

Smithsonian Folklife Interview

Joy Barney  
Interpretive Ranger,  
Stanislaus National Forest, California

February 2004  
Interviewer: Jill Evans

Jill Evans (JE): Okay, let's see. How long have you been on the Stanislaus?

Joy Barney (JB): I've been on the Stanislaus since 1989, so that's fifteen years.

LE: Oh. [JB laughs] And did you start here?

JB: I was a seasonal with Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation. [Rest of title unclear].-  
- Long title [Laughter] – for two seasons. And then seasonal with the Army Corps of Engineers  
at Knight's Ferry for two seasons, and then started here after my fourth season at Knight's Ferry.

JE: Wow. That's great. So this is the only forest that you've been on?

JB: Yes. The only forest. Once I came here, I never left. But I've been on three different districts.

JE: Okay. All on the Stanislaus?

JB: yes.

JE: Okay. How interesting. Okay. And did you move around districts because they were different positions, or have you always been an interpreter, or...?

JB: No. I actually... My degree is in wildlife biology, and when I graduated from UC Davis there was no jobs whatsoever. So I just applied, and the only person, the only agency that hired me was New Melones Lake. And they hired gobs of seasonals, like nine of us. They just went for the seasonals like crazy. So I was there for two seasons, laid off in the winter, went back to live at home, that kind of thing. And I kept seeing these [green trucks?] and I had no idea what the Forest Service was. Growing up my parents always took us to state parks, national parks. I knew what park rangers wore, but not the Forest Service. What are those people doing, they don't wear uniforms and they're driving trucks? I didn't know what they were. And then I started working in the community in my time off. And finally, it wasn't until I went to the unemployment office, after I was laid off from the Army Corps of Engineers, that the unemployment officer—when they used to have people you went to go see, counselors—said, my wife is looking for somebody just like you. And she was Joyce [Misew?], and she was looking for people, forestry technicians, in silviculture. And they were re-foresting the burn, after '87. So they were hiring tons of people. And they needed to find somebody who had some college education, some background, who wanted to work out in the woods. I said, that's me, I didn't even know there

was such a thing! I thought you had to be a fire fighter! And that was my introduction to the Forest Service.

JE: Wow. So you did silviculture first.

JB: Silviculture for seven... Well silviculture as a GS 5 forestry technician for seven years. At Mi-wok. And then I went to Groveland as a GS 7 forestry technician in silviculture. And both times, during my seven years at Mi-wok and my four years at Groveland, I did interpretation on the side. It was my passion. [Laughs] So whenever there was a school program, even though I was just, you know, doing something completely different—Oh Joy, there's a school program on wildlife. Do you want to do it? Okay! Or volunteer tree planting was a big thing we did back then.

JE: That's great. So how did it...? So now you're an interpretive specialist.

JB: Yeah.

JE: So how did you go from forestry technician to that?

JB: That was a huge leap. They were able to... While I was at Groveland, the forest started to recognize interpretation as a meaningful thing. And probably maybe after two years that I was in Groveland, they started to give out some funding for interpretation. So I had a certain amount of days. And then those days translated into time and grade, or whatever, towards my being able to leap across. Oh, and I also had a detail. When I was a 5 in silviculture I had a detail to this position that I'm in currently. But the only thing they could do, the best they could do was give me a GS 6, information specialist or something, because I didn't qualify for the 9, coming from a 5. So I did that for a summer. Incredible. Very intense. And I'm, I'm just a GS 6 and I'm so tired. [Laughter] Fifteen hour days, you know; long, long weeks. And at that time, you were it. I had one volunteer and a seasonal working for me or something. Not really working for me because I was just a 6. [Laughs] Anyway I was in charge of the summer programs up at the Summit Ranger District, in '94 as a detail.

JE: And all by you pretty much.

JB: Yeah. Phyllis actually was in the position, and she had done a transfer to a botanist for a couple of years, and while she was gone they needed...

JE: I see.

JB: So that's what happened.

JE: Okay. So from that did you decide that's what you wanted to do?

