency. Certainly the current one is not. He's someone who came up through the Forest Service ranks. I think what I would say is it's not that the future chiefs of the organization will be politically appointed, but certainly there will be more political input into who those chiefs are even if they are career employees. Of course, there always was some; it's not that the Forest Service was ever completely apart from that process. But I think we are going to now, more likely than not, see chiefs change with every political administration. That didn't always happen before. And then I think we're seeing more change down the ranks of the organization as administrations change than we saw before.

REINIER: What kind of change, down the ranks of the administration?

BECK: I think certainly with the last two chiefs most of the regional foresters and line officers at that next level have also changed or shifted and maybe just moved to different jobs within the organization. And over time, under Mike Dombeck, I think every regional forester changed, either sitting ones were moved into other jobs or in some way there was turnover in that whole level. And pretty much we've seen that happen also with this current chief, Dale Bosworth. Again, he's a second-generation career Forest Service person, but we're also seeing a lot of changes in that senior executive level of deputy chiefs and regional foresters and station directors. So I think that is more likely to continue to be what happens.

REINIER: Well, the issues that the Forest Service deals with have become increasingly political in this society, haven't they?

BECK: Oh, yes. Yeah. And certainly especially I think we see a lot of the leading edge of that in California and the Pacific Northwest in terms of again people's increasing interest and opinions about what happens with their public lands.

REINIER: And stewardship of the public lands and really what that means in terms of wildlife.

BECK: Oh, yeah. But also when you're working with public opinion, something that is very obvious is there is no one public opinion. So I think that's the factor that again brings in the political process because people have different ideas about what should be done on the land. There are different advocates for different points of view, and certainly different political administrations tend to have different priorities and different groups that are more influential with them. So I think there is a range of opinion out there, and the Forest Service, of course, needs to be trying to balance as much of it as possible and be working both with the public and

with the political layer of government, with whatever administration is in power at that time in order to still have the best balance of what is happening on our public lands.

REINIER: So does that mean that people who work for the Forest Service really have to see their jobs differently than they used to, or have different skills?

BECK: I think there are some differences. If they're different skills, again a lot of them are more in the dealing with our publics and the public involvement in different ways. The one thing that we're seeing a need to do more in different ways than we have is really involve the public more in decisions that are being made. That's being a real struggle. There's not really total agreement of what that would look like, but our traditional public involvement, I think, has been to say, "Hey, here's a decision we're making; you can comment on it." Of course, that has shifted through the years. But we're looking more at processes now where we're involving people earlier before decisions are made in different ways and even to the degree of giving people, not just the ability to comment, but to really input or be involved in what the decision is going to be, in what's a more collaborative way. But exactly how we do that in different places, I think, is different. I think there is still more movement to make in that direction of truly engaging our partners and our publics in what our decisions are on the national forests.

REINIER: Two things come to my mind as you talk here. One is that your whole career has really been involved in working on collaboration and teams of people; that's really been the orientation all the way through...

BECK: ...Right, right.

REINIER: ...for you, hasn't it?

BECK: It has been. And, of course again, what I've been working with [in State and Private Forestry] is how do you work with partners when you're essentially working off the national forest, working in their backyards. Of course, there it's very easy to see, yes, it isn't just our decision to make about what happens. You're working with people to identify common goals. Here's some resources we can bring to the table and things to help you, but we're working in an arena that is definitely not under the direct control of the Forest Service. It becomes more difficult for our agency when we are looking at, well, how do we involve people in a truly collaborative way in decisions that are happening on the national forest. That's where the shift is because for so many years the way people have been brought up to think about that role is we are the managers of this land. We make the decisions. We certainly are attentive to our publics and want to be aware of what they're interested in, but it has been a different role in terms of our role on the public lands on the national forest where we are the managers of it; we are the controllers of it and the decision makers. Again that has shifted through time, but it's still, I think, very difficult in a lot of ways for us to let go of that direct control and say, "Hey, we may really share some of the power even about what happens on the public lands, or do it in a different way." So that's the shift that we're trying to make and to figure out how that really works on the federal lands as opposed to on the state and private lands.

REINIER: This is the other thing I was thinking as you were talking. One of the phrases I've heard recently is that the Forest Service has become more people-oriented and now the demand, in a job for example, is to find someone to fill that job who is people-oriented.

BECK: Um hmm.

REINIER: So now what does that mean? [Laughter]

BECK: I don't think it means any one thing. I think it does mean someone who has skills in working with people whether you're working internally with your organization or externally with partners. I think that someone who has skills in communication, who is able to understand people's needs and be responsive to those. That can apply whether you're working with your own staff in terms of motivating them or getting them interested in the work and being aware of what they need to get their job done, or if you're working externally with partners in terms of how do you really listen and hear what they need and work with them the way that's effective. It's probably some shift in orientation that I think we've been making over time that is very important to where we go in the future.

REINIER: And you think that that shift is occurring?

BECK: I think it is. I think in some places it's occurring more easily; in some places it's being more difficult. I think we've still got a ways to go and we've still got some things to learn about what that really looks like when we're working on the federal lands or across ownerships. The other thing we're increasingly seeing is the need to be working at the landscape level, at the watershed level, where we're dealing with mixed ownerships, with issues that cross public and private land. How do we do those things with our partners, with private landowners, with other people, in the way that is truly meeting the needs of the larger watershed? What are our roles and our partners' roles in making that happen? So we're still learning. I think we're moving in that direction. We're developing those skills, but we still have more to learn.

REINIER: Culturally women are supposed to be good at those skills. [Laughter] Do you think that the increasing number of women in the Forest Service has helped in this shift that you're talking about?

BECK: Possibly. Certainly, I think any time you're getting more diversity in the organization you're bringing in different mixes of styles whether it's based on something cultural or just that you've got individuals who bring different things. I will say I see both men and women who are good at this, who really are excellent at working with partners and collaborating, and I see others that that's not as much their style. So I do think that increasing diversity gives us greater richness of a range of styles. I don't think being able to do this is unique to a particular gender or group. [Laughter]

REINIER: Well now, you chose to do this [Master's degree in Organization Development] at Pepperdine University.

BECK: Yes.

REINIER: I'm curious as to why you chose Pepperdine.

BECK: Well, the program I went through, which is the MSOD program there, to me is the best graduate program in organization development in the country. I was fortunate that I was here in California and I might not have pursued it if I'd been in another part of the country. It has been recognized in some surveys as being right up at the top of the list as far as graduate programs in this field. It was just very attractive to me and had excellent faculty and excellent guest faculty. Much of their faculties are brought in to do different sessions of the program and they are some of the leading people in the field. So it wasn't a tough choice. [Laughter]

REINIER: How did it work? Did you go down to Malibu for that?

BECK: No. No, actually this program, because it is designed for people who, for the most part, are going to be working full-time--it's for mid-career professionals basically or people who are

underway with their career--was designed in weeklong sessions, very intense sessions of coursework that would be off site. They weren't held on the Pepperdine campus in Malibu. They were held in a couple of locations where there were almost retreat settings where you were off-site, one down near Watsonville at Pajaro Dunes and then also another one down in Palm Desert. So they were certainly nice places, not Malibu but some very beautiful places. We'd be there for a week and have morning, afternoon and evening classes, and then have several months in between where we were doing reading and writing papers. But it was designed so you could focus on your class time and then go back to your job and do some of your other studying in between.

REINIER: Well, it seems like this fit very nicely into your job, especially since you were able to use the team you were working with as the topic of the research.

BECK: Oh, it absolutely did at that time. And I also think it really helped me work with that group on that transition effort. It was a very good fit at that time to be doing the degree and the study along with doing the work in the organization.

REINIER: Has the degree helped you in your career? Has it qualified you in any way?

BECK: I wouldn't say necessarily it's qualified me differently in terms of what would be required for other jobs, but to me that type of field is very useful whether you are working as a consultant in the field of organization development or if you are being a manager or a leader. And I think of people who go through that program, there are some of both in there. Some people are doing it in order to consult in the field; others are doing it because they're managers and it's stuff that they can use as a manager and in developing their own organization and staff. So I find it useful whichever role I'm in.

REINIER: And so did you choose to do it because you wanted to do it?

