AN INTERVIEW WITH

RALPH MAX PETERSON

by

Harold K. Steen

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Figure 1: Ralph Max Peterson, Chief of the United States Forest Service; no date. [Photo courtesy of the Forest History Society, Durham, N.C.]

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Introduction

Ralph Max Peterson was born on July 25, 1927, in Doniphan, Missouri. Following military service during World War II, Peterson entered an engineering program at the University of Missouri. He received a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering in 1949; in that same year, he began a Forest Service career that would end with retirement as chief in 1987.

The interview that follows traces Max's long tenure. He tells a detailed story of working as an engineer in California and the northern Rockies. As an engineer, his responsibilities crossed functional lines, providing a breadth of experience that would serve him well as he moved from staff officer to line officer.

The interview process began with an exchange of letters; Max approved a suggested outline with few modifications. Many of the topics stemmed from the recommendations of past associates. This outline served as the basic structure for two sessions—one of three days and one of two days—that included twenty-two hours of taping. The two sessions nearly a year apart resulted in some overlap. Transcripts were edited for clarity; every effort was made to leave the conversational tone typical of oral history.

Max is a congenial guy with a commanding personality. He is a great story-teller; he obviously relished telling his stories in great detail, and his enthusiasm was contagious. Our chairs were separated only by a small coffee table that held the recorder. Throughout, he grinned, chuckled, gestured, and shifted in his chair for emphasis. Unfortunately, much of this humanness is missing from the flat pages that follow.

The interview was conducted Max's home in Fairfax, Virginia—the home he and his wife Jan purchased when he moved to Washington, D.C. to become deputy chief. We sat in his study, cluttered with family, Forest Service, and hunting memorabilia. I was treated like family, being fed and generally pampered; once a taping was delayed by the need for all hands to put hay in their horse barn in preparation for winter. In all, it was an experience for the interviewer to long remember.

In 1949 Max was visiting his sister in southern California. The brand new engineer didn't have a job yet; California seemed like a nice place, and he applied to the Forest Service. He got a job and soon started work as forest engineer on the Plumas National Forest. He worked in California on three national forests for a decade, and in 1959 he was assigned to Missoula, Montana. Shortly after he arrived, a major earthquake shattered the Madison River valley in the vicinity of West Yellowstone. The disaster brought extraordinary engineering challenges, and Max rose to the occasion. It was but one of many events that would test his mettle, as he zigzagged to the top.

Another opportunity that would turn out to be crucial was the Forest Service tapping Max for the masters of public administration program at Harvard. In those days, retreat rights were uncertain, but Max, Jan, and the children headed for Cambridge. The education was solid and germane; his classmates were mid-level like himself, and Max was able to draw upon these relationships in later years. Also, the degree gave him a breadth just at the time that the agency was attaching importance to such things.

The tradition that only foresters would receive line assignments was long and seemingly inviolate. Max, by now regional engineer in San Francisco, was content with his position, but he had champions who felt he had the ability to go farther. He did; in 1971 he was appointed deputy regional forester in Atlanta. A short year later he moved up to regional forester, breaking the foresters-only barrier. He had never been a district ranger or a forest supervisor, but now he was regional forester. Max was happy; he would have been content to finish out his career in Atlanta.

Chief John McGuire required each regional forester to sign an agreement that they would accept any offered assignment. After only two years as regional forester, McGuire asked Max to come to Washington, D.C. as deputy chief for programs and legislation. As it turned out, the chief had been under great pressure from Congress to end the "foresters can do anything" syndrome, and Max's advanced degree in public administration gave him credentials that were directly responsive to complaints from the Hill. Max was best qualified, and his

being an engineer was no longer an impediment. It was not an impediment in 1979 either, when the secretary of agriculture looked for McGuire's successor. The secretary considered Associate Chief Douglas Leisz, and considered Max, and selected Max to be chief of the USDA-Forest Service starting July 1.

Max remembers that he ran "wide open" during his time as chief. He loved the job, but his family observed that he aged two years for each one spent. When his time came to retire, he suggested several chief/associate chief pairs to the secretary; one pair was Dale F. Robertson and George M. Leonard. Max stepped down on February 2, 1987 and Robertson became his successor, with Leonard as associate chief. Since "retirement," Max has been executive director of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

The challenges Max faced while chief were varied and many. The so-called Gramm-Rudman budget cuts meant that he would oversee a work force reduction of 25 percent. At the same time jobs were being eliminated and hiring freezes were in effect, the agency was under court order to dramatically increase the percentage of women employees. As noted above, it was a time of challenge.

Endangered species and biological diversity would become issues beyond anyone's calculations. Science was often sketchy, but those with management responsibility rarely have the option of waiting for perfect knowledge. At this writing, heated debates continue and the agency's fundamental mission is under scrutiny; these controversies took shape while Max was chief.

Not only was clearcutting a contentious issue, but some timber sales made the headlines. In the Pacific Northwest, plummeting timber values prompted companies to seek relief from their contractual obligations. The resulting timber sale "bailout" severely tested ideologies, but the broader needs of the American public prevailed and companies received degrees of relief.

The national forest land base itself was reviewed. For more than a half century, most people agreed that the ownership mix between the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management made little sense; the mix was in fact an accident of history. Thus, the two agencies conducted a study dubbed Interchange, and Max received a citation (which hangs in his home office) for his role. But inertia and tradition took their toll, and the exchanges did not take place. Concurrently, President Reagan's "asset management" was to offer for sale chunks of unneeded federal land. Little land was sold, but another bit of Max's time had been used.

On the Wednesday before Mount St. Helens erupted on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Max toured the area and assured himself that an adequate emergency plan existed. The next Wednesday he flew West—just missing a chance to accompany President Carter on Air Force One—to inspect the damage and to demonstrate to a frightened public that appropriate steps were being taken. Max was especially pleased that the emergency plan worked well and that the Forest Service fulfilled its responsibilities for what was by all measures a unique situation.

Max is especially thoughtful when he discusses wilderness and its proper role in national forest management. He looks beyond the ongoing controversies and waxes philosophical. He also recounts how other federal agencies with their own priorities wanted to violate wilderness restrictions; but Forest Service policy prevailed because workable alternatives appeared.

In addition to these and other specific topics, Max talks at length about general duties, such as testifying before Congress. We get a sense of what it is like to be chief on a day-to-day basis. We also get a lesson in real-world civics: the government does not always operate in the way described in the textbooks of our youth.

Max ends the interview with a look at successes and failures. The failures stemmed mainly from being unable to predict what would turn out to be important, and so problems that might have been treated when small instead turned into very big problems. As to the successes; well, there were many, and Max is generous in sharing credit. This interview is long, but even then so much happened that the story seems compressed. It is a source document of great value.

Harold K. Steen
Durham, N.C.

First Session: August 22-24, 1991

Harold K. Steen (HKS): Let's start with a little background. You were in the war and you came back on the G.I. Bill.

Ralph Max Peterson (RMP): Right, right.

HKS: University of Missouri.

RMP: Right. Actually I got some college in the Navy. It was called the Navy B-5 program which was a Navy Air program. As a part of the Navy Air program, I went to school at Northwest Missouri, at that time it was called the Northwest Missouri State Teacher's College, now Northwest Missouri State University at Maryville, Missouri. I went from there to Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. So I actually got essentially a year of college credit in the military.

HKS: I see.

RMP: When I got out of the Navy I was able to finish school in three years, which was important to me because I was interested in getting out and getting a job. It really counts for the fact that I got a degree in engineering rather than in something else, in that I had all this math and physics and chemistry and meteorology and all that type of thing in the military. When I got out was looking at finishing in three years. Of course anything related to math or engineering or science I was in good shape for.

HKS: So when you were in high school you didn't necessarily think you wanted to be an engineer.

RMP: No.

HKS: That sort of evolved.

RMP: That evolved primarily because of where I was when I got into the military.

HKS: But this was civil engineering.

RMP: Yeah, civil engineering. I took a lot of hydrology and soils and those types of courses that turned out later to be very good courses to take for the type of thing I was doing. My college roommate during most of that time was a person who was a wildlife biologist major and who retired from the Fish and Wildlife Service after a full career. I had two uncles at that time working for the Forest Service, so the Forest Service wasn't unknown to me.

HKS: I see.

RMP: I was born inside the Clark National Forest in Missouri, and as a kid my great-grandparents lived right next door to a CCC camp, and I had an uncle in that CCC camp. And so I knew the CCs and I knew the Forest Service from those days.

HKS: A lot of veterans were graduating about the time you did. Was it hard to get a job or were there plenty of jobs?

Beginning with the Forest Service

RMP: It would have been hard to get a job in forestry at that time and probably in Wildlife and Fisheries also. Interestingly enough, I had accepted the job and in spring of 1949 I had accepted a job with the Missouri State

Highway Department. And I'd also looked at a job with the Pennsylvania Railroad. In fact, I went back to Philadelphia on a train and interviewed for a job there, but I decided pretty suddenly that Philadelphia didn't look like a place that I wanted to live. [laughter] So I accepted a job with the Missouri State Highway Department. My oldest sister had married a year or two before and had gone to California with her husband. And she said, "You ought to come out to California." So …

HKS: The plot thickens, that's where the Plumas comes in.

RMP: Yes. I went to California, to San Diego, primarily to visit her. I liked California and she said "Well, why don't you stay out here?" And I said, "What's the job situation out here?" You may recall in 1949 California was laying off all kinds of people in the defense industry.

HKS: Sounds about right.

RMP: I said, "I'll file a form 57 to see what kind of jobs there are in California." I immediately got several federal offers. I got an offer from the Bureau of Reclamation, and I think the Corps of Engineers. I got about four offers. But one of them was at Plumas National Forest in northern California. I thought I'd much rather work for the Forest Service, and it was also the only job in California [laughter], which I think may have a part of it. But I really went to work with the idea I was just going to work that summer in California.

HKS: I see.

RMP: My two uncles worked for the Forest Service, one of them was a forestry technician at the time, and the other was an administrative officer. And I really didn't have any feel that the Forest Service had people that worked in engineering and that type of field.

HKS: Were there civil engineers on the ranger districts at that time?

RMP: No, no. In fact there was only one other engineer on the Plumas and that was George Newhall who was a forest engineer. There were only two of us on the forest when I went to work there in August of '49.

HKS: I suppose foresters still did a lot of engineering in those days, it wasn't quite …

RMP: Well, there wasn't really much engineering being done in the sense that we would think of it today. Timber was sold, and it was up to the company to decide where to build the roads and how to build the roads and so on. They were primarily building just temporary roads. In fact, about that time a lot of people got concerned with these temporary roads that were just punched in, usually without any attention being paid to drainage, erosion, and so on. Some of them were on real steep slopes, and they put them wherever they wanted to. There was real concern being raised about the damage to the land that this was going to cause.

HKS: I came along ten years later and it was much different. This was in Region 6 on the Snoqualmie National Forest; every road was designed by the Forest Service.

RMP: That was not true in 1949. In fact, there was no purchaser credit system; the credit system was established later. The company just bid the timber based on an appraisal, and they went after it. In fact, in my first couple of years on the Plumas, all we could do was lay out road and hope they'd pay some attention to where we wanted them to put it. There was no requirement that they put it there.

HKS: I guess that's not too surprising, because it was just at that period that Forest Service timber was becoming important.

RMP: You're right. There'd been some work during the war. They constructed defense access roads during the war, some of them for minerals and some of them for timber. Those were sold somewhat differently. But, you're right, that was the beginning of the willingness, I guess you'd say, in the West to spend money, and the time to get into the mountain area more. They'd pretty much cut the private timber. Before that there'd been a lot of railroads put in. The whole east side of Plumas had railroads.

HKS: And highlead?

RMP: No, not much highlead.

HKS: Oh, I see.

RMP: They'd just take off, go get the timber. Someone said they build a road going and build a road coming [laughter]. During World War II there was not much done in the way of campgrounds or recreation areas, or other facilities, so there really wasn't much need for engineering.

One of my first and major jobs on the Plumas actually was related to water projects, Pacific Gas and Electric was putting in a whole series of hydroelectric projects and we were dealing with the need for releases of water for fish and for wildlife and for recreation. We were also dealing with relocation of facilities. I was heavily involved in my first year with looking at streamfall records and hydrology; to look at low flows and requirements for fish and wildlife and recreation and to specify in the federal power license what the releases should be. There were already some hydroelectric projects on the Plumas, some of them had the releases specified and some did not. There was real concern at that time about having hydroelectric projects with dry streams.

HKS: Were you interested in channel maintenance, just for the record?

RMP: Channel maintenance was something that I don't think we gave a great deal of attention to there because the Plumas has real steep country and the reservoirs weren't very big.

HKS: I see.

RMP: So there was a lot of winter flow that went down the stream. We had plenty of flushing flows, so that was not …

HKS: But you observed that.

RMP: Sure. We knew that there were flushing flows, and we knew that there were the heavy spring flows, and we knew that that was somewhat important to spawning areas for fish, and also the maintenance of the stream channel. The original licenses dealt with the amount of water and the temperature of water during the low flow season. Particularly in California, where it has that big change between winter and summer flows.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: I remember George Newhall, who was a marvelous guy to work with, was kind of a studious guy, somewhat research oriented. In fact since he retired he has authored a book having to do with the effect of sunspots on the weather patterns in the United States. He was quite involved in hydraulics and soil. He'd been a CCC engineer, by the way; he'd graduated during the depression and went to work with the CCC. He was very patient and a very good teacher. He was involved in snow courses and measuring water for irrigation in the valley. Probably I would have gone back to school, I mean I was going to Missouri, had I not had somebody who was appreciative of the work we were doing.

HKS: What did the old time foresters, timber management guys, think of engineers? Where you kind of an ornament in their mind, or were they glad they finally had this technical help?

RMP: I think it was mixed. I didn't feel the resentment or the conflict that later developed, primarily in Region 6, because there was so darn much work to do on the Plumas. The people I worked with were just glad to get some help.

HKS: I see.

RMP: And interestingly enough, some of the real old timers were the best people to work for. I worked with a guy by the name of Buchanan, Buck Buchanan, who was a timber management assistant on the Quincy District of the Plumas. He was an old timer who did not have a professional education, but who really knew what he was doing. At that point the Plumas Forest was just getting covered with USGS quadrangles, and we had these blueline prints out that showed the topography. I was out there with Buck, and we were trying to figure out where we might put a road in. He was thrashing around, and I pulled out this blueline contour map and said "Buck, there's a saddle right up there." He said, "I don't think there's a saddle up there, I've been all over this place." I said, "Well, it shows right here." And so we walked up there and found that saddle.

HKS: He was impressed then.

RMP: Buck said, "Hey, let me look at that thing." Buck became a real firm friend of mine. Every time he had a sale, he would say "Come out and look at that sale with me, I want you to look at it before I lay it out because I want to know if we can get to it or not." He developed real close friendships with a lot of us.

HKS: Was there photogrammetry available?

RMP: Yes, after the war there was a push to do maps. Up till that time there were no contour maps of the Plumas. We had a few in some locations, but they were so poor that they weren't much value. We worked with the blueline prints of the USGS advance sheet. One of the logging bosses looked to me with a great deal of skepticism and wondered what this young guy could have to do with where he wanted to put roads. We went out on the sale, and I had looked at the quadrangle, looked at the sale area, and decided that we might get into an area. He looked at that and he said, "You sure we can do that?" So we thrashed; and the brush is real heavy on that part of the Plumas, really difficult to get around. The brush is higher than the ceiling. You can't see out and it's really tough to get through. So we went through there and it worked out. He said, "I've been thrashing around for two days trying to figure out how to do this." Within a relatively short time he said "You show me where you think we can put them and if it works right I'll put them there." So, not all of them are that way.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: But enough of them began to be willing to pay attention to what we were doing and within about two or three years we didn't have much problem. The fact, maybe, that we couldn't tell them you gotta do it had some advantages because it made you then spend some time with them to convince them this was a good idea rather than just give them something and say "Put it there."

HKS: I talked to the first forester that Weyerhaeuser ever hired. Same problem they had in locating railroads.

RMP: Yes, started building a railroad until they ran into a cliff and then stopped it. They didn't actually do any recon work.

HKS: It seems so obvious now.

RMP: That's right. Then there was another thing we did down at Plumas (realize that we're talking about time when employment's tight, and you're looking for ways to have people work in the winter time). Forest Service employees were starting to look at having a forest where in the summer we could use a lot of junior foresters who we then tried to hire. And without much work to do post season. We had a lot of the junior foresters at that time that were doing timber stand improvement, cutting limbs off the trees to get the good wood on the lower logs. And we had an opportunity then with the state Division of Forests and Parks that was interested in putting in a north and south range hiking trail, which among other things went down into the middle part of the Feather River and up the other side. So I was very much involved and did a lot of layout on what later became the Pacific Crest Trail. Several junior foresters including people like Bill Tickala who has retired from the Forest Service and worked for the AFA, actually worked one of those winters on a trail crew.

HKS: I worked the Crest Trail in the Cascades in the early 1950s. So when was it named the Crest Trail?

RMP: The Pacific Crest Trail was enacted by an act of Congress in the middle 60s, when the Trails Act passed. I was in California at the time. I would guess it was either '65, '66. Anyway, when the National Trails Act was enacted, initial components of that were the Pacific Crest Trail and the Appalachian Trail. And we incorporated part of that Beach Parks Trail into the Pacific Crest Trail.

Cleveland and San Bernardino National Forests

HKS: Did you work on other forests? You went to the regional office …

RMP: I was on the Plumas Forest from '49 till the spring of '53. Almost four years. At that time I moved to the forest engineer on the Cleveland Forest in San Diego.

HKS: Okay, near your sister?

RMP: Yes, she lived in that same town but I think that was somewhat incidental. Maybe the reason that I went to the Cleveland is that I had been involved in those watershed projects and hydrology and all that type of thing, and in fire. Plumas had a lot of fire stuff, and I had worked in the fire organization. For whatever reason, I went to San Diego as forest engineer to supervise their staff in 1953 when Walt Puhn was forest supervisor. Then in '55 I moved from there to the San Bernardino Forest. So you're talking about two forests there that are about as different as you can get. These forests were primarily set aside for watershed protection. Heavy recreation forests. The San Bernardino Forest at that time had more recreation business than any other forests in the system, and it still usually ranks quite high. Both of those forests were involved in those days in looking at how you might reduce the brush cover in selected areas, to both improve water yield and to reduce fire hazard. The Cleveland, for example, only had an administrative officer, and a man to handle fire control and timber, which wasn't very much at all. I handled most of the special uses of watershed management and engineering.

HKS: Was this brush burned off?

RMP: Some of it was burned. Some of it was done with tractors on ridges where we just tried to chew up the brush. The idea was to create grass in those areas so that you'd have a change in vegetation in case you had fires, and where you could use mechanized equipment on those ridges.

HKS: I see.

RMP: Because you couldn't really control fire in Southern California in that brush country most of the time unless you could have water, and you couldn't put people down those ridges without a break of some kind.

HKS: Now the Ponderosa Way, that fire break that the CCCs built, hadn't gotten that far south had it?

RMP: In the South they had what they call a front line fire breaks; for example, there's a fire break that goes back of Pasadena and through all that country on the Angeles and came across and went behind the buildup areas on the San Bernardino. And that was motorized firebreak. The idea was to stop fires that start in one valley from getting into another valley. Then you started having development in the forests and then you had airplanes crashing into the mountain and you had all other kinds of problems. You may remember that the Angeles Forest, beginning with a lot of flood control acts, had a special program for intensified fire protection (and also on the Los Padres Forest) to try to reduce the amount of sedimentation that was coming from those fires. It was filling up reservoirs, water spreading around, and all of that.

We were trying to do some of the same things on the San Bernardino where you identify a ridge that a tractor can work on if you have a fire. You do what is called pre-planning. You pre-plan the whole area, and you figure out how you would chop the country up in small blocks. Then you'd check this ridge, and there'd maybe be just one spot on that ridge that a tractor can't go up or down. We used to call those X-spots. So you'd use a tractor

and work through that spot so that if you had a fire, the two hours it might take to work through that in a fire would be taken care of.

HKS: You must have had plenty of chances to test to see how effective this was.

RMP: Yes. If you check the fires in Southern California, and we did some of that checking in connection with those, every major fire stops either on a road or in the vicinity of a road. You really can't stop a fire out in the middle of a brush field unless it just goes out of its own accord. Now since then, with the advent of advance ignition techniques and so on, they've been able to break that brush off and have a change in fuel on a broader scale. Anytime we could start a fire in the brush, we couldn't stop it. So we had to actually have a piece of equipment there to be able to work with the fire and let it work. You couldn't start a fire.

HKS: You're an engineer, was this unusual what you were doing? I never thought of engineers doing this; I thought of foresters doing this. Did it just happen this way?

RMP: Well, if you look on the Angeles where they did this, and on the Los Padres, fire was assigned to the forestry men in all cases. You're also talking about structures being built with check dams in some of those canyons to hold the sediment. And you're talking about somebody who knows hydrology and soils and who knows what equipment can do. Now the fire people were very much involved in helping plan what was being done. But as far as I know, in all cases the program side of that was assigned to the forest engineer. Maybe one other reason that that was happening was that the equipment that was being used was also equipment that was being used for road maintenance and construction.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: You'd be doing that kind of work during the off seasons. You might have a fire tractor that could be used in a fire, and you assigned a tractor to do road work and this kind of work in the off season. Anyway, Mike Howlett who was on the Angeles at that time and Boyd Fisher who was on the Los Padres as forest engineers did handle that flood control program, advanced work. When I say "that" program, I mean increased manning associated with increased tankers that was handled as part of the fire organization. It was a coordinated plan.

HKS: After a fire goes through, don't you have all kinds of flood problems? What do you do then?

RMP: On the San Bernardino, the Cleveland, and the Angeles, we pioneered some of the early rehabilitation work after fires. There was at that time an emergency fund that was available through the Soil Conservation Service for remedial work after fires. On the Cleveland, when I was there, they had a Coast Guard unit in San Diego. With my Navy background, I was still on Navy reserve and I knew where those people were, I got them to fly those fires after they were out. At that time you couldn't spend fire money, but we flew all those fires and made reports on the fire, what was there, and picked out canyons that might have to have a check dam or something else, and came up with a rehabilitation report which went to Washington. We had special funding to do that. In fact we built a major debris dam on the Cleveland Forest, on the northeastern side of the forest near Elsinore which was above a whole bunch of orchards and homes. The debris basin did do its job and it's still there. It's a protection source.

HKS: When a flood doesn't happen, how do you impress that on Congress? We need some more money, there may yet be another flood.

RMP: In California with so many homes being built in those outwash areas; it's pretty spectacular to see mud going under a house and lifting the floor.

HKS: Yeah.

RMP: When you got one of those fires behind those subdivisions, you didn't have any lack of support for getting the money. There was a major fire on the Angeles, north of Monrovia, and it burned out all those canyons there, all that buildup area. Jim Byrne, who was the regional engineer at that time, pulled together a team of people, which included me from up in the Cleveland and Mike Howlett and others throughout the region. We

moved in and under an emergency authority put up dams in several of those canyons. Interestingly enough, in one of the situations we had some of the dams built before we had the plant finished. [laughter]

I was in charge of the field survey part of it, picking the location for the dam. We had another guy who was doing the design of the dams; then we started the construction. Literally we ran a center line for where we thought the dam ought to be and we had a clearing crew in there clearing that center line before we ever knew the height of the dam or exactly what area it was going to cover. We were doing it under emergency authority. The county of Los Angeles was getting the right of way, and I remember deciding that the only place we could put a dam to protect this one area was right through where a greenhouse was, an operating greenhouse. We started stretching tape across this greenhouse [laughter], the guy running that greenhouse wasn't very happy with that idea. The right of way people from the county of Los Angeles didn't arrive until later. They were working behind us to pick up rights of way where we had decided we needed some dams, and the survey crew of course had to get there first to know where they were going to be. And this guy was very unhappy.

HKS: I imagine.

RMP: The idea that we were going to put a dam in there to take out a couple of his greenhouses. When those were put down, they did do their job, they did protect the area. Then of course there was aerial seeding of the areas that looked like they would need it.

HKS: Jim Byrne is a name I recognize. There's a history of engineering that was put out maybe fifteen years ago with recollections of various people, including Byrne. They talked a lot about World War II and access roads. Byrne was what to you?

RMP: He was the regional engineer. I was of course working for the forest supervisor there, but this team was assembled. The regional forester at that time was Clare Hendee.

This was quite an emergency in Southern California, having an all out burned over country that was laying there right above all those towns. So the regional forester authorized the assembly of this emergency team. I went up there, I think in January of '54, and was there for about five weeks. It was just like a fire, I mean you were under tight time to get in before the winter rains came, and one thing you didn't want was the winter rains coming when you had a dam half-finished.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: So, we finished that fairly soon. The other major thing that was going on in this forest is that we were trying to redo the recreation areas. Recreation areas in Southern California that were operated by the Forest Service at that time, I would say, were a disgrace.

HKS: Were they built by the 3 Cs and then neglected?

RMP: Most of them had been built by the CCCs, There was virtually no maintenance money at all during the war. The facilities were run down. The toilets were a disgrace; the roads had dust six inches deep on them in the middle of the summer because they'd just been roughed out of the woods. When you got light use I suppose this was all right, but some got plenty. It didn't rain all summer. When you drive through one of those campgrounds you would throw up a cloud of dust that would choke anybody that was camped along the side of the road.

We had major water system problems. Mount McGun on the Cleveland had a major water system that was put in there by the CCC, served that whole mountain. It was the only water system on the mountain; all of the summer homes were hooked to it, the resorts were hooked to it, it was now by this time twenty years old. The pipe was getting holes in it, the water supply was inadequate. So I spent a lot of my time on the Cleveland doing recreation. That was probably the single most time-consuming thing I did was trying to improve those recreation programs.

HKS: It sounds like to me that you had an unusual assignment. Within the whole agency, nation-wide, recreation was just becoming important, but you were already heavily involved because of where you were.

RMP: I think on a small forest like the Cleveland, it's kind of all hands of the cook, you know. With only two staff officers beside the administrative officer at the forest level, districts were poorly staffed. They had very little money to work with. Most of the work we got done in recreation was by using fire crews.

HKS: That's a part of their training to use tools and so forth. I guess that was the rationale?

RMP: Another rationale is that if you've got a fire crew, the worse thing you can do is have them just sit there waiting for something to happen. So we regularly used the fire crews to clean the campgrounds. Early in the morning they'd work on trails when they could be away from the truck, maybe. We developed some collapsible forms to be used for construction of campground stoves, and those fire crews would every morning reset those forms and fill them up with concrete and let them set overnight and move on again and in a couple of months time they could redo all the stoves in the campground. And then we brought lumber to where they were, and they built the tables. Realize that those forests had very large fire crews.

HKS: Sure. Ten years later on the Snoqualmie, the fire crews maintained the campgrounds. The patrolmen picked up the garbage. Like you say, they had to stay busy somehow.

RMP: Right. Actually it was one of those things you didn't have any choice. Sam Jarvi who was the forest supervisor on the San Bernardino was really a wonderful human being in that he had a great sense of humor as well as being quite serious. We had something called Barton Flats, which is a timbered area in the San Bernardino. There were fifty some organization camps up there. The kids out of San Bernardino and Los Angeles and Pasadena and all those areas were there all summer. The campgrounds were full and overflowing. As I said, they were a disgrace.

I remember somebody came out from Washington and drove through Barton Flats campground, which was terrible, and started making some comments about it. We oughta do this, we oughta do that, and Sam Jarvi got out of the car and went back and opened the trunk and took out a set of stakes, he said "This is about the fifteenth crew that I've had coming here tell me we oughta do something about this. How about we get some stakes out and let's do something about it. I don't need any more people making windshield cruises, telling me I ought to do something about it. Why don't you give me some money in the budget to do something?" We didn't have enough money to buy materials. That was good experience in a way in that the teamwork on those forests was good.

Research

HKS: You've obviously had interesting and important work and you felt good about that. At the national level we went from Watts to McArdle, while issues like regulation dropped out of sight and research probably became more important. As a forest engineer, were you paying any attention to that?

RMP: I was very much involved in research, interestingly enough, in two places. San Dimas Experimental Forest was in southern California. They were looking at the inter-relationship between brush cover and water yield, which was a big issue in southern California, and they were also involved in trying to figure out more fire resistant plants that could be put in selective areas.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: A guy named Dusty Rand who came out of the guayule project did some of that work. And I used to go over to San Dimas at least once a year. Percy Rowe was in that project at that time along with Sinclair. We used to spend a whole day there finding out what they'd found out. They had sensors on different kinds of soils; water would fall on them and they'd use different plants in there and find out how much water plants

used by figuring out how much came on through. I was very much involved in trying to follow that research. In fact, because I was so involved in that research, involved in hydrology, and helped make some of those analyses of relationships between water yield and run off, when I was back at Harvard University Keith Arnold called me up and asked me to work on the San Dimas forest heading up that project. This was, I thought, quite a change.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: The other person that was on the Cleveland that had been very, very interested in the water side of things was Hamilton Pyles.

HKS: I know the name.

RMP: Okay, Hamilton Pyles, interestingly enough, was an engineer who came through Fire out of CCCs.

HKS: We interviewed him about fifteen years ago.

RMP: We did a water primer on the Cleveland Forest, which is probably the best thing that had been written in years and years about the relationship between land management and water. It was specifically directed toward district rangers and others, and it's a real classic. He did a lot of work with the city of San Diego about being concerned about fire protection because of the extreme amount of siltation they were getting on the reservoirs. He did, pretty much by himself, the early work.

Anyway I was very interested in research. I was also interested in research from the standpoint of the Forest Products Laboratory. I read some stuff about the Forest Products Laboratory, and about their work on wood of various kinds. Because we were starting to rebuild a few facilities and getting a little money for recreation, I was trying to see what we knew about paints and stains and performance of wood in different kinds of conditions and so on. Then in the spring of 1955 I went back to the Forest Products Lab for at least a week, maybe two weeks, training session there. Then I was asked by the regional forester, which was probably Connaughton by then, and by Keith Arnold, to serve on a little panel that they had at Berkeley that was looking at future research needs. I was one of only two or three from the National Forest System side of things to be invited. I don't know why they saw me as somebody who needed to know more about research, but I found that very interesting, to look at future research teams.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: I was very intrigued at that point at how you really decide what you should look at in research. How do you look ahead fifteen or twenty years for the major problem, as well as for the current problems? I was not involved in the state crowd that much except in southern California. The California Division of Forestry was a major, major player in wildlife and fire protection. During those years I served on about sixty class-E fires, which included the California Division of Forestry and other cooperators. I was very aware of this cooperative thing and the fact that the Forest Service somehow was putting some money into this, but I didn't know much about it.

HKS: Were you seeing people like yourself from other forests, or was this somehow "Peterson was called in there and got the opportunity"?

RMP: No. I saw, particularly in southern California, I guess I would say there was probably better teamwork between engineering people and others on the forest. I didn't ever have any feel for the kinds of conflicts that later developed for some reason between what engineers were doing and what foresters were doing. That whole thing was foreign for me as a concept.

HKS: I could tell you about that.

RMP: I knew about it later, I was very much involved in it when I did that national study on the use of engineers in the Forest Service. In fact there was a move afoot at that point, in some quarters, to create a separate branch of engineering. You probably remember some of that.

HKS: I graduated in 1957, and we had civil engineers on the district. They reported to the supervisor, not to the ranger.

RMP: The forest engineer.

HKS: I don't want to distract you.

RMP: There were a lot of fires in southern California, and in all cases the forest engineer was an important part of that fire organization. Fires build teamwork in an organization.

HKS: Oh sure.

RMP: So I got acquainted not only with other forests, but with California Division of Forestry people and other organizations. I didn't have any feeling that somehow being an engineer I was different. Maybe because I was born inside a forest too, I'd spent a lot of time in a forest, I never saw engineering as an end to itself. It was a means to an end, to do the job.

HKS: The distinction between line and staff wasn't significant as far as you were concerned?

RMP: No.

HKS: You were a staff officer.

RMP: Yes, but I had a larger organization than most people have.

HKS: You started at the national forest level. Most foresters would have started on a ranger district.

RMP: I went to every ranger district, and we sat down and reviewed the condition of all our roads, and the priorities for road maintenance, and which road they needed opened first in the spring, which ones they thought were in bad. We had a condition survey that we'd done. We developed the work program for the road maintenance and road construction for campgrounds, rehabilitation and so on, and it wasn't any problem. In most cases we were using a central crew to do that because we simply couldn't afford a crew on each district. That was just a way of life there. In southern California you had high-country districts and low-country districts, and it would have made no sense at all to try to have a separate crew on each district to do road maintenance. While you needed two or three crews in the low country early in the spring, if you had them up on the other district they'd be sitting there unable to get out of the yard.

Wilderness Installations

HKS: What other kinds of things did you work on? Fire was a major part.

RMP: Fire was a major part, and recreation was a major part. Special use permits of various kinds were an important part of my job, because, for example San Diablo Peak on the Cleveland Forest, at that time was the single most important available peak for all kinds of electronic transmission.

HKS: Military or civilian?