JB: That summer was... I really liked, I really enjoyed it, but it was intense. And I definitely wasn't... I would have liked to have done it, but that was a career goal. I wouldn't continue doing it as a 6. That wasn't where I wanted to go. So I went back to silviculture and saw promotional

opportunities there. And I loved silviculture. The variety... You know, there's planting and then there's [word unclear]. Things change all the time. And you're out in the woods every day, and ground counting, that's fun stuff. And I had enough interpretation, maybe at least a program a week. Little things were going on throughout that whole time. And when I was at Mi-wok my supervisor supported me to do the grant writing for interpretive trails and projects, and so I started working... I had always had these close relationships with the teachers. And so of course you get these excited teachers that just have something that they want to do—Joy will do it! [Laughter] And then nobody really, nobody designated to do that kind of thing. And here's this GS 5 on the district who was interested—oh, I'll write a grant! No idea what I'm doing. But we got it. And in those days it seemed like we got every grant that we worked on. Sometimes it was weekends; sometimes we were doing things, the teacher and I would just get together and do stuff, just 'cause this project was so fun. And we were creating a trail, called the North Fork Interpretive Trail, and the idea was... it was an NREC grant.

JE: Okay, uh huh.

JB: National... Anyway, Conservation Education is the last two.

JE: Yeah. Recreation Conservation?

JB: Yeah. Anyway it comes out of our regional office. [Laughter] It's been a little bit of time. And their thing was to have a sustainable program. They didn't want to fund something every year. And we could have easily done that, ask for three thousand dollars just to fund supplies and... But we wanted to create a sustainable program. So the funding was buying equipment and interpretive supplies; things like tracks and furs and skulls and things like that, which the teacher would keep. So that the money was going to the school. And she also applied for a Tapestry, and Toyota Tapestry grant, and some other grants, and we got all of them. So we had a total of maybe seventy-five hundred for the project. Then we created the trails; we needed a location to go to. We had nothing in those days. [Laughs] So we created a trail on the Mi-wok District. Something that was accessible by bus. Close enough to the schools. There were a lot of requirements. Not an hour's drive on the bus for some of the local schools. And the idea was to train this teacher/student to do the programs. So we taught her sixth, seventh and eighth graders how to teach; and the four stations were ponds—in those days it was just a station, we didn't have themes or ideas—it was ponds, wildlife, forestry, and [Mi-wok culture. And she bought and bought... And she still does this; she is passionate about acquiring things. So she has tubs, gobs and gobs of tubs that she stores in her home of all those stations. We'll have bark of every of the five species of mixed conifers that we have here, plus oak, so she has tubs of cones and bark and leaves. So that's the forestry station. Tree cookies cut to the trees. And for the Mi-wok station she has baskets. Not all Mi-wok baskets, but baskets that she's just collected from all over, to put her things in, to have a flavor of some kind of native culture. And they do acorn processing,. And she has game things; and she's taken lots of classes so she has all the brushes and everything that she's made herself. So those she houses, and now all the program still continues.

JE: And her students?

- JB: Her students are still teaching. We stand behind them, kind of for guidance, but they do all the teaching. So basically we can go in there non-prepared. And we can just ask a Forest Service to come and stand and listen. And kind of... They're kids, so you kind of have to reel them in sometimes. You know, they're having a stick fight or something [Laughter] or they're complaining about one of their other friends. Okay, we're professionals now. [Laughs] And they do an awesome job. These kids get up there... You can see their progress from sixth grade through eighth grade. In sixth grade they're a little nervous, and they have their notes on the back of their poster and they're holding it up and looking. She teaches them how to stand, and how to not look bored; to look like you're engaged and excited. And so that's almost like a whole speech class for her. Plus they're learning the natural history. And we go in once a year with them and make sure that they're on target. And then when they're through they do their programs. And they'll do their programs for other elementary schools. We usually have to or three other elementary schools, kindergarten through second grade. And so the sixth, seventh and eighth graders are teaching kindergarten, first, second. I don't know if we've had... Maybe third as well. And even up to fourth. But the kids, the kindergarteners, are just [mimes rapt fascination]. Don't even move. [laughter] And I think it's because it's the kids teaching it. And they're fascinated. They're just fascinated. They think it's just amazing. I can be like that in sixth grade. I can speak like that.

JE: In not too long.

JB: Yeah.

JE: That's really cool.

JB: And I see some of the eighth graders—the first group of eighth graders has graduated from high school—and you see some of them in the community sometimes, and they're really, really gotten a lot out of having the experience speaking in front of others. And parents are in that group, and sometimes they're former teachers, Because when they were in kindergarten, now they're, oh, I'm so proud of you. [Laughter]

JE: Oh, that's so nice.

JB: So those are good things about that program. And we started that, I would say, oh, maybe in '92.

JE: Okay. So it's been running for a while.

JB: And it's kind of modified. Sometimes we do it at the North Fork Interpretive Trail, which is what it was designed for. Sometimes we're now doing it up at Pinecrest, because we have a little bit of a flatter trail. The kids, the little ones, can't make it all the way down to what we call ponds. And then we had a flood year once and it kind of wiped out the ponds. So we haven't actually been going all the way down to the pond area for a long time. The kids catch aquatic insects and they put like dye in the water and you can it going through the gills, the dye. Food coloring. And they collect them and identify them,

JE: That's great.