BECK: Oh, yeah. Yes. I had always liked that field, in fact always considered that that was really my field from the time I was doing it in my first Forest Service job. At the time I wanted to go back for the graduate degree, I was really wanting to return to that kind of work. I had been in managerial jobs in my last two jobs, but I had always been interested in returning to that field as a consultant either internally in an organization or externally as a consultant to organizations. So it just felt like it was the time to go back and renew my skills in that area and learn some new things and get a degree in my portfolio in that field. So it turned out to be good timing for me.

REINIER: And then in 1999 you became co-director of State and Private Forestry for Region 5.

BECK: Actually, what I did pretty much was go back into the job I had been in. I was in the internal consultant role really longer than initially had been planned. It was going to be a year to eighteen months. It was almost three years for various reasons, probably one of which was the death of Jean as one of the deputy regional foresters. That left a gap on that team. I think the reorganization and the transition just took a lot longer than had been expected. I think the Regional Forester Team was valuing having someone in the role I was playing because there was continuing change. It wasn't just a question of getting into a new organization; as is always true in organizations, there was continuing stuff that came along. So they had continued me in that role really as an internal consultant to the Regional Forester Team during some difficult times.

Then Lynn, who was the regional forester at the time, retired. I think that was part of the political changes at that level of regional foresters. I think he felt that he had to retire. I don't know that he was actually directly asked to, but he may have been. It was not really just a

pure choice of "Gee I'm ready to retire." It was part of that changeover in the regional foresters. So he left and a new group of folks came in. There had still been a vacancy in one of the deputy regional forester jobs or another almost the whole time. They hadn't had a full complement of three deputies really since Jean had passed away. And so two new deputies had been selected and came in right before Lynn left. Then one of them was asked to be acting regional forester, which left a vacancy there again with a deputy essentially.

REINIER: These are people that came from outside?

BECK: They came from other regions in the Forest Service. But I also think then at that point they were looking at what's going on here, what have we got in terms of our staff. They both weren't quite sure what to do with an internal consultant; that was a new concept to them, plus they felt like they really needed another person back in the State and Private Forestry staff. When Jean left and I left, really the whole leadership burden in that staff fell on the other assistant director.

REINIER: And that was?

BECK: That was John Neisess. So John really had been carrying the load in all of that. Neither Jean nor I had come back for different reasons and it was a huge load. I think John was enjoying it, but he was also working very, very hard running a staff as one leader when there actually had been three. And he and I had talked quite a lot about that, and we both felt that we neither needed nor could afford three leadership positions again in the staff. Again, with budget cuts, we felt a director and two assistant directors we just couldn't afford it. One probably wasn't enough. He was doing a wonderful job, but again just working much harder than anyone should have been expected to work. I think the leadership group was seeing that too, and asked me to go back in to the other assistant director role. That was at that point in time. And again, they asked me and John how we wanted that to work. They wanted to fill the director job. They were quite uncomfortable that that job had been vacant all that time. Of course, John had really been acting in it. John had been the director, but he never really had officially had the job.

REINIER: He was called the assistant director?

BECK: Well, he was called the acting assistant regional forester. Actually, the previous team had been trying, because he had done that for so long, to get approval to just promote him in place, which of course he was wanting to have happen. All of this change happened at a very difficult time. All of a sudden the leadership that had been supporting that had left. So the new group came in and said, "Well, we probably need to advertise and fill that job, but in the meantime, while we're kind of figuring that out, we'll put Leigh back in there [in the other assistant director job]." John and I looked at that, and they said, "How do you guys want to do it, at least for the short time?" It was intended to be a short time. And we said, "Well, we'll be co-directors," again, while this was going on. We did that for a while and, again, that extended to be a much longer time period than they intended. So we were back working as a team, this time a team of two, leading the staff for a while.

REINIER: That seems to be another way, though, that political change filters down to the staff on the Forest Service. You might have an expectation of a promotion or something and then you're dealing with a whole new set of superiors.

BECK: Um hmm. Exactly. And you know at the time really both John and I had been heading in different directions because he was hoping to get that director job. I was really wanting to continue doing the organization development work and move in that direction as opposed to

going back into management. So at that point it wasn't quite what either of us had wanted for our own careers, but we found ourselves back as we had been before doing the team approach.

REINIER: Did you divide the programs up between you?

BECK: I assumed the supervision of the Cooperative Forestry programs; that was the natural division. But I think again we worked as a team in terms of the overall leadership issues, and again we liked doing it. Even though we both had kind of wanted different things for ourselves personally, we worked well as a team and we liked doing that. We had very different styles, but that was a very compatible thing for the two of us in terms of merging those styles, bringing different things to it and working together on the overall leadership issues for the staff. So that was how we did it. We had separate groups of programs, but we worked together on things like budget and the staff policy and again shared the leadership duties in terms of attending meetings. We were both during that time period considered members of the Regional Leadership Team, so we both went to the Regional Leadership meetings and morning staff meetings and things like that.

REINIER: So how did that work out then? When the change finally came? I see that you had a detail as acting deputy regional forester in State and Private Forestry in 2000.

BECK: Yes, and again this is just another example of the fact that change is continual. The woman who had come in back when the leadership group changed in the deputy regional forester role for State and Private Forestry was Roberta Moltzen. Roberta was there, so John and I essentially both reported to Roberta. She was there for about a year and a half and got a job with the Bureau of Land Management, which we were sad about. We had enjoyed very much working with Roberta, but she was moving on with her career. And so the Regional Forester Team again had a gap on their staff. It was vacant for a little while and then they did ask me to be acting in that role for a time period until they were able to fill it. So I, once again, was moving out of the staff and John was holding the whole ball of wax. So they did at that point give us both temporary promotions, me in the deputy role and him in the director role. It was another shift after again being team members for a while in terms of co-leading the staff.

REINIER: So as acting deputy regional forester in State and Private Forestry what were your responsibilities? What did you do?

BECK: In that role I supervised several staffs. Even though the title there is State and Private Forestry, that deputy has a larger portfolio than just the State and Private Forestry program. So I did supervise the State and Private Forestry staff, but also the Fire and Aviation Management staff, and the Public Use and Facilities staff, which included both the recreation program and the engineering program in the national forests. That was interesting because that was one of the staffs that had been combined back under the original reorganization.

REINIER: Recreation and engineering?

BECK: One of the last ones. Yes, and the philosophy there, again, what the Regional Forester Team that had done that was trying to accomplish, they were looking at the public uses of the national forest. That's why the name was "Public Use and Facilities." So it was looking at what are our functions that are dealing with the needs of the public on these lands, whether it was the recreational facilities or the roads and the other things that the engineering group dealt with that were making the forest more accessible to the public. So that was some of the philosophy of combining them. But that was one of the last staffs that remained combined, and now it is essentially functioning as two staffs again. There is an organization proposal back in Washington to separate it into two staffs again. [Laughter] But at any rate, for the moment technically it is

still one, I believe. So this deputy had that portfolio of programs and supervised the Tribal Relations Program manager for the region. And then the deputy was a part of that Regional Forester Team with the regional forester and two other deputies, one for administration and one for natural resources. Interestingly, the natural resources deputy was also vacant at that time, so again there were different people acting in that role during this time period too. So that team really, for a long time, had not had a full complement of players on it without some of them being acting.

REINIER: Were there things that happened in any of those areas during that time period that we should talk about?

BECK: Well, probably one of the most interesting things that did happen in that time period was the initiation of the National Fire Plan. Certainly, our last several fire seasons in this country have been major in terms serious fires and damage. Coming out of that there were several different studies and groups looking at what needs to happen with the fire situation. The culmination was the National Fire Plan, which was jointly recommended by the secretaries of agriculture and interior, but it came out as some of the work of the Forest Service, and actually in large part was authored by my old boss, Michael Rains, who had headed up one of the groups that was studying the fire situation. The National Fire Plan has been a real major focus of emphasis on the fire situation, but not just in terms of fire management. It's intended to be an integrated kind of a cross program look at what we're doing on the land in terms of protecting communities from fire danger. There is a piece of it that is fire preparedness and getting our fire fighting forces up to the level that they can really do the job they need to do in fighting wild fires. There is also a component on restoration of fire-damaged ecosystems that involves some of our other program areas and staffs. There's an area on community assistance, which again ties into the State and Private Forestry programs and the Economic Action programs that we talked about earlier in terms of being able to get dollars to communities to deal with things like making their communities fire safe and dealing with fuels treatments on private lands. The fuels component itself, that's another major component of it, is how are we treating fuels on public or private lands to reduce the fire danger. Another part of the community assistance piece is the State Fire Assistance part again which provides assistance through the state forestry agencies.

