AN INTERVIEW WITH

GERI VANDERVEER BERGEN

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Geri Vanderveer Bergen was interviewed by Jacqueline S. Reinier at Bergen's home in Nevada City on July 5, 6, and 7, 2000. Dr. Reinier is a former history professor and director of the Oral History Program at California State University, Sacramento. She and her students have done previous interviewing of Region 5 USDA Forest Service employees in California. She also has taught Oral History Interviewing in the Capital Campus Public History Program at California State University, Sacramento and at Vista College in Berkeley, California. Prior to the interview 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 Bergen's living room in Nevada City. Choosing her words carefully, the interviewee described a transitional period during which the Forest Service has undergone a great deal of change. When she was trained as a forester at the University of California, Berkeley, very few women had enrolled in the School of Forestry. As a woman, she was directed toward a career in research, and her first full-time position with the Forest Service was Public Information Officer in the area of Women's Activities. Yet she shaped her positions as she held them and, drawing on her background in volunteer conservation activity, she was able to become environmental coordinator for Region 5. Eventually she obtained the field work she had always desired and became the first female line officer in the Forest Service, first as deputy forest supervisor and then as forest supervisor of the Tahoe National Forest. An active member of the Society of American Foresters, she has carefully made in her way in a large previously male-dominated federal agency.

The interview was transcribed by Carol Niehus 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 December 2000, Bergen was forwarded a copy of the transcript for her approval. She kept the transcript for almost a year, finally returning it in October, 2001. During that time she made the decision to omit in the transcript some of the material on the tapes. Places where these omissions have been made are indicated in brackets. Material added by Bergen also is bracketed.

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

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Geraldine Marcia Bergen was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1930, from where her father, Reginald V. Bergen, commuted to Wall Street to work for the J.P. Morgan investment company. Raised in a family with traditional gender roles, she was not expected to attend college. After her graduation with a straight-A record from Nutley Senior High School in New Jersey in 1948, she attended the Katherine Gibbs School in New York City and took a secretarial course. In June, 1949, she married Donald F. Eldridge, and traveled with him to Seattle, Washington, where he took a position with the Boeing Airplane Company. Although she worked as a secretary for a period of time, Geri became a full-time mother with the arrival of her three children, Guy Robert Eldridge born in 1952, Katherine Ann Eldridge, born in 1953, and Marcia Sue Eldridge, born in 1954. After her divorce from Donald Eldridge, she moved with her children to Reno, Nevada in 1957, and supported them for two and a half years by dealing blackjack at a casino.

When Geri enrolled in the University of Nevada, Reno, in 1958, she had already decided to pursue a pre-forestry curriculum. As a child, she had delighted in trips to the mountains with her family. On her trip across the country and sojourn in the Pacific Northwest, she had visited National and State Parks, and while in Seattle took an extension ecology class from the University of Washington. Able to concentrate on her studies when her children went to live with their father, she earned an almost straight-A record and focused on her goal of admission to the School of Forestry at the University of California, Berkeley. Geri married Donald C. Larson in 1959 and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area where she continued her rigorous curriculum at Oakland City College. By the summer of 1960 she was ready to attend the summer camp required by the UC Berkeley School of Forestry. The second woman ever to participate in the summer camp, Geri found herself entering the program with forty young men. Experiencing considerable stress in the new situation, she gradually learned to shed some of the assumptions with which she had been raised and to become “one of the gang.”

As only the eighth woman to enroll in the program, Geri achieved a distinguished record at the School of Forestry, earning membership in Phi Beta Kappa and Xi Sigma Pi, the honorary forestry fraternity, as well as honorable mention for the University medal. As an undergraduate and graduate student she received the Whitt Brothers Hardwood Industry Scholarship in 1961, the John H. Wheeler and Elliott H. Wheeler Fellowship in 1962, and the Amy Bowles Johnson Memorial Fellowship and the LeConte Memorial Fellowship in 1963. Yet, as the only woman in an all-male school, her most cherished award was the signed ax handle presented to her by her classmates at their senior banquet. As an undergraduate, Geri worked part-time at the Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station in Berkeley, and continued to work there after she entered graduate school. But she found that she was not happy conducting research, and during the summer of 1963 worked for the Institute of Forest Genetics in Placerville. In 1964 after her children returned to live with her, she withdrew from the forestry graduate program and completed her master’s degree in the field of botany.

Seeking part-time employment, Geri worked as a Junior Specialist for the UC School

of Forestry, writing histories of Whitaker's Forest and Blodgett Forest. She also participated in volunteer conservation activity with such community and regional groups as Save San Francisco Bay Association, People for Open Space, and Richmond Citizens' Planning Association, as well as serving as a member of the Richmond Recreation and Parks Commission. Her volunteer work helped to qualify her for the full-time position of Public Information Officer in Women's Activities in the Pacific Southwest Regional Office of the USDA Forest Service, which she was offered in 1967. The first professional forester to fill the position, she met with women's clubs and youth groups to promote conservation, and produced the bi-weekly newsletter, *The California Log*. In 1972, as the nation's focus turned to environmental issues, Geri propelled her experience in land use planning and her interest in the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act into her appointment to the position of regional environmental coordinator for Region 5. There she developed regional policy to implement NEPA, consulted in the field with people working on environmental impact statements, and coordinated such activities with the Washington office and other federal agencies. In her work as public information officer and as environmental coordinator her ability to grow in the job was rewarded with promotion within each position.

In 1978 Geri moved to the field work she had always desired and became the first woman to hold a Forest Service line position when she was appointed deputy forest supervisor of the Tahoe National Forest. Learning on the job by working closely with the forest supervisor, Bob Lancaster, she acquired skills in fair decision-making, personnel management, and multiple-use planning. In 1985 she became the first female forest supervisor when she was promoted to that position on the Tahoe National Forest. as forest supervisor, Geri worked to build a strong staff, hiring a number of qualified women and making a special effort in order that couples be able to work near each other. As deputy and forest supervisor, she provided executive leadership for development of the Tahoe Land Management Plan. She also engaged in budgeting for the future to be able to accommodate new directions in forest management. In 1990 Geri was promoted to the position of deputy director of the environmental coordination staff in the Washington office. There she advised regions on projects requiring environmental impact statements and worked with the Spotted Owl team until her retirement from the Forest Service in 1994.

Throughout her career Geri has been a very active member of the Society of American Foresters, serving as its secretary for Northern California, member of the national program committee, and elected representative to its national governing body, the SAF Council. She was elected an SAF Fellow in 1985. Since her retirement and return to Nevada City, California, she has continued to work with conservation issues, serving as a board member of the Nevada County Land Trust. She is an active member of California Alumni Foresters, Northern Mines Business and Professional Women, and Soroptimist International of Nevada City. Although during her Forest Service career she was known as Geraldine Bergen Larson, after her husband's death in 1987 she changed her name to Geri Vanderveer Bergen, in order to legalize the nickname she had always used and honor her New York Dutch heritage.

[SESSION I, July 5, 2000]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

REINIER: Geri, I understand that you grew up in Brooklyn, New York.

BERGEN: Yes I did. I lived on East 29th Street. I think it was between Avenue L and Avenue M. We had a three-story house.

REINIER: A brownstone?

BERGEN: No, this neighborhood was individual houses. I lived there until I was nine and we moved to Nutley, New Jersey. As I was saying [earlier], in 1994 when I retired from the Forest Service and was moving back here, I stopped in Brooklyn to see a couple of things and one was to stop by my old house, and the young couple living there now invited us in. A friend and I were looking at the house from the outside and the husband, the owner, got home from work about that time and so he invited us in, a young couple with a couple of children, I think. We saw only the main floor, but there was an extra bathroom there. The whole neighborhood is still in very good condition or it appears to be. As I understand it, it is a Hasidic Jewish community now, which accounts for it being very well maintained, I think. So that was fun.

REINIER: Did you have a small family? Did you grow up in a small family?

BERGEN: I have a brother [John V. Bergen] and a sister [Patricia S. Bergen Schriber]. And with my parents, and my grandfather [John Bergen] lived with us from the time I was about two to the time I was about eight.

REINIER: What did your father do?

BERGEN: My father [Reginald V. Bergen] worked for J.P. Morgan on Wall Street in New York. I don't know what all his assignments were during a whole course of his career, but he was an assistant treasurer at the time he retired.

REINIER: Would you say that you were raised with traditional gender roles?

BERGEN: Very traditional gender roles, yes. Yes.

REINIER: How would you explain that?

BERGEN: Very traditional child/adult roles. Very traditional roles in a lot of different ways, but as far as the gender roles go, for example, I have an older sister and a younger brother. Before I finished high school my parents were divorced, so we had less money in the family available for additional education. But essentially the attitude was, your brother needs to go to college, but women don't need to go to college. You'll get married and have children. That was the expectation in my family. My mother [Janice B. Bergen] did have enough concern for our future that she wanted my sister and me to go to secretarial school, so we would at least have a way to earn money or a job to fall back on if we ever needed to. But college was not in the outlook for us at all, as far as my parents were concerned. Now it was different at [high] school and friends' parents, but as far as my parents were concerned.

REINIER: But you did have people who encouraged you to go to college.

BERGEN: Yes. Well, I was an all-A student. Someone like the dean of girls at the high school was definitely trying to encourage me to go to college. I was engaged and I wanted to get married; I wanted to leave home. Besides the fact that the money wasn't there and I didn't get the home encouragement. My fiancé was a very bright man who for various reasons was able to graduate from college with an electrical engineering degree at the age of twenty. His parents were very well educated. His mother had a master’s and his father had a Ph.D. They really didn't want their son to get married that soon, and so they were trying to encourage me to go to college also. And of course their daughters went to college. So I had encouragement from those two directions, and I think that somehow or other along the way I internalized that. And so later on in my life, which we'll get to, later on in my life when it was possible for me to start college, I found that was what I wanted to do.

REINIER: Great. But you did expect that you would be a wife and mother.

BERGEN: Yeah. That was my expectation and that's what I did. I was not yet nineteen when we got married.

REINIER: That was to Donald [F.] Eldridge.

BERGEN: Donald Eldridge. He had gone through college at an accelerated rate because when he started college it was post-war, just at the end of the Second World War. So he was able to finish two years of college in a year and a third. That's one of the reasons he got through so young. And one of his job offers was from Boeing Airplane Company in Seattle. So we decided to be adventurous. We got married in June of '49 and promptly moved to Seattle.

REINIER: And you were not yet nineteen.

BERGEN: I was not yet nineteen!

REINIER: My. But before that you went to the Katherine Gibbs School?

BERGEN: Yes, I graduated from high school in June of '48.

REINIER: That was in Nutley, New Jersey.

BERGEN: Nutley, New Jersey. And Katherine Gibbs was the leading secretarial school in New York City. My sister had gone there earlier. I took the nine-month secretarial course, commuting into the city each day, having to wear a hat. We were expected to wear a hat as I would be going to an office.

REINIER: Gloves?

BERGEN: Gloves. Hat and gloves, oh yes. Because we had a commuter bus I could take back and forth. And that was interesting. One of the things that was interesting to me about that, looking back on it, I had very little trouble learning shorthand, which gave a lot of the other students a lot of problems. My problem was trying to learn typing and being coordinated enough. Everybody else seemed to learn typing faster. I learned it ultimately and I use it now and I'm glad. It's helped me a lot throughout my career to have both the shorthand and the typing, so it was worthwhile doing. And then I took a job. I started [Katherine Gibbs] right away in July of '48, so I finished in March of '49. I did go to work in a secretarial position in Nutley, New Jersey for International Telephone and Telegraph. They had something called Federal Telecommunications Laboratories, research laboratories which they had established, and I was able to get a secretarial position to the personnel manager there. So I worked there, and if I hadn't gotten married I would have continued to work there.

REINIER: Did you enjoy doing that work?

BERGEN: Overall, looking at all the secretarial jobs I had, no. [Laughter] That was one of the contributing factors that led to my motivation later to go to college because I felt under-utilized mentally and I felt underpaid. Not underpaid for what I was doing but underpaid for what I was capable of doing. One of the reasons I determined later to go to college was that I wanted to be able to earn more money and to utilize my abilities.

REINIER: And then you moved to Seattle and worked also there in early years of marriage, is that right?

BERGEN: Yes. I worked, and I had about three secretarial jobs at different places. One was an insurance company, and also for Boeing for awhile until I was laid off. When I looked for work again, I got on with Liquid Carbonics which is now part of General Dynamics. And then when I became pregnant I stopped working.

REINIER: And then you just had your children one right after the other.

BERGEN: Yes, I did.

REINIER: Tell me about those years. Your children were eighteen months and then one year apart, is that right?

BERGEN: That's right. Yeah, Bob, my son, Guy Robert Eldridge, but he goes by the name Bob, was born in March of '52, and Katherine Ann Eldridge was born in October of '53, and Marcia Sue Eldridge was born in November of '54. [Laughing]

REINIER: You must have been very busy.

BERGEN: You know I was busy. I didn't enjoy the first three months of being pregnant, but I actually had a very satisfied feeling, I think, from the childbirth experience itself and I enjoyed nursing the children. It was just very fulfilling. It didn't take me long to want to become pregnant again, which it was too bad to have three that close, really. I discovered it was very difficult to have three that close because the parents only had two laps and you had three babies essentially. And then, unfortunately, my husband and I were having some difficulties and decided to get divorced. My youngest was only ten months old when we separated and I went back to work. So that was also difficult because I had the three small ones at home.

REINIER: How did you handle that? Did you have child care?

BERGEN: It wasn't as expensive then, fortunately, as it is now. Yes. And at first I had a lady who provided child care in her home that was not too far. And I also was able to get a job not too far from where I lived. Our house was south of Seattle near a community called Burien. We were sort of just west of the Seattle/Tacoma Airport, and I got a job with Pan American Airways at the Seattle/Tacoma Airport, so it was a short drive. And I was able to find a lady who provided child care in her house and didn't mind, I guess, that the children had slight colds a little bit, and they also brought colds home. We did that for awhile and then later I was able to find a lady who came into the house, which of course was even nicer for me and for the children in some ways. Much easier for me.

REINIER: So did you work full-time?

BERGEN: Yes. I did.

REINIER: That was in the early fifties. Were you influenced by the gender roles of the fifties? I was going to say, did you expect to be a traditional wife and mother, but that ended quite quickly for you, really.

BERGEN: I didn't question the gender roles really until the feminist movement came along, and even then I was very distrustful. I was not necessarily in accord with everything that they were saying. But I've always been sort of a strong individualist. I was also a bit shy, so it wouldn't necessarily show, but I've been a little bit rebellious and a bit of an individual. What really motivated me at that point (that I realized at one point there) was that all my life, up until that point, some place along the way, what bothered me was the loss of status. I had no status. All my life I'd been somebody's daughter, somebody's wife. And now I was somebody's mother, which, of course, was going to continue, but those were the only, those were the only identities that I had. I didn't have an identity of myself. I had no status as an individual. I wasn't Mrs. Eldridge anymore. That was my name, but I wasn't Mr. Eldridge's wife. I had no particular status, and that was another motivating factor for going to college later.

REINIER: You were far from support too.

BERGEN: Yeah.

REINIER: From your family.

BERGEN: Yeah, I didn't have any family support out there, no.

REINIER: Very brave!

BERGEN: I guess. Very foolhardy maybe!

[Laughter]

REINIER: How do the kids remember those years?

BERGEN: I don't know. I think it was difficult for them. Yeah. Could we pause for a minute?

[Interruption]

REINIER: Now, you moved to Reno in 1957. What brought you to Reno?

BERGEN: I guess I just needed a change at that time.

[Interruption]

REINIER: So now in Reno you started working at a casino.

BERGEN: Yes. I was really tired of secretarial work, of the office jobs that I had up until that time. And I didn't really want to do office work, so I decided to look into something else. And at first I looked into, you know, what does a woman do? Well, I looked into childcare, but not only did I really not want to do that, but as people pointed out to me, if I had one child sick they would make that child stay home. So I had to stay home with this child, and I had three children. So they didn't really see me as a dependable employee. So at any rate, one of the clubs, the Nevada Club, had a continuing ad for change girls, for employees, in the newspaper all the time. So I applied there and was hired immediately as a change girl. And I told them when they hired me--I'm interested in looking back that I was that bold--that I really didn't want to do change indefinitely. I wanted to be a dealer. Well, I worked on change about six weeks. It's hard work; you lose weight. [Laughing] It was very demanding work the way they ran the shifts, but I was always accurate with my change and everything. So just about the time I was becoming very bored with this and decided I needed to do something else, they decided to put me into learning to deal. And since I had the three children with me, I needed to get child care and I needed to be able to sleep and so on, they agreed not to put me on graveyard shift and I was able to learn on swing shift. Normally, they train people on graveyard.

REINIER: So that would be the evening shift.

BERGEN: So I was on the evening shift, like four to twelve, something like that. And so I learned. I'm sure I learned a lot faster because there were more customers, more business at that time. And then after you're on a job a certain length of time, perhaps six months, they put you on a seven and a half hour shift instead of an eight hour shift. So that really helped also. The total shift including the breaks was seven and a half hours. So that was much easier than a job where you had to be there eight hours plus your breaks.

REINIER: Well, this was a new kind of a job for you.

BERGEN: It was very different. It was very different. It wasn't something I'd seen myself doing before. And there were two phases to it, really. First was actually the technique of dealing, learning to shuffle the cards and to handle the chips and everything.

REINIER: Was it blackjack?

BERGEN: Blackjack's what I did. Yes. But the other part and the part that was more valuable to me was learning to handle customers, learning to interact with people.

REINIER: Yes.

BERGEN: Because I had been very, very shy. Here I said earlier I was an individualist and I was, but I was still very, very shy. I had never applied, for example, for a secretary job that had receptionist duties. I was that shy. I was perfectly happy

being a secretary and I could answer the phone at that job, but I didn't want to be a receptionist. It was handling all those contacts all the time.

REINIER: Dealing with the public.

BERGEN: Yes. Well, I like people. I like to be with people. But at that time I was so very, very shy, I didn't like that. So obviously, dealing, I had to deal with the public. And I had to learn how to do it tactfully. And it was also in a way a little bit like being on stage in that you're expected to be at work, couldn't be late, you weren't supposed to be sick, you were just supposed to be there, and you were supposed to be back on time from your breaks. You were just supposed to be there and ready to work.

REINIER: And you had to be on all the time.

BERGEN: Yes. Yeah. You were on all the time when you were there. So I learned a lot about people. I learned to call people's bluffs. It really was interesting. I started working there as a change girl in January or February of '57. And I left there just after Labor Day in '59. So I was there about two and a half years as a dealer. By that time I was essentially ready to leave because I had really learned what I could learn other than learning to deal another game. But I had learned all I could learn about dealing with people. Unfortunately, one had to be on guard against people who would try to cheat the house. And you also have people who would get angry with you when they lost although all you had done was deal the cards. They're the ones that put the bet down. And I could see the people who had been doing this job for a long time, some of them had characteristics that I would call being hard. I can't quite define that, but I didn't want to turn into that kind of a person. I didn't want to change. I'm a caring person, I think. So it was a good time for me to leave, and I did leave.

REINIER: Had you already started going to school when you were working?

BERGEN: Yes. That's what gave me my opportunity to start college. Although I hadn't thought about it at first, I discovered after I lived there in Reno that with six months residency I could become qualified to go to college as a resident. Actually, I didn't go until I'd been there a year, but I certainly started thinking about it sooner. And I was working nights so I could go to college in the day time. Because of financial considerations primarily, I had let my children go to live with my ex-husband, who was at that time living in California, not in Seattle. He had moved to what we call the Peninsula.

REINIER: South of San Francisco?

BERGEN: South of San Francisco. And he had also remarried, and so I thought the children would be better off there. And so I had the time then. Once that had happened, then I was essentially alone again and with a job, self-supporting, and with the time that I could go to college. So I started thinking then, what do I want to do? And because of

past experiences I ultimately came up with forestry as a possibility. I went through the normal things, what do women do. I went through things like English and history in my mind. And medical technology. I can't think of what other things that I went through, but I didn't go into sciences in my mind because I didn't think I liked science in high school. I was wrong; I did like science but at the time I didn't think I did. But what I wanted to do, I wanted to end up with a profession where I could make more money than I could as a secretary. And I couldn't see what I could do immediately with things like history and English. Or languages. I loved languages in high school. But with a bachelor's degree, what do you do with those things? And medical technology didn't interest me. Again, I didn't think the career opportunities would have been that great. And I actually felt that I would be one person in a whole milieu of the same people doing the same thing and that didn't interest me. And ultimately, somehow or other, I thought of forestry. And now I need to back track to earlier experiences.

REINIER: Yes. Because we're very interested in what brought you to forestry with your urban background.

BERGEN: Well, the interesting thing to me was that growing up I never heard the word "forestry," I never heard of national forests. I knew forests, but national forests and forestry as an occupation never came into my consciousness that I'm aware of. But as a child before the war we would go on summer vacations, family vacations.

REINIER: Road trips?

BERGEN: No, most of them were to locations, farms that were also run as boarding houses. And we had one that we went to in the Pocono mountains a couple of times and one that we went to in the Catskills a couple of times. So we went to the mountains essentially when we went on vacation. And then also my father’s employer had a summer camp for employees on a lake in Maine. I can’t quite remember the name of the lake. It was named after a man; Baker might be the last name. So we went there at least twice. Whether I remember the first time we went to each place, I’m not sure, but there are pictures in the photo albums because my father took a lot of pictures. So I have memories of going and going back and talking about them in between, and so on. So we stayed at Spruce Manor House, I think was the name of it, in Canadensis in the Poconos, and we stayed at some place in Stamford in the Catskills. Both of those were operating farms. There were farm animals and haystacks to slide down and outdoor picnics and things. But then there were outings in the daytime, and we'd go to picnic grounds with water and waterfalls or we'd go on hikes some place where there was a view. So I think those experiences must have meant something to me although at the time I wouldn't have realized it.

And then my first experience with conservation issues came when I was engaged to the man who became my first husband. His father, Robert [W.] Eldridge, had been raised in Moscow, Idaho, where his father had been on the faculty there at the university. And he'd been raised in Moscow, Idaho but he lived in the East as an adult after he

finished college. He lived in the East his whole life. But at that time the initial controversy over damming the Snake River, Hell's Canyon in the Snake River, had started, and he was very concerned about that. And probably other conservation issues. Seems to me, I remember hearing something about Storm King on the Hudson River, but I don't remember what that was. But the Hell's Canyon, Snake River controversy, I remember that very clearly, and that was being discussed. That was my first introduction to environmental controversies. And I had heard of national parks. I said I hadn't heard of national forests, but I had heard of national parks. Our travels with my family had been as far north as Maine. I'd gone down to Florida, and I'd gone as far west as Ohio. That was the extent of our travels. But in the summer between fifth grade and sixth grade, a boy in my class's family went to national parks in the West and took pictures. They probably published more than one book, but among other things they published a little pocket booklet with like a page and a half on each national park and a picture.

REINIER: Lovely.

BERGEN: And when we came back to school at the end of the summer, he handed out one of these to everybody.

REINIER: Uh-huh.

BERGEN: [Weeping] I guess it was important! Excuse me.

[Interruption]

REINIER: We were talking about the boy who brought the booklet to school.

BERGEN: Yes. It had the pictures of the national parks. I don't know whether I had heard of national parks before that or not, but ever since then after I got that booklet I always wanted to visit the national parks in the West. Unfortunately, along about there the war started and gas rationing, so we stopped our vacations and our travels as a family, and then after the war my parents got divorced. So there weren't any more of those vacations that we took, and so as a family we never went further, which we might have if we'd stayed together and if the war hadn't been there, etc., etc. But I always wanted to do that. So when my first husband and I got married, we decided to visit some of the national parks on the way to Seattle.

REINIER: Oh, you drove across the country?

BERGEN: We drove. We bought a used car, not too old a car.

REINIER: In 1949.

BERGEN: In 1949 we bought I think it was a 1946 Olds. It wasn't too old, but it had bad tires. We had problems with the tires. And we drove across country, piled everything that belonged to us into the car and took off. Our itinerary that I can remember included Rocky Mountain National Park and Yellowstone [National Park]. We hadn't heard of the Tetons. We hadn't taken the time to do any more research. We missed that. Our route happened to take us around them.

But we also got one of these tour guides from one of the oil companies, and it happened to be Conoco. I don't know if it's still around. We have a play in town and it got mentioned in the play that I just went to last week, which is interesting. But Conoco Oil Company. And it [the tour guide] was large; the pages were full sized pages and one side would be the map. And the other side had written material about all these routes that were on the other side of the map. So while Don was driving I'd be reading this and it would tell us when we were going to enter the Targhee National Forest or this national forest or that national forest, as well as telling us about the national parks. So that was really my first real information about national forests.

And of course the scenery in the West was magnificent and we hadn't seen anything like that before. I still have a picture in an album someplace of me holding a snowball in June in Rocky Mountain National Park, all those first experiences that people have some place along the way. And I was just probably still young enough to be impressionable. At any rate, I liked all those experiences. We got to Yellowstone. We rented a little cabin that had a wood stove because we had our belongings. We didn't have sleeping bags, but since we had all our belongings in the car we had blankets. We stayed at Yellowstone a couple of days and went north from there and into Montana, I guess, and across some mountainous pass. We drove between Montana and Idaho, came across through--I've been on the road since, but I think it was at that time also--Kellogg, I think was the name of it.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

REINIER: So you were taking this trip.

BERGEN: Yeah, and so we crossed northern Idaho and drove around Lake Coeur d'Alene; the highway went around the lake and that's beautiful. I think we probably then saw Grand Coulee Dam in Washington. And finally we got to Seattle and happened to cross the floating bridge across Lake Washington on the 4th of July of that year, 1949. Here were all these toll booths and they were empty. We didn't know why. It turned out they had just had a big ceremony that day taking the toll off the bridge. So we got to Seattle on July 4th, 1949. We could have taken longer on our trip, but we had enough money left to rent a place and to get us by until the first paycheck and that was all. But anyway that was my initial experience at being exposed to the national forests and national resources and national resource management and mismanagement and the West

in general, yes. And then we took up various outdoor activities while we were living in Seattle.

REINIER: What did you do?

BERGEN: Well, we started going skiing with some friends. I never thought I'd want to go skiing and I never became a really good skier, but we went skiing regularly the first two or three winters before I became pregnant. Usually at Stevens Pass in Washington, sometimes Snoqualmie Pass, but usually Stevens Pass. We went camping.

I'd never even owned a pair of blue jeans before that. The way I was brought up, I had to ask my mother to buy me a pair of wool slacks so I could go to football games in high school. Slacks were in the winter time not part of my wardrobe. I had shorts for the summer, but slacks were not part of her... She did wear slacks during the war because we didn't have enough oil to heat the house adequately, but other than that she didn't wear slacks and it didn't occur to her that I needed slacks for anything. So I actually had to specifically ask for one pair of wool slacks in high school. But I never liked blue jeans. I still don't like blue jeans; any other color was better if I had to wear jeans at all. But anyway, I got my first pair of blue jeans. We got sleeping bags and camping equipment.

Our first camping trip was around Olympic National Park. We spent a lot of time going to Mt. Rainier because you could do that in a day. You could go to different parts of Mt. Rainier for the day; you didn't have to camp necessarily. So we went to Mt. Rainier, we went to Olympic National Park, we camped on the east side of the Cascades some of the time. We went on a lot of day trips different places. Whidbey Island. We got up to Anacortes. Some of this was after the children were born. We continued to camp, take day trips into camp. I got pictures of me with all of them, the youngest in her stroller. I took the playpen along. [Laughing] But this was up in the San Juan Islands. So we went all over, all over western Washington really, a little bit in eastern Washington. Moses Lake. We went down the Oregon coast. This was before the children were born. We went down the Oregon coast to Crater Lake. My husband's parents came from the East and we met them in Idaho and camped in places in Idaho, visited Moscow, Idaho because my husband's grandfather was still there.

So in general, we just got to see a lot of the Northwest, including examples of... I could see old dredgings, old mine towns in northern Idaho. We could see examples of clearcuts right up to the boundary of Mt. Rainier Park and so on. I don't know whether I was forming opinions about any of these things at that time. I was forming them, I guess. I don't know if I had them or could have expressed them. What I ended up with and still have as my philosophy is actually a Gifford Pinchot philosophy of wise use, utilization of resources but renewal for the future, stewardship. Conservation, whatever you want to call it. And I never was against use, was always the case. Maybe there was a little touch of that in my last year of high school, I don't know, learning something about conservation. I think I knew the terms. I don't know what we covered in school.

One year, one summer, this has to be one of the first ecology courses in existence. I had one child I think and I was pregnant with the second. Bob was born in '52, Kathy was born in '53, so it was summer of '53. I took like an extension course, a non-credit extension course from the University of Washington called "Crabs and Crags." It had to be an ecology course although they didn't use that term, and it was a series of Saturday field trips during the summer.

REINIER: Oh, great.

BERGEN: It was wonderful. And the family went with me on some of them. We started out with tide pools, and we visited the University Arboretum which was right there in Seattle, and then we progressed to things further away. One trip was a geology trip and we took that by ourselves, not with a group, and went through guide books, some information, some literature. Went through Snoqualmie Pass, along the east side of the Cascades, and back over Stevens Pass with information about the trees as well as the geology. We went to Mt. Rainier park once. In the meantime, when we visited the national parks also I picked up a lot of brochures on the trees, and the flora and fauna, geology. I was learning a lot because I was interested without realizing it. And then I took this course.

One of the things that really stayed with me with this course was we went to an experimental forest that I presume was run by the University of Washington, one of the Pack experimental forests; there's more than one in the Northwest, I think. I'm not sure. But I remember seeing there what would be called outplantings of different geographic providences of Ponderosa pine. Some of these terms I learned later, but I know what I saw there and what they were, one plot essentially next to each other, a group of Ponderosa pine seedlings from different parts of the West. Black Hills, eastern Washington, western Washington, whatever. And they explained to us the idea was to see whether, if they were all grown in one environment, would they all grow as tall and straight and fast or would they continue to show the characteristics that they showed where they came from--concept of geographic variation--and they continued to show characteristics where they came from. The ones from the Badlands or wherever grew slowly and sparsely. And so years later I studied forestry and remembered all this very vividly. It was sort of interesting. So these things all made an impression on me.

REINIER: And it sounds like you just loved it.

BERGEN: I did. I enjoyed it very much. Yeah. Yeah. I enjoyed my life in Washington state very much. So when I was there in Reno trying to decide what to study, I finally thought of forestry. I started to find out more about forestry. I don't remember now specifically. I found old booklets from the Forest Service so I know I contacted the Forest Service and got information from them. I don't know where else I got information from, but the more I found out about forestry the more I decided that's what I wanted to do.

REINIER: Well, that was very unusual for a woman to go into forestry.

BERGEN: That's what I mean about being an individualist. Yes, it was. I also, obviously, started to look at schools, what schools have forestry courses and whether they teach what I'm interested in, and so on. And some schools at that time, I think maybe the University of Alaska had a forestry course but they weren't accepting women. The Forest Service wasn't saying it wasn't hiring women, but it didn't. The University of Nevada didn't have a forestry course per se but it had what they called a pre-forestry course. They would allow you to take the courses that would qualify you to transfer to another school. And the University of California essentially had you taking general courses the first two years and then going to forestry summer camp and then taking forestry courses starting with your junior year. Because my children were in California, I consulted with the people at the college, at the University of Nevada, and discovered that yes, University of California has a good school of forestry. So I think I sort of aimed myself right from the beginning to go there.

REINIER: To go to Berkeley.

BERGEN: To go to Berkeley. And so when I signed up for the University of Nevada I took courses that were as much as possible the equivalent of what I would need to qualify at UC Berkeley.

REINIER: So what kinds of courses were those?

BERGEN: Well, my first semester I took botany, zoology and English. I had to have English, of course, but took botany and zoology at the same time. It actually turned out to be a very efficient use of resources, if you want to put it that way, because the basic concepts were so similar. We studied the plant cell and the animal cell. They're different, but it's easier to learn the differences than to memorize two whole sets of things. When we got to genetics the principles were the same, the examples were just different. That you get in the introductory classes. Sure, there are differences, but you get more differences later. At the time I still didn't think I liked science. I just knew that I had to take botany and zoology if I wanted to be a forester. I liked it! [Laughter] I enjoyed it. I learned something about myself, too, that way.

REINIER: And you were still working at the casino while you were taking these courses.

BERGEN: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

REINIER: That was a heavy load.

BERGEN: For three semesters I took ten to fourteen units each semester. I took a few units in the summer time but that was more enjoyment, it wasn't forestry. It was a little more English and so on.

REINIER: Do you remember any professors from the University of Nevada?

BERGEN: Gee, I don't remember any names. I remember one of my botany professors; his name was something on the order of Cooney or Clooney. I think it was Cooney. I took two botany classes to make sure I had the equivalent of the one at Cal because they didn't quite cover the same things. The first one wasn't quite as many units and it didn't cover quite as many things. I took my first genetics course there because I had extra time. I felt I had the time in my schedule. That was an upper division class and I still took it, my third semester there probably. I had chemistry, I had geology--physical geology with a lab--probably two chemistry classes, freshmen chemistry. The electives that you have to have. I had an extra English class because I qualified high on the English exam, so I was able to take something different other than the basic English. Psychology. I'm trying to think what else I took besides botany, zoology, chemistry, geology, genetics. But that's all I can remember right now off hand.

REINIER: Did anybody encourage you to go into forestry?

BERGEN: They really didn't; they really tried to discourage me.

REINIER: Did they?