JB: So that was my main Mi-wok project when I was working on the Mi-wok Ranger District. And then when I started at Groveland I started our Earth Day event. And that was born the same year my daughter was born, in 1997. And I wanted to have something that would be for the schools, but also that she could see as she grew up and progressed. So the first year there's pictures of her with my parents. She's just a little bundle; she was four months old. And in those days it was, hi I'm a wildlife biologist and this is what I do. And there were eight tables, and everybody wanted to... Wildlife biologist, forestry, hydrologist, and somebody said, oh you forgot law enforcement, and you know, it's really hard to remember every single one of the jobs.

JE: Yeah, there's a lot.

JB: And it was really more job related, and kind of a sharing. And the kids went through the stations, and it was, ten minutes, go! Ten minutes, go! 'Cause you can't get to eight stations.

JE: Okay. So the kids would come and rotate through?

JB: Yeah. And maybe we'd have eight or ten children at a station, and then move them through. I think we might have had a couple of hundred kids that year. And after that we got together in a group... Groveland district was great about this idea. They were just so supportive and very involved with the whole process. And we said, well how did that work? And they said, well, it was very fast. Ten minutes was not enough time to view everything you wanted to about your job. And it wasn't so much about your job; it was like, you know, here's cool things about aquatic animals, or here's some cool things about, here, we'll learn a little bit about how a tree grows in the forestry section. So it wasn't, I'm a forester and I plant... You know. It was more engaging than that. But it still wasn't enough time. So we decided to condense some of those spaces. Like we thought soils and water and wildlife and forestry maybe could all be in one thing. And I think the following year we did get stations down that encompassed a group of disciplines. So we called them the nutrient cycle, the fire cycle, the water cycle, and the human connection. And the human connection was history, prehistory. And they were supposed to possibly connect with each other. So the kids would see their connections to each of the stations, and the stations would connect to each other. And we had the little Golden Forest Trail that the kids would walk along. So it was as much as a mile throughout the whole day. Lots of partnerships with local... There was a local Southern Tuolumne education foundation, and they provided snacks. In their charter it was to provide educational opportunities for Southern Tuolumne schools. And that only included Tenaya and Tioga. There's two schools in Groveland that it would apply to. So they would also pay for their bus. And they're only fifteen minutes away, but still it helped. Paid for their bus, paid for the snacks for all the kids, even though a lot of the kids weren't from Southern Tuolumne. They got donations of some kind of fruit juice and graham crackers or something like that. And then we partnered also with the Lion's Club, and they provided hamburgers or hot dog or veggie burger type of meal. And so we would send out that list to the schools before they came and some of them chose to do that. And all the proceeds that the Lions made went back to Southern Tuolumne Education Foundation for the next year. We were even able to get enough donations to bring an inner city school bus out, and so for two years we had sixty kids, one time from Stockton and one time from Modesto I believe. And it

was quite an experience. It took them two hours to get there and they spent two hours there and they had to leave. [Laughter] But it was pretty amazing, because a lot of those kids had never been to the woods.

JE: Wow. That's really neat. And do you still do that program now?

JB: No, now we've moved it from Groveland. We did it at Groveland for, I'd say five, four years. And that last two years it's been at White Pines Park on the Highway 4 corridor. And we're changing it just because the kids on the Highway 4 corridor had never had an opportunity to go. And the idea was to rotate it around. But now White Pines is such an ideal location so that's where it's been lately.

JE: And still the same four...?

JB: Now we have... At Groveland at one point we had the Resource Protection Connection, which was boat patrol... And we were inter-agency, so we had Bureau of Reclamation there, and Sheriff's department, and the Yosemite National Park, and Bureau of Land Management. That was at Groveland. It's interesting because different corridors have different connections with different groups. So that worked for that corridor. And the resource protection, with all of those partners, was a very popular station, but it was a lot of things. It was not so much educational as, you know, go climb on this boat. Get on this ATV. Look at... Check out this... [Laughs]. And that was fun for the kids; it was a good break, because the other stations were very educational and definitely interpretive, interactive. The water cycle, they come through and they go through this gate and they get sprayed with water and become a drop of water. And then they go through the water cycle as a drop of water. Some of them get eaten by animals, and so they go and find out about the wildlife. Aquatic animals or wildlife in the area, and then they go on, and some of them get taken up by plants, and they can find out about plants; and some of them go through a culvert and become drinking water. And then some of them become recreation, so there's a raft they can get on. There was a bunch of different kinds of things they could do there. That's just one example of one of the stations. So where it is now, in White Pines. We didn't have those... People didn't flock to us, even though we tried to same kind of things with the same partners. New Melones Lake has always been part of our partners. So they have always come and helped with the water cycle. And we also have now Calaveras County and Tuolumne County environmental coordinators. Both of those people come and help us. But they're like one person, they'll do the whole thing; it's not like having an agency come and help. And then we also have Calaveras County Sheriff's Department came last year. So we've had a little... Slowly people are coming by and, hey, this looks like fun. [Laughs] Can I help? And we took a lot of the emphasis away from, we don't have the big events type of thing, like with food and the... that turned out to not be doable on that site. So it's bring their lunch. And that's not a problem.