[End Tape 5, Side B]

Tape 6, Side A: Working with State and Private Forestry in the state of Hawaii and U.S. territories and affiliated countries in the Pacific—Island ecosystems—Urban and Community Forestry—State and Territorial Foresters—Travel to the islands—Working with different cultures—Maintaining ties with the Washington Office—State and Private Forestry in different regions.

REINIER: Leigh, we haven't said anything about your responsibilities in Region 5 outside of California.

BECK: Right. There is really a whole additional and different group of partners that we worked with out in the Pacific. We've talked a lot about California being such a diverse state and with really diversity of environment and people and social and political issues. But with the State and Private Forestry program, we also work with the state of Hawaii and with the U.S. territories and affiliated countries out in the Pacific. I think all too often even within the Forest Service people refer to Region 5 as the California region because all of the eighteen national forests that are in the region are in California. But our partners and clients actually stretch across the whole ocean out there. Something I like to say, just to give people a sense of the breadth of it, is we cross both the international dateline and the equator in this region. So we're much more than just California. And there is a whole range of issues in tropical forestry and in island ecosystems that we're dealing with, whether it's with the state of Hawaii, which is an island state, or with territories and actual countries that are miles away and many miles across the ocean, and in many cases have different cultures, different governments and other types of differences.

REINIER: So not just Hawaii but also island territories?

BECK: Oh, yes, yes. There actually are six entities out in the Pacific beyond Hawaii that we work with. Three are actually U.S. possessions and that would be American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, which is composed of a number of islands. Three major ones, all of which have some of our programs, are Saipan, Tinion, and Rota, but then there are many other smaller islands that are part of that commonwealth. And then there are actually three other entities out there that are eligible for at least some of our programs. They were part of the former Trust Territory of the Pacific that was formed by the United Nations after World War II. Of all the islands that were part of the Trust Territory, some took different paths. Some chose to become a territory, like Guam. There are three that actually chose the route of independence but with compacts of free association with the United States, and under those compacts they both have some protections through the U.S. military and they also are eligible for many of the domestic programs through the federal government that the states are eligible for. Those three countries are the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. So, very fascinating places to work with.

The thing that I have realized too since I've been working with them is some of them, again, are not just one island. The Federated States of Micronesia actually has four states within their country and the four states are very diverse culturally. They really are separate but came together as the Federated States, and they are spread over 2000 miles of ocean in the Pacific. The four states are Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. So working in the Pacific is a fascinating experience. Each of those four states has different topography, different resource issues, different culture, different language, although they all speak English but they all have their own native language too. So it's a fascinating experience to work out in the islands, both from the natural resource side, from the cultural side, just from many angles. I think it also has really given me a much better sense of the fact that our natural resource issues are global issues.

We've talked a lot about crossing boundaries within the United States, and I think to really deal with natural resource issues, we have to look at the global scale. We really in this day and age are a small planet, and what happens in natural resources in any part of the planet, really ultimately is part of a global picture.

REINIER: What kind of issues did you deal with in the Pacific?

BECK: One of the things that you're very aware of when you're working out in the islands is the island ecosystem, which, of course, is in a way different than mainland ecosystems largely because of the size. If anyone wants to really get a sense of what an ecosystem is, an island is a wonderful place to do that because you really see the full scope of parts of the island and how impacts on the environment in one part affect the others. Whether it's from the mountains to the coast, it's a smaller distance and it's very visible what can happen if part of the ecosystem is disturbed. An issue that's important to them out there are watershed issues because again their water is very important on the islands. You see what can happen in their interior regions or in the islands that are high islands that are the volcanic islands, certainly the mountainous regions, and how that top of the watershed connects right down to the coast. You see their issues on the coast particularly with the mangrove forests that are growing right out in the water that are critical to their overall island health and are the breeding grounds for the fish. One thing many of the islands are really dealing with is what happens when development comes in. They may take out stretches of that mangrove coast, and you can see the impact on their natural environment in so many ways from taking out even a small stretch of that coast for development. So yeah, the watershed issues are important.

One thing we've worked a little bit with them on and may be looking at more is related to the rural development area. It's looking at, if they are having development pressures, are there alternatives they can look at like eco-tourism, where they're bringing the tourism in but in ways that are less impactful on their environment, maybe building catwalks and bridges over areas where people can go and observe the environment without impacting it. And so that's an interesting area.

An issue that the islands deal with a lot is soil erosion. Many of them are right on the path of some of the cyclones that come through. Guam is impacted regularly with being hit with... Now I have to stop and think. In Guam is it a cyclone or a typhoon? They're all the same thing as hurricanes but which side of the equator and the dateline you're on is important. I think it's a typhoon in Guam. [Laughter] But they're hit regularly, and that often really damages their vegetation. So one of the things they really worked with and some of our programs have been involved with it is tree plantings to prevent the soil erosion. Then, what you do see in the tropical ecosystem is how quickly things come back. They have to because they know the next typhoon will be coming through in another maybe ten years, if that long. And so you see the vegetation that adapts quickly and does quickly take hold, and the growth out there is phenomenal for people who are used to looking at mainland ecosystems in terms of how quickly the environment does replenish itself out there after a typhoon comes through.

We work with them in Urban and Community Forestry with the focus being on community. There are not a lot of major urban areas there, but what we see in the islands are communities that are very tied to the natural resources. So again with the community forestry, they've often used some of those programs to do urban agro-forestry where they're doing plantings in their parks. They may be fruit trees, and the community participates and takes care of them and probably enjoys the fruits from them also. And we see a lot of school involvement in the Urban and Community Forestry school plantings, many of which really improve their schoolyards too in terms of the shade. And we've seen island beautification programs with some of those program funds, again looking at attracting tourism into their island economies.

I think earlier I mentioned issues with invasive species, which are again very important to them. When you have invasives come into an island, they can rather quickly take hold and threaten their native vegetation and really take over. So I think the island foresters are further ahead than many of the mainland state foresters in having struggled with that issue. They're still looking also for help and answers, but it's something that they have learned a lot about over the last number of years and probably can help raise awareness with some of their colleagues in the mainland U.S.

REINIER: Well now, in Hawaii you're working with the state forester again...

BECK: ...Yes. Yes.

REINIER: ...as you would be here, but on the other islands who are you working with?

BECK: Well, they do all have forestry organizations of some types. So the title of our contact may vary but they have essentially the counterpart of a state forester, a territorial forester. Interestingly, in American Samoa their territorial forester actually is employed through the land grant college there in Samoa. Most places the state forester or territorial forester is going to be in a department either of agriculture or of natural resources. Again, that varies, even in the mainland states, what their state structure is. But in Samoa it is through the college. And the person who's in that position also actually teaches and I think is required to teach some courses at the college. That's an interesting situation too with Samoa because that position also is actually a contract position on a two-year contract.

That illustrates something that is also an issue in many of the islands, which is developing and keeping local expertise in forestry. Samoa has really struggled with that and has found they have to, at least are currently, still going outside to bring people in to play that role because they don't have people trained in forestry locally who also then will stay and do the work there. Often they've had folks go off and get the education and then decide that they would use it somewhere else as opposed to coming back to American Samoa. I think a lot of the islands have struggled with that. Also, they, just like the Forest Service and many state forestry organizations are hitting a point that's kind of the graying of their work forces. They are looking around and saying, "Many of us who are in leadership roles now are going to be retiring, and yet we have very few young people in our pipeline who have the natural resource education and background. Where will we get our local leaders of the future?" That's another area we're where we're trying to work with them on is how can we help get some folks some developmental training.

There are some folks at our Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry, which is located in Honolulu; I think I mentioned that group earlier. It's under our research station but we do have some folks there that are actually funded by us in the region through State and Private Forestry, who help carry out that part of our program out there. Actually, one of the research leaders there has done some wonderful work in intern programs. Her name is Kathy Ewel, and I think because she's wanted to have students who could help with the research work there, but she's really looked at how do I get local kids who are on some of the islands we're working with interested in natural resources and wanting to get that education and be interested both in the research and then also maybe in the implementation back on their own home islands of some of these natural resource programs. That's an ongoing effort and there's been some really good connections made there for students.