BERGEN: Yeah. It's funny, but they just didn't think that forestry is what I should be doing. The botany prof, the one that was my advisor, was a very nice person and helpful and everything, but he really didn't think that's what I should be doing. At work or friends that I knew would say, "Well now, why do you want to do forestry? Do you want to be a lookout, or do you want to cut down a tree?" That was people's concept of

being a forester, being a lookout or cutting down trees. And that was something that was really hard to overcome.

REINIER: Were you aware of the research possibilities in the Forest Service at that time?

BERGEN: I don't know. I may well have had some reading that related to careers in research. I don't know that I was really thinking in those terms.

REINIER: You were thinking about being a forester.

BERGEN: Yeah. And that's really what I wanted to do. It turned out later when I went to graduate school at UC Berkeley, what I really wanted to do was to be a forester, not a researcher. We'll get to that later. I wasn't thinking in research terms then.

REINIER: Okay. Yeah.

BERGEN: I was thinking about managing resources, or [as I put it later in the interview here] being a practicing conservationist.

REINIER: Uh huh. Tell me what you mean by a practicing conservationist.

BERGEN: Well, a person who believes in conservation, and to use a current term, is an activist, is actively working for conservation. Politically, is not a practicing conservationist. I mean managing, somebody that manages resources.

REINIER: Um hmm. Resource management.

BERGEN: Yeah, resource management with a conservation objective, resources-for-the-future type of objective.

REINIER: Uh huh. So then you came on to Berkeley. In 1959 you moved to the Bay Area.

BERGEN: I moved to the Bay Area. Several different things sort of coalesced at that time as often happens in life with personal and career oriented things. I met my next husband, [Donald C.] Don Larson, in Reno.

REINIER: I see.

BERGEN: That was an interesting series of coincidences. He worked nights also. He was a printer and he worked with a newspaper. He worked at night. Both papers, it was the *Nevada State Journal* or *Reno Evening Gazette*, whatever one was printed in the

morning I presume was the one he was setting type for. But he worked in the evenings, same kind of shift I did, had the same night off from work I did. He rented the apartment upstairs from me and he was taking classes at the University of Nevada.

REINIER: Oh!

BERGEN: And I was living like half a block from the university. It's one of the things that made it easy. I could come home for lunch if I wanted to and go back to the lab class, but I was very close to the university. Well, he happened to rent the apartment above me. So finally we ran into each other one day in the hall, and then one day we ran into each other walking up the alley that went to the school. So anyway, we got acquainted and we started to date and started to date regularly.

Then that summer, as I mentioned, I was saving money to go to college later, and would probably have been better off financially to stay in Reno another year, but I didn't want to become hard. Like I said, I was getting a little tired of being a dealer and working at the clubs and facing the same problems with the people and so on. And there

was a strike at the newspaper where he worked. The reporters struck, not the printers, but the craftsmen, the printers, and I presume the press people, honored the picket line. And there weren't that many other printing opportunities in western Nevada, so the single men came down to California to look for jobs. It was very easy at that time for printers to travel, to go from shop to shop if they belonged to the union. All they had to do was show up when people would start work, hand in their card to the union boss, and if there was work that night they would get hired. Or if somebody wanted to take a night off, they'd hire somebody, another printer, to take their place. It was that kind of work that the same work could be done by different people if they had the skills. So he came down. He worked at Sacramento some of the time, I'm sure he worked at the *Oakland Tribune*, he worked in San Francisco. That way you could take your own days off, so he took his days off to come back up to Reno to see me. So he was already down here in California, and I wanted to come down.

I did come down and I talked to one of the advisors, student advisors at the School of Forestry at UC Berkeley. He advised me to go to one of the junior colleges first, like Oakland City College, to finish out my lower division requirements because it was normal for people to transfer to Cal their junior year, go to junior college and then transfer to Cal. I didn't know anything about junior colleges up until that point. That was one reason. And the other reason was that I would then be here a year and I would be a resident here, qualify as a resident. So that was good advice although it was disappointing to me because I really had wanted to go to UC Berkeley.

But I did, I came down and I started taking classes at Oakland City College. I was going to look for work as a cocktail waitress, thinking I would be able to make enough working a couple of nights a week. Even though I had never worked as a cocktail waitress, I was assuming I was going to be able to get work as one. But then Don and I decided to get married. And he had regular work down here, down in the Bay Area. So I never did follow through on that plan to work as a cocktail waitress. I probably wouldn't have liked it too much, but I think I would have made adequate money at it. So I went to Oakland City College two semesters, took seventeen units each semester, got all A's both semesters.

REINIER: Did you get all A's at the University of Nevada too?

BERGEN: [I remember four units of B--Oral Interpretation of Literature. I think all my other units at UNR [University of Nevada, Reno] were A's.] I was runner up for the university medal at UC Berkeley the year I graduated.

REINIER: Excellent! Excellent!

BERGEN: So I was in the top four or five in the class.

REINIER: Excellent!

BERGEN: Uh huh.

REINIER: Good for you!

BERGEN: I got one B. And that was one of the forestry classes, wood technology, a B in that class. I got all A's otherwise. I could look it up on the transcript for UC Berkeley. And then I had all A's at UNR except I had taken four units of oral interpretation of literature and I got B's on those. I got a B on the first one. I took the second class in it, but that's been helpful. I'm not the best speaker in the world. I've been a Toastmaster and I'm still not the best speaker in the world. But both that oral interpretation of literature (which taught me to over-emphasize, sounds you had to over-emphasize when you're reading) and the Toastmasters have been very helpful to me. So I got B's on those two courses at the University of Nevada and the wood technology. And as a graduate student, one of the last classes I took which had nothing to do with being a graduate student of botany, was magazine article writing, and I got B in that. So those are my B's and the rest were all A's.

REINIER: So you were a very good student.

BERGEN: Oh, I was valedictorian at my high school class. Now it seems to be common to have multiple valedictorians or salutatorian but it wasn't then. We had four women students that were tied for valedictorian in my high school class and I was one of those.

REINIER: Well, good for you!

BERGEN: So yeah, I was an A student. At Cal the professors wanted me to go into research. You know, the research pushed out there once I got to Cal. But I took seventeen units each semester at Oakland City College.

REINIER: Continuing pre-forestry.

BERGEN: Continuing pre-forestry. The pre-forestry curriculum is very broad. I needed two semesters of economics, which I took, got A's in that; that was hard. I needed calculus. I needed of course surveying. I had forgotten my high school trigonometry by that time and I needed trigonometry for surveying, so I signed up for trigonometry and calculus at the same time. The counselor said, "You can't do that. You have to have trigonometry before you have calculus." And I said, "Well, I had trigonometry in high school, it said on the transcript. So on paper I qualify and I think I can do it." So he let me do it and it worked fine. I didn't have any trouble with it! And the calculus class didn't move that fast; it had some other things in it first. And I needed that trigonometry badly. I needed it for the surveying class and then I needed it for the forestry. What else did I take there? I probably had to have a course in government. I probably took that, but I've forgotten. I know I had two economics classes, two math

classes, oh, organic chemistry, I had that. Very broad. Very broad underpinnings for forestry. And physics. I had a physics class. I've had all of those.

REINIER: Oh, my. That's a rigorous curriculum.

BERGEN: It is.

REINIER: You weren't even in the program yet.

BERGEN: No, this was pre-forestry. So I had to have all of those. I took those all from Oakland City College, got through, got married besides.

REINIER: Were you living in Oakland at that time?

BERGEN: Berkeley. We had an apartment up on Garber Street above College Avenue. Don was working nights, but I used the nights for doing my homework.

REINIER: That worked well.

BERGEN: Yeah, it worked out okay.

REINIER: Did he encourage your interest in forestry?

BERGEN: Yes, he was always supportive, very supportive. At first he was taking classes too. He never got his degree, but he was taking classes at the university when I met him. He took classes at Oakland City College for a couple years and then he stopped. Everything else got more demanding, but he supported me throughout my career very much. I didn't realize how rare it was. I'm single now and I begin to understand that when I don't meet people that supportive or understanding of me and my accomplishments at all. But I got married in November and the following December I went away to an eight or ten week forestry summer camp. I was going to do it; I was definitely going to do it. I told him before we got married. But that doesn't mean anything; he still could have been upset about it. He wasn't upset about it at all; he was completely accepting of it. I don't think I realized how unusual that was at that time. I don't think I realized that. I wish I had, but I only realize it now.

REINIER: Did he enjoy the forestry?

BERGEN: Yeah, I think so. When the kids were young we went camping quite a bit. I don't think he was too interested in camping. Our last camping trip was probably 1973 or someplace in that period. I don't think we went camping after that at all. And I don't think he was interested then anymore. Well, we traveled after that still. So he enjoyed it; he enjoyed it to that extent.

REINIER: Were your children still living with their father then?

BERGEN: Yes, they were, until 1964. They came back to live with us in 1964, which was during the period I had been doing graduate work. They were in the younger [fourth and fifth] grades (elementary school) at that time. So that was another transition.

REINIER: Yes, I should say, yes.

BERGEN: But anyway, I went to Oakland City College, got all these courses. In the course of that semester someplace I stopped in at the School of Forestry at UC Berkeley, maybe to ask them questions. Maybe I'd already applied, sent in an application, I don't know, for the summer to attend the forestry summer camp. A little school catalog said, "All forestry students must attend summer camp between their sophomore and junior years." Essentially it said that. It didn't say anything about men versus women, okay? And so I stopped in maybe just to change my name after getting married, or just to check on arrangements or something. And we had this delightful administrative assistant at the School of Forestry at that time, been there for years, very helpful, and she said, "Oh the Dean will want to meet you. Wait, wait a minute." She went in and told [Henry J.]Hank Vaux, Dr. Vaux, that I was there. So I went in to meet him, and that was all there was to it as far as I knew. But he wanted to assess my sincerity, I guess, going to summer camp, and I had just gotten married. I got to summer camp and forty young men and me, okay?

REINIER: You were the only woman!

BERGEN: I was the only woman and probably the oldest student there, too, although I tried not to let the guys know that. But the first day when they were introducing, giving us the beginnings of everything that was going to happen in the summer and so on and so forth, they said, "Well now, there's been one woman here before." So at that time I learned that there had been one woman previously in summer camp.

REINIER: But you were the second one ever!

BERGEN: I was the second. Second one ever. And so later on I found out things like they had to have permission from the dean of women students. They had to make special living quarters available for me. What they did that summer, there were two teaching assistants who were married and they had tent frames at a separate camp with bathrooms, away from the main camp, so they had me living down there with them instead of up with the guys. Well, they don't do that anymore. Everybody lives in the same general area. They have lots of women up there now. But anyway, I was the second. They had to get permission from the dean of women students; they had to put me down there. Oh! And then I remember one of the professors saying to me at one later time, they did look sort of askance at this woman wanting to go. But I had taken care of all the requirements. By taking these seventeen units, two semesters, at Oakland City College, I had everything that was in the catalog, required, as a prerequisite.

REINIER: Yes, and such a good record too.

BERGEN: So they didn't have any choice, which was good!

REINIER: Well now, how did they treat you?

BERGEN: Well, the teachers and the teaching assistants treated me fine. The young men were very threatened.

REINIER: Were they?

BERGEN: Yeah.

REINIER: How did they behave?

BERGEN: At the end we were great friends by the end of school completely, but the summer camp was a little difficult. And my upbringing wasn't one to have encouraged me to know how to be a pal or a friend to guys at that time in my life yet, even though I'd been married, I was divorced.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

REINIER: Geri, at the end of the last tape we were talking about the summer camp and you said that some of the young men were threatened by the presence of a woman.

BERGEN: That was my interpretation certainly. This was the summer of 1960, just to place us in time here again.

REINIER: Before the resurgence of feminism.

BERGEN: Yes, very definitely. And I think the age of the men at summer camp was probably between twenty and twenty-seven. We had three or four veterans, those were the older ages. At least three of them were married. So we had some married couples, then, married men, and then I was married and I was twenty-nine that summer. I tried not to let on that I was older and I hope they didn't realize I was, but one weekend my son visited me, my husband brought my son up to visit me. Then they realized then. But I think that here they were, not just graduated from high school, but at least two years past since they had at least done their sophomore year at college, but expecting to be at an all male enclave for the summer, not expecting there to be a woman to compete with if that's what they were thinking. I wasn't trying to compete with them; I was trying to do what I was supposed to be doing, that's all, but some of them felt competitive, I think.

Some of my relational skills also needed working on, I'm sure. One of the emphases at summer camp (I realized later) that the professors were interested in our doing was learning to work together in teams. A lot of forestry work is done in teams;

it's the only way you can do it. Because boys and men do things together as teams. I was not brought up that way. I was never interested in sports, unfortunately. I was not "athletic" and I didn't know about working as that kind of a team. Equal, where everybody is equal. Also, even though I'd lived in Reno where I had the freedom, a woman had the freedom to go out alone in the evening, any time of the night or day, and go any place she wanted to, it was probably the only time in my life up until that time where I lived that way. I sort of reverted from that. I sort of forgot that I knew how to do that. And the sort of thinking that at social events I had to have an escort, that's the way I had been brought up. Even though I didn't have a husband there, to me, it was a traditional thing that a woman had an escort. And so then I was very unsure of myself as far as signing up and paying my fair share and so on. They called it a beer bust, you know, a party, a weekend party with a keg of beer or whatever. And so I probably made some hard feelings by not doing things, not acting like one of the gang. But I didn't feel like one of the gang, so I didn't know how to do that.

So at one point some place during the camp.... I don't know exactly what happened. I can't describe right now what kinds of little things the guys did to show antagonism, but I know it was there. Well, one of the things, for example, that was wrong and I didn't do it again. We went out to the woods in trucks and these were open back trucks. I don't think the safety regulations would let you do such a thing now, but they just would have seats in the back of open trucks. And a couple of days when it was raining I'd be offered a ride in the cab; there was room for one person in the cab. And I heard all this grumbling with the guys in the back, "She gets to sit in the cab in the rain." I never got in the cab again the rest of the summer. That was it. I rode in the back every single time. But nonetheless the fact that I had done it sticks in people's minds, I'm sure. But I was thinking, you know, a woman, or a lady is treated that way, so I wasn't thinking anything of it when I did it, but I just didn't do it again.

There were other things; some of them were not talking to me, I guess. I just shrugged my shoulders and ignored it. I know I was feeling some stress. I went to dinner one night and the stress had gotten so heavy that I wasn't even looking around. It turned out, it was probably a good thing. I wasn't even looking around me. I was just sort of looking straight ahead and got my food, sat down at the table, and the man across the table from me was being nice.

[Interruption]

Okay. The man across the table from me very nicely started a conversation with me. At this point people weren't talking to me. He was obviously not part of this group that was against me and he started talking to me. He was trying to be nice obviously. He may also have been trying to distract my attention from things, which was a good thing, because I never saw what it was he was trying distract my attention from, but I found out afterwards. Anyway, I really appreciated it, Ed's talking to me that night, later in particular. Later after dinner the teaching assistants called me into the office because

they were concerned, I guess, about the way I was acting as well as the way the guys were acting. Well, I was doing some things too. And it turned out, I guess, that the antagonism toward me had gotten so high that people had drawn pictures of some kind that night and posted them around the dining hall and I had not even seen them. Because I had the feeling of things closing in on me and I wasn't looking around. So the man across the table from me who talked to me was obviously trying to make me feel a little better. It was something I really appreciated. So I don't know specifically what I did after that. I know I was startled [to] realize that, because the teaching assistants were men, but they felt part of the problem was mine. I guess I did my best to change too. At any rate, the atmosphere did lighten after that. That was the worst part of it, and it was probably two-thirds or three-quarters of the way through the summer. After that it did lighten, and I guess I tried even harder to be sure that I was doing my part on everything, if I hadn't been before. So I had to learn, make adjustments, too.

REINIER: What did you have to do differently?

BERGEN: Definitely not expect any special favors of any kind. I probably, partly because of my upbringing, was still expecting some, and I just had to learn not to. I think that was it, not expecting any special favors. I didn't think I was, obviously, but I had to really readjust my thinking.

REINIER: Well, you were raised to be a lady.

BERGEN: Yeah, I was. Definitely. Even though I'd been out on my own, it was still a difficult thing to make that adjustment. But the teamwork aspect of it continued on. Oh! And the other thing is people had accused me of complaining. That always bothered me because if the guys don't like the meal they say it, but if I don't like the meal, I complain. I had to not say anything negative about anything also, was the other thing that I had to watch. But by the time we finished the next two years of school, where we had to study as teams on a lot of projects, and work as teams in the lab, do team assignments and study as teams in order to get through, and I helped the guys sometimes. They were nice about not expecting me to help them too much. I had some typewritten notebooks because of my secretarial school background. I would lend them to the guys if the guys were sick and needed the notes. I'd lend them to them, and they were nice enough not to ask me for them in general. So that was a sort of an understood thing and that worked okay. We worked together as teams, and at the very end we had a senior going away banquet. Of course, up until that time it had been a stag banquet. It was the professors and the seniors, so I was the only woman there. And buying my own drinks, which the bartender found very strange. With all those guys around one woman, I was buying my own drinks. But the guys had taken an ax handle and all the guys in the class had signed it and they gave it to me.

REINIER: How nice!

BERGEN: It was wonderful. It really was.

REINIER: Yeah. So you really did learn to fit in.

BERGEN: Uh-huh. Yeah. They accepted me. I broke into tears at the time when I accepted it. I was not expecting that at all, and I just felt so good about that.

REINIER: That is great.

BERGEN: It was wonderful.

REINIER: Have some of those men continued to be your friends in the Forest Service, some of those guys you went to school with?

BERGEN: They're friends, definitely. Yes, some of them I see. Some of them I don't see at all, but yes, when we see each other, we're friends. I see some of them at alumni reunions. Some of them, a couple of them, I'm trying to think if they were at the same summer camp I was. There are a couple of them, my contemporaries in school, I don't know that they were at the same summer camp, that actually work here on the Tahoe [National Forest], or did work here on the Tahoe. Three actually, at least one of whom was at summer camp the same year I was. So we continued as co-workers, yeah, and colleagues.

REINIER: Tell me a little bit more about summer camp. What is the purpose of it and what do you do there?

BERGEN: I think the purpose was to give us a field experience at forestry work, so our studies could relate to that field experience later, our upper division studies. So we had introductions to some basics in forest ecology and soils. Dendrology, which is identification of tree species and also of shrubs, and herbaceous plants to some extent, but mainly shrubs and trees. We did some mapping. We did some very rough mapping with just a Jake compass and the surveyor's chain or tape and eyeballing.

REINIER: Eyeballing?

BERGEN: Well, looking at things, you know. You have an instrument called a level which helps you determine the angle and elevation difference, depending on the distance. So we did some real rough topographic mapping. We had to find section corners, markings, sections of the property. We did all these things as teams and they varied. They assigned us to teams; we didn't pick them; they varied during the year. We learned how to measure trees and estimate volume, diameter and heights, using different kinds of instruments. Of course, all of those are old-fashioned instruments compared to what they use nowadays. But we had to learn that and use volume tables to estimate stands, and to

take samples, how you laid out a sample, you took a sample. Because later on as foresters we would be directing groups of people doing this kind of work. And we spent two weeks in doing things that specialists would be doing now, I think. We spent one week in using these techniques that we had learned and our surveying background to lay out a logging road across some terrain. And we spent another week doing what we called a closed-tape transit survey where we had to do a survey that was highly accurate. You start from one point, find your way through the woods, across to a line on the other side, and then come back a different way. All the angles and measurements had to match, which is what the trigonometry and surveying skills were needed for. I don't know that they do quite those things now, exactly those two assignments. Those are probably a little less relevant to what the typical foresters themselves would be doing. A surveyor would be doing them or an engineer or whatever, I think in most cases. But at any rate, that's how we spent our time. We were out in the woods every day. Some of it was just

observing and learning forest ecology and soils, relationships and so on, but some of it was doing, a lot of it was doing.

REINIER: Was that in the Sierra?

BERGEN: Yes. The forestry camp is up outside of Quincy, a place called Meadow Valley. It's on the Plumas National Forest essentially. And then there was also some university owned land up there [that we used for exercises], but the camp itself was in the special use permit for the Forest Service. Or at least it was at that time. There was a cook. We had to pay enough funds to run the camp for the summer, to pay for our meals and run the camp. We had a very good cook, Charlie LeGrand. He was a cook for one of the sororities or fraternities in the winter time on campus. So he knew the guys, and he knew how to go out and buy in bulk inexpensively for the kinds of appetites that foresters, young men working out in the woods all day, would have. We had plenty of food, but not too much. The money was well-utilized. I was supposed to be on the camp auditing committee, and he was smart enough. He gave me a couple of cautious things to look out for once or twice, so he was a good friend too. He was a good friend too.

REINIER: Then you came back and you started the program, 1960.

BERGEN: Yes.

REINIER: And so what was it like in the school of forestry itself?

BERGEN: The school of forestry... It's a very comfortable place to be because it's full of... What's the word I want? Camaraderie isn't quite the right word. But you are colleagues. You are on a first name basis with your professors all the way though. Everybody's on a first name basis in forestry throughout the country. It's marvelous that way; it really is a fraternity. Maybe that's the word. It's a fraternity, and so from the very beginning you're on a first name basis with your professors.

REINIER: It's a club.

BERGEN: Yeah, it's a club, in that way. Because it was a small school. It's varied over the years, but at that time there were like essentially forty students each, juniors and seniors, and probably about the same number, about eighty graduate students. So that would be the nucleus of the school, of course the professors, administration. Now it's no longer a separate school; it's part of the Department of Environmental Science Policy and Management, I think. I don't know whether the same feeling of being quite as close a fraternity is there. But it's being retained to the extent possible, certainly. I'm not real active in the alumni right now, but I've kept up with things and I've been active over the years. But it is, it's just like a fraternity. I mean I could walk up to the Chief of the Forest Service even though I don't know him and call him by his first name. Yeah. I

could do that now and I could do that when I was working.

REINIER: And you were still the only female student?

BERGEN: Well yes, but I wasn't the first female student. There was only like one at a time. I should have the number in my mind and I don't. There are histories of the school of forestry published, so that would have it. But there have been maybe six or seven female students. But only one [Emily Anna Shideler] had gone to forestry summer camp before me and she had gone, I think, in 1953. I went in 1960. The next one [Kirsten Salstrom MacGregor] was 1964, and then by 1970 there were quite a few going. In that period of time all of a sudden women started going into forestry throughout the country.

REINIER: Yeah. So what courses did you take in forestry? Did you continue with your scientific studies?

BERGEN: Yeah. I took all the required courses. Dendrology, forest ecology, plant physiology, forest soils, of course. Forest economics. Mensuration, which is measuring trees. Forest management. Forest policy. That's the nucleus. Oh, and forest fires, forest protection and forest fires we had to take. But that was the nucleus at the time I was going to school. And there were some electives within forestry, most of which I didn't take because the professors were advising me that I should be going on to graduate school into research and teaching.

REINIER: Was that because you're a woman?

BERGEN: Definitely. It was definitely because I was a woman. And it was because I was a good student also. And Berkeley is research oriented and a lot of students do go on to graduate work. So you can't say it was just because I was a woman because the whole thing fit, you know. They would have been advising top students, I'm sure, anyway, to go into research or go on to graduate work for one purpose or another. I had wanted to get out and work in the field, and women weren't doing that then yet. So

instead of my electives I took some courses at their advice to give me some background for some graduate work. I took some more chemistry and I took bacteriology. I also took a public administration course and a history of science course. So I didn't get very far away from science and forestry even in some of my electives. The furthest away I got and I enjoyed that very much was called Language of Culture in the anthropology department. I do enjoy language very much and it's still one of my interests, so that was a little aside thing. But all these have ideas you can apply in the field.

So I missed out. I didn't take a course called Forest Influences with fields of water and erosion processes and hydrology. I didn't take a course in entomology or

pathology, which would have been good to have had. But I didn't take them because I was taking these other courses. And I missed out during the last semester of the senior year when the guys were applying for jobs with the Forest Service and the California Department of Forestry. I wasn't doing that and I sort of felt left out a little bit.

REINIER: Did you want to be doing that?

BERGEN: Well, see, I was going to go into research and so I wasn't doing it. It would have been scary to be doing it, but I would have liked to have been doing it. But it would have been scary. These were all new experiences for me, so they were scary. Oh yes, the guys and I, we went to coffee regularly. It wasn't every day of the week, but whatever the course schedule was, some days we went to coffee together and things like that. So we were friends, definitely we were friends. And I had a couple of parties at my house for the class.

REINIER: Great. Personally, I'm just curious, where was the school then, on the Berkeley campus?

BERGEN: Yes, on the Berkeley campus it would be right by the West Gate, Mulford Hall, you know Mulford Hall?

REINIER: Yes, I do.

BERGEN: Yeah. So that's where the school of forestry was located.

REINIER: Where the school of agriculture is also.

BERGEN: That's it, yeah. That's in a different hall, actually, but it's close by.

REINIER: In the general area.

BERGEN: I'm trying to think of the name of it.

REINIER: Hilgard Hall?

BERGEN: There is a Hilgard and there is another one. Gianelli.

REINIER: Yes.

BERGEN: So those are all part of the ESPM [Environmental Science Policy and Management] now, this new department.

REINIER: Well now, you were also working part-time.

BERGEN: I did a little work part-time; I didn't do a lot. I think the first year I was just studying, and [then, the next summer--1961] I got a part-time job at the experiment station. The [Pacific Southwest Forest and Range] Experiment Station is run by the Forest Service, part of the Forest Service's research arm. It was in Berkeley at that time.

REINIER: Yes. Down on Milvia Street.

BERGEN: Yes. It's in Albany now. They moved. So I got a part-time job there, but it was easier for them to hire me as a clerk than as a technician. It was very easy for me to qualify as a clerk. So it doesn't show up as a professional, or even a semi-professional job on an application.

REINIER: Because of your secretarial skills.

BERGEN: Yeah. But I worked part-time. Oh, they were doing a wood product census and I worked on that, and I did some recreation research. But it was technician or clerical type duties, really, going through records and assembling them and so on, but it was related to all these projects. And I did some mathematical computations for one scientist. So I did several different things like that. And then maybe it was the following winter, I'm not sure which year it was, but I did work for the library at the school of forestry one year, part-time. That I enjoyed because I like books, and I really got to know the forestry library well and what it had in it. So I enjoyed that very much.

Then when I graduated, because I was going on to graduate school right away, and because I had been able to make some contacts by going to Society of American Foresters meetings, professional society meetings, I was offered a job right away, a career conditional position with the experiment station as a research forester, a GS7 because of my grades. So I went to work immediately in a career conditional appointment, GS7 forester. So without really applying for anything, without going through what the guys had gone through. And that summer [1962] I worked in the laboratory in Berkeley. Pollen physiology, and I was just testing pine pollen for germinability. I worked four days a week or five days a week; I guess I worked five days a week at that time. I was not very happy with the lab work. That was the start of the experiences that led to my future decisions. But I enjoyed forestry school and I enjoyed working with the guys, being part of the group, once I became part of the group which took a little while. But I

really enjoyed school. I did not enjoy working in research and I didn't enjoy graduate school. And it was the first time in my life I had not enjoyed going to school. I'd always enjoyed going to school.

REINIER: Why not?

BERGEN: Well, it took me a long time to figure that out. The lab work in forestry that first summer was repetitive and produced primarily negative results which bothered me. It didn't bother the man I was working for because he had learned that you couldn't do something. He had learned and supposedly I had learned that you try to do something a certain way and it doesn't work, so that's accumulation of knowledge. But to me it didn't work, so what's the result of all my work?

REINIER: This was the Forest Genetics Project?

BERGEN: The Pollen Physiology Project, yeah. And we were trying to find out ways to test whether the pollen grains would germinate. You test pollen, you know, like you would seed; you would want to know that the certain percent of your seed would germinate. Well, this was the case, were the pollen grains viable and could we develop a test. So we were trying to develop a test to determine how viable the pollen was. And we were having negative results on the testing effect. That was one challenge.

I did get a fellowship. I'd have to look it up in a book to tell you which one, but I got a fellowship. Both my years I was doing graduate work I got fellowships, [Amy Bowles Johnson Memorial Fellowship and Leconte Memorial Fellowship], so then I had a monthly stipend which really helped. I could have gotten by without working at all, but I had the appointment and I wanted to keep in touch with the experiment station. So I did some periodic work during the winter, mainly during school vacations and so on. And I don't remember specifically what I worked on. Again, I was in the labs in Berkeley.

But anyway, I started out thinking I would work in plant physiology and work directly for a Ph.D., doing plant physiology. My major professor would have been Ed Stone. Well, what I found was that I got stuck in an office. We did have offices in forestry; they had room space for the graduate students to have their own desk and an office. So I shared the office with one other graduate student. Because he was busy and deep into his studies and activities--I was there, just to study--I didn't have anybody to talk to except when I went to coffee. I guess I could have initiated more discussions with my major advisor, but he didn't initiate any with me. I wasn't quite sure what direction I was going to go in. I didn't have any idea what kind of a research project I wanted to do. And what I ended up concluding a couple of years later was that I personally needed more feedback from people as I do my work and more interaction with people. I don't do well without interaction with people, and so research wasn't really the place for me. I think I was depressed, I don't know.

But I was unhappy that first year, and I decided to make a change. I was working for the Forest Genetics Project and the school of forestry hired a new professor [William J. Libby] in that field of forest genetics. They hadn't had one before. I got some encouragement at the experiment station to go into forest genetics. So the second year I switched to forest genetics, and the work I had done at school would fit both. And the second summer [1963] I worked for the Institute of Forest Genetics in Placerville rather than at Berkeley. So I left my husband again [laughing] and worked at Placerville. He came up for the weekends because he didn't like the fog in Berkeley. We only had one car anyway so I was pretty stuck on the grounds of the Institute of the Forest Genetics, which is outside of Placerville. During the week. We had the use of a car one day a week to go in and buy groceries and get our laundry done, and other than that we were stuck on the grounds during the week. So Don came up for the weekends. That was okay. I don't think he liked being alone, but he was glad to get out of the fog. So that was better. I was doing a variety of projects. We had a small group of both students and researchers, some of whom stayed there. At least one of the researchers stayed there and the director probably did. Other people came and went. And there was a variety of projects. There were technicians I could go out in the field with and work with part of the time. We had the equivalent of a nursery. We were raising hybrid seedlings and there were old projects, out-plantings, things that had been done or just tests of things--treatments--that had been done in the woods that were sitting and waiting to be finished. My understanding was that the way they had been designed originally, say in the 1930's, did not meet current statistical standards. The only thing to do with the project was to take what information you had, go out and take one last set of measurements and write up the results.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

BERGEN: I produced a set of short papers that summer too, so there was a variety of activities there. My free time I went out and collected wild flowers, and one of the resident researchers there [William B. Critchfield] helped me learn how to identify them. It was a very pleasant summer, but again the research types kept to themselves pretty much. My only way of relating to them was through projects; it was wild flower identification or if we were working on projects together. We didn't seem to have camaraderie of discussion. I shared a house with a newly married couple, so I didn't want to interfere with their free time together either. So although I had one other woman I could talk to and so on, I didn't spend a lot of extra time with them because I wanted to give them some time to themselves.

REINIER: But on the job you were still the only woman.

BERGEN: Yeah. Yeah. I was the only woman. And so anyway, then I went back to school that fall and I was frankly becoming dissatisfied enough that I was actually starting to have some panic attacks. I was going to a counselor at Cowell Hospital and I

didn't know what was wrong, couldn't figure out what was wrong. I even for a little while hoped that some medical tests would show that I had an illness so I would be able to drop out. What I was doing was living up to other people's expectations. I was very unhappy when I lived up to other people's expectations, but that's what I was doing. The professors at the school of forestry thought I should go into research, and I had accepted that and tried to make it my objective, and it didn't fit me. I'm amazed looking back, but it was a misfit for me and I was having doubts about it, and I didn't know how to get out of the problem. And the interesting way I got out of the problem, but I didn't quite get it figured out and the counselor did not help me that much, in the spring my ex-husband, my children's father, called me up and said (they had several other children), said that there were problems raising that many children, and how would Don and I like to have the children back to live with us and raise. So that at the time was my excuse, besides wanting to do for the children because I felt that was the best thing for them, it was also my excuse for not continuing graduate school right at that point. It's funny, but I couldn't make up my mind to do that myself. But I had this outside thing with responsibility that came back to me that was very important at that stage in my children's lives and made it easy.

REINIER: Were they about ten?

BERGEN: Well, 1964, so the youngest was nine, almost ten. 1964. So that would have been nine, ten, and twelve. So that meant a big change for my husband and me. We had been living in a rented flat in Berkeley, and so we started looking for a house. We rented a house in East Richmond--three bedroom house, a small house--and I just temporarily withdrew from school. I didn't make a decision at that time. I just temporarily withdrew. So I didn't go to school in the fall although I did some volunteer work. The school of forestry was putting together its first fifty-year history at that time, and so I did edit some of the chapters in that, did some editorial work on that. But other than that, I wasn't associated with the school. And so then I had to re-evaluate what had I done with my two years of study and graduate work and what should I do with it, what could I do with it. By that time I realized that I needed the feedback, that I hadn't been getting that at all. I was just totally existing in limbo in the school. So that somehow or other helped me come to that conclusion, that I needed the feedback, just interaction with people and knowing that I was accomplishing something out of my work.

So the question was, what do I do with this two years of work? If I'd known I was only going to do two years of graduate work I would have gotten a master's in forestry. Master's in forestry is much more restricted coursework and mine was very broad in genetics and botany primarily, hardly anything in forestry. My work had been in genetics and botany and soils. When I started looking into it, it fit a master's in botany much better than it fit anything else. I also found out that I could get a master's in botany with oral exams and wouldn't have to do a thesis. So I could do it either way. With an M.A. for some reason rather than an M.S., which I never figured out, but I could get a master's. The only problem with research was my lack of creativity as far as thinking of projects that I wanted to work on. That never came to me as far as, you know, this is

really what I want to do and I'm willing to put a lot of effort into the questions that I want to have answered. No, I didn't come up with those questions. The teamwork thing was missing there for me. So I still couldn't come up with an idea for a thesis, but I found that I could do orals.