JE: And they get bussed in?

JB: They get bussed in. Last year we did find funding through Bill [Otani], who's the Asian Pacific coordinator at the Washington office. He gave us funding to bring up some inner city kids from Modesto. It's very expensive to bring up those buses, so that really helped, and we were able to do that last year. And we rely on... There's five interpreters in our team, on this

forest. But we can't do it with just five people. It takes at least... In Grovewood it was fifty. It was fifty individuals to put on this event. [Laughs] And so everybody would just come in, and that was what they did that day. And at Calaveras we've been able to do it with fewer, a little less folks, maybe thirty. But I think this year we're going to try and do it with maybe fifteen. It's just, budgets are so tight, and people are not available. Unless you have a job code, and we don't. So we're going to try, and we keep trying to get more and more partners to help. Now the stations are pretty set. We can teach somebody how to do the station in a pretty quick way. But we will still have probably at least another ten folks. And some of these ten people have done it every year, so they're good. They're just great interpreters.. And we have music and storytelling, and we try to do a lot of different... We try to engage the whole child somewhere in all the stations. There's some running. There's some squirting of water in the fire cycle, they get to pretend they're fire fighters and so they squirt the back pack pumps on a pretend flame. So that gets the kids who really need to be mobile. And then there's some touching and looking, and there's some singing and moving, and a little bit of storytelling.

JE: And how long do they stay there to go through the day?

JB: They stay there for two hours and fifteen minutes. And they get three stations... This is our current schedule. We've expanded the time in stations: thirty-five minutes each station. And the thing has progressed. [Laughs] It's gone from ten minutes, then it was twenty, then it was twenty-five, and now we're finally up to thirty-five minutes, with ten minute passings. [Laughs] So it means they're there for two hours and fifteen minutes. And they only can have three of the five stations. Oh, and you asked me, are the stations the same? They're water cycle, energy cycle—we decided it should be called energy cycle and not nutrient, because nutrient implies it just stays within the ground and the trees, but energy goes all the way to the sun and down again. So we wanted to include the sun. It's more applicable to what kids are studying in school. So water cycle, energy cycle, human connection, fire cycle. And we have another station called the keepers of the earth. And it's kind of a land stewardship message. It's a different kind of station. It's more the kids sit there and listen. And it's working. So it's kind of, with all the other interaction and things going on, this one is really working. It only takes two people to do that station, and you can have thirty kids sitting down and listening. And sometimes we just needed a place to put some of the kids when there was an overflow. And that's becoming the station that people request. That the teachers want.

JE: Do the teachers choose for their class?

JB: We try to accommodate them as much as possible. But if everybody wants it somebody's not going to get it. [Laughs] They usually tell us all the stations are great. And we have a hundred per cent return of the teachers. They call us in September and January and say, please put us on the list. Don't forget about us.

JE: That's really great. That's really impressive.

JB: So that's kind of our big school push. Then we also have all those programs by request. And it turns out to be at least one a week for me, and I don't know what all the other interpreters are doing.

JE: So why do you think that this forest is I think probably one of the only ones in California that actually has an interpretive team? Why do you think that's happened here?