REINIER: So is part of your job now to travel out to the islands to supervise?

BECK: I do get out there, usually at least once a year to some of the further out islands, to Hawaii I think several times a year probably for meetings. At least once a year the heads of all of those organizations come together for a meeting. They had formed a committee partly to help themselves share resources and learn from each other because the resources that they've had and even our available grant dollars to them are not vast. So maybe, oh, I think it's been six or seven years ago they formed the Pacific Islands Committee, which is actually the sub-committee of the Western Council of State Foresters. In my position I am a member of that committee, so usually I will go to that meeting on whatever host island that is sponsoring it that year and then also tie some other work into it. The last several years, myself and several members of my staff have also done a program review on whichever host island was sponsoring the meeting that year and then provided some other kinds of training or technical assistance while we were out in that part of the region. I have had some wonderful experiences out there. And usually when I go it's a relatively long trip in order to try to maximize benefit from the cost of the plane ticket and the fact that I'm out there.

REINIER: Well, that sounds absolutely fascinating. What were some of the global issues that you've been introduced to through this work in the islands?

BECK: Well, to me I think the most important thing is just realizing that really no country is just alone in dealing with its resource issues, that whether we're looking at future wood supply or health of the planet or water and other resource issues, that it really is a much bigger picture than any one country's own issues and concerns. There actually is coming up, interestingly, a follow-up to the International Forestry Summit held in Rio about ten years ago to look at what are our collective responsibilities in managing our forests worldwide. There were agreements that came out of that, and there's actually a ten-year follow-up summit to that being planned right now that will be in South Africa sometime within the next year, again to bring leaders together from countries around the world to look at how are we together working to sustain the health of our forests on the planet as a whole along with other sustainability issues. In fact, the title of this conference has to do with sustainability. I'm not sure of the full name, but it's around that whole issue of sustainability and how do we, as we look ahead, how are we assuring that we're sustaining for future generations the type of forest and other resources that we now have through wise use and management and conservation.

REINIER: Have you had the opportunity to attend those conferences?

BECK: No, I haven't. I would dearly love to! [Laughter] But certainly, there will be good delegations there from the United States. Actually, the Forest Service lead liaison for the conference is Ruth McWilliams, who is someone I know out of the Washington office who has a major role in sustainability within the Forest Service. And actually the group she works with, a team of two folks who have been working with sustainability, has just been reassigned back into the State and Private deputy area, which I'm pleased about because that will help us in working with those issues. I also just found out last week that part of the U.S. delegation or group that's been invited to participate in that conference is Tree People down in Los Angeles, which is a long established group that works with urban forestry issues. You may have heard of them headed by Andy and Katie Lipkis. They're leaders in that area [urban forestry], and I understand that their organization has been asked to participate in the sustainability summit. So there will be some good representation there and many people, I'm sure, from the U.S. and other countries who will bring a lot to that.

REINIER: Well, that's a fascinating part of your job!

BECK: It is. It is. It certainly has exposed me to a lot of new things in areas I enjoy, both on the natural resource side and also on the cultural side and working with people in different

countries and in different ways. Learning about how people do business differently in other countries has been a good experience too.

REINIER: Do you want to give us any examples of that or experiences that you've had?

BECK: Again it may be similar even to some of the things I talked about when I talked about working with that tribal workshop way back in terms of different ways of communicating, sometimes different paces of work, different political systems, and needing to learn enough about what your partners' needs are and how they need to do business in order to be effective. I think if we went in and said we're going to operate these programs exactly in Palau the same way we do in Northern California, it would not be effective. I'm trying to think of a good example. One of the things we learned when we were in the Federated States of Micronesia recently is their community involvement work, or the way their programs really are made known to their publics is really all through their going out and visiting in communities. We work in other places where there's more media, brochures produced, or there's an office and folks come in to get information. We talked with them about how do people find out about your programs. They're going out one-on-one into the villages and communities and sitting down and talking with folks.

REINIER: Isn't that interesting.

BECK: Which is very effective.

REINIER: Probably the most effective.

BECK: Yeah. Absolutely. So yes, it's been very interesting to get to work in that part of the world.

REINIER: I didn't ask you before on the tape. You grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, and now you're a Westerner!

BECK: Um hmm.

REINIER: [Laughing] Have you enjoyed coming to the West and working in the West?

BECK: Oh, very much. Yes. There are similar issues and yet there are also very different issues around the country. I find the West to be exciting, maybe just because there is so much diversity within the West. Certainly particularly with the partners I work with, between the islands and California, there's every possible kind of resource challenge and organization and political entity, from dealing with independent countries to dealing with the state of California, which is large enough and rich enough to be an independent country, a much larger one than some of the actually independent countries we work with in the Pacific. And I think the complexity of issues has been interesting, the fact that often in California we find ourselves the leading edge of emerging issues, both resource-wise and socio-political issues and economic issues, and dealing with the very vocal publics who raise issues. I think working out with the islands also is always feeling like it's something new and different. While it may at first not seem like it's the leading edge issues in the same way, as far as dealing with the development pressures, with the invasive-species issues, with the global resource issues, a lot of that is really emerging issue type of stuff too. So it's never dull.

REINIER: Absolutely fascinating. Now even though you're here in the West, you still keep up your ties with the Washington office, it seems to me.

BECK: Oh, yes.

REINIER: How do you do that? Do you know people there?

BECK: Oh, yes. Definitely I do. But also again, through our program, even though the Forest Service is de-centralized in a lot of ways, we're still part of a national program. So the program leadership in the Washington office stays in touch with all of us in the field. So we always know the State and Private Forestry leadership back there. In fact, just two weeks ago there was a major national meeting for all of the State and Private Forestry field leadership with our relatively new deputy chief who's just come on, Joel Holtrup. It was an excellent meeting. We were looking at what are some of our priorities heading forward and responding to some input that actually the state foresters gave us recently. They did a review of our Washington office State and Private Forestry, which I thought was wonderful. We are always reviewing our partners and this was a chance for them to come and review us, and say, "Here's some things that we'd like you to look at." So that was a good meeting. So we work together with both the Washington office and counterparts around the country in forums like that.

Especially here in the West, I think I talked earlier about the seven regions and the fact that there's not one organization here but many that work with the states. The group of us that are essentially the counterparts to my position, those seven regions, we get together periodically, usually at least once a year and sometimes other times on phone calls or something to share what's going on and look at issues we're facing and try to do some problem-solving together, sometimes look at sharing resources. We're right in the process now of actually creating a shared position with three of those regions for a program that's growing where neither of us can really afford a full-time position, but we feel we need some focused expertise. So we're creating a position that will serve the Region 5 states and territories; and then Region 6--Oregon and Washington; and Region 10--which is the state of Alaska. So we do a lot of sharing and working together around the country.

REINIER: Do all of the regions have a comparable emphasis in State and Private Forestry or is the area more developed in some regions than in others?

BECK: I'm sure there is difference, which could have to do with leadership emphasis on it, but it's also structured a little differently in different regions, especially in the West, in terms of where it fits in the organization or what programs are together. Just an example of that is that I have all the Cooperative Forestry Programs and the Forest Health Protection program. In some regions those are in separate staffs. Some of the State and Private Directors have Cooperative Forestry and Fire but not Forest Health Protection. Some have just the Cooperative Forestry and Forest Health Protection separate. So it's a mixed bag. What is emphasized in different regions may vary depending on their issues and needs, so it's not exactly the same everywhere.

REINIER: Is California in the forefront in its emphasis on community and urban forestry in your cooperative program or the rural development program?

BECK: Actually, both are major programs for us. There's an example of the diversity within California. Certainly Southern California is a major urban environment.

REINIER: Yes.

BECK: And in fact I think I mentioned earlier that a group of forests have identified themselves as urban national forests, and all four of our southern national forests in California are charter members of that group.

REINIER: Yes.

BECK: Quite apparently the Angeles, the Cleveland National Forest headquartered in San Diego, the San Bernardino National Forest and the Los Padres National Forest are all in rock throwing distance of major urban centers and are needing to focus on how they're working with urban publics.

[End Tape 6, Side A]

Tape 6, Side B: Cooperative Forestry programs—Working with the Federated States of Micronesia—Channeling grant dollars—Review of Programs—Working on a budget.