So I did do one more semester in botany and actually changed from the school of forestry to botany for that because I was going to get the master's in botany. So I took a seminar in botany. I had to take one lower division, one undergraduate course I'd never taken, which was plant taxonomy. I think that's all I had to take. And then I took the magazine article writing course because I was re-thinking what I wanted to do with my forestry. And maybe one other course. But I spent a few hours every day studying. I forget now how I even organized that, but I had a reason then to do that. I went to the school and my kids were old enough to be home awhile by themselves. So after I got them off to school in the morning, I'd go off and study. I wasn't working then, I was studying. And I passed the orals. The major professor, whatever they called them, that professor's speciality was photosynthesis. By this time I'd done a lot of work in plant biochemistry. Biochemistry and plant biochemistry and pretty much a full range of botany courses. And a course called genecology, and so they all fit together. So I had a group of botany professors for my master's, instead of forestry. I passed it fine, so I got my master's. So that's why I studied botany instead of forestry.

REINIER: I wanted to go back and pick up a couple of things. I thought it was very interesting that you joined the Society of American Foresters in 1962. And then you said that the contacts were helpful to you.

BERGEN: Yes.

REINIER: Would you tell me a little bit more about that?

BERGEN: Okay. The school of forestry has a forestry club, I'll start with that. So I joined the forestry club when I got to the school of forestry. I think I was secretary one year probably. And I was also elected to Xi Sigma Pi which is an honorary forestry fraternity.

REINIER: Was that because of your good grades?

BERGEN: That was because of grades, yeah. And maybe that's when I started to discover that I liked to belong to groups, sort of a continuation of the groups that you build up in forestry summer camp and in school. And the students were invited to go to the SAF [Society of American Foresters] meetings, which at that time probably alternated between San Francisco and the East Bay, once a month with a speaker.

REINIER: It's a national organization, isn't it?

BERGEN: Yes, it's a national organization. And we had a Bay Area chapter, which was the meetings I was attending. I was probably the only woman there most of the time. I assume there may have been someone else there part of the time or a wife or something, I'm not sure, but I was probably the only woman there. So I met people working in the regional office, and I met people working in research, and I probably met people working in private industry. But one of the men in research was head of the Forest Genetics Project, and I guess was thinking this would be a good thing to hire this smart woman forester and so he offered me the job.

REINIER: And what was his name?

BERGEN: His name was [Robert Z.] Bob Callaham and he went on in research in the Forest Service, he moved up. His son happens to be a heart doctor here in this community now, which is really funny because I run into the son and the son's wife, but that's just one of those funny coincidences in life.

REINIER: Yeah, that's very nice.

BERGEN: But Bob Callaham was well known in the Forest Service and so he was my first boss. So I worked for the Forest Service for almost two years. I started in June of '62. And about May of '64 was when my children came back to live with me. I knew I wasn't going to go on in research, and the experiment station was not interested in keeping me on if I wasn't going to go into research. Nobody told me that you can establish eligibility for rehire if you work full two years. I didn't have enough knowledge to go and talk to anybody in personnel. I don't think it would have worked at that time, but nobody told me that I could apply for a transfer to a job someplace else. So I just quit. I actually resigned. In the long run it all turned out fine, but there was a complete lack of any career advice from personnel there, as far as, if you wait one more month before you resign you'd be eligible to be rehired.

REINIER: At the experiment station.

BERGEN: Yeah, and the same job category. Yeah.

REINIER: So do you feel that there was anybody at the experiment station encouraging you to go on in your career?

BERGEN: Not after I said I was no longer interested in research. Because they'd been trying to get me to come up with what's your project going to be too. Everybody had been, and I just wasn't finding myself there at all. It probably was something that they weren't thinking about. Nothing was done deliberately or anything else, but nobody thought about giving me any kind of advice whatsoever or telling me to go talk to personnel. And I was not at all used to working for the government. I had never heard about anything like reinstatement rights or anything like that, so I had no reason to go ask any questions. I was just feeling the pressure I was putting on myself because I was in

the wrong area. But it's funny how uncomfortable you can feel when you're not meeting your own needs but you don't know you're not meeting your own needs.

REINIER: Oh, yeah. And you know something that's interesting to me is that you were rethinking your career goals at the same time that Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* came out.

BERGEN: Really? I've never read any of those books. I should have.

REINIER: So you didn't read that.

BERGEN: No. I very much support the women's movement, but not the extremes of it, and I didn't support it at that time. It bothered me at that time; it really did.

REINIER: Of course, one of her pieces of advice is you need to go through the kind of very experience that you were going through, which is interesting.

BERGEN: What I was doing, having been brought up in a very traditional way, was internalizing other people's objectives for me. I did that as a child, I did that as a young woman, and then I was doing it again in forestry school, even though I'd already figured out I need my own status. I need to be my own person. But nonetheless I fell victim to the expectations of other people. I guess I could fault them for putting their expectations on me, but I need to fault myself for accepting them. That's the thing. They had typical expectations at the time, but I should have been able to say, wait a minute, does this fit me? I wasn't able to do that yet.

REINIER: It's a developing process, isn't it?

BERGEN: Yes, it is. So I internalized the wrong expectations for a little while and it was a misfit.

REINIER: Well, this was a time of growing student activism on the Berkeley campus.

BERGEN: Yes, it was.

REINIER: Were you involved in that at all?

BERGEN: Not directly. In fact, I probably avoided it. Probably avoided controversy. But one of the things that was really interesting was that the school of forestry celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1964.

REINIER: At the time of the Free Speech Movement.

BERGEN: Right, exactly. And I'm not sure whether I have my dates right because I just re-read something about the Free Speech Movement, and it puts Mario Savio's arrest on a different date than I think I remember it. So this would need a little research, but we had an alumni reunion and a seminar, may even have been a two-day meeting. Usually these were in early December, so I thought it was early December. We had the Pauley Ballroom at the Student Union over-looking the plaza. So we had all these alums there from forestry for this special occasion marking the fiftieth anniversary of the school of forestry and down below us in the plaza were all the students gathering. And either that day or right around that period of time was the day that Mario Savio was arrested. And the alums were so disgusted with what was happening in Berkeley. They were really put out by it. I didn't feel that way about it. I wasn't that upset by it; I just knew it was happening. But they were so upset by it, and we felt it was so unfortunate. Some who might have donated some money couldn't be expected to then, at least for awhile, things like that. So it was an unfortunate juxtaposition, but it was a very interesting spot to be in at that particular time. You could look down and see what was happening!

REINIER: Yes. Did the activism on campus affect your work? Did you find that it got in the way of your academic program?

BERGEN: I didn't. I didn't. No, I think I had my life full with other things and I just wasn't paying attention to it. I think that there were some effects later, '67-'70, when the Kent State thing happened in '70. I can't speak to it because I wasn't on campus then, but I know that there were some real reactions to that. Good reactions, I mean, positive reactions within the school of forestry looking at the needs of students and so on and so forth. I think that period of time generated dialogue and relooking at some things. Just from what I've heard from the outside, but I wasn't part of that.

REINIER: Yes, I think it did in other departments too on the Berkeley campus. Well then, after you got your master's degree in botany you worked part-time as a junior specialist in the school of forestry?

BERGEN: What I did then since I had the children living with me, I wanted part-time work. For some reason I was having difficulty finding it. It was like all of a sudden the part-time jobs dried up. I still don't know, the money was not there for part-time jobs supposedly, whether that was the reason, or whether people were just thinking I didn't really have career goals and they didn't want to hire me or what. But I was having trouble getting a part-time job, and I couldn't get one at the experiment station. I did some applying to book publishers, editors, you know, groups that might have editing jobs. I started looking more for work in the public relations or writing area primarily, but I would have taken anything part-time in forestry. I remember I even applied to the Atomic Energy Commission because it had an office in Berkeley at the time, for a part-time job. I went through the whole security clearance thing and they told me they didn't have a job for me. [Laughing] For whatever reason. But at any rate, I wasn't able to find a job.

So the school of forestry regularly hired graduate students in part-time positions as junior specialists to do research, working with the professors. So what happened was, for two years there after they had filled all the graduate students' needs, if they had a position leftover that would suit me, they would hire me for it. So one year I worked for Professor Harold Biswell. I may not have started until January; I might not even have had a job in the fall semester. But I worked for Professor Biswell and he was doing work in what we call prescribed burning now. He was one of the pioneers in that area. I was doing primarily writing and research, library research rather than field research. I was doing library research, writing, and editing and it produced a history of the Whitaker's Forest, which is a school of forestry property. That was published in a magazine called *American Forests*, and I should be able to find a copy I can share with you. September of '66 was when it was published, I still remember. Besides producing it for him, I was also allowed to sell it to the magazine and so it's a permanent record. And then I did other things. Some of that was excerpted in other publications on Whitaker's Forest. One section was edited out by the magazine because it was too long, and so the school of forestry re-used that. So there were a number of different products that I worked with and did things with. At one time I was working on just checking bibliographies, but I liked libraries and some of the bibliography checks would take me all over the campus, so that was okay. So I did various things like that.

And the following year, same situation, and I ended up working for [Herbert C.] Herb Sampson. Both Dr. Biswell and Herb Sampson have since passed away. Herb Sampson was an instructor in logging and logging roads. He wasn't a professor. He was a practical forester, but he was an instructor in the school in those areas and a very delightful person. Very fine person. Full of good practical advice too--one of the more practical people. I think he was sort of in charge of the physical property at summer camp, for example, not the courses, but the physical property. Plus he was in charge of Blodgett Forest at that time. Blodgett Forest is down here in El Dorado County intermingled with the Eldorado National Forest. It's school of forestry property that was donated by the Blodgett family. I should know more about it than that because I ended up drafting it--I'm not sure if it's 100 percent accurate because I never quite finished it--but I was able to do part of the research of the history of Blodgett Forest. And Herb would help direct me to who I should be interviewing and records I should be looking at. And I used other historical records. So I wrote a history of Blodgett Forest which they have in their files down there.

REINIER: Where?

BERGEN: At Blodgett Forest. It's outside of Georgetown. And I should have a copy of that too, but that I don't know where it is. I think I can find the other article. So I did that. So this now takes us to June of '67. The sixties was the period of the feminist movement, wasn't it really?

REINIER: It was beginning, yeah.

BERGEN: But it wasn't in full swing yet, I don't think, and I wasn't fully subscribing to it yet either. I still was holding on to some of my values that I'd learned as a child, for example. But the regional office of the Forest Service for California was located in San Francisco. It was there until the last couple of years. And that was headquarters for all the national forests in California.

REINIER: Region 5.

BERGEN: Region 5. Was called the California Region at that time; it is the Pacific Southwest Region now. And they have a Division of Information and Education [I & E], which was like public relations essentially. And they had several positions. One of the positions in that department, that division, was called Women's Activities. Believe it or not, it's what it was called then.

REINIER: Was that for wives, for example? And clerical workers?

BERGEN: No. It was an outreach program to reach women's groups and youth groups. I think it probably had its start in less urban states where the Grange was pretty important. In some states, it was outreach to the Women's Auxiliary of the Grange, the Women's Auxiliary of the Resource Conservation Districts, the old soil conservation districts, they would have a women's auxiliary.

REINIER: Because women were very active in the Grange.

BERGEN: Yes, the Grange and the soil conservation districts were two areas. And then here in California we worked with the Federated Women's Clubs and the Junior Women's Clubs and the Garden Clubs. Those were the three main groups, actually. The Girl Scouts, the Boy Scouts, the Camp Fire Girls, 4H, any of those groups, plus service clubs if they had a need. It could be any of them--Kiwanis groups, Lions, or any of these groups that wanted to have conservation programs of some kind or other. So that was the purpose of that position, was to work not with scientific groups or resource management groups or that kind of interest groups, but essentially with the women's groups and the youth groups. California Garden Clubs, Incorporated, I guess it was called. So that's what this position did. The idea was to teach them about conservation, take exhibits to meetings, help them pass resolutions when the resolutions were needed. Of course, our role was really to provide the information and they would pass the resolutions, but you might give them a hint as to when a resolution would be helpful and who it should go to. So you were working on cooperative relationships with these groups.

This position had been held traditionally by a woman who had risen from the clerical force. It was a woman's position. It was held by a woman, obviously, who was a quick learner and who was able to grow in the job, but was out from the clerical force. That had always been the way it had been filled before. So, for whatever reason, things were changing in California, I'm sure you'll recognize that. The man who was the head of the Division of I & E at the time, Grant Morse, decided he really would like to have a

professional forester in that position, when the lady who was in it was retiring. He called up the dean of the school of forestry among other things that he did, looking for somebody to fill that position. I had my resume all done and the dean was aware that I was looking for work in public relations, writing and editing. And in the meantime I had done a lot of volunteer work in the community in the couple of years since I'd got my master's degree.

REINIER: Yes, I wanted to ask you about that. So maybe you should talk about it a little bit now.

BERGEN: Okay. I'll finish this one little bit and then I'll go back to that. But I had done a lot of volunteer work too which helped qualify me. Grant came over to interview me, and as far as he was concerned, I had the job then, I think. There wasn't any question in his mind. Because I fit what he wanted. I was a graduate forester and I wanted to work in public relations and I was a woman.

REINIER: But it was a woman's job!

BERGEN: It was a woman's job!

REINIER: A woman forester for a woman's job.

BERGEN: And it didn't really bother me at the time at all. By that time my husband, was he in management? 1967. I'll have to think about that a little bit. But he was probably moving up a little bit in a printing company. But he was beginning to be a little less flexible in moving around. Earlier, being married to a printer, I had thought I could have gone out and worked in the field, not every single location, because printers could move around in the way I mentioned to you earlier. I could have easily worked in Redding or Fresno, any place with a daily newspaper my husband could have found work.

REINIER: And your children weren't living with you.

BERGEN: And they weren't living with me then; that was in '62 when I graduated. So if I hadn't gone into research, I could have easily gone to work for the Sierra [National Forest], the Sequoia National Forest, or the Shasta Trinity [National Forest], or whatever. Anyplace with a daily newspaper, and Don would have been willing to go with me. So it fit then, because he was not in management then. He was just a printer. So that fit up to that point; our careers worked well together, which was nice. So anyway, you asked me about my volunteer work.

REINIER: Well, yes, we might as well get that in.

BERGEN: Yeah, I think so. So 1964 was when the children came to live with me and Don and I rented the house in East Richmond. That's really a good place to start,

because I wasn't working for the federal government then yet, so I was able to do some work in politics which interested us both. We joined the East Richmond Democratic Club, and we met some interesting people through that, several of whom were very much involved in what was then still being called conservation activities, now environmentalists. Actually, one of them was Jean Siri, whose husband, Will Siri, was or had been the president of the Sierra Club, lived in El Cerrito. One was a lady named Mary Leuba. She and her husband moved back east a long time ago but they were active in Save San Francisco Bay.

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

REINIER: We were talking about your volunteer work.

BERGEN: Yes. So we had this group, this cell of women that did conservation-related activities in primarily West Contra Costa County.

REINIER: And you met at the house of Mrs. Clark Kerr, you said.

BERGEN: Yes, the Save San Francisco Bay Association related work.

REINIER: Because she was very active in that.

BERGEN: Yes, yes, she was. We met there. We were working primarily trying to get some shoreline preserved and open to the public in the city of Richmond. And I remember I produced a map that we used on a flier.

REINIER: Because you had those skills!

BERGEN: That had something like, I forget how many miles of shoreline it was, but let's say something like forty-eight miles of shoreline, thirty-eight feet open to the public. Thirty-eight feet, and that was a boat ramp, at that time. And I also got myself appointed to the Richmond Recreation and Parks Commission, so I was on that for a couple of years. I didn't get reappointed because my city council member left town, and so I didn't have the political support. They wanted their own person in. But I was on that and that was very good training and used my experience. And then I was a charter member of Richmond Citizens' Planning Association. We weren't living in the city of Richmond yet, but we formed a group that was working toward planning, and so were attacking things from different directions. There was one group that was sort of based in Point Richmond, actually, and had attorneys and architects and so on. And we were working on planning issues concerning the city of Richmond. And the Save San Francisco Bay group was working on shorelines issues. And then I was on the park commission and so that was park issues, park and recreation issues. So I was involved in all of these.

REINIER: Now at this point did you think that that would continue to be what your life would be like? You had your children and you were working in these community activities.

BERGEN: No, I think looking for a more permanent part-time job was what I was really doing. I wasn't really looking for a full-time job right at that moment because my children were still fairly young. But what I would have liked to have had would have been a more permanent part-time job. So these activities were activities that were using my talents and keeping me from being stale and things I was very much interested in, but I wasn't thinking that would be my life, no. We also had a little informal group called West Contra Costa Conservation League, which was the same women, but we used that title and we spoke on other things. So I understand these conservation groups and circles that are around here too. And then we worked on open space issues in the Bay Area in general. There was a group called People for Open Space at that time, and those were people from all counties. I was the Contra Costa County representative for a little while

in that group. So we provided input to the Association of Bay Area Governments and the East Bay Regional Park District on areas that should remain open space. I don't remember the exact names of these different efforts, but there were a whole lot of different things we'd want to do. One of the other women from this RCPA, this Richmond Citizens' Planning Association group that I mentioned we started, and I got together, we felt it was high time for regional government in the Bay Area. And we actually wrote our own proposal for regional government, and we started taking it to city councils and the boards of supervisors.

REINIER: That hasn't happened yet.

BERGEN: No, it hasn't happened yet. We weren't students of government, but I think we did a pretty good job because somewhat later Assemblyman [John T.] Knox from Richmond introduced a bill to provide regional government, I guess in the Bay Area, and it was our proposal, it really was. It had been rewritten by his staff. So I had all this experience in producing newsletters, making speeches, doing other things of that type. So that was part of my experience for this women's activity job also.

REINIER: With the Forest Service.

BERGEN: With the Forest Service. I guess I was asked to fill out an application, and even though that was unpaid work, to include all that as separate experience blocks. I probably have that application somewhere. So I did. So Grant [Morse] wanted to hire me. They couldn't reinstate me as a GS7 forester because I had not worked quite two full years. It turned out for my benefit ultimately, because they ran me through as a public information officer instead and rated my application from that basis. Apparently there was no standing register for that, so they could put me on what they called a TAPER appointment, which was called temporary appointment appending establishment of register. I didn't realize I wasn't getting a permanent appointment right at the time. I might not have been quite as thrilled about it, but it worked out okay in the long run. So instead of offering me a job as a GS7 forester, they offered me a job as a GS11 public information specialist because that's what it graded out as, somehow or other.

REINIER: And a considerable raise in pay.

BERGEN: Of course. I was not looking for a full-time job at the time. I was looking for a part-time job because I had the children and it was in the middle of summertime. But we also had just bought a house and we could use the money, and it was too good a job to turn down. It really was. So I accepted it. I was sorry not to be home with the children in the summertime. I didn't mind as much in the wintertime when they were in school, but in the summertime that bothered me some. But, at any rate, it got me started on my career, and it was the basis for a lot of development. The other aspect of that job besides things I've already mentioned that I worked on, the women's clubs and so on, well, there were several other aspects. At that time I also had to produce a bi-weekly newsletter, internal employee newsletter for Region 5.

REINIER: Is that *The California Log*?

BERGEN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

REINIER: Tell me about *The California Log*! I've seen copies of that.

BERGEN: Well, of course, it's produced differently now, and it's not produced as often either. But I was supposed to take care of all these external contacts, which meant travel, and also produce this newsletter every two weeks. It didn't always come out every two weeks, but it came out pretty regularly. And, of course, it was much more primitive printing set-ups and it wasn't computers at all. And I managed to do it. I got it done! So I did that. That was internal, but there was a little conflict there. As far as time and being out of the office, I meant that kind of conflict. And then I was expected to put together my own exhibits. The Forest Service didn't have an audio-visual person yet, and they didn't have a visual graphics person at all. They didn't have either of those when I started with them. So I had to put together my own exhibits, and I did have help. We had a visitor information specialist working in our section, and he was very helpful. We worked together on exhibits, each one of us. I had already put together [a wilderness exhibit] when I was working for the school of forestry. I didn't mind tackling these things. I was an amateur, but nobody was more professional. We didn't have anybody else that was more professional to do it, so you go ahead and do it.

REINIER: So you were really working in public relations.

BERGEN: Yes. Yeah, I was.

REINIER: It was a public relations job.

BERGEN: Right. And I'd go out and give programs. We did have a multiple use program that had been put together for another purpose. I adapted that for my use, so I would have a slide program ready to go. I got so I knew it so well I could vary what I said depending on the audience and their interest, and their level of education and so on. So I did my own slide programs and I got Smoky Bear costumes for people. It was a very varied job. Oh, then at the same time they also hired a conservation education specialist. They had not had anybody working in outdoor education or conservation education previously. It was Jane Westenberger. I worked somewhat with her on conservation education, too, primarily when we were getting the women's clubs to support conservation education programs. We put on programs for the local teachers, for example, something like that. So we did conservation education workshops.

REINIER: What did conservation mean during that time period in the Forest Service?

BERGEN: Well, it meant the same things it means to me now, which would be wise use stewardship, sustained production, renewal of resources in the long run.

REINIER: And yet wasn't the Forest Service then beginning to move more toward recreation, opening up? Was that happening at that time also?

BERGEN: Right, but that's another resource that you want to sustain. My interpretation, and I sort of developed this as I went along, but to sustain the basic productivity of the land, it can be timber producing land, but as you change the social objectives, it can also be recreation land, it can be wildlife habitat, it could be wilderness. Time frames are different. But you haven't lost the basic productivity of the land, to renew itself, to sustain itself. Change goes on all the time. And so if you don't go too far away from this equilibrium which is changing, if you don't go way out of it, like by hydraulic mining or something that goes way out of it, you can return to some former state, or it's just another state. So to me, the concept of conservation goes right along with multiple use and sustained yield, and it applies to all the resources, all the renewable resources. Some are more long term than others. If you lose some soil, soil's renewable too, but in a terribly long term. So you do your best to maintain the soil productivity, which is what I tried to do here on the Tahoe [National Forest]. So I'm speaking now of a concept that grew in my mind, too, sort of developed, but conservation as sustained yield for all the resources would be the Forest Service's concept. Now I say that, interpreting, from my point of view, from the point of view of the people I worked with most closely, and the point of view of my next job which was the environmental coordination job.

But I know that there were a lot of pressures out there for timber production. And I think that the Forest Service had two pressures, two avenues of direction, or whatever. I never felt directly this real strong push for timber production above everything else, but I think there are people either that did feel it or did think it was there for whatever reason. I think that we can see the effects that that was the thinking. I can't produce the facts behind it, but I think that the pressures were there, higher in Region 6 than in Region 5.

REINIER: I wondered about that because Region 6 was so rich with money for timber production.

BERGEN: Yes. They have all this money. Going way back with that women's activity job, the women's activity person in that region would say, "Now doesn't the timber industry have so much power." And I'd say, "No, you know, I don't see that in [Region] 5." That doesn't mean they didn't have power, but they must have had it much more overwhelmingly in [Region] 6. The timber industry was organized. I can remember that there were many meetings in the regional office where they were trying to iron out clauses for the timber sale contract between the representative of the timber industry and the Forest Service representatives. I can remember that well. As a matter of fact, I wasn't at the meetings; I was aware of the meetings. Yes, timber had a strong voice, but everybody tried to have a strong voice. I usually felt that the pressures were pretty well balanced.

REINIER: Well now, also the environmental movement was heating up.

BERGEN: Yes.

REINIER: At this time. And was that another pressure that would be antagonistic to the idea of conservation as you expressed it?

BERGEN: It's antagonistic to the idea of use and management, which bothers me. It bothers me a great deal, because some people don't understand that all our resources including our wilderness are influenced by man in one way or another. They have been in the past. I mean wilderness has had trails, it has had emigration, it has had grazing and it has air pollution perhaps. Some wildernesses are overused by recreationists. There's no way you can preserve things without management. And we have wilderness management plans. To leave it untouched does not preserve it, not in that sense. I'd like to think, I don't know if I'm right, that in my job I helped Region 5 recognize the environmental movement, but that's maybe getting on to a story for another day.

[Laughter]

BERGEN: It's getting late here.

REINIER: Okay.

[End Tape 3, Side A]

[SESSION II, July 6, 2000]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

REINIER: Geri, at the end of the tape yesterday we were talking about your job as Public Information Officer in the regional office of Region 5. Could you tell me a little bit more about what you did in that job?

BERGEN: Well, it was my responsibility or my job to represent the Forest Service to outside groups, general interest outside groups, primarily women's and youth groups, as I think I did already mention. For example, I would go to the statewide conventions--conferences, annual conferences or conventions--of groups such as the California Garden Clubs and the Federated Women's Clubs. These would be several day conferences. I would take a timely Forest Service exhibit and I would present awards in order to have some visibility there, would work with the state conservation chair of these groups and arrange to have an award. Now at that time we didn't really have any way of putting money in our budget to give awards to people, so it was difficult to come up with something that was worthwhile giving when we didn't have money for it. And what we did have, we had a program called Penny Pines--I think the Forest Service still has it--in which clubs or individuals could donate money to help reforest an acre of land. And this had been established at sixty-four dollars when 640 trees per acre were planted, if my memory is right here, and I guess we planted them at ten cents a tree or whatever. Sixty-four dollars was the standard donation and the clubs would get credit for an acre of land. Well, by this time the reforestation costs were up over two hundred dollars an acre, but we hadn't changed the contribution amount. And we prepared a certificate. We had some very nice certificates we would hand out with the club's name, just thanking the club, and the club's name would also show up later on the sign at the plantation. Or they could be done in honor or in memory of somebody. But we made sure that the donors understood that these were not memorial forests but working forests, that they were donating to the reforestation of working forests. They could specify which national forest they wanted to have the money used at. And it was up to the national forest to put that money in their reforestation funds and also to buy signs, that was permissible. So we had the Penny Pines donation, and we may have given awards for like the most Penny Pines donations in a year, something like that. I had an extra large heavy certificate, a Penny Pines certificate, made up that could be given to the club that had done the most contributing to Penny Pines that year.

During this period of time, I think we had on one of the forests and he came to work at the regional office, a person who was a visual information specialist, John Jenott. That was very helpful, and he had a lot of skills. And with his help we devised a very inexpensive award. He had access to Manzanita burls. He would take some Manzanita burl--since he had access to them they were of no cost to us--and splice off or saw one side of it at an angle so you had this beautiful burl wood showing, and finish it. And then we would affix a brass plate, or an aluminum plate that looked like brass, with the name of the club, and we gave this as a conservation education award. I don't remember right now whether it was the junior women's clubs or to the women's clubs, but it was for a conservation education program. Of course, the clubs would have to apply for the award and have a set of judges judging and so on for them. So in that way I would be on the

program and I would present these awards at the program. Just for recognition, no money came with them or anything, but that was one aspect of how we got the recognition.

REINIER: You told me earlier how you learned how to pack for these conferences.

BERGEN: Yes, since they were women's groups and they were not as informal as they would be nowadays, the conferences required usually a long dress of some kind for one of the evening functions and my Forest Service uniform when I was manning the exhibit that I would bring along. When I went to the garden clubs, there would be a luncheon that I would generally be invited to sit at the head table for that required me to wear a hat. So I had to pack both a uniform and an evening gown and a hat. So that was an interesting combination of clothes to take a meeting.

REINIER: Yes. We were talking earlier about how 1969 and '70 when you were working in this job, was such an exciting time period because that's when the environmental movement was really getting underway.

BERGEN: Yes, it was. Since my job was working with outside groups, I saw that this was an opportunity to broaden the kinds of outside groups we worked with. 1969 was a very exciting time. One of the things that happened was that congress approved a bi-state compact between California and Nevada that established the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency [TRPA]. And the Forest Service at that time set up the Lake Tahoe Basin Administrative Unit; that may not have been the original name of it, but anyway, set that up with essentially the same boundaries as TRPA. That to me was really the first approach to ecosystem planning that was obvious. The student movement and the student participation in the environmental movement was starting then. And one of the agencies that appeared to recognize this first was an agency that was a predecessor of the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency]. I think it would have been called the Federal Water Pollution Control Agency; I'm not sure if that's the exact name, but I do remember going to a meeting that they held with many, many students and young people attending, and feeling that this was a force that we should recognize and be working with. The National Environmental Policy Act was also passed in 1969 and I think signed into being the 1st of January 1970. I don't know whether I recognized that in itself at that moment as being more significant than some other things that were going on, but certainly I was aware of it.

And April 1970 was the first Earth Day and there were a lot of things going on in relation to that. One of them was the survival walk that a group sponsored--trying to remember the directions--from the East Bay, through the San Joaquin Valley, down all the way to Los Angeles. Their idea was to do this without motor vehicles, and so an air pollution event as much as it was anything else. But they were going through the Central Valley where we have offices for a number of national forests, and so I alerted the public information officers in all those national forests to see if they could help this group. I alerted the Angeles [National Forest] because the group was going to be crossing the

Angeles and there were fire concerns and so on. And a number of the forests took the opportunity to work with the group, made contact with the group and to work with the group. The PIO [public information specialist] on the Stanislaus [National Forest], I believe it was, made arrangements for the group to camp in a local fairgrounds when they got there, so they had a place to stay. And the Angeles had somebody walking with the group across the forest. And there were other contacts made and there were exhibits that were put up. We started to have exhibits at shopping malls for Earth Day. We did things like that. I mean the forests did them, but I was alerting and coordinating. So that was our first recognition, I think, of the power of the environmentalist movement, and that was very helpful.

The other thing that I got into about that time was the increased interest in land use planning. Multiple use planning was evolving at that time within the Forest Service into other systems. What were called unit plans started to be developed, which were smaller than a forest in size, larger, perhaps than a ranger district, taking a natural watershed or a natural area into consideration. I can't give you the names now specifically of any one of them, but Tahoe [National Forest] was working on at least one. And the region set up an ad hoc committee to look at how we approached the planning, and discuss and review the new approaches. I somehow or other was able to make my interest in planning clear. I had had this interest on the outside. I had helped start the Richmond Citizens' Planning Association; I had been very involved with land use planning, particularly for open space in the Bay Area. And through the Save San Francisco Bay Association and other contacts in the Bay Area, I had maintained my interest in land use planning, and I saw the multiple use plan as able to expand and do that.

REINIER: That's a really interesting point, how your outside work began to channel into your job and begin to change the direction of it.

BERGEN: Yes. Yeah. My interesting was in planning. The draft of a proposal for regional government that I had mentioned earlier was mainly based on that concept of regional planning. So it was a planning approach; it wasn't based on overall government. That wasn't the idea; it was a planning approach. And so multiple use planning and then how it was developing grew out of that. So I had made my interest in that apparent in some way. One of the other responsibilities of my job at I & E was writing speeches, primarily for the regional forester from time to time, not all the speeches, depending on the subject that he was to address. And there was a position called the multiple use coordinator that was attached to the regional forester's office, and I started to get assignments from him for research. What kinds of special areas do we have in the multiple use plans was one of the assignments. Research areas, research forests, cone pine management area, Sugar Pine, whatever, we had a number of different kinds of little allocations of land for other purposes throughout the region. So I had that assignment. And I started to be asked to write speeches for him and at one point I was asked to make the speech for him.

REINIER: And this was for whom? Who was he?

BERGEN: His name was Bill Cooperrider, he had the position at the time, was the multiple use coordinator. And they had this committee that was reviewing the planning and Bill was part of the committee. I believe that Paul Stathem, the supervisor of the Shasta Trinity [National Forest], was part of the committee. Warren Walters was part of the committee. He must have been on the recreation staff in the regional office at that time. [And I was asked to be on the committee also]. So we met periodically. After awhile it became apparent to the Forest Service that they needed to put more resources into implementing the National Environmental Policy Act than they had up until that time. Whatever direction there had been came out of, I guess, the multiple use coordinator's office in the regions. I don't know when the Washington office first set up the position of environmental coordinator, but it would have been between 1970 and '72. And the region decided that they needed to enlarge the position of multiple use coordinator to a staff. They decided to set up a staff called the multiple use group, the original name of it. That later became the land management planning staff, but at first it was called the multiple use group. So that was going to have a staff director, which would have been the equivalent of Bill Cooperrider, the multiple use coordinator. And it was to have a land use planner, a special areas person, which in this case was wilderness--we were still doing primitive area reclassifications designations as wilderness, and then RARE1 and RARE2 came along--and then the environmental coordinator.

And by this time I had gotten deep into NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act], one way or another, and I was very much aware of the bill and the purpose of the bill. There were two people besides myself that were interested in the position and who would be obvious candidates for consideration. One of them was a person who worked in engineering, who was their coordinator with the Federal Power Commission it would have been at that time, now the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. There were a number of hydroelectric projects on national forest land, and we were asked to input onto the requirements for those projects when they happened; that was a coordinating position in engineering. And then in watershed there was also a person who coordinated multiple use reports, essentially, I guess, looking at the watershed effects and whether they were considered. And those were really the only resource coordinating type positions in the regional office at that time. And then I had my interest in NEPA. So I made sure that the people who were going to be considering this, Bill Cooperrider and others, I made sure that they were aware of my interest.

REINIER: How did you do that?

BERGEN: I'm not sure! Looking back, I went in and I just talked to them about the fact that I would be very much interested in that job. Of course, I had been doing some work in this area already so it depended partly what they thought of my other work, but I didn't want to be left out of the consideration. And, fortunately, I was selected for the position.