RMP: Everything. AT&T was putting in major installations because from San Diablo you're sitting back, you're looking into Los Angeles, you're looking into Orange County, you're looking at San Bernardino and Riverside and

you also could see San Diego. Mount Wilson was not as good as San Diablo Peak to observe those places. We got into a huge series of conflicts on San Diablo peak because everybody wanted the top of the mountain.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: We didn't have an adequate road up there to serve all those people. We had all kinds of conflicts between different frequencies because you had harmonics off the frequencies. When you get electronic sites in close proximity you have an electric field around those.

HKS: So FCC doesn't deal with that issue.

RMP: FCC issues the frequency, and as long as you've got frequency separation they're all right. They don't deal with on site electronic affairs.

HKS: I see, they're sort of theorists back there at FCC.

RMP: As far as they're concerned, if the electronic spectrum says that there's an open frequency there, you can be allocated the frequency. We didn't get involved in allocating frequencies, but when you try to start putting that all on a mountain … We had everybody wanting to be higher than everybody else. Then we had everybody wanting to be on a mountain whether they needed to be up there or not.

HKS: So somebody would come to the Forest Service and say, "I want to build a tower." And you'd approve the plan?

RMP: They'd need a permit to put it on Forest Service land.

HKS: But the permit included your judgment that it was going to be a viable facility?

RMP: We set up an electronic advisory group. We called it the users advisory group, which represented everybody that was on the mountain. Then we built a plan for the mountain that worked out separation between these frequencies. They had to go into a special vaulting systems and so on in order to be able to protect it from electric field kinds of things. Then we started saying, "Hey, you don't need to be on this mountain to serve your use." You can be on another mountain. If you're the Riverside County Sheriff, you don't need to be on top of that mountain. We made a whole land use plan for all those peaks down through there and categorized the peaks in terms of whether you need 360 degree coverage or whether you need just partial coverage of a particular area. We then went into reviewing the requests to decide whether they could be on that peak. You see, once you have frequency, that doesn't guarantee you any use of land.

HKS: I understand that.

RMP: So they had to have a permit from us to be on the mountain, regardless of whether they had a frequency assigned.

HKS: But the Forest Service in some way assumed the responsibility that there wasn't chaos.

RMP: We didn't have much choice because of what suddenly happened. The reason I got into this to begin with was the telephone company wanted to be on top of San Diablo Peak. They wanted to replace our lookout in order to put all their microwave stuff in, which was brand new then.

HKS: There was a good road up there already?

RMP: No, there was a very poor road. You could only get up by jeep the last mile or two. Well, we agreed and we gave them a permit to replace our tower before I got there. They built the lookout, probably the most fancy lookout that was ever built for the Forest Service on top of this microwave station complete with running water, electric lights, the whole bit. But whoever designed it decided they ought to build this like an airport control tower, you know, with the slanted windows.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Well several things happened. Nobody worried about the fact that you had horizontal rain up there on top of that mountain when you get wind blowing, and so the thing wasn't water tight. The fact that the windows were slanted, a cloud would project down and look like a fire, look like smoke. And so it was almost a nonfunctional tower.

HKS: But it was attractive.

RMP: Very attractive. About that time all these other people wanted to go up there. Of course they all wanted to be on top where this lookout was, because if they were off to the side the lookout was a barrier for a particular …

HKS: Sure.

RMP: We sort of by default got into that. I didn't know enough about the subject to do this, but the district ranger knew less about it. That was in my portfolio working with the district ranger, and we set up this user's advisory group. Every time a request would come in, we'd refer it to them for comment. And one of these guys would go back and said if you allow that, the harmonic off of that is going to clobber us unless you do this.

HKS: You had public land in a sort of a quasi-reservation. You couldn't have recreation access. Was this a conflict of interest, did people complain about it, or did people understand?

RMP: That was not a big deal. There was a special gas filter station at Mount Laguna on the Cleveland Forest that was built by the Air Force. It was one of these super secret stations. They called it a weather station, but everybody knew what it was because there were 250 people up there. [laughter] It had a fence around it; I guess it's still there. In fact, the Bureau of Prisons was talking about putting prisoners there a few years ago; it had been abandoned long since by the Air Force.

During the time I was on the San Bernardino, it was my first experience with a conflict between wilderness and these kinds of uses. We had a colonel come in from the Army to the office in San Bernardino. He said he had orders to put in one of those gas filter stations on Mount San Gorgonio. Mount San Gorgonio is the highest in southern California, 11,500 plus feet, and it was also in the middle of the Big San Gorgonio Wilderness. It had been administrated as a district. This was probably '56 or '57. He says "We have orders to go to the top of San Gorgonio and put a testing facility up there by Christmas if it covers the area we need. We've got to have an operating installation up there." And I said, "That's in the middle of a wilderness area." And he said, "That doesn't matter, we have instructions from the President to put this thing up there."

HKS: We're about ready for Sputnik and so forth, in that era.

RMP: This was the late '50s, right about the time we started to talk about missile gaps. I suspected they wanted Mount San Gorgonio, because the whole Edwards Air Force base country's right north of there, and they were starting to do things there, testing supersonic aircraft, some of your special electronics stuff and so on. Well, I told the guy, "You know there isn't any road anywhere near the top of Mount San Gorgonio, and you've got to overcome about 6,000 feet in elevation. Besides that it's a wilderness, and we aren't about to give you permission to go up there." This guy was kind of obnoxious. He'd gone in and talked to the forest supervisor and he called me up, this was Sam Jarvi. This guy had literally put his feet on the supervisor's desk while he was telling him that he was going to put this thing up there. [laughter] Jarvi said something to the effect "I've got more important things to do than talk to you about this, Max will take care of it." That was his way. [laughter]

HKS: You had a tramway from Palm Springs too; you had a lot going on there.

RMP: That happened after I was there. But anyway, I said to the guy, "Why do you need to be up there? What are you trying to cover?" He said, "That's top secret." I said, "Well I don't have top secret clearance but I have

a secret clearance from the Navy," because I was in the Navy Reserves still, and so I showed him my clearance. I said, "Maybe we can help you figure out a way to do what you're trying to do that may not involve San Gorgonio, if you can tell me what you're trying to do." We had one of those big relief maps out in the reception area, that was built during the CCCs, and it shows all of those peaks around there. So I said, "Now if you really just need to cover Edwards Air Force Base area and the desert, through that way and on to the north, Tip Top Peak here will not only cover that area, but there's already a road there and there's already a power supply. And you can drive up there today." And the guy said, "Well I was told Mount San Gorgonio was the only peak that would serve our purpose." I said, "Let me suggest you go to Tip Top Peak and you don't have to tell me what you're doing. You go up to Tip Top Peak and do your testing and if that does your job for you, then we don't have a problem." He went to Tip Top Peak and he tested and he covered his area and that problem disappeared. [laughter] But that was my first brush with the military.

Small Watersheds

HKS: Let's talk about water problems.

RMP: I'd be embarrassed because it involves people who later became important in the scheme of things. Public Law 566 had passed, which was a "small watershed" program.

HKS: I've heard of that.

RMP: This was a sort of sequel to the flood control act of 1944, which set up the projects on the Angeles and the San Bernardino.

HKS: But by small watershed, it's not the Missouri River Valley.

RMP: No, small. Small watersheds were usually watersheds of a few thousand acres. It was handled by the Soil Conservation Service, not the Corps of Engineers or the Bureau of Reclamation. The important thing about 566 is that it was an attempt to combine less treatment with structural measures. In other words it was a combination of trying to stabilize things in place, and then with some structural measures to supplement that. One of the people that was very important in PL 566 passage was a guy by the name of Ted Silverwood. Ted Silverwood is the person at the big reservoir in southern California that became part of the California water plant, north of San Bernardino, is named after. And he was a resident of Redlands, was a good friend of Sam Jarvi. He was pushing that project primarily because he wanted to do something about the flood and fire frequency in the San Bernardino Mountains, because he knew the program was ample to the Angeles but was up to the San Bernardino. After the small watershed project passed, we developed what we called the Upper Chino project. The person that was assigned by the Soil Conservation Service to handle their side of that planning was Einar Roget.

HKS: Who's that?

RMP: Einar Roget (who I didn't see from the time we finished that for about almost twenty years) became state conservationist in New Mexico, then became president of the Soil and Water Conservation Society of America. I guess at that time it was called something else, but anyway, he became president of that. He was recruited by Tom Nelson later to be an associate deputy chief of State and Private, and then became associate deputy to me when I was in P&L, then became deputy chief of State and Private. I really didn't have anything to do with bringing him aboard. I had met him there as we did the Upper Chino plan. It was a plan for all those foothill watersheds, a combination of land treatment and intensified fire protection and fire breaks and all that, as well as some water spreading basins to put the water into the underground rather than running off. And some debris protection. An interesting thing about that, that's the largest project that was ever planned under PL 566 umbrella, and was so large that Congress decided there wouldn't be any projects that big anymore.

HKS: Why did Congress care?

RMP: Because it was bigger than anything they had in mind, because of the dollar cost was bigger.

HKS: The cost.

RMP: That's right. When they thought about the small watershed project, they were thinking about something that cost maybe 50-100 thousand dollars, and we were talking about a project here that was somewhere maybe in the 50 million dollar range, something like that. But interestingly enough, the whole thing's been built up under county and state and other. If you go there you'll find the Upper Chino project is in place, but it was never done as a small watershed.

Fire Control

RMP: Then the other person that reported to the staff down at San Bernardino, same as I did, was Charlie Yates, who went on to be regional forester in Alaska. He didn't report there the same day I did, but he reported there almost the same. He reported to Region 5, was deputy regional forester by the time I ever arrived there as regional engineer. That was the first place that I ran on to a conflict between the previous fire control officer and a guy that handled engineering. It wasn't as much of a conflict between them as it was one that was based in the regional office. We were beginning to build some fire roads to try to open up access to some of that back country.

HKS: Congress appropriated money especially for fire?

RMP: Yeah, in particular southern California. Right after some of those disastrous fires, they said it's time we got some access in that country, so they appropriated some special money. We were also getting a little recreation money at the time, too. Well, Charlie was the kind of manager of fire organization, and he had these two big hotshot crews. But hotshot crews came aboard at the time the fire station started, and then immediately after Labor Day they disappeared, and then you'd have a lot of fires still.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: So we sat down and said, "We need to cut the brush where those roads are going to go and we need to do a lot of other hand work on those roads, so why don't we have the fire crew do that?" Then we could bring the fire crew on earlier and could beef up the size of the fire crew. Then we'd rotate those hotshot crews in and out of there, you see, because you really can't put somebody cutting brush week after week in that country, and really get any production out of them. It was costing us a young fortune to get that done by contract.

If somebody hired crew and told them we're going to have you cut brush in the mountains for the next few weeks, in about two days they're gone. It's hot, it's dry, there's snakes, it's a long ways from anywhere. But we had quarters for the hotshot crews right there on the forest, you see, barracks, so it made sense. We put them to work to do that, and Charlie and I cooked this up. Sam Jarvi was all for it, so we were financing these hotshot crews coming a little early, and also expanding the size of them. Because we reasoned that we were getting the amount of work we were paying for out of road money, and he was getting a hotshot crew, a bigger and better hotshot crew coming earlier and so on. We couldn't see anything wrong with that. Finally this reached the regional office, and they said, "How in the hell are you using road money to finance a hotshot crew? This is illegal. You can't be doing that, you've got to quit doing that."

HKS: Was this the engineer, fire control, or the bean counter?

RMP: I think this was the fiscal people that first got into it.

HKS: Fiscal people, okay.

RMP: They saw a hotshot crew come through all charged to road funds. They said, "You can't pay hotshot crews out of road funds." The other problem we ran into at that point that caused consternation was if you were hiring a road crew to do this, they were wage rate people, and the fire crew people were GS people. So they were going to raise the question as to whether we could do this. At that time we began to use some of the circular saws as well as some of the chain saws. This is excellent training for those people, you know. Anyway, we had to go through several gyrations and finally somebody decided that it wasn't wrong. If we'd accepted the first no, which neither Charlie nor I were willing to do, we would have discontinued that to the disadvantage of the government and the disadvantage of everybody, just because somebody was saying you can't do it that way. And there isn't any reason why you can't do it that way.

HKS: If you had asked first they would have said no.

RMP: If we had asked first they would have said no. Charlie Yates later on was to be deputy regional forester at the time I was regional engineer in California, and was later going to be regional forester in Alaska. Then Einar Roget came in here, as I mentioned before. Another person that was involved there in an indirect way was Red Nelson. I got pretty well acquainted with him because he was in charge of fire control in Region 5 at that time. He moved to Washington as assistant chief, I guess, to Gustafson. I didn't really know him that well but I'd seen him on a lot of fires, and I knew he was vaguely somewhere in the hierarchy. At one point his assistant had been Sam Jarvi, who was now the forest supervisor. I think we called it the *Green Sheet* at that time, this little information thing that came out of Washington, and it had this notice that Harvard University was granting fellowships in a couple of different things. And Red Nelson had folded that out and sent a note to Sam Jarvi, saying "I think Max ought to apply for this. We've never been able to get a Forest Service candidate in yet."

HKS: I've got Harvard on my list of questions.

RMP: That's the genesis, really, of how I went to Harvard, because I don't think I would have ever given that a second thought.

HKS: Well, a couple more questions about … was there much private land on the Cleveland/San Bernardino

RMP: Yeah, both.

HKS: And did the state have fire jurisdiction or did you have an agreement that you handle all fire on all lands?

RMP: We had an exchange agreement with them where we handled certain lands and they handled certain lands. And then we had so-called initial attack zones where we took initial attack and they took initial attack. The cooperation was really good with the state of California at that point. The real problem we had, which I did get in the middle of, sounds silly now, but you realize the fire hydrants that were in different jurisdictions had different threads at that time?

HKS: No I didn't. It doesn't surprise me at all.

RMP: It took twenty-five years to change that. The cities had put in different kinds of fire hydrants and different kinds of threads and it was going to cost quite a bit of money to change them. So on all the fire trucks we had to carry different kinds of adapters to fit different kinds of fire hydrants, and you ran a real risk of running a tanker in to fill up with water or running a fire truck in to hook onto a fire hydrant and find out that you couldn't, it wouldn't work. We also had a big communications problem because our frequencies didn't match their frequencies; we didn't have any way to cross talk. We began to do things, we figured out if we had one of their speakers and they had one of our speakers, we could talk without either one talking on the other one's frequency.

HKS: Sure, I see that.

RMP: The FCC would not, and neither would the state, have given us their frequencies. If they had, we'd have had to install another radio in our vehicles because we were using a fixed crystal radios, and they weren't

tunable. They had two channels on them. So we set up that system of being able to talk without using each other's frequency. That actually was the forerunner of what came later.

HKS: So any cooperation you had with the state was an ad hoc deal, you worked it out yourself. The actual formal cooperation hadn't taken place like the inter-agency outfit in Boise.

RMP: Oh no. Boise and Reeves fire center came when I was in Atlanta, much later. We had agreements with the state, and we had agreements on initial attack zones and reinforcements and all that type thing, but it was within region.

Even with those speakers and so on, it was really difficult. You might have ten jurisdictions on one fire and ten sets of frequencies, so you couldn't really exchange that many radios. So what we were doing really was trying to cobble up something. We didn't have standard maps, so it was very easy for people to get lost, particularly when you're trying to direct them up some national forest roads in the middle of the night. You try to use place names or even road numbers, but there was a high probability that people would get lost. So we went to standardized maps and went into grid system and so on. We on the San Bernardino Forest had standardized maps for our fire organizations by taking the USGS quads and bumping the ones up to a common scale and bringing the others down, so we'd have a common map base for all the people to use.

Then they went into this sophisticated way of interchanging communications, including the communication with aircraft which was also another big problem—how to communicate with aircraft on fires. And we were beginning the real use of aircraft on fires. Keith Arnold had come down to head up Operation Fire Stop, you're aware of that, and I was involved a little bit with him, that's the first time I got acquainted with Keith. We did some early work with helicopters. We did some things with helicopters that probably later on turned out to be not a good idea. We laid a lot of hose with helicopters across brush land.

HKS: We have a film on history of fire technology, and Fire Stop footage on hose laying is in there. You're saying that … this was an open field, this was a test, but it didn't always work out …

RMP: We were laying hose in a brush fields. It's okay, but you realize you've got a tail rotor back there, and you've got to be sure when you lay that hose out that you don't get it hooked in the tail rotor. You've also got to be real careful the hose plays out okay. If suddenly it hangs up somewhere, you've suddenly got an anchor on the helicopter. Anyway, we did quite a bit of the earlier work there with the helicopter on the San Bernardino and Cleveland Forest. We also hit fires using the bucket, and that was the beginning of the use of fire retardants. We didn't know a whole lot about fire retardants.

HKS: I was at a fire in 1958 on the Snoqualmie and we used crop dusters that dropped borate.

RMP: We were close to the San Dimas Equipment Development Center. San Dimas was always wanting to try out whatever they had, whether it was a rain seeder or whether it was some kind of fire equipment. They always wanted to try it out on the San Bernardino or the Angeles or the Cleveland. The San Bernardino had more different kinds of terrain. So we ended up with a lot of the early testing work. I remember we were testing the dropping of borate, and we were trying to figure out the pattern from different elevations. We took a picnic table and set it up on this old airstrip as a place where we wanted to start in releasing the borate. Then we put down one foot square panels so we could look at the way the drop distribution was, its pattern, how long it was, how wide it was, and all that from different elevations.

HKS: And the table was the target for the pilot.

RMP: The table was the target for the pilot to start his drop. To our consternation, when he made the first drop it just splintered that table all to pieces. [laughter] Right before that there had been a firefighter that claimed to have been knocked off a ridge by a borate plane, but everybody thought he had probably gotten scared. When that table splintered, we recognized that the borate ball coming out of those airplanes was breaking up on the outer edges, but in the center of that there was a solid piece of water, which practically had no compressibility. Anyway, that was the first time that I and several others ever recognized that we had a real problem there with safety and people on the ground.

HKS: That fire that I was on in 1958, we didn't take any evasive action with the dropping, but shortly after that there was a memo to get out of the way. You probably thought that out.

RMP: We had to have done that either in '57 or '58 because I left the San Bernardino in the fall of '58 and we did it while I was still there. We did the testing and found out that ball.

HKS: We were supposed to hide behind a tree or something.

RMP: Get out of the way of that thing. We instructed the pilots not to drop water directly on fire fighters, not to drop borate directly on firefighters. We also got involved in trying to put in equipment to handle borate, to fill those planes fast. That's a major problem.

HKS: I've seen that in airports.

RMP: There was no equipment that anyone was building at that time to handle that … That borate was almost mud, the crop dusters are basically handling water with a little insecticide in them. The characteristics of that is entirely different from that borate. Borate was plugging up valves, it put lots of friction in the system, and it's abrasive.

HKS: Borate was eliminated, I mean, it killed some apple orchards.

RMP: One of the early things they used was bentonite. They experimented with a whole bunch of different things till they came to the stuff that's being used now. Anyway, San Bernardino was a good time for me in that we were involved in a whole lot of different things, and also in the Cleveland to an extent, with Operation Firestop, with recreation just beginning. While I was on the San Bernardino, Operation Outdoors got underway, and we started getting a fair amount of money to rehabilitate recreation areas.

Harvard

HKS: If you hadn't gone to Harvard you probably would have stayed there quite a bit longer.

RMP: I was very happy there. I wasn't particularly interested in going anywhere. We had four kids at that time.

HKS: I see their picture on the wall.

RMP: We had four kids, and our son when we left to go to Harvard was less than a year old. The other kids were four, six, and eight. So if somebody had come to me and said do you want to go off to a year at Harvard, do you realize this was before the government employee training act, so you go on leave without pay.

HKS: Is that right?

RMP: You're going to get a fellowship at Harvard, but by the time you pay your tuition and everything out of it there isn't a whole lot left. I would probably say this is financially unfeasible.

HKS: Yes.

RMP: But, they said you should apply for this, so I thought well heck, I applied for it and passed the region and went on to the chief's office and passed the chief's office. First thing I got finally was in August a congratulatory letter from Harvard that I'd been admitted to the water resources program. They had two programs, land use and water resources, and I was admitted to water resources program.

HKS: In what department? Engineering?

RMP: No, no, the School of Public Administration.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: It was at Litterer Center. In fact, I took both the water resources program and the land use program, since I could write my own curriculum there. I participated with John Sander, who was there as a fellowship, and also with several people from SCS, and also with a Forest Service researcher, his name escapes me. But that turned out to be a very good experience because I could take the courses that I felt the need of then. I took courses in land use planning, and soils, and hydrology, and participated in the Harvard Forest stuff there and with their planning processes.

HKS: You had a lot of experience and you had notions of your own. What was it like in school? Was it theory? Did it make sense? Did you learn a lot?

RMP: I learned quite a bit since I could take courses that I liked, or I felt a need for. I took a course in economics taught by Professor John D. Black.

HKS: A name I've heard.

RMP: John Kenneth Galbraith had been a professor there, but he left to go join the Kennedy campaign. And so John D. Black came out of retirement to teach economics.

HKS: I think he taught Hank Vaux.

RMP: He taught Hank economics. And he was probably one of the best people that I ever dealt with in terms of not only knowing the theory of economics but how to apply them from a practical standpoint. A member of that seminar was Otto Eckstein who went on to be a member of the president's Council of Economic Advisors and founded Data Resources, Inc. He was a member of that seminar, he was an assistant professor.

HKS: That's pretty solid stuff.

RMP: It was real good stuff. Since I had all this math, economics was duck soup, you know, all those curves and all that kind of stuff. I knew the formula without even reading the stuff so that made economics really easy for me. I took a graduate course in hydraulics in which I was looking primarily at the forest areas and so on in hydrology. I took another course in soils from Arthur Casa Grande, who is probably to soils what Aldo Leopold was to wildlife.

HKS: I'm not familiar with that name, but …

RMP: Casa Grande, and then I took a course from Maas, Arthur Maas in resource planning. He had been heavily involved in primarily in the water kinds of arguments resource planning.

HKS: He wrote the book …

RMP: He was the author of the book *Muddy Waters*. A professor in government who was really good was John Gaus, who did his graduate work on the US Department of Agriculture, and he was quite familiar with the Forest Service. I was involved with Harvard Forest, and that land use seminar. I did two major papers and one was on fire flood sequence in California and the whole hydrologic side and the economic side of that. Then I did another major paper on multipurpose resource planning as it related to water resources. I got heavily involved in multipurpose economics and all those theories of assigning costs and so on.

HKS: That was pretty early. I mean there weren't other people working on that yet.

RMP: That was just be beginning of Senate Document 95, the senate document that became the bible for planning of multipurpose projects. The guy that wrote that came down to Washington after I had gone to Montana and came back and helped write that document—Maynard Hucksmith.

HKS: What were people like Zivnuska and Vaux working on in those days, was this …

RMP: I read some of Vaux's work. I don't remember reading any of Zivnuska's stuff at the time, but Henry Vaux was well-known. Zivnuska was pretty well in the timber side of it, but Vaux had written quite a bit in multi-purpose stuff, and then the other guy that was, I read one of his books at that time, was John, Resources for the Future.

HKS: Krutilla.

RMP: John Krutilla. There was a book by Krutilla and Eckstein. Arnold Eckstein was a member of the Harvard seminar, and he'd written this book with Krutilla called *Multipurpose Resource Economics* or something like that. It was practically the bible at that time on the whole business of multipurpose economics. I first met John Krutilla and I was talking about his book; he was astounded that I knew anything about his book. I told him it was one of our books at Harvard University. Anyway, that was a tough time, I'd been out of school for nine years, and now I was in school, in graduate school, and every one of those courses I was in had people majoring in those fields. In other words, when I was in hydrology I was an undergraduate; all the other students there were graduate students in hydrology. When I was in economics, all the other students were graduates in economics. I think the thing that carried us through that was the fact we had some experience, and so that turned out to be very good, we did quite well in there.

HKS: You got your degree in one year?

RMP: Yes. With the number of years' experience we had and with the one year of academic work and the completion of those papers, we got a graduate degree in public administration.

HKS: You didn't go back to California, you went to Montana?

RMP: When I left San Bernardino, I was going to be gone essentially a year. It didn't make any sense to me to think about going back there, because I knew they had to have somebody doing that job.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: So I said "Why don't you just fill that job and don't worry about me when I get out next year." I didn't realize that I was kind of entering no-man's land, though. [laughter] Because the next spring, I think it was about February, I got a call from Keith Arnold wanting me to take that job in San Dimas. I did not see myself as a researcher; I did not see that as being something I was interested in doing as a career. So I thanked Keith for the offer, and he said, "Why don't you at least look at the job description?" I said sure. Meantime another thing entered the picture and that was that Harvard University decided that they wanted about three of us to stay back there another year, to complete the new book on multipurpose resource management, and do a follow-up seminar. They had a grant from Rockefeller. I really didn't know what I wanted to do then. I didn't particularly want to do it, but I thought well, I guess that's up to the powers that be to decide, so I then told Keith that I really didn't want to take that job, I appreciated it and all that, but I really didn't want to take it. Meantime Easter had come, I didn't know where I was going, and so I contacted the personnel officer in California, McCutcheon, and asked, "Where am I going to go when I get out of here?"

HKS: This is the first year.

RMP: Yes. I didn't stay the second. I said to McCutcheon, "Where am I going to go? And what's going to happen to this request that Harvard University made to the chief to have me stay another year?" McCutcheon didn't know anything about the letter to the chief to have me stay another year, and … I was just sort of waiting to hear from somebody. I was beginning to wonder in what direction I was going to head because I had my furniture stored in San Bernardino and so on. Harvard got a letter which they showed to me, signed by

Harper for the chief, saying they were sorry but they couldn't delay assigning me to an important research job in southern California to be there for another year.

HKS: Keith Arnold was busy at work here, it looks like.

RMP: Back in the Fall, October or something, I had received an offer from Region 1 to be assistant regional engineer, responsibility primarily in water sanitation and that whole non-road side. I had written back saying I was not going to be available until next June. I had gotten informal word that they weren't really that hot for me to go out there, that they really had their own candidate but that the chief's office was telling them that they ought to have me go out there. And having to go into Region 1 with them thinking not thinking it was such a hot idea didn't strike me as being a very solid thing.

Anyway, here I am at Easter and I don't know where I'm going to go. I get this letter saying I'm going to be assigned to research projects. So I called Jack Kern, who was a training officer in Washington, and said Jack, "I'm confused, what in the world is going on here? I did not accept a job in southern California, I told Pete I didn't think this was the right job for me. I was offered a job in Region 1 which I turned down, I need to know which way to head my furniture." And he said, "I don't know where you're going to go." So that gave me a good warm feeling. [laughter] During the Easter break, since we had vacation time, I came to Washington and worked for a week, and ran onto Clayton Crocker who was the personnel officer in Region 1. He said, "Young man, why did you turn down coming to Region 1?" I said, "You know this was last fall, and I didn't figure you wanted to keep the job open. I got the word informally that you had your own candidate and you really didn't want me." He said, "That's not true. In fact," he said, "we still haven't filled the job. We'd like to have you take it." I said, "It's all right with me." So that's the genesis of going to Region 1. It was that meeting with Clayton Crocker.

HKS: And if you hadn't gone to Washington for Easter vacation and met Crocker …

RMP: I don't know what would have happened? This made me very sensitive after I came into the Washington office, and after I became chief, of paying attention to people you send off to school. Two things, I made the regions guarantee that if they sent anybody to advanced education they were responsible for the placement of them. That they would take them back. At that time you could find somebody who maybe was not quite as good at things as people thought they ought to be, to send them off to school to sort of get them out of their hair. It's a cop-out.

HKS: I was working for the experiment station in Portland, and as far as I understood the Forest Service was going to send me to Yale for a Ph.D. in fire meteorology. I decided to go back to school and become a historian instead. But I would have had an obligation to work three years for the agency for every one year in school. Obviously someone said I was going to go back to work for the Forest Service.

RMP: Not the way I went.

HKS: No, that was before that, that was before the act.

RMP: Well, interestingly enough I accepted going back to Harvard in the spring. I was notified in May that I'd been accepted to the thing at Harvard. Then in July, the Government Employees Training Act passed.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: July of 1958. I'd already accepted going to Harvard under this fellowship. We got back there to school, and saw people from several agencies there. Every agency except USDA had put their people under the Government Employees Training Act. Here I was there with two guys from Forest Service and three or four from SCS, and none of us were under the Government Employees Training Act, and here's all these other people from Tennessee Valley Authority, Bureau of Reclamation, Corps of Engineers, whole bunch of other agencies who were. Several of the SCS people felt that it was really a poor idea to have this kind of inequity between people under the same program. They wrote a letter to SCS, and got what must be one of the very

classic replies of all time about Christmas time from SCS saying "Had this been a competitive selection under the Government Employees Training Act, we might have selected somebody else."

HKS: I see, so you're lucky.

RMP: Now, wasn't that a nice answer. And that infuriated me, that SCS would send their people that kind of response. Here's people on leave without pay, going back to school with the idea they're going back to the agency, had that kind of commitment to the agency, and the agency was saying in return, we may have selected somebody else, therefore we're not going to do anything. In the meantime, we didn't get an answer from the Forest Service. John Sandor had written because John has been district manager at Juneau and probably for him it may have been a very significant, probably a very costly move to Juneau. We didn't get any allowance to move or anything like that, you know.

HKS: I didn't know that.

RMP: No allowances at all. He had written a letter and we didn't even get a response. So I sat down and wrote one of the toughest letters I've ever written saying that the Forest Service has every right to say yes or no. We came here based on those conditions we'd be under a fellowship. But here all these other agencies had put their people under the Government Employees Training Act, and we're simply asking you the question of what you're going to do; and two and a half months later, we haven't even gotten a response. It sure puts the Forest Service in an unfavorable light compared to other agencies, when you can't even come up with a decision. And in about a month, I guess, after that we got a response that said they would put us under the Government Employees Training Act beginning I think in March. It was way after Christmas by the time we got an answer. In order to get that, we had to give up the fellowship for that period. Well Harvard said they don't give fellowships for a few months; if you're going to give it up, you gotta give it up the whole semester. [laughter] When the dust all settled, all we really gained by going on the Government Employees Training Act is that we, by being on the payroll, started accumulating a little leave.

HKS: Who signed the letter in the Washington office? I mean, was it at the chief's level or …

RMP: Yes, it was …

HKS: Must have been McArdle.

RMP: No, it was not McArdle. I don't know if McArdle knew anything about this, but it was not McArdle. In fact, when we had gone back to school, we went in and had an audience with McArdle, and we were only supposed to go in to see him for five minutes. They said he's very busy you can only see him for five minutes.

McArdle started waxing eloquent about his days in graduate school. He said when he went back to graduate school his boss immediately proceeded him, he was working in State and Private Forestry at that time, and I don't know who his boss was, but he said his boss was a great, big, tall, very stern person and he came to visit McArdle. He was up at Yale for some reason, came in to visit McArdle. He said they let him in a one-bedroom apartment and they had either one or two kids then, and he said all they had in the living room is what they called a sanitary couch. It was anything but sanitary, made into a bed and all. And he said his wife was getting ready for all these people had just stuck a whole bunch of toys under the couch. This couch had this big sag in it, so he had turned this couch upside down and put a whole bunch of wire in there and tightened it up to hold this couch up so it would be something you'd sit on, it wouldn't have such a depression in it. So he said this man came in and visited with him, and they ushered him over to sit on this couch, which was the best thing they had, and he sat down on the couch, and his weight tripped that thing [laughter]. It stood him up on his head in the corner. That tickled his kids to death, and he said he and his wife and kids all died laughing. He said this guy stood up and brushed himself off and never cracked a smile. Anyway the only reason I had to tell you that story is that years later when I was chief, I always remembered that little hunk of time. So anytime somebody from the field, or somebody going to school came in to see me, I tried to spend some uninterrupted time with them.

HKS: Sure, that makes a difference.

RMP: I figured they might never be in a chief's office again. Whatever impression they were going to get came from that, so I told them, "Do not interrupt me during this time unless it's important, unless it's the secretary or something. And give him some coffee, make him feel like we're a good host here." That came from that visit with McArdle. After I became chief, he was still there. He would write me these notes, and he would say, "I know you're busy and you don't have to even acknowledge this, but I just got to thinking about this." Inevitably it would be something very interesting, and maybe a very thoughtful suggestion. I never failed to both answer those and call him. He was a very, very considerate person. I'll tell you one little thing about the 1960 World Forestry Congress. I've been to every World Forestry Congress since 1960 except the one in Spain. I have no idea why I went to the one in 1960; I had just gotten to Missoula in '59. I was involved there with the earthquake, which is another story.

Montana Earthquake

HKS: I've got the earthquake down to ask you about.

RMP: We'll talk about it later then, but anyway, I don't think I even knew there was a World Forestry Congress coming up [laughter]. So the list came out of the people authorized to go to the World Forestry Congress, and lo and behold my name is on the list. Did I get in a bunch of trouble from assistant regional foresters and so on, who had asked to go and weren't being authorized to go. Here was this young whippersnapper, and who does he know, or how did he wrangle this? And Charlie Tebbe was the regional forester and I said "Charlie", Mr. Tebbe I guess I called him, I said, "I didn't even know that this thing was going on and I didn't put in a piece of paper." You see I had not been recommended by the region either.