BECK: I was saying, of course, the Urban and Community Forestry program has lots of activity in the L.A. area and there are many partners down there that we work with, like Tree People that I mentioned earlier, and many others. Also the San Francisco area has many urban forestry non-profit groups and people involved in it. And then there are communities around the state that participate through CDF [California Department of Forestry] in urban and community forestry activities. On the rural development side, of course, Northern California, there is a focus there. The northern part of the state is part of that Northwest Forest Plan we've talked about, which had actually even a special program with additional funding for the Pacific Northwest Rural Community Assistance Program targeted towards those Northern California communities. And then communities all down through the Sierra have been involved for years in those economic action programs and community involvement. So around the state there are even different emphases, but I think both of those programs have been very important ones in California.

REINIER: And then the islands are a whole different... Do you have those kinds of cooperative forestry programs on the islands?

BECK: Oh yes. Yes.

REINIER: Urban and rural programs?

BECK: The rural development program really has not been very involved in the islands, other than in Hawaii. We're involved with Hawaii in funding for an effort called the Hawaii Forests and Communities Initiative. Interestingly, part of what Hawaii is looking at is almost the flip side of what Northern California was dealing with in terms of downturn in the timber industry and how to diversify the economy and look at moving in different directions with the timber industry slowing down. Hawaii has been dealing with the decline in the sugar industry, the sugar cane, and one of the things they had been looking at over a number of years is how might we develop forest industry and more of a focus on forestry, in part utilizing the former sugar cane lands. Part of this Hawaii Forests and Communities Initiative is trying to look at some of those issues and also how through the ties to forestry our communities are being enhanced. So that's an interesting piece. Other than that, the rural development program has not really been very big in the islands. We've talked about possibly working with them on some of the eco-tourism possibilities through that program, but that's maybe in the future.

The two largest programs out there have been the Urban and Community Forestry program, again focusing on the community piece of that, and then the Landowner Assistance Programs, which are the ones that help the private land owners really deal with getting plans on their private forest land and learning to manage it. And then another part of that Landowner Assistance Program package that's very important to the islands is the seedlings and nurseries part of it. There's a program, actually it's been re-titled now; it used to be Seedlings, Nurseries, and Trees Improvement, and now it's Reforestation... Oh gosh, I have to stop and think. The acronym is RNGR. Reforestation, Nurseries and Genetic Improvement, I believe. Genetic something. I'm sorry. [Laughing] I would know it if I wasn't being taped Jackie.

[Laughter]

BECK: But again partly because so much of their programs revolve around the communities, their nurseries are often kind of the center of their programs. They produce tree seedlings that

then they make available to people in the community. And so that's a major program that we're able to support, both through that RNGR program and to some degree through Urban and Community Forestry. Because the trees they're producing are for urban or for community areas, there can be some contributions through that program. So those are the big ones out there. And then also, over the years we've been getting into place a Cooperative Forest Health Protection Program with each of the islands. I believe this year was the first year we actually were able to bring every one of them into that program. And so that's going to be one we're going to want to continue to really work and build with them, especially to help deal with the invasive species issues and things of that nature. So those are the programs that are big in the islands. And, of course, all of those are here in California also.

REINIER: Fascinating.

BECK: It is. It's never dull. [Laughter]

REINIER: I'm so fascinated by this extension that you're talking about of Region 5, all the way out to Micronesia. Tell me a little bit more about working with Micronesia.

BECK: Actually, the country that is the Federated States of Micronesia is in itself quite a far-flung and diverse country. It's interesting because I remember when I was in the Washington office being vaguely aware there were islands out there, but I kind of thought of it as, well, there's Guam. I think for a long time, too, through our programs the allocation process really recognized one state share that all those islands could share. What I've realized since I've been here is that not only are there six entities, but some of them, like the Federated States of Micronesia are composed of multiple entities. And I think one of the things that we've accomplished over the last number of years is really getting that kind of recognition through the allocation process. There is not one group of islands past Hawaii, there are six complex places. We've gotten recognition of a different standing for them in the allocation process, which has also happened for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. My colleague, John Neisess, played a real major role in getting that recognition through our Washington office and getting some more equitable funding out to the islands.

But an interesting example in FSM, the Federated States of Micronesia, is that they are still considered one entity through our process. They have to look at programs in their four separate states. The state forester counterpart for us is in their national government on Pohnpei, but he has a very challenging job because he has to coordinate grant proposals coming in from each of the four states and put them into one package and set some priorities with their individual state foresters to submit to us as a grant application. What we learned there during a recent review is they're in many ways a much looser federation than we thought. The national government doesn't exercise a lot of control. They are designated as the entity through whom all dollars will flow; all federal assistance has to go through them the way it does with us, but then there's a lot of independence in the four different states. One of the issues they were struggling with, with our programs, is often by the time a grant actually got to them, got to their department of finance, got sent out to their individual state departments of finance, and got through all of the red tape at each level along the way, sometimes the program managers in an individual state like Kosrae would get their funding within weeks of the time the year-long grant was going to expire. They were constantly coming back to us and asking for grant extensions. One of the things we just worked out with them in our recent review is to try to go to a two-year grant cycle where two of their states actually would get a grant every other year, have the opportunity to apply for a two-year program in their program areas, and then the next year the other two would, which both would give them the chance to put together a more comprehensive program and a two-year time window to carry it out before the dollars were going to expire. So we're just transitioning into that this year. But I think it is another example of how we need to

look at the needs of our partners out there because that was being pretty difficult for them and us both on the financial management side.

REINIER: Yes.

BECK: Just the length of time it was taking to get the dollars from us all the way to the ground out there. [Laughing]

REINIER: A lot of what you do is really grant administration, isn't it?

BECK: It is a large piece of it. There's that financial assistance and there's technical assistance. I don't know if I talked about this with the grants before, but our grant dollars are all required to be matched locally. Many times they are both overmatched or they're matched again out in communities when the states then will sub-grant out and communities will match again. So they're often quite well leveraged by the time a project is done. So when we get a grant application, say from Kosrae, they show on their application not only what will be done with our dollars but what the match will be. Really their total program includes both the dollars that will be contributed by us and their match, whether it's through their own government or community or match in kind with people who have been working on the project. It's not a simple pass through of dollars, but it's a development of a joint program with resources contributed by multiple partners in those cases.

REINIER: And then are you responsible for review of those projects that you've given the grant monies for?

BECK: Yes. And we work with them on an ongoing basis in terms of what's being accomplished. They provide progress reports to us, quarterly is the schedule, and at the end of a grant a final progress report. Then, as I mentioned earlier, periodically we conduct an overall program review with each of them. That may just happen every five years, but that's when we go out and really look across the board at how the programs are being managed and how the finances are being managed and what's being accomplished. Hopefully though, we're in touch with them in an ongoing fashion enough that we know those things. There's accomplishment reporting annually in addition to on the grant cycle where we gather information from them on what they've accomplished that year in the programs. And so we should be knowing on an ongoing basis what's happening on the ground as a result of these programs.

REINIER: Are these grants competitive?

BECK: The ones that go to the states and territories usually are not. There are dollars that are again allocated based on some national formulas that then come through us. We have to do some negotiating then amongst the states and territories we work with around actually what would be the available dollars to them because there are also other costs. All of our administration and overhead comes out of the overall allocation to the region. But it's based initially on formulas based on data related to the states we serve in terms of things like acres of non-industrial private forestland, or numbers of communities and population figures on the urban side. So there are dollar amounts that actually are allocated to them. What we will do is give them grant advice that will say, "Well, this year there is this much money available to you in Urban and Community Forestry." Then they will come back to us with a proposal that says, "Here are the things this year we would like to do in Urban and Community Forestry." They can apply for up to that amount we've given them. They might one year say, "We can't use that much money." They might another year say, "Gee, we've got some additional projects if you have any extra money; could you fund these?" But the basic grant is not really competitive. As

long as they give us a grant proposal that meets the criteria, that meets the goals of that program, and that we feel is a valid and good one in terms of our ongoing work with them.

REINIER: Now is that budget allocation your job?

BECK: Yes, it is, in terms of what are the available grant dollars for each state, if that's what you're asking. We get an allocation from Washington based on the appropriation.

REINIER: But distributing that in the various ways and adjusting that for your departmental needs here...

BECK: Um hmm.

REINIER: All of that, that is a big budget job.

BECK: Oh yes, yes.