REINIER: In 1972.

BERGEN: In 1972.

REINIER: To be the Region 5 environmental coordinator.

BERGEN: Yes. The job title, civil service title, was Environmental Analysis Specialist, I think. But the working title was environmental coordinator. So this was very significant for me. And it was at a very important time in my life too because within almost a week's time, in early June of '72, I received that job offer plus my three children all graduated from high school within nine days there. The youngest one graduated with her class at De Anza High in El Sobrante. The other two had dropped out earlier for various reasons and had gone back to Richmond Adult Night School on their own, individually, but they happened to have done it at the same time. And so they graduated from Richmond Adult Night School, and all three graduated at the same time.

REINIER: So that was great!

BERGEN: It was. It was a very great time for me, a very happy time. So we formed a new staff...

REINIER: Now before we get into that job, let's talk a little bit about the kind of visibility you were able to attain in the previous job. For example, you were really shaping the job of public information officer in an environmentally conscious direction, weren't you?

BERGEN: And you wonder how, when you look back at it, you try to remember. Yes. But by taking on these speech-writing assignments and these other assignments that were available, by being willing to take them on. It sometimes felt like I was doing a job and a half because I had to keep up all the responsibilities that had been assigned to this women's activities job all along, getting out *The California Log* and working with the external groups. It was before the days of computers, so we didn't have quite as much information coming across our desks as you would have today, but being in information and education we did have a lot of information coming across our desks. And so I had found during the time I had this job that I could be a selective reader and pick up on whatever subject I needed to pick up on. For example, if I had an assignment to write a speech for the regional forester on a certain subject, I would find that there was plenty of material--besides that I needed to research within the Forest Service--but as far as external information, because there would be plenty of material coming across my desk. I could get the perspective of the outside world of how the subject related to other groups and their positions and so on without leaving my desk essentially. This was also true with land use planning and with NEPA; there was plenty of material coming across my desk that I could learn and pick up on as I had the need to use it.

REINIER: And you've always been a good student!

BERGEN: Yes. Yes. My husband used to call me a quick study. I learned to do things fast. Yeah. Yeah.

REINIER: Yeah. Yes. Well, you have to be.

BERGEN: So...

REINIER: We're interested also in the way that women have been able to advance their careers. At this point were there people who were helping you along? Recommending you for positions?

BERGEN: Well, I felt I had a lot of support all along. For example, from the time that I first got this job in the regional office in 1967, the dean of the school of forestry, at that time John Zivnuska, obviously gave my name to Grant Morse and recommended me. I was active with the California Alumni Foresters as well as somewhat with the Society of American Foresters, so I kept up a lot of contacts that way. So people knew me and knew my work. I participated in giving training sessions in the region, so I did travel to some of the forests. The training sessions were either conservation education or they were general information and education training sessions, and I was making presentations in my area. When I first started working in 1967, one of the first training assignments that I got, for me to learn, was to go to instructor training. I think I may have been the first woman in the region to attend an instructor training course. So we learned techniques of adult education essentially in that course to use in teaching and carrying out training. Carrying out training was never one of my favorite jobs, but it was something that I was required to do and did do. So in that way you met field people also and you traveled out to the forests. And I made field contacts for other purposes, although going back that far it's much easier to remember the environmental coordination job than it is the I & E purpose. But I went out on assistance trips to forests, to help them, to train their people they had assigned to women's activities, for example. So you had that kind of visibility. I was back in Washington either on special assignments or when we had training sessions nationally, so the director of information and education in Washington also knew me.

REINIER: Who was that?

BERGEN: At that time it was Hank DeBruin. And I knew people in research because I'd worked in research. So yes, I think that knowing people, having them know me and obviously being capable. Having people know me, if I wasn't capable, would not do me any good at all. But the fact that you are known and in my case were visible since I was a woman in a man's field--there weren't that many that could be visible--really helps a lot in a career.

REINIER: And [R.] Keith Arnold. Wasn't it in this job that you told me he invited you to participate in a conference?

BERGEN: Well, I was in Washington at one of the training sessions for women in these women's activities types of positions. Two of the people from the deputy chief's office--I don't know if that was specifically what Keith's position was at that time, but it may well have been--but two of the people from research were Bob Buckman and Keith Arnold making presentations. Since Keith knew me, he asked me to help hold a large poster that he was making a presentation from at that time. Yes, that was significant in that it showed that he knew me and one could see that I had some support from research if I wanted to go ahead with my career. I was advised that that was a good thing!

[Laughter]

REINIER: And also, how about [Douglas R.] Doug Leisz, the regional forester?

BERGEN: Yes, Doug was a very good regional forester to work for. I did not know him before he came to Region 5 as regional forester although much of his career had been in Region 5 and he was also a UC Berkeley alumnus. Interestingly enough, I was asked to write the first speech that he was to give in Region 5 in this position and that speech was a speech to the Cal Alumni Foresters. Since I attended the alumni meetings regularly, I had a fairly good idea of what would go across. We figured we needed some humor. I wrote a number of speeches for Doug over the years and he always changed what I wrote, but he'd come back and ask me to write more things. So I guess the basic material that I put together usually was what he wanted. And then he would just develop it on himself. So I wrote this one, developed it, based on whatever facts it was that he wanted to present. But we felt we needed some humor because this was going to be an after dinner speech; people like to drink at alumni gatherings and it could get rather dull if you didn't liven it up in some way. And by this time we had this visual artist on board that I mentioned before, John Jenott. So I got together with him and he had a sense of humor. So we managed to draw up some humorous cartoons to go along with some of the concepts that Doug was going to be presenting. We put them on a slide projector or possibly ladder and slide, some type of a slide projector at any rate, so I could show them at the appropriate time. So as Doug talked these people were just starting to get sleepy and all of a sudden here pops this funny cartoon on the wall. So that's how we kept that one moving. Yeah. So, anyway, I had these assignments of writing speeches for Doug from time to time. Our I & E offices were adjacent to the regional forester's office, so we were providing information and advice on various things from time to time.

REINIER: So as you were moving from one position to another, did this support then help you in your advancement in your career?

BERGEN: There were two ways. Because I had done speeches for the previous regional forester, Jack Deinema, also, I also had his support. I don't know if you noticed

in my list of positions, but I was hired as a GS11, public information specialist, and while I was in the position I was promoted to a 12. And then later in 1972 I became the environmental coordinator, and while I was in the position I was promoted to a 13. Those are both somewhat unusual. In order for that to work there has to be a material change in the job content in some way, either from outside forces or in my case, you'd have to go to personnel to get a definition, but it was based on the man in job concept. So essentially I built the jobs. In each case I built up the jobs and then it became a job of greater responsibility.

REINIER: Ah ha.

BERGEN: I had to have the regional forester's support to get those promotions, but I got a promotion in the job in each case because of what I was able to do with the job and because the regional forester recognized and supported the promotion.

REINIER: I see. Good for you!

BERGEN: Yeah, so that really helped my career. It was sort of interesting because I got the promotions in the jobs rather than between the jobs. I went from 11 to 12 as the information specialist. Then I was reassigned into the environmental coordination position but then I went from a 12 to 13 within the position. Actually that reassignment [from public information to environmental coordination] was a great help to me because I had worked as a research forester, but then I was hired as a public information specialist. I was not in the forester series and I was on this temporary appointment. When I was reassigned I might have gotten on to a permanent appointment but I don't think so, earlier. When I was reassigned to a forester position, then I was in the forester series. I was on a permanent appointment; I could start contributing to civil service retirement and so on. So that was one of the reasons I wanted that reassignment. There were several reasons I wanted that reassignment. Five years in a position in one job seems to be long enough. You build up the position and then you get to a point where you're doing the same thing all the time. It's much more fun when you're building it up and you're having new experiences. Five or six years in the Forest Service is really long enough, for me at any rate, in one job.

REINIER: Because people do move around a lot in the Forest Service.

BERGEN: Yeah, they do.

REINIER: Has that always been a policy of the Forest Service to move people around?

BERGEN: It's definitely a policy. Less so now, I think, because people are finding it harder to move. They have working spouses for one thing and the spouses may not be mobile. It's costs money to sell your house. And even though the Forest Service picks

up a lot of the costs, here in California with Proposition 13 if you move to a more expensive area....

[End Tape 3, Side B]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

BERGEN: At that time, the time I was in the regional office, I knew a lot of people who had started with the Forest Service in the 1950's, and it was obvious from talking to them that the Forest Service had been growing very quickly at that point, and so therefore there had been a lot of quick promotions and a lot of moving around. So it was really typical for people to move very frequently. My job was very atypical, really, starting in the regional office and working in information, for example, for five years. But that was what was available. Women weren't working in the field at that time yet. Later on we come to how I got to the field, but yes, women were not working in the field then yet.

REINIER: I think we should say something about the fact that we were talking about, this is the point when the environmental movement is getting underway and it's also the time when the women's movement is really being felt. So would you say you were at the right place at the right time?

BERGEN: Looking back on it, it sure seems that way, yes. It does. [Laughter] The movement's thing was interesting because I didn't subscribe to it [at first], and some of the people in the Forest Service didn't quite know how to take me. And I was still having to accept some of the concepts of the women's movement because I wasn't brought up to think of being equal. I was really brought up to think that women had

some sort of special treatment in some ways, even though they couldn't do some other things. And so I had to change my thinking, and I guess it finally sunk in. While I was in the I & E job, I did join the Business and Professional Women for the first time. The Union Square Club [in San Francisco]. And that was interesting because that was a group of women who also traveled in their jobs, and at that time it was very unusual for women to travel in their jobs. It isn't now, but it was then. I had good bosses that knew that I had to do that and that people had to accept me doing that. Both when I first started with the experiment station and when I first started with I & E in the regional office, I wasn't there two weeks but when I was sent on a trip. And I think that was just so people would accept the fact that yes, this woman forester is going to be traveling. And so I thought that was very good planning on the part of my two bosses. I had a lot of support from my immediate bosses.

REINIER: And who were your bosses?

BERGEN: In the experiment station at first it was Bob Callaham, and I think he was replaced by Bob Echols. And, in the Regional Office it was Grant Morse while I was in I & E, and then when I went to the multiple use group, there was another person in there for a short while, but Bill Graham was the staff director for most of the time that I was there.

REINIER: What did you do as regional environmental coordinator? What were your duties and responsibilities?

BERGEN: I should give you a copy of what I wrote in the application. [Laughter] I guess you would say there were three basic responsibilities. One would be summarized by saying to provide program leadership, which would be developing regional policy to implement the Washington office policy and the law, developing regional policy for implementing NEPA, and advising the regional forester, staff directors in the regional office, and of course the forest supervisors or their staffs on implementing it. One would be actual assistance, which is a little more detailed than providing leadership. Providing leadership is, "this is the way we should do it," and assistance goes out and works on specific problems. I went out to the field and I would work with people who were actually developing environmental impact statements. (There's more than three).

A third and an important one was maintaining coordination with other government agencies who either were also developing environmental impact statements on their projects or would be commenting on our projects. Because one of the requirements of NEPA was that you send out your draft environmental impact statement for comment. And you would send this out to other agencies that might have overlapping responsibilities or jurisdictions, including state and local government, not just federal, and you would also send it out to interested members of the public or other people that might be affected. Of course, that's grown over the years tremendously. But maintaining

relationships with the environmental coordinators of these other agencies was part of my responsibility.

And then the fourth was essentially working with the Washington office environmental coordinator. Being the first incumbent of a new position like this one, where the policy is still being developed, in this case policies also still being developed in the Washington office, gave me a lot of opportunities to talk back and forth with the Washington office environmental coordinator. And to go to the national meetings annually or however often we had them and participate in policy development. The Washington office of the environmental coordinator was always very small as far as numbers of people were concerned. The first coordinator was Barry Flamm, whom I remember working with. I don't know exactly when they changed. The second coordinator was George Leonard, who later became associate chief. George was very good to work with so we did have a lot of phone conversations back and forth as I remember, and he apparently valued my input.

I was environmental coordinator from 1972 to 1978 in Region 5, and during that time the Renewable Resources Planning Act was passed and the Washington office started to develop the first RPA program. To do that, they determined that an environmental impact statement would be needed, and they set up various committees around the nation to do various aspects of developing this environmental impact statement. I remember that we had quite a lot of discussion over time on what were the activities that were going to be proposed under this program, how would we group these activities, how would we determine what the environmental effects of these activities would be. I believe that we set up committees for: what were the activities going to be in the recreation program, what were the activities going to be in the range program, what were the activities going to be in the timber program, roads program, whatever. So there were a number of committees that were set up. Each committee probably, if I'm remembering correctly, would have had people who were specialists in that area and at least one of the regional environmental coordinators on it. Or something of that type; I think that's the way they were set up. I know that I was on one of the committees.

So as we progressed through this process of developing this environmental impact statement, the work became more condensed, and the committees became less committees and smaller committees, and you moved up. And so I ended up being on the core committee in the Washington office, that went to the Washington office periodically to work on this. We had a fisheries researcher, and we had one from one of the experiment stations, intermountain maybe, and we had soil scientists from the Northwest, and I was the environmental coordinator. There may have been at least one other environmental coordinator on there. Who else. Obviously other people, but I don't remember them. So we got this down to where we had our description of activities and we were actually working on how do we describe the environmental effects and assess them.

At this point George Leonard, who was leading this whole thing, was reassigned or promoted to director of timber management for the Washington office. So the office of the environmental coordinator in Washington became vacant, and for the duration of that period of time while it was vacant they did, I think, a wise thing. They detailed one regional environmental coordinator in to take his place as Washington office environmental coordinator, and they detailed me to lead the environmental impact statement effort for RPA. So essentially then, I was completing the effort. I was working with a special temporary RPA staff that had been set up in Washington. That's another way you have support. One of the people heading that up was Jay Cravens, who was regional forester of Region 9 at the time, but he was also on extended detail at the Washington office to work on this RPA. I got to know Jay that way. Jay later became president of SAF, and we were able to work together on various things. So it's really interesting how these relationships intermesh over the years.

REINIER: Yeah, and very important.

BERGEN: Yeah, yeah, it is. But that was very interesting because it was a real exercise in working with people I didn't really know. I had a product to get out, I had a time frame, I was working with people who did not yet understand NEPA and environmental impact statements. I don't mean directly, but in the Washington office and various places. Many of them seemed to think that the activities and the effects were the same thing. That was the hardest concept to get across. Other people on the committee, we had the same problem.

REINIER: Would you explain that a little bit more?

BERGEN: Uh huh. The activity is producing X amount of timber from so many millions or billions of board feet of timber, a certain amount of harvesting and a certain amount of road building, so many miles of road. The effects are what happens to the soil, water, air, other plant life when you do that. But a lot of people, and this was particularly true in range, wanted to think about, well, the effect is that we produce so much timber or we produce so many AUMs of grazing or whatever. They had difficulty because the old Forest Service multiple use reports didn't really look at effects except right adjacent to major watersheds or bodies of water, something like that. So to get people to stop thinking in terms of the effect as what we're producing rather than the effect as external to what we're producing. What we're producing is the action, and the effect is on other resources. That was a struggle the first few years of NEPA implementation in the Forest Service overall. It wasn't just a struggle in doing this [RPA assignment], it was also a struggle within the region working with the personnel on the forest to get them to think beyond their traditional way, to look outside of that tunnel to what's on the outside of it.

REINIER: How did you do that?

BERGEN: Hitting people over the head! [Laughter] No, just repeat. Repetition. Repetition I think was the best way. Examples. Examples and repetition. In the beginning I didn't recognize them all myself. It ended up that in all my positions for the Forest Service I had to be a generalist rather than a specialist. I was a generalist when I was in information and education. I had to be able to speak about any of the Forest Service programs, have enough knowledge about them, speak about them. I was a generalist with NEPA. I had to learn more things about archaeology or air quality than I knew before, but I had to be very broad.

REINIER: I was going to ask you if archaeology was one of the areas.

BERGEN: Yes. Yes. Those are sort of opposites in a way, but those were two areas which I didn't have any background for. The Forest Service didn't do much with air quality before NEPA came along at all. Archaeology, the Forest Service had at least started to get into, was doing quite a bit in.

Also the effects on rare plants and endangered species of wildlife. This was really very rudimentary compared to the kinds of analysis that are done nowadays with environmental impact statements, but it was a start and we were doing the best we could and we were expanding. I know one of the ones that we really had a dearth of capacity to address, was difficult, was the air quality effects. In working on some of the ski areas--I don't know why air quality really was one that the environmentalists focused in on except maybe they knew that was our weak point--but on working with the forests on environmental impact statements from Mineral King or Kirkwood, ski developments, why air quality were issues that we had to address. And I was working with people in research in Southern California who were doing some work in air quality.

REINIER: Because of pollution from traffic?

BERGEN: Traffic. Yeah. Primarily from traffic, increased traffic. And the problem was there was already air pollution in these areas from ambient air movements. And there weren't baseline measurements even existing. So to work on that, to try to find some way of generating some useable, reliable data to address the issue was difficult.

REINIER: Yeah. Yeah.

BERGEN: And then a couple of times I set up field trips to the forests for representatives from the other federal agencies so they could get a better idea of what we were doing. This would be to help them when they were going to comment on the Forest Service projects. We wanted them to be able to have a picture of what we were really doing and not some mistaken picture, so they could make realistic comments and not consider that we were doing extreme things to the environment when we weren't. One field trip with people up to the Shasta Trinity, and we wanted to do a trip up here to Tahoe, as I remember, for other agency representatives.

REINIER: I'd like to ask you about a couple of people that you were working with. Did you work with Don Miller, the archaeologist?

BERGEN: I know that I did, but I don't remember a lot of specifics about working with him.

REINIER: And you were working with Jane Westenberger too, weren't you?.

BERGEN: That was I & E, yes, we had to work very closely together.

REINIER: Can you tell me a little bit more about her career at this point?

BERGEN: Her career was in a way similar to mine in that she had worked outside of the Forest Service in outdoor education, environmental education. She worked, I think, maybe as a science curriculum advisor to some county departments of education in Southern California, but she also worked summers as a visitor information specialist at Lake Tahoe and probably other places, probably other places in Southern California too. So she was already acquainted with the Forest Service when she was hired. One of the interesting things to me, since Jane and I both came on board about the same time, we had a trip we had to make to Sacramento to get acquainted with the people in the CDF [California Department of Forestry] who worked for the public. And the Forest Service had a policy at that time that for a Forest Service vehicle you had to have a Forest Service driver's license, and you had to take a test, a couple of tests to do that. And that was going to take time. And meanwhile, we had to get to Sacramento; we were going together. Both of us had had driver's licenses, Forest Service driver's licenses, before. I had, because I'd worked with the experiment station; she had for part of these summer jobs. And we went to the chief clerk on our staff and told her that, and she was just floored to think here's two new employees and they're both women and they both say they've had Forest Service driver's licenses before! At any rate! [Laughter] It really surprised her. So anyway, they were able to get us temporary emergency licensees based on that and we got around. Because for some reason they couldn't schedule the tests for a period of time; they couldn't do it right away. But there were a lot of cumbersome procedures like that, but anyway we were both there at the same time. Grant introduced us to the field in one letter, sent a letter out telling about the two new appointments and so on. So I think it was good timing.

REINIER: So, did you have quite a bit of visibility in this new position as region environmental coordinator?

BERGEN: As regional environmental coordinator. Well, I guess I had a lot of visibility. I certainly had a lot of opportunity for that because those consultations with the Washington office on policy also meant talking to other regional environmental coordinators. So you started to set up a network, have people throughout the United

States that you knew, and that you worked with on various things, and that you got advice from. But what I was laughing at, thinking to myself, was that, depending again on personalities and backgrounds, some of the people on the forests that were working on environmental impact statements would be looking for help and eager to have some help and advice and welcome you, and others didn't want to see you walk through the door. They didn't want to take your advice; they wanted to go ahead and do the job the way they wanted to do it and get the job done.

REINIER: Because they were resisting the environmental impact.

BERGEN: Yeah. The environmental movement, having to do it. It was the same approach as the people that felt that the activities and the effects were the same thing. They didn't want to have their little world disturbed, I guess, and they didn't want to recognize this environmental movement out there either. So within the region, you had two different approaches. Some people would be taking all the advice and help you could give them, and other people would be struggling. And then you still had incomplete buy-in by some of the--I'm not talking about anybody in specific--but some of the staff, even a deputy regional forester in the regional office. So that there would be, "We've got to get this project done; we've got to get this project done, so hurry up on the environmental impact statement." But if we take the time we can do it right and be less subject to question and appeal and so on later. "No, we got to get it done. We got to get it done." So it got put out half done, and then it got severely questioned, and then you had to go back and redo the work, or you had to respond to a lawsuit and it delayed you longer. It's really hard to get through to people that doing the job right the first time would save you time in the long run. That was difficult.

REINIER: So there was a lot of resistance to it.

BERGEN: Yeah. There really was a lot of resistance. Yeah.

REINIER: Was there resistance to you as a woman at this point?

BERGEN: That's a good question. If there was, I didn't let it bother me. My approach seemed to work. There are always some people that are easy to work with and there are always some people that are much more difficult to work with in any job for whatever reason. And there's always some interpersonal conflict someplace, and you have to get the job done anyway, so you find a way to work through that, if you're going to be effective, if you're going to do your job. And so if I did have resistance, or lack of cooperation, for example, would be the way resistance would show itself, I treated it the same way that I would any other interpersonal problem in developing good working relations. Would go back to the person and ask them again for what I needed, or would do my share of what was needed, or more than my share of what was needed. And build some trust. And over time it worked. I built acceptance over time that way.

I'm jumping ahead a little bit. When I came to the Tahoe as deputy forest supervisor, before I was offered the job, one of the things that Bob Lancaster, the forest supervisor, wanted to know was essentially that same question. I don't remember how he asked it of me. Whether he asked me whether I felt resistance or how I handled problems, but anyway that was the answer I gave him, that that's the way I did it. And that's what he was looking for. He was considering hiring me, but he didn't want somebody who was going to be an adamant feminist and would make issues out of everything. And I never handled things like they were issues. I just handled things like they were problems to be resolved.

REINIER: Is there anything else we should say about your work as environmental coordinator?

BERGEN: Let's see. It was a fascinating job. I did it six years.

REINIER: You really developed the regional program for environmental analysis.

BERGEN: Yeah. Yeah. Some interesting timing that I was able to leave when I was, because I worked so hard with the environmental coordinator developing those regulations and they were just about to undergo some change. Oh! One of the things that I did in that job and that I really enjoyed doing, was working with the regional attorneys. Lawsuits started already in that period of time. Trying to think which ones we had. But the main one that I remember was on something called the [Gasquet-Orleans] G-O Road in Northern California, Six Rivers National Forest. That was a big one, but there were others. I can remember going to Southern California on one.

REINIER: The G-O Road went all the way to the Supreme Court.

BERGEN: Yeah. Yeah. Later environmental coordinators continued to work on it, I know. [Laughter] I'm trying to think of the ski areas. Of course, Mineral King got taken out of our hands by congress. But there were a number of legal challenges. I don't remember ever actually having to testify. I probably did at least once. I don't remember though. But I did develop affidavits for the attorneys, and I got so I could write them myself. The attorneys might do a little editing, but I just would develop the whole affidavit. I found in that job I had generally congenial working relationships with our OGC, office of general counsel.

REINIER: Now what was it, you said that you got the promotion once again in the job, the GS13.

BERGEN: Yeah.

REINIER: What was the basis for that promotion?

BERGEN: Have to look at the personnel records. [Laughter] Development of the job, and in the job, but I can't tell you specifically. Let me think. It's interesting. It's too long ago. I think just all the things that I mentioned to you: working with the external agencies, and starting to work with the environmental groups, that movement, working with OGC. At that time the body of environmental law was small and essentially I could refer to it as well as the attorney could, for precedence and so on. It's not like that now; it's huge. But court decisions, that type of thing that you would use to refer to. I think just development. The job itself developed as time went on, and I developed in the job and actually helped the job develop.

REINIER: How did you happen to move to a line position with the Tahoe National Forest?

BERGEN: Okay. By the time I'd been in the position six years I was a little antsy. I was sort of ready for a move. In fact, I had actually even applied for a job outside the Forest Service in 1977 and then changed my mind. That job that I had applied for was the job of executive officer for the state [department of] forestry. Hank Vaux was still the chair there, and if I'd really wanted that job, I think it would have been offered to me. They were obviously trying to make a decision between two or three top candidates, and I was getting little feelers about whether I really would take that job if I was offered it. I finally decided that, no, I was better off working at the Forest Service where I had a group of people I could depend on rather than working alone. I used my experience that time. Even though that job in Sacramento sounded fascinating. I'm not a real political person, and you needed some politics to do that job. The person that got the job did very well, stayed in it until he retired, so he obviously knew how to react to the different forces. So, anyway, I decided that, no, I needed that support. The Forest Service was very good for me because there were people you could go to for information or for assistance any time you needed to, and you weren't doing anything alone. It was very helpful to me that way. So I looked at this other job in 1977 and decided against it.

And periodically I would talk to my boss, Bill Graham, who was very supportive, about, "Gee, I'd like to go out to work in the field, but I'm already a GS13." At that time district rangers were 12's, and how could I go out and work in a ranger district? My grade was already too high. I don't know if I thought about going out directly to a forest. The grade was high for going out to a forest. Or should I be detailed out to some job for awhile?.

[End Tape 4, Side A]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

BERGEN: Okay. My grade was already too high to work on a ranger district. We talked occasionally about a detail, but nothing came of that. Then occasionally a forest supervisor would stop by my desk and talk to me for awhile, and I'd think maybe he's

thinking about offering me his deputy forest supervisor position. So the conversation essentially between me and my boss grew to, maybe I could go out as a deputy forest supervisor. And, in fact, that became something inside of me that I really wanted to do. I looked around the region and first I said, what forests have deputy forest supervisors? They don't necessarily all have them. And okay, of those, who was likely to move soon? I don't even think I asked anybody; I think I just used my own knowledge of the Forest Service by that time to think about it. And then the other factor, of course, was the fact that my husband, depending on what year you're talking about, was either president of a printing company in the Bay Area by that time or was starting his own printing company in the Bay Area.

REINIER: And your children are now grown.

BERGEN: They're grown. Yeah. Not as independent then as they are now, but yes, they were grown and out of the house essentially. But nonetheless my husband was pretty stationary in the Bay Area at that time. So the criteria of closeness became a factor. The Eldorado National Forest didn't have a deputy, as I remember. Tahoe National Forest had a deputy position, and that was definitely the closest one with a deputy. Maybe the Eldorado did then. But anyway the Tahoe was really the closest. Either Placerville or Nevada City was the closest. [Richard L.] Dick Stauber was the deputy on the Tahoe. Dick had been in our office working on detail. That was obviously a training type of an exposure visibility experience for him, and so it was very likely that Dick would be transferred or promoted some time soon, and that would become vacant. So I already had in my mind that, gee, I'd like to work as a deputy in the Tahoe National Forest.

Bob Lancaster was the forest supervisor here, and I had first met Bob when I first came to work in the regional office. He was working in a staff called state and private forestry, and we had actually worked together on some things. We traveled out to one of the conservation education training sessions together. We both had responsibilities, and he had taken the precautions of a man and woman traveling together when we were going down to Porterville or someplace. We stopped by his house in Lafayette; he had to pick up something. Well, he wanted his wife to meet me, I'm sure, to make sure she was comfortable about it and everything.

REINIER: I understand there was some difficulty with some of the wives.

BERGEN: Yes. I think that. I never talked to him about that, but I figured that was what was going on there. But anyway, we knew each other; we'd worked together. And then he became forest supervisor in Region 1 in Montana. But he and Doug Leisz were very close friends, had been in school about the same time. And so Doug brought Bob back to be forest supervisor of the Los Padres National Forest in Santa Barbara. So while he was the forest supervisor down there and I was environmental coordinator, we had occasion to work together in helping the Los Padres with an environmental impact

statement; I believe it was on a dam. But I was also an EEO counselor in the regional office and I went down there once to work with a problem that they had on the forest. So he knew me and he had seen how I approach some things. One of them's amusing. We were having a meeting on this dam project in the regional office, and the conference room was adjacent to the division of I & E and was adjacent to the regional forester's office. I was there as the environmental coordinator and we needed copies of something, and Bob waves this piece of paper at me. "Geri! Can you go make copies of this?" I'm the woman, but I'm also the environmental coordinator. So I said, "I'll see if the regional forester's secretary can do it." And I picked it up and left the room! So I think that was one of the things. Normally, I wouldn't ask the regional forester's secretary to do it, but in that case I did.

REINIER: Making the point in a tactful way.

BERGEN: Yes. Yes! Yeah. So that was sort of amusing. So at any rate, apparently Bob has a very strong, aggressive personality and sometimes abrasive even. But he had enough sense to know that. And the deputy he had picked on the Los Padres was a man with very nice sensibilities towards people. And apparently when Dick was leaving, he decided he wanted to get somebody with similar characteristics, somebody who would balance his own character. And he knew me. At that time the Forest Service was keeping a register of people who were applying for these positions, and I hadn't applied for the register, for whatever reason, but I hadn't. But Bob came in and he saw Doug Leisz, who was the regional forester. Then Doug talked to personnel. And lo and behold, I get a phone call to come down the hall and talk to Doug. So Doug and the personnel officer were there, and Doug said, "You've given some thought about being a deputy forester, haven't you?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "What do you think about being deputy on the Tahoe?" [Laughing] And here I'd been thinking about it! So I said, 'Oh, I'd love it." But they had a process by which the regional forester could put your name on a certificate even if you hadn't applied by something called management referral. So the regional forester put my name on this certificate. And then I went ahead and I filled out an application form, so Bob Lancaster would have that to look at and it would be part of the record, so he could look at that. So I don't know who else was on the certificate. It wasn't a sure thing. He still had a certificate of candidates to choose from.

REINIER: Was there pressure at this point for them to place women in these positions?

BERGEN: No, not at all.

REINIER: Not at all.

BERGEN: I think just the opposite. It hadn't been done, you know.

REINIER: You were the first line officer.

BERGEN: I'll tell you something else about that in a little... Bob was interested in two things he needed to know from me. One was this question of how I'd handle what looked like discrimination and so on. What was the other question? Oh! The other thing he was interested in, which I happened to volunteer before he asked me, was if my husband would stay in the Bay Area, would I go down to the Bay Area every weekend, because, really, the deputy needed to be available on the forest. And before he even asked me that question I mentioned the summer I was up at the Institute of Forest Genetics in Placerville [1963] and the fact that my husband came up on the weekends. He liked to get out of the Bay Area, and I was sure my husband would come up most of the weekends. So those really were the only two questions or misgivings, I guess. Anyway, so I got offered the job and I accepted it.

REINIER: Did it help that you were a forester in background rather than another kind of professional?

BERGEN: I think so. Because the other thing that happened that I didn't find out about until later, this was interesting. Apparently there was some concern expressed by some people [about] this woman who hadn't been in the field before, and that didn't help, see. A woman who hadn't been in the field before being a deputy. But apparently, the most recent deputy before me who had been selected was on the Plumas [National Forest] and the man was a hydrologist by training, not a forester. So apparently there were grumblings about him too, which I hadn't heard. Doug Leisz put out a memo--I didn't see it until months later--but he put out a memo to the forest supervisors, whomever, may not have gone to general circulation, just saying questions had been raised about these two selections or placements. Doug was very nice, casual. He was a tremendously good thinker. His mind was great. And he had this nice, casual way of presenting all the facts logically as they all fall into place. And so for both Jim Boynton and myself he listed in the memo what our qualifications were for this job and why we were selected and that was it. But it was sort of interesting; he didn't single me out as a woman. Now I don't know how many grumbles there had been about the hydrologist being put in the deputy forester supervisor position. I have no idea, but he handled it so it didn't single me out either in that way which was nice. Like I said, I wasn't even aware of that at the time. So, there I was, scared to death!

[Laughter]

REINIER: How about the fact that you hadn't had field experience?

BERGEN: Oh, I had a tremendous amount to learn, I really did.

REINIER: You did.

BERGEN: I had to build support on the Tahoe, build support, use the support that was there.

REINIER: Was there resistance on the Tahoe to your appointment?

BERGEN: Not really. Not that I'm aware of. The women liked it because they said, "Oh, now we have one of the biggies in the ladies room with us. The men get to talk to the forest supervisor in the men's room; well, now we can talk to the deputy in the ladies room." Essentially, the women liked it. There were one or two women on the forest that I knew already, although they didn't necessarily stay, but there were one or two. Oh, and the recreation officer on the forest had worked in Information and Education when I had, so I'd known him all those years. There was resistance on a couple staff probably. And there was one old-time district ranger that Bob had thought might feel some resistance or resentment. He happened to come into my office when I was dealing with a bank on the phone over some issue, personal issue, and I was embarrassed to death that I was in the middle of this conversation when the district ranger was there. But I was being very firm in stating what it was that I wanted and what I felt the problem was, and apparently that engendered a lot of respect in Jim for me. And so he was just as much a supporter as anybody else, which sort of surprised Bob. Bob told me that later, that he hadn't expected that, but that's what it was. That's what did it. Jim came into the office and he saw me being very firm, determined but not upset or angry or anything.

REINIER: So they wanted to know that you would be firm.

BERGEN: Um hmm. But they wanted me to show that in a rational way. So that was interesting and I took the opportunity to learn. The district rangers were, as a whole, very helpful. They were all very helpful.

REINIER: Would it have helped had you been a district ranger, do you think now?