It so happened what the chief's office did, which is what we did later, they decided that they would like to have kind of a diagonal slice of people, to have people of different age and different places in the organization so that you would both have some future understanding of what was happening, this being a national meeting. So, when they made up the list, I was there in Missoula, and some way in their horizontal slice.

HKS: The history office notified the regions that I was going to interview you, and what questions would you like Steen to ask Max? We got a bunch back. "Ask Max about the Madison River Canyon earthquake, 1959." I don't remember it at all. An earthquake in Montana sounds kind of strange.

RMP: Well it happens to be the second largest earthquake in terms of magnitude in recorded history in the United States.

HKS: So the New Madras is the largest one?

RMP: New Madras is the largest one. I'm not sure how it stood with San Francisco, either second or third in the United States. The center of it was on the Gallatin National Forest, right adjacent to Yellowstone Park. I'd only been in Montana since the first of July. This thing happened twenty minutes before midnight in August, August 8th or 10th, something like that.

HKS: Did you feel it in Missoula?

RMP: Yes. I was in bed and my wife was fiddling around covering the kids. I was lying there and suddenly I felt the bed sort of moving around, and I thought is she moving the bed while I'm in it? So I said to my wife, "What in the world are you doing?" She says, "I'm not doing a thing, I'm just standing here." I realized it was an earthquake. We opened the front door and the neighbors across the street had their door open. We visited a little bit about what was happening. We turned on the radio, but the first report was that it was off the coast of California, so we went back to bed. Then sometime during the night, they activated the smoke jumpers and sent them over there to, because all the roads were blocked, there were people …

HKS: The rescue people.

RMP: The rescue people. All of the facilities were knocked out over there, communications and otherwise, and they sent a team from the regional office, headed by Harvey Rowe, at that time was the chief of operation. The main reason I was going over was the fact that the dam was heavily damaged. In fact, it was reported it'd been out. This is one of these famous reports that turns out not to be true, that seemed highly logical to everybody at the time. A person living along the south shore of the Madison Arm of the Hebgen Lake went out of his house right after the quake and he had his boat tied up there near the house at the boat ramp, and all he could see was dry land.

HKS: The water was moving back and forth at that time.

RMP: But, it moved back and forth and stayed out. Well, what would be your assumption if you suddenly don't see any water there?

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Communications were all out so he hotfooted it to West Yellowstone and got a ham radio operator there to go on an emergency frequency. He was able to talk to the highway patrol in Idaho, to report that Hebgen Dam was out. They were able to reach Montana on the emergency frequency, the highway patrol frequency, to tell them that the dam was out. When we left Missoula, we were told that the dam was out, and the people at Ennis downstream had all abandoned ship. This is a Federal Power Commission authorized dam, and I had Federal Power Commission responsibility in the region. So I went over there primarily because of my responsibility in hydrology, dams and that sort of thing, as well as part of that emergency team. And flew over there and landed in an airplane that was doing flyouts right below the slide, and was picked up by helicopter, and was among the first one or two that walked over the slide, the big slide that covered the whole mouth of the canyon and blocked Madison River that created Earthquake Lake, that's still there.

HKS: This is below the dam.

RMP: Below the dam, about ten miles or so below the dam. But the big issue here was, is Hebgen Dam going to fail. If it does fail, what's it going to do when it hits this slide that's across the river. Everybody remembers floods like the Johnstown flood and the Shawn where the dam has failed. I walked the dam all the way up over the top and down the other side, looked at it. The thing that struck me was in the upstream basin of that dam, some of the trees were still standing. All of the topsoil had gone into the upper face of the dam. The lower face of the dam was all big boulders. There was a dolomite ledge there, dolomite is mostly limestone, and the dolomite ledge stood there like this [gestures] and backed up this whole hillside. This whole hillside was holding like a retaining wall.

When the earthquake shattered that, it broke into lots and lots of pieces. When it went out, the rocks went downstream, the blanket went upstream from this soil that had been formed there, which was a great way to build a dam. I looked at it and said this thing's going to fill up, and where's it going to go when it fills up? This is where one of those coincidences occurred. There was an emergency declaration, and the Corps of Engineers was asked to take responsibility for handling the problem. The person that was sent out to chair the advisory group for the Corps of Engineers was none other than my professor, Arthur Casa Grande.

I was over there most of the time for a couple of months. First we worked on search and rescue. Even before that I went on up to the dam itself and met the chief engineer from Montana Power at the dam site. At that point there was all kinds of muddy water coming through the dam. This is an earth filled dam, and if it's going to fail, this thing has 400 thousand, 430 thousand acre feet, or something like that. The capacity minus the slide below us like 50 or 55 thousand, we finally calculated. That space behind the earth filled dam down there is just going to slow it up a little bit, and probably worsen the flood if the big dam fails. We had to try to figure out is that big dam going to fail.

You realize at this point everybody at Ennis had camped out on the mountain side, because they had been told first that the dam was out. Then they were told later from aerial observation the dam was still there, but they

didn't know how long it was going to stay. To make a long story short, we inspected the dam to see where the water was coming from. The spillway just looked like you'd thrown it up in the air and dropped it, a concrete spillway. There's a whole lot of fissures across the lower face of that dam. It had a concrete core, it was narrow at the top and wide down. We could see a great big fissure in that core wall. The dirt had settled on both sides of that, so it was sticking up about eighteen inches. We decided maybe that that water was coming through the spillway and following those fissures and coming out. So we decided we had to block off the spillway. We took some big wooden timbers over there and blocked off the spillway. As soon as we blocked off the spillway and waited a few minutes, the water started receding. We realized we don't have a leak right through the dam. Now, what do you do? If the pipe was shattered and if we opened it, we would hasten the failure of the thing.

That's one of those great dilemmas. With the guy from Montana Power, we decided after looking at that that the dam probably would hold, because any time an earth-filled dam like that settles more, you actually decrease the vulnerability through it. It was not like a concrete dam. If that had been a concrete dam the whole thing would have probably been gone, but being an earth-filled dam, an earthquake just made it settle more. As long as the pipe wasn't ruptured, we'd be all right. Then we wrote up this note in there that we released to the press that the dam was badly damaged, but barring future heavy quakes we thought the dam was going to stay all right. We recommended a radio link between the dam and the town of Ennis to provide a warning in case the pipe going through it was in fact damaged. Gary Moon, who was in his first year or two as state forester, took on the chore of setting up with the civil defense people that radio link. That was my first acquaintance with Gary Moon who went on to be president of the National Association of State Foresters.

HKS: You must have been badgered by the Montana congressional delegation, and people like that.

RMP: The governor of Montana, his name was Olson, was in Canada at the time. His lieutenant governor, who was of a different party, was making quite a to-do about the fact that the governor was out of state, not minding business when this thing occurred. After we got through with our work there at the dam, it was about dark then, we were going out via pickup. This guy that looked like just a Montana rancher or something said, "Can you tell us what's going on here?" Well we were in a hurry to get the heck out of there, and this was about the twenty-fifth person that asked us something, so the ranger started to say, "We're just trying to get everybody out of here, trying to move on here." And the guy said, "I'm lieutenant governor Canon." [laughter] Anyway, I went back then down to Ennis.

If the dam is seen in imminent danger, you're supposed to petition to have the owner do something about the dam.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: There wasn't any state authority like there is in California and other places to regulate the dam. The Federal Power Commission has the license, and the license prevents any draw down during the recreation season, except in the case of emergency. So I got on the horn and called Federal Power, called San Francisco I guess, which is where the region is, and told them the dam was badly damaged. The Power Company wanted an order as to what they should do. I didn't recognize why the power company wanted an order, but it was because if they open that valve going through that dam, and it turns out that that pipe is badly damaged and the dam fails, they're following instructions. So we had a huge hassle, a day or so, trying to figure out who was going to instruct them to draw down water.

HKS: These days you can put a TV camera through the pipe and take a look at it.

RMP: But we didn't know what the situation was then. In one of the most irresponsible things that I ever saw a newspaper do, they took a close up shot of this concrete core now standing up about this high above the dirt, and has a gap about that big, and it goes down and just disappears. They published that on the front page of the paper as a gaping hole in Hebgen Dam. No sense of scale, no since that the eighteen inches sticking out …

HKS: Was this the local paper in Ennis? Missoula?

RMP: No, it was a Utah paper. Ennis didn't even have a paper. Three things that are important about that today. Realize that this is happening right next to Yellowstone Park, and realize that the Park Service in those days are real hungry to annex land.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: Here you've got this major fault zone that goes through that country, and this spectacular thing that's happened. And so the likelihood that the Park Service might just annex this area is pretty high.

HKS: This is the Gallatin National Forest?

RMP: All of those features are on Gallatin Forest. It's adjacent to Yellowstone Park. We went back to the ranger station at West Yellowstone, and George Duvendack was the forest supervisor, who incidentally was a geologist, one of the old time forest supervisors who was a geologist but worked for the Forest Service all of his life. We were trying to figure out what we could do that might recognize the importance of that area, and might tend to be a defensive tactic for what we saw as a takeover.

On the San Bernardino Forest there's an area shaped like an arrowhead on the side of the mountain. The lore is the Indians came to that mountain because they followed that big arrowhead. So it's a tremendously important landmark. Well that landmark is there because the soils are different, the reason the soils are different is because of the geology of the soils, that's a geological area. So I knew there was such a thing as a geologic area in the scheme of things.

I said to George Duvendack there is a geologic area classification; maybe this could be a geologic area. We looked it up in the manual, decided that it could be a geologic area, talked to Harve Rowe who's in charge over there. Harve Rowe called Teddy, who was a regional forester, who called Ed Cliff and got him out of bed [laughter] and told him he thought this ought to be designated as a geologic area.

HKS: This is enough magnitude so the chief's office is watching?

RMP: In fact Ed Cliff came out with the congressional delegation, the congressional delegation included people like Mansfield and Murray at that time.

HKS: The rationale was the potential loss of life downstream? Why was this seen as so important?

RMP: In the first place there were about thirty people who were killed in the earthquake, a whole bunch of them are buried under that slide. In fact, there's still people entombed under that slide. It was international news.

HKS: I was in the Navy. I was on Guam when it happened. That's why I don't remember.

RMP: Well it was a Mount St. Helens.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: It was a big deal. Of course being next to Yellowstone Park, all the papers were using West Yellowstone as a dateline as the location for it. So it was being heavily associated with Yellowstone Park, even though it wasn't in the park. Anyway, Ed Cliff the next day then talked to Carl, and they decided that yes, this should be designated as a geologic area and talked to the secretary. Ed Cliff came out with a congressional delegation and announced that it was being designated as a geologic area, which made all the headlines of the paper locally. We didn't know until later that Conrad Worth was in the air looking at that thing with full intention of landing and asking the secretary of interior to get it designated as part of Yellowstone. At the time, before the National Forest Management Act passed, it could have been transferred by presidential declaration …

HKS: Sure.

RMP: We landed at Bozeman and were greeted by headlines that said it was designated as a geologic area. I expect that's one of the reasons people said to ask me about it. The other thing that was interesting is that when you looked at the dam, it was obvious that there had been water flow the full length over the dam. It's roughly fifteen feet from the surface of the water to the top of that dam. So the question was how in the world can you have water going over the top of that dam at full length. Then there was a platform that they had—called stop logs—that was about another eight feet up. They were oversized railroad ties that they put down into the channel to raise the water levels on the spillway. We discovered that several of those stop logs were way down stream. It was obvious that the water had flowed over the whole width. But when we got hold of the resident manager, he said that when the earthquake occurred and he ran up to the dam, the water came up, just big surges went over the dam and then it came back and it went way down. He could see way down towards the toe of the dam, and came back again and went back over the top. It did that several times. He said that was the scariest thing he had ever seen in his life. He said it was just like tipping a pan of water. We discovered too that the road on the north side of the lake was flooded, and several hundred acres were now dry that used to have water on the south side. And we didn't know really what had happened to the country there.

HKS: The whole thing tipped a bit.

RMP: It turned out the dam dropped about twelve feet.

HKS: There were benchmarks; you could actually measure what happened?

RMP: There's a benchmark on the dam, but we knew it had probably dropped some. We thought at first that it just tipped. I don't think there's any record of a dam dropping that far and remaining intact. The whole country just went down.

The other problem was what happens if that new dam created by that slide backs water up on toe of that fill? Saturates that toe of that fill? What happens then? We didn't know whether the water when it rose to the top of that slide would go to the toe of that dam, so I decided to try to use the altimeter on the helicopter to check that. We landed on the slide and set the altimeter and flew to the dam and landed on the dam and read the altimeter and flew back, did that twice to figure out the answer to that. The answer was when the slide was full it would be right at the toe of the dam. The guides were reading forty foot or fifty foot graduation I guess on the altimeter. This was not very reassuring. So we had to quick bring in a survey crew to pick up the water level of the slide and come in and our estimate of where that water level was turned out to be within five feet of where it was, which was purely luck.

The Corps of Engineers came in and cut down the surface of the slide to build a spillway. They lined it with those dorolite boards. I was concerned, I told them I thought when the water started over that dam those dorolite boards were going to just settle because of all that soil around them. They were in a hurry to do something quick. They put those dorolite boards, and when the water started flowing over the dam it started gorging; they almost lost it. Then they went into what they called Phase II. I kidded them that Phase II meant that Phase I didn't work. They went in and the cut down the crest fifty feet in order to get down into solid material. But in lining the thing with those dorolite boards, they were blasting those boulders, those boulders are spectacular, quite a lot are bigger than this room. They were quickly blasting them. There were only about two of them left that were any size, and I said to Colonel Hogley who was running it, we've got to keep a couple of those big boulders. He said, "Why do you want to keep them?" I said, "Because we want to keep them as part of the interpretation later of the earthquake." One idea was to use one of them as a monument for the people that were killed there, put a plaque on it. He just went roaring out of the tent, and he came back in about five minutes and he said, "Good thing you were asking that question because they'd already drilled that boulder to shoot it." The flag that now flies on that monument is planted in one of those holes that they drilled to shoot it. Later it had a plaque on it for dedication. Those boulders were called Peterson's folly for quite some time.

It is an interesting story. It helped me to get acquainted in Region 1 fairly well because I was involved with several forests. The team that went over from the regional office; I wouldn't have had the chance to get acquainted with Harvey Rowe and all those people, if I hadn't been a part of it.

HKS: How long before you got back to regular routine work?

RMP: I was there solid for a couple of weeks, and then I was there almost half time for a couple of months. We kept having all kinds of people that wanted to come out and look at that thing. For example, this was during the Eisenhower administration in which they were looking at ways to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes. One of the things they were talking about doing was the possibility of building dams with nuclear power. And they had something called Operation Plowshares.

HKS: I remember the term.

RMP: They sent people from Operation Plowshares to look. We had geologists from everywhere that were wanting to see the slide.

Somebody who should have known better predicted that the water would never reach the top of that slide. They looked at all those big boulders downstream and said the water's just going to come through that thing and we don't have a problem. Well Oral Anderson who was there as regional engineer, who was a good engineer, came out and sat down and did some rough calculations on flow through a dam, which when you don't know what the material is it's not too easy to do. But we finally predicted that because it was almost a mile from the downstream to the upstream, I finally said that I didn't think it would be over about twenty cubic feet per second closer to that dam being when it was full. It turned out to be actually a little less than that when we went through it. We predicted that it was going to fill up within about two months. That wasn't a hard prediction to make because we knew what the inflow was.

HKS: Obviously this was a unique situation and setting. People didn't really know what was going to happen.

RMP: Another thing I learned about that, Pete, relates to today's disasters. The people that have to take action immediately after a disaster happens, have to be on site. I'm serving on the National Academy committee on the United Nations Decade of Disasters. We're now looking at how we can reduce the damage and the cost to life and property in disasters. You've all these huge plans to deal with disasters, but practically all of them initially forget the idea that the only people that can do anything in the disaster area are the people that are there.

HKS: Like the oil spill in Alaska, Exxon.

RMP: You have to have a system that goes into work right away. And the other thing about it, do you realize that there's at least three chances out of four that a disaster will occur outside of normal working time?

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Generally when you have a major disaster occurring, it's likely to occur after hours, it's likely to occur on weekends or holidays or other times when your non-emergency forces are not there. Unless you've got it pre-organized, pre-planned, it ain't going to work. The only thing that happened at Mt. St. Helens that worked was that plan that forest supervisor Bob Takarczyk had put together with a cooperator to say what are we going to do if this thing blows up.

HKS: I remember going on a fire, and we all had radios on different frequencies, so we couldn’t talk to each other.

RMP: Yep, that can happen. The Federal Emergency Management Administration, which has the federal responsibility for disasters. The problem with FEMA is that technically they can't respond to a disaster until it overwhelms state and local authority, and they don't have any force. All they can do is write checks to authorize some other people to do things. When you had Hurricane Hugo, and there was a substantial amount of criticism of the slow response, a lot of people blamed FEMA. Well, FEMA doesn't have the capability. The only people that can do anything initially are the people who are there, and if they're organized.

HKS: This is so logical. Why did it take until recently for people to do something about it?

RMP: Maybe this is too critical, but if you look back at a lot of the civil defense stuff, all this that's gone on since World War II, they tended in a lot of respects to be outside the emergency organizations. You probably don't even know who your civil defense coordinator is for your place in North Carolina.

HKS: No.

RMP: If you had a problem you wouldn't even know who to call.

HKS: That's right.

RMP: The chances are, that person doesn't have any equipment or any forces, so he has to depend on the fire department and the ambulance services and so on. Unless those are pre-organized to handle a major disaster, you're going to have problems. It can't be just a paper organization. If you look at what happened in the recent California earthquake, guess what system was being used to coordinate things? It was the Forest Service. It's the only system that's organized and available to work across agencies. It works because all the emergency forces that were there knew how to make it work. Anyway, the Montana earthquake was my first understanding in a non-fire situation, that you had to have some organization to handle it. In many cases of emergency people, don't have the responsibility for other kinds of emergencies, it belongs to somebody else. EPA may have oil spill responsibility, but EPA doesn't have any equipment out there.

Engineering in Region 1

HKS: What else happened in Region 1?

RMP: In Region 1, I was involved in two or three other things that were interesting. Remember this was the age of major water projects, and we had major water projects involving the Salmon River. Those were proposed Federal Power projects, and so I was working in the regional office along with the watershed management people. This was the early phase of what we called "impact statements."

HKS: Okay.

RMP: I'd worked on some of those impact statements …

HKS: NEPA was way in the future, but you still called them impact statements.

RMP: They were called impact statements. I don't know the genesis of NEPA's statement. At least several of us came convinced that you really couldn't build those kinds of dams involving the Salmon River and handle the anadromous fish problem, because contrary to popular notion, it's not getting the big fish up the stream that's the problem, it's getting the small fish down.

HKS: They get ground up going through the …

RMP: Apart from that, they don't have any sense of direction once they hit the slack water.

HKS: That's right.

RMP: That's the bigger problem. If you can put adequate screens in, when they hit that slack water—and you're talking about real long reservoirs—they have no way of knowing where downstream is. They tend to mill around. They were working on things like barge systems, try to barge the fish down and so on. The Salmon River is probably the world's best single stream for anadromous fish and all kinds of other values other than power. The regional office decided and the chief's decided that maybe for the first time in history we should take the attitude that construction of that reservoir was incompatible with the purpose of the national forests.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: Technically the Federal Power Act says the secretary of agriculture can impose conditions. The license shall be subject to conditions determined necessary by the administrative agency that had jurisdiction over the land. So it was clear we could impose conditions. But then it says, a finding by the commission that the project is not inconsistent with the purpose for which the reservations created or acquired. We decided we should make an inconsistent finding, which would really be pioneering. The Federal Power Act says look at the whole problem, but there were a lot of others who were saying this ought to be inconsistent. I did get involved in that later, and this is were these coincidences occur several times in your life, I came to Washington and found myself in the chief's office and this federal power report's pending that says this is inconsistent. And at this time Bob Long was assistant secretary.

HKS: What was the inconsistency? Because the forests were created to maintain favorable conditions of water flow and …

RMP: And we said that included fish. Favorable conditions of water flow and include the habitats that water provides.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: The whole bundle of values. To maintain favorable conditions of waterflow was a historic reason to create national forests, and they were thinking about having fish in the streams and recreation and other things to enjoy. This report was being written in which we were saying that we should find the dam incompatible. Tony Dean was head of engineering, and engineering was handling that letter. And so they called me over and said, it may have been the wrong assistant secretary, anyway I was called to the assistant secretary's office. He challenged me about this thing. It was easy to calculate the power values.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: They were huge. And so he said to me, "Why, with all these values for power, the way the West needs power, why would we say we shouldn't build this?" I said, "If you'll accept the proposition that not all streams ought to be dammed, accept the proposition that it's not in the public interest to dam every stream. If you started selecting streams that you wouldn't dam, the Salmon River would be the first one that you'd pick that ought not to be dammed. It's that high on the priority list as far as I know."

HKS: Was the Sierra Club or other groups helping on this?

RMP: Oh yes. There were several other environmental groups.

HKS: Helping might not be the term, I don't know if they're coordinated with the Forest Service, but they would have been opposed to the dam.

RMP: They were opposed to the dam. This was High Mountain Dam. Anyway, the Forest Service did take that historic position on the dam. It was never built and now that river is a wild scenic river.

HKS: But there must have been some resistance from the Federal Power people. They like dams.

RMP: Yes. Later on, we asked for a whole bunch of conditions on some projects which the Federal Power Commission didn't like, so they didn't put them in. We maintained that the Federal Power Act required that they be put in, and they said it didn't. So we got into an argument between the lawyers of USDA and the lawyers of the Federal Power Commission, and that question went to court.

HKS: Interesting.

RMP: The Justice Department acted for us, and the Federal Power Commission hired it's own lawyers to contest that claim. You couldn't have two parts of the Justice Department against each other. That was finally decided by the appeals court. The law is very simple. It says it shall be subject to the conditions that the agency having jurisdiction over the lands determines to be necessary, and it's very clear. It's not ambiguous, it's very clear. That authority now is very clearly in law, because the Federal Power Commission didn't want it there, I mean they litigated it. We were trying to work it out on a more amiable basis, but they just insisted. They had a bunch of young Turks as lawyers that just insisted that this was something for the commission to decide.

HKS: Of course the mood has changed a lot in all of those agencies. The Corps of Engineers and so forth are less aggressive about the need for dams, as I understand it.

RMP: Yes they are, but I would still say in some respects there's still a problem with the Federal Power Commission. Just recently in the so-called Rock Creek decision in California, the State of California wanted certain water releases on a project in California and the Federal Power Commission decided not to put them in. This actually went to the Supreme Court, and forty-nine other states joined the case and got it overruled nine to nothing by the Supreme Court. It said that Federal Power had preempted state authority. So we still aren't there with the Commission.

Those would have been a disaster for the fisheries in lots and lots of places, because with small hydro projects that are unmanned, you can't at all be sure that all the automatic controls are going to work to keep water in the streams below. And unfortunately you can't dry out the stream for three days and say whoops, we made a mistake and put the water back in the stream. It's still a major problem the conflict between fisheries and power.

Logging the Bitterroot

RMP: One other thing that happened in Region 1 is that when I'd been doing graduate work at Harvard University, guess who was just finishing his Ph.D. at Harvard? Arnold Bolle. Bolle was just finishing his course work and went to Montana. We decided at that time that we should use a Harvard Forest model in which to look at various alternatives to try to plan the best use of a forest. Arnold came out and was interested in using the north part of the Flathead as an area to experiment with that kind of planning. That was really way too early to get a region like Region 1 interested in that kind of sophisticated planning. I don't know that they were antagonistic; they just saw it as kind of a waste of time. So it never really got anywhere. I was sent to the Bitterroot forest to look at some things down there. There's was a proposal to put a research project, you know they had the old jammer logging?

HKS: Yes.

RMP: Where their roads were just a few hundred feet apart on the hillside?

HKS: Sure.

RMP: I looked at the Bitterroot forest, and I saw those roads that were about three hundred feet apart, and the fill slope from the road at the top was coming into the next one down. I thought why in the world are they doing this? The slopes were somewhere around 60 percent, just about standing on the angle of repose. In the first place it didn't make any sense to me economically to be spending all that money to build those roads. Plus it appeared to me that they were really deteriorating those slopes because when they go into soil and hit tighter material, it tends to follow the slope. Then the water flows down and goes into the next road, and goes into the next one, and it's not really going into the underground. I just thought this whole thing didn't make any sense.

HKS: Turned out to be pretty …

RMP: But I didn't have enough sense to know that that wasn't supposed to be any of my business. [laughter] So I went back and proceeded to write a report on this thing in which I …

HKS: What date is this now?

RMP: This is 1959.

HKS: Wow.

RMP: So I went back and proceeded to write a report (might have been '60) in which I said this whole jammer logging system didn't make any sense to me economically, environmentally, or any other way and that rather than doing a research project I thought they ought to discontinue that kind of thing and go to modern systems of logging. I didn't have any idea that I was hitting a guy on the side of the head who already had a toothache, [laughter] and I got really chastised. This was none of my business. My job and the engineering department's job was to put the roads where somebody else decided they ought to go to support the logging system that was in use.

HKS: Who favored this system? Is this out of the regional office or is this the forest supervisor's decision?

RMP: It was in use throughout the region. There were no high lead systems.

HKS: This was standard procedure?

RMP: Standard practice. All their appraisals were built on that, nobody knew any other system. Nobody had seen any, I mean no body in that region; there were no high lead systems in that region. There were no systems other than jammer logging. That's the way you logged. I was kind of ignorant in not knowing that that's the way you did it in Region 1.

HKS: I suppose if someone said, "Let's go high lead," all the local operators would have screamed, "We don't have the equipment."

RMP: That's exactly what people said to me, you just don't understand the situation, everybody's got this kind of equipment, we don't have any high lead equipment.

HKS: Anyway, you'd gotten into timber management business.

RMP: I'd gotten into somebody else's business, completely inadvertently; I simply didn't know any better. Ed Cliff came out about that time. The head of Timber Management had written a real tough letter to my boss saying that this was not any of my business and was inappropriate. It showed that I really didn't understand the region. I don't remember if it was quite that bad, but I took it as a real chastisement. So we had a meeting with Ed Cliff, and we were talking about logging the region and so on, and somebody said, "Our job in this region is to capture the growth of timber out there and to be able to go get the timber wherever it is." I'll never forget, Ed Cliff looked around and said, "That's not a proper statement. You may leave timber that costs too much to log, or it may cause more damage to get it than it's worth, and ought simply to be left there until we develop better technology to log it." He said, "Furthermore, I'm unhappy with what I see as logging methods in this region."

HKS: Gulp!

RMP: That rescued me from having created this great faux pas. Charlie Tebbe had a stroke about that time, and Wally Drescoe filled in for a while, and then I guess I left the region then after that. It took that region another fifteen years to really make any significant change.

HKS: They got a little publicity later on.

RMP: They got publicity on the Bitterroot. And interestingly enough, I would maintain that the Bitterroot controversy was caused primarily because of a new forest supervisor not being respectful of one who used to be there. As a historian you might check this out, but I think that all of the major controversies that the Forest Service was involved with in the '60s and '70s had a retired Forest Service officer on the other side of the issue.

HKS: Is that right? I remember it was a forest supervisor that was …

RMP: Brandborg had been there on that forest and retired there and stayed there in town. And Thurman Trosper came from here. Thurman Trosper was one of the people that created the multiuse tietack.

HKS: All the loops?

RMP: Also that squiggle thing that never really sold. Well he came to Region 1, and he said that the Bitterroot had been managed as a custodial forest, and it's time that we really practiced multiuse on this forest. Thurman Trosper made lots of speeches in and around that little town, and all of his writings talked about getting away from this custodial management where the resources weren't really used, and about moving into the area of multipurpose management. I don't know if Brandborg took that as a direct criticism of what he had done, or he saw that as invading areas he thought should be wilderness, but he was the primary figure behind the Bitterroot controversy.

HKS: I always thought it was Bolle's report.

RMP: No. If you look back, Brandborg was there before, Bolle's report just gave it additional notoriety.

HKS: I mean *American Forests* started publishing the Bolle report when all this …

RMP: That helped to give it more notoriety, but the guy that was out there and was a local guru was Brandborg, who was really well respected in that town. If you go to the Monongahela, you had a former district ranger who felt that his work was being criticized because the new people came in there and said that the diameter-limit cutting that has been going on on the Monongahela all of these years had systematically degraded this forest. It has taken out the dominants and the co-dominants. What we've got left is supreme junk, so you've got to get rid of that system and start over. As far as he was concerned, that was a disavowal and criticism of what he'd applied which he'd been told was the way to do it. As far as they were concerned, it looked like the rape of the earth. He thought these guys came in from the West and were trying new silviculture techniques. If you want to check all of those major controversies you'll find that at the heart of them was a retired forest officer.

HKS: After they retired there was some policy shift, and they took it in some way as unwise.

RMP: I think it was as simple as that. (There's something going on in one Region 8 that I ought to talk about later). Remember these people that are there and retired in these towns have enormous credibility in the community.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: What they're saying is seen as being true, and in particular it looks like these new people are selling out to industry or somebody. And they have enormous currency. Right now one region is having that problem in spades in an area where some of the people are saying we've got something called "new forestry," that we're not going to do things like we used to. We've learned, our eyes have been opened, the way we've done it for forty years is wrong. You're getting a reaction from the local people that retired there saying these guys are just smoking opium, they don't really know anything more than we did. Whether that's true or not true, the credibility of the retired people is greater than the credibility of the people that are working in that kind of argument.

HKS: I'm sure it is. Where I worked for the Forest Service, the agency was extremely popular. Everyone in town knew us, we were asked to coach Little League. They saw us as part of the community.

RMP: When I worked on the farm bill last year, I had more credibility with congressional staff members than did the current employees of the Forest Service. They knew that I wouldn't have to follow a particular administration line. It didn't have anything to do with me as an individual as much as you're now assumed to be objective and can call the shots like you see them, and you're not putting in what ever the party line is.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Credibility is part and parcel of that problem of controversy. I recently went to a region and talked to the forest supervisors about this. I said, the single most important client in that town is the former forest supervisor. Let that person know what you're doing, why you're doing it, take him on a trip and let him understand it, so when one of their friends comes and says "What's the Forest Service up to?" he doesn't have to say, "I don't know, nobody talks to me." Part of it is just common courtesy.

HKS: We interview quite a few people and you can see this is not an uncommon feeling. "I don't know what's going on. I don't receive any briefings anymore."

RMP: When I went to Region 8, one of the people that was probably the most help to me was Rick Erickson, who I succeeded as deputy regional forester. Rick Erickson had spent his entire career in that region, he knew all the people, he knew all the forests, he was well respected in that whole region. Here I was, from a lot of people's viewpoint, a non-forester coming into that job. What does this guy know about it? I tried to have lunch with Rick once a month, both to get his perspective on things, and to get his wisdom on things. This was very good because he knew people and situations and so on that was invaluable to me, but also to keep him as a communications link. He was in touch with all of these people, and he still is. So he turned out to be the single most helpful person to me, and is a very good friend of mine today because of that.

Stint in Washington

HKS: Now we've got you to Region 8.

RMP: You've got to go two other places first, so I'll try to do it quickly. I came to the chief's office in January '61. That was the part of the chief's office that worries about Federal Power Commission stuff, water, dams, buildings, all of the basically non-road stuff. And Ward Gano was the head of that part of it.

HKS: I know the name.

RMP: Ward Gano is retired from Portland now; he was retired as regional engineer in Region 6.

HKS: I guess that's where I knew him.

RMP: He goes all the way back. He was the guy that did the structure work for Timberline Lodge.

HKS: Wow.

RMP: He was one of the very funniest people that I know, one of the brightest people that I know. I went to work and was involved early on with the Job Corps. Also involved with the Pinchot Institute. I went with Clint Davis when he made a trip to meet with young Dr. Pinchot, and him donating the Pinchot Institute to us. I went to look over the facilities and make a report on what had to be done if we took that property. In the process, I met Mike Frome who was there. I was involved in that, and I was involved in launching the Job Corps.

I was involved with the Job Corps, though, primarily because I moved in '63. I left engineering and went on detail to Administrative Management, which was headed by Ed Schultz at that time. Ed Schultz went on to be regional forester in Region 8, and deputy chief, and would probably have been chief had he not had a heart

attack and died about '73. Anyway, I went to work in Administrative Management, and the first thing I did was this nationwide study on the use of engineering skills by the Forest Service. We were having a high loss of engineers and also landscape architects and geologists—non-foresters. This is when I really ran on to this schism, which is a primary Region 6 phenomenon by the way, of the severe conflict between engineers and foresters. It's primarily because they had people who had gone through the logging engineering curriculum who felt that they should not extract logs and that was mostly what the Forest Service was doing, and that they really should be the engineering force. Then they got into a big conflict about whether they should have engineers on every ranger district and all that kind of stuff. So I did that study which you must have seen, "The Use of Engineering Skills by the Forest Service", published in '65, something like that.

HKS: That's the time I left the agency to go back and become a historian, so …

RMP: It's a published study, which is probably now considered one of the classics. Why did people leave an organization? And why people leave an organization is entirely different from what people think are the reasons. The other thing I discovered from that is the reason people give to leave an organization probably has nothing to do with the reason they really left. For every two people we were hiring we were losing at least one, maybe one and a half.