REINIER: That's an important aspect of your job.

BECK: Absolutely. Absolutely. And when I say "my" job, I'm not saying my job alone. I'm including my staff's job. I get a lot of help on the budget. [Laughter]

REINIER: So, as you mentioned, you have people who specifically work with that.

BECK: Yes. Oh, yeah. And all of our program managers have a piece of it. Now you were asking about competitive grants earlier. The rural community assistance grants actually are competitive, the ones that come in from communities. They're administered through the national forests as opposed to through the state forester, so that process is a little different.

REINIER: I see.

BECK: There's certainly a big budget and grant role too.

REINIER: So you have review committees then that select among the different competing groups or communities? How does that work?

BECK: Actually, there usually is a team of folks who review the proposals that come in based on the criteria for that program and any emphasis that year, a part of that selection process. Through the National Fire Plan, we've been working through the California Fire Alliance which is a multi-agency group, state, federal, and local fire agencies, many of whom have their own grant programs and dollars available through their regular program. We've been trying to work collaboratively with them to look across all those different agency programs at how can we jointly use our resources to meet community needs. So many of those folks with different agencies like the Bureau of Land Management and, of course, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, have helped review some of our grant proposals when they come in. Sometimes we've found proposals that have come to us that really could be better funded by one of them and we've been able to just share. We're hoping even next year possibly to go out with one consolidated request for proposals for all those programs so it's more like one-stop shopping for communities.

REINIER: And so part of your job too must be publicity to let communities know that this kind of help is available.

BECK: Well yes, certainly there is a big role in getting the word out there to them.

REINIER: Yes.

BECK: And again, there are a lot of people involved in that. Some of that would initiate with our program managers and then through the forest, with the contacts there. Most of the forests have someone who is not a full-time but at least a collateral duty working with the economic action programs, who is in close touch with their communities. Often those people are part of their public affairs shops, so they also have some skills in reaching out with external communication.

REINIER: It seems to me so exciting that you actually can do something about a lot of these issues, that you have the resources that you can actually make some difference!

BECK: Yeah, yeah. And it is exciting. It just is definitely a white hat part of the Forest Service. It's a part of the Forest Service where people are glad to see us coming most of the time. [Laughter] It's pretty rewarding. We get to do some positive things.

REINIER: I should say.

[End Tape 6, Side B]

Tape 7, Side A: Becoming Director of State and Private Forestry in Region 5—Working with a staff—Serving on the Regional Leadership Team—Goals for State and Private Forestry—Being a woman in a Leadership role—Mentoring in the Forest Service—Changes in Management style—Being a change agent in a large government agency—Working with different publics.

REINIER: Leigh, how did you receive your current position as director of the State and Private Forestry staff in Region 5?

BECK: Well, as I mentioned earlier, the director position actually had been vacant for about five years, ever since Jean Hall had left for her assignment before her death. And so the position had never been filled. As I mentioned, the new team that came in after Lynn retired had wanted to fill it rather quickly, but I think other priorities and alligators came to their attention and, quite frankly, I think they were very pleased with the way things were operating in State and Private Forestry. John and I were leading the staff as a team and we liked doing that. I think they saw us as doing a good job with it. But here was a vacant director position that I think they felt they needed to fill and possibly were getting pressure from Washington to fill. Actually, John and I proposed to them that they just abolish the director position [laughing] and let us be co-team leaders, but they didn't feel they could do that. So they did eventually advertise the director position. This was during the time period that I was in the acting role as acting deputy regional forester. And they also advertised the deputy regional forester position for State and Private during that time period. So actually, I applied for both of those positions and was selected as the director of State and Private Forestry right at the end of December 2000. Time is flying, so.

REINIER: So now you're the director. What does that mean? Do you have assistant directors then?

BECK: There is still essentially an assistant director position as for Forest Health Protection. Again, as I mentioned, we really did not feel that we could afford three leadership positions anymore. So the position I had been in, the assistant director for Cooperative Forestry position was not filled, and at this point I have no plans to fill it.

REINIER: So you've just kept the same division between you and John that you had previously.

BECK: In terms of direct program supervision, I still directly supervise the program managers for the Cooperative Forestry Programs and then I also supervise John as the assistant director for Forest Health Protection. But then he leads that whole program area and supervises the folks in that program, yeah.

REINIER: I see. Let me just ask you this. How large a staff do you have?

BECK: Oh, I always have to stop and count [laughter] the actual number of people, which is embarrassing. I don't know why I don't keep that number in my head. I almost have to add them up. I'm thinking it's around seventeen or eighteen folks right now total but that could be a little short or a little high; I'd have to count.

REINIER: Are they all in the regional office?

BECK: They're not all physically in the regional office in Vallejo; they're all considered part of regional office staff. We have actually three people now that are located in Sacramento at the Remote Sensing Lab, which is actually a joint location with the Forest Service and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. They do a lot of remote sensing and GIS [Geographic Information Systems] work--both agencies do--from that location.

REINIER: You'd better explain that to me! Remote sensing and GIS work.

BECK: Okay. Well, what they are doing essentially is mapping and aerial survey and other types of work to record the landscape actually in various different layers and look at what is on the land, whether they're looking at what have we got out here in terms of insect and disease damage or fire damage or vegetation covers. It's mapping, but the remotely sensing part is aerial survey or satellites so that we're developing maps that show what's going on on the landscape. And of course again that really should be across ownerships, which is why it's very useful to have the state folks and our folks located right there so that we're looking at what's the whole picture in California of our landscape in various different configurations of what's out there in the land.

REINIER: Okay. And then other staff members are...

BECK: Well, again, in addition to the group that's right in Vallejo in our regional office, and who we have in Vallejo, obviously, again are our program managers on the Cooperative Forestry side for the Economic Action Programs, for Urban and Community Forestry, for the Land Owner Assistance programs. Then we have several key staff in the Forest Health Protection group that report to John, who have the lead on various components of that program. We have a budget coordinator and a grants coordinator again who is Nancy [Lollar], who I mentioned earlier, who has a major job in working with all of our grants to the states and partners. Then we also have a technology transfer position in Urban and Community Forestry that's joint with one of our research units, the Pacific Southwest Research Station and is located actually in Davis, California, where that Urban Forestry Research Center is. That position actually functions west-wide with all of the state foresters and territorial foresters that are part of the Western Coalition and takes the results of the urban forestry research that's being done there at Davis and tries to make it user friendly and translatable to the urban forestry practitioners and the communities. That's a relatively new position, so that's the other one that's remotely located from us. [And then we have one administrative support person, and we share a second administrative position with another staff].

REINIER: So then what is your role among the leadership in Region 5? Are you also part of a team of directors?

BECK: Yes. Yes. I am on the Regional Leadership Team, which includes all of the directors and all of the forest supervisors and deputy forest supervisors. That's the larger leadership team for the full region, along with the Regional Forester Team. And then, of course, the directors in the regional office still meet weekly and work together. As I said, it's grown back up to a larger group again and may be back up to eighteen by now; I think it probably is. But we do still work together. I think that, while the effort that Lynn had initiated may not have quite succeeded in terms of getting the cross program integration that he had wanted at the time through that reorganization, I think now with a lot of the things that are happening, we're finding we have to work that way more and more. Certainly with the National Fire Plan we need to because various tasks have different components of it. We're working together with some of the sub-regional efforts that are out there now like the Sierra Nevada Framework, the Southern California Conservation Strategy and still the Pacific Northwest Plan where different staffs are involved with it from their program areas. So we have to work together to be sure that the approach is well

integrated on the ground. So I think some of the intents of the earlier effort are probably now happening in a way that maybe has matured more since that point in time.

REINIER: Are there any goals that you want to achieve in this position?

BECK: To me, the thing I would really like to do is to advance even more this concept of looking at the larger landscape and looking at how we as a Forest Service are impacting a larger landscape in an integrated way, across State and Private and NFS programs and using all our programs and authorities to work with partners on a larger scale. I think again we still can do more with that. I think we're learning, but to me, if I can keep that out in front of the region and help us get there and help us develop the ways we're working with partners into some new ways, than that would be what I would really feel good about.

One thing the region is entering in on, and it's been an issue for many years in the region and one that keeps popping up as important, is water and watershed level management. We've launched into a new effort to look at that. A feature of it that folks are acknowledging as important is we've got to look at the whole watershed, not just the parts of it that are on national forest land. To me, that's real progress. Again, I want to help make that happen and help us look at how we do that in a way that really involves our partners appropriately and helps us do the best job we can across the landscape.