JB: I think it's one hundred per cent our forest leadership team. Even when I was doing that stuff on Groveland, it was a bunch of us here and there. There's always somebody like that in every forest. There's somebody, a wildlife biologist who goes off and does school programs, or a forester who loves to have kids plant trees in the forest. They know that that's not going to get the target. And it really doesn't offset the cost of your day. But they know that it's really, really valuable. So you always find these people that are doing these things. And a lot of times in your job description it says up to twenty per cent of your time can be used for that. But our forest leadership team realized that it was valid and it was important. And you know the little carrot of that money, the funding that went... and in those days if you were in silviculture you were fully funded. Way fully funded. [Laughter] We had things that I will never have again in my life. In that realm of being in the forestry, silviculture department, we had trucks, we had radios, we had CDs. And so you can, if your work is done, you can sneak away and do a program. But they were recognizing that even though that's happening, let's recognize it as a program in its own. And they started to ask for accomplishments. Because we were just doing them and nobody would even know. So I started asking around and gathering everybody's accomplishments, and it was significant. And I think from those early days they started to recognize that those accomplishments are significant, and the forest is doing a lot, and let's keep it going. Summit always had a program. They have had an interpretive specialist there for thirty years. And Summit has Pine Crest Lake, visitation of ten thousand new users every week in the summer. Or not just new users, just in the Pinecrest Lake basin. So it's huge; it's like a little mini-recreation area. So Pine Crest has always done that, but as far as going forest-wide, that probably started happening right around '97 I would think.

JE: And so they actually created positions?

JB: And then after that there was a reorganization that happened, and I can't remember what year exactly. Probably around '98. And the districts decided how they wanted to do that. Because before the funding was coming a little bit to this district, a little bit to that district. They decided, the districts themselves decided how they wanted to use that money. And Mi-wok decided to fund a position 50/50. And at that time it was 50 per cent botany, 50 per cent interpretation, and then they found out they can't combine position descriptions that way. That was the need. And Phyllis just happened to be a botanist [Laughs] and a [lifetime?] interpreter, but that wouldn't work. So she is now a three-quarter time interpreter. And then on Calaveras they decided that they would just offer up the equivalent of those dollars to somebody for days in interpretation. And they've done it in many different ways; they've had a little mini-team and people used twenty days each, and right now it's one person. As people are disappearing and needing to get funding from elsewhere, there's one person and that's Barbara. So she does that for fifty per cent of her time. She's funded through the interpretive team budget. And then on Groveland they had a position on the books for a long time, but weren't able to fill it until with Nancy. So that just happened recently. So it's not 'til very recently probably, since '99, 2000. Nancy came two years ago, or last year. So it's only been in the last couple of years when we've had a full staff. And before Nancy was there there was funding for that district, so it was represented also by a team,



or different people would take days out of that and come and help us with things like Earth Day, or the events that we had going on, and they would participate during that time period.

JE: Oh that's really great. That's how the forest copes.

JE: I think it is. And the bottom line is, it all has to come from... Otherwise you'll just have a scattering of dedicated individuals. But if you really have support from your forest leadership team, it can be really huge.

JE: So other than the Earth Day, the big program that you do, what other sorts of programs do you do, if you're doing it like one day a week or so?

JB: We have a bunch of kind of canned programs. Making Tracks is a wildlife program, and we do the tracks [rest of sentence unclear]. That's the catch. We always have to find something that they want as the catch. And that's the catch. But it could be tailored to endangered species, bear safety, wildlife in general, nocturnal animals. So we can do any of those programs, and we always do the, we call it Making Tracks, or Let Wildlife Be Wild. And they want the tracks. [Laughs] Around October we do that program. Phyllis and I do those together, and we've kind of adapted it to where I'm the bat, [Laughs] wear the costume and she starts out and says, I don't know where Joy is, late again. And I fly in. But they don't know that I'm Joy the ranger, they just know that I'm a bat. And these kindergartners and first graders really think that I'm a bat. [Laughs] Yeah. I'm I guess just a large bat with a person face. And later on as I come as the ranger and say sorry I'm so late, they say, you were the bat. No I wasn't. You have her same face. [Laughs] And then they used to tell me, you have her same earrings, so I started taking off my earrings.

JE: oh, that's so cute.

JB: It's really fun. We'll do that up to second grade, but second grade we know that they know that I'm not a bat. And Phyllis and I do a back-and-forth joking thing about myth. She pretends she's afraid of me, I'm going to get in her hair. And I try to dispel those myths. And then we do a little bit of a slide show, and some songs, and possibly a bat story, depending on grade level.

JE: And do you do most of your programs for kids then?

JB: We're probably fifty-fifty. In the summertime our big push is programs up at Pine Crest Lake. They're kind of based around Pine Crest Lake. And I did bring a copy of our newspaper. [Shows paper to JE] This started out as, in the days when there was just an interpretive specialist at Summit, he used to call it, I think it was called *The Summit Traveler* or the *Summit...* It's gone by several different names. [Laughs] But anyway it was just a newspaper for Summit Ranger District. And then when I came into the position, Phyllis and I have always worked very closely together so we decided to make it *The Sonora Pass Traveler*. Mi-wok and Summit. And then as Nancy and Barbara became involved and they wanted their own paper, we said why don't we make it a forest-wide paper? So now that's what it's become, and it's got the whole forest on it, and it has corridors, and we also wanted to show links to outside the forest over the passes; so

people can pull this out and say, take a day trip. And go this way through Yosemite or this way through Highway 4.