HKS: Pretty expensive isn't it.

RMP: After investing this huge amount of money. The question was, "Why were we losing them?" Why we were losing them was that most of them felt the Forest Service was entirely biased toward foresters, and if you weren't a forester they didn't feel you belonged.

HKS: Something to that, I guess.

RMP: I didn't really think much about it at the time, but when I went to work in California, in the winter they had an orientation school for junior foresters, but nobody else went to them. It was not a junior professional orientation session, it was junior forester orientation session in which you learned about the mission and history of the Forest Service and how the Forest Service is organized, and multiuse, and all this kind of thing. Of course, some of the foresters learned that in school, most of the engineers had none of that in their background. It wasn't until several years later that some regions organized multidisciplinary orientations, which is now the norm. But at that time, I didn't go. The first time I went to an orientation school was I'd been on the Plumas for three years. Those who felt the strongest they weren't accepted were wildlife biologists.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: This didn't apply to everybody, administrative officers, in particular, didn't feel this apparent discrimination. It was the field-going non-foresters who felt that they really couldn't aspire to any of the higher level jobs; certainly all the line jobs were closed to them. They were by definition second-class citizens. Now I had run on to that personally in '58 when I was getting out of school, and I didn't notice at the time, but …

HKS: Out of Harvard.

RMP: Out of Harvard. Charlie Connaughton had wanted me as forest supervisor on the southern California forests. The answer he got was I was not qualified, couldn't meet the qualification standards. There's an author called Hertzburg who wrote the famous little book called *Motivation that Works* and ended up sort of as my guru. I was trying to figure out why people left, I didn't know anything about really how you went about this. I had to go talk to a bunch of people about some approaches to this thing, so I studied a whole bunch of stuff, and then used a young guy by the name of Bernie Aiken who worked in personnel and is still in personnel.

We picked up this Hertzburg book, and his theory is that there's two kinds of factors that affect you in your work. One is called hygiene factors, and the lack of having those will make you dissatisfied, but having those won't make you satisfied. The hygiene factors are a reasonable place to work with reasonable equipment to work with, pleasant surroundings and good people, you know all those kinds of things. But the reason that people either leave or quit a job is number (1) whether they think they're doing something important, number

(2) whether they think they're making a contribution for doing that, and number (3) whether they get any recognition from it. Recognition could be as simple as somebody saying you did a good job, and that didn't have anything to do with money, though money didn't hurt. We then cooked up a nationwide survey of the people in those disciplines in which we did two things. We asked them a whole bunch of questions which they could circle, multiple choice kind of questions. But then we had two open ended questions. We asked them, tell me a time when you felt particularly good about your job, describe what happened. And then we took the flip side of that and said describe a time you felt particularly bad about your job, what happened. That analysis, which is published in that study, just mirrored what Hertzburg had found out.

The motivators were the thing where somebody had been a part of a team, like fire team. Anytime people are part of a team that's doing something important and everybody's contributing and everybody feels that they've really conquered this thing. That's what builds teamwork. The flip side of it was when did you feel like you're going to leave the organization, it was almost invariably is "I was being treated as an outcast. I was trying my best to do something and all I got was snide remarks and criticism, or being treated as a second class citizen, or somebody else getting credit for work that I broke my tail to do." If you read that report, one of the interesting things about it is the preface, which is signed by Cliff, "The real challenge is whether the Forest Service can become an interdisciplinary organization." Now that was before we ever knew about ID teams or any or that type of thing. I think that was the challenge in the early '60s. How do you put different disciplines together that have different ideas, and how do you make a team out of that? The space program has done that pretty well.

HKS: In 1958, 90 percent of the professionals in the Forest Service were foresters, and a decade later, in terms of being hired, it was 50 percent.

RMP: Up until then you have the forester and that forester was handling special uses, handling recreation, handling wildlife, handling range, and when you got to the upper levels, the forester was the personnel officer …

HKS: Sure.

RMP: A forester was the deputy chief for administration, and so people were seeing all these top jobs were being captured by the foresters. We lost an enormous amount of talent during those periods, from people feeling like that unless you were a forester you weren't going to be anointed. There was a black landscape architect in southern California, name of Collins, who came to the San Bernardino. Dave Tucker, who was the recreation staff officer, got him off the register never had the faintest idea that the guy named Collins was going to be black. This guy was a fantastic landscape architect, I remember, a wonderful human being. Ten years downstream he said that he felt more discriminated against by being a landscape architect than he ever felt about being black in the Forest Service.

HKS: But is Civil Service part of the problem? You can't get the kind of GS ratings for …

RMP: Didn't have anything to do with GS ratings. It has to do with whether you provide equality of opportunity to the top jobs. You can be paying the people the same amount of money.

HKS: Sort of a professional tokenism. You have landscape architects, but they don't appear to do anything serious.

RMP: The Corps of Engineers, I'm sure, loses lots of good people who are not engineers, because effectively the Corps of Engineers did the same thing. If you looked at their organization they were using engineers to be everything, so this is not unique to the Forest Service. It's a common problem that befalls an organization primarily made up of one profession, particularly when that profession early on felt it had the expertise to handle all these other fields. As the world changes, and as they get these other people, it's not as easy to manage an organization that's made up of several different disciplines as it is one. If everybody sees things alike, you don't have much dissention. You also may not have very good decisions.

Sam Jarvi, who I've mentioned before and who was a tremendous person, was on the San Bernardino. He came out to a fire that was really teeing off. The fire control officer on the forest and the district ranger had been

riding in the fire control officer's vehicle. They came in, and Sam says to the district ranger, " How do you size it up?" And so the district ranger gave him a very nice size up. Then he says, "Charlie, how did you see it?" (this was Charlie Yates). Charlie said, "That's the way I saw it." Sam said, "Charlie, why don't you go get in your vehicle and go home? If there's anything I don't need it's two guys driving around in a vehicle that see things just alike." There's a tremendous amount of truth in that. Unless they see things from a broader perspective, and therefore look at maybe solutions that otherwise didn't get seen, or maybe see dimensions to the problem that would have been missed, you don't need an interdisciplinary team. You just have one person do the deciding.

HKS: Then you've got to cope with the need for change.

RMP: They see things different. You can experiment with this sometime. Take four people and take a trip in the forest, and when you come back tell them independently to write down what they saw today, what impressed them about this trip, and what kind of thoughts they have that if they were relating something about this trip. What they see will reflect their professional background.

HKS: You walk down the street with an architect, he notices houses.

RMP: One of the courses I did at Harvard that turned out to be real important to me was geomorphology, which tries to help you understand how a particular landform got there. That's enormously important if you're dealing with mountainous terrain. It's entirely different if it's a glacial terrain than it is if it's a bed of an old lake. When I go into the mountains, one of the things I look at is land forms, the condition of the trees and the wildlife and some of the other things in geology and hydrology. Before I took the course, landforms didn't mean a thing to me. But some of the major controversies the Forest Service got into has been in building roads and other improvements in the very different landforms that triggered major slides that showed we didn't know what we were doing. We didn't recognize what we were getting into. Anyway, I guess in doing that study it really hit me that the Forest Service had a major challenge that's not unlike other organizations in going from essentially one profession to an interdisciplinary organization, and it had to be real, it couldn't be tokenism. It can't be, "We'll listen to you but we're not going to pay any attention to you." The sense of values is different. A wildlife biologist sees an old tree as an extremely important tree.

HKS: The fire control guys worry about …

RMP: The fire control people worry about snags. The timber guy might say, "Well shoot, that thing is fine for culmination of mean annual increment and is a loser from now on." Now all three are true. But if you didn't have the other two people there, you wouldn't even ask those questions. That's been a part of the problem the Forest Service's had since the early '60s, since we really expanded out in all these other professions, is that their sense of values are different.

HKS: Yet the Multiple Use Act suggests precisely that.

RMP: I don't think you can do the Multiple Use Act without having interdisciplinary organization. I would even say this also has to do with men and women mix and racial mix, because they also see things differently. Let me make it plain, I think foresters, probably as a profession, are less resistant, or probably welcome other disciplines into their ranks better than a lot of other organizations would have done, in spite of the fact that there's been controversy in some locations. My sense around the country now is that that transition's pretty well been done, in terms of interdisciplinary teams. In some places you've still got some problems, but I would not criticize foresters as being unduly resistant. The Corps of Engineers is probably much more closed. If you went to the Fish and Wildlife Service, they have greater problems accepting different disciplines. If you go to the Park Service historically they have not known where they want to go, so they created basically a system that's not based on any kind of education at all, you can be anything and be the superintendent of a park.

HKS: I thought most of them were naturalists.

RMP: The current superintendent of a park can be anything. They used to have a lot of landscape architects. Bill Mott, for example, a recent director of the Park Service, was a landscape architect. The regional director of the

Park Service when I was in Atlanta was a historian. Dave Thompson, I don't know if you knew him or not, but he was a history major. He'd find people with a museum background, he'd find people that were foresters, every kind, but you see they were put in this one series. They haven't maintained, like the Forest Service, the forestry general series, where you can qualify from closely allied series. During my tenure I was not interested in changing that forestry general classification. I would not want to make a forest supervisor out of a forester that didn't have any background in Forest Service multi-purpose management. I wasn't interested in making a supervisor out of a wildlife biologist who didn't have any of that kind of background either. I think the closely allied series worked reasonably well. I was concerned that if you opened up the series you'd get anybody there, you might just be appointing a politician.

Reorganization

RMP: Let me see if I can close up the Washington office. I then worked two years after I did that study in Administrative Management primarily looking at management improvement. How do you improve the management of an organization. I was in charge of what they called the Branch of Systems Management, and because I was in Administrative Management, we launched the Job Corps. There was no separate Job Corps organization in the forests, so I helped conduct the early training sessions on Job Corps when it was first started. You remember when Region 7 was eliminated? I was in Administrative Management when it was eliminated.

HKS: I knew one was missing, but I don't remember.

RMP: Region 7 was in Upper Darby. There was a group put together that ended up being called the Dickert committee. Dickert was out of OMB, and they had done a little bit of analysis of organizations. They decided that the Forest Service had way too many ranger districts and way too many forests and way too many regions, and that we were in time with the horse and buggy days, and that we were trying to maintain the old general store and the old country school, when those had long since passed by. They decided how big can a ranger district be in terms of acres.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: How big, how much timber can a ranger district sell? How much recreation can a ranger district manage? And of course in each one of those there's some big ones.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: They said, why don't we set a norm when a ranger district can be this big and have this much timber and have this much recreation and so on, because we can prove that it can be managed by one person, because it's being done now. With that proposal they would have cut the number of ranger districts from about a thousand at that time down to say about four hundred or something. They would reduce the number of forests from one hundred and fifty-five down to something like seventy; they would have wiped out three regions. As a part of that study, they also decided the Forest Service was not paying enough attention to State and Private, so State and Private ought to be organized separately from Washington. The Forest Service probably had at least twice as many research stations as it needed. And so they …

HKS: This is because of improved communications and transportation?

RMP: They also said you'd have better staff. They're saying you've got these little tiny districts out there, some of them are five miles long, and that's got to be an inefficient situation and with transportation improved now and communications and everything else. There's no reason to stay in the horse and buggy days. So they presented this thing, and having come from OMB, it was not something that you could take entirely lightly. Ed Cliff was a proponent of small ranger districts, because he felt the ranger ought to be intimately familiar with the resources and the land. He was familiar with what's being done in Europe where they actually have smaller

areas than we have where you have a person that basically knows every spot on the real estate all the time, and has long tenure there and so on. He felt that the ranger was a working person and not a manager. They also said the chief ought to have a full deputy instead of five assistants. At that time Ed Cliff had six assistant chiefs, but there was no associate chief. That was discontinued back when the aborted attempt was made to transfer the Forest Service and the associate chief became acting and never did become chief. The associate job was not filled after that. They decided the chief ought to have a full deputy. I was in Administrative Management when the chief did agree to drop a region, and he decided to drop Region 7 in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, and transfer those forests to the Eastern Region and the Southern Region. Also to create the two S&PF areas. Then he said we really don't know what size a ranger district ought to be to be efficient and also keep in touch with the resources. As a result of that, what Ed Cliff was able to negotiate was that he reestablished the associate chief job, and Art Greeley became the associate chief. Then he renamed all the former assistant chiefs as deputy chiefs.

HKS: I remember Ed Crafts called me on that, because he only got to be an assistant chief. When he was interviewed he said it was the same as a deputy chief. He went into some detail to convince us of that.

RMP: Same job. At that point in time, too, there were two people handling National Forest Systems. There was Red Nelson who had half of it: he had National Forest Resource Management, and Art Greeley who had National Forest Protection and Development. When they made an associate chief, they put National Forest Administration back together, and there was Research and State and Private Forestry. Then Ed Cliff agreed to create the two S&PF regions. Since most of the State and Private work is in the East, he would create two areas in the East: the northeastern area and the southeastern area. Then the question was how are we going to relate to the rest of the Forest Service, and so they co-located the northeastern area with Research, and the southeastern area with Region 8. You suddenly had Research and State and Private and National Forests. That's three co-equal organizations in the field. Anyway I was involved in all the rigmarole of closing out a region, which is a nightmare.

One of the big problems in that is simply trying to handle the records, because a lot of records are by subject matter. You've got to go in and pull the pieces out that happen to relate to a particular forest. Some permits were issued by the regional forester and some by the chief. There were all the personnel actions to be sorted. There's an enormous amount of cost associated with doing that kind of thing that you don't recover for a long time. I don't think Ed Cliff was ever in favor of doing that. He did it because he was in a spot, and he was having to respond to a directive.

Anyway they did that classic size of ranger district study. The idea was once you decide how big a district can be, then you can decide how many forests you need, and then how many regions you need. The size of district study, as you might expect, concluded that the most important thing to the size of district and the effectiveness of the district is who the district ranger is. That resulted in some indication that there were probably some districts in places that were too small to be effective over a normal period of time to keep an adequate organization. The study particularly zeroed in on the idea if you've got two districts in the same town, you no longer can argue that you're getting better public service there. There was consolidation of some districts and there were some forests that were consolidated. That, I think, partly led up to the attempt that was made in the early '70s to combine regions.

HKS: Along GSA lines or something?

RMP: Whatever the standard region is. But there was even before that a feeling that the Forest Service had too many regions, and that the regions were kind of a legacy of a by-gone era. Look at Ogden for example. Ogden was established there because that's the intersection of a north/south railroad and an east/west railroad, a junction point.

Back to California

RMP: I was in Administrative Management in '66 and went back to California. So I spent '66-'71 back in California. I don't know if there's a whole lot to say about that era except that I was very much involved in some of the early

work that we did of trying to look at long-term logging systems, trying to get away from this going up canyons and logging where you tend to concentrate water, and where you're in very unstable country and try to go to the ridgetop systems. Also trying to look at a forest more in terms of what's that forest going to look like twenty or thirty years from now. Not what the next sale is going to be, or what we are going to do in the next three years, but really trying to go beyond the zoning that was done in multiuse planning, to do some more long-term planning of forests. I got really interested in that point, and also in some of a lot of these special designations.

We had a national recreation area created, the Shasta-Trinity National Recreation area. This was a place where my feeling for interdisciplinary things came out of the engineering study. I went to the Shasta Trinity forest, and we found the recreation people working on one set of plans, and the landscape architects working on something else, the district working on something else, engineering people working on something else, the lands people working on something else. There was not good teamwork between them. They were reporting separately to the regional office, trying to get funding; there was no unified budget system at the forest level. Believe it or not the supervisor did not submit a budget. Separate budgets went out of recreation and timber and all the other functions, and they came all the way to Washington that way and were considered and allocated back out as separate functional budgets. Then you wonder why they didn't fit. We had places where we got money to build a recreation area but not the road, and vice versa [laughter].

HKS: I can see that. Sounds like Soviet Union planning.

RMP: I don't know that they were doing any worse than anybody else, but it was just more obvious there because they had the national recreation area with all that work that was going on, a lot of money flowing in a very short period of time. One night we were talking, and we said what if we just tore those darn walls down and created something called the national recreation area design team that was composed of all those disciplines and had a single schedule that they all related to. Then we talked about how would we get such an organizational change made? There probably weren't enough horses in the world to make those kinds of changes at that point in time to a forest organization with the various functional organizations and functional staffs. So we said, why don't we do it within the existing organization and have them continually report to the same bosses. We'll just create a design team and have them still report to the primary staff. So we tried that out on the forest supervisor. Bob Tracey, who later was director of watershed management here, sat in. He was a deputy on the forest, and he said, hey I've finally figured out what a deputy forest supervisor should do, he should coordinate this thing within the existing organization. As far as I know that was the first formal interdisciplinary team that was established.

HKS: This was the late '60s?

RMP: This was in 1967. Now we had used an interdisciplinary team in Montana when we established that geologic area. Charlie Tebbe had created what he called the earthquake planning team, and he put me and a guy from recreation on it, Harold Anderson was in charge of it. We created plans for that area. That was in 1959, so that was some years earlier. But the first time we actually had it on a forest level, a functioning interdisciplinary team in the formal sense, was on the Shasta Trinity as far as I know. And it was born out of a concern.

I stayed in California until 1971, and Connaughton was the regional forester. He was succeeded by Jack Deinema. Once before when I was in the chief's office and was in Administrative Management, they were thinking about having me go out as deputy regional forester. That was about 1965. They frankly got cold feet, because I hadn't been a forest supervisor let alone a deputy regional forester. So Clare Hendee, who was a strong proponent that I go out as deputy regional forester, said "I guess that won't happen on my watch." He said the Forest Service is still not ready to accept other disciplines. Even though technically Ham Pyles had come through that and so had George James. George James was a mechanical engineer who worked in fire.

Then in 1971 Ed Cliff called up and asked did I want to go to Region 8 as deputy regional forester. At that same time, Charlie Yates went to Alaska and became regional forester and opened the deputy regional forester job in

California. By that time Doug Leisz was regional forester; Jack Deinema had become associate deputy chief. Anyway, I said why in the world should I go to Region 8 as deputy regional forester when there's a job for deputy regional forester right here? And I know this region a whole lot more than I'll ever know Region 8, even though I was technically born in Missouri right next door. I never worked in that region; I didn't know anything about that region, why should I go there. If I'm going to be a deputy regional forester why not do it here? It was actually Red Nelson who ended up calling me back, saying, "Let's put it this way. Region 5 is not likely to be a place where there's going to be a vacancy in the regional forester job downstream." He said, "I can't tell you whether you'd get the job or not, but there is likely to be a vacancy in Region 8, and it would make a lot more sense for you to go to another region. You've got plenty of California experience; you've been in California for fifteen years. You don't need anymore experience in California. One of your weak points right now is not having any experience out of California." Anyway I went to Region 8 in early 1971 as deputy regional forester.

HKS: Who was regional forester there?

RMP: Ted Schlapfer. Ted apparently had an agreement with Ed Cliff that he would get a western region when it opened.

HKS: So he went to Region 6.

RMP: He went to Region 6. I was only in Region 8 a little over a year until Ted Schlapfer left, and I took his place. I wouldn't say that was wired at that time, because Ed Cliff retired and John McGuire was chief by that time. I'm sure that John McGuire made his own decisions. One of the things that concerned McGuire was that Region 8 would be considered a stepchild by somebody who was regional forester who really wants to go west.

HKS: Yes.

RMP: I had enough southern background and familiarity of at least some of the culture in that country and had really enjoyed being in that region, and got acquainted with a lot of people in that year, year and a half almost, to where John McGuire was apparently comfortable doing that.

There's a couple of thing's I've missed that we probably ought to talk about. When I went to California, as I mentioned earlier, in the spring of 1949, I was not married. I came back to Missouri in November, and Jan and I got married. We were semi-engaged when we were in college, and I guess we'd have been formally but in those days money to buy a ring and all that kind of stuff wasn't really something I had.

I came back in November; we were married, and went to Quincy. Little towns like that don't have apartments of any consequence, and houses are few and far between. We lived in an apartment at the home of some people called Broussard. He was manager of the water company. The following spring, we did move to a small house, and the next summer our daughter Brenda was born (our oldest daughter who's the novelist.)

Small houses were, as I mentioned, hard to come by, and the only house we could find was one that they hadn't really put the siding on the outside. It still just had tarpaper on the outside. It was beautiful inside, I mean it was brand new and all the plumbing was new and everything was new inside the house. On the outside it looked like the proverbial cold water shack. So we looked at it; Jan was really unsatisfied with the apartment we were in because we didn't control the thermostat (it was the upstairs of the house, you see). We also had practically no kitchen. Quincy was a cold place, and we didn't control the thermostat, and the people downstairs did control the thermostat. She'd get up in the morning and she had what was called a trash burner; it was connected to our stove. Well she'd fire up all this wood and stuff in there which would immediately cut off the thermostat. [laughter] We on the second floor would practically have icicles on things. These people were very nice except they said you know we go to bed early and we're going to be sure that you're quiet if it gets late. One of the things they didn't want was the shower going after ten o'clock at night. Anyway we decided that that wasn't exactly the kind of restrictions that we wanted. And the cold—Janet had scarlet fever when she was a kid so she has a particular problem with colds, and she was having troubles with that.

We moved to this house with the tarpaper on the outside, and I said to the guy, "I wouldn't mind putting that siding on if we had it." About four days later, a truck arrived with all of the siding, and I ended up putting the

siding on the outside of this house, [laughter] which made it look pretty nice. Paula, our middle daughter, was born in Quincy two years later, 1952, and then we were in San Diego when our third daughter, Marla, was born. In 1957, the year before I went back to school our son, Dan Mark, was born in San Bernardino area, and that was the all of the family. Jan, with my spending a lot of time with fieldwork and a lot of time away and a lot of time on fires, pretty much had her hands full. For example, I brought Jan home from the hospital when the baby was either two or three days old, her mother was there to help take care of the baby, but I left on a series of fires on the Plumas. Finally I saw my daughter and my wife six weeks later.

HKS: Yes.

Forest Fire Issues

RMP: But that was not all that unusual. I didn't think that too much about it at that time because lots and lots of people were away from the family for extended periods.

I first met Ed Crafts and Ed Cliff when I was in California. I met Ed Cliff a couple of times when he came to southern California for various things, but Ed Crafts came on what was called a GII, General Integrating Inspection of the region. I later came to know Ed Crafts quite well and to appreciate him and to completely that understand he was a very intellectual person and tended to ask questions that didn't necessarily fit the conventional mold. So he came on this GII and was in fact on the San Bernardino forest. He looked at all these fires that came across the front country. We'd had a whole series of fires go into the mountains just north of San Bernardino, the so-called McKinley fire, and the Panorama Point fire which was up just north of San Bernardino. The fires joined on the Angeles, why that whole front country had really been torched. Crafts sat there and looked at this and said something to the effect that he certainly wouldn't call that a portrait of success [laughter] or some words to that effect. He just said it with quite a bit of what appeared to me to be sarcasm. He said we have simply got to figure out a way to manage these southern California forests without just spending all this money to try to put out fires, and then two years later it all burns off and we go through this whole cycle again.

Well, we'd been trying to try to figure out a way to get fire resistant vegetation in places, I had myself planted this vegetation in my backyard that Dusty Wrenn had brought from Israel to see how it would grow in that kind of climate. And we planted some up in the mountains, which would solve our attempts to grow something along the roadside so that we'd get less roadside fires. A lot of fires were starting along the roadside. Maybe plant them on the fire breaks to slow down a fire when it hit. The problem with that vegetation is that it could not successfully out-compete the native vegetation.

HKS: I see.

RMP: In other words, if you tried to spray you'd kill it along with the other vegetation. Anyway, that was one of the attempts to try to change the vegetation.

We also tried various ways to do prescribed burning. We started using things like little pyrotechnic devices that were almost like little firecrackers that you could put on a string. You could then fire an area and get enough heat to create different fire situations by changing the vegetation, by having a tapestry of different kinds of vegetation at different ages and so on. We of course did not have the capability of doing that from helicopters at the time. Helicopters were expensive, and I don't think we thought about trying to use them.

We had no money to do so-called fieldwork. But this led to a lot of research that began to take place on fuel management. I don't mean it started from Ed Crafts; the Angeles and Los Padres forests had been trying to find different kinds of vegetations, there was a research project going. But Ed Craft's emphasis on the GII started putting the emphasis on trying to break up the brush.

Then one other thing happened. We had a fire on the Cleveland forest. We were talking about the need for roads and access to that brush country and breaking up the brush. A lot of dead-end roads had been built in that country where the ridges were fairly flat going out and you'd build a road. Suddenly it would stop, and you had a dead end road. One of the things you couldn't do is to put firefighters on that kind of road, if you didn't want to run the chance of losing a whole bunch of them. So on the Cleveland forest, the chief of fire control from Washington went out one of those dead end roads to get a better look at the fire that was on the other side, way down below him. The fire was blowing through there. I don't remember whether it actually cut him off, but it came very close to it if it didn't. Which was a pretty vivid way of explaining that you simply couldn't have these very narrow roads with this heavy brush on both sides that suddenly dead ended without running a real risk of a disaster with people.

HKS: I remember that Region 5 in the 1920s experimented with what was called light burning. It was controversial. They distinguished between light burning, or fuel reduction, and prescribed burning for silvicultural practices in the Southeast. This was in a sense a rebirth of that idea to burn fuel.

RMP: Yes. They did a lot of the work done on that, trying to burn when you could control it. But it took a source of heat in order to get it to start at a time when you could also stop it. You could burn it lots of times when you couldn't stop it.

HKS: Is there much lightning fire in those areas?

RMP: Lightning is not the big cause of fire there.

HKS: So these days when we're trying to do "natural things," we wouldn't burn to duplicate natural conditions where lightning is not a factor?

RMP: Lightning would be a factor if you didn't have twenty million people in southern California. With twenty million people, you're going to have ignition sources from power lines breaking, from airplanes running into the mountain. We had fires from drones getting loose from Edwards Air Force Base. One of our more interesting cases was where this drone got away and the air force decided to shoot it down before it crashed in a populated area. Every time they shot at it, they started a fire. Kids playing with matches still is a big cause of fire, or simply people burning things. A lot of people used to burn things in their backyard.

Another thing that came to the fore about was that a lot of us were trying to figure out why these mountains unravel so much after burns. Why did the whole mountainside come down? It was fairly obvious that when it rained on those areas that had all the ash on them, that the rainfall simply didn't go in. You could walk on one of those areas after it rained, and there'd be some topsoil maybe an inch or two thick, and you'd actually see dry soil in your tracks. The water simply wasn't going in. We said there's got to be something going on here with the soil. When I wrote a paper at Harvard, I said there's something going on with the soil. One idea was that the ash was simply filling up the pores of the soil beneath it, and preventing penetration.

HKS: But that would happen in other parts of the country, too.

RMP: Yes, but we couldn't figure out why it was so much more evident in California. Of course, those mountains are steep. Southern California mountains have some of the steepest country around; they're much steeper than anything, except for some areas in Region 6, and some of the areas in Region 5 on the coast. When these burn off, there's just nothing left, there's no root system, there's no logs, there's no nothing. There was some capillary action or something happening there that was causing this problem. You could take some of that soil and put it in a container, take some water and drop some of that soil in it, and it would just sit there as a glob. And it would take hours, maybe as much as twelve hours, before that soil would ever absorb the water.

Later on when there was a lot of detailed research done on that, we found out that a couple of things were happening. That brush has so much oil in it, and when you vaporize that oil, it goes down in the soil and cools. It actually forms an impervious layer down in the soil.

HKS: So it's not just the heat of the fire it's …

RMP: It's those oils that are volatizing, and they're doing two things. They're coating the particles of soil somewhat and they're also forming an impervious layer. That whole thing tends to slide off the mountain where that layer's created, because the water goes down and follows that layer. The whole mountain comes apart. If you can burn fairly lightly you don't get that much effect. That's the reason, I think, control burning is particularly important there because you don't get that hot burning that causes penetration and causes that layer to be created.

I didn't know that was what was happening, except all of us knew something was happening to the soil after those fires that was causing the whole country to unravel. I was really taken by the question of how in the world are you going to manage the southern California forests, this brush covered forest, with all of the exposure to people there, and you knew you were going to get fire starts, and you knew that you had to have some way to do some change of vegetation in order not to have homogeneous vegetation of one age that would carry fire.

Some were saying that once we get this firefighting capability, you won't have any problem in southern California. It's really because you don't have air capability. Sam Jarvi, who had a great capability of saying things in a way that people understood, said, "Remember, first, it's dark almost half the time which makes it pretty difficult to use aircraft. Second, most of the big fires that really do most of the damage occur under Santa Ana conditions, which means you may have 60 mph or more winds, which means that you're not going to be flying aircraft much during those kinds of conditions. Third," he said, "the up-draft that has occurred from those fires, if you flew over those fires and dropped a bucket of water, not only would the water pass you going up but the bucket too." [laughter]

This was true in saying you're not going to be able to attack the head of a fire, you're going to have to work the edges. Sam said that aerial equipment and aerial delivery is going to be an important tool, but it's not going to mean you're not going to have to worry with fires in southern California. We were being told don't worry about the fuels by some people, we'll just develop new technology and we'll be able to handle these fires. Sam's words, which were about 1956 or something, turned out in 1991 to still be true.

HKS: Some physiologists or botanists came up with a theory of why, in that kind of hot, arid climate, plants with a lot of oils would predominate. Is there something about the oils that the plants need to survive so you couldn't replace them with a less oily species?

RMP: All I can say is that's a so-called fire species. The Chamise, which comes back after a fire; it takes heat to germinate the seed.

HKS: Like ceanothus in the North.

RMP: Right. So after the fire, the first thing that comes back is the Chamise. Then as it gradually develops into mixed brush species which people call chaparral. Chamise is a fire species; it's like lodgepole pine from that standpoint. It is a species that adapted to a frequent fire sequence, and because it's adapted to that sequence you're not likely to replace it.

HKS: Because you've got seeds in the soil.

RMP: Not only have you got seeds in the soil, it also sprouts, so it comes back both ways.

HKS: That's why it's so hardy.

RMP: That's why it's so hardy. You can put the seeds in sand and put them in your oven and heat them, and that way you can get them to germinate.

HKS: I remember a study on ceanothus. Seeds retain their viability for over two hundred years.

RMP: Yes.

HKS: I mean they represent an old growth cycle almost.

RMP: They'll just lay there in the soil until you get the high temperatures of fire. Even though a lot of the seeds got burned up, you get enough seeds that survive and get heated until they suddenly come up. The ironic thing is immediately after a fire, like four or five years after, you've got a cycle again when it's extremely flammable. That makes it really difficult. About the best thing that anybody's come up with is prescribed or controlled burning to break up the tapestry of the fuel, and be able to get in immediately when a fire starts and try to have someplace you can get equipment and water and aerial delivery real early. But I'd have to say that if you look at what happened even in 1988, we don't really know how to effectively control fires in that kind of a world.

One of the things that struck me was that much of our fire planning was based on five year averages and fuel moisture under average conditions and so on, and you tend to get wiped out not only in southern California but even in Oregon, Washington, and Montana, you really tend to get wiped out under extreme conditions which are quite different from those so called average conditions. I was bothered by the idea that all of our fire manning and fire flying and everything else was basically based on those five-year averages. Frankly, I'm still not satisfied that enough attention's been paid in fire research to extreme conditions. We could end up handling those average conditions and not touch the extreme conditions.

You can see that the extreme conditions are just likely not to ever be controllable. Fire people take a hard look at the Los Padres forest and so on and look at all the money we were spending on fuels and so on and saying, "Is that really helping us during the normal year? Is that still an effective way to handle extreme conditions? If it's not, we still haven't found much of a secret to reducing the extent of fire." That remains an open question, whether we really know techniques that help us under extreme conditions. Of course, that's been enormously complicated by spending a tremendous amount of your fire forces trying to take care of the houses that are in the brush fields. People seem to want to build houses on those steep hillsides in those brush fields, and have vegetation coming right up to their house.

HKS: How about some philosophy. We have flood plains; you can't build in a flood plain. Have a fire plain. Is that feasible at all?

RMP: In the first place, if you didn't go on a fire plain or a flood plain you wouldn't have any population in southern California, because the whole thing is either one or the other.

HKS: How about lending institutions? They have a lot of clout, you can't get a mortgage if you're in an area like that, or are these people who don't worry about mortgages and insurance costs? They have enough wealth that …

RMP: I think most people think that floods are something that happens to somebody else.

HKS: The banks are pretty snooty folks sometimes about getting a mortgage; they worry about termites and all sorts of long-term problems.

RMP: Not really. Up until recently, there was no flood insurance. In other words, if you have a house that the windows blow in or the wind blow off in a windstorm and you get rain in your house, that's covered. But if you're in a place where you get flooded from a stream, unless you have special flood insurance you're not covered. I guess the frequency of that was low enough until the banks didn't worry much about it. We used to say for the first five years after you had a tremendous amount of flooding, people tended to stay away from those areas. But within about five years …

HKS: Newcomers and so forth.

RMP: Newcomers. Most of the people that moved in had not the faintest idea that there was any problem. If you zoned those areas, as I say you literally would not have people in Southern California. Those streams, once they hit that great change of slope and drop the debris, those streams flop around. If you fly over southern

California and look at those streams, they look like you've turned a garden hose loose. Before the streams do that they overlap. This stream may have flowed across that one, and the stream actually builds up to where the area of the stream is higher than the area around it, but disgorging debris.