BERGEN: Well, I would have understood much more easily what the work on the district consisted of. The district rangers have a tough job as far as I'm concerned. I don't know whether I could have been a successful district ranger because they really need to balance. There are limited resources. They have limited resources of people, skills and money. Assume they have the materials, at least the materials that the money could get, but they have very limited resources of time, and the skills are only the skills that are available now. We may be able to get some other skill that we don't have tomorrow or next week or next year, but do we have it today?

REINIER: You mean skills on their staff?

BERGEN: Yeah. Yeah. Actual physical limitation of man hours, person hours, but there's also a scope of skills that they have and don't have. There are a lot of skills that were in the supervisor's office that they were dependent on having and couldn't

necessarily get when they needed them or get as much of them as they felt they needed. And they were being held to be accountable to produce. The production was there. Essentially the planning is done at the supervisor's office level and the doing, the execution, is being done at the ranger district level. They were being held accountable for getting out so much timber or producing whatever else it was that needed to be produced with the money that they were allocated for the year. To me it's a very demanding position.

The deputy position was a learning position. Bob Lancaster was great at making sure that I had an opportunity to learn a lot of things. I learned discipline. Discipline's a funny word maybe, but I learned maybe I should say fairness. I learned how one really needs to be extremely logical in thinking through, and making decisions that affect people so you're treating everybody the same according to the same either rules or principle. Same principle. According to the same principles and not playing favorites, and so that you're sure of your rationale for what your decision is. You need to be sure of your own rationale for making decisions.

REINIER: Did you learn that from him or by trial and error?

BERGEN: I learned some of it directly from him. Because there were a number of cautions or precautions that he would give me at various times. He would leave me with decisions to be made, but he would also give me guidelines if they were necessary. I learned an awful lot from him; I really did. And he sent me out in new experiences. I became responsible for making the safety inspections which, you know, the deputy gets the job that the forest supervisor doesn't want anyway. I had to learn a lot with safety inspections. We had a good safety officer at the time when I got here, who was a forest technician, not a forester, but he was a technician. He was one of the people who was very helpful to me. And he was also somebody I could go to and say, "Oh, I have to go out to such-and-such a ranger district today and they want me to address the groups. What's bothering people now, can you tell me what's bothering people so I can speak to some issues?" Things like that. So that was very helpful. And then the forest engineer was very much of a multiple use oriented type person rather than an engineer type person, and so he knew what was going on on the forest, all over. And so he was very helpful. And of course, as I mentioned, the recreation officer whom I worked with before. I felt that I had a lot of help and support. I asked a lot of questions.

REINIER: What was your learning curve? Did you have to learn it pretty fast or did you feel you had time to absorb?

BERGEN: Well, the first six months, five or six months, were difficult. The week I got here there was a fire on the forest and Bob Lancaster was out on the field, and I didn't know what I was supposed to do for that week, really. In the fall he sent me down to Berkeley for a two week executive training session and I promptly got pneumonia, and I was out like another two or three weeks with that. So I was gone from the forest like five

weeks. I didn't do as well as I would have liked to that first five or six months. He and his wife planned a trip, like a month-long trip to Spain in January, almost sort of on purpose, to leave me in charge. So he was gone out of reach. I was in charge from then on, everything. Yeah, that was a quick learning curve.

REINIER: Yeah! Then you learned quickly. Yeah.

BERGEN: It was a very good plan. And so I had to learn. I had things to learn that I had never handled before. A number of the personnel decisions were left to me, but I had to learn how personnel operated, what the rules were, that type of thing.

REINIER: Was there reduction in staff yet? Was that being felt yet?

BERGEN: I don't remember reduction in staff being any kind of a problem until after I became supervisor. We had work force management meetings later, when I was supervisor, and that was trying to get by with less. Interestingly enough, even with the reductions in staff, the total numbers, at least during the summer season, kept growing. The last summer I was there, which was 1989, for the first time we had over 500 employees at one time on the forest. I just inquired recently because of all the reductions, "How many people are working for Tahoe this summer?" "Over 500." One of the reasons that these are this high now and then also is that the staff on the forest were very good at getting extra dollars for special projects, and hired field groups to do special projects relating to wildlife assessment or hydrological assessments and so on during the field season. I think that's still the reason, but it was a reason why it was that high the last year I was there, the effectiveness in getting extra dollars for projects that needed to be done rather than just the standard projects.

REINIER: Are those temporary workers then?

BERGEN: Yeah. Temporary. The year-long full-time people, when I was supervisor, was probably about 280. Please don't hold me to the exact figure, but about 280. But we were up over 500. Some would be fire crews and field crews of various kinds. We started to have some work force problems. I know that we had a workforce management meeting the day before my husband died; that's something you remember. In fact, I wish I hadn't gone to it. I wish I'd stayed home. So we were in work force management, work force planning, in 1986 certainly. '86. '87. But at the same time I was able to have a really full staff. I built the forest staff up and we ended up with a really good staff. Then after I left that's when the real work force problems started, and they ended up ultimately reducing the number of full staff and so on. Reorganizing. And I guess I'm just as glad that I didn't have to do that because to build something up and then to have to be in charge of reducing it again would be a difficult thing to do.

REINIER: It would be very hard. Yeah. Tell me about the Tahoe National Forest.

BERGEN: The Tahoe National Forest was a beautiful forest for one thing!

[Laughter]

REINIER: I know!

BERGEN: It's a very well-balanced multiple use forest. With some very complex problems. The recreation use, the measurements vary from year to year, but it's traditionally been in the top ten or twelve nationwide in recreation use, maybe higher than that now. And the recreation use is year round, both in the summer and winter, and it's dispersed as well as developed. Developed recreation is the kind of recreation that takes place in campgrounds or around developed bodies of water and ski areas, downhill ski areas. And dispersed recreation would be trail use, mountain climbing, cross country ski area, back country use. And those are pretty equally developed in the Tahoe. If you go up into the Pacific Crest Trail area, the Basin Peak, Castle Peak area near Donner Pass in the summer time on a weekend or into the Grouse Lakes area, you will find not wall-to-wall people, but there will be all kinds of groups of people hiking in different directions. For dispersed use it's very heavy use. The forest is between the Reno area which is growing and the Sacramento area which is growing. And the residential use of both sides of the forest was growing, so there are more and more people close by as well as in the urban areas, which puts an impact on the resources. There's some grazing. There are a large number of mining claims on the forest. The number I had written down was 10,000 mining claims in the forest, 400 of which would be active at any one time. There's a very large lands workload, which is the equivalent of real estate workload because there is a great deal of included private land in the forest due to the historical reasons. And so there is a large workload in land line location, preventing trespass, land exchange, road permits, road use permits. We have to have road easements or arrangements for getting across private land. Private land owners have to have arrangements for getting over the Tahoe. The principal timber owning companies that own land in the Tahoe have road use agreements with the Tahoe. So we have a joint use road system essentially that's been developed.

REINIER: Is there much logging in the Tahoe?

BERGEN: Less than there used to be. [Laughing]

REINIER: Yeah.

BERGEN: The allowable harvest was 140 million board feet. It's hard to transfer into acreage, so I can't tell you how many acres per year that was. It depends on the type of harvesting that you do. At the time that I was forest supervisor, timber companies liked to have, for example, three years worth of timber cut under contract at any one time. Small timber sales were usually sold to be cut that year, for example, but large timber sales were expected to be cut over a longer period of time. Companies could do that

when there were larger timber sales. But you didn't want them to hold them indefinitely, so there were also criteria in the contract for when they should be cutting, how soon they should be cutting. The amount cut for a year varies for the program timber harvest because it has things like fire salvaging, things such as salvage come up, or because of the way the companies who have bought the sales schedule their cutting. When we did the Tahoe forest plan, which we did when I was the forest supervisor, was started under the previous forest supervisor and completed under me...

REINIER: That was a major plan, too.

BERGEN: Yes. It was a major plan. A lot of environmental concerns were coming to light during the time that the plan was being developed, especially between the draft and the final plan. And these were concerns that would cause you to reduce the amount of timber that you would be able to harvest. So that we cut down, the final plan called for 110 million board feet of timber a year. I doubt that the forest is harvesting that much, but I don't know what the current is. Let's say less than 100 [board feet] but it probably varies from year to year. We had certain constraints in the forest plan, and since then there's been a change in direction regionwide as far as the California spotted owl is concerned, so that's cut back further into what's allowable harvest on the west side of the forest. I can't speak to what's going on now, of course.

REINIER: Yeah. You also have wilderness areas.

BERGEN: Tahoe has one wilderness, Granite Chief Wilderness, which was created fairly late. I think it was created actually while I was here as deputy supervisor by congress. And that included quite a lot of private land also, so that ultimately there was a land exchange. So that was picked out.

REINIER: And reservoirs for water and power?

BERGEN: Yes. We had a large one such as Bullards Bar Reservoir because that was water for Yuba County. French Meadows Reservoir. It's PCWA, Placer County Water Agency. A lot of the smaller lakes, some are PG&E [Pacific Gas & Electric Company], some are Nevada Irrigation District. A lot of the smaller lakes have small dams. And on the east side of the forest there's Stampede and Boca and Prosser Reservoirs, which are interconnected with Lake Tahoe and Donner. Provide water for the city of Reno. Irrigation water, water for Pyramid Lake. There were endangered species concerns. Native American concerns. There's been considerable litigation. The water systems are very much controlled in different ways. Another complexity in the management of Tahoe was the amount of the mining claims and sales, and the amount of hydraulic mining that was done in mining days, leaving bare areas, leaving areas where accelerated erosion can occur, leaving areas that might have toxic chemicals. So those are a cause of some of the management complexities.

REINIER: What about law enforcement? Was that under the supervisor?

BERGEN: At that time it was under the supervisor, yes. And that was an interesting part of the job. One part of me hated to have to enforce any kind of rules or regulations because I don't like rules and regulations myself.

[End Tape 4, Side B]

[Begin Tape 5, Side A]

REINIER: Geri, at the end of the last tape we were talking about the Tahoe National Forest and you were talking about law enforcement responsibilities.

BERGEN: Yes, I'm trying to think how the program grew over the time that I was deputy, and I'm not sure that I can explain all of that. But by the time that Bob Lancaster retired we actually had, I believe, five full-time special agents working for the Tahoe. It was really probably heavier than most of the other forests and a little bit more than we needed. We had the opportunity to hire people or train people that had good qualifications, and so some of our people were being used by the regional office on professional assignments elsewhere part of the time. Law enforcement, first of all, reported to the forest supervisor, and there were a number of different kinds of law enforcement problems on the forest. These range from what's called occupancy trespass, where people are living on national forest land illegally, to growing marijuana, and arson. I'm trying to think what else. In some cases there would be survival groups, survivalist training on national forest land and so on. Threats to personnel. That and the other problems that I'm not aware of.

There's a great deal of cooperation with the local county sheriffs with marijuana detection and eradication. Because it's partly a national forest problem and partly a local law enforcement responsibility. We would support them and they would support us depending on the kind of situation. But there were times when the law enforcement people were met by armed people on the forest, that were resisting being evicted or whatever the situation was, so it was necessary to have good law enforcement people. We also have occasions where you are doing arson investigations or occasionally you had occasions where you were investigating your own employees which was very distasteful. We had one situation where we had a drug-related death in the barracks. So there's a lot of work that has to be done that you depend on in the investigative skills of your trained law enforcement personnel force.

REINIER: Did you have to do much with fire management?

BERGEN: Fortunately, we had a very capable fire management officer. I don't feel that that's one of my strengths at all. We had a few major fires on the forest, nothing really terrible. There was a complex of fires that occurred in 1987 while I was on

vacation back on the east coast. [Laughter] The major fires in 1987 occurred while I was back east, so when I came back here there was a fire camp established and they had been pretty well taken care of. We just had the rehab and the fire salvage sales to take care of after that. But once a fire gets large it becomes "an incident" and an incident command team is sent out. It's not the forest supervisor's direct responsibility. The incident command team takes charge. The forest supervisor is providing information and helping make decisions, but they're not making the fire fighting decisions. But anyway, the deputy and the district ranger had handled everything they needed to on that. Fortunately, we didn't have any other major fires while I was supervisor. That's a concern.

Comment [COMMENT1]: [Interruption] The major fires in 1987 occurred while I was back East and so when I came back here the...there was a fire camp established and they'd been pretty well taken care of. We just had the rehab and the fire salvage sales to take care of after that.

Yeah, back to the law enforcement. I guess I was saying that on one hand, I didn't like to enforce regulations, but on the other hand I found it very comforting to have a good well-trained law enforcement staff on the forest in some situations. And I did my best to try to understand their job so they had support also. When I was deputy forest supervisor, the forest supervisor, Bob Lancaster, went to one of their annual refresher and training events, and so then essentially the following year I did at Modesto Junior College and participated not only in the lectures and training videos and so on but also in some of the firing range work, both with a stationary target and also with a moving target. There was an opportunity to fire with two different weapons running between--what do you call something that protects you from being seen? You had targets out there and so there were five people, five desperados out there or something you were trying to get, and they had to move from one safe spot to another safe spot as they closed in. They let me try that one with them too.

REINIER: How did you do?

BERGEN: On the firing range one I did well.

[Laughter]

REINIER: You're a good shot.

BERGEN: I'm a good shot. Uh-huh. But the law enforcement people appreciated that [my participation and support], and I would get recognized by and appreciated by and helped by law enforcement people in other situations in the Forest Service when I ran into them again, which was very interesting. So you show support like that and they appreciate that. The law enforcement personnel now reports through a separate line throughout the Forest Service. That change happened while I was in Washington, and I'm not sure of all the factors that led to it, and I don't care to comment on it. [Laughter] But we did have good staff here and good cooperative relationships with the local sheriffs. So that was important.

REINIER: What about cultural resources management? When you were deputy were you developing programs in that area?

BERGEN: We have a tremendous cultural resources program on this forest. It's sort of hard to talk about being the deputy versus being the forest supervisor on some of these since I was on the same forest. The forest supervisor's job is really made easier by having very, very competent staff or specialists on the forest, who know their job, do a good job and are self motivated. Among those people we had this tremendous forest archaeologist, Dick Markley, who set up a good program, who established good working relationships with the State Historic Preservation Officer. To the point where we were able in many cases to do our findings of non-significance and have it accepted without review. The forest I think now probably has an archaeologist on every district, possibly even shared ones. And I think that's necessary with the amount of projects and the amount of archaeological work. But Tahoe is historically very significant having been right on the crossroads of the westward migration to California.

REINIER: Absolutely.

BERGEN: And so it has a lot of historical resources as well as archaeological, and many of these are lineal features such as water ditches and wagon routes and logging railroad routes and have been inventoried. I think there's probably more on the Tahoe than anyplace else. I can't quote the figure, but it's a very large figure.

REINIER: And you have historians also, don't you?

BERGEN: I understand there's an historian now, yes.

REINIER: But there wasn't.

BERGEN: We used the services of a Forest Service historian that worked for the Eldorado when I was supervisor. We didn't have our own historian. We had one botanist when I was here. I think we established that position. It was a permanent position while I was forest supervisor, and there are at least two botanists on the forest now. They deal primarily with rare, sensitive and endangered plants.

REINIER: What was it like to be the first woman line officer in the Forest Service? Did you get a lot of publicity? Was there a lot of publicity about you because you were first? I'm still thinking of the position of deputy forest supervisor.

BERGEN: Yes. I know you are. Are you thinking of local? Are you asking me about local publicity?

REINIER: Or in the Forest Service. Or both.

BERGEN: I don't think there was a lot of publicity about me. I don't encourage it myself; I'm still a little bit shy. I don't make opportunities for it. If it happens, it

happens, but I don't go around trying to make opportunities. I'm not particularly aware that there were a lot of people who were aware I was there. People still mainly remember me by my name "Larson." I didn't change my name until 1988. I still get introduced or remembered around here very much by the name Larson. So yes, I'm known that way. But as time goes on I'm less and less known. [Laughter]

REINIER: As deputy did you begin to work out a management style?

BERGEN: Yes. Yes, I did have a management style. We had so many different areas of expertise, so many different specialty areas on the forest, that we had to take into consideration in making decisions. So essentially I had to depend very much on my staff and on the specialists that worked with the staff for advice and suggestions. And so I developed what I call a consultative management style. In other words, drawing people out, getting their advice, getting their suggested options if I could, and researching the question. I consider myself a generalist and not a specialist in any one area, and so I depended very heavily on my staff. A forest like the Tahoe can't run without expert staff that are actually self-motivated and very interested in running their programs and running them themselves, and just need to be headed in the right direction. So that's really what you need to do to make sure that your staff and rangers are headed in the right direction and then let them work out their programs themselves.

REINIER: But the decision was ultimately yours.

BERGEN: Oh yes, very definitely.

REINIER: Did you find that difficult or did you feel comfortable in making your decisions after you'd done all that research?

BERGEN: Oh yes, I felt comfortable making the decisions. Some were more difficult to make than others, of course. But that was the very satisfying part of the job, actually, being able to make decisions that would protect and enhance resources.

REINIER: We've kind of slipped over really into talking about your position as forest supervisor, but before we get to that I did want to ask you more questions about the time period when you were deputy. Tell me a little bit about [R.] Max Peterson as chief. Did you work with him at all?

BERGEN: Oh, I remember Max primarily when he was regional engineer in Region 5. That's when I became acquainted with him. I had very little direct contact with him as chief. And again, that puts over into the forest supervisor....

REINIER: That's all right.

BERGEN: The first new chief when we had the first meeting of all national forest supervisors in the country, which was held at Snowbird, Utah, probably in 1985, as I remember...

REINIER: ...Just about when you went on as the supervisor.

BERGEN: Yeah, the following fall or something, I think that's the year it was held. That was a good opportunity to get to know forest supervisors from other regions as well as to see Max's management style.

REINIER: Do you want to comment on that at all?

BERGEN: No, I don't think so.

REINIER: And you were the only woman?

BERGEN: Not at that time. Oh, '85 I was. Yes. Uh huh.

REINIER: And during these years you were very active in the SAF, the Society of American Foresters.

BERGEN: Actually, I had been active all along. While I was still in the regional office I was vice chair and chair of the Bay Area chapter of SAF. I don't recall the exact years of that. I have it someplace written down, but I don't have it in my head. And at various times I was on the executive committee for the Northern California section of SAF, either working with issues for the house of society delegates or working on the programs, not chair necessarily, but on the program committee for some of our annual meetings. And then in the early '80's, late '70's and early '80's, while I was still in the regional office, I was elected vice chair of the land use planning and design working group in SAF, which made sense when I was on the land use planning staff there in the regional office. And that overlapped until I went to the Tahoe, so that would be about from '77 to '81, or '78 to '82, something in that time frame, because it would be two years as vice chair and two years as chair. During that time we planned activities at the SAF national conventions for the working groups, primarily meetings, programs with meetings, put out newsletters.

And we also did a special issue of the *Journal of Forestry* in which Doug Knudsen and I wrote the introduction. And I don't know the date specifically, but it was a special issue of the *Journal of Forestry* on land use planning for forest lands. Doug Knudsen from Purdue [University], I believe it is, was the chair, I guess, and I was the vice chair at that time. Or possibly I was the chair but he'd been the immediate past chair and together we worked on that issue and wrote the introduction. So I did those things. And then I was on the SAF national program committee. Was this the first year I was on the national program.... Probably during the time that I was on the working group.

REINIER: I have 1978 and '79.

BERGEN: Okay. While I was on that working group, at that time I was on the national program committee for the technical sessions. They have the working group people do the technical sessions. And then at a later date I was invited again to be on the national program committee working on the general session. And I also was asked a third time while I was in the Washington office, so I've been on the national program committee three different times.

REINIER: Oh! Un huh. And did you participate in the Dallas meeting? The SAF Symposium on Women and Natural Resources in 1985?

BERGEN: Yes, I was a speaker on a panel at that meeting. One of the other speakers was Denise Meredith of BLM [Bureau of Land Management] and I think there was a third speaker. I don't remember right now. But yes, I participated in that.

REINIER: And tell me about your election as fellow.

BERGEN: Oh, that was a real honor. I think that was in 1985. One of my supporters in SAF and a long time forestry friend, Ed Martin, supported my nomination.[1] The process requires that a petition be signed by a certain number of members, so somebody has to have the idea that they want to nominate somebody to be elected as fellow. The petition is used to nominate you, and then the election is among the members of your state society. I don't remember just how long I'd known Ed, but we probably became acquainted through Cal and my forestry activities. He had been the first foresters licensing officer from the state of California. I had applied for and received my license as a registered professional forester in California in 1973, the first year that that was possible to do so. I am still RPF [registered professional forester] No. 885. Ed and I knew each other over the years and I think he said that I was the first woman RPF. We still see each other occasionally at SAF meetings.

REINIER: What does it mean to be a fellow?

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[1] This comment was added later by Geri Bergen. [I believe this statement to be in error. I think Jack Sweeley, whom I knew both in California Alumni Foresters and in SAF, supported my nomination as fellow, and Ed Martin later (1988) supported my nomination for SAF Council. This might be able to be confirmed through SAF records].

BERGEN: It's an honor, essentially. It recognizes contributions to forestry and to the society. I really appreciate Ed's caring, but I think there were women in other parts of the country that deserved that more than I did, who were much later in receiving it. Even when I was first in Washington D.C. in 1990, that was when the second woman fellow was elected. She was in the National Capital Society, so she and I at that time were the only two women fellows and we were both in the National Capital Society. Now since then there have been a number of other women elected, but the recognition has come very late really.

REINIER: So you were the first woman fellow?

BERGEN: Yes.

REINIER: Another first!

BERGEN: Another first! They keep coming.

REINIER: Yes. And did you find through the years that the SAF was a useful symposium for you to discuss problems?

BERGEN: It was a useful place, yes. It was that and also a useful place to make contacts or to be directed to contacts, to widen one's acquaintance. I like to go to the national conventions. I go fairly regularly to them, and I go at least as much to see people as I do to hear the programs. Right now it's more that it's enjoyable rather than necessary but it's really nice to have those contacts and to make those contacts. And you see people over the years. You meet people and later on you find yourself working with those people so it's very beneficial.

REINIER: So the networking aspect of it is really useful.

BERGEN: Networking. Right.

REINIER: Yeah. At this same time while you were still deputy, you were appointed by the California State Board of Forestry to the Professional Forester's Examining Committee.

BERGEN: Yes. There were I forget now whether five or seven members on the committee. There has been all along one representative on the committee from the Forest Service, and there were other representatives of other segments of the forestry population and the general population. But there's been one from the Forest Service and Doug Leisz was the first representative from the Forest Service. At some point, I guess it was 1982,

he felt he could no longer continue with that. I really don't remember how I became interested in that or how I became appointed, but I was very much interested in it and I was appointed. Of course, it's easy to go to meetings in Sacramento when you're living and working in Nevada City. So I was on that. I filled out the rest of his term and then I was appointed one more term. The terms are four years, so I was on there seven years. And the only reason I declined to be re-appointed again was that I was running for the SAF Council, and so I didn't feel I wanted to do both of those at the same time.

REINIER: Okay. Because later you were then on the SAF Council.

BERGEN: Yes. I was elected in 1988 and started serving in 1989. I didn't fill out the full three-year term because I changed jobs and moved in 1990. But that was another example I think where contacts and support really helped. The immediate preceding council person was Harry [W.] Camp, whose name I've mentioned to you before. After my husband died in 1987, I went to the national SAF meeting in Minneapolis. It's just so funny. The national council met in front of the whole body and I looked up there and I saw this group of about twelve men, twelve white men, and thought I think it's time to change this body. Because Harry Camp was a friend of mine, I thought about it a little bit and I thought that perhaps his term was just about to end. I remembered, or I thought at any rate, that council members were not allowed to run to succeed themselves. They could only hold one term at a time. So I went up and I asked him, "Is this your last year as council member?" "Yes," he said. "Am I correct that you can't run again, you won't be running again?" "That's right." And I said, "Well, I think I might like to run for council. What do you think about that?" So he was very supportive. He gave me all his records after his term was over. So he was very supportive as were my many other friends in SAF obviously.

REINIER: What does it mean to be on the council?

BERGEN: The council is like a board of directors, the national board of directors for the Society of American Foresters, so we were dealing with all the issues that the national organization needs to deal with at that level. I think there are about eleven voting districts and then there's a president and a vice president and immediate past president and the executive director of the society. You meet four times a year for governing the society. You're looking at budget, you're looking at membership, you're looking at dues, you're looking at legal matters of which there were some, and you're looking at forest policy matters and whether you should be taking positions or stands. You're looking at forest science matters, looking at public relations. There are a number of different areas that need to be considered where decisions need to be made by a board of directors.

REINIER: And it's an honor also.

BERGEN: Oh, definitely.

REINIER: Definitely.

BERGEN: But it's a way to serve and it's very interesting.

REINIER: I think your activity in the Society of American Foresters is really interesting and clearly has been beneficial to you in your career.

BERGEN: If you want to know another first, the year that I became elected to the council, one other woman was elected from New England, but we two women were the first two women on the council.

REINIER: Another first!

BERGEN: Yeah, there were two of us. And she later went on to become president. She was the first and only woman president that SAF has had.

REINIER: What's her name?

BERGEN: Jane Difley.

REINIER: Okay.

BERGEN: So. This is interesting because she and I were the first two [women on the SAF council].

REINIER: We've been talking some about your position as forest supervisor on the Tahoe National Forest, but we need to talk about how you came to that position. Was it just assumed that you would be forest supervisor when Bob Lancaster retired?

BERGEN: No. [Laughing] No, that was not the assumption! Neither mine nor anybody else's. Definitely not Bob's. [Laughter] I'm trying to think. I believe the process at that time was that anyone who was interested in being a forest supervisor had to apply to a national register that was set up ahead of time. So you were not applying for individual jobs; you were applying in general for forest supervisor jobs that might come up. And you could indicate the area of the country, for example, region or whatever, or whatever your limitations were. You could indicate that, which didn't mean that they would be observed. Of course, you had no assurance you'd be selected either. So I believe that I did that probably more than once, probably at least a couple of times.

My husband had a printing business and I was really not willing to move across country or move very far. I'm sure I restricted the area that I wanted to be considered in. Whether I restricted it just to Region 5 or just to Northern California, how that was done, I don't remember without seeing an application. And so during that time there were some other openings that came up. By this time, by the way, Doug Leisz was no longer

the regional forester. Zane [G.] Smith [Jr.] was the regional forester; he had become regional forester while I was still deputy. He was supportive of my being strongly considered as a forest supervisor. So at one time or another we discussed the Mendocino National Forest and the Eldorado National Forest, as well as the Tahoe National Forest. I don't know how strongly I was considered for any of those, but I did indicate to him that I would much prefer to be considered for the Tahoe than for the others. And the Tahoe was the one I was selected for.

REINIER: And do you think it's a good idea to become forest supervisor when you've been the deputy?

BERGEN: Of the same forest.

REINIER: Of the same forest, yes.

BERGEN: There were varying opinions on that but my former supervisor, Bob Lancaster, definitely thought it was a bad idea. I didn't see a problem with it at the time, but of course I hadn't been a forest supervisor yet and I was very glad to be supervisor of such a great forest as the Tahoe. Looking back on it years later, I think that I perhaps could have done a more thorough job say of cleaning house if it had been needed [if I had gone to another forest]. Not that it was needed on the Tahoe, but there were some changes that should have been made and perhaps a fresh viewpoint would have been nice in some areas that I didn't quite bring. So I think I could perhaps have done a better job going to another forest. In some ways I could have done a better job, I'll put it that way, maybe not in others.

REINIER: So now again, here you're the first female forest supervisor.

BERGEN: That's right.

REINIER: Was there opposition to your appointment?

BERGEN: Now that I didn't hear. Let's see. Was there opposition to my appointment? There were probably some disappointed people who would have liked the job because it is a choice forest. I'm not aware of opposition. No. And the appointment went through fairly quickly because Bob retired December 31 and I was appointed effective January 20 or 21.

REINIER: In 1985.

BERGEN: In 1985.

REINIER: Uh huh. Beginning of 1985.

BERGEN: Uh huh.

REINIER: We talked a little bit about your management style previously. How did it work out for you in working with the staff?

BERGEN: I think I continued the same management style.

[End Tape 5, Side A]

[Begin Tape 5, Side B]

REINIER: On the other side of the tape we were talking about working with your staff.

BERGEN: It didn't vary a lot except that as forest supervisor rather than as deputy I had the full scope of decisions to make. I also had a vacant deputy forest supervisor position since I had been promoted on the same forest, so that was necessary to fill. And my first selection again was to get somebody with a different management style than my own, who could complement me in working, in this case, in communicating say with men that might be difficult to communicate with. And so I chose our timber management officer, Bruce Van Zee, and asked him to be acting deputy forest supervisor until the job was filled, which was probably about eight months, seven or eight months until it was filled. And so he was fine as a deputy forest supervisor. Then that left somebody else to be acting timber management officer and you go down through the line. But it's a big enough forest with enough workload that there was no way I could take on a new job and not have a deputy there. The interesting thing was that immediately some of the environmentalists came back to have a decision of the previous forest supervisor to be reconsidered, and I did. I reconsidered it and I modified it slightly.

REINIER: What was the issue?

BERGEN: The issue was a sensitive plant species [of ladyslipper orchid] growing in the Rock Creek area, not far out of Nevada City, and whether or not a timber sale that had been approved would allow the microclimate, the local ecology of this particular area to be modified so much that it would harm the orchids. After taking a look at it we did decide to make some minor modifications which allowed more timber to be left near the area where the orchids still grow.

REINIER: Wild orchids?

BERGEN: Ladyslipper orchid. Yeah, wildflower, uh-huh. Not a very obvious one. You have to go out in April or whatever and look for brown flowers under green leaves, so it's not easy to find but it is out there. I think the environmentalists were just starting to get active about that time. We had a group that's still around called the Forest Issues Group--at that time it was affiliated with the Sierra Club and now it's a separate group--

that started to take issue with a great many of the supervisor's decisions. This grew as it went along and we just had to do our best to have a complete analysis of all the items that really were a subject of concern on a timber sale or other action, and also to make sure it was well-documented. But we also worked at building some trust and a level of communication with this group, which did pay some dividends. In particular after the 1987 Indian fire on the Downieville District, at that time there were a whole series of fires in the state and we felt that it was necessary to get salvage sales on the market as quickly as possible if we wanted to get the timber salvage because it would possibly be such a glut on the market of timber being offered for sale. And so the Downieville Ranger District worked as quickly as it could to divide the area up into timber sale units and prepare the sales. To get the necessary expertise we borrowed specialists and foresters from other forests in fact to help prepare the sales. And I think we had ten sales, the tenth one being a helicopter sale because of the steepness of the terrain, and worked with the Forest Issues Group, took them out on the ground, showed them how the heat of the fire had girdled the trees at the base when the duff had burned and so on, and were able to get all the sales but the last one through without them appealing. I think that last one was maybe an effort to save face on their part when they put in the appeal because they hadn't appealed any of the others. But the appeal didn't have a great deal of merit, and so I called up one of the members and I had a nice phone conversation with him and suggested that they might want to consider withdrawing the appeal, and they did. So the work out in the field, and communicating with these people and so on, paid off that way. So we were able to get all those sales on the market.

REINIER: How did the appeal process work? To whom did they appeal?

BERGEN: They would appeal to the line officer above the person who made the decision. The process is a little different right now. The regulations have changed so don't ask me about the current process. The regulations did change. The new ones were being developed about the time I left Washington, about the time I retired.

REINIER: As forest supervisor did you have any difficulty with working with any of your staff members?

BERGEN: We had some difficulties, yes. Of course, the staff are strong-minded people and that's what you want to have. I was able at different points to bring in some new staff. The recreation officer retired the same year that I became forest supervisor. This was [Edwin H.] Ted Gregg [Jr.], a man who was very capable and whom I had known for many years and whom I depended on. That was a great disappointment to me because I had been looking forward to continuing to work with him. But I brought in a very capable recreation staff officer who had been a ranger in Region 6, and who had taken a recreation course that the Forest Service was making available to professionals.

REINIER: And that person's name?

BERGEN: [Peter M.] Pete Brost, and he's still a recreation/public services staff officer there. The timber management officer was Bruce Van Zee, who had been my acting deputy, went on to legislative affairs in Washington D.C., so I had to replace him. Oh, by the way, I had to get a new deputy too, and got a very capable man, Frank Waldo, who had been a district ranger on the Stanislaus National Forest and who had been I believe special use permit administrator for recreation in the regional office. So he had strong recreation background which was very helpful with the Tahoe, as well as a district ranger background. He was my right hand the whole time I was forest supervisor, a very capable person and very supportive person. I really couldn't have done the job without him. So the two of us I think made a good team. So I had a new deputy and a new recreation staff officer and then a new timber management officer [Bill Knispek]. He also came from Region 4. But the other staff, let me see now.

[Material here has been omitted by Geri Bergen].

[When it was time to replace the resources/planning officer], we were not under such tight budgetary constraints, and we were able to divide the position up, which it really needed to be. We needed a land management planner because we were still developing the plan, and we needed a resources staff officer to handle the resources because wildlife, soils and watershed, and range were in this area. And so I brought in an experienced land management planner from the Toiyabe National Forest and a woman resources staff officer from the regional office. She had been in planning in the regional office and she's now one of the district rangers on the forest.

REINIER: And her name?

BERGEN: Jean [M.] Masquelier, and so we were able to fill those positions.

[Material here has been omitted by Geri Bergen].

BERGEN: [I built a very strong staff on the Tahoe. All had excellent technical abilities; some were more people-oriented than others. When a staff member moved on to another job, I definitely looked for replacements with good people skills, and I think for the most part I was successful with that. You have to learn what you can do and what you can't do]. This is out of order, but I have one example related to the consent decree that I'm thinking of at the moment.

REINIER: Let's hear it.