JE: And your interpretive team puts this out?

JB: Yeah. With the addition of Nancy also came at the same time there was a graphic artist, and she just happened to recognize his talents, and he's helped us to go from—I think I have an old one that I'm going to do by myself, and I'm not a graphic artist [Laughs]—this was done in Corel Draw. And we have another member of our team, Laurie Lupo, and she is an [word unclear?] master, and she did most of the graphics in this version. I mean it's pretty good for people who didn't know what... [Laughs]. And we did this in Corel Draw.

JE: Oh that's great.

JB: So this was one of those earlier attempts, but then we've gone from that to this type of format, and this is all done in Adobe Design. But these are our programs in the summer. And all of the corridors now have programs.

JE: So they're like family program?

JB: Family programs, walk and talk hikes. So I wanted to highlight the backstage tours, which you think it would be family programs but we get almost all adults. And those are, come and find out what a wildlife biologist does, come and follow an archaeologist through a site. And we usually get one or two kids that are maybe ten and older. Because they know it's not going to be interactive and engaging, but they're fascinated. Everybody is fascinated by these things. And we went to, we called the program Wildlife in [Beardsley/] Canyon, and we have the first nesting pair of bald eagles on Beardsley Lake since 1972, and they've been back now two years. So we call it Wildlife in Beardsley Canyon because if we called it the bald eagle tour everybody would come, and we don't want to inundate it. But we get thirty people every time to that. And we have to meet at the ranger station and drive to the location; it takes about twenty minutes. And every time we've done this, the bald eagle [has given us] a show. They're two hundred, three hundred feet away, they're quite a distance, but we can stand on the boat ramp and watch. And there's nothing going on; I'll say, you never know, we'll just stand here and I'll talk. [Laughs] Which obviously I have no problem doing. And they show up every time. We can see the nest, so if nothing else the people get to see what a nest looks like; and we talk about staying away from the nest and the need for quiet during the critical nesting and fledgling time, but we go after the babies have fledged. Or they're just about ready to fledge, so they're sitting on the edge of the nest. If we go then, then they're guaranteed to at least be a baby there. But they don't do anything; they just sit there. [Laughs]

JE: Not a very good show.

JB: Yeah. But when the parents come back, then you can kind of really see. So there's that one, and then there's an osprey, where our biologist has put an osprey platform. And so I show the series of photos of how the guy climbed up there, put this platform up, and as I'm talking about that, the osprey shows up. [Laughs] And it's also past the sensitive nesting time, but they kind of

hang around the site. So those are two of the wildlife ones. We do Thinning Makes the Forest Grow; so we go to a beautifully thinned site and talk about how that helps the remaining trees, for forest health. And then there's always a fire fighting one, and that one we do get a lot of kids to. And they get to get dressed up and shoot water. [Laughs]

JE: And so do you bring in people for those [props?], and do you have all that stuff?

JB: Most of those... The firefighters I bring in; the Beardsley Canyon and osprey I've been doing myself because the wildlife biologists have been just swamped. So I feel that I can do that, since I have a background in wildlife, but it's not the same as being a working wildlife biologist today.

JE: [inaudible question]

JB: I don't know. They might be okay with it, but I think it's way better when... I mean to me I'm just like [mimes awe] Wow, you're great. And if I'm thinking that the public is probably feeling like that too. You really do that? And you really saw these things? So when they can, they come. So I schedule them anyway, and I know that I'll be able to do them if they can't. But if they can come it's even better.

JE: Oh that's great. Okay. So you set things up and then try to get people to come, and if not...

JB: Then I can do them. Yeah. Thinning Makes the Forest Grow, usually I can get a forester. But since I was in silviculture I can kind of speak to it. I can't speak to this particular project because I wasn't the administrator on that sale, but if we get the real person, it's great. But at the last minute they get called out on fires and things have happened. So those are some of the... And most of the long hikes, those are almost always mostly adults. The evening programs: we have an amphitheater that can seat 750, and in these days the maximum we might have is 300. It seems like people are not that interested in interpretive programs anymore. It's free! [Laughs] Come on down. You'll have fun, I guarantee.

JE: But still, 350 is a good amount. That's a big amphitheater.