I was talking to some geologists about that time and they said the only problem of southern California is that people are here a few million years early. This is still geologically young and unstable country, and people really ought not to be living here. If you look at the fire and flood sequence and the fact that there's very little water and everything else, it's not a good place for people to live except it's a beautiful climate and lots of people want to live there.

I think society at some point has to get a handle on this. When you have a disaster and you have all kinds of government and other people come in to help people come through this disaster, in some respects we're encouraging behavior that might not occur otherwise. We come in and provide funding to bail people out of those kinds of things. We spend money to build flood control channels, we spend money for all kinds of additional fire protection, we come in and help them out in case they are flooded and so on. Who would say on an individual basis you shouldn't help somebody?

HKS: That's right, I understand.

RMP: If you were looking at this as a geographer, you would say why should you take a lot of water out of the streams in northern California, and take that water all the way to southern California and put it in an area where you've already got too many people.

HKS: We had a drought in Santa Cruz in about 1980; we had water rationing. You fly out to L.A. and see people were washing their cars and washing off the sidewalks and …

RMP: They're not doing that now.

HKS: I know that [laughter].

RMP: This is the whole question of how much society in general has to say about what area's developed is a curious one in our country. When I lived on the Plumas forest, I was involved with the early work related to the California water project. The reservoir for Orville dam floods a big hunk of the Plumas forest, and so we were involved in two things. One, the relocation of all the facilities that would be flooded. Second, the state decided that they would build some upstream reservoirs for recreational fishing as part of that whole California water project.

Upstream reservoirs were built and became quite attractive recreation fishing streams. But at that point it really seemed to me like a pipe dream that you're going to take the water that far into southern California.

HKS: They had the Tehachapis to get over.

RMP: Yes. All those mountains to get over, and I thought, man alive, how in the world are you going to do all this? That's going to be expensive. So I really questioned whether this was going to happen. Then I moved to San Diego, and when I moved there and talked to people, there was no question it was going to happen. Of course, the votes were there in southern California, so there wasn't any question that California was going to authorize the California water project because that was the only way to get water, in their view, to people that needed it. The people didn't want to live in northern California. This is a continuing problem in our country, to what extent do you take resources from one area, take the water and translocate it to another part because people prefer to live there. This is the western/eastern Colorado question. People like to live in eastern Colorado so they go and bring water to eastern Colorado. You've got that big fight now. I guess we have gone backwards somewhat, but moving now into Region 8.

Regional Forester in Atlanta

HKS: Region 8. You'd just become regional forester. Ted has just left for out West.

RMP: I was deputy regional forester and then became regional forester. Ted had moved to Region 6. An interesting thing happened right when I moved to Region 8, that is a part of history but maybe a couple of features are not. Do you remember the famous buried trailer incident?

HKS: No.

RMP: It made all kinds of national news. I'd just moved to the region. It's probably an accident that I didn't sign the memo to the forest from the region. Up in North Carolina we'd acquired some land that had been acquired from a school district. A man in North Carolina got the idea that since that was donated for school purposes, really it would still belong to the school district of the family that donated it, really didn't belong to the government because the deed said it was donated for school purposes. So he wrote out a quit claim deed to his son, quit claiming his interest in that land to his son, and his son moved a trailer onto that piece of land, which was as far as we were concerned part of the national forest, part of the Pisgah National Forest I believe.

The district ranger, seeing this trailer and the guy starting to take up housekeeping on national forest lands, said to this guy that this is national forest land. He produced this quit claim deed, said no I own this, it was quit claimed to me by my father. As you probably know, I could quit claim the Brooklyn Bridge to you, or the Dulles airport or anything else. I just say I give you my interest in it. If I don't have any you don't have any either, but it's an official document. Anyway, he proceeded to bring in this trailer on the land, and he took the wheels off of it, and it was kind of a ramshackle old trailer. The district ranger went to the Forest and went to the Region and checked out all the land records. It turned out that the government had actually condemned that piece of land in order to clear title.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: There was no question that the government owned that land. The memo came back from the Region to the national forest in North Carolina. There has been a complete check of this piece of land and there's no question but what this piece of land belongs to the government and is part of the national forest. It's been verified by the general council, the regional attorney, and you should probably take action to reassert ownership of that land, and so on. The district ranger went out and talked to this guy, and he said you know this really is national forest land, and you're going to need to move.

Apparently the ranger talked to this guy several times and it was not an antagonistic situation at all. The fellow finally said, "There isn't any way I can move this thing, the wheels are off of it, it's practically falling apart. I guess we'll just have to demolish it, get rid of it. I do have some things in there I'd like to move out of it." So the ranger helped him move his things out. After he helped him move his things out, they took a bulldozer and demolished the trailer and buried it on site.

About that time a whole whirl broke that the Forest Service had just moved in heavy handed and ejected a guy and buried his trailer without any due process. There was no notification to move, no sheriffs, no US marshals or nobody else involved, you see. The ranger did all this, in his view, to merely help this to happen, feeling that this guy didn't have any way to move the trailer.

This took about twenty-four hours or something to end up in the White House, because it was picked up by the press. It became a big cause about the highhandedness of government. Realize that Nixon now was the president and there was lots of criticism of government employees and bureaucracy in general and highhandedness of government and all this kind of thing. Ed Cliff was chief and apparently they came to him and said you've got to fire that guy. Ted was still regional forester at the time, and I ordinarily would have probably have signed that memo as deputy regional forester. But it was signed by a guy down in Lands because it was considered just a routine notification. So neither Ted nor I had known that instruction had gone to the

Forest. And I'm not even sure the forest supervisor had known about it. It just landed on the district ranger's desk and he proceeded to do something.

HKS: But where did the story start? Did the so-called landowner talk to the press, or did the press just observe this and pick up the story?

RMP: I'm not sure. Small towns in North Carolina have all got newspapers. Apparently somebody knew that this was happening and it got picked up in the coffee shop, and the next thing you knew the reporter had it and the next thing you knew United Press had picked it up. And the next thing you knew it was on national radio.

HKS: A quiet news day or something and there you go.

RMP: So it just blew up. Ted immediately moved to tell him to put another trailer back on the site and allow this guy to move back in, and go through some due process to be sure that they went through notification and all this sort of thing. A lot of the damage had been done. And it even was picked up in the *New York Times*, the front page of the *New York Times*. I don't want to spend too much time on the story, but the first brother that was there in the trailer actually died and it was reported that he may have drank some moonshine that was contaminated or something. Whatever the reasons were now I don't know, but the *New York Times* published this as the government harassing this poor gentle mountain man until he couldn't take it anymore. Anyway, the one part of this that is fascinating is this guy got an attorney then who filed an action saying that there was all kinds of personal effects and so on in that trailer and pictures of family and things that were inestimable in value and that he had suffered all kinds of emotional suffering and demanded some huge amount of money for this trailer that had been destroyed by the government.

HKS: I imagine the district ranger is feeling pretty shaky along about now.

RMP: The district ranger's feeling lucky that he still had a job at this point. He was a pretty good district ranger. He had a real feel for people in that area and his motivation I'm sure was as pure as the driven snow. Simply helping this guy.

HKS: Sure, the pragmatic approach.

RMP: Pragmatic, and rather than going to get a sheriff or getting other people, getting marshals or this sort of thing …

HKS: Which would have affected the relationship he had with this guy.

RMP: So he was trying to be helpful, this is what came across. Anyway we got into a question of how are we going to deal with this because we were really just beat up almost every day in the press. They'd pick up some new incident. We were trying to figure out how we could negotiate a settlement. Meantime, Bill Huber, who was the head of I&E (Information and Education) at the time was down in Arkansas on a GII. The only reason I'm bringing this story in is because it's an interesting story and also brings it in that Region 8 was a great place for people to play practical jokes on each other. Bill was in Arkansas on this GII, telling everybody about this buried trailer incident and saying, you know, we're really just getting beat up on this and we don't know any way to get the real story out. It just looks like the highhandedness of government, burying this poor trailer. Regardless of the motivation of the ranger, he should have recognized the potential that's boiling up in the press. If it got out that the government had really buried this guy's trailer, to try and explain why.

Anyway Bill got back to his motel after dinner, and he got a long distance phone call. It was from the attorney of this person who had the trailer. The attorney said, "I want to settle this case." They talked about it and they talked about how much and so and so forth. Finally, Bill said, "I can't settle a case but I can make a recommendation on it." They finally arrived on a figure on how much they would settle the case for. They ended the conversation, and Huber was really feeling great, you know, he had settled this case. I wasn't there; I didn't know anything about this at the time. He was telling all these people that were there at the motel at this GII that boy, Ted would really be proud about this because we got this darn thing settled and got this off our back. He said, "I'd better call Ted."

It was about 11 o'clock by then, and there's an hour change of time in Atlanta, so they said, "You'd better not call Ted now, it's after midnight back there." Bill said, "Okay, I'll call him in the morning." Then one of the guys said, "Bill, how do you know this guy after thinking this over might decide you were such an easy mark that he'll come back and double the amount he wants? You don't have anything in writing. Or suppose he disavows this whole thing or at least raises the price." And Bill says, "I'll just tell him from the soul." So they went on to bed and they got up the next morning. Bill went out in his car and there was a sign on his windshield that said, "I changed my mind. Kiss my * *, Black Bart." [laughter] That's the first time Bill knew that he had been taken, because the long distance operator was the wife of one of the people on the district there, and he had negotiated the settlement with the assistant ranger.

HKS: Why do I know Bill Huber's name?

RMP: Along the way he was the Smokey Bear program manager in the western office then took up director of I & E.

HKS: Followed Clint Davis, then.

RMP: I think he was the program manager maybe immediately following Clint Davis for Smokey Bear. He's been most in the southern region. The reason I mentioned that story is to illustrate that Region 8 people would do almost anything to pull you into something that they could get a practical joke on you.

HKS: It's spread out so much compared to say 5 and 6, even 1. The people in east Texas and people in Virginia hardly even see each other.

RMP: I learned that you simply can't manage Region 8 like you would Region 5 or Region 6, because you realize in Region 5 you've only got one state, Region 6 you've only got two states. So to a large extent in those regions, dealings at the state level are done by the Regional Office. Because in California if you were dealing at the state level with something, you couldn't have 17 different forest supervisors trying to deal with a major policy question. But when you're in Region 8, you only have one forest supervisor in the state; you depend on the forest supervisor to handle relations at the state level to a large degree.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Since the region is so scattered, there's a lot less of people really knowing each other. In California people in different forests kept coming together on fires and all kinds of other things, and they were next door to each other and there was a lot of interrelationship. If you're a forest supervisor in northern Virginia, you may have never met anybody from the national forest in Texas. So it's a whole different system in Region 8. Region 8 tended to have very strong forest supervisors, who at times apparently were not too enamored with the Regional Office, because the Regional Office was seen as an office several states away.

HKS: I can see that.

RMP: That was good experience for me going to Region 8 and being in an entirely different kind of region with a whole bunch of different states and a whole different kinds of economic, political, and other situations. National forests in Region 8, for example, were not dominant suppliers of timber, for that part of the country. The national forests in Region 8, to a much larger degree, were seen as more for recreation, wildlife, and other purposes. Of course that part wasn't new to me having been in southern California. But the people related to the national forests in the South and East quite differently from the way they do in the West, because in the East the national forest may be the only public land of any consequence that's open to recreation and hunting and fishing. There are no large national parks. Smokey Mountains is the only one of any size, really. And there's very little other public land in those states.

The national forest people relate to the national forest as a place to go and go fishing and camping or something. So the people prize the national forest for that purpose. In some places you do find there's a kind of love/hate relationship with the national forests, particularly when you get into Appalachia. I knew instinctively

from having been in Missouri, in that all that land's acquired, and it used to belong to somebody, and that family may still have some kind of roots there. There may be a cemetery there, an old homeplace there, maybe a little piece of land that they kept, and when they lost that land they may have felt they lost it during the Depression or during a period of adversity, and they may have lost it because the taxes weren't paid. In some places they feel like the Forest Service sort of has this land that they really would like to have themselves as part of their heritage.

We particularly got involved in those kinds of questions. When you're doing national forest planning and you come up with a plan, say, to eliminate a bunch of places where people can drive. They're not really roads but where people used to drive through the country, particularly if you're getting into some kind of roadless area or wilderness and there happens to be a cemetery in there or at least a place where people used to drive to fish, to a stream or to hunt, you've got a major fight on your hands. You're changing a whole cultural tradition.

Cross-Florida Barge Canal

RMP: Really Region 8 was an excellent experience for me. In fact, I would have been in Region 8 for a long time had I had my way about it. A couple of major events that might be of interest. I was very much involved in a barge canal issue in Florida where there was a decision made by President Nixon to stop the construction. This was I think brought to him by Nat Reed, who was the assistant secretary of interior for fish and wildlife and parks, who was from Florida. He'd been a longtime opponent of the cross-Florida barge canal.

HKS: This would go through a national forest?

RMP: Yes. It went through the Ocala National Forest, cut right across Florida, north to Jacksonville. That cross-Florida barge canal was authorized in 1944, and one of the justifications for authorizing that was to reduce the exposure of U.S. shipping to possible hostile submarines, by not having them go around the tip of Florida, and also to reduce the mileage. It was authorized in 1944, but by the time all the planning and everything else was done it's getting into the '60s. By the time they started construction, it's tied to a couple of reservoirs. It was just ripping, just ruining that Ocklawaha River, which is one of the most beautiful streams you've ever seen.

HKS: Is that the Okefenokee area now?

RMP: No, no, this is at Ocala.

HKS: I'm not very familiar with the geography.

RMP: No, it's a stream. It goes from the St. John's River on the east side, up the Ocklawaha River right near Ocala and comes out the west side of Florida. And it would have to have several locks in it, and it had reservoirs that connects with those locks which would take people across Florida. By the time the 1970s came around, there were really serious questions about the whole idea. For one thing, you certainly could never say there were any submarines around that anybody was worried about at this point. Plus the size of shipping had increased so dramatically that the canal wasn't big enough for the ships that were operating anyway. So the only use of that canal would be primarily by pleasure boats and so on, and by maybe some small shipping barges. Certainly not any of the big barges, because if you were going to leave, say, the New Orleans area or somewhere, or Texas or anywhere else, and you were going to go somewhere on the east coast, you would swing out around the tip of Florida, and probably make as good time as if you wanted to go through that barge canal. Even if you were small enough to go through there, which most of them were not.

HKS: Because it's slow going.

RMP: It would be slow going, and with big ships you couldn't get through it.

HKS: But someone was still in favor of going ahead with the canal.

RMP: This is one of the problems with large public works projects. The land has already been acquired, it had already been designed, you were talking about a tremendous economic bonanza for that area, maybe not the word bonanza, tremendous economic impact in that area. These people had taxed themselves to buy the land, they'd created a tax district to buy the land. In several cases the highways had been raised over the stream where the barge canal was going to go underneath. In fact if you'd drive down there today you'd wonder why so many of these bridges are way up in the air and are long. They were built across the cross-Florida barge canal.

HKS: Had the Forest Service already issued this special use permit?

RMP: It was authorized by an act of Congress, a whole Corps of Engineers project.

HKS: That takes care of that.

RMP: That took care of that project. We'd historically not been that much in favor of it, but it was passed by an act of Congress. In fact I guess you'd probably say we were opposed to it back then, but the act of Congress in 1944 pretty well settled that, an authorization act.

But Nat Reed was really involved in trying to stop it. One of the things that was involved were two reservoirs that were already there, just been built and they were raising the water level. They were flooding a lot of trees. The question was were those trees going to die? While they were arguing about what to do, the president stopped the construction. I bet I'd talk to Nat Reed twice a day for weeks as we tried to assemble some people down there, people primarily from Forest Service research who understood the physiology of trees and who could look at those various trees that were flooded part of the area. Many times they flooded part of the area. And if it was going to be flooded during the growing season, how many of them would die. Was this an irreversible thing?

So we did an EIS. The people down there sued. I ended up in federal court defending the EIS, which was my first major experience with federal court. It was one of those situations where some happenstances help you out. I had spent that Christmas on the Ocala forest with my family, because this thing was boiling up and I had not been there on the ground except for one occasion. I felt uncomfortable with the problems that were involved without having to be able to understand it on the ground. I got the district ranger to take me on a trip by boat along that river. I looked at the EIS in some detail, which was in draft at that point and had not been released. I made all kinds of comments on the EIS. When we got in federal court, we got in one of those situations where the EIS had been produced by the Forest and had been signed by the forest supervisor.

They asked the forest supervisor in court about the EIS. He said he'd really not been that much involved in the EIS, it had been done by his deputy. So he wasn't really that familiar with the details of the EIS. It was signed by Jack Deinama for the chief, who was associate deputy chief at the time. Jack said, "I just signed this thing, it came up from the Region and my people told me it looked all right and I just sent it on, I never really read the EIS." Phil Thornton, who was deputy chief at that time, said he was transmitting it on and didn't read it. [laughter]

It looked like our case was going down the tube pretty fast, because people whose names were on the document were not familiar with it. These were the people, supposedly, who were the decision makers. So I was the only one left. I testified, and I said, "Yes I did know of the EIS, I'd read it in detail, I'd looked at the area on the ground, I'd made notes on the thing." So when they asked the ranger about it then, asked him if there was evidence that I had read it and so on, he said, "He wrote all over it." [laughter] The only reason I repeat that incident, it taught me a lesson at that point, never sign anything that you're not reasonably familiar with, if it's a document that you're going to be held accountable for. That doesn't mean you've got to read every word or anything like that, but it means you've got to take some responsibility that it's an adequate document and you'd better look at it enough. I followed the principle pretty much as chief that if I didn't have time to at least look at something and be reasonably familiar with it, then somebody else should sign it. There's not any particular point in assuming responsibility for some things.

HKS: So there aren't that many documents that require the actual chief's signature by law or something that …

RMP: They may require an acting chief to sign. Certainly I signed lots of things that I didn't understand forward or backward. If it's got your name on it you can't come back later and say I just signed something and I didn't understand it at the time. You find people doing that with travel expense claims now and then. People say well my secretary just filled it out and I just signed it. You'd better be responsible for what you sign.

HKS: I understand that.

RMP: Anyway, we ended up with a mixed decision in that case. The EIS wasn't sufficient and it didn't cover some of the area outside the some of the national forest. But it was adequate for the part related to the national forest. And part of the problem with that is that even though president Nixon had stopped the construction, the only evidence that anybody had that the president had stopped the construction was a White House news release.

HKS: What was going on in Florida? Didn't Nixon stop the expansion of the airport?

RMP: I think that was primarily due to Nat Reed who was the assistant secretary of interior for fish, wildlife and parks, and was a very, very strong environmentalist. Nat Reed's brother is apparently chief of protocol for the State Department. It's a very prominent, very wealthy family in Florida with a lot of roots in Florida, and was very concerned at some of the things that were happening in Florida. He's the guy that certainly has most of the credit for stopping the cross-Florida barge canal. That project should never have gone forward. The fact that they authorized it raised another question. Once these projects are authorized like this—this was authorized in 1944—as long as they stay on the books they're still authorized.

HKS: Sure.

Phosphate Mining in Florida

RMP: And it takes kind of superhuman effort to de-authorize a project. The governor's cabinet in Florida, for example. Florida is one of the states that has a cabinet form of government, where the governor takes action with his cabinet. They demanded the de-authorization of the cross-Florida barge canal. The other major issue, again when I was in the region, that turned out to involve Florida was the famous Osceola phosphate case. There'd been a routine permit to prospect in Florida, to a company. The prospecting permit was agreed to by the forest supervisor. I don't know whether they had any idea that phosphate might be the mineral being sought, or if they just saw it as a routine permit to prospect, or what the feeling was. But they issued a permit to prospect. The company went out and drilled some holes and discovered a major deposit of phosphate on the Osceola National Forest.

Phosphate occurs over a large area, and not really deep. To mine it, you essentially churn up the whole surface and go down and get the phosphate. Then you redeposit the top soil. In the process of taking the phosphate out you leave behind a very fine colloidal material that remains in suspension for a long period of time. So you have these large slime pits, and these are a major problem to everything. In the process of doing this, you've completely destroyed any structure of the soil or the forest or anything else. The prospecting permit had actually been issued by BLM, and the forest supervisor had given the consent of the Forest Service, which is required on acquired land. On acquired land at that time BLM could not issue a prospecting permit without the consent of the Forest Service, which the Forest Service had given. The law says the secretary must consent to the prospecting and to the leasing. For many years that had been considered two points of consent, consent to prospecting and to leasing. Well the interpretation of BLM's attorneys and the Interior's attorneys was that if you consent to prospecting and they find a valuable deposit, they have a right to a lease.

HKS: I see.

RMP: This started a confrontation that lasted several years, because you're talking about millions and millions of dollars worth of phosphate. Essentially you were going to destroy, in my view, that part of the Osceola Forest. You could stick a few trees around, but as far as reclaiming the ecosystem that had been there, you weren't going to do it.

HKS: Basically this is the same as strip mining coal.

RMP: It's even a little worse than stripping coal in that you end up with these slime pits that have water in them. It's also phosphate enriched, and so you've got a tremendous growth of plants. Those slime pits are going to be there for decades, and they're large.

HKS: A high water table is part of the problem.

RMP: You just work a few feet above the water table. In the manufacturing process, they get rid of this colloidal material by sending it to these pits. That's about all you could do with it. You certainly couldn't put it over the surface. It's a mixture; it's a slurry.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: The colloidal material just stays in suspension, and over time the water sort of evaporates and finally you get something that's like a heavy mud. Unless you fence it or something it is hazardous to water fowl or any kind of wildlife, maybe even to people, or cattle or anything else.

We took a pretty hard line in the region that we considered the granting of a lease authorizing this to be mined was simply incompatible with the Osceola Forest. They said they could reclaim this. They would develop the reclamation technology. This continued long after I came to Washington as deputy chief and it wasn't finally resolved until I was chief. Of course the major action was over in Interior, because they had to make a decision whether this was a valuable deposit or not. If it wasn't a valuable deposit they weren't going to get a lease. That got into the question of how do you consider value. Do you take into account all of the costs of reclaiming in computing value? Or do you consider the in-place value? Suppose you assume certain technological changes so maybe you can reclaim it, the value will change.

HKS: NEPA affects this somehow.

RMP: We had gone through an EIS process on the thing, although the original prospecting permits were issued pre-NEPA.

HKS: NEPA can't be retroactive in that sense. If something is already authorized, that's it?

RMP: The prospecting was already authorized, and there was no NEPA analysis as far as I can remember. The prospecting was before that. It finally turned on the question of whether this was a valuable deposit. Of course there was a lawsuit in connection with it. The secretary of the interior finally ruled that you did need to consider the cost of reclamation, and that since they didn't find a valuable deposit, they were not entitled to the lease. But it took about ten years.

HKS: Where was the company all this time, just sort of fuming and fussing?

RMP: The company was doing all kinds of things. They tried to go the political route, they tried to go the legal route, they tried to go everywhere to get a permit. Some of the people felt quite strongly that they would develop a technology to be able to handle the slime pits. You're talking many, many millions of dollars of phosphate. They very much wanted the permit, and were very disappointed when they didn't get it.

Arkansas Caves

RMP: There were a lot of good things I was associated with when I was in the region. When I got there, the region was in the middle of developing the Blanchard Springs Caverns, a big caverns in Arkansas. Here was a case where a cave had been rediscovered. I don't know exactly when, but it had obviously been known before. When I got there they were well under way in developing the caverns. The region had done an excellent job of trying to learn from other caverns that had been developed around the country, trying to figure out what people felt they'd done right and what they'd felt didn't work so well. They'd gone with the Park Service to Carlsbad Caverns and other caverns and looked at what they had done. They'd looked at private caverns. One of the mistakes they said they'd made is that when developing the caverns they had brought in light and heat and stopped the cave processes. One thing you should try to do is keep the cave a live cave, if you can. The caverns were still making stalactites and stalagmites and were still a functioning, operational cave.

The region brought in people to look at the whole life cycle that was going on in the caverns. Now the life cycle in the caverns is almost entirely dependent upon bats, which would fly out of the caverns at night. Bat guano is a food source for the other things inside the caverns. There were blind salamanders and all kinds of interesting creatures that had adapted to the cave. The region made a decision to keep the natural opening where the bats came and went, to let it function. Then they put in an elevator to go down to the caverns, and put an airlock so when you get out of that elevator, you don't either get the air coming out of the caverns, or bring in the air from outside. You go down, walk out the door and close it behind you, and then another door opens into the caverns.

Then they went through things that happened with lighting in different caverns. If you put in regular lights, you start off having an algae growth. They set up a system so that when you're taking escorted tours through the caverns, the lights come on when you enter an area and then they turn off behind you. They are on for a short time while the particular group is there. The cavern isn't lit in general.

HKS: Sounds pretty expensive.

RMP: No, it wasn't. I don't think it was any more expensive than the other way of going about it. In fact, it would probably be more expensive if you put in regular lights and left them on all the time.

HKS: I suppose.

RMP: The elevator was fairly expensive. This was one of the poorest counties in Arkansas. These caverns could be the major tourist attraction, and one of the questions was how do you have that happen without a Coney Island type thing or a development that's incompatible with every thing else. The local Forest Service people working with the local people did a really an excellent job of helping them develop an architectural code. We decided that we would pick up easements along roads going to the caverns so you couldn't have a myriad of signs. We were able to develop these caverns in a way that was very environmentally sensitive.

HKS: You didn't have a concessionaire do this?

RMP: No, not a concessionaire. As far as I know, all of the Forest Service work has been done by the Forest Service. The work was done there with the local people, and then the state of Arkansas was working on something called a full culture center, and that's near by. This whole area then becomes a big recreation attraction, a full culture center and the caverns and picnicking and so on, which is the most important thing in that whole area from an economic standpoint. Shows how things like that have an important variant on things. We had the governor, then Governor Bumpers, come over for the ground breaking. We had had not very good relations with the governor's staff because we'd been doing some herbicide spraying in Arkansas, and he had some people in his staff that charged we were using Agent Orange.

HKS: Oh sure.

RMP: He was a critic of some of the forest practices that were going on, and so we weren't standing too well with then Governor Bumpers. He'd been told a lot of things by his staff that we were not very sensitive to what was going on over there, but he came to that groundbreaking. Several years afterward he told me he'd been told all these things about the Forest Service. He said, "I came there and I saw what was being done to protect those caverns in terms of keeping the natural systems working, and I learned about all of this being done with the community to have an architectural code and protect the area going in and cooperate with the people there." He said, "I decided these people can't be all that people are telling me if they're doing these kinds of things." That worked to demonstrate to a governor who later became a senator. The kinds of things that they remember set a tone of how they relate to the Forest Service. They don't necessarily relate to the chief, they relate to the Forest Service that they know back home.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: And the reason that I spent a little time on this story is that when the National Forest Management Act was in the final throes on the Hill, and the question of whether or not it would pass in the form that we were now hoping it would pass, the person that held the key to whether that happened or not was Senator Bumpers.

HKS: Interesting how things work out.

RMP: And he had in his pocket the proxy of Senator Metcalf. I often thought back, what if Senator Bumpers had had a different experience? During the time the National Forest Management Act was pending and there was lots of criticism of forest management in the East and so on, the two forest supervisors said to Senator Bumpers, "Would you come and take a tour of the forests and see what we're doing, because what you're being told by a lot of people is not really what we're doing?" Senator Bumpers said, "That's a reasonable request." So he went on a tour of those two forests, and he came back and he told John McGuire, "I took a tour of those two forests, and I saw lots of things there that I might have some question about. But," he said, "a lot of things that I saw there were things that I liked and they were different from than what I'd been told was happening."

One of the problems in Arkansas, and other places too, is that industry in Arkansas was, in my view, not being very sensitive to the Arkansas culture and anything else by moving into Arkansas and having huge clearcuts. Hundreds of acres in one big swath. You realize that these people in Arkansas still remembered the time when the timber was wiped out in Arkansas early in this century. As far as they were concerned, it left the country devastated.

HKS: I guess the last old growth was gone in 1940.

RMP: But most of it was gone in Arkansas in the 1920s and 1930s. When I grew up in Missouri, which is next door to Arkansas, the old railroads were still evident. We used to go down and pick up railroad spikes and all that kind of thing, but it was cut over, abandoned by the companies that owned it, sold for taxes, burned over repeatedly, and was just devastated country. This is the same for most of Arkansas. People who were still there remembered, and they were reacting very negatively to what they saw as devastation, and particularly by a foreign-owned company. I mean a company that was not native to Arkansas. That land had been owned by Dierks for a long time.

HKS: And Weyerhaeuser bought out Dierks.

RMP: And Weyerhaeuser bought out Dierks. From their viewpoint, Weyerhaeuser was simply not practicing sensitive forestry. You realize this is a place where people hunt, fish, and had traditionally been open to them. It looked like the wrath of God to them. A lot of country that had been in hardwood had been replaced by pines, and these people are squirrel hunters and deer hunters.

HKS: Some of the hardwood was just knocked over, right?

RMP: Yes, a lot of it was just pushed over, wasn't being utilized at all, just pushed over and burned. Part of the bad rap we were getting in Arkansas was because of what was happening on private land inside the national forest, and people didn't make any distinction.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Anyway, the Blanchard Spring Caverns involved Senator Bumpers. Also at that time in the South, Senator McClelland was involved, Senator Stennis; you had most of the power in forestry circles in the South and Southeast. Talmadge in Georgia. With the exception of Humphrey and Jackson, the power in forestry was in the Southeast in the Senate. Rarick, who was the coauthor of the Humphrey-Rarick Act, was from Louisiana.

So my time in the South was important in getting a better understanding of that part of the world, and an understanding that the Forest Service is quite different in that part of the world. I got a better understanding of the importance of Research and State and Private. Most people, including private landowners, probably relate to the desire for information out of Research or the fire protection that comes through State and Private more than they do the national forest.

HKS: It's interesting for me, living all my life on the West Coast and then moving to North Carolina where the federal presence is not so obvious.

RMP: That's right. But it's probably more obvious in North Carolina than it is in most of the southern region, because you do have quite a bit of national forest and the Smokey Mountain National Park. But in the Southeast, a lot of people routinely mistake the Forest Service for the Park Service, and in fact routinely think they're on a state park maybe, when they're visiting these areas. They see the national forests primarily as an area to go swimming, to go fishing, to go camping, to go boating, to go hunting, and relate to the Forest Service quite differently.

Planning Systems

RMP: The region had just started with Region 9 something called unit planning. I don't rightly know who the father of this so-called unit planning was. Ted Schlapfer was involved, Jay Cravens was involved, Elbin Strom from the region was involved. The theory of unit planning was that you would pick rather homogeneous areas and you would write some kind of guides for that area. You would do this without reference to the administrative boundaries. We wrote a guide for the coastal plains, for the Piedmont, and for Appalachia. This guide described the kind of country and the kind of resources that were there and talked about how you coordinated the kinds of uses that were there. Everything from the kind of wildlife that was there to the recreation opportunities, the kind of trees that were being grown, the timber situation, and the cultural situation, fire and so on.

The next subordinate plan was a so-called unit plan, which was generally small enough to be a part of a national forest. The rules said it could cross forest boundaries, so you had the Appalachian guide, the Piedmont guide, and the coastal plains guide. A long time before, southern California had had a management direction for southern California which was also a guide for several forests, but this in Region 8 and 9 was the most intensive guide that had ever been prepared for the national forests. The two regions worked together because the Appalachians spanned both.

Those guides went forward and would probably have been completed and would have been the first management plans post-NEPA. But the Monogahela situation brought in the National Forest Management Act which had some additional and difficult requirements. The process was carried to Region 6 by Ted Schlapfer, and so he had those early plans on the Willamette Forest, for example, they were done and Jack Alcock who had moved from the Daniel Boone forest in Region 8 to the Willamette after Ted Schlapfer had gone out …

HKS: That's quite a switch, isn't it?

RMP: That was a good process because for the first time it said we're going to have one plan for an area of land. We're not going to have something called multiuse coordinating instructions and a whole bunch of

functional plans. We're going to have one plan for an area of land. You can have an interdisciplinary team put it together, develop the basic plan. You're going to look at alternatives, you're going to have public involvement in the process, and the public was very much involved including the states, like fish and game people in the states. When you get through you're going to have a plan that is published and everybody knows about. If you're going to change what you're doing, you're going to tell people about it and so on.

Those essential ingredients became the foundation for NFMA. When somebody says to me, how did the planning process come out of NFMA (and there's all kinds of people that would either take credit or blame), the process in NFMA was actually developed and tested as a part of the unit planning, with a couple of exceptions. When it got to NFMA, we got in a big hassle about how are you going to establish the allowable harvest level or what became known as the allowable sale quantity, since you don't control harvest levels on a year by year basis. That requirement was interpreted as having to be done on a forest basis, or two forests. You could combine two forests because you're setting the allowable harvest as part of this planning process. Most of Region 8 was on what was called area control anyway, and now on volume control. So the allowable harvest was not, per se, a big issue.