BERGEN: Okay. Obviously the objective of the consent decree was to hire more women and to promote women when they were qualified for the jobs, and so you were looking and in various ways making opportunities. Finding qualified woman to apply for the positions. Well, sometimes these women are married. And we would be bringing in a woman from out of the region or from another forest quite a distance away. After the monitor was appointed, she was very, very strict that all positions had to be advertised

competitively. Nothing could be filled by reassignment. In order to give women opportunities was the rationale. And before we had the consent decree, it was possible to reassign people without going through advertising and competition. It would be typical if you had a case of a married couple that one person would be selected through competition and then you would find a position that fit the abilities and skills of the spouse and reassign them at the same grade level. Well, [under the consent decree] we were not allowed to do that. Even when we could select a woman, we were not allowed to place the spouse, and that might mean that the woman would turn down the position.

REINIER: Yeah, even though that would be certainly a benefit to women.

BERGEN: Yeah. But we were not allowed to do that. If we wanted to reassign somebody we had to go and ask. And so a lot of the forest supervisors selected a woman and then they would request permission to reassign the spouse and they'd get turned down. So I just didn't do that. What I did, there were other ways to do things. If you don't ask questions, you don't get the answers, okay? No, the easy way was to find a position that you were going to advertise anyway and have the spouse apply, have the spouse qualify for this position.

REINIER: I see.

BERGEN: So. What we had started to do on the Tahoe in order to be able to fill our positions, meet consent decree goals and not have to fill every single position with a woman... If there was a woman on a certificate they wanted you to select a woman. It doesn't matter how many other people were on there. If we only had one person on the certificate and it was a man, they wouldn't allow us to select him. Just a couple of examples. So what we had started to do was to group positions to the extent we could when we had similar or identical positions. So if we had GS9 foresters positions, timber forester, because it could be a forester doing something else too... So we had a timber sale administration position open and we had a need on two different districts, we would advertise them together and then say one position was at Foresthill and one position at Sierraville or wherever they were. And then people who would apply could indicate whether they would be interested in both locations or one or the other, but we would get a larger certificate. We would hopefully by outreach have at least one woman, maybe a minority too, on the certificate. Then we could select based on fit for the job and merit both, but the idea was to select a woman and one other if a woman was fully qualified for the job and everything. So by doing that we were able to fill our positions a little faster even though we may have to wait until we had more than one, but we were able to make more than one selection from a certificate.

So what I would do would be, for example, hire a woman as a district timber management officer. Okay, her husband is qualified to do fire crew boss, let's just say fire crew boss for now. Well, obviously, you're going to have some openings for fire crew boss, might not be on the same district, but Tahoe's pretty compact. So, what I

usually did in the situation would be to tell the person it was offered to, I can't make an offer of a job for your husband right now, but we will after a time be advertising something for which he's qualified and can apply. And we will do our best to select him, not that we will, but we will do our best. And that worked. Time and again something would come up where we could group positions and we would be able to go ahead and advertise [two or more positions, and make several competitive selections from the same certificate]. And so that worked. That worked really well. And I just didn't go to the regional office and ask. Often their last names even were different. Both members of the family are being selected competitively, so there wasn't any beef. It was an easy way to do it. [Not really easy, but an effective way, within the rules we were working with, to take care of employees' needs]. It was work for my personnel people, but at least we had a good personnel staff who were very cooperative in trying to help us get consent decree objectives met. A lot of other things we did too, very positive things, but that to me was positive because the women then came to the forest.

REINIER: Yes.

[Material here has been omitted by Geri Bergen].

BERGEN: [Another one that worked out really well. One of the women forestry graduates from UC Berkeley about 1972 had, I understand, originally been hired by another national forest as an outdoor recreation planner because they couldn't reach her on the forester register. They later converted her to a forester, and she had a good career in timber management. She was on the Tahoe when I first came here as deputy, and her husband worked on an adjacent national forest. They commuted in two different directions from a small community between the two locations. Later, after they both had worked for another national forest in another part of the state, she applied for a position back with the Tahoe, and we wanted to select her. The question was, would there be an opening for her husband. In this case I knew of a suitable opening (for him) on another adjacent forest, but of course could in no way commit to that]. I think I talked to the regional forester in that case, we were talking about two different forests. And I probably talked to the other forest supervisor too; I wouldn't have done that without talking to the other forest supervisor. So I talked to the forest supervisor and I talked to the regional forester. I think there was probably more than one position that would have fit this individual that was probably going to open up, but again, I had to ask [the woman forester] to take it on faith that we would find a position for her husband. And that's what I did say, just take it on faith that we'll find a position for your husband. But I knew about this [relatively nearby opening], and so yes, they [the regional office] worked it out. I don't know how they worked it out within the consent decree, but it worked out and [her husband] was offered the [position]. [Again, they lived between the two duty locations, and had to commute, but apparently it was a satisfactory arrangement for them].

[Material here has been omitted by Geri Bergen].

REINIER: Certainly an issue for women in working with the Forest Service is how to manage it with family.

BERGEN: Yes.

REINIER: And it sounds like a very creative approach.

BERGEN: I was glad myself that my husband did not work for the Forest Service.

REINIER: You were.

BERGEN: I was, very definitely, because I felt like I had more control over my life that way.

REINIER: How so? Explain that.

BERGEN: Because if both of us had worked for the Forest Service, one or the other of us would have to be deciding on subjugating our career for the other person's career. The Forest Service might be looking at, well, do we really want to make this person an offer when the other person is doing such good work there, and we don't want to have that other person leave. There's all kinds of considerations that could come into effect as soon as you know that we have to consider this as a couple. As management you do have to make some adjustments, and you may not want to make those adjustments. If you didn't have a consent decree, you could almost ignore them. But you're going to recognize that the couple needs to react as a couple. I've seen cases where, "Well, I don't know that I want to go to Region 10, which is Alaska. I have this good job here and should I really go there and take some other different kind of a job." And I just felt like I was much more independent even though I had to make a decision about staying in the Bay Area with my husband or going to the Tahoe essentially without him, only seeing him on weekends. But the decision was completely mine. The Forest Service didn't have any input into that part of the decision.

REINIER: And they didn't consider you in light of someone else's career in the Forest Service.

BERGEN: Well, not in the light of the career in the Forest Service. They did consider is that going to work for you. But nonetheless it was my decision, how I would work out the problem. I didn't have to worry about the Forest Service input in how to work out the problem. At that time in my life I just felt I was able to act more independently that way.

REINIER: And then Don did come up here, didn't he?

BERGEN: Yes he did. He came up a lot of times on the weekends. Since my youngsters were down in the Bay Area, I would go down there for family celebrations, but he came up on the weekends most of the time. We each ended up having a dog. We ended up with two dogs when he came up. He had started a new business in 1978, a new printing business [located in San Leandro], and ultimately he was able to sell his interest in that business. So he joined me in Nevada City and then he built up a nice little printing business here. Unfortunately, he developed cancer and so we lost the business. That was a sad time.

[End Tape 5, Side B]

[Begin Tape 6, Side A]

BERGEN: We were talking about the consent decree, and I was thinking that there was one other way that I can remember now that I solved a problem for an employee, while not interfering with the function of the consent decree. I got an e-mail message from another forest supervisor one time saying he had an employee, a GS11 timber forester, that needed to be near his grandmother who lived at north Lake Tahoe. He

wanted a reassignment near his grandmother, and he gave his first, second and third choices where he'd like to be. Among his first choices were the Truckee Ranger District and among the second choices were the Sierraville Ranger District because they would allow him to be fairly close to his grandmother. This was a fully trained journeyman timber management forester. I had a ranger district, Sierraville, that had several vacancies, had a number of new foresters that the ranger didn't feel were fully trained yet. Because, partly, of consent decree placements we were taking in people with less training, fully met all the qualifications but they had less actual experience. He felt that he really had a need when he filled this current opening for somebody who already knew how to run the timber program, do the work on the ground. We had several other similar positions on other ranger districts and we were about to advertise, but I knew this ranger really desperately wanted somebody who already was functioning at the journeyman level. So I called the forest supervisor up, and I said, "We're going to advertise several positions on the Tahoe in one announcement. I will ask my district ranger to talk to the district ranger where your person works to check him out, but make sure you tell your employee to apply for the position and indicate where he wants. We have several different locations, one of which is Sierraville, and if he's a fully competent employee, we'll do our best to select him." And so that forest supervisor did, the guy applied, we selected several people including women from that certificate, and we selected this man, this forester for the Sierraville job. My district ranger was happy, the forester was happy, the consent decree people were happy. It worked out for everybody. But you didn't see much of that going on. People were afraid to make that kind of commitment. I'm sure that the Forest Supervisor that sent the e-mail about the job didn't really expect to get a positive response like that, but it fit our needs at the time and it met that employee's needs. So that's the kind of thing that it always made me feel good to do.

REINIER: You went out of your way, really, to meet people's needs.

BERGEN: Yeah, I tried to.

REINIER: Yeah.

BERGEN: We had another situation where we had a wildlife biologist on temporary status for a number of years on one of our ranger districts and were at a spot where we could justify hiring a permanent wildlife biologist for that ranger district. Obviously the district ranger felt this person was fully qualified and should be hired, but he was a man. And so when we advertised that position, we only got one applicant, that applicant. Probably other wildlife biologists who knew him felt that that was his position, so they weren't going to apply. In this case I didn't even fully explain to the district ranger. I just said, "I'm sorry, you don't understand and Steve doesn't understand why we can't select him, but we cannot select from a certificate with only one person on it [under the consent decree rules we were working with]. But we will advertise it again. Ask him [to trust the system and] to apply again." I think the district ranger, even though he was very supportive of me, I think he thought I was a little cuckoo at that point. But we had

another wildlife biologist position on another district that we were going to advertise for and we had applicants for it, women applicants. So, thank goodness for a good personnel department. I don't know what the Forest Service does now because they don't have personnel departments on the individual forests anymore. They've changed that.

REINIER: Is it more centrally located?

BERGEN: Yes. It's more centralized now.

REINIER: Oh, so you couldn't do that.

BERGEN: Not in the same way. I would have to go over and build some trust with whoever's doing it. Apparently they're talking about centralizing it. So we advertised again. We got applicants for both districts; we were able to select for the one district that the ranger wanted. But it took advertising more than once, it took waiting, it took several people's efforts to do it.

REINIER: Yes. Yes. And willingness to do it.

BERGEN: Yeah.

REINIER: Did some other people just complain rather than go to that effort?

BERGEN: I heard a lot of complaints from a lot of forest supervisors certainly about how they weren't able to fill positions, and I never felt like I had any major complaints to make, except one place where I was told to select by the regional forester and that one didn't work out. That was unfortunate and I should have just refused the certificate. I got a little bit blindsided on that one, but still I had a lot of successes. I made a mistake on one I had wanted that didn't work out. But still all the others that did made me feel good. So I tried to do as much positive for the employees as I could. End of that subject for now.

REINIER: You were very involved in planning. Tell me about developing and implementing your Tahoe Land Management Plan.

BERGEN: When I was deputy forest supervisor I was sort of the line representative to the interdisciplinary team that was developing the plan, so I was familiar at least with the details and the processes. The forest supervisor, who had given general direction, couldn't get into the details of the processes we were using. I won't say that I understood the intricacies of the linear program and things like that, but I understood how we were developing criteria for certain activities and so on. The draft plan I think was put out...

REINIER: I have 1986 as the date.

BERGEN: Okay. The draft plan was pretty well along the way then by the time that I became forest supervisor; 1986 sounds good. According to my memory, we received about 12,000 letters in response to that, which at that time was a very high number. It isn't now, but it was at that time.

REINIER: From whom?

BERGEN: Environmentalists. You had local governments. You have timber industry, other interested people, but primarily environmentalists and citizens and the general public who had taken a great interest in the Tahoe National Forest and had whipped up a lot of interest. Now I think things go to 30,000 and more comments, but anyway we had 12,000, so we had a really large analysis job to do. We did not have any idea in 1986 that it would take us until 1990 to develop the final forest plan, but there were a number of different issues that came up at that time.

One of the issues that came up about the same time in 1986 was how we were planning and managing streamside management zones, resource management activities, primarily timber management activities. And there was regional direction for maintaining cover, which is trees and vegetation along the streamsides for shade, for temperature control, for riparian habitat, for a number of resources. The temperature control is for fish, but the riparian habitat is also needed by wildlife. Through concerns expressed by some of the environmentalists and through some of our own specialists I became aware that perhaps the way we had been interpreting direction was inadequate, that the forest had really been leaving very inadequate riparian areas along the streamsides compared to what the direction was and what the needs of wildlife species were. And so we went back and between the wildlife biologists and the forest silviculturalist, the man who was silviculturalist at that time, we re-looked at the direction and sort of convened a group to discuss it and essentially realized that we hadn't been doing what the direction was. So we started to implement new streamside management guidelines. In fact, we went out at that time with existing timber sales that had already been put under contract and we worked with the people who had purchased the timber sale contract, their representatives on the ground, to mark out trees to make adjustments so that we could protect the streamside corridors.

And I just saw the other day one of the examples of where we hadn't done it well enough. This was again in that Rock Creek area where we had made some adjustments in the timber sale boundaries to protect the orchid. But when I was out there on the ground sometime later, during the time I was forest supervisor, [I found] we had a very inadequate fringe of vegetation along the stream in the middle of these blocks and wouldn't do it that way now. And I just happened to drive though there the other day, not too long ago, and see the same thing.

So we started to make changes and we were able to make changes, as I said, in sales that were already under contract by negotiating with the timber sale contract

purchasers. I think there's a very cooperative set, or at least there was at that time, of timber managers, timber operators, timber purchasers in this area. We really never had any major problems in working with them. They're environmentally conscious too despite what the environmentalists say. So the first thing we were starting to do then was to make changes in our streamside management standards and guidelines to go into the forest plan. We also implemented those [changes] on the ground without waiting for the forest plan.

And then we had the fires in 1987 as I mentioned, the Indian fire and a couple of smaller fires. When we were developing the environmental analysis reports on the salvage sales for that fire area, we started to look at some other areas [resource needs] that were coming to our attention. Soil productivity and retention of snags for wildlife and downed woody material, which is both for wildlife and soil productivity. A lot of research information was coming forward at that time. So when we started looking at what do we really need to leave for adequate resource protection, we realized that if we took those standards and we applied them to the land management plan, that would materially change the amount of timber volume that we would be able to get off the forest. So we had to go back and re-calculate all the data for the land management plan essentially.

REINIER: Very complicated.

BERGEN: Yeah, it was. But it was very, very good that at that stage in the planning process we were able to recognize the resource management needs that hadn't been recognized before and get them into the plan before it was made final. And that we were also looking at increased protection for the visual resource and for recreation resources; and wildlife habitat and recreation were being recognized as very important components of the plan. And then also really about the time we were finalizing the plan a concern with small mammals that are called "fur bearers" became apparent too. This primarily is the pine marten and the fisher, and they need areas with downed woody material and large undisturbed areas and large connected areas. And so that further would influence the amount of land available for timber management purposes. So all this was decreasing the amount of timber the Tahoe could produce. We had to get support from the regional forester and agreement from him because he was the deciding official on the plan. We were able to get his agreement I believe to reduce the allowable cut from 140 million board feet to 110 million board feet. So all that went into the final plan, these changed standards and guidelines. We didn't wait for the final plan to be completed and adopted and approved in order to implement this though, because for each timber sale or each activity we could put in the standards and guidelines that were needed and cover them through environmental analysis. In other words, we could change our existing direction by showing this need in the environmental analysis for each timber sale plan. So as we went along we were able to build into our activities the guidelines that we were expecting to have in our approved land management plan. So that's what we did. It was one of the things that we did.

REINIER: And your background in environmental analysis was extremely helpful, wasn't it?

BERGEN: Yes, it was, once I realized what we were doing and weren't doing that we should have been doing. Yeah. And then the other thing that we did to help make the new plan effective when it came out, we were also expected to take the forest plan back to the Washington office and present it to the chief or to his staff, which we did. We did that in March.

REINIER: And that was [F.] Dale Robertson?

BERGEN: I don't know if Dale actually sat in on the meeting, probably George Leonard did.

REINIER: But he [Dale Robertson] was chief by 1987, yes.

BERGEN: And so we presented the plan in the Washington office to some staff, whatever, and that was just before I was moving back there. But we did present the plan. And so that was accepted; we didn't have a problem with that, which I wasn't sure of. And the final plan came out in the summer of 1990, which was after I was back in Washington, but essentially I carried it all through the process.

REINIER: I see.

BERGEN: Now the other thing that we did to help implement the plan and again this was like two years before, the direction that we were going in, very definitely was recreation and wildlife; these were really the main purposes of the Tahoe rather than timber management. It was changing gradually, but it was becoming apparent. The program planning and budgeting cycle requires you to plan budgets probably about three years ahead of time. I'm trying to think of the exact timeframe, but I would say about three years ahead of time. So we decided that we would not plan the budget like that current year's budget at all, but we would gradually change from our current direction into what we expected the plan direction to be. In some cases this meant ignoring some of the regional office direction because when we were planning program budgets you were given sets of directions that were sometimes internally conflicting. You were given maximum amounts of money you could have in your budget, but you were given targets for timber, for example, how much timber you should be planning to cut. If we had budgeted all the funds we needed to cut all that timber, we wouldn't have been able to request very many funds for recreation and wildlife habitat. We didn't make giant changes in one step, but we also needed more money for archaeology and for some other related activities. For any land disturbing project you need archaeology.

REINIER: It's required by law.

BERGEN: Yes, right. So we started to make this transition. And we planned to make adequate planning for trying to keep the recreation, the maintenance and so on, up. Doesn't mean we got all the money we asked for, but we started to make this transition.

REINIER: To get the money to make up for your decreased timber.

BERGEN: Well, no, to get the money to manage for wildlife and for recreation and for archaeology. And then we just put what was left essentially in for timber, and so this is how much timber we can produce with this amount of money. Now it gets changed in the regional office, you know that, and it gets changed when you get your money and your direction three years later. But it doesn't get changed all the way. So we tried to keep making some progress.

REINIER: Interesting.

BERGEN: Yeah. Now I assume the forest kept doing it. The administrative officer and the deputy and I, we knew what we were doing. That's what we were doing, and they were still there when I left, for awhile. So I assume we kept doing that. My understanding is--again this is my understanding, I haven't done the research on it--that when the cuts did come down in 1990 and beyond, cutbacks in money for personnel and so on, that the Tahoe was not as badly off as some other forests because we had already made a transition in the areas where we were asking for money. I know that they could still use a lot more money in recreation than they have, so it isn't that Tahoe is well off or anything like that. But we did start making that transition so the budget would balance with the plan.

REINIER: Interesting.

BERGEN: Even if it's not enough money, we tried to bring in that balance to it. And I feel good about that. We made that effort and we did the best we could at it.

REINIER: And the down-sizing hadn't really started yet when you were forest supervisor.

BERGEN: No. That wasn't really what I was looking at. I was just looking at getting the program budget balanced with the plan. Then the down-sizing started later, but at least there was probably a little bit more money there for some of those functions that normally don't get too much money. You can't produce the timber without having wildlife biologists and archaeologists and so on on staff. They seem to have plenty of archaeology help right now, so I think it worked.

REINIER: Well, that's fascinating.

BERGEN: Yeah. It was very interesting trying to work in essentially what was becoming a more and more bureaucratic environment and still manage the resource from a stewardship perspective. Yeah. Yeah.

REINIER: What do you mean a more bureaucratic environment?

BERGEN: There was more and more direction from the top, more and more control, more and more time in regional management team meetings were being spent on administrative matters such as personnel and budget and the consent decree rather than on resource management matters. To me, I would think that the management team of the Forest Service should be concerned primarily with resource management matters. I wasn't the only one; we found management team meetings to be more and more frustrating because of the fact that we were dealing with personnel and administration and maybe law enforcement, although that was important, and budget items such as that.

REINIER: Tell me about the Pacific Crest Trail.

BERGEN: Ah. The Pacific Crest Trail is another little jewel, I think. The actual location of the Pacific Crest Trail had to be negotiated with the owners of the land where we cross private lands, which is a lot of the Tahoe.

[Interruption]

BERGEN: I was just saying that the actual trail location had to be determined not only by the physical lay of the ground but by negotiations with the owners. Eminent domain was not able to be used on that, so it was a general trail route. The Tahoe I think did a nice job in some places with bridges and so on, very nice. But one of the things that I'm very proud of is the Pacific Crest trailhead we have up in the same general area as the Boreal Ski area. And as a trailhead for horses. I mean it's suitable for horses as well as for people and designed by the landscape architects on the Tahoe, constructed while I was forest supervisor. We had a formal dedication in 1988. It's a very nice spot. When you start hiking to the access to the Pacific Crest Trail from the trailhead, you're behind the rest stop on the highway [Interstate 80] there essentially. There's access to a nature trail also, and I've had a lot of delightful hikes myself up there. So that's something. It was one of our accomplishments. At times we had three landscape architects on the Tahoe and besides looking at timber sales for what they look like visually, they would design recreation facilities. And so we have a lot of big recreation facilities.

REINIER: Is that going to eventually be all along the Pacific Crest?

BERGEN: It is, I think.

REINIER: It is already?

BERGEN: Yeah, because I've heard of people who have hiked it all. Yeah.

REINIER: That's very exciting. We've talked a little bit just in passing about the consent decree, but I think we should really talk about your experience with this as forest supervisor because it was in 1983 that the consent decree in Region 5 went into effect, that there be 43 percent women in each grade level by 1986.

BERGEN: 1983 going into effect. Okay.

REINIER: Yeah. And so that was really a major issue that you had to deal with as deputy and then as forest supervisor.

BERGEN: Yes, it became more of a major issue as time went on. One reason it was a major issue is that there was a work plan, that's not quite the right term, but there was a work plan developed by the Forest Service and presented to the court and accepted by the court that had something like 140 action items in it. My belief is that when this was developed by people in the regional office they didn't realize that it would have such strong legal force as it had. They looked at it as a Forest Service planning document wherein you'd do the best you can to achieve these objectives. But once it was adopted by the court we were expected to achieve all of the objectives 100 percent. And so when that didn't happen at a later date, then we got the court-appointed monitor, and then we got time frames, and we got specific direction on how to implement these items that we had agreed to earlier but hadn't really thought through. Essentially a lot of them were nice-to-do items but not necessarily something that if you were being held to tight time frames that you would want to do. What happened is that the consent decree became a workload for many, many employees. The reporting requirements became a workload for many, many employees, including women obviously, and so the workload part of it was very definitely resented. There was some male backlash because of it and certainly the women didn't like that. Many of the women would have preferred to have been able to feel that they had been selected or promoted completely on their own without the consent decree having been the motivating factor. Each forest had to have a consent decree committee. My secretary volunteered to serve on it. She may have been chair of it. I think she was. She was the forest representative to the regional consent decree committee.

REINIER: What was her name?

BERGEN: LaVeta. LaVeta Nevius. A great secretary, couldn't have asked for any better. We kept giving her promotions as we were able to, but she functioned much more as an administrative assistant than as a secretary. And she also had the ability to relate to people, all kinds of people whether it was employees of any level, outside, as people came to see me. She was very competent, and organized my papers for me when I didn't have them organized. Kept me on track. We couldn't have done the job without her. She was great. But she was a very good representative. She was able to think clearly.

Good representative of the region consent committee and the informational link back and forth to employees as well to management. But again, all of that was time away from other work, of course, other things to be done.

And then the requirements, we've mentioned some of these hiring requirements, the fact that we had to go through competitive placement in all cases rather than doing a reassignment for somebody's benefit, might it be personal benefit or might be job-related benefit. In one case we were able to obtain permission to reassign a female recreation forester who we would have lost otherwise, reassign from one district to another district. And by that time reassignments were so uncommon that all of the employees, men and women, expected everything to be advertised. And it didn't used to be that everything was advertised. Management used to be able to make these reassignments for, as I said, management reasons or personal reasons.

REINIER: Now in your case the positions that you took were not advertised positions, early in your career.

BERGEN: Right. The Forest Service has changed the way they handled things. No, they weren't advertised positions at all. Yeah. That's not the way they used to do it, period. Then they changed to advertising most of them but still having reassignment available. And then the consent decree essentially, almost 100 percent, lots of people they didn't reassign. I had one situation where having reassigned the recreation forester, I got a grievance from a recreation technician at another district. Turns out that for family reasons he wanted to move to a different location and he hadn't had the opportunity.

[End Tape 6, Side A]

[Begin Tape 6, Side B]

BERGEN: It turned out that we had another vacancy on another district that also met his needs. But nonetheless we had an employee that felt that we had overlooked him entirely. You know, when we were trying to take care of some needs there. We had another situation where I offered a position... I knew that the regional forester had an EEO complaint he was handling, and I had a position open that I felt would solve his EEO complaint. So I offered it and the person took the job. A male who would have liked to have competed for that position didn't actually file a grievance and complain [formally], but he did come to me and really complain [informally] about it. And I couldn't tell him. You can't say, "Well, I offered that position to settle an EEO complaint." You can't say that, so they never know that.

REINIER: Oh!

BERGEN: You're not going to say that. That's confidential information. So anyway, the workload in grievances and EEO complaints grew. Somehow or other, maybe

because by this time I was a widow and I didn't have anybody at home to talk to about these things and to bolster me up, I began to really feel attacked personally by these. Not to the extent, I wasn't being illogical about it or anything, but it did bother me a great deal. I felt like people were sort of turning against me because they couldn't understand. There's no way an employee's going to understand all the considerations that the manager has to take into account when they make decisions. So that became quite a load on me even though I was stressed toward the end of the time that I was there on the Tahoe.

REINIER: Do you think that women would have advanced without the consent decree just as well?

BERGEN: Some of them may have advanced better, that is with better feelings about them and their jobs. I think there would be less women probably in the Forest Service because we really made major efforts for outreach to women, particularly women in other professions where they were available and where we were hiring: fisheries biologists, wildlife biologists, soil scientists, those positions where we had some money to do some hiring. Another creative thing that we had to do. We also had targets in our temporary hires: fire seasonals or the project work crews that go out and cut brush and so on. And we had women applicants. But what happened, the application form was essentially a self-rating form, at least the way it was handled at that time, where the applicant puts down things like how well they can use a chain saw or whatever. And say both a man and a woman have similar experience, but typically a man will go ahead and rate himself, yeah, I can do that well, I can do that well. And the woman will say, oh, I'm pretty good at that. I'm pretty good at that. I'm pretty good at that. Once those were in, the ratings were based on those checkmarks and the women would come out lower than the men. And you had to go down by a certain formula, so you couldn't reach the women. So we actually put on seminars for women, potential temporary employees, past temporary employees, to help them learn how to fill out the application forms.
REINIER: Excellent!

BERGEN: So that more of them would be placed. Teach them how to evaluate their experience better and not to discredit themselves. Women tend to do that, unfortunately.

REINIER: Yes they do. Especially when it comes to something like using a chainsaw.

BERGEN: Whatever...

REINIER: But they do anyway, generally.

BERGEN: Yeah. You tend to say, "Well I think I can do that okay." Even my very competent daughter did that to herself recently, with a lot of experience. And I probably do it to myself.

REINIER: Yeah. Were you active then in helping other women receive promotions in these years other than what you were required to do through the consent decree? I was thinking about Mary [J. Moore] Coulombe.

BERGEN: Yeah. I was going to answer. That was a very interesting example of male mind-set near the beginning of the consent decree. It would have been after I was forest supervisor, so it was probably '86. But the position of forest supervisor of the Plumas National Forest was open, and under the consent decree we had established a process of setting up a selection panel--I think that's the right term; we had panels of more than one kind--selection panel of people other than the final decision maker to review the certificate of eligible employees and make a recommendation. I think it was very unfortunate that a personnelist wasn't part of the panel because that would have solved this particular problem. And I don't remember who the two men were, but the three of us were working together, reviewing the certificate for Plumas forest supervisor. Of course, personnel only puts people on certificates if they're qualified under the regulations for that position, whatever the position is. I think there was quite a large number of people on this one.

One of the people on the certificate was Mary Coulombe. And Mary Coulombe at that particular time was a GS12 district ranger in Region 3. The position, of course, was a GS14, but Mary had previously been a GS13 planner. Okay. And she had at some point I think gotten a master's degree in forestry, and I don't know whether that was before or after she'd been a planner. And then she took the district ranger position for the experience, but because she had been 13 she was fully qualified to be considered for the 14. And she met all the other criteria. She should have been at least in the top three if that's what we were doing out of this large certificate, selecting the top three which is probably what we were doing. We were probably ranking them in order. And I could not get these two men to agree with me. There was no way that they would agree with me that a GS12 ranger is qualified to be a GS14 supervisor. And there was no personnelist in the room to explain this. Whatever the report was that we finally sent in, it had three other people, it did not have Mary in the top three. So I sat down and I wrote a personal note, minority report, to the regional forester, sent it to him in a blue envelope. I don't know what transpired after that. I don't know what they documented, because they would have had to keep this thing, how they documented that or whatever, but Mary was selected for the position.

REINIER: She was!

BERGEN: Yes. I've never told her this story. I've only told it to one other person and I don't remember who. I just told it recently to somebody, but I've never told her that. She's not working for the Forest Service now anymore, but she was forest supervisor of the Plumas. She did a good job I guess from the region's point of view because she got a very large money award when she left the Plumas. [After she left the Plumas] she was in the Washington office first as national forest assistant and then international forestry. Apparently now she's left the Forest Service and gone to work for

the World Bank; I think it was the World Bank. I saw her at Portland last fall, but international forestry again essentially but for a different employer. Again, in a way that's confidential information, but it was just the mind-set of these two men. They weren't really following instructions.

REINIER: That's extremely interesting. She wouldn't have gotten that position if you hadn't been there probably.

BERGEN: Well, I guess one should say that that's probably the case, yeah.

REINIER: And then she was the second woman to be a forest supervisor.

BERGEN: She was the second forest supervisor, yeah.

REINIER: Yeah, on the next door forest.

BERGEN: Yeah. Uh huh.

REINIER: Great. That's fabulous. I'd like to know a little bit more I guess while we're still talking about the consent decree about white male backlash. Was there a great deal of backlash on the part of men?

BERGEN: Well...

REINIER: To the consent decree, that you experienced?

BERGEN: Most of it I guess I would experience through hearsay reports back to me, not directly. But yeah, one like this one employee coming to me that really would have liked to have applied for that position that I just mentioned to you that I had given to somebody else because of an EEO complaint. I put that in the category of backlash and it's also a little bit of a misunderstanding of how personnel works. There were the major movements by minority employees, I think, as well as white males that were taking shape about the time I left the region. And there were dialogues with the regional forester. Because those were EEO related, even we forest supervisors weren't getting much information about that.

REINIER: Were minority candidates as successful in getting positions as women candidates were?

BERGEN: We had minority targets at the same time. When we went out and looked for women we were also attempting to look for minorities. Minority candidates were even harder to find than women candidates.

REINIER: Um hmm. That's what I would judge.

BERGEN: Yes. They were. In any of the professions. The people in the minorities do not tend to gravitate toward natural resource professions. That's changing. I've seen that again at national SAF meetings where for quite awhile we had a "women in natural resources"-type breakfast and it's been changed now into a cultural diversity breakfast. A lot of minority students who are looking for jobs come to that, encouraged undoubtedly by their professors or whatever, and a wide range. Plus we even had some Southeast Asians who are foresters stand up and make some presentations at the last one. I know somebody who's hired a couple of Southeast Asians as foresters, and that is also very unusual. I didn't even know we had any people from Southeast Asia going into forestry school yet, but there are some. There are blacks from the South, mostly from the Southeast. We've always had a few Asians, but not the Southeast Asians of the new immigrants. We've always had a few Asians in forestry, but very few blacks, not even many Hispanics, not many Native Americans. There's been very limited numbers in my experience.

REINIER: Were you able to hire some minority candidates on the Tahoe?

BERGEN: Yes. We were able to hire some minority candidates on the Tahoe. In fact, what did I just say here? [Looking at papers] No, it was mainly women. Not very much. I said "recently," this was in 1989, "Recently we have added several minority employees to the forest professional work force," professional work force, okay, "through creative outreach and recruitment." But my percentage was only from 9 percent in fiscal year '88 to 11 percent in '89, which is not very big. So some must have left is all I can say. Only one I can think of right offhand is a minority fisheries biologist that was there when I was there. Let's see. Yes. We hired more than one minority but there were not a lot available. Yeah. So even though I said "yes," it doesn't look as if it was as good as I thought it was.

REINIER: And at the same time weren't you able to somehow write up your reports so you had a 43 percent hiring of women?

BERGEN: Well, in the line officers, this is the district rangers and forest supervisors and the deputy forest supervisors, actually, yeah, I think I did a pretty good job of selecting women at different levels. My first selection of a district ranger was for the Nevada City district and I was able to select Ann Dow, and we already had Joanne [B.] Roubique as district ranger at Truckee, and I was forest supervisor. So of the seven line officers we had three women and that was 43 percent. Ann Dow left. Who did I have as acting in there for awhile? I don't know, but Ann Dow did leave the Forest Service. Came time to replace Ann on Nevada City district and I had another very good woman. I had a woman forester in timber management in the supervisor's office, not on the district, and I was able to select her. That took a little bit of effort because the regional forester was reviewing all of the selections and he looked at the application and he didn't look at it well enough. He thought I was selecting somebody who was already on that ranger

district to be district ranger on that ranger district and he wasn't going to approve it. And time was going by and he wasn't approving it. So I got in touch with him and asked him about it and I said, "No, she's been on the Eldorado and she's in our timber management staff, but she has not worked on this district. She's only done work on the Eldorado or the Tahoe because her husband works in Sacramento. I think she would be a good candidate." And so he finally approved that selection. But she never had the opportunity to work for me [as district ranger] because her position took effect at the same time my position in Washington took effect. But when I got ready to retire in Washington, she sent me the most gracious note saying how thankful she was for the experience of being district ranger, and she appreciated my selecting her. And now she's the resource staff officer for the forest, another promotion.