REINIER: Anything else?

BECK: Oh. Well, there is certainly a lot going on! If I was going to say there was one overriding goal to me that's what it would be, but that plays across an awful lot of our programs. Another big area I'll continue to be real involved with is the National Fire Plan and working with the community assistance component and then trying to work across with the fire staff and others on how we make that work. A big issue that we're working with on the forest health side with our partners both in the Pacific and in California is invasive species. That of course is a major issue with the islands, but it's also important on the mainland where we're working with things like introduction of new diseases like Sudden Oak Death, which is major in California. A member of our staff has been playing a major lead in the multi-agency task force that's been working with that in terms of both the research end and studying it and learning more about it. Then how do we operate to try to contain the spread, what do we do around appropriate quarantine. Right now there's some required quarantine, but how do we do that in a reasonable way that we're dealing with it and spreading information on it and again keeping all the partners involved. So there are those types of things. And all of these things, to me, again, play across the landscape; where there's a disease like that it's going to be on public and private land. There are many, many things that are going to keep us busy over the few years. If there's a theme I'd lay across it, it's again working with partners across the landscape, whatever the specific issue is.

REINIER: And are you able to use your organizational skills? They're very practical as the leader of the staff.

BECK: Well, I hope I'm using them! [Laughter] Sometimes it's probably hard to keep them forefront in your mind. But yeah, I find that that background comes in useful. And so, yeah, I probably use it every day.

REINIER: So you're really busy in this position, a position of such responsibility. And I'd like to talk a little bit more about...because I think this is a question that women face. How do you manage to balance a position of this responsibility with a personal life?

BECK: Well, I would say probably I don't do that terribly well, to be honest. It's something that I think is very important certainly, and I told you that I had really focused on it when I was doing my graduate work and study. We talk in the organizational world about the fact that your "self" is your most important instrument as a consultant. I think that's really true of leaders and managers. We don't always learn how to do that in those roles. So I think it's something that I constantly work on, but I can't say I have achieved all my goals in that area to be honest. Probably the main thing I do is try to keep it out in front of myself as something that is important and do some things in my personal life to kind of renew my batteries from time to time. But it's difficult. It's difficult. Like many of folks on our leadership team, I have a very difficult travel schedule. Trying to keep your personal life going when you're out of town a lot is hard. Trying to keep your job back home going when you're out of town a lot is very hard because there's a lot that needs to be done at home with the staff. And so it can be a difficult balance.

REINIER: You have to work hard to get ready to go and work hard when you come back.

BECK: Um hmm. Right. [Laughter]

REINIER: Now, in this leadership position that you're in, is there any way you'd like to reflect on being a woman in a leadership position in the Forest Service?

BECK: Oh. Well, for me during a lot of the time I've been in leadership roles I haven't thought about it much as being a woman in a leadership role. I can't say that I've never been aware of that. There've been times I've worried about how people might perceive me. I think we talked earlier about that. Especially when I was in the staff assistant job in Washington and definitely when I was in the deputy position in the Northeastern Area being worried that people would think I only got the job because of my gender. And maybe even worried that that was true, although I didn't really believe that it was--just worrying and feeling the need to be sure I did a really good job because I didn't want folks to think I didn't deserve the job. I probably have felt that some in California, probably especially because of the consent decree culture here and the fact that there still are people who lived through that, still probably people who feel that a lot of the women who are in leadership roles here maybe got them for those reasons.

Interestingly, I'm probably one of the few women who actually came to Region 5 during the consent decree for a downgrade. I actually took a grade down when I accepted the assistant director position in Cooperative Forestry. It fit what I was wanting on a personal level then and I wasn't that concerned about it. I thought that was ironic. But I think there still is some of that concern just about perceptions. I haven't felt necessarily that I had a harder job because of that. And any more it's rare for me to be in a situation where I'm the only woman in the room. I think it happened a week or two ago, and I went, "Gosh, this is strange!" It hadn't been like that for an awfully long time. Probably the biggest thing, again for me, has just been concern about people's perceptions. I think that probably still happens from time to time, but I don't worry as much about my ability to do the job or my competence. Anymore, I don't feel that that's such a strong thing. It's probably still there a little bit.

REINIER: Now as a woman who has moved into a leadership position in the Forest Service, have you worked to secure positions for other women and for minorities in your career, in terms of hiring and advancement?

BECK: I think I've probably been a mentor for other women...

REINIER: ...Good!

BECK: ...and for minorities. I think as far as helping people get jobs, I would say in the context of doing good outreach for positions I've filled and really considering all the applicants that came in, in that sense, yes. I'm not sure I could say I've gone out and tried to help a particular woman or a particular member of an ethnic group get a specific job in a targeted way.

REINIER: I'd like to know more about mentoring.

BECK: Well, I think the key to that is it needs to be something that happens based on people developing a relationship. I've been several places where groups or organizations have tried to set up formal mentoring programs and assign mentors. For some reason to me that doesn't even feel quite like it's a true mentoring relationship. For me what happens is when you know someone, and maybe an employee kind of identifies with you and feels that you're someone they can trust and learn from, there's a natural mentoring relationship that develops. What I've tried to do is just really be available to people where I felt that there was that kind of relationship. I have found through the years, too, I've even occasionally had people that I didn't know that well come in and just ask if they could talk to me about career opportunities and advice on jobs to apply for and things like that. And it's felt good to think some people have sought me out in that way.

REINIER: Have you done public speaking of that sort?

BECK: Not in a long time. I certainly used to back again probably when I was in Atlanta and Washington when I was doing a lot of training and consulting. Certainly one of the areas that I worked in a lot at that point again was workforce diversity. I did programs in that arena then. I can't say really that I've done much speaking about the subject since, probably just worked with it more on my own managerial career.

REINIER: Have people been mentors for you?

BECK: At various times people have. I think I mentioned before that in the organization development field Edie Seashore was a role model and a mentor for me. Probably within the Forest Service some of my bosses have played something of a mentor role, I think. Al West did when he was deputy chief and talked to me about career options and roles. Maybe in a different way Lynn Sprague did when he was regional forester, not so much in terms of exploring career opportunities but being a supporter and someone that I could go talk to, as my boss and also as someone that I trusted and valued his advice. So there have been people through the years that have played that role, but never formally or never in a sense of being identified in that role.

REINIER: Well, it's interesting to me that a few minutes ago you said that now when you went into a room it was rare that you were the only woman in the room.

BECK: Um hmm.

REINIER: So do you think women in the Forest Service have achieved a critical mass?

BECK: Oh. I'm not sure quite what that would be. I guess my gut reaction would be to say yes. I'm not saying that there aren't issues for a lot of women out there but in terms of overall, are women well represented and a presence in the Forest Service, I would say definitely yes. There are women in almost every type of job in the Forest Service, certainly at every level. So, yeah. I would say over the last ten years the amount of progress and the change in that way is phenomenal. What would constitute a critical mass, I'm not sure of, but in terms of really being there in the organization, I would say, yes, women have arrived.

REINIER: One of the things that's been very interesting to me in talking to you really is this whole issue of management style because your whole career has really focused on that. It seems that that management style is one way that the Forest Service has changed. Now would you agree with that? We have talked about that a little bit.

BECK: Yeah. Yeah.

REINIER: I think that's maybe an idea we can bring out a little bit more.

BECK: I think it has. I don't think I would say the overall management style of the Forest Service has changed, but I would say we have changed in the direction. There is more diversity of management style throughout the Forest Service, and that that is more acceptable, that there is not an expectation that there will be a predominant management style, that other styles are out there and thriving and valued in many places.

REINIER: Would you think that's your greatest personal contribution to change in the Forest Service?

BECK: Well, I can't say I brought that about as far as the Forest Service as a whole changing in that direction. I'd certainly like to think I contributed to it just through my own style being certainly different when I first was getting into management roles. And also when I'd been in internal consulting roles through things I have brought and worked with other managers on. Yeah, I would say I've made contributions. I certainly wouldn't take credit for any whole hog change in the Forest Service!

REINIER: But earlier when you were talking, you said something that was really interesting to me, and that was that you said you thought that your whole career in the Forest Service had been about change.