HKS: I don't know if this is the right sequence to ask this question, but I've been thinking as you talked. When I went to work for the Forest Service in 1957, we were told, rightly or wrongly, that the ranger district was the basic administrative unit. And about ten years later I was reading that the national forest was the basic administrative unit. It sounds like there's a tendency toward centralization. Is it still true that the national forest is the basic administrative unit?

RMP: I think the national forest probably is the basic administrative unit. What should be the logical planning unit, though, is, I think, subject to a lot of question by a lot of people. The theory that you're talking about in '57 came out of a McKinsey study of the Forest Service in which an outside consultant came in and looked at the Forest Service and concluded at that time that the ranger district ought to be the basic execution unit. The national forest ought to be the planning unit.

The theory there was that the ranger district ought to execute the timber sales and ought to execute the grazing permit and so on, but the district ranger would not likely have the mix of skills to do a full-blown multiple use plan. The ranger should be involved in the multiuse plan, but it would not be a ranger district multiuse plan. Up until that point, the so-called multiple use plan was a district level plan. Region 4 went the furthest with that. They had a cabinet, and each ranger district map was back lighted. Then they had overlays to show the zoning and the plan for that district. That district was supposed to coordinate with the later functional plan. Functional plans were done at the forest level, supposedly coordinated to this district plan. Many of those functional plans were approved by the regional forester.

Working circles were established right after World War II and were based on transportation around a mill. You tried to establish a harvest in a particular working circle that might have one or two or three mills. With increasing transportation and so on, working circles tended to evaporate over a time. The question became, so you have a working circle, does that mean that other people can't bid in that area?

When I first arrived on the Plumas there were a bunch of maps in the file cabinet that said an area here was "Reserved for Quincy Lumber". These were working circles to support these particular mills. You remember a 1944 act that allowed the creation of these so-called sustained yield units. Simpson has one up in the Pacific Northwest, and there were some there in California and so on. The theory then was that it was important to have stability of supplies, so you'd set up these small units and you would maybe in some cases even prevent competition in those units. In Simpson's sustained yield units the only people who can bid are the people in that unit. And they have to manufacture within that unit. I think later most everybody decided that was a poor idea, even for the company involved, because what happens in that kind of situation is that you create a great disincentive for the mill to improve anything it's doing. If it improves anything it's doing and it's more efficient you immediately capture that in the stumpage price. About the third time the company saw that any time it improved its efficiency it would be captured by stumpage, they would take that money and spend it somewhere else where the government wasn't going to capture it. So those mills tended to remain very inefficient. No incentive to compete with anybody else, because there wasn't any competition, and the history of those tended to be that they kind of creamed the line and then folded their tent.

HKS: Flagstaff was one of those, right?

RMP: Flagstaff was probably one of the better ones in that transportation was good enough and there was enough entrepreneurship. For quite a few years it operated reasonably well. The question became with Flagstaff, at some point, is that mill really still essential for Flagstaff, which has now become a major town. The basic thing was that a planning process was evolving, several regions were experimenting with planning. Everybody began to say, you really can't have a ranger district multiuse map be a controlling document, and then have five or six or seven or eight or ten functional plans done at different levels to different details that are somehow supposed to be coordinated between themselves and with that district plan.

When I went to the San Bernardino Forest, I was trying to understand the various plans that were there, and I found the district multiple use plans done with one scale, the timber management plan done in a different scale, the recreation plan done in a different scale. I was trying to do something called a transportation plan which was to provide access for all these things. The first thing I had to do was try to figure out how to get all this stuff to the same scale so I could understand what was happening in that particular area. We finally standardized our maps and tried to get everything to the same scale. Sam Jarvi took all the staff up into the mountains and said, "Why don't we try to make sense out of all these different plans that we've got." The formal process was still functioning.

HKS: Yes.

RMP: It was finally the unit planning in Region 8 that tried to pull all of this back together, and Region 9 and several other regions. When we got to dealing with Congress on the National Forest Management Act, you couldn't really with a straight face tell Congress that all those plans were coordinated. I remember Jim Giltmier who was staff for the Senate said "in order that we understand this, how about taking forest so-and-so and bringing the plans that are on that forest so we can see them," what the plans look like. You could imagine what happened.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: We had stacks of plans, different scales made at different time, with different assumptions, with different people. We really couldn't tell anybody that those things were well coordinated.

HKS: So centralization probably is not even the right term to use. Doing away with the functional …

RMP: The main thing was that we're trying to coordinate what we've been saying for years and years and years. You were finally saying, "Hey if we're going to have a multiuse plan and a multiuse process, the ranger can't possibly do the job if a whole bunch of other people are doing functional planning, somehow poke down to him different plans." He can have his multiuse plan; it in some respects worked reasonably well and in some respects didn't work at all.

HKS: The GIIs must have been in one way or another pointing out the shortcomings here, because they couldn't pin anything on anybody because no one was actually in control.

RMP: Practically every GII said there was inadequate coordination.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: Also that there was inadequate coordination during Research and State and Private and the National Forest on a lot of things. All kinds of people were trying to figure out how do you put this thing together, but one of the problems with an ongoing organization is that you can't suddenly say let's stop the clock and spend the next two years trying to figure out how we can do things differently. It's kind of like the Holiday Inn you're staying in, you could maybe put up a sign "closed for remodeling," and you can try to redo things, but you can't really do that in a national forest.

HKS: The old cliché about riding a bicycle while you're assembling it, sort of thing.

RMP: Right. It may have taken a crisis like the Monogahela to cause a whole new developmental planning process.

HKS: This is probably too simple a characterization, but was it largely a matter of turf? The staff wanted to keep their specialties and there was resistance. How do you get together? Or do you put it off until next year?

RMP: I don't know whether it was primarily turf. I think it's primarily that that's the way you'd been doing things for a long time. The functional system in some respects was a natural process of having outside clientele groups.

HKS: The fire and timber folks had a lot of clientele.

RMP: So did recreation and wildlife and so on. And when people who were interested in wildlife came to look at what the forest was planning to do, they wanted to see a wildlife plan. They weren't particularly interested in what you were going to do in timber. This remains a problem with coordinated plans of how do the people that are primarily interested in wildlife see what are you doing to wildlife, or what are you doing to fisheries, or what are you doing to archaeological resources, or what are you really doing to the timber resource. The clientele out there, regardless of what we may say, primarily sees the forest for their particular use.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: In many respects the forest staff was a proxy for that clientele. The planning process had been developed, and the funding came that way too, you see. In fact, Congress still provides funding that way, in spite of everything that's been done over a long period of time, Congress is inclined in 1991 to even earmark things more precisely in particular functional activities, and demand that it be spent that way. We've gone through some attempts to loosen that up with some success, but I think the planning process was just a reality of what the clientele expected and the way staffs had developed. In all fairness, a lot of the planning processes that have been developed over time have spent a lot more money than anybody can point to the benefits that have accrued from it. There's not very many people who think that some kind of comprehensive planning is a good idea, at least if they have to follow it.

HKS: Plans take a long time to complete, and life moves along during the planning process.

RMP: Right, life moves along, you have to take actions, and then inevitably what happens downstream doesn't fit the plan.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: All planning requires certain assumptions, so you make a plan following certain assumptions. In some cases you're trying to do long-range stuff. Well, the world doesn't unfold that way. Money doesn't come the way you assume to execute this plan; you have a fire; you have floods; you have insects; you have disease; you have a depression in which people want to put public works in place; recreation and so on moves differently from the way you thought it was going to move. You have inflation where you reduce government spending in certain areas. One of the frustrating things for everybody is when you put a comprehensive plan together somebody wants it to be followed they way it's laid out, and it never really happens that way.

HKS: These days if you don't do that aren't you liable to lawsuits for not following your public plan?

RMP: Yes. The dilemma is how do you have a plan that's flexible enough to allow you to meet the reality that you're liable to have and have it specific enough to mean anything to anybody. That's still a challenge. There are certain things that ought to apply to all activities out there, and called standard of guidelines, you know. In other words there should be, regardless of whether you put a permit out for a power company to do something or whether you put a permit out for any other activity on the forest, certain soil and water protections, certain fire things, certain archaeological or related protections, some of those kind of things ought to apply across all

resources. Somebody ought to do an on site analysis of the impact of this thing and how it fits with the rest of the forest. Some of those kinds of concepts have arisen which are a little different than saying, "does it fit exactly the comprehensive plan?" So you're looking at the comprehensive plan as being more of a guide than a blueprint.

HKS: Planning has been an important part of your public posture as it were. Is it because of NEPA and the National Forest Management Act, or because Max Peterson has always felt planning was essential to all of this? Can you sort that out?

RMP: I may not be able to sort it out completely. I have not been a fan of spending a lot of money on planning, because I've seen a lot of money spent on planning that was essentially wasted in that nobody followed the plans or paid any attention to them. But also it seemed to me that way back when I was in California as a young person that you have to look beyond this year at what you're going to do on a forest. You've got to look at what happens over time. You can't just suddenly wake up next year and say we ought to erase what we did last year.

There's obviously a need to have some way of understanding where you're going. I early got mixed up in that; California had what they called an all-purpose transportation plan. You realize these forests were quite inaccessible at that time, so the idea was that if you were going to do anything with this forest you had to have some coordination of how you were going to access them, by trail, by road, by air, by water, whatever, and you had to coordinate all this, otherwise you're going to end up with building maybe a two-lane road to nowhere, or you're going to build a one-lane road and find out that somebody was putting a one hundred unit campground at the end of it, say. Part of this was sort of self-defense at trying to see where we were going.

The region got involved in this comprehensive resource planning in which, for the first time, we tried to have the person that was handling timber management say well here's the way I see the timber management program unfolding and somebody else say this is the way I see the recreation planning unfolding. You'd lay these overlays on maps, and you'd try to look at them. You suddenly saw there were some incompatibilities. Forest engineers tend to get involved all the way across functions. There probably is no other person on the staff that gets involved across functions. The only person that gets involved across functions more than a forest engineer is a forest supervisor. From that respect, even though you're not a forester, you get involved with more functions than say if you were a forester and you grew up in timber management. Unless you became a district ranger, you might not really work with these other functions.

HKS: So being an engineer you might get better training and experience than the foresters would, simply because of the way …

RMP: I didn't really feel that I could figure out how I was going to serve these people unless I knew something about what they were trying to do. So, I'd ask the dude, why are you doing this, why are you doing this, why are we doing this, why are we doing this, trying to understand what made them tick. By the time I moved to Region 8, I had become convinced that the system of a ranger district doing something called a multiuse plan and then having a functional plans by different people at different times at different schedules simply led to something on the ground that nobody could understand. You couldn't explain it to an outside person. You couldn't explain it even on the forest. The individual staff might think they knew what they were doing but there was no way …

HKS: The money came down functional lines.

RMP: The money came down functionally. I decided at that point that we weren't ever going be able to become a multipurpose organization unless we had some kind of unified budget system, where the line officer was looking at budget needs across the functions.

HKS: I remember in 1957 the district ranger showed me his budget for the year. Somehow I was in there and I had two weeks on this and three weeks on that. I don't know how those numbers were arrived at, but it really constrained what I did.

RMP: Sure. But worse than that, when I was in California the budget went up at different times depending on the function that was asking for the information. And it went from the functional staff all the way to Washington and was acted on by the functional staff in Washington, and was sent back. The budget officer had the numbers to work with, but the decision on what was to be funded was done by the functional staff at various levels.

HKS: The overall administrator didn't have …

RMP: One of the theories of line management is that you have authority over funding, and the line officer really didn't have any authority over funding. I said to Jack Dienema, "Instead of all these forests and their budget requests coming to Washington and going out through the functions, why don't we sit down and look at them across functions?" It's impossible for people in Washington, in putting budgets together, to try to figure does this road match this campground.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: They were approving certain projects, but they had no way, through their process here, of coordinating it. It would be uncoordinated. So I said to Jack Dienema, "Why don't we put all of this together and try to submit a coordinated budget?" And he said, "That's probably a pretty good idea," but he said, "What will they do with it when they get it in Washington?" They don't have any coordinated way of looking at it. Not that Red Nelson, Ed Cliff, and others didn't look at the budget in terms of balance, between how much we spent here and so on, but they weren't able to do the detailed coordination that made it fit when it got down to the field. That was my frustration, how do you get this to fit. That wasn't because I was a fan of planning as much as I was a fan of how do you put the thing together. I remember that on the San Bernardino Forest building a campground without the money to build the roads. Now this makes you look fairly foolish.

HKS: Something that Jack Anderson could get a hold of and have a field day with.

RMP: Sure. There were a lot of frustrated people in the Forest Service who were trying to figure out how you put this together. We had in the Washington office the deputy chief of the National Forest System that was involved in what we would call multiple use coordination. But typically that person was either all alone or had one staffer to work with him. The real power was going out to the functional division. They had the budget control. As far as the people in the region are concerned, they weren't really interested in that guy, he was drawing pretty pictures and making nice speeches, talking about multiuse management, but he was not really an important figure in what they did.

The Region 8 unit planning was one of the early attempts in Region 8 and Region 9 (Region 6 was doing something or other) to figure out a way to have a plan for forests that made sense, that could be explained to the public, and would have been looked at in an interdisciplinary way. Previous to that, probably the best job that had been done in that in my view was done by Region 4. Floyd Iverson in Region 4, the regional forester, and Bill Hearst, both now retired, early on were concerned about this coordination at the field level of activities. In addition to the general zoning that was going on in the forest of saying this is a streamside zone and this is water influenced zone and this is a general influence zone and so on, they were picking areas where lots of activities taking place and preparing a small unit planning for that area. They called them management units. That was the early attempt to do detail coordination on the ground. That's probably as good as has ever been done. You realize there wasn't a whole lot of money being spent out there.

HKS: Yes.

RMP: And you were talking a lot of times about range labs and other pretty low intensity management labs. They are probably some of the real pioneers in trying to do detailed on-the-ground planning that was then followed, that wasn't overridden. Anyway, I very reluctantly left Region 8.

Thoughts on Leadership

HKS: Before you leave Region 8, McGuire told me when I interviewed him that he had each regional forester sign an agreement that they'd come to Washington when asked. He felt that this was necessary. There's so much decentralization in the Forest Service, I guess regional foresters could in effect be too busy or some such thing. You signed a letter like that.

RMP: That's right.

HKS: On a personal basis, where you surprised? He said it in a good natured way, but obviously it was something that he felt was very necessary to do in order to be an effective chief and keep you guys in line somehow.

RMP: When McGuire became chief, he apparently had several regional foresters that he felt should come in and help him that were not willing to do so.

HKS: To come in on detail for …

RMP: No, come in and be assigned to the chief's office.

HKS: Okay, be a deputy then.

RMP: Be a deputy or some other job in there. I don't know much about that history. He reached out and got Rex Ressler as associate chief. They sent him out to Region 6, and I guess he was only out there eighteen months or something when he was pulled back in. I'm sure Rex really wanted to stay out there longer than that, and I don't know whether John looked around and decided he was the best person or whether he tried some other people and they didn't come. John instituted that requirement in 1971, or maybe shortly after he became chief. He simply said to you, if you're going to be promoted to a supergrade, you must sign a piece of paper that says you're available for assignment wherever you're needed.

HKS: How many people in the region were under this?

RMP: Just one.

HKS: Just the regional forester, okay.

RMP: And the station director and area director. So when John called me, I happened to be in Florida at the time, and said he'd like to offer me the job as regional forester with the understanding that I would sign this agreement that I would be available wherever I was needed, including Washington. He followed through by sending me the agreement to sign.

HKS: It was more of a moral agreement, it wasn't a legal thing in a sense; well I suppose it was legal, but…

RMP: No, it's also legal.

HKS: I mean, he could demote you if you refused, but…

RMP: I don't know if he could demote you. An organization has the right to reassign people, including to a different location. If you refuse to do that you can be charged with refusal to report, and you've abandoned your position, and so you're gone. A lot of people don't know that. A lot of people think if you have a civil service job you have a right to that job in that location, and that's not true. The agency always has the right to reassign you to any job that they need if the work load requires it or something. He certainly had the legal right without me signing it. But this is putting me on notice that if you accept this job I expect you to be available wherever I need you. That was a formal written thing which I signed. He said I am recommending you to be the regional forester contingent upon your signing this agreement that you'd be available.

HKS: He recommends? Who makes the actual appointment, doesn't the chief make the appointment?

RMP: Secretary of agriculture makes the appointment technically on all supergrades, and now it makes the decision on all Senior Executive Service jobs. The secretary of agriculture can reassign anybody in a supergrade job to any job in the department, not just in …

HKS: So if he got in trouble with a senator, the secretary would go right straight to the regional forester and do something and bypass the chief.

RMP: I don't think he would.

HKS: He wouldn't, but he could.

RMP: I don't think he would do that. He wouldn't violate the chain of command unless it was some kind of emergency. But let's say that the secretary decided that he didn't like the performance of a regional forester, or anybody else. The secretary has the authority under the senior executive service to reassign that person anywhere in the department. Now he only has to give notice, and it's thirty days, and there is no appeal to that. That's not supposed to be disciplinary; I mean it's not supposed to be a disciplinary thing. It's supposed to be related to needing you somewhere to do some work. There's also a cooling off period when a new secretary comes in. He can't do it within the first one hundred and twenty days, in order that the secretary gets acquainted with people and doesn't come in and decide to clean house the next day or reassign people. Anyway, that was before the Senior Executive Service passed in 1979, when John McGuire instituted this. He had said to Ted Schlapfer when Ted went to Portland, "Ted I'm sending you to Portland with the understanding that you'll be available anywhere in the Forest Service, and if you're not available you'll retire at fifty-five."

HKS: Pretty tough and straight from the shoulder talk, wasn't it?

RMP: I always kidded people about John. John McGuire is one of my all-time favorite people in terms of being very considerate and very patient and giving everybody the benefit of the doubt. But one person said to me one time, which fits pretty good, he said Ed Cliff had a very tough exterior and was very soft inside. And so Ed Cliff appeared very gruff to people but he really was soft. McGuire is very tender, and very considerate and very understanding of people on the outside, but about an inch underneath there is a marine. That is a pretty apt; John is one of the real tough people in a tough situation. We'll talk about that in a moment when we get to the National Forest Management Act, but John has a real spine. He could really stand up and be counted when he thought it was necessary. He also didn't back away from decisions very easily.

HKS: Somebody told me when Ed was chief, John was one of the few people at staff meetings that spoke up.

RMP: Yes.

HKS: I suppose it's the way you just characterized it. John not only had a lot of sand in his gizzard, but he knew maybe that Ed was a little softer inside than other people did and would put up with it.

RMP: That's right. This is not too infrequent with people that appear tough on the outside. Charlie Connaughton, for example. His staff in California when I went there was really afraid of Charlie Connaughton, because Charlie Connaughton was a formidable person. I mean Charlie Connaughton had almost a photographic memory, he knew every place in the region that he'd ever been, he knew all of the people in the region. When we'd have a staff meeting to discuss a personnel selection, everybody in that region he knew, not only their name, about their family, he knew where they went to school, and all the jobs they'd had in the region.

HKS: People always mention Charlie in some positive way. I didn't know him very well; he was on our board for a while. Why wasn't he ever a deputy chief, because he refused to go into Washington, do you suppose? It seems like so many people have used him as an example of something good, like you just have here.

RMP: I don't know this story first hand, but Charlie Connaughton came pretty near being chief. He never aspired to be a deputy chief. Charlie never saw himself as a number two guy somewhere. He'd much rather run a region than be a number two guy in Washington.

When I went to California his staff pretty much relied on Charlie to make the decisions. He really didn't have a staff meeting unless it had to do with personnel. We never had a staff meeting in which we discussed major problems of the region, or where we might be going on something. Now we'd have a meeting maybe to discuss a job or something like that, but there never were any staff meetings to discuss what the course of action might be or something like that. He would talk to whoever was involved on a one on one and then make the decision, and then probably 99 percent of the time were good decisions.

Charlie went up to Region 6, and they were in the middle of managerial kind of operation. They were talking about something, and as they broke for lunch one of the guys said, well let's get together after we come back from lunch and get our team together and we'll see if we can get a commitment, decide how we're going to do this. And Charlie said, we'll go to lunch and when we come back I'll tell you what we're going to do.

HKS: That's the way Ed Cliff was characterized to be on a couple of occasions, he announced what was happening. It could have been some sour grapes, I don't know the background…

RMP: I watched Ed Cliff operate quite a few times in staff, and I'd say that was uncharacteristic of Ed Cliff. I saw him on a lot of decisions where he would go around and ask each member of the staff where they stood on something. Frequently he'd made a decision, and he might not make a decision that centered the way the majority was feeling at the moment. But I never saw Ed Cliff as a unilateral operator.

The reason I mention this about Charlie Connaughton was that I'd been there a very short time, maybe about a year. I'd known Charlie Connaughton before when I was in the region as just a young guy. He was way up there to me, in terms of capability and everything else. I was fascinated by his mental capability and his practically photographic memory and so on. But he was inclined to do things based on his idea of what should be done at the time.

So I came back to Region 5 and McCutcheon, who was handling personnel, said Charlie decided to move the forest engineer off of this particular forest to take this GS-13 job that he had open there. I said, "What?" and he said, "Charlie decided to move that guy off this forest and put him in that GS-13 job that you have in your office up there." I said, "McCutcheon, that's the last guy we ought to have on that job, a job we're trying to get some leadership. This is just not the place to put that guy." I said, "Is this a settled situation?" And he said, "Charlie decided it." I said, "I think I should go at least talk to him about this, and explain to him that I think this is wrong." McCutcheon said, "I will pick you up when you get thrown out of the office." [laughter] So I said, "He can't do anymore than throw me out."

I made an appointment with him. I said, "Charlie, I understand you've decided to move so-and-so into this GS-13 job upstairs," and I said, "Let me make it clear, obviously if that's what you want to do we'll do it, but let me just give you a couple of reasons why I think we shouldn't do that." Charlie looked at me, and I saw his face flush just a little bit (which everybody else said at that point you should have backed out). He said, "Okay." I said, "The very reason that this guy is doing a poor job on that forest is the very reason that he'll do a poor job in this forest. You're going to spread that poor performance all over the region, which has a lot more implications than just on that forest." I said, "The second thing it does, it tells everybody in the region that the way you get a key job in the regional office is to screw up on forest." So I said, "Let me suggest we do this in this case, we assign this guy to this job and we do this…" and so and so on.

By this time he was listening pretty well, and so I stopped. He said, "You know I really want to do this for this guy, but," he said, "what you're telling me is undoubtedly true." And he said, "Why don't you all do that. That's a better solution." So we did. Connaughton was not against logical discussion, but his staff had just gotten afraid to even engage him in logical discussion. Several of those guys practically didn't have a face-to-face relationship with Connaughton at that time—they wrote notes to each other. One of them told me he had what he'd called CAC notes, which were signed CAC. If you got a CAC note, you might be in for something. One guy wrote him a letter, a note, memo or something saying that he was being asked to go into the chief's office for a

meeting or something or other, and Charlie didn't believe Region 5 people ought to spend a hell of a lot of time in the chief's office. He said, the chief can run his show and I'll run mine. Charlie apparently came back to Washington on a trip and everywhere he went he saw Region 5. He said, "Why aren't you home doing Region 5 work and how come you're here?" So he would not let anybody come on detail to Washington or even a trip without his personal approval, because he just felt they ought to be home doing their work.

HKS: Decentralization at work.

RMP: He felt the chief ought to have all of the people he needed, and he could have his. I think there was some abuse of that maybe, of just calling people in to do work. Anyway, one guy had written this note that he'd been asked to come back to help on something. Charlie wrote back and said, "Why don't you let the chief do his work and we'll do ours?" Bang. CAC, and that was it. [laughter] He was a fascinating person and one of the strongest people. There's a story that I can't tell you first hand because I only know it second or third hand, that Connaughton came very near being chief. And I'm not sure.

HKS: Instead of McGuire?

RMP: No, no, way back. See Connaughton was the president of SAF. I think the time that Connaughton came very near being chief was way back when McArdle became chief.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: Connaughton was very well known at that time. See he'd been a station director, he'd been regional forester in two regions by then, he'd been regional forester in both 8 and 5 at that point. Wasn't he president of SAF way back then?

HKS: I'm not sure when he was president of SAF, but he was also president of the AFA.

RMP: He was president of AFA much later.

HKS: During the Mike Frome situation.

RMP: Connaughton was a very powerful figure way back, and I was told a story, I don't know if it's true or not, where he was asked to fly to Atlanta and was interviewed by, I think Talmadge, and was potentially preselected as chief when McArdle was selected. Charlie was very loyal to the chief, but he never aspired to be a deputy chief. To him that was a not as attractive a job as regional forester. In fact, when Charlie went from Region 5 to Region 6, somebody said why in the world after being regional forester in Region 5 all these years, why at this point in your career would you go to Region 6? And he said with a perfectly straight face "because the chief asked me to." That ended the question. But he never aspired to be a number two man.

Deputy Chief

HKS: I understand that I guess. Now you've just transferred from Atlanta to Washington, as what?

RMP: Deputy chief for programs and legislation. The only thing about that move, that's necessary to record, is that it wasn't my idea. In fact, I'd still be in Atlanta probably if I'd been left to my own devices. I was very much enjoying the regional forester's job. Realize that when McGuire asked me to move I'd only been in Atlanta one year as regional forester. I'd been deputy regional forester for a year and a half or so.

HKS: Two and a half years and in a line position.

RMP: I was really enjoying that region, enjoying the people in that region, and the charms of that region. I had two kids in college down there and a son that was going to be a junior. We left two of our youngsters there in

college, and so it was not a good time to be moving. I was up here on a trip doing something, I don't remember what, and somebody said oh, the chief wants to see you before you leave. So I went down there and Edith Clark said yes he wants to talk to you before you go back. I went in to see him and he said, "Is there any reason that you can't move to Washington?" I said, "Well John, if you're asking me if I want to move to Washington the answer is no, I would really like to stay down there because I've just been regional forester there just over a year."

John had a habit of pulling on his ear a little bit. He was sitting there smoking his pipe and he was pulling, he said, "That isn't exactly the question I asked you." [laughter] He said, "I asked you is there any reason why you can't move in here?" And I said, "What do you have in mind?" He said, "I'd like for you to be their deputy chief in P&L, replacing Phil Thornton." I said, "Well, I can do it, it's not really what I'd like to do at this moment but I can do it." He said, "Really there is a fairly high need for you to do that. See, the whole top staff of the Forest System is on a move up system, which got fouled up because of Ed Schultz's death of a heart attack. Ed Schultz, I think, probably would have been chief at the time that Ed Cliff retired, had he not died of a heart attack.

HKS: That's what John thinks too.

RMP: Apparently John was being given a bad time at that point by the department for filling all these top jobs with retreaded foresters and not having anybody in these jobs that really had any background in the subject matter they were working with, other than just having grown up through the system. I don't know a whole lot about that, but I know he was given instructions, for example, to put a professional in charge of I&E, to look at changing the deputy chief for administration and put somebody in that had some professional background in administration. Apparently when the P&L job came up, the person he had had in mind initially apparently had something in his record that the department didn't like, and so he was having trouble filling that job. So he said to me, "Realize that not only do I think you can do a good job in that, but you have a recent advanced degree in public administration, and you're not just another typical guy up through the Forest Service. It's important you take that." And that's about all he said. John was not one to spend a lot of time giving you lots of explanations of why he was doing this.

HKS: So Harvard turned out to be really a major impact on your career, in a lot of ways.

RMP: Yes. Anyway, I said to him, "How quick are we talking about?" And John said, "You know that this has gotta be written up, it's gotta clear the department, it's gotta go over to the Civil Service Commission who have to approve the managerial qualifications and all this. These things tend to be taking about 6 months." This conversation was probably in December, early December. And he said, "We're talking about next spring sometime." And I thought well, maybe this will be about the time school's out next year.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Well, that one got approved and wrapped in the most rapid time in history, I think. [laughter]

HKS: John might have pushed that along a little bit then.

RMP: I didn't pose any great arguments. Left to my own devices, I'd rather stay in Atlanta, which was true, and I felt I'd rather have a longer career down there. He said we also were having trouble coordinating the Program Planning and Budgeting with the budget process in administration. John said we had to somehow get them together, so he made the decision to move the budget shop to P&L, so we needed to put that whole thing together. Anyway, I said okay; I came up in February, minus my family.

HKS: That's when you bought this house?

RMP: No, actually I didn't buy the house right then. I was here by myself, and initially I stayed with this woman that owned a house over by Seven Corners, who owned this big two-story Victorian kind of house who was there all by herself. She liked to have Forest Service people rent rooms there, because there was obviously a man around. She was real scared about being there by herself. Somebody told me about that place so I lived

there for a while, rented a room there for quite a while. Then it was time for school to start that fall. We knew we wanted our son in Robinson High School here. We house-sat for Red Nelson for a couple of months, who was on a worldwide trip.

Then we rented a place over here on Gainsborough, right over here in King's Park West so our son could go to Robinson High School. We didn't buy this house until the fall of '75. At that time we were tied to Robinson High School because our son was a senior. We'd originally planned to buy a house with some acreage, and that didn't work out so we ended up with our horses out in the country and us in here.

I came up in '74. At that point P&L included Legislative Affairs, this PPB policy analysis group, and environmental coordination which had a responsibility for NEPA, which was occupied by Barry Flamm at that time. Then they moved the budget shop there shortly after that, so I had the responsibility for the budget shop. At that time the Resources Planning Act was making its way through the Congress. I really was not in any way a prime mover on that because that had been coordinated by John McGuire—primarily himself—with some other people, Bob Wolf and some other people on the Hill. But it was coming to fruition.

Monongahela Clearcuts and RPA

RMP: Meantime, we'd had the Monongahela decision, the original district court decision. It was under appeal, and the question was, what is the Appeals Court going to say about the Monongahela decision. So I did get involved in the final throes of the Resources Planning Act.

OMB was opposed to the provision in the law that says when a president sends forth his budget, if he doesn't ask for the funds that are shown on the long-term program, he's got to explain why. They thought this was bordering on unconstitutional. The only reason that provision was in the law was because several members of Congress—Humphrey, and Talmadge, and others—were trying to get somebody to look at forests on a longer term than just annual budget cycles, trying to get some sustained funding. First, one Congress can't bind another one. They couldn't figure out any way to get a long-term program that would be approved by Congress that would have any teeth in it. So they hit upon this example where the president would submit a program as a part of this long-range plan, and unless it was overturned by a veto by either House (there was a provision in there for either house to veto it), that would be the program. Then when the president submitted a proposal, if he didn't follow that program he'd have to explain why. OMB saw the RPA as primarily an attempt to build a long-range program that would justify increased financing. They also saw it reducing future flexibility and giving them more trouble, so they were very much opposed to the RPA. And when it finally passed…

HKS: Was it controversial? I mean did the Sierra Club and the National Forest Products Association stake out strong positions?

RMP: No. Interestingly enough all of those diverse groups supported the idea. And the reason they supported it, which, I guess is maybe not too surprising, each one of them felt if you really looked at the long pull, that their particular needs were increasing, and that it would justify more attention being put into the Forest Service for that particular use.

HKS: In other words…

RMP: The Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club were saying that if you really look a long term ahead, and you look at long-term needs of the country, and you look at increasing population and increasing leisure time and you look at the private land going to come back, and so on, that there should be less reliance on the national forest in the long pull on timber, and we ought to have more of it set aside for other purposes. The people in the timber side of things were saying, now if you really look at future needs for housing and all that kinds of things, we're going to have to more intensively manage the national forests, and we're going to have to have access to those lands that are not normally accessible and so and so. Each one for its own purposes thought that long-term planning would favor their particular activity, I think.

There had been a whole bunch of bills introduced by various and sundry people to do various things. For example, Hatfield's timber supply bill was introduced and did not pass. Metcalf introduced some bills to limit clearcutting and so on. None of those bills passed. Finally everybody rallied around this long-term planning act. The outside groups were all in favor of it; in fact, it passed the House overwhelmingly. It passed the Senate on a voice vote with no registered opposition.

HKS: The Areas of Agreement Committee, was that significant?

RMP: Yes.

HKS: Charlie Connaughton, according to Bill Towell, was the intellectual architect of that. Bill gives enormous credit to Charlie for having the broad vision when he was involved in AFA.

RMP: Certainly I don't have any reason to doubt that at all, because in Washington Bill Towell was the embodiment of that effort. At the same time Charlie Connaughton was the president, so I'm sure they were on the same wavelength. Charlie felt very strongly that you needed an effective coalition of people interested in national forests, the water users, the recreation and wildlife people, the timber people, and he felt very strongly that if you were careful you could manage the forest to meet all of their needs in a coordinated way. We worked probably as well as I've ever seen anybody work with the regional foresters Multiuse Advisory Council.

HKS: Laws tend to be functional, and Charlie kept saying that there needs to be a uniform forestry law that pulls it all together.

RMP: RPA was the one that set the planning processes in place. RPA really has very little policy in it. It's properly called the Resources Planning Act because it really says that what you should do is look a long term ahead and look at all the renewable resources of the country, of the forest and range land renewable resources and look at the future of supply and demand, look at research in state and private and national forests and parts of this.