REINIER: And her name is...

BERGEN: Julie Lydick.

REINIER: And Joanne Robique in 1982 was district ranger at Truckee.

BERGEN: Yes. Bob Lancaster selected her. She'd been one of the landscape architects on the forest.

REINIER: Uh huh. So that was an early....

BERGEN: Yes, that was early.

REINIER: Because Wendy Herrett was the first female district ranger in '79. Was she the second?

BERGEN: As far as I remember, yes. We can call Joanne up and ask her.

[Laughter]

BERGEN: But I think...

REINIER: There was another woman in Region 3 just about the same time...

BERGEN: ...Now I wonder who that was...

REINIER: ...Louise Odegaard [also was appointed district ranger in 1982, on the Tesuque District, Santa Fe National Forest, Region 3].

BERGEN: That's possible. And a woman--what? Archaeologist or landscape architect or planner? You don't remember what the background was?

REINIER: I can look that up and let you know. [Louise Odegaard began her Forest Service career as a technician. In 1983 Laura Ferguson was appointed district ranger of the Santa Barbara District of the Los Padres National Forest, and Susan Odell was appointed district ranger of the Mariposa District of the Sierra National Forest, both in Region 5].

BERGEN: I'm curious, yes. Curious who that is.

REINIER: Were you getting ready to leave the position of forest supervisor by the end of the '80s? What was your feeling?

BERGEN: I'm trying to reflect back on what my feeling was. Certainly the consent decree and the EEO complaints and the grievances were bothering me. I felt I didn't have good communication or support from the current regional forester. I didn't, but I didn't go to him and say let's sit down and talk, which I should have done. I'd lost my husband, so I didn't have that male support at home which is really pretty important to have. In fact, if my husband had been alive and been in business, there was no way I would have left. I considered retiring because I would have been eligible to retire in September of 1990. But I wasn't ready to retire yet. Mentally. But I should have been more assertive in talking about the problem with the regional forester. I never got more than a fully satisfactory performance rating as a forest supervisor, and I think I did better than that. We met our targets. I never had any specific complaints directed at me as to ways I should improve or anything else. I was a bit unhappy about that too. I was never really told I needed to change any of the way I was doing things. So it was interesting. In fact, I guess I was even being encouraged to leave.

REINIER: Do you think you were?

BERGEN: Um hmm.

REINIER: What made you think that?

BERGEN: Statements which my mind should have told me these aren't true statements. Statements like the Tahoe forest supervisor job is a good training position. And yet when I look back on it, the supervisor on the Sierra National Forest has been there, let's see, probably as long as I was supervisor. He's been there now for fifteen years I would bet. So the forest supervisors don't always change fast. So I was being gently encouraged to leave, and I should have challenged that and I didn't. I should have talked to Doug Leisz. I should have talked to somebody because Doug was already a mentor and an advisor, but I didn't really talk to anybody. I think I was getting very depressed. And then I lost my dog too, which, believe it or not, it sounds strange, but my favorite dog passed away. I had two dogs, but the other one was not my dog; he was my husband's dog.

REINIER: And Don's illness had been a strain.

BERGEN: Well, yeah, that had been a strain. But Don had died in '87, so I hadn't had that support at home since then, and my dog had been my companion since '79. I just loved....

REINIER: When you were up here alone.

BERGEN: Alone, yeah. And Don had gotten him for me. And then my son and his family lived here, but unfortunately were not real, real close at the time. Not that we didn't care for each other; we love each other very much, but we just weren't very close. He was under a strain working in Sacramento and living up here anyway, so you know you don't spend a lot of time together under those circumstances. I really didn't have anyone to depend on or to talk things over with. And I should have found somebody, but I didn't. Anyway, so I started applying for other positions. The first one I applied for was deputy regional forester in the regional office. My daughters were in the Bay Area. It would have been a financial difficulty to go back to the San Francisco area after I'd left it, but I could have managed it one way or another. And I wasn't selected for that. And then I applied for a job in the Washington office in land management planning, which I'm glad I wasn't selected for. It was for the person handling appeals on land management plans. It turns out when I got there I discovered it was one of these real barn-burner production type jobs, so I was very glad I didn't get that.

And so then the deputy staff director for environmental coordination position in the Washington office was advertised, and since I'd been the environmental coordinator in Region 5, I felt that was something I would enjoy doing. I knew Dave Ketcham, who was the staff director, well enough to think that I would like working for him. And in particular, again, here's where the support comes in. The man who was deputy chief of programs and legislation at the time that I applied for the job was Jeff Sirmon. Jeff had been in engineering in Region 5, which is where I met him. He'd been regional forester in Region 1. I'd run into him here and there at different times during our careers. He had had some interest in supporting me, which was evidenced by asking me to come to Washington to work on a special team that was working on up-dating the labor union agreement, even though I had no experience with labor unions. So he got me into Washington where there was more visibility on this team. So I felt I had his support. He was the deputy chief of programs and legislation. So I think partly because he was there and I knew how he thought and I knew that I would enjoy working for him, was one of the reasons why I was willing to apply for this environmental coordination job. Well, I was selected. And then Jeff Sirmon was reassigned to international forestry, so I wasn't working for Jeff. And I felt I never quite had the confidence and support of the people who took his place. I had my immediate boss's support, that was fine. And there weren't that many other people from Region 5 in the Washington office. I didn't know the chief. Dale Robertson was the first chief that I hadn't personally known before since [Edward P.] Ed Cliff, but in between I'd known them. I knew George Leonard, who was the associate chief, but I didn't know Robertson.

[Material here has been omitted by Geri Bergen].

REINIER: So did you enjoy your work in the Washington office?

BERGEN: It was an interesting experience, yes.

[Laughter]

REINIER: And yet once again you did outstanding work. Because of that work you received three different merit and cash awards from the chief.

BERGEN: Actually they were a group award. Every member of the group got an award.

REINIER: Oh, I see.

BERGEN: But yes, like I said, it was an interesting assignment. It's hard for me to remember now what the order of different things were, but the Northern Spotted Owl controversy in the Pacific Northwest was heating up.

REINIER: Yes, this was 1990.

BERGEN: Yeah. And the scientific advisory team, I'm not remembering the exact name. I think FEMAT was the name of the report, but I can't tell you what that stands for anymore. But there would have been a scientific advisory team that had come up with a report on how the Spotted Owl should be managed...

REINIER: I can tell you what FEMAT stands for if I can get the...

BERGEN: FEMAT, here we go.

REINIER AND BERGEN: Forest Eco System Management Assessment Team.

BERGEN: Yes. And I think that was the report of the scientists that had been put together on the Spotted Owl. So that had come up with some recommendations and then we had the president's forest plan and we had the EIS. I'm not even remembering the order of everything right now. And we had the litigation, and we had the court, and we had President [William Jefferson] Clinton elected.

REINIER: Yes, in 1992.

BERGEN: Yes.

REINIER: Now, let's go back then. You were working on the Spotted Owl team. What was the Spotted Owl team?

BERGEN: It was essentially a team of people drawn from different staffs in the Washington office to give staff assistance to the chief, and it turned out also to the secretary [of agriculture], and it turned out later also to the White House. Decisions were being made at higher and higher levels essentially, but to give staff assistance and also actually to give Washington office staff assistance to Region 6. I think that the initial purpose was a team of people that could react to needs that Region 6 had in responding to the Spotted Owl situation. We would take information from Region 6 or from the scientists, whatever, and we would do staff papers for the chief or for the deputy chief. Decisions had to be made and we had regular meetings with the deputy chief of the national forest system.

[End Tape 6, Side B]

[SESSION III, July 7, 2000]

[Begin Tape 7, Side A]

REINIER: Geri, would you tell me a little bit about your job at the Washington office as deputy director in environmental coordination staff?

BERGEN: Yes, I would like to talk about that a little bit. I think the first observation I need to make is that there's a lot of difference between being a line officer and a staff person. I knew that would be a big change for me when I made the transition. But to go from a staff of say three to four hundred people to a staff of eleven or twelve people was a significant change. And then being staff to the chief and the deputy chief of programs and legislation essentially was back to the kind of role I had in San Francisco, but still a big change and not the easiest to adjust to. Environmental coordination in the Washington office was a small staff. The most people we had on board at any one time was eight professionals including the director and myself, a technician, and about three and a half clerical help. And not all the eight professional positions were filled at one time, and at the end, in fact, people were not being replaced. So it was a small staff with a large responsibility advising the regions, working with the regions particularly on projects that were controversial, projects that required environmental impact statements. Large variety of projects from winter sports areas to Department of Federal Highway

Administration and highways across the Caribbean National Forest in Puerto Rico. And there were various concerns about endangered species in different parts of the country.

But what I needed when I got in there was to familiarize myself again with the various laws and regulations that we were to implement, not only NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations that implement NEPA, but on Forest Service manual direction on NEPA, and the NFMA and the Forest Service regs [regulations] implementing NFMA, because a lot of work, of course, did relate to environmental impact statements on forest land management plans. I felt we had excellent staff people on our staff, we had excellent professionals who were well-versed in the regs and able to give advice to the regions with their problems. I felt as a deputy director I needed to be as well-versed as they were and the only way to do that really was to delve into a problem and then research the regs in the process of helping solve the problem. You can't just read them once or twice and realize how many intricacies there are and cross relationships between them. One way that helped us when we had major problems to solve or to think through was not just our formal staff meeting once a week, but we would have informal discussions among ourselves when we were trying to solve a problem or meet informally at lunch time to address a problem. But what happened was that shortly after I got there the secretary requested a regular briefing. At that time it was probably once a week, but a regular briefing on current issues that he needed to be aware of when he went to cabinet meetings, things that might blow up, that type of issue.

REINIER: And who was secretary then, secretary of agriculture?

BERGEN: Well, it was under the [President George H. W.] Bush administration. And I don't remember the name.

REINIER: We'll look it up. [Clayton K.Yeutter, Secretary of Agriculture, 1989-91].

BERGEN: Yeah. But this was under the Bush administration because it would have been in 1990. It was felt that environmental coordination was the staff in most touch with the issues, and I got the assignment of delving into what was going on, writing up these papers, and this bothered me. This bothered me because it took my time and energy away from what I felt was my major job, which was being deputy director of the environmental coordination staff. It kept me from having the time to get into the regs and to familiarize myself with them and to become fully conversant with the regs. I probably complained mildly in some form and because of that I was seen as not a team player by the deputy chief and the assistant deputy chief in programs and legislation. And that made a problem that I think stayed with me a long time there. Looking back on it now, it would have been better if I had not complained or had analyzed the problem a little further and just said to my boss this conflicts with this, what do you think about it, and just left it at that. But having not been in a staff position for a while, having been a line officer, it didn't occur to me that there would be repercussions. And also the atmosphere in the Washington office is different than the atmosphere in Region 5. I think we were

freer and more open in what we could say in Region 5. But at any rate, that got me off on the wrong foot.

After some time this responsibility was given to another staff. I don't remember what time or which staff although public information, the director of information would have been a good place to have put it. But we did have to expand it as we went along. Environmental coordination doesn't know everything that's going on; the other staff directors have to have input into this for the chief and staff to make a determination what belongs in here. And so it slowly expanded and then ultimately became assigned to some other place in the organization, which then relieved me to do other duties, which I was glad to have it done. We did have a number of writing duties that came down periodically, such as providing input to the Council on Environmental Quality for their annual report. So that type of duty [I] often felt a need to organize and to be the principal author of also. So at various times I found myself coordinating written material with other staffs. Anyway, in addition to this weekly report, I accepted those duties that had to be done, but again, I didn't feel that was my primary reason for being there. I finally did get myself up to date on all our regs and directions, was able to fully be a member of the team and lead the team, but it was still very frustrating at first.

REINIER: What was your work on the Spotted Owl team?

BERGEN: The Spotted Owl team was essentially staff support to the chief and to the secretary's office, dealing with the Spotted Owl issues in the Pacific Northwest, and also some staff support or coordination with Region 6. Representation from my staff, which at first was one of the other people on the staff and then later myself, the representation from my staff was to provide environmental analysis, environmental coordination role on the committee. The other people on the Spotted Owl Team included representatives from legislative affairs, from timber management, from state and private forestry, definitely from wildlife endangered species. Office of general counsel occasionally had a representative sitting in, depending on where we were as it became more litigious. We were at times just exchanging information but we were at other times responding to requests for information, requests for information that had to be answered almost immediately that came from the White House through the department. So it became apparent after a while that the White House--there were a group of environmental advisors in the White House and I can't remember the exact name of the position or committee right now--but it became apparent that they were the ones that were calling the shots or trying to exercise some degree of spin control if you want to call it that, over this situation of the Pacific Northwest. A couple of years ago I saw the movie "Wag the Dog." I don't know if you saw that movie.

REINIER: Um hmm.

BERGEN: And I found it absolutely hilarious. Obviously it was satirical, but so close to the truth unfortunately as far as spin control, trying to control issues from the White House.

REINIER: Is this the Clinton administration?

BERGEN: Yes, now as we've moved up to the Clinton administration, really. Things were not the same way previously. I really related to that movie and really enjoyed it because I thought it was a very good satire on what was really going on.

REINIER: We'll talk in a minute more about the impact of the Clinton administration, but you talked a little bit about working with Dale Robertson earlier. Would you like to add anything about what it was like to work in the Washington office when Dale Robertson was chief?

BERGEN: I probably only met Dale once when I was forest supervisor and that would have been at the second national meeting of all the forest supervisors, which was called Sunbird, was held in the Southwest, but I don't remember whether that was Albuquerque or Tucson or where, I think Tucson. That was my first chance to really see Dale for any length of time and see him operate, but I don't remember my impressions at that time. I had a lot of other things on my mind at that time and my very favorite dog died in the middle of that week, or had to be put to sleep while I was away. So that sort of erased most of my memories of that particular week. And I did not feel like I had much occasion to work very closely with Dale. My boss, Dave Ketcham, was the one that worked the most closely with the chief and the associate chief. If I did have occasion to go to the front office, my preference was to see George Leonard, who was the associate chief, because I knew him and we could converse easily and I could understand his approach to things. Dale, to me, was always very pleasant. When people are always very pleasant sometimes you can't get beyond that to find out what's really on their mind perhaps. Other people that I worked with who were on this Spotted Owl team, for example, had worked more closely with Dale in the past and were working more closely with him at that time and related better to him. Where we were doing Spotted Owl things I let them take the leadership. I wasn't the leader of the team; other people were. So although I had meetings with Dale, I did not seek him out any oftener than I needed to, I guess. And I was perfectly happy to meet with George Leonard when the occasion arose.

REINIER: But now George Leonard along with Dale was reassigned.

BERGEN: Yes, I understand that. In fact, I was there when that happened; I remember that. Uh huh.

REINIER: Do you want to comment on that at all?

BERGEN: No, I don't really have enough specific background in that situation. I think that that was, when? Early in 1994? Was that when that was? Or late '93. Was it in '93?

REINIER: It was in '93. Jack Ward Thomas came in in '93.

BERGEN: The interesting thing was that about the time that this happened there was a national management team meeting, staff directors and regional foresters, going on in Washington. My boss, Dave Ketcham, couldn't attend, and so I attended it in his place. Those are good opportunities. It's always good to be able to attend something like that, again for visibility and contacts. There was a going away reception, just for the management people, for Dale and George. So I was able to attend that, because otherwise I wouldn't have had the opportunity to. So that was interesting. But as far as actual facts surrounding that reassignment, I'm not privy to.

REINIER: How did things change in the Washington office when Clinton was elected?

BERGEN: The need for quick response on anything political was heightened. This report that I mentioned that went to the secretary on a regular basis was continued and it included details of the chief's schedule. I don't think I was responsible for it at this time, but I certainly saw it and had input into it, and it would include details of the chief's schedule, if he was going to be meeting with anybody important, that the secretary or the president ought to know about. It became very structured as far as what was wanted by the secretary. See, this would have been '93, would it not? One of the other things that happened that ended up affecting me was that the secretary put a freeze on filling upper level positions. Already I guess at that time I was looking. I was not that satisfied with the work in the Washington office. It was difficult. One was a GS15, assistant staff director, but one was doing very piddling staff work part of the time. When I went there I had hoped that my values and my conservation philosophy and so on, that I would be able to have some input into management decisions. Staff is not used that way near as I could see. I had very little opportunity to do anything but to respond to demands.

REINIER: And you'd been the decision maker on the Tahoe for seven years.

BERGEN: Yes. So it was not as satisfying as I had hoped it would be. And of course my family was back here, back in California, and I was there. I had a brother and sister on the east coast, and I was able to spend some holidays with them and so on. But my family was back here and most of my vacations I came back to California it seemed, rather than doing other things. So I was already thinking about leaving, and I decided to apply for a position in Region 4. I decided to apply for a position in Region 4 up in Utah, which was the recreation and land staff position in that region. This advertisement for this position went from December of '92 to January of '93, so that was the period of time that I had in my mind. And it was also about the time that Dale and George were leaving. And I used my background on the Tahoe National Forest primarily to help qualify myself on that application because of the high recreation workload and the high lands workload on the Tahoe. And about May... First place, for some reason the selection was held up for a long period of time; that's a long time to go. The announcement closed at the end of January and one would have expected a decision say in March. Meanwhile the new secretary under the Clinton administration had frozen placements, or was talking about

freezing placements, and the Forest Service was continuing to make some limited placements for approval, I think, of the secretary.

REINIER: Was that because of budget issues?

BERGEN: It was because of budget issues and it was because of the re-inventing government initiative of the Clinton Administration, and they were determined to reduce grade levels, average grade level positions in the different areas. It was the upper grade level positions that were being prevented from being filled, and again my memory's a little bit hazy, but this is my best recollection of it. And this was very difficult for the Forest Service and I'm sure for other agencies. Our Washington office did not consist of doers. We weren't issuing Social Security checks and things like that. Our Washington office consisted of highly professional staff and researchers, research staff people who were directing major programs and should be at higher grade levels. So trying to reduce the average grade level was particularly difficult for those people who were still, say at the 12 grade level and who had been looking. The few professionals that we had at that level in Washington were looking forward to promotions because of the high cost of living and so on. It was a very ill-advised initiative as far as I was concerned. And so the approval of selections and placements at that grade level became progressively more difficult.

So in that atmosphere I had applied for this position. And I was offered the position. I was selected and offered the position by phone from personnel I think in early May. Usually an offer comes through your boss. My direct boss was absent and instead of it going through his boss it came directly to me because I was acting at that time. I accepted the position, and my only documentation of that, I think, was in a message with our internal e-mail, was called DG at that time, and a note to my boss that I had done this. That was the very last position I think that happened to be offered to anybody [in that period], and it was offered with the proviso that it not be announced, so I couldn't talk to anybody about it. And it was never made effective. Nothing ever happened beyond that except to unselect me about a year later, the following January or so.

REINIER: Why?

BERGEN: Well, it wasn't filled and then it was filled for a long time by detailers. Budget cuts were going on. People from the Washington office did go out on detail to other positions in Region 4 that were vacant. I did not feel that I could because I was living alone; I did not feel I could leave my house for a long period of time and go out on detail. I didn't even apply for a detail.

REINIER: What is detail?

BERGEN: Detail is a temporary filling of a position. By reassigning somebody or by temporarily promoting somebody usually for a specified length of time. It can be

unspecified. For example, when I became forest supervisor and I had to have an acting deputy, that was like a detail. I appointed an acting deputy forest supervisor, but I didn't have an ending date on that. It was just for the time being, or until further notice type of a thing, till a position was filled. And I think the details may have even been advertised, but they may not have all been advertised. So the position was filled in one way or another in Region 4 in this interim. There was a hiatus throughout, in other positions too. There was this hiatus in filling positions or of placing people in positions. So even though the offer had been made to me it was not announced. I did manage to get out to Region 4 on one trip and take a day of my own time to do a little house looking. We had an ecosystem group or a recreation meeting. I went out to the region for a couple of reasons two different times I think, and one of them I was able to take a day of my own time and look around at housing, just for information purposes. But the position was meanwhile being filled by detail. They detailed one of their own people on their own staff to fill it, or gave a temporary promotion to one of their own people on their own staff, who I heard back indirectly was doing a great job. So I could see that they would be satisfied with that if he was doing a great job, and they were cutting back. So ultimately it was just sort of decided not to fill the position, with me at any rate. So I didn't get that move.

Of course, what I had been looking for was to move back closer to California, to be in that position a year or two and then perhaps to retire. There were no positions being open in California at that time, there were major cutbacks going on in Region 6, and there were cutbacks looming in Region 5. They'd never reached the same level as in Region 6, but certainly positions weren't being filled in Region 5 either. So there wasn't any outlook for any position that I might qualify for in Region 5, which is why I chose to apply for that position in Region 4. But anyway, I was looking forward to that position, particularly to the lands component of it. It was heavy recreation, and probably heavy winter recreation, which is not my forte either, so in many ways I'm just as glad I didn't ever go out there. And also it's a difficult environment for a woman to be successful in. So for those reasons I'm just as glad I didn't go ultimately. But nonetheless, I've never seen the Forest Service do anything like that before, offer a position and then take it back, rescind it or just put it on hold like that, and I was very unhappy with the way that was handled. So that essentially occupied my attention and thinking from January '93 to January '94, one element of it. I'd applied in January '93, I was offered a job as I said I think in May, and things kept not happening. The chief or the secretary was doing some re-looking at reorganizing the department during that summer also, that summer of '93, and we expected some announcements and some decisions at around Labor Day or early September. And I thought, well, maybe there would be a lifting of this freeze, is what it was called, on filling positions. But there wasn't. Things kept going on without being decided. In the meantime the chief...

REINIER: This is Jack Ward Thomas?

BERGEN: Well, I'm trying to think. When did Dale actually leave? I think Dale made the initial decision. So that must have been early '93 too if he left on that date.

REINIER: Jack Ward Thomas came in in ‘93.

BERGEN: Yeah, in ‘93 at some point, but you know, I don’t know the month.

REINIER: I don’t have the month. [Jack Ward Thomas was appointed Chief of the Forest Service on December 1, 1993].

BERGEN: I don’t either in my mind. Let me just say that I thought Dale made the decision, so it may have been made in early ‘93. But a decision was made to move the environmental coordination staff from programs and legislation and combine it with land management planning; this is in the National Forest System. This was something that my boss, Dave Ketcham, programs and legislation deputy chief, worked hard to prevent or avoid because our feeling was that NEPA applies to all the programs in the Forest Service, which includes research and state and private forestry. Therefore, environmental coordination does not belong in the staff of National Forest System; it has to relate to all the programs of the Forest Service. I don’t know what input or what reason the chief had for making that decision, but he did, and when Jack Ward Thomas came in he did not rescind the decision. So environmental coordination was directed to work with land management planning on a study, administrative study, as to how we would effectuate this reorganization, and that then was to go to the department for approval. So essentially, in my mind, in any rate, this decision was made without benefit of asking the affected people, looking at the program effects. To my mind, it was made out of the blue. I don’t know what the background for it was. And we were essentially asked to justify it and provide for how it would be done after the decision was made rather than looking at how it could be done before the decision was made.

First, we had to have meetings of our limited staff in environmental coordination. Also about this time, because of cutbacks, one of our principal staff people who did external work was selected for another position; that position was not filled. Another one was told his position couldn’t be funded and we had him on detail [to another staff]. He was trying to get into other areas anyway, and we had him on extended details to other staffs because we didn’t have funds for his position. Ultimately, he did manage to get a position in the Southeast someplace that fit him better anyway. So we were down two staff and then a third left, so we came ultimately during this year, ‘93 year, we ended up down three staff . Then Dave Ketcham retired in February of ‘94, so we were down four of our eight professionals, and I was acting staff director. So we were enmeshed in an administrative study; I had to work with land management planning. In the beginning all of us who were there participated in developing some of the background that was needed for this study, but as time went on, I became the contact. We had less and less people, and we had other responsibilities. I was the contact person. I began attending staff meetings in both programs and legislation and in the National Forest System. This combination hadn’t been effected yet, but the two staffs had to start working together, looking at what our space would be, there were all kinds of things to consider.

[End Tape 7, Side A]

[Begin Tape 7, Side B]

BERGEN: In January of '93 when we had this management team meeting that I mentioned, I think I had the opportunity to sit down and meet with [Robert C.] Bob Joslin who was the deputy regional forester in Region 4 that I knew the best and whom I would have been working for if I'd taken this position, and had some discussion with him about it. I don't believe I got a turn down really at that time, everything was still probably in advance, but it was obviously not an enthusiastic, we're working really hard to try to get you, kind of a response. And also about this time I went to Social Security [laughing] and applied to start receiving my Social Security in May of '94. I picked the right month. It didn't matter to Social Security whether I picked the right month or not because it could be corrected at the end of the year, but I said, "I think I'll be retiring in May of '94." I could have waited until the following fall and I would have had another year in with the Forest Service. Then along about the first of April a buy-out was announced whereby people could retire early or regular optional retirement and get a $25,000 payment because of the cutbacks. They were trying to encourage retirements and I decided to take advantage of that and I retired as of May 3rd [laughter] of '94!

But particularly after my boss, Dave Ketcham, had retired, the stress had gotten to me all that fall also, when we were working on the reorganization. We were progressively losing our own staff people, so at the very end, after he retired, maybe there were only three of us professionals. I was working with two different staffs and it was just impossible to do the work. Oh no, there were four because we had the lady who did the social impact analysis, but she couldn't do the full range of functions in the staff, but the other people could. We still had four of our eight people counting me, but it was not anywheres near enough to handle the workload. And then they selected the very top person, the person that really knew NEPA the best, to go to another staff. But after all this fell apart, after I retired, they realized they didn't have enough feedback, so they brought him back. So he still does the NEPA work in what used to be the land management planning staff; it's now called ecosystem management and coordination or something like that, and he does the work. But anyway, to me it was partly caused by this re-invention in government approach, and partly caused by the cutbacks and money, and partly caused by goodness only knows what reason for that decision. So all of those added to the stress.

REINIER: Do you want to make any comments about Jack Ward Thomas as chief?

BERGEN: My comments are limited because I had limited ability to work with him directly. When he held employee meetings and addressed us, I always felt like he either had made very little preparation or he just didn't know what to talk about and how to talk to employees. They did not have a great deal of content as far as I was concerned. He may have felt just calling the meeting and being there was what we wanted, I don't know.

[Material here has been omitted by Geri Bergen].

BERGEN: So anyway, I just didn't relate enough to Jack Ward Thomas. I did get a certificate of merit after I retired!

REINIER: Yes, you got three of them as we mentioned!

BERGEN: And that was for work on another team that was also dealing with endangered species. In this case, the effort was being called PACFISH and it related to the salmon stock on the west coast here. I can't really remember the details. And it amused me to get the certificate and the check a year after I retired. It amused me to get it at all because at the time I was working on it our role was essentially trying to tell people you need environmental impact statements, and they were trying to put in some policy into effect without environmental impact statements. It didn't just go on in the 1970's, it just continued to go on, where people wanted to do environmental analyses instead of environmental impact statements, or they didn't want to do them at all. They didn't recognize the need for them; we ought to be able to make these decisions. It's a policy decision, you know; it still has an environmental effect. So anyway, that was the continuing process of education with people, trying to get them to see when they need to really analyze the actions they were taking and the effects of those actions.

REINIER: And you're talking about this in the 1990's.

BERGEN: Yes, I'm talking about this now in the 1990's. But at any rate I did get an award for that. To back up a little to talk about the role of women and minorities in the Washington office. First, just an observation, because remember we're in a place now that was not affected by the consent decree. This is sort of an effect of the particular location, but because the staff in the Washington office were primarily upper level staff that were brought in because of their knowledge and experience to lead programs, the staff was primarily white male. And at the time I went in there, chief and staff were almost 100 percent white male although there had been a woman in administration, I think. There had been some representation of women. But the clerical support staff, because we were in Washington D.C., was primarily black. So first you had this class distinction that was there even though you tried to make it be not there and you tried to help. For example, our environmental technician was a black lady, and you tried to help her think like a valued member of the staff with certain environmental coordination skills. But it just was very difficult to overcome this perceived gap, partly on her part; it wasn't on our part. And you did have black women that rose up to relatively good positions but primarily as secretaries. There was that gap. So at some point the chief and staff did decide--I think they felt they were doing the right thing--but they decided apparently that they needed to be more accessible to women and minorities. They needed to include women and minorities in their staff deliberations, but what they did was essentially set up

a shadow cabinet at first. They asked applicants who were willing to sort of serve with the chief and staff or work with the chief and staff to attend meetings. So they set up this group that had Native Americans, blacks, other women, a cross section of representation, a few people that were in professional or semi-professional positions. One man, a Native American, had been a forest supervisor. There was a black in there for awhile who had been a forest supervisor. Women with various different kinds of backgrounds. So this shadow staff essentially attended staff meetings, I presume had a voice in them. Got assignments, so they had extra work to do in addition to their own jobs. They had assignments to either research things and write papers or prepare speeches or to go out and actually give presentations representing chief and staff. But what I didn't see at all was that the policies and the decisions that were coming out of chief and staff in any way reflected other values or approaches. To me, it was giving lip service to the idea of minority representation, not an effort to really incorporate a change in values. It was very definitely a male institution with male mores.

And then as time went on, and this goes on now to times after I retired, they started to work really hard at promoting minorities, women and minorities, and this turned out from what I've visually seen and know of to be in many cases, black women. There were black women who were foresters or who were other similar backgrounds that were available to be reassigned and promoted. And so what they started to do was to make these women more mobile, put them into different positions. It was very obvious that they were grooming them for promotion. But that didn't necessarily mean to me from what I've seen that they were building in all the skills and the abilities and experiences that were needed to really be effective in the upper positions to which many of these people have been promoted now. So yeah, they've changed the look of the Washington office. From my point of view, they hadn't at the time I was there at all institutionalized a change in attitude. And I don't think they did at least for a long time since. Now, I can't speak to the last year or two, but up until then I would say that. I can a little bit because I go to meetings and things; I really think that they haven't gotten the point yet.

REINIER: Your experience before that was Region 5. Was it different in Region 5?

BERGEN: Oh, I think so, yes. Not when I started working in Region 5, no, but I think that the women and minorities approaches are very much valued. Region 5 is always seen as a step-child by the Washington office and the rest of the Forest Service. Seen as being different. It is different. Because it's out there in the forefront. It's in California and California's in the forefront of change in the nation and the region has been able to be responsive to that change, fortunately. But the Washington office doesn't think we should be because we're out of step. We're always seen as being out of step with the Washington office. I could see that when I was back there. Here I am, trying to help people see ahead and I'm just being seen as a troublemaker from Region 5, I think. So yeah, I think that Region 5, really, has really worked at bringing in...

[Interruption]

BERGEN: Region 5 has really worked at trying to bring in the viewpoints of women and minorities into management considerations. I think women and minorities are part of the management structure without anybody giving it a second thought, other than that obviously we're still working at hiring, promoting at the lower levels, bringing people into the institution. There are many men out there, for example, who are very supportive of the women in their careers. Even though there's some experience of backlash, there are also many men that are very supportive. I think that the atmosphere is very open.

REINIER: I was fascinated when you said the viewpoints of women and minorities. How are the viewpoints of women and minorities different?

BERGEN: Well, the life experiences are different for one thing. From different life experiences you would bring in different viewpoints. This is a generality of course, but women typically tend to go about solving problems in a different way than men do. So that by bringing in people with these different backgrounds and different approaches to life, you bring in other viewpoints and they help in finding ways through facts to decisions.

REINIER: We spoke just a little bit earlier today about the Forest Service as having been kind of a para-military organization. Do you think that women have significantly changed the Forest Service in Region 5?

BERGEN: I think the Forest Service has significantly changed, but I don't believe it's just because of women. I think another change is because of the bringing in of different values from hiring a wider range of professionals and more professionals, and bringing in people also at higher levels that don't have the Forest Service experience of that. There has to be gradual change. There has to have been, even though I'm not here working in it and I can't say that I see it, but there has to have been gradual change in the organization.

REINIER: And another question I've had. Do you think that by the time you retired, did women reach a critical mass in the sense that it wasn't so innovative anymore to be a woman but women were just more an integral part of the agency?

BERGEN: There certainly are a lot more women, for example, in field positions, which is really where the work gets done. I don't know whether that would be completely true in every location, every region or every forest or every ranger district, but I think it would be true in large areas. One of the things that has interested me, which I see at national SAF meetings, for example, is the degree to which women have become part of the forest industry in the Southeast--women foresters--they seem to have been brought in without problems.

REINIER: In the Southeast.

BERGEN: In the Southeast, which is where there's a lot of timber, privately-owned timber lands, and a lot of, therefore, private forestry, and I do see that women have made inroads in that area. Now whether it meets your term "critical mass" in any of these places, I don't know. But yeah, I see that.

REINIER: You were mentioning just now the Society of American Foresters, and you continued to be very active in that organization in the 1990's. We haven't really talked about that.

BERGEN: Let's see. What did I do in the 1990's?.

REINIER: You were a member of the national program committee again.

BERGEN: Yeah, I was asked to do that one year.

REINIER: And then did we talk about your election to the council sufficiently? We talked about that a little bit.

BERGEN: We did talk about it and you asked me what the council does, you know, and I explained that basically. I didn't finish out that term, which I would have liked to have been able to. I considered running again recently but decided against it because it is a three-year commitment and I don't want to take it on again and not complete it. I might want to make some changes in my life at some point and I'm not getting any younger anyway. There's so many different things to do that I decided against it at any rate.