BECK: Well, I think it is, but in various ways. I mean I've been a change agent in the Forest Service.

REINIER: Yes, that's what I'd like to focus on now.

BECK: I mean in some of my jobs, my technical definition of my job has been to be a change agent. When I've been an internal consultant or a consultant to the forestry organizations, that's a lot of what you're dealing with in the whole organization development arena, how essentially to build capacity for organizations to be able to change and to know how to stay relevant in change. And I would hope when I've been in various managerial jobs whether they're staff jobs or leadership jobs, that I've also brought to those jobs my own beliefs in the fact that we need to be constantly looking at how we're staying relevant and how we're changing appropriately to meet the needs of our mission and our clients and partners. I would hope I brought that to any of my leadership roles also.

REINIER: Can we talk just a little bit more about how the Forest Service in your view has needed to change to meet demands on it? Can we summarize that in any way?

BECK: Oh! It's probably not a quick and easy summary.

REINIER: Well, it doesn't have to be.

BECK: I think a lot of it has been around how we relate to our publics in terms of really listening to the changing needs, changing interests, and changing desires for being really involved, of the

public that we serve. I think, certainly, the Forest Service, even at the time I first started working for it, really focused on this is our job and we need to do it. I think that whole opening up piece in realizing society has been changing, what people want from their public lands has changed and probably grown more diverse in terms of the number of different opinions and needs that are out there. And I think the desire on the part of the public to be consulted, to be involved, has increased. So I think what the Forest Service has needed to do is acquire those skills of really listening, of focusing externally to some degree on working with communities and with the users of the national forests and the partners and other landowners adjacent to the national forests. So I think it's an opening up of our boundaries in a sense and maybe our organizational boundaries and in our ways of doing business to be willing to change and willing to listen and involve people in the directions that we're heading.

REINIER: And you think that's occurred?

BECK: I think it is in the process of occurring. I think we have made a lot of movement in that direction. I think it's still probably the direction of even more change. And I would say probably that a parallel change has probably happened internally in terms of a lot of our systems and processes and ways we deal with employees. It seems that things used to be done in a lot of pretty regular and expected ways around people's career paths and how you move through the organization, and even who came into the organization. Again I think we've moved in the direction of opening our boundaries more. We have more different types of people in the organization in terms of the disciplines they come from. People used to rarely come into the organization at anything other than entry-level, where you would come in as an entry-level forester and move right up through all the tiers. Now you see more people who come in mid-career or even at high levels, and again people's career paths are different. I think there's less expectation that everyone will go through exactly the same chairs.

[End Tape 7, Side A]

Tape 7, Side B: More on working with different publics—Changes in people's perceptions—Advice for women and men in the Forest Service.

BECK: I think what I was saying right as the last tape ended was that some of the changes that we have made internally in terms of being more opened up, having a wider range of people and styles, and jobs and careers inside the Forest Service is something that we have had to do in order to make the changes I was talking about earlier in terms of responding to a more diverse public and diverse needs externally. So I think the two types of change have moved along together.

REINIER: Something that fascinates me in talking to people from the Forest Service is that the word "public" is used in plural.

BECK: Umm!

REINIER: You talk about "publics" rather than "the public."

BECK: Well, and maybe that's reflective of something I was saying earlier, which is there is no one public voice or public opinion.

REINIER: Yeah.

BECK: And you especially see that in California. There are so many different groups and opinions and points of view out there. I guess it's one collective public but it is not one public opinion. That may be something of a shift that the agency has made too is in realizing that. It's not that simple to respond to what the public wants because it's no one thing. So there's quite an art, again, to collaboration and to involving people in a way that sees that all of our owners and all of the public out there don't come to the table wanting us to do the same thing. How do we engage them with us in a way that, whatever the answers turn out to be, whatever the decisions are, they feel that they've been fully engaged, knowing that not everyone will even want the same decision initially.

REINIER: We were talking just a little bit earlier, can you think of maybe some specific examples of ways that the Forest Service has changed?

BECK: We've talked about maybe the differences in how we do involve the public or how we work with partners. Again this is a change that I think is in progress. But it becomes a real mind shift in how you think about working with people externally. Often we'll use the same words either that we've always used or we'll use the same new term, like "collaboration" has become a pretty overused term to the degree a lot of folks don't even like it because it means such a multitude of different things to different people. I hear people use it in ways where they're meaning totally different things than the person who used it right before them.

I'll share one story that to me illustrates the point, at which that shift and perception happens, where all of a sudden someone says, "Oh! Now I see it in a little different light." This was a story shared by a former forest supervisor, actually, who is retired now. He was a supervisor down on the Angles National Forest, Mike Rogers. Mike and I were both at a workshop where we were with a number of people talking about a roll-out of a new proposed regulation for our national forest planning rules. One of the features of it is around collaborating and involving our publics in some different ways. And the story Mike shared that I thought was real effective was that he for so many years had tried and tried to get members of the public and

some of the partner groups and people near the Angeles National Forest to come meet with him to talk about watershed management on the national forest. He felt like he was just struggling to try to get people interested in wanting to come talk about watersheds on the national forest. And then at some point in time, this watershed group in Los Angeles that had been developed came to him, and they said, "Mike, would you like to come to our forum to talk about the larger watershed and be a member of this group?" He said all of a sudden it was like the shift for him happened, and he went, "Oh! I can do this and I can come and just be one member at the table. I can bring my responsibilities as the supervisor of the Angeles National Forest and knowing I'm responsible for that part of the watershed, but I'm just one member at the table." He said, "This is actually easier! I've been pushing the rope trying to pull people in to help me with my part of the job and all of a sudden I realize I'm one player in a much bigger job." And it actually became an easier thing then to build the partnerships and to collaborate. So I've always thought that was a good story about that shift and how we go about it. We've always had public involvement, but it's that shift of sitting at the round table with a number of players and realizing that we're looking at a bigger picture and bringing our own needs and interests to the table and also our own contributions to the larger resource issues.

REINIER: And in a different place it seems too, a different table.

BECK: Yes. Yes.

REINIER: Rather than bringing people in to your table, it's going out to theirs.

BECK: Right, right. It could be. The table could be anywhere, but yes, I think that's what a lot of this goes into, it isn't all come to us. So we're going to meet you half way. We'll sit at the table with you, not necessarily at the head of the table, and ask your opinion.

[Laughter]

REINIER: That's very interesting. Well now, we were saying earlier and this is something that I really have come to think in doing this interview is that your career really has all been about change in the Forest Service, in the federal agency of the Forest Service. How do you think that you have contributed to change?

BECK: Well, certainly in different ways depending on what job I was in. But probably most significantly just by being myself and being a different kind of person in a lot of different situations. When I first came into the organization, I was very different in my background and style. I had a pretty unique job in the State and Private Organization Management Assistance arena, so I think I found myself in a lot of unique jobs. Also I think I've always brought a different style to a lot of the jobs I had and maybe been in some places where I had the opportunities to influence change, both by virtue of my own style and the kinds of programs I worked with. I think the State and Private Forestry programs are about change, or they certainly have the ability to be in working with partners. So if there's something I'd like to feel good about, it's about opening windows to different ways of looking at things. I think I've had a lot of opportunities to do that in the Forest Service.

REINIER: And you think it's been well received?

BECK: Sometimes! [Laughter] Probably sometimes not so much at all, but a lot of times, yes. And change is never easy.

REINIER: No.

BECK: It can be frightening; it can be painful. So I would say, yeah, probably there were a lot of times it hasn't been so well received, but others where it has.

REINIER: Leigh, it's been fascinating talking to you. I've learned a lot about State and Private Forestry that I didn't know. Thank you very much!

BECK: Thank you.

REINIER: As we end this, do you have any have any advice for other women in the Forest Service? For men?

BECK: Well, I think it would probably be the same advice that I'd give to women or men. I think it's mostly don't be afraid to be yourself and bring who you really are to the job. I think often organizations really try to put people in a mold. While there are certainly things that we all have to learn about how to operate in an organization and what an organization's culture is, I think people are best at their jobs when they really bring their own strengths and perceptions to it and are willing sometimes to challenge old ways of doing things. The old ways are sometimes exactly the right way, but I think people being able to bring the best of themselves to a job means their own style, their own perceptions, and being willing to voice their thoughts.

REINIER: Thank you very much.

[End Tape 7, Side B]

Names List