Had Humphrey really had his way—see he was for a central national resource plan, I think. Humphrey was also a realist and realized that such a law couldn't pass. That's the reason you've got that dichotomy in the RPA where the Assessment covers all lands, whether they're managed by the BLM or whether they're in national park or if they're forest or rangelands whoever is managing, the assessment includes that whole thing. When he got to the Program side of it, he couldn't figure out how to get a program covering all those lands, so the Program just covers national forest activities. The idea was the BLM and others would use the assessment to help fashion their own programs. It was really a pragmatic way of Humphrey figuring out how to put it together. But I think had he had his way he would have had several departments working together on a coordinated plan of some kind. But that smacked of central planning which the United States has never been very much enamored with.

Anyway, the part I played was very small. It was a little bit comical in that by the time the RPA passed, Nixon is about to get tossed out of office, and so the relations between the executive branch and Congress is very poor. But here you had a bill that has very broad support except that OMB doesn't like it. OMB would really want the president to veto it, because it had that requirement in it that the president explain why he didn't press the program. So RPA went to the president with a recommendation from OMB to veto, and the recommendation of the secretary of agriculture that it be signed. And it sat there on Nixon's desk, who was more worried about other things. So he didn't do anything with it.

HKS: Was it unusual to have OMB and a secretary disagree?

RMP: No, no, it happens. Most of the time they work it out before it gets to that…

HKS: That's what I would have thought, there'd be a consensus there.

RMP: It's not too unusual. Realize that the RPA now is the first bill that the new President Ford picks up. And so he's trying to figure out what to do. While Nixon was still there there'd been some attempts to try to figure out how to handle it without creating a crisis. They weren't really interested in Nixon vetoing a bill that passed with that much support, certainly with lots and lots of motion to override, when the only explanation he could give for vetoing it, he didn't like to have to explain when he declined to push it that in the future, which was certainly a bureaucratic kind of a response. I got a call from OMB, it could have been the White House, one of the two, saying can you arrange for a friendly veto. In other words, the president would veto it with a statement that says if you remove that provision and send it back down I'll sign it. Well you can imagine trying to get a friendly veto with what was going on with Congress right then, between the Congress and Nixon. So I did a little bit of checking on the Hill and they said, "What about a reluctant signing?" [laughter]

HKS: The civics books don't cover these…

RMP: No, they don't cover these kinds of things. The consequence of all this is nothing happened. Nixon didn't do anything, so Ford picked it up. It was the first bill he had to sign. He had announced in his first statement to the country that your long nightmare is over, we're going to bring the country back together, and so on. He didn't want to start by vetoing a bill that would alienate everybody. But this also wasn't the highest priority thing on his desk. But he's going to have to do something. He doesn't want a pocket veto or he didn't want to send up a veto or didn't want it to become law without his signature. Time was running out.

HKS: What time did he have?

RMP: Ten working days after it arrives. And so he was, I think he was up to…

HKS: Nixon took a couple of those days anyway.

RMP: I think he took five or six.

HKS: Wow.

RMP: Most people think that the president has got ten days after Congress passes a bill to veto it, that's what all the civics books say. The president has ten days after the bill arrives at the White House and is enrolled. Now the time difference between the time they pass a bill and they're able to get it properly printed and get the signatures of the people on the Hill that have to sign it, and get it down to the president can be weeks.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: Whatever the time of it was, Ford had the bill. We were talking to people over there, which is kind of hard to do because the White House now is in disarray, you've got one group coming and one group going, and nobody quite knows what's happening. We suggested through channels that if the president was going to sign it, he might as well have a signing ceremony and bring all these bipartisan people down and have their picture taken. It would be, here's the new president really bringing together the country. The bill would pass and so on. Well OMB wasn't for that, they wanted to steal that veto. Anytime you've got that kind of disagreement you just get stalemated.

The other part of this drama that's playing out is that Rarick, who is the cosponsor of the Humphrey-Rarick Act, was from Louisiana. He was running for reelection in a primary that was tantamount to an election in Louisiana. Well he's being accused of never passing any legislation, and never doing anything of great importance. About every hour on the hour I'm being called by his staff wanting to know if the president's going to sign the bill and if he's going to have a signing ceremony. Obviously Rarick picture with the president with this major bill being signed could be an important thing for him.

Anyway, we're trying to work this thing out and meantime John and I are supposed to go down to Tennessee Valley Authority to a meeting of some kind. We spent all that day shuttling back and forth, everywhere we landed they told us to go back. We first landed and were told we had to go back because they were going to have a signing ceremony. We came back and by the time we got back they said no, there's not going to be a

signing ceremony. [laughter] Because by then, the first time they could do the signing ceremony was either late Thursday or Friday, I don't know the day. Too many congressmen would have escaped, and they couldn't get enough people for a signing ceremony. But the president was going to sign it and wanted a signing statement. We had already worked up a little thing that explained the bill and so on.

Here we had a brand new president going to put out a signing statement. I know his son Jack is a forester, and so I want to personalize this signing statement. So we wrote this signing statement and they said, you've got to get it over here for the president. I went sailing over there with a signing statement in my hand, and went into the OMB and then finally into the Old Executive Office building, and I just kept going. I finally arrived at this staffer who said, "How did you get in here?" I said, "I just walked in." He said, "You're not supposed to be in here. You went through about three levels of security, you know, getting here." There were people with boxes everywhere the old staff moving out and the new staff moving in. I delivered the signing statement to them and ultimately they just decided to have the president sign it and issue a signing statement. But Rarick was never able to get that word out in Louisiana that the president had signed this major bill, and he was defeated. So his major handiwork of a bill got signed the same week he was defeated in the primary.

HKS: I don't want to jump out of sequence, but you've introduced the idea. I've often thought that Ford, like any father, would show interest in what his children were doing. He may have had more specific interest as president in forestry than other presidents would have simply because his kid would come home at Christmas and they'd talk about what he's up to and that sort of thing.

RMP: I think that's true. Ford was quite interested in forests when he was a congressman from Michigan. I really didn't have any contact with him when he was congressman because by the time I came in he was vice-president, and was shortly president. When I was here earlier in my career, I was not working with Congress, so I didn't have any contact with him. But I'm told by the people that worked with him that Ford was quite interested in forests, he was an avid skier, used to ski in national forest ski areas in Colorado, and he now has a home at the base of Beaver Creek Ski area out there and is sort of their goodwill ambassador for that ski area. I met him later on, when we opened Beaver Creek Ski Area, after I became chief, and had a chance to talk to Ford personally. He's very knowledgeable about forests, surprisingly knowledgeable about forests. And about a lot of the history of the Forest Service, which was quite impressive to me. Of course, I didn't know that at this time. But I don't think Ford would have bought OMB's recommendations under any circumstances, but he certainly wasn't going to do it at that point. From what I know of Ford, I think he could have been an unusually good president had he really had an opportunity, but I think he was too close to Watergate. I mean he was tarred with all that happened before.

HKS: He certainly understood how Congress operated.

RMP: There was an attempt made about halfway through RPA to interject a cure for the Monongahela decision. But the legislation was too far downstream then, and there was no agreement on what would be put in there. If you read Dennis McMaster's book, *Decade of Change*, you'll find he has recorded I think quite accurately the attempt to try to work in a solution to the Monongahela decision in the middle of that RPA process. It just didn't work, it wasn't that kind of consensus.

I was not involved in the Monongahela controversy because I was in Region 9 and that was in Region 8. The only way I was involved was through Stan Adams who was supervisor of the George Washington Forest and Mike Penfold who was supervisor of the Jefferson. Stan is now the state forester in North Carolina.

HKS: That's right.

RMP: And Mike Penfold is now the assistant director for natural resources for the Bureau of Land Management. They were on those two forests, and I would give those two guys some credit for really working with their publics to both change what they were doing and change the perception of what they were doing with their public to essentially avoid the Monongahela controversy.

Both the Jefferson and George Washington forests have substantial land in West Virginia. But those two forests never became a part of the Monongahela controversy; it was on the main Monongahela. Once the controversy

erupted down on the main part of the Monongahela, it may have stayed there anyway, but those two supervisors, seeing what was happening there did a real good job with the fish and game divisions.

HKS: Hubert Humphrey was a keynote speaker at the AFA 100th anniversary dinner in Washington in 1975 when I was there, and he said that the Monongahela resulted from the president of the local Izaak Walton League playing golf at a country club where he could see the national forest clearcuts. This was really an affront to this person. Is that too simple? There must have been multiple sources of something like Monongahela.

RMP: I don't know whether there was anything else that fueled it but certainly the clearcut in that vicinity was maybe the last straw, or maybe the thing that convinced them to take action. But there had been some controversy on clearcutting in the Monongahela for some years before that.

HKS: That's right. The Forest Service then put out quite a few studies on that.

RMP: If you go back to why clearcutting was used in the East and look at the studies that were made in North Carolina where they did a whole bunch of different cutting practices, a couple of areas they actually clearcut and they had a full expectation that that would turn out not to be the way to do things. Quite surprisingly, when they went back and they found in those clearcuts they had a better variety of species, they had a better development of a stand. In the researchers' view it was a better way to handle things in those particular hardwood stands.

The Forest Service was applying in West Virginia and Virginia what come out of research in North Carolina. In the view of the professional people working there it was the right way to handle a silvicultural question.

I don't know the extent to which local people were brought into what was happening or how it was happening or anything else, but I considered quite a bit of the reason that you had the reaction there is what I've mentioned earlier is that when I grew up in Missouri and you saw that kind of cutting, that was devastation. I think the local people saw that as a sellout to the timber industry, among other things, and they saw it as being imported from the West, and they saw it as destroying everything there including the squirrel trees. It was just abhorrent to the local people. In attempting to explain it, some of the Forest Service people said one of the reasons we have to do that is this diameter limit cutting that had been used before is just systematically degrading the stand, and all we've got left is a bunch of green junk and we've got to start over, which was true enough from a purely timber silviculture point of view. But one of the people they were criticizing in that was one Ralph Smoot, who was a retired district ranger. Maybe to a lesser degree or a greater degree, I don't know which, Leon Minkler who was a Forest Service researcher who roundly criticized and still does what was happening there. Well Ralph Smoot lived next door to a fellow by the name of Davis who was on Jennings Randolph's staff. Ralph Smoot and Davis were absolutely convinced that what the Forest Service was doing there was just being a tool of industry, and being insensitive to all other kinds of values. We were cutting it all to make it simple to log it and to get everything that was there. In some places we had been planting pine which further was an insult as far as the local people were concerned.

Anyway, I think it was obvious that the Izaak Walton league locally said that was the wrong thing to do and filed suit. Izaak Walton League vs. Butz got the district court to agree with them. Then it went to the Appeals Court. When I came to Washington the thing was pending before the Appeals Court, and so not knowing about the subject, one night I asked to see a copy of the appeal briefs—the government's brief and the other side's brief. Tom Nelson had the office down the hall from me and he was a deputy chief of the National Forests System then. I went in and I said, "Tom, what are we going to do when we lose the Monongahela decision?" And he said, "What do you mean?" And I said, "Just that, have we got a contingency plan of what we're going to do when we lose the Monongahela decision?" Tom, who realized that I was half facetious, said, "Do you know which way you came in here, can you find your way out the same way?" [laughter] Tom had come out of research and was pretty analytical in his looking at things…

HKS: There's a Tom Nelson and a Red Nelson…

RMP: This is Tom Nelson. Red Nelson is really M. M. Nelson, who at this point and time is retired. Red Nelson is still alive and residing up in Oregon; Tom Nelson is deceased now. Anyway Tom, who was pretty analytical and

so on, said, "Sit down, let's talk about this. Our attorneys tell us that we're likely to win this one all right, they don't seem to be too worried about it." I said, "Well Tom, I don't know anything about it, the only thing I can tell you is I'd rather have their brief than ours, because they are dealing with the reality and what the law says, and we're dealing with the theory that that law has changed over time, and that's pretty hard theory when the words are pretty specific in the law. The circuit court is one that believes strongly in the strict construction of the law. I think are we not only arguing against the specifics of the law, we're arguing in a circuit that doesn't have a reputation of buying that kind of argument." We started to develop a contingency plan, what we were going to do if we lost the suit.

The only trouble with that, we didn't start early enough, I mean that was just literally weeks before we lost the suit. And so then that thrust us in the throes of trying to find a solution to the Monongahela decision and that of course led ultimately to the National Forest Management Act. We developed a series of about six options for dealing with that decision, everything from the appropriation rider to just changing with a few words, to some full scale redoing of the planning process.

National Forest Management Act

RMP: Then I was involved in a major way along with McGuire. McGuire was obviously the leader of that team. McGuire, myself, George Leonard, and Mark Reimers were the people that met to work on a daily basis throughout the NFMA business. I think it's reasonably well documented in Dennis McMaster's book. About the only thing that's not documented in there that probably John gave you was that we never could get a decision out of the administration what they wanted to do, because at this point Ford is going to run for reelection. I'm sure none of his political advisors saw any political benefits for him getting involved in this kind of explosive question.

HKS: So when you say administration, you really are talking White House, as opposed to the department.

RMP: You don't get a position cleared in the real world unless it clears OMB.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: Office of Management and Budget tries to reflect the White House view. If OMB clears a position it becomes the administration's position, so the president is associated with that whether he wants to be or not. There really isn't in Washington any separation of a departmental position from a presidential position. The administration gets credit for it, in other words you hear them saying the Bush administration has done this and maybe it's done by an assistant secretary. So we could not get the administration to agree to any position. Somebody promised us enough legislation but we never could get it together.

HKS: But wouldn't you have been asked to draft this legislation?

RMP: Oh we had multiple versions of. We had everything from an appropriation rider to a complete rewriting of the bill. But what everybody was afraid of was how do we deal with the clearcutting question? Which was fueling Monongahela.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: What are we going to say about clearcutting? Meantime, the so-called Church committee guidelines had been developed and published in a Senate publication. One of the questions was, were we just going to put the Church guidelines in law? Everybody was all over the lot in terms of what we ought to do, and you can find in somebody's archives if you look deep enough, you can find every version of about every kind of bill you've ever heard of that tries to resolve this thing. Finally the instructions that John got were we will not send up a proposal, work with the Hill and try to work out the best thing you can. But even though he was given those instructions, he had a lot of people that wanted to try to call the shots in the process, and this resulted in my

observing first hand two or three times in the process McGuire really stiffening his back and saying that's not appropriate, or that obviously wouldn't sell, or we can't do that and so on. So John gets a lot of credit for having kept that process together, and kept it going. The enormous respect John had with the Hill allowed him to work with both sides pretty effectively in trying to fashion that bill.

HKS: He talks about sitting in on the markup process, which would demonstrate that they felt he was a pretty good guy.

RMP: In fact John McGuire and I sat in on every markup on that bill. Of course John was calling the shots on it.

John was fairly quiet and non-confrontational, so was an ideal person to have as a front man. He had an unusual delegation at that point, too, because he was told to try work it out, he did not have a bill he had to defend, which probably turned out to be a good idea. And so he was able to sort of work the thing through, with a couple of confrontations along the way. The Senate early on built the National Forest Management Act off of RPA, of the planning requirements of RPA, because the Senate had been a primary actor in that. Bob Wolf had been involved, so they built one off of the other. The House was going along trying to adopt the shortest bill they could with the fewest specific instructions and not this big planning process, which they didn't believe in. They wanted to just put a few requirements in the bill and get us back in business. So when we ended up in conference, one of the big questions was were we going to follow the detailed planning requirements, were we going to adopt that approach, or were we going to adopt just the requirements approach of the House.

That ended up being a fairly big question for the administration to resolve. So the department got involved in that and OMB got involved in that and we ended up having a meeting on the Hill. It was quite an acrimonious meeting, and finally John said, "I think we need to follow the planning process, because if we don't, we won't get much discretion, we'll get a whole bunch of requirements in the bill and some federal judge downstream will decide what they mean." And he said, "Also we need to have an orderly process in going about getting from the RPA to a plan for a forest." He was an advocate of doing that. Finally there was an agreement that we would support the Senate planning process but that we would try to pull out a lot of things out of the Senate process that were considered, trying to avoid a lot of stuff that Randolph had put in you know, or tried to put in.

HKS: I interviewed Gordon Robinson, the Sierra Club forester, and it was his position that he and other Sierra Clubbers sat down with Randolph. I don't know if Randolph would agree with this, but the Sierra Club saw Randolph as their entry point into the National Forest Management Act. Do you agree with that?

RMP: Well, I don't know. Another person that played a very prominent role in that was Bolle. He came in and met with them. My observation was that Davis, who was the staffer for Randolph working with Arnold Bolle, and Gordon Robinson and several others fashioned the Randolph bill. Of course the Randolph bill was a highly prescriptive bill in trying to specify exactly how you would manage different pieces of land. We were highly concerned as to how in the world you would make that bill fit different parts of the country.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Also John made the point that even if you think that's the best way of doing it today, what are you going to do when Research tells you something different? Are you going to just freeze management into whatever somebody thinks is a good idea now? So we spent the first two or three months at NFMA trying to get about three basic principles agreed to. One is that the national forests are extremely varied and there's nobody smart enough to write a prescription that fits everywhere. We brought in pictures of different national forests and talked about the different approaches to management on different forests.

The other thing that we were saying is that not only are they extremely varied, but I mentioned John's point is that Research is going to give you better answers over time. And the third thing is people's needs are going to change, and so what you see today as your idea of what people's needs are may be different one or two or three years from now. We shouldn't try to freeze management based on Congress's prescription of how it ought to be done.

Anyway, by the time the House passed its version and the Senate passed its version, and we got into conference, obviously John McGuire was the leading figure in the conference. But John had to go somewhere, I don't remember where it was, and he wrote an official memo delegating me to be the representative in the dealing with the Congress, which was the first and only time I've ever seen that. I think he did that because he had been formally designated himself and he wanted to be sure that there wasn't any question about what was happening here.

HKS: Because wouldn't a political scientist say, where is the associate chief?

RMP: When you get into legislation like this and you're dealing on a day to day basis with legislation and the chief gets this involved, you pretty much have to have the associate chief running the rest of the Forest Service. I don't think that's any reflection on…

HKS: No, I understand why, you had the knowledge and so forth, but…

RMP: There was no way you could bring somebody else up to speed in all of the things that might be happening there, so John felt I should do this. I don't remember whether I was there in two or three days of the conference by myself, but anyway we came to this point in the bill on whether we were going to follow the Senate version of the planning process versus the House version that had this other approach. They came to every section where there was disagreement and Talmadge would ask McGuire when he was there and ask me when I was there for comments on what we thought.

We had decided in this semi-summit meeting that we'd had that we were going to follow the Senate approach. We wanted the Senate approach but we wanted to soften that a little bit by saying we'd like to pick up some of the House language, which we thought was better. So when Humphrey asked me I said, "Senator Humphrey, we basically would like to use the Senate planning approach, but we think some of the House language is better for some of the specifics of the bill. We'd like to see a kind of Senate planning approach for some of the specifics of the House bill." Humphrey said, "That sounds like a good political answer." [laughter] No, he said, "I think that sounds like you're straddling the fence, or something. I think you sound like you're diplomats straddling the fence or something," and everybody laughed. And I said, "No, seriously, we think there ought to be a deliberate planning process with the one plan. We think that's a process that we're moving to now and would make sense, but we like some of the language in the House version."

Realize that this conference room is completely packed with people. They held it in a small room in order to discourage people being there, but that room was crowded with people literally standing elbow to elbow in that room. It wasn't much bigger than this room, and probably had seventy-five people in it. Right after that they broke to go vote. At that point one of the House staffers who had been out of town and apparently didn't realize what we had come to as the way we were going to approach this, walked over in front of me and said you're supposed to be following the administration's position. And within half an hour there were a guy from the department, and a guy from OMB and a guy from the White House took up position behind me in the conference room

HKS: So the administration finally took a position.

RMP: Somebody had phoned that I was outside where the administration wanted to go on the conference.

HKS: I see.

RMP: The administration didn't take a position on the whole bill, but they took a lot of positions during the time we were trying to work out the conference report. So Jim Giltmier, who was staffing for Talmadge then, spotted these people and realized that I was in kind of a spot. He sent a note over that said Humphrey wants to know who those goons are. [laughter] I sent a note back to Jim and said don't worry about it; just try not to ask me very many opinion questions. I said I'd answer any question he sends over until somebody throws me out.

They went ahead, and we went on through the conference and things went okay. When I got back to the office there was stack of phone calls about this thick from people who were unhappy with our agreeing to follow the

Senate planning process. Industry was strongly behind following the House process and also some other people were too, but mainly it was industry saw the House bill as being less burdensome, had a better language from their point of view. Interestingly enough that particular House staffer that said you're supposed to be following the administration position, a couple of days later came to me and he said I want you to know that I found out I was wrong, I was on a trip and I didn't realize that the administration position was what you were saying. So he says, I owe you an apology. That person is one of my best friends today.

HKS: It took some doing to confess up to that.

RMP: He was just out of touch a little bit there. Anyway, we worked on through the conference. The toughest issues in conference were how to deal with the Church committee guidelines, which were eventually incorporated. First off, John McGuire had administratively agreed we'd basically follow the Church guidelines, so a paraphrase of the Church guidelines are in the NFMA. Interestingly enough, when we finished NFMA with the all of the warring sides with all kind of people pulling out big guns and aiming them at you and saying what you're doing is… At one point we had industry saying that they're going to double the price of two by fours and this is going to be a disaster if this bill passed. We had environmental groups saying if this bill passes it's going to be back to business as usual, it doesn't prohibit clearcutting and all these kinds of things. The bill finally passed and everybody declared victory.

HKS: I remember that, that everyone said this is a good bill, a good law.

RMP: I think it was. I think it avoided extremes on both sides. The only thing that seems bad about it is that it did put in place fairly complicated planning process. The Committee of Scientists were a mixed blessing. The committee was helpful in fashioning the planning process, but the Committee of Scientists had a much deeper hand in developing the planning process in detail that I don't think anybody ever envisioned when they were originally established.

The bill was signed in August of '76, and so the responsibility of appointing a Committee of Scientists at that point fell on the secretary of agriculture. It was supposed to be the secretary's advisory committee. By the time it really got to the secretary to act on it, Jack Knabel, who was by then the secretary of budget, resigned and could not see the merit in appointing a Committee of Scientists who probably wouldn't be kept by the new secretary. So he delayed appointing a committee, which didn't get appointed till the new administration came on.

That resulted in about an eight-month delay in getting the Committee of Scientists underway, which delayed the whole planning process about that much. By that time Rupert Cutler was aboard as assistant secretary, and Rupe really wanted this Committee of Scientists to hear from people throughout the country. They went into this long program of having meetings around the country, and listening to people, and going through draft planning processes and so on. They spent a long, long time developing those planning guidelines. A lot longer than anybody had ever thought, which delayed the whole process. One other thing that was important in the passage of the bill that was somewhat difficult to deal with was what do you do until the new plans are in place?

HKS: Sure.

RMP: There was real concern that if you had to get these new plans in place before you could do anything, it might take some time. Regardless of what time it took, how are you going to operate until the plans were in place? That was the first problem. That's the reason it has a grandfather clause in it that says that it can proceed under existing plans until the new plans are completed. But it also says it will begin to incorporate the Church guidelines and the other provisions in the act as soon as feasible and completed by a certain time.

HKS: The Church guidelines are more or less in the process of being adopted without NFMA.

RMP: There were some other things in NFMA that were not in the Church guidelines, like diversity of animal plant species throughout the range.

HKS: That's turned out to be kind of a controversial issue, diversity of species. Was that foreseen? Were you or John just a little bit nervous about diversity of species?

RMP: I don't remember having a big argument. I know there was an argument about monoculture.

HKS: Sure, clearcutting plans…

RMP: …related to clearcutting. There was an argument that by the management of the forest we might change the whole mix of species, both plants and animals. We were trying to deal with the wildlife side of it and we said you want wildlife throughout this area and you want a diversity of wildlife that relates to the diversity of plants and animals you have there. We put that in reverse. We put minimum populations of the native species throughout the area and were really feeling that this was a good idea. I don't think anybody thought that had any great potential for causing any problems. There was concern about fish and wildlife at the time the act was passed. In fact, one of the primary organizations that we worked with were the people concerned with fish and wildlife. I've said several times since the act passed that probably the fish and wildlife people were more in the center and probably had more influence on the act than the people at either end. They believed basically that you ought to have professional management of land, and you ought not to have lots and lots of prescriptions written. Some of them had been associated with fish and wildlife refuges and so on, but the wildlife people were, I think, fairly influential in the bill, and so they wanted to say something about wildlife in the bill.

There were quite a few things put forward; diversity and at least a minimum viable population, because we were dealing then with the concern for endangered species. There was concern that there might be management of the type that would endanger species. The national forests were seen as the place where a lot of species had retreated to. They were concerned that if they weren't managed properly you could endanger species. The diversity of wildlife was not, in my memory, a real big issue that was debated. I think everyone pretty much accepted it; it was not seen as a problem. A couple of things that were struggled with during the time the act was passed, philosophically or intellectually, was did the NFMA relate to NEPA. If you look at NFMA, the National Forest Management Act, in many respects it's a NEPA type process.

HKS: Sure is, the public involvement and all of the rest.

RMP: You add some alternatives and the whole thing is exactly the rationale that's followed in NEPA. At one point, some of us thought well, why don't we say this is the NEPA process for national forest planning? Then others said if you follow national forest planning, you're going to have to comply with NEPA anyway, because it is the NEPA process. At one point we were even thinking about specifically excluding NFMA from otherwise complying with NEPA's assessment provision, because it seemed like it was a NEPA-like process. But there was, I think, early understanding that it probably wouldn't be acceptable as a proposition, you couldn't put that into law.

Another thing that was a concern for us was how would you go from RPA to these plans to projects? In other words, what's the link? The NFMA says that the plans will be responsive to the program throughout this part of RPA, but what does that really mean? Obviously it doesn't mean that the forest plans are RPA because RPA covers all lands, not just national forests. The spine of the main analysis in the RPA has got to have some relevance to what comes out of the plans, otherwise you've got plans that come up with something entirely different from than you've got in your program. So there was a lot of struggling over how intellectually you'd put those things together.

But I would say in passing NFMA, still the primary inference is we've got a crisis on our hands, and we're trying to resolve this in a reasonably short time. When we get it resolved we're trying to then have a period of time in which there was a hope that you'd get a new coalition of people coming together around NFMA plans. And that we'd have a period of less polarization by having people that are able to sit down and do some deliberate planning process.

HKS: And that more or less happened, right?

RMP: Some places it's happened, some places it hasn't happened. I think it happened in more places than not. Some people say to look at the number of plans that have been appealed, or look at the number of plans that have been challenged and so on, and so therefore the planning process hasn't worked. I think that is a case where people were expecting too much out of the planning process.

If you've got a situation where you can reasonably meet the needs of the people that are there, and they are concerned, and they are reasonably compatible, then you're going to have people that are going to agree. If you get to a place like Region 6, Pacific Northwest, where you've got conflicting demands on those lands, and the land can't meet all those conflicting demands. Then you have to start making tough choices. You can't expect just because you've got a planning process that people are going to like what comes out of it. Did you see my little lecture I did at Oregon State?

Federal Land Policy and Management Act

HKS: Yes. I've got a copy with me. The Starker lecture.

What was happening? At least to the general public, there must be some similarity between the Bureau of Land Management managing federal lands and the Forest Service managing federal lands. Yet you look at the two bills and it's hard to imagine that they came out of the same Congress. Were you looking at FLPMA?

RMP: The popular notion was that FLPMA was not going to pass.

HKS: Oh is that right?

RMP: FLPMA moved down either on the last day or the next to the last day it could have moved.

HKS: FLPMA is kind of a hodgepodge of ideas and emphases, where National Forest Management Act is coherent, there's a blueprint there.

RMP: The way I see the difference is this, FLPMA is really the BLM Organic Act. They didn't have an organic act, so it was an attempt to try to take the lands that came out of Taylor Grazing Act and the O and C lands and to move from an idea of disposal of land to an idea of management land. Then there's a lot of provisions in FLPMA that are also applicable to national forests, the grazing provisions and so on that are broader than BLM. A lot of the right-of-way stuff that is in there is broader than BLM. So FLPMA is kind of a whole bunch of bills. If they had had an RPA and an organic act and some other things, that probably would have dealt more with planning. It's more of the way that evolved. It's sort of putting everything from 1897 through the Multiple Use Act through RPA into one act. I think that accounts for the difference. But if you look at the depths of FLPMA in terms of describing multi-purpose use, it's almost identical to multiuse.

HKS: You've already got a lot on your plate with the National Forest Management Act, and here was FLPMA talking about consistency on grazing fees. There are a lot of issues here …

RMP: Yes. We were very much involved in lots of parts in FLPMA, and FLPMA had been sitting there as kind of a sleeper for some time. Nobody knew whether it was going to move or not. We were more on a crisis schedule with it after May, and we had lots of people working on FLPMA. I spent some time on it, but others spent lots more time. There were right-of-way people that worked on right-of-way provisions. FLPMA also covers minerals, which includes minerals on all kinds of lands. We weren't working on a day-to-day basis with FLPMA. The act also has a provision in it that requires that the director of BLM will be confirmed by the Senate. Did you know that?

HKS: No I didn't.

RMP: We raised the question of since the director of BLM had always been a professional person, why we were making him a presidential appointee subject to Senate confirmation, essentially making it like an assistant secretary. We got the most curious replies—something to the effect that since this was an organic act for BLM, it obviously has to deal with the appointment of the director. Which is certainly a chicken and the egg question. They could have easily said that the director would be a professional appointee of the secretary of interior.

Be that as it may, that's one of the differences; it requires the president appoint and the Senate confirm of the director of BLM. This was a precedent setting thing at that time because the Forest Service, SCS, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, none of the agency heads were presidential appointees subject to Senate confirmation at that point. So we were concerned with that, but we were being told right up till the last that FLPMA was not ever going to pass. It was sort of sitting there during the real active part of NFMA. Finally at the last minute they picked it off and did a compromise and sent it through.

HKS: I don't remember anyone even talking about FLPMA. It wasn't controversial. The *Journal of Forestry* and *American Forests* didn't carry analyses the way they did for the National Forest Management Act.

RMP: No, FLPMA was more of an organic act. It pulled all the authorities together in one place. The Multiple Use Act said the same thing basically, so I paraphrased that, and included minerals. So it wasn't all that controversial. There's no planning process specified in FLPMA either.

HKS: Is there more you want to say about the National Forest Management Act? I don't have the sequence clear in my mind. There is also the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. Was that before you were chief or while you were chief?

RMP: I was chief at that point.

HKS: Okay, we can deal with that later. Two people in Region 10 wanted me to ask you about that.

Three Little Bills

RMP: Probably another three bills we ought to deal with during this period. I was not the major player in the development of the regulations under National Forest Management Act. That passed over to Tom Nelson and the land management planning staff. Rupe Cutler was heavily involved. Cutler, who was assistant secretary, met with the Committee of Scientists on many, many occasions as they fashioned those regulations. I looked at the regulations a few times as they were being developed, and I attended a couple of public meetings where they were discussing them, but I was not a prime mover in the developing of the regulations, cause they simply weren't in my area of immediate responsibility.

I was, at that point, involved in what we called the "three little bills" that weren't so little. We needed an updating of the Research Act to deal with a whole bunch of things, including how we dealt with international research questions. We were by then getting into things like gypsy moth, where we're trying to look at predators that might come from other countries. We were being asked to do things related to international concern for fuel supply and tropical forests and all kinds of things. And we really weren't sure we had all the authority we needed to deal with that.

In the updating of the Research Act one of the things we tried to do is to bring in more responsibility for international things. There wasn't a whole lot of interest in that at that point within the administration. Probably one of the things that most people did not understand, or maybe still don't understand, is that there's so many players in the international arena that it's pretty hard for an agency like the Forest Service to do some things that people would like to see them do. You've got the State Department who figures that things in the international arena really needed to be handled through the ambassadors to the country, and need to be based on international arrangements and so on that are made through the State Department. Then you've got the Agency for International Development, USAID, who also has a major program, and then you've got people like

the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Then within USDA you've got the Office of International Cooperation and Development. All think they have the responsibility, and do have some major responsibility. So when you get down to an agency level, and you're worrying about what's happening somewhere, you really have a hard time getting into the act. There's not funding, you don't have manpower, you don't have presence there, and so it's a tough thing to figure out if you're going to influence events internationally, how you are going to deal with it.

HKS: So when somebody in Fire Control was sent to Chile to advise them, they were sent through the State Department? I mean in the earlier days?

RMP: We regularly got requests from other countries on fires, which might come through an office also in the State Department that deals with international disasters. Response to disasters caused by insects and earthquakes was pretty well greased because there was a big response by U.S. government, they were looking around for people to respond. A more difficult problem you had was, suppose that you learn that in the tropics when they harvest the trees there are thirty-five species there and they're burning thirty-two of them and using parts of three species. And they really don't know how to regenerate the area.

We had quite a bit of information on this subject. We have people like Frank Wadsworth down in Puerto Rico, who's probably the best person in tropical forestry in the world today in areas that he knows. But he's one person. So how do you deal with getting information to other parts? I became particularly frustrated with following the World Forestry Congress in Indonesia while deputy chief in 1978. I made a trip to Thailand after that, and I ran across some Peace Corps people. They were from the United States and also from Sweden I think; there were several countries involved under their agreement.