REINIER: Should we say more about the role of the SAF in your career? It certainly seems to me that it's been helpful to your career that you have been so active in the Society of American Foresters.

BERGEN: I certainly think it's been helpful to me in my career and I advise young foresters to become active in SAF, or young professionals to become active in their professional societies. I've advised a lot of people that way; it doesn't mean they've taken my advice, but it is my advice. I think the contacts are very worthwhile so whenever I have the chance to, I do give that advice. Particularly, when I was still in San Francisco the school of forestry at Berkeley would refer students who wanted some career advice to come see me. Most were women, but some were men, which I appreciated. And my advice usually, besides the professional society, particularly for the women when it was still difficult for women to be accepted, was to try to qualify themselves in a couple of areas if they had interest in a couple of areas rather than just one. My interest in land use planning went along with my interest in forestry and helped me at a certain point in my career. And so perhaps they might have a strong interest in both forestry and wildlife or some other aspect. Sociology and forestry, all of these things can work together at some particular job at some particular time and make them the most desirable candidate. So that's always been advice, make yourself broadly qualified in more than one area if you can.

REINIER: We should say before we go on to talking more generally about women in the Forest Service, how have you kept yourself busy since your retirement? I know that you're active in the Nevada [County] Land Trust, for example.

BERGEN: Yeah, I've maintained my membership in the Business and Professional Women, specifically the local group is the Northern Mines Business and Professional Women, part of the California Federation of Business and Professional Women's clubs. Right now this year I'm both by-laws chair and finance chair for our local organization. I have rejoined Soroptimists International in Nevada City, but that is for me more keeping contact with friends; I don't do a great deal with that. And I have been active with SAF. I ran for secretary; I was elected secretary one year. I think I also ran for vice chair and didn't get elected, which I felt was just as good because Northern California SAF is a very busy organization, and there's a lot to be done and it would have kept me very busy. I did edit the newsletter for a year. I have not taken on any responsibilities recently with SAF.

The organization I'm giving most of my time to is the Nevada County Land Trust, which was started in 1991, the year after I left here, and its purpose is to acquire and maintain trails, parks and open space through voluntary donations primarily of conservation easements, trail easements and conservation easements by the land owners. And to date the land trust has about 2500 acres in western Nevada County, primarily under conservation easement. I've done a number of things for the board, with the officers, but specifically I am the project team leader for a small area that will be a park that a lady donated to us in fee title, the Burton Homestead essentially. It's only a mile and a half from Nevada City and it will be a thirty-nine acre park. And the second one I've just taken on is the trail project along the Banner Cascade Ditch. We will be trying to acquire trail easements from landowners along about a four and a half mile section of this old, mining ditch that was used to bring water down for various purposes.

REINIER: And that's right here in your neighborhood.

BERGEN: Yes, it is, which is why I volunteered to take on the project.

REINIER: Maybe we can talk a little bit more generally for a little while. You certainly have had a successful career in the Forest Service. Have you felt discriminated against, however, as a woman?

BERGEN: No. I have never felt discriminated against. People may try to discriminate against me occasionally, and I don't let that happen. But no, I don't feel like I've been discriminated against.

REINIER: This I think is interesting in your case because you're a forester, and as a forester with a Berkeley education, the way I see that, that puts you in a club as a woman.

That certainly gives you an in in Forest Service culture, would you agree with that? Maybe I should ask you, has it been helpful to you to be a forester?

BERGEN: Certainly, as I wanted to work for the Forest Service, it's been helpful for me to be a forester, yes.

REINIER: That's what I meant.

BERGEN: Yes. You know...

REINIER: Rather than another professional, I guess.

BERGEN: Rather than another professional. Yes. That's a hard question to answer because I think in the back of my mind I wanted to work for the Forest Service all along when I entered forestry even though I didn't necessarily have that in my mind. I wanted to work in the field. I don't know that I actually said to myself, "I want to work for the Forest Service" rather than for some other potential employer. I don't know that I said that consciously. But when I look at various decisions that I made along the way and the early impressions that I had going back to my first cross country trip and my experiences camping in the Northwest, I think that that's really what I wanted to do. So I wouldn't have taken any other route that I know of. I certainly hadn't thought of other professions such as archaeology or wildlife or geology; any of those, for example, weren't ones that I really considered, or thought about at the time that I decided to study forestry. Forestry had aspects of all of those in them, and in fact at that time the Forest Service hired primarily foresters and had them doing a full range of jobs. They even used foresters as personnelists at that time. Foresters moved from one job to another job within the agency and did this full range of work. It was only later that the Forest Service started to hire more other professionals at a certain time. And so the Forest Service evolved too. So at the time that I wanted to do it, forestry was the way to go.

REINIER: But even though you were a forester, do you feel that as a woman that you've been excluded from informal networking systems?

BERGEN: Somewhat. Somewhat. But that's partly I think due to my own background and upbringing and hesitancy and shyness. I'm not an extrovert and I'm still often not comfortable initiating friendships. I don't feel like I've been excluded by other people specifically. I'm just often not seen as being a warm, open person. I am a warm, open person, but I'm often not seen that way. So I wouldn't say that I've been excluded by other people other than that. The times and my background and the times and place led to whatever the situation is.

REINIER: Did you learn, however, to be one of the boys?

BERGEN: To a certain extent, yeah.

REINIER: We talked about that a little bit when you were at summer camp.

BERGEN: Yeah. At summer camp and business trips you pay your own share, go along with the group. Maybe I didn't want to eat Mexican food but okay, I'll eat Mexican food. I don't say that; it's in my head. To be one of the group you have to go along with the group.

REINIER: You've always been such a superior student. And you've worked very hard in your positions. Do you think that women have to work harder to show that they can do the job?

BERGEN: I think that's been the case. I don't know to what extent it's still the case, but because when there are a few women, mistakes by one show up. When you're low in numbers, any error or mistake, misjudgment, misbehavior on some people's part, is very obvious, and it detracts from the way other women are seen. And women are very much aware of this as a whole.

REINIER: Do women have their own networking system?

BERGEN: We have had. I don't [know] whether it's still continuing. We used to have periodic women line officers retreats here in the region.

REINIER: Tell me a little bit about those.

BERGEN: Oh, they're very informal. There weren't very many women line officers then yet. Some of us probably took leave to go on them and others were able to justify in their own minds or with their bosses that this was a legitimate business meeting. We invited Paul Barker to join us once or twice, and so obviously if he could do it we could; that was obviously official time. We were authorized at later times to do it on official time and expense; it was just initially the first time or two we weren't sure. We had people who worked in the counseling area more or less, one way or another in the regional office, who helped put these together for us and helped plan. We had various people who would take responsibility for getting a location and planning informal agenda.

REINIER: Have you worked to secure positions for other women? We talked about Mary Coulombe and your activity to help her become a forest supervisor.

BERGEN: Well, certainly as a forest supervisor myself, I was very active in recruiting and selecting women for positions on the Tahoe. I'm trying to think of specific examples. I feel I have worked to help secure positions for other women, but I'm trying hard to come up with examples. I can't give you a specific example, but I've been supportive, I'll put it that way, I know I've been supportive over the years in a number of different ways.

REINIER: And you've participated in a number of meetings.

[End Tape 7, Side B]

[Begin Tape 8, Side A]

REINIER: Geri, at the end of the last tape we were talking about meetings that you had participated in, helping to advise and support women in the Forest Service.

BERGEN: There was a variety of different kinds of meetings that I participated in, just to back up a little bit. In 1975 when I was on detail to the Washington office a good part of the year, I went over and visited with the staff at the national Society of American Foresters headquarters office which was in downtown D.C., and at that time Don Theoe was their director of professional programs. At that time there were, like, nineteen women members of the society out of nineteen hundred if I remember the number at all right. I attended the national convention that year which was the seventy-fifth anniversary of the society and was held in Washington D.C. Don and I got the idea--there were just a few women attending it--we got the idea that there should be a meeting of the women foresters who were attending this national meeting. Don had working for him that year a student intern in forestry, Kate Hutcherson, and Kate and I put together what we called the Women's Forum. Don managed to secure a room for us in which we would have the meeting, and we put up informal signs. We had perhaps ten women come; two worked for the Forest Service, one in Montana, Region 1, one in Alaska, Region 10. A number were students looking for positions. One or two were forestry consultants or worked with their husbands as forestry consultants in the Southeast. I don't remember whether we had a women in research or not; we may have had a woman researcher. But that was essentially the extent of women in forestry at that time, in 1975. The Region 10, Region 1 women were field foresters. I've forgotten the Region 10; the Region 1 worked in timber management between two national forests. We just had informal discussions. But both of them were expressing some bitterness at the way they had been treated by the Forest Service, which I found interesting. But at any rate that was the first women's forum we held at an SAF convention. Not immediately after that, but after that partly through the assistance of the group that was putting out the *Women in Forestry* magazine, we started to have a breakfast or a reception for women in natural resources at the meeting. That has since then become a cultural diversity breakfast. But it really helped in helping women to get acquainted with each other, meet each other at the conventions and do some informal networking.

Other meetings that I've done, other kinds of meetings during the course of my career, for example, I've been active in the California Alumni Foresters, and a few times I was able to go visit with the students, particularly while I was still in San Francisco. So I would visit with women students when I was asked to. I was asked to go to the University of Minnesota to visit with their women students when women were just

starting to enter forestry school and they didn't have any role models. So I've done that two or three places. So some of the women, some of the younger women in forestry, know me or I know them from having gone back say to UC Berkeley and met with them, encouraged the students and shared experiences. Then at various times Region 5 has had meetings primarily to help the women come to grips with the kinds of problems they might be facing, and I've attended some of those. And then we've had some networking for women line officers in the region. We had the SAF sponsored conference for women in natural resource professionals in Dallas in 1985.

REINIER: And you spoke there, didn't you?

BERGEN: I spoke there.

REINIER: Do you remember what you talked about?

BERGEN: I'd have to go back and read my paper, which I have it. No, I don't remember what I talked about. We had Women's Equality Day. I think the Department of Agriculture sponsored that in 1983 in Washington D.C., and I went back and spoke at that. That's an idea of the kinds of meetings over the years which I've tried to help support.

REINIER: So do you think you've been a role model for other women? Sounds like you have.

BERGEN: I think so. I think there are a number of women who consider that I have been, yes.

REINIER: Has anybody been a role model for you?

BERGEN: I don't know of any women role models, no. I think that there have been a number of men that have either been mentors or at least supporters whose principles and behavior and actions are ones that I can emulate.

REINIER: Do you want to talk about anybody specifically?

BERGEN: Well, the two people that come to mind the most, I learned a great deal from Bob Lancaster who was the forest supervisor here [Tahoe National Forest]. A great deal. And I really feel I could not have done the forest supervisor job adequately without many of the things I learned from him. And then the overall role model, I think, that a person would like to be like and can't possibly hope to be like is Doug Leisz. He's very well thought of and has been tremendous support. He always comes up with a great thought process in solving any kind of a problem, and it's an honor to have been associated with him at all.

REINIER: You have had a lot of support, and earlier you were talking about how you thought the Forest Service was an agency particularly well-suited to your personality.

BERGEN: I think that I needed that kind of support. I needed to be able to have close working relationships. I also needed feedback, as I think I mentioned early on, and working within an organization is a lot different than working alone. Some people are self-motivated, and as I said, I found when I was trying to go into research, that that did not work for me. I worked better as part of a group, even though sometimes it's difficult for me, but that group support is there when you need it when you're in an organization like the Forest Service. People do pull together and help each other which is great.

REINIER: Has it been easier for women to advance in the Forest Service than it has been for minorities? Have men in the Forest Service been more accepting of a female coworker than a minority coworker?

BERGEN: My initial reaction to that question is that there have been more women in forestry earlier than there were minorities. Women are more visible now also just because there are more women in forestry; that became the first group. Minorities were slower to enter forestry. There are certainly more of them now. I don't think it's at all difficult in Region 5 for minorities in forestry, and I can't speak for the other areas of the country. But again, I do think there are differences in approach and viewpoint in Region 5.

REINIER: Yeah, as you mentioned.

BERGEN: Yeah. There might be minorities [who] would disagree with me, but my own personal feeling is that people's ethnic backgrounds are not paid attention to by the majority of people that work for the Forest Service in Region 5.

REINIER: We talked a little bit about the consent decree in Region 5 as something special about Region 5. Can we talk a little bit more about that now? What is your assessment of the effect of the consent decree? We talked about that when you were forest supervisor.

BERGEN: I have not talked in detail to employees/friends since I came back that were here during it and when it ended. Certainly it's left a legacy of more women in professional positions. Whether it's had a lasting effect on attitudes and so on, I'm not sure.

REINIER: Do you want to say anything more about it?

BERGEN: At the moment I don't think I have anything more I can say about it.

REINIER: Okay.

BERGEN: I think there was a great feeling of relief when it went away. But I wasn't here really at the time that that actually happened.
REINIER: In 1991.

BERGEN: Yeah.

REINIER: Yeah. We were talking about Forest Service culture which fascinates me. We've talked about this a little bit when we talked about you as a forester, but I think we should talk about it a little bit more. For example, you told me earlier a fascinating anecdote about just an issue like uniforms.

BERGEN: Um! Oh, I did mention to you that when I first went to work for the Forest Service when I was in Women's Activities/Conservation programs, I had what was then the women's uniform which was really a very nicely-tailored wool suit. But there were no uniforms for women with slacks or pants at that time, even for women who were in the visitor information programs. And it may be that the first field uniforms were about 1978. There may have been earlier ones, I'm not sure, but I know in 1978 when I came out to the Tahoe, the uniform was being re-designed, and so I didn't get a uniform until the new uniforms came out. The first uniform that came out was the field uniform, and it had not been designed for women. It had slacks, fine; the slacks were men's slacks as far as I was concerned, maybe just reproportioned for women. There were probably no women on the uniform committee, and nobody had given any thought to the fact that women's clothes and men's clothes aren't designed alike. I actually felt angry. I felt, I'm a forester, but I'm not a man and I don't need to dress like a man. Once I calmed down, I did share some opinions with somebody on the uniform committee, and the next go-around of uniforms was much improved as far as comfort and usability was concerned.

REINIER: And then you said that women wore white blouses or white turtlenecks on the Tahoe.

BERGEN: We chose to interpret the uniform policy liberally. The policy didn't say men specifically, but it said "shirts." It said that white shirts could be worn with the dress uniform, white shirts and the Forest Service tie rather than the green uniform shirt. So we women said, "Okay, if men can wear white shirts, we can wear white blouses." And we did wear white blouses of various kinds and also turtlenecks in the winter time. I still do.

REINIER: Are there any other comments you have to make about Forest Service culture and being a very early woman employee. For example, I was struck in reading about summer camp, all the legends and lore of summer camp, how unusual it was for you to be there as the second woman to attend summer camp.

BERGEN: Ah! I'll have to go back and read that myself. There were customs that had grown up there that were intended I think to build up group cohesiveness, and one of

them was an annual day or day and a half of athletic endeavor and competition. I was never athletic, so I didn't even want to play volleyball much. I don't have a lot of upper body strength. I never handled the chain saw as part of my work duties even though cutting firewood was one of the work duties; I did something else instead because I don't think it would have been safe. And part of this competition and cohesiveness building included sawing contests and contests with axes and so on. So my whole role there was watching, and I felt the whole thing was useless! [Laughing] So that was a place where my values differed from the values that had been held and used. I don't know whether that competition still goes on. If it does, it's probably on a voluntary basis. Students from various forestry schools get together once a year in what's called the Forestry Conclave and hold some of these competitions, and I know some women competed. That's fine for an individual to choose to, but I didn't think everybody in the group should have to be forced to do that, myself!

REINIER: I remember years ago when I was looking for a job in history, one of my male colleagues turned and to me and he said, "Jackie, you just don't know the rules." And I was so interested in that. Were there rules that you didn't know either because you were a woman?

BERGEN: Probably. Probably. I recently glanced through and wished I'd reread earlier the book, "Games Your Mother Never Taught You," if you know that book.

REINIER: Yeah.

BERGEN: And there are in there a lot of rules supposedly that corporations hold, but they're in the Forest Service too. Yes. So yes, there were rules that a girl doesn't learn and a boy might, yes, definitely.

REINIER: Do you remember what any of those were?

BERGEN: No, not offhand. I just wished I'd reread the book when I went to the Washington office; it would have helped me!

[Laughter]

REINIER: It's interesting, after your long career you still found the Washington office pretty sticky.

BERGEN: Yes. Yes I did. It was behind California, as I was saying, it really was.

REINIER: It's very interesting. What about sexual harassment in the Forest Service? Have you had any experience with that either personally or as a supervisor?

BERGEN: I don't even think the term "sexual harassment" had been devised yet when I first started with the Forest Service, and what overtures were around, I was able to handle easily and I expected to handle them myself. I certainly never felt any sexual harassment. There was never any pressure. There might have been overtures, but there was never any pressure. If I could handle it with humor, that's fine. But I remember saying to one woman, one way of handling it is to say--you don't want to put the man down, either--say "Thank you, but no thanks" in one form or another if you can, or handle it with humor, one of those two ways. I never felt harassment and I never saw it operate, but I'm sure it did operate. While I was on the Tahoe you'd hear little things now and then and you'd say, "I don't want this to happen on my forest. I don't want this to happen in the fire crews" or wherever it might be happening. "But why doesn't somebody come forward and tell us what's going on?" Nobody would; we didn't have complaints. There were one or two finally that were looked into and handled, but there was probably more sexual harassment going on than was reported for some reason. There were some things that had to be done like not having girly calendars in the work rooms, shop areas, and things like that. Occasionally we'd have something like that, but there wasn't any major blow up about sexual harassment that I was aware of. No. That doesn't mean it didn't happen, but it's very hard to get people to come forward, I think, and to stand up and speak to it.

REINIER: You were married throughout most of your Forest Service career to Don Larson, and was that protective of you, that you were a married woman? I noticed that they referred to you in those early years as Mrs. Donald Larson.

BERGEN: Uh huh. The Forest Service did too? Or just the articles in the paper?

REINIER: Articles in the paper did. But then even some Forest Service things referred to you as Mrs. Larson.

BERGEN: Mrs. Geraldine Larson.

REINIER: Mrs. Geraldine Larson was your name, yeah.

BERGEN: I don't know that a Mrs. in front of a name is any particular protection for a woman.

REINIER: But is a Forest Service career hard on a marriage?

BERGEN: It could be. Could be. My jobs always involved a lot of travel from the very first one. That was the hardest for my husband, particularly with children there. He had the full responsibility while I was gone; I had a little vacation. But he didn't really complain about it. Things worked out all right. So I think that that way it is. And of course when I moved up here and he had just started his business down in San Leandro, we were separated during the week. He didn't care for that too much. He accepted it, but

he didn't care for it. The evenings were lonely, but we managed. We survived through it.

REINIER: And it sounds like he was a good sounding board for you through the years.

BERGEN: Our careers developed together very well. We were helpful to each other, yes. He went up in management from night shift foreman in the composing room to composing room foreman at a commercial printing company, to production manager, vice president, to president. And then he formed his own company of which he was president. So that there were a lot of things to discuss along the way. Meanwhile, I was growing in my career and professionally. And just a great deal of problems and good things. But there was a great deal to share and to discuss. Yes, we were sounding boards for each other, and that was very helpful, and the fact that our careers were growing essentially similarly.

One thing that was sort of amusing looking back on it. When he was production manager at the printing company, which ran at least two shifts--I don't know if it ran three, but it would run two shifts--things could be very hectic at times, as you could imagine, getting all the jobs running at the right time, coming off at the right time, arranging for shipping and so on. And so after he had left his second company and come up to live with me up here, up in Nevada City, we had the unfortunate situation of the avalanche at Alpine Meadows ski resort in which one woman ultimately was rescued after having been buried a couple of days. We had that tremendous snowfall just before Palm Sunday weekend. Bob Lancaster, the forest supervisor was up on that part of the forest. The morning after the heavy snowfall the electricity was out at the supervisor's office, was out at our house, was out in most of the foothills. None of our ranger stations except for some reason Truckee had electricity. None of our other ranger stations had electricity, which meant that the phone systems didn't work either unless you had one direct line in. I was at home in a cold house. We had a wood stove. And since I was the deputy and I was here and Bob Lancaster was not, I was getting phone calls at home. My husband was trying to make us a pot of coffee on the wood stove. I was trying to get into the shower so I could get dressed, but the phone calls were coming so thick and fast I couldn't even do that. Because I had people down at the office calling and telling me what the situation at the office was, and I had people in touch with what was going on in Truckee and so on. And so finally, finally I got into the shower, got dressed, got a cup of coffee, and I got down to the office about 11:00 a.m. I'd been working all morning as far I was concerned. I'm sure I'd been in touch with the regional office before that, but I called the regional forester and told him I'm at this phone number now if you need to get in touch with me. And I got chided by the regional forester for not getting to work earlier! It was just hilarious to me.

REINIER: Oh!!!!!

BERGEN: But at home, what I was starting to say was, at home when Don was trying to make the coffee for me and we were fielding these phone calls and I was trying to get into the shower, he said, "This is exciting!" This is like his work used to be and he was enjoying it!

REINIER: I was going to ask you if he enjoyed it.

BERGEN: He enjoyed it! Yeah, because I was involved in all this stuff that was going on like he would be when he was production manager.

REINIER: Yes! Uh huh. Well, I imagine he was proud of your accomplishments.

BERGEN: Oh, oh yes, certainly he was. Yeah.

REINIER: Now after 1964 you had the children and we really didn't talk about what arrangements you had to make to combine your children with your career.

BERGEN: Yeah, at first there I was working part-time, but when I received the offer to work in the regional office as public information specialist, I felt that was too good to refuse. So then the question was how did I balance home and office. Let's see, in 1967 my son was fifteen, so my two daughters were a couple of years younger.

REINIER: That's an age where kids can get into a lot of trouble though! [Laughter]

BERGEN: They did! At times. Actually, I wanted somebody to be there after school and that didn't work out. But I did feel I needed help at home, and I never liked to clean house myself anyway, and I still don't. So I decided to try to find a half-time house-keeper. I felt with our two incomes we could do that. It took--probably it took about six months before I found somebody that I was satisfied with and that would stay, and I did find a lady that was a widow who had never worked before and lived close enough to take a bus to our house, who would come in for half a day every day five days a week. And so that was a great help to us all because the beds got made, the laundry got done, and the house got cleaned, and a couple of days a week I would ask her to start meals that I could then heat up when I got home from work. And then I had the kids cook meals a couple of days a week too. And I was able to keep a pretty regular schedule when I worked in the regional office. Then I was usually home from work by 5:15 and we could eat at 6:15 or 6:30 every night. So that worked. That worked out pretty well. The children had some free time on their hands after school, but it worked out okay. It was a lot of help.

REINIER: But you had to do that in order to combine everything.

BERGEN: Yeah. It helped us all survive, I think.

REINIER: Was the agency helpful to you in any way in combining children with your career?

BERGEN: At that time there weren't a lot of specific arrangements. If I needed to meet with a school counselor, for example, or take a child to the doctor or whatever, I had to use some of my annual leave. Yeah, I'd have to use annual leave to do that. Later in my career we had flex time, but my children were long since grown. And it helped me in Washington too. Flex-time was a great help with families and with personal needs. When I was supervisor we did our best to make accommodations to help people, to help employees, when they needed it. For example, one of the women foresters that I may have mentioned her to you earlier, her husband was a forester on [another forest] and she was a forester [on the Tahoe]. When they had a child, they didn't want to leave the child with a babysitter any longer than they needed to. They each arranged to work [only] four days a week; I was okay with that. At that time we didn't have flex-time, so they were just working four days a week and they were taking a reduction in pay. One took Friday off, one took Monday off, and they only needed to have a babysitter three days a week for their child. And I was okay with that.

We had another case where we initiated job sharing for a couple that both had computer programming skills. Actually, it worked out well for us as well as for them because their skills were not identical. Their backgrounds and experience and training were not identical, but they were computer programmers. They worked on our land management planning when we were doing our initial land management planning. They did job sharing and their initial objective was just to share; they worked a total of forty hours a week between the two of them. We managed the jobs so we did that. Well, it turned out that it was beneficial to us because since their skills were slightly different there were times when we needed more of one than the other. We had two people that together could work more than forty hours a week, which we could pay for at the time we were doing the land management plan. It was more like having two part-time people in a way than job sharing, but it was set up as a job sharing position. They ultimately moved to the Region 6 regional office with a similar job sharing arrangement, as I understand it. So we did some innovative things from time to time to help people.

REINIER: Yes, it seems to me that as a forest supervisor that you did change the agency in a lot of the things that you did. In your long and very successful career, is there anything that you would have done differently?

BERGEN: Oooh... Would I have done differently... As I mentioned, I should have probably gotten a little more advice before I went to the Washington office in 1990, but that actually worked out very well for me financially because I worked four years longer. I might have retired sooner if I hadn't gone to Washington. And I had a promotion, so I was working at a higher salary level. So I have a higher retirement income now because of that. What else might I have done differently? Only some very minor things. I think it all worked out very well.

REINIER: What do you think your greatest triumphs have been? What are you proudest of?

BERGEN: Well, I guess I'm proudest of the direction that I set on the Tahoe National Forest.

REINIER: What's been your greatest disappointment?

[End Tape 8, Side A]

[Begin Tape 8, Side B]

BERGEN: I'm going to back up a little bit. If anything I would have done differently it would have been good to have gotten out in the field more while I was deputy and forest supervisor, more than I did. And it would have been really great if I'd kept more of a diary of what I did. Not necessarily detailed diary each day, but major things that happened each day. It would have been really nice to have that record and I didn't do that, so those are the things I wish I did that I didn't do. The disappointment, again, related to not having gotten out in the field more. I was looking forward to getting out and enjoying the Tahoe as a retiree when I moved back here, hiking and getting into parts of the forest, either getting back into parts of the forest that I really liked or getting into some parts that I never was able get into, didn't have the time to get into. And I have a back problem and it limits my ability to walk and I can't do it. That's my disappointment.

REINIER: Oh. Because you really do love to be in the forest.

BERGEN: Yes, and I love this forest.

REINIER: Yes. Now you've said some of this. But maybe we can think of more. What advice do you have for other women coming up in the Forest Service now? I'm really asking you this as a pioneer woman in the Forest Service.

BERGEN: Yes. What advice do I have? The situations are somewhat different.

[Interruption]

BERGEN: What I'm thinking is that the situation has changed in the Forest Service, and I don't know now to what extent the same old rules apply and to what extent they're different. Certainly there's been not a resurgence but an upswing of the numbers of professionals who are not foresters. The timber foresters have felt de-valued along the way here. There's been changes in direction and emphasis. I don't know how many women foresters with an idea of going, for example, into timber management even exist or are coming into the agency, so any advice I would give then would have been mainly

to women who were foresters and advice I would give now would have to be to women overall with varied resource backgrounds. And so, looking at it that way and looking at the fact that we know we're in a period of rapid change, I would have to say to get as much varied experience as possible and to learn to work well in a interdisciplinary mode. Because that's always been difficult. Whether one's a forester or one's another discipline, that's been difficult, but it's been perhaps more difficult for people that came in from other disciplines and didn't necessarily identify with what appeared to be the Forest Service's main objective, which appeared to many people to get out the timber cut. As far as I'm concerned, that's not the Forest Service's main objective and won't be in the future. But it's still part of the objective. People have to work together for a common goal, and so I think getting some sort of interdisciplinary team problem solving experience.

And then, of course, the standard things: making yourself visible, volunteering to be a part of teams, going on detail, all of that is good advice and we worked on that a lot. We were trying to help people get promoted on the forest, get them on to a detail someplace here, what experience do they need and how do we provide that experience. Get yourself a training plan. Make sure you have an assigned training plan and try to follow it. Because that justifies doing a lot of things that maybe people say, oh we can't afford to send you there now. But you get your boss to approve it ahead of time, this is what you need, and then you can do it when the opportunity arises. And it's amazing to me. A supervisor is supposed to make sure their employees all have training plans, and it's amazing to me how many times that doesn't happen. That's standard advice, but go on details, make yourself visible, be part of the teams, but get that interdisciplinary experience and get a variety of experience. Then you'll be ready for that opening when it comes up that you didn't expect because you don't know what's out there in the future.

REINIER: I was going to ask you what advice you had for men in the Forest Service, but what you just said also seems applicable to men.

BERGEN: Yes. There's really not anything any different there. We did our best to help a number of men get ahead too. There's even a picture of me with them in there. [Pointing to Forest Service materials]. We had one professional on the forest who by training was a logging engineer, and a very good logging engineer. He had been a logging engineer for the Sierra and the Sequoia National Forests. I forget whether we had a logging engineer or we needed those skills while he was on the Tahoe. It was probably when Bob Lancaster was supervisor, and I don't know the specific reason, but he was on the Tahoe. He also had good people skills and was interested in being a district ranger. When the district ranger on the Nevada City district left, we detailed John Henshaw as acting district ranger on the Nevada City district and he was there quite a while. That was a GS12 district ranger, and John was already a GS12, so it was just a straight detail. I hope I'm remembering the grades right. And he was well-liked because he had good people skills. The district ranger on the Nevada City district had been reassigned, John was brought in, he had good people skills, people wanted him to be selected to be the continuing district ranger.

I selected Ann Dow instead. That was during the consent decree. The regional forester needed to have women selected. I knew Ann; she was another UC Berkeley alumnus--alumna in this case--and I knew Ann and I felt that she could do the job. But specifically, although John had been doing the job, for example, for like six months or so and people had become used to him and his people skills, I felt he was capable of doing more than that job. And I did not select him. So for those combinations of reasons: I felt he was capable of doing more than that job, and that we needed to meet consent decree goals, and there was a very capable woman here ready to be district ranger, I selected Ann. And John was crushed; he was so disappointed. And believe it or not, two weeks later I got a phone call from the forest supervisor of the Olympic National Forest in Washington, who had been a Region 5 employee and whom I had worked with in Region 5 and knew. That was a GS13 district ranger job he had an opening for, and I guess John had applied for that. I was able to give John a glowing recommendation for exactly, as far as I was concerned, the needs that Ted had for that job. John fit and John got that job. Anyway, it proved that I was right in not selecting John for that GS12 ranger job because he got the 13 job. And so it made me feel good and it made John feel good too. So that one worked out.

And another thing that we did, and the next forest supervisor did, it took a long time, but Dick Markley, our archaeologist, had aspirations to be a district ranger. We made him available for a variety of details, and I can't think what when. I know quite recently he was acting district ranger on the Nevada City district. Finally, after all these years, he was selected as district ranger on a national forest in Idaho, but I think in this case it's taken ten years. We were actively putting him on details. Meanwhile, we enjoyed having him as forest archaeologist. Tom Efird, whose name is on here, is another person that I was supporting for a district ranger position. He was district silviculturalist and he was ultimately selected for district ranger. But we provided [opportunities for] the men as well as the women, is what I'm trying to say.

REINIER: Yeah.

BERGEN: With details or whatever the development experiences that we felt they needed that we had available and that we were able to do under the consent decree and so on. We continued to try to develop and place the men employees as well as the women; it wasn't just women.

REINIER: Geri, I've really enjoyed chatting with you. Thank you very much for sharing your experience with us.

BERGEN: Well, thank you too, Jackie, I've been wanting to do this so I'm glad we had a chance to do it and I'm glad to have met you.

REINIER: And I'm glad to have met you.

[Interruption]

REINIER: Geri, one thing I wanted to ask you is that you changed your name, was it after you retired that you changed your name?

BERGEN: No, it was when I was still working. I changed my name in December of 1988.

REINIER: Oh.

BERGEN: My husband had passed away in 1987. Nothing against my husband at all, but when we had gotten married in 1959 I had naturally changed my name from Bergen to Larson as women did in those days, so all my career my name had been Larson. It was a difficult decision to change my name since my diploma, my forestry license, everything was in the name Larson. But I liked my name Bergen. I'd been brought up to value my Dutch heritage by my father. Bergen is a Brooklyn Dutch name and the original person who happened to have that name came to New Amsterdam about 1635. He was Hans Hansen van Bergen, and this had been the family history that my father had been very proud of. I felt like I was a Bergen, and I wanted to identify my Dutch heritage. In a way Bergen doesn't do that because Bergen is also a Norwegian name. This ancestor had been from Bergen, Norway, but from then on the line had been Dutch. So I was faced with other choices or decisions about my name. I never liked the first name, Geraldine, and I had called myself Geri for some time, so I decided I would change my name. And I had trouble. I tried to set up my checking account, so I could sign my name "Geri," and as long as I knew my real name was Geraldine I could not make myself sign "Geri." I would accidentally sign Geraldine. Once I changed my name legally I was able to sign "Geri." It was very interesting. So I wanted to change my name legally to Geri. Then the question became what should I do with my middle name which was Marcia and which I liked because I named one of my daughters Marcia. But by this time I was fifty-eight years old and Geri Marcia Bergen sort of sounded little girlish to me. And since I wanted to identify myself with my Dutch background, I chose my grandmother's maiden name, Vanderveer, for a middle name. It's also my father's middle name and my brother's middle name, so it was definitely a family name. There were Vanderveers in the line more than once in fact when we look at the genealogical history. So I chose the name Geri Vanderveer Bergen, which I think has a certain ring to it and which is a nice name. I enjoy the name; I'm glad to have that name.

REINIER: And it reflects your heritage.

BERGEN: It reflects my heritage; it feels like me. I still have a lot of people around here who remember me as Geri Larson, and call me Geri Larson, and introduce me as Geri Larson, but I don't mind that. I don't have any objection to that and I'm glad to have the new name.

[End Tape 8, Side B]

Geri Vanderveer Bergen