JB: Yeah. So it looks kind of empty. We do some... And for the most part probably for our general evening programs we might get a hundred and fifty. Three fifty would be for one of our... We bring in other people.

JE: Is that like a special event?

JB: Yeah. And we do that every Monday and Wednesday, so at least one, either the Monday or the Wednesday of that week, at least one of those is somebody we've brought in. We have speakers who will do that for free for us. Royal Robbins, I don't know if you... He's a mountain climber. And he has a cabin in Pine crest and he comes, and he'll do one guest shot. And we have Patrick Karnahan who painted this. He's an artist, and part of the Black Irish Band; he's a songwriter and singer. He'll come and do a program for us for not very much, for just gas money basically. And some people love that; they're getting a real talent to do a campfire program.

JE: And so to pay him that, the gas money or whatever, do you have a small budget for that.

JB: We do. We have a donation box for talent that's sitting at the front desk, and people put money in there, because the front desk people are so great. [Laughs] Here we do wilderness permits and we don't charge anything for that, and sometimes the people are just so... Because elsewhere they've gone they have to pay. And they're just like, oh! Put it in the box. And all that comes back into put program. That and some other, I'm not sure. This isn't happening anymore, but. Yeah, just mainly putting money in the box. If we would bring the box to the program, I wouldn't say that we would get enough to cover any one given program. If the program would cost fifty dollars, it's not like we would get fifty dollars every turn. Some of the other programs we do, what we've really noticed is what gets people to come is there's something they [get to take?]. So there's a t-shirt program that we do, it's called What's Bugging You Now? And we talk about aquatic ecology, from the bugs that you find in the water and how they tell the health of any body of water. And since Pine Crest Lake is right there and we have a stream around, we can talk about that and why they're important. And even mosquitoes. [Laughs] And then the big thing is the things that are obvious to us like fish and bald eagles and osprey. But then they can do, they can make a [phrase unclear] fish printing. But we do it with plastic fish. And so they roll them on the t-shirts and they make these t-shirts. They come for the t-shirts, but while you're here... [Laughs]. All right now, while the t-shirts are drying everybody comes this way. [Laughs] I think I have a picture of the kids... Oh here's one. [Displays picture off-camera] This little girl with her...

JE: oh, that's fun.

JB: Oh I have to talk about this too.

JE: Your volunteers.

JB: Yeah, another partnership that I've started with Tuolumne County Office of Education and Mother Lode Job Training. Tuolumne County gets money from Title 3—I have to get all these Titles correct—Title 3 After School Forest Related Program. And so our contact with the Tuolumne County schools office had this great idea that the best way to get that, instead of paying for field trips that kids com after school. Or they have to get together and form a group so that they can come after school. She decided that, how about we pay kids in high school to work in the forest. And that's what she wanted to do with that money. So she gave it to Mother Lode Job Training to hire kids, and we provide them with the projects. So last year we had nine students, two were at Groveland—and we don't pay a penny for these kids. We have to provide supervision, so that can be huge when you're talking Forest Service people who are running ten different directions and micromanaging. [Laughs] And the kids can't be left alone. They're sixteen through eighteen years old, so you don't just say, okay, go clean the campgrounds. So we had two in interpretation last year, and that was perfect. We've always had, we've tried to do it with different... We don't have any money for seasonals or anything. I always just happen to get a volunteer every year. And they've been awesome. All my volunteers have just been awesome. And I've also worked with Jim Oftedal for the California Consortium. He can hire Hispanic or Asian students. So we've had one student of his for two years in a row, and then another year, from his Hispanic program. So one year we had two. And they were paid employees. I think

there were three. So they were paid out of that budget. And that was nice. It's nice to just have people get paid and not have to volunteer. But now we have these kids, who are local, and they're younger than Jim's program. And they're not GS 3; they don't drive a vehicle, you sort of have to sort of baby sit them a little bit. But the ones we had were just amazing. Incredibly independent and helpful. They have them set up tables, put newspaper on things, clean the forms after they're all full of paint. And we can be free to interact with the group.

JE: Oh, I see.

JB: Without cleaning. [Laughs] So it's been great. And they also post our flyers throughout the campgrounds, inviting people to the programs. They created some flyers. They were busy. We had them hopping. And then there was a crew of five who did trail work, recreation work on the Mi-wok District. And those folks did not want to be in front of the public. They didn't want to wear a uniform. [Laughs; a few words inaudible] So they were really great. And then we had two at Groveland. One ended up helping the graphic artist, and he had graphic artist skills, and it just was a perfect... I don't know how this happened last year, where everybody paired up with somebody and it was a perfect combination. And the other one ended up in recreation, and he cleaned toilets every day, and cleaned up campfire pits, changed the bulletin board information. Typical park ranger kind of stuff. And he loved it. And they said, oh, we would hire him back in a minute and he was great. And he didn't necessarily want to be on a crew of guys working on a trail. It wouldn't have mattered to him, and a job was a job, but when he found out that he could be closer to home, work with these folks... And he loved it. It worked out really well.

JE: And will you have a chance to get any of these folks back?

JB: They can. If they're not graduating they can come back. So if they were sophomores last year, incoming juniors, and now they're incoming seniors, they can do the program for two years. And this year we've budgeted in little raises for them; the ones who come back. And my student, the one who ended up helping me all the way through the end of November, he... They were making minimum wage last year. And he went out after this experience and he was able to get a job at a veterinarian clinic for eight dollars an hour. So he went from six seventy-five to eight dollars, and he wants to come back to our program. So he's going to be back next summer.

JE: That's very nice.

JB: So I think a lot of these kids, the program was so great, and they learned so much, and they felt so appreciated, that they want to come back, and I think that's one of the great things.

JE: It is.

JB: But we also know that we're making them marketable. So we know that if the program is really successful, none of them will come back. [Laughs] But our hope is that some of them will come back, and they can mentor the new sophomores coming in, and then it's not so intense on our part to show them how to scrub. [Laughs] Here's how you scrub the mold and make it clean.

JE: Oh that's fabulous. So you have lots of outside help from different [places?].

JB: That's how we have to do it. And we have lots of volunteers too. Some volunteers have come back every year. We couldn't do it without all those people. We have a very small budget. We do have a budget, which is great. Better than anybody else. But it's small.

JE: It's important to make that go as far as you possibly can, isn't it?

JB: Yeah.

JE: Okay. Well if you did go to D.C., this is a two week time period, the Festival, it's two weeks long, and part of that time period covers the July Fourth weekend. I'm not sure how the rest of the weeks fall, but is there a special program that you would like to do there? Like if you could set up your Earth Day event there?

JB: Wow. [Laughter] I could set up the Earth Day event there. Well the Earth Day event needs a lot of space. The beauty of it is walking between the stations. But the stations themselves are large, and you'd want to have enough space that you couldn't hear this station from that next place. And personnel—you'd need enough people... We have five stations; we'd need enough people to cover... four people per station is decent. We've had as many as six, and it's more fun. Because the more people you have to bounce off of, and then the better it is to break people up in smaller groups. And I think it's the kind of program that would work great with families. We just have always done it in the day, on a weekday, so that we don't have to pay overtime to anybody. [Laughs] And we'll have more buy-in from the Forest Service employees that we need to come and help us. They're not going to come on their Saturdays. Anyway, that's mainly why we've done it on those days.... Yeah, that could be a... I didn't think of that as being a program that could be on the road. Same thing like with my teacher friends; boxes and boxes of stuff.

JE: And could you get those boxes there, or would you need things for you there?

JB: Either way. Some of the boxes... Well, for instance, the human connection is California Miwok Indians, so they probably don't necessarily have that kind of stuff in D.C. We couldn't have just other Indian stuff, because we wouldn't know how to interpret that. So part of the human connection is the baskets, and tools. So we have that stuff to bring out own. And, I don't know, there's soil and trees and things like that. Rotten logs [Laughs]... You know, the energy cycle, we walk through the forest and look for rotten logs and evidence of decay. So some of that, I don't...

JE: Is that stuff you could plant there?

JB: I don't know. We could bring rotten logs. [Laughs] We probably couldn't transport that across state lines, but they'd have to bring a rotten log with some good grubs in it. [Laughs] Many rotten logs so that people could tear them up and look at them. And that's part of the beauty of the Forest Service as opposed to state parks or national parks, is that the kids can tear apart a rotten log and look in. So that sort of thing would have to be done.

JE: Okay.

JB: And the other parts, the fire cycle is usually more effective if we have real fire fighters there. But the interpretive part can be any one of us.

JE: Okay. So like four people minimum per station?

JB: And there's like five station, so...

JE: And would you be able to do like other sorts, like sort of roaming interpretation, like your bat program or things like that?

JB: We have our bat program, a Trees Are Terrific program. We do a lot of storytelling, Native American storytelling and Native American culture.

JE: Okay.

JB: Those probably are portable. I don't think you'd necessarily have to be on the site, which is where we prefer to be.

JE: Okay. That's great. I think that's it then.

END OF INTERVIEW