These young people decided that they wanted to grow some trees for regeneration of the area, so they're going to put in a tree nursery. I said to these young people that were about a year out of school, "Did you ever have anything to do with putting in a tree nursery, do you know anything about the subject?" And they said, "Not really except for what we read a little bit." So I said, "Well now, you're out here in the Peace Corps, if you need assistance on something, how do you get it?" And they said, "That's a good question. We don't really have any organized way of getting technical assistance as it relates to forestry." I thought well gosh sakes, how are we sending these young people throughout the world and just kind of leaving them on their own? Maybe they're creative and all these kinds of things, but you can also make big mistakes when you're trying to do this stuff.

I came back and talked to our people and said. "How come we've got these young Peace Corps people way out there and they don't have any technical backup at all?" Well that led to a project with AID to develop some forestry handbook materials and develop a technical backup system for the Peace Corps people by detailing a person over to work with the AID and the Peace Corps to try to develop that. Then, shortly after that, I don't know if it had anything to do with what I was concerned about, may have been somebody else observed the same thing, SAF decided to provide complimentary copies of the *Journal* and some other things to these people. We started trying to figure out an organized back-up, and so AID then was starting its project, which it was getting funding, and it didn't have any people to do it, forestry became a big deal in other countries. And AID could get funding but didn't have a staff. And so that led then to our agreeing to take on a lot of these projects in which they provided funding and we provided staff.

HKS: Through the International Forestry Division?

RMP: Through the International Forestry Division. Bob Buckman was one of the primary people that were also pushing this. Tom Nelson was involved with this. Quite a few people were involved in trying to see how can we help with these projects in that AID had some money without any staff. I asked how many staff we were talking about, and they said maybe six or seven people. I said, "Shoot, we can't even count that close when it comes to closing the year with personnel ceilings in the Forest Service. So why don't we just do it, why don't we just sign an agreement and do it and no problems."

That started this whole first series of agreements which finally led to this forestry support program. A lot of people were actors in that, but this is part of the frustration. We couldn't get enough money to finance this little bit of work by the International Forestry Division, but they were getting several times that much money through

AID and other sources. We finally were able to break that loose, primarily because we were willing to provide the ceilings, and they couldn't figure out how to do it without ceilings.

Back to the legislative side for a minute. With the Research Act, which did include some expanded authority, we passed a new State and Private Act, for which Einar Roget was one of the prime movers. What we were trying to do was update authority for State and Private to broaden it beyond fire and timber. More of a multipurpose assistance act. And also to update the authority. Jim Giltmier, who was again involved in that on the Senate side, was really nervous as to whether this was going to pass. I think it passed the House side like three hundred to fifteen or something, and the Senate had passed on a voice vote I think. So we called him "landslide Roget" after that. He was really worried whether it was going to pass. And then, also in that period, the Renewable Resources Extension Act passed. There had been some historic controversy between Forest Service State and Private and extension forestry.

I really thought this was kind of nonsense, with all the things that needed to be done at State and Private, to have a conflict between Extension Service and Forest Service. I did a GII of Region 9 while I was still deputy chief, and I remember I was in Indiana and we were looking at forest management practices. We were looking particularly at timber harvest, and I found out that only 10 percent of the people in Indiana had any kind of professional assistance when they harvested their timber. And I said goodness sakes, we've got situations in the East, in the Southeast and the Northeast where only 10 percent of the people are receiving attention at that point in time, and they're really setting the management of that forest for a whole generation. If we're only touching 10 percent of them, why in the world do we have this jealousy between two agencies that are only doing 10 percent now? We've got lots and lots of room out there for everybody. We need to have some understanding of who's going to do what, but if Extension does some major outreach effort and then the state forester comes in and provides the detailed plans, it's a matter of logic. So I was not willing to get involved in that controversy. I told extension I would and did support getting that act passed, which has not ever been funded very well. At least we tried to get our house in order in terms of the basic authorities to do the work.

HKS: LeMaster's basic description of the so-called three little bills, is it accurate enough?

RMP: Yes, I think it's accurate enough. The only thing I would add to that is, Denny saw the three little bills from the Congress side. It was not nearly as easy to put those three little bills together as he thinks, because in the first place we had to get OMB to agree that it was a good idea to even have such bills, to get a favorable report. There's always a certain amount of suspicion that you're trying to expand your horizons and increase the money supply and all those kinds of things through legislation. So there was a whole administrative side of that that Denny didn't see, and he couldn't expect to see from where he sat. But essentially his description is correct. I guess the next big test from the legislative side was the Alaska Lands Management Act.

Alaska

HKS: But this is after Carter gets in. Maybe we ought to get you to be chief before we get to that.

RMP: Essentially there are two bills involved. The first bill of course was the Alaska Native Lands Settlement Act, which passed way back in '72 which I wasn't really that involved in. The Alaska Native Interest Land Conservation Act, ANILCA, passed in 1980, and I was very much involved while I was still deputy chief, when I was handling Programs and Legislation.

As you probably know, we had proposals for major new national forests in Alaska. We thought we were making pretty good progress to get those national forests in Alaska. We got the D-2 study teams up there, the big D-2 reports and all that that went on for years there. I went up there while I was deputy chief and looked at all those lands that were proposed to be put in under that law. As I say, we thought we were making pretty good progress. In fact when the Carter administration came in and Cutler came aboard, I made a long trip up there with him to look at those lands. We flew all over Alaska and looked at those lands, and Rupe Cutler was pretty well convinced that a lot of those ought to be national forests.

HKS: That's interesting.

RMP: The people up in Alaska did a good job of taking us out and showing us how they would plan to manage the land and so on. So Cutler came back pretty well enthused in what he'd seen in Alaska and what the opportunities were to have national forests there. But then Cecil Andrus announced that the president was going to support all these national parks and national wildlife refugees and all this kind of stuff in Alaska. I don't know if he'd announced it yet, but the idea was being promoted, so we went to a big meeting at OMB in which Cutler made an impassioned plea that we ought to have these new national forests and all this type of thing. We found out shortly after that meeting that we thought we were trying to hail a train and the train had already left the station. The decision had already apparently been made between Carter and Andrus to…

HKS: Was this for national parks or national parks reserves? I don't fully understand the difference, but I know there is a difference.

RMP: Both.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: But it created national parks, national park preserves, national wildlife refuges. Essentially when the dust all settled, the Forest Service got a little bit of land added, but not anything of any consequence. It was pretty much a wash for us. We pretty well got wiped out as far as getting any additional lands in Alaska. In fact, for a while it looked like we might lose Copper River Delta and quite a few other areas. We might actually lose some areas.

HKS: Let's go back a step. We have the secretary of the interior talking to Carter and the deputy secretary whoever Rupe Cutler was.

RMP: Assistant secretary.

HKS: How about the secretary. It wasn't an equal battle was it? Or does it make sense to have Rupe rather than the secretary himself?

RMP: Andrus wasn't over there in the meeting with OMB. But he'd apparently talked to Carter, maybe shortly after he'd got elected. Carter made the commitment to protect the so-called crown jewels of Alaska through a national park and the national wildlife refuge system. Rupe met with Bergland, who was secretary at the time, and then we made a presentation to Bergland. We tried to convince him that we really needed to have these new national forests in Alaska. He was from Minnesota and knew the national forests there Minnesota. He was very, very sympathetic to national forest management. I don't really know for sure what he did, but within a few days after that session we got the word that it has been decided what the distribution of lands in Alaska will be. When it came the time to testify, Rupe Cutler testified in favor of this administration proposal.

HKS: It's clear enough I guess.

RMP: What really got involved in ANILCA, as far as national forests is concerned, is we were going to do primarily on the Tongass forest in terms of a wilderness designation bill. The bill in one step, which is unique, not only put certain lands in a new basic land management system like the national parks or wildlife refuges, it also designated large parts of lands as wilderness. It also designated a large amount of wilderness on the Tongass. Then our primary work started to be trying to deal with the question of how much land should be designated as wilderness in Alaska. One of our real problems there is that Alaska was way downstream by now in planning under NFMA.

HKS: I'm sure.

RMP: In fact they'd published all kinds of maps and they had published preliminary ways they were going to go. How could we complete NFMA which was delegated to the regional forester to do the plan for the forest? How

do we coincide that with the decisions that were made in Congress on which area should be wilderness, and so on? Obviously the two had to match when you got through. That became a pretty tedious thing, trying to figure out how this worked.

By this time John Sandor is the regional forester in Alaska. It was kind of nice that I had gone to graduate school with him and knew him quite well. But John Sandor felt very strongly that it was up to him to plan how this forest ought to look under NFMA. There was somewhat a violation of process, some of these decisions on areas that would be new wilderness and so on. That was probably one of the toughest things to try to get through just procedurally, how this thing can operate.

HKS: The Chugach got off scot free.

RMP: The Chugach was so small and the trade-offs up there were so small it never really became a big issue. It's primarily the Tongass. The Tongass is almost twenty million acres of land, so we're talking about a whole lot of land, and this involved the whole Alaska delegation. Really they supported the new national forests up there, they supported a whole different way that Alaska ought to be put together than where the Congress was coming from. We're moving toward the tail end of the Carter administration now, we're trying to put this together.

Probably one of the most difficult things in anybody's life is that people came in from Alaska that had the information, like Hatch Graham and Joe Solinski who were staffers. They were very much supportive philosophically and professionally and every other way, supporting the decisions that they had seen made in Alaska. Now the whole tide was swimming in the other direction. I spent a lot of hours counseling those two guys and others that were involved that, look this is the time the Forest Service has really got to be professional in that Congress knows the consequences of what they're doing, and they're going to make the decision. It's our job to be sure that they know when they make the decision, that we care what they're doing. It's not our job to lobby them, because the administration has already stated that they've got a position.

Meantime the Carter administration has been defeated and suddenly we had the Reagan administration coming in. It's recognized that you're gonna get the best bill if it goes before Carter leaves, rather than wait and it goes through Reagan. Whatever bill comes out is going to be fashioned in the Senate, and they're going to send it over to the House and they're going to have to accept it. So I ended up sitting with those people on the Hill along with Hatch Graham and Joe Solinski helping them fashion the final bill, which was probably one of the most uncomfortable spots you'll ever be in your life, because the emotions really were running high.

HKS: If you'd had your druthers, wouldn't you have rather waited until Reagan got in? Because you have a chance of overturning the national parks.

RMP: I never thought that was a valid alternative, because it was obvious that the votes were there to pass it while Carter was there. People were so tired of working with that Alaska thing, they'd worked with it for a whole decade.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: They were finally arriving at something that looked like a fair consensus, and so it was going to pass. The whole national park/wildlife refuge thing had been decided, they were just not arguing about the Tongass, how the Tongass was going to be. The big argument was how are you going to relate to the wilderness designations in future employment there. Seiberling had gone up there and was handling it on the House side. He came from Ohio and felt that you had to continue employment in Alaska. His ancestral company manufactured tires, you know, and so he was sensitive to employment questions. He went to Alaska along with the rest of the delegation and they came back and said we want a large wilderness system but we also want to continue the employment that's up there. We need to fashion a solution that does both.

For weeks we worked on trying to figure out what lands could be involved that would both give you a large wilderness system and continue the employment level. They got into a big argument over what do you mean continue the employment level, because industry maintained that should be 650 million feet a year because that

had been a number that had been set earlier. But the actual amount that had been cut from national forest land was only about 450 million feet a year. There was so much land going to the natives, so much land going to the state, how much would that make up of the total, you know, between the 450 million and 650 million. You assumed that you'd get some timber from native and state lands. We finally ended up with 450 from national forests. The natives maintained at that point that they were going to cut their land very slowly. They were going to have a very high level of stewardship, and they roundly criticized the big clearcuts that were there, saying they were going to have a very much more natural kind of management of their lands.

HKS: Are the natives being managed at this time by the Bureau of Indian Affairs?

RMP: No. They pretty much had their own planners.

HKS: How about the Alaskan Indians who are not on reservations?

RMP: They were not being given help by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as far as I know. These are Alaska natives and aren't on reservations. They'd never had any reservations and still don't have any reservations. These were Native Americans who ended up with villages and some land outside of that. Anyway, they were saying that they were going to cut the lands very slowly, they were going to cut their lands in a way that would be long-term management of the lands and so on. Therefore there wasn't going to be a lot of timber from those lands in the flow of things. The state was taking about the same position.

Be that as it may, we finally ended up with the idea that we were going to produce about 450 million feet, but we couldn't produce the 450 million feet and have as large a wilderness area there as people wanted. The two didn't fit. The question became, can you produce that additional amount of timber on that land if you put more investment in it, if you build more access to inaccessible land that's not now economical, and if you do more reforestation and other kinds of culture work? That, interestingly enough, was propounded by the environmental side, that if you put this additional investment in those lands, you can get that production and keep the employment going on a smaller land base. In fact, even people said this isn't an investment for the timber people, this is an investment in a big wilderness system. So they actually promoted that idea through OMB, and OMB initially was not going to buy that because that meant in the future you'd have to pay out more money. It might not be an economical sort of thing to do because you'll be spending money providing access to many other things in the area …

HKS: Below-cost timber sales and all of that stuff.

RMP: Yes, below-cost was not such a worry at that time. Anyway you obviously were going to spend more money than you were going to take in. That thrashed around for a while, and finally OMB said they would agree to that, the administration would agree that they would spend more money. That went to the Hill. Senator Stevens and some others said, I'm not going to bite off on that idea that the administration is going to provide more money because the ink won't hardly be dried on that bill until they'll probably oppose this additional appropriation. He said the only way that he would agree to do that would be to have a guaranteed source of funding.

After working around for a little bit, Doug Leisz, who was the associate chief at the time, worked with OGC and was stealing staff. They fashioned that provision that said the secretary of the treasury would provide to the secretary of agriculture from receipts from national forests sufficient funds to produce that 450 million foot supply. They said initially it would be $40 million, and then it said in the future whatever funds were required would be there because nobody knew what inflation might be. All the costs of doing this were purely estimates. Stevens obviously wanted a way for that to step up with increased costs. Anyway that's the genesis of that provision in the Alaska Lands Act that calls for a specific amount of money available for each year. It was finally repealed but was in there primarily to guarantee that balance between wilderness and jobs.

HKS: Even though Stevens got what he wanted, it was repealed. There's no way you can bind the future Congresses, as you said.

RMP: You can make the best plans you can, and even though obviously you're going to spend more money in Alaska than you're going to take in under that provision, nobody saw the market just fall into the flats, with housing starts going way down and other countries producing this particular pulp that was being produced in Alaska, world markets falling. Suddenly Alaska not only is not paying its way under this, but there's a huge subsidy going into this. Nobody anticipated that level of subsidy, because nobody anticipated the market falling that much. In fact the companies came in with those long-term contracts. I guess I would never enter into a fifty-year contract.

HKS: John expressed some reservations too about those long-term contracts.

RMP: When conditions change, it's very difficult to figure out how to allocate the costs.

HKS: Let's go back to 1940 and try to forecast 1990. That's rather absurd.

RMP: For example, EPA would come along with new pollution control requirements. Well the company would say how the appraisal works. When they pass through production costs and so on, we've got to pass through that EPA pollution control, or whatever else happened. And you had a noncompetitive situation since these are fifty-year contracts all based on appraisal. Obviously any time the company didn't like the appraisal, it was to their advantage to contest it as long as they got back enough money in the contesting to pay for their costs in contesting it.

HKS: They had the same pass through problem you do with the sustained yield units.

RMP: So you have all the problems that you have with a sustained yield unit when you have those fifty-year contracts. The other thing that happens is, you make all of the small companies a complete prisoner of those companies that are the only ones there that can process pulp logs. You realize that about half the timber in Alaska is only good for pulp. So you create a completely noncompetitive situation that's not good for anybody concerned.

Anyway, I sat in on that conference, on the Senate side, where they did most of the work on this. Tsongas, who's the present candidate for president (it was kind of confusing because we had Tsongas and Tongass) [laughter], from Massachusetts was one of the prime movers in the Alaska lands thing. Also there was Senator Jackson and Senator Stevens, and it's a very uncomfortable situation being in that.

They decided that they wanted us there to answer questions, and they had an agreement that they would not ask us opinion questions, they would ask us factual questions. What if we draw this line here, what's the effect of this, what if we drew over here? We were sort of their staff trying to help them work out a solution. At one point somebody said chief what about this, and Jackson said wait a minute, that's not a fact question. That's an opinion question; can you ask him in a way he can respond without asking him to express and opinion on it? So they somewhat protected me in the Congress. When you realize the administration change is fairly sudden, it's very important that Stevens not be unduly antagonized by my working in that group.

HKS: Where was Andrus, who was so upset with John McGuire that he made the famous statement, "The first thing I will do is fire McGuire"? Was that over Alaska?

RMP: I don't know for sure where that antagonism came from. Carter carried some antagonism with him from Georgia that related not to the Forest Service but to forestry. When he did his big reorganization in Georgia and created this big Department of Natural Resources, he had this big study done by the University of Georgia, I was in Georgia when they were doing this study. He was governor when I was in Atlanta. They had a problem in that the Fish and Wildlife Commission is a constitutional commission in Georgia. That's true in several states. So if they're going to create a Department of Natural Resources, they couldn't change this constitutional Fish and Wildlife Commission. The forestry interests in Georgia were not about to be subordinate to this fish and game commission, which had to be there as a matter of the constitution. They successfully fought Carter and won, keeping forestry out of the Department of Natural Resources. Ray Shirley, who was the state forester, had tried to work this out with Carter, and in the process was going to get fired by the forestry commission, got rescued by Carter by changing the law down there. So when Carter came to Washington later and proposed his

reorganization, he was purported to have said to some people that he had lost his reorganization in Georgia because of forestry and he was determined he was not going to lose it in Washington. I don't know what Andrus' enmity was there, but obviously John McGuire had public stature.

There's one little thing that happened. Quite a few of the people that were in Interior I'd known from Atlanta. When the White House started appointing people in the new Carter administration, an awful lot of the Georgia mafia came up, and I knew quite a few of these people that were in the natural resources side of things. In the middle of this proposal for reorganization, I got involved with Andrus and Alaska.

I think Alaska is important because it was a terrible professional strain for the Forest Service to handle. Here we had an administration that was going quite opposite to the way the Forest Service wanted to go, and quite opposite to the way people felt strongly that it should go, but we still had to function within the system. Maybe one of the indicators of final respect that we got in Congress was that Congress in essence adopted the Tongass Land Management Plan into law. If you read the final act and so on, they really followed pretty much exactly the Tongass Land Management plans with the adding of a little bit of additional wilderness.

HKS: Giltmier would have a big role in getting the language in. That was his function, right? In staff, he would be writing the language.

RMP: No. The major action of that was not in the Agriculture committee. So here's where you get into jurisdictional questions. The primary actors at that time were the Energy and Natural Resources committee in the Senate, and the Interior and Insular Affairs committee in the House. The big actor in that was Mike Harvey who was the staffer for the Senate, which was chaired by Senator Jackson. The whole Senate Agriculture committee was not involved in that, so Giltmier was not a player. Bill Horn was staffing, for example, for Stevens through part of that. Bill Horn later went on to be assistant secretary of the interior for fish and wildlife and parks. But no Jim Giltmier would not have been involved in that. Neither would Dennis LeMaster or any of those people.

HKS: I don't remember who it was, but somebody long ago, maybe somebody like Chris Granger, looked at Alaska and said, "This is our chance to have this big experiment, the Sweden of America." They could try all the social experiments using Alaska. It kind of turned out that way in a sense. Some of the things that are proposed are wholly unique to the rest of the philosophy of the nation.

RMP: Some people said one of the reasons that the Alaska Lands Act passed is that we'd fouled up so much of the lower forty-eight that somewhere we ought to protect some land, whether we ever go there or not. This is where we're doing our bit for the environment. There was certainly this aspect to that, if you were a senator or congressman from any state, you name it, except Alaska, you could get votes for voting for the Alaska Lands Act. You weren't going to lose anything if you voted for it. The groups that were supporting the Alaska lands legislation were primarily environmental groups who would vote against you if you didn't support it. But you weren't going to lose any votes from anybody else if you voted against it because it didn't affect the local economy. Groups that are concerned with the local economy wouldn't bother it. Some called it a cheap environmental vote. They did a very unusual thing in that they polled the entire Alaska delegation. That's what I tell people, when they started talking about the spotted owl issue in the Northwest. This will probably be the closest to another Alaska case that anybody's seen. Where probably the notions of the country as a whole will prevail.

HKS: I know we'll be talking about that later, but I've been surprised how far this spotted owl thing has gone. I thought certainly it would stop somewhere, but it's still going.

RMP: Anyway, with Alaska lands, the sentiment ran so deep up there that you could go into some of those small towns and you could find a sign that said Department of Interior people not served here, at restaurants and hotels.

HKS: I'll bet. I have a brother-in-law who drives a log truck in Forks, Washington, and I can understand that kind of sentiment.

RMP: They were really upset. The Alaska Lands Act was not moving, and they were trying to get Carter to do something that would be dramatic and that would cause people to maybe relate more to Alaska. He decided to create these large national monuments in Alaska. I'm not sure who generated the idea, but we were told that Carter wanted to designate all of these large national monuments in Alaska, and he wanted to designate virtually all of Admiralty Island, plus Misty Fjords. At one time they were talking about some more, but they finally settled on those. So they decided they were going to make this big announcement that he'd done this, and we had to work out the details. Among the things they were going to do, they were going to close all of those national monuments to hunting.

The Forest Service had had national monuments in California and in other places. Historically I think we had had quite a few at one time before they were all transferred to National Park Service. We couldn't find any reason why he should close an area to hunting just because it's a national monument, because national monuments are theoretically being established to protect antiquities, and they really don't have anything to do with any hunting or fishing area. We took the attitude that these areas ought to be open to hunting and fishing for the national forest monuments. Interior and the White House were saying they should be closed.

I don't know who did the final chop on that, we just went ahead and wrote on it that it should be open to hunting and fishing. A couple of times they tried to stop us and said they ought to be closed because Interior wants it closed. We said, no they don't. Besides, the organic act of national forests leaves the states with these responsibilities. We're going to be overriding the states' responsibilities if we do this. We just kind of kept going, and nobody ever came through with enough horsepower in the time limits we had to override it, because there was only two or three days to do this.

The question was whether Rupe Cutler was going to go to Alaska or I was going to go to Alaska to help announce these national monuments at news conferences in Anchorage and Fairbanks. Rupe decided he'd rather stay in Washington and be a part of the announcement at the White House than go to Alaska, so I drew the chore of flying to Alaska and announcing something that was about as popular as measles. [laughter] But I ended up sort of wearing the white hat, because I said that the national forest monuments were going to be open to hunting and fishing and the Interior people had to say theirs were going to be closed. So that took quite a bit of steam out of it. I spent a lot of time in Alaska during the time I was deputy chief and after I was chief trying to sort out all of this stuff.

HKS: I was just thinking, it's arduous, you've got four time zones just like going to London from the East Coast in terms of your body chemistry. It's hard work to go through that.

RMP: Hard work to go through that. It's a huge chunk of land. The real scary thing I found in working with Congress over time was that people were drawing lines on maps and didn't have the faintest idea of what was there.

HKS: Like FDR and Churchill during World War II, I guess.

RMP: Maybe faintest idea is too big a statement, but people sometimes draw lines on flat maps with big wide pencils. Even if you tried to know a lot about an area, you may not know enough to be able to intelligently draw lines. I saw, particularly when we were working with wilderness bills, people drawing lines when they didn't understand topography, didn't understand what the lines were going to look like on the ground, didn't understand the problems that were going to be associated with trying to administer an area drawn that way and so on. If I was ever going to be disillusioned with Congress, I'd be disillusioned with their attempts to legislate wilderness. I developed a pretty healthy skepticism of the Congress doing that very well.

I'm sort of mixing what happened after I became chief and what I did before. Most of this Alaska stuff happened before I became chief, except that meeting on the Hill in which we finally settled the thing. The proposal to reorganize government and establish this new Department of Natural Resources cooked for quite a while and was something that we were involved in in various and sundry ways. Are you talking to Ray Hauser along the way?

HKS: No.

RMP: Two major things we were involved in, one before I was chief and one was after. One was the reorganization and the other is interchange, and some people like Ray Hauser had probably a better view of some of that than I did.

HKS: Interchanges, I don't know what that word means.

More on Reorganization

RMP: I'll talk about it later. Anyway Andrus really wanted to bring the Forest Service over to Interior. He couldn't do that administratively. For a little time there, I think the president's reorganization authority had expired. See the president has authority to propose an organizational change, and it lies before Congress for a certain length of time. If Congress doesn't object it can go forward. But you can't really create a department, or you can't create an agency that was created by act of Congress that way. You have to get approval of Congress. So later on the president could eliminate the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, because it was created administratively, not a creature of Congress.

Carter and Andrus both were determined to reorganize government, and I think Carter came with this by having inherited a government in Georgia that he thought initially was completely unmanageable because of the number of boards and commissions and departments and everything else. So he managed that massive reorganization in Georgia, and created a large Department of Natural Resources. He put in a few departments and tried to create a more responsive government. That was supported by a study from Georgia State.

Anyway, they got going on this big federal reorganization, and Andrus made the mistake of saying, as you mentioned already, the thing he'd do the first day would be to fire McGuire. So we didn't really know what was happening on that, there were some papers put together on how this would work. It was pretty well done over at OMB with some people on detail. The primary flaw on that from a lot of people's viewpoint was it was not a new Department of Natural Resources. It was really just a redone Department of the Interior, and it would still keep all of the functional organizations that Interior had had. It would have kept the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, all of the agencies in it, the Bureau of Mines, with those specific functions. They said that the Forest Service would subsume BLM. All of us went around to try to figure out what subsume meant. Subsume means being made a part of something that's bigger than you are, or something or other. BLM immediately drew a snake with a rat inside it [laughter].

I went over there to talk to a fellow that I'd known from Atlanta that was in Andrus's office about something entirely unrelated. Lo and behold, the door opened and in walked Andrus. I don't know if it was pre-planned or accidental or something. Andrus sat there for I think close to thirty minutes and talked about the reorganization. He said, "I realize that I really shouldn't have said that I was going to fire McGuire the first day. That was kind of a silly thing to say." He said, "I've drawn a lot of heat for that, and I don't have any particular ire against John McGuire. I understand John McGuire is going to retire fairly soon." So he said, "That really shouldn't have been an issue. I have a lot of respect for the Forest Service." The longer he talked, the more I had the distinct feeling that he was trying to tell me that if the Forest Service came over there I would be the head of it. It bothered me to be a part of that kind of conversation.

HKS: Sure, sure.

RMP: I don't know to this day whether he was doing anything more than trying to tell me that he really didn't have any great enmity for the Forest Service. But he said, "Obviously, if McGuire leaves we'll want somebody who's been in the Forest Service and been around and knows the West and the East and has been here and has got the respect of the other Forest Service people." He went on and on and on, and it seemed like he was sort of finally saying, "You'd be the kind of guy that we'd want to head this." I felt very uncomfortable being in that kind of spot. I went back and promptly told McGuire of the conversation.

Anyway, there were a couple of big meetings that were held on the reorganization in which they called all the deputy chiefs over there and gave us this big rah-rah talk of how much better the Forest Service would be in being a part of the Department of Interior where you had a secretary that knew the kinds of things we were working with. We wouldn't be a part of this outfit that was running dairy programs and all this farm stuff that had no interest and no concern with what we were doing. Besides that, with this new organization we would have a whole bunch of new jobs. They used the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, as the template of all these big new jobs that would carry higher salaries. They seemed to be implying to all of us that if we bought in on this that we would get higher salaries. Andrus was not a part of that, this was the OMB people that worked out of the White House before. I don't know how they could have more misjudged an audience, because as far as we were concerned they were trying to tell us that we ought to sell out an organization because we might personally profit by it. And I didn't think it really was …

HKS: This is the Carter OMB.

RMP: Yes. I didn't think that that was much above, somewhere between a bribe and blackmail. Those may be pretty strong words. It just really turned me off that they would think that people that had worked twenty-five or thirty years with the Forest Service would overcome our objections at the idea of the Forest Service being transferred by the idea there'd be some higher salaries there.

HKS: You said something earlier about organization. Was the Forest Service as an agency created by act of Congress at any time? I don't recall when it happened; it just sort of slipped in it seems to me.

RMP: No, the so-called creative act, when they transferred the forest reserves …

HKS: In 1905.

RMP: In 1905, to the renamed Forest Service. Let me go back a little bit. In the 1897 organic act, they established Forest Service, or established the bureau of forestry I guess, they even established by law the position of chief forester, you know that's an 1897 act.

HKS: The '97 act said the secretary of the interior should make rules and regulations. Anyhow, getting back to Carter's reorganization, maybe they were slimy because they were dealing with congressionally created agencies.

RMP: Also, the National Forest Management Act of 1976 provided that national forests couldn't be transferred except by act of Congress. So they couldn't transfer the national forests into Interior. But anyway …

It was clear at least that if the president had reorganization authority, he could propose moving the Forest Service to Interior, and that could come about without an act of Congress. But without that reorganization authority he couldn't do it. He was also making some changes that involved the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, and that all took legislation. Finally, it was fairly clear he was going to have to have a legislative package.

Anyway, this big briefing that they had that I mentioned, where they had all of us over there and explained all of the advantages of the Forest Service going to Interior and remake of Interior, and we would subsume the Bureau of Land Management, I thought was a kind of direct play to a idea that we might personally be better off if we went over there. Meantime, there was great concern around the country of the disruption that all this would create if you tried to somehow create a new organization, and put this all together. You realize we didn't know how this was going to interplay with the BLM organic act.

FLPMA has a political appointee as head of BLM. You're not going to have somebody in both Forest Service and BLM who was going to be chief, other than a political appointee. We saw a substantial disruption of Forest Service activities. One of the questions was what was going to happen to Research and State and Private? If you're going to leave that in Agriculture, you just had another kind of split, which we felt that in the future would be very detrimental. So the question was, was the whole Forest Service going over there or just the

public lands part of the Forest Service. When this started cooking up, Rex Ressler was really feeling personally a lot of concern about this idea that this reorganization might take place.

HKS: He's still with the Forest Service at this time.

RMP: At this point. I was deputy chief and he was associate chief. We had a lot of long discussions about what the Forest Service could do, and what would we do after we got a president who seemed to be headed in this direction. We had some support from Bergland, by the way, saying this is a poor thing to do. At one point there was even a bill introduced that would have created a Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, saying that maybe we ought to just take from Interior the things that they had that were natural resources and leave them with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the national parks, and museums, maybe put the Smithsonian in with them. Create a different kind of organization.

Anyway, Rex was having quite a bit of trouble figuring out what we effectively should do about this, and so, of course, was McGuire. All of us were concerned about how we could deal with this reorganization. About that time we learned of Bill Towell's retirement, and I was talking to somebody in AFA about it. I said, "You know Rex is feeling a lot of heat from this reorganization thing, and it's concluded that he's not likely to be chief because of a lot of things." Rex is an excellent person; I think he would have made an excellent chief. But he'd been pretty badly scarred by this Crested Butte problem in Colorado, the ski area problem he'd kind of gotten in the middle of without deserving to be there. He just happened to be at the wrong spot at the wrong …

HKS: That's the story that Jack Anderson wrote about?

RMP: Yes. I told the people they might try Rex Ressler at replacing Bill Towell. He might be interested in that. They asked if I really thought he might. I said, "Yes, I think Rex just became eligible to retire and he's frustrated that he can't do more on reorganization and so on, and I think he might just be interested in that." So they said we might call Rex. I went down to talk to Rex, and I said I mentioned to these people that you might be interested in this AFA job, you've been saying that you could do more outside than you might be able to do inside. And Rex said. "By golly, I might just take a flier at that." So Rex went to AFA. He then did a lot from AFA to oppose the reorganization, and is probably one of the half a dozen people that at least put on the table the bad parts of the reorganization proposal as it related to a public agency.

HKS: A generation earlier when Clapp, who was acting chief, opposed FDR's reorganization plan, he was punished for it rather harshly and was kept as acting chief for four years. So the Forest Service must have felt some concern about stepping too far.

RMP: Yes. We felt ethically and morally constrained. We also felt that you better be careful what you do because the Forest Service might suffer for this for years and years. A couple of things that I did on that that were things that I thought were responsible. I knew Carter had a member of CEQ who had come up from Georgia way, and she had been co-chairman of Conservationists for Carter. Her name was Jane Yarn, and she was on first name basis with Carter. I really thought that they weren't paying enough attention to some aspects of reorganization. No question that Bergland was against it, no question that Rupe Cutler was against it, but they really couldn't do anything about it. They were really in a position that if they said anything outside of the inner circles they would be disloyal.

I sent some stuff to Jane Yarn to ask her to bring to people's attention things that just didn't make any sense in this proposal. Jane Yarn, incidentally, was involved in one other incident along the way. When Carter became president, we got word about a month after that somebody in his campaign was circulating a letter asking for nominations for chief. McGuire was a career chief, and we certainly didn't think that they were likely to change the chief job, we never thought that was likely to happen. Because John had good relationships with both sides on the Hill and was not a partisan kind of figure.

I called Jane Yarn in Atlanta and asked if she was aware that there was a memorandum being circulated on behalf of president-elect Carter asking for nominations for chief. Jane said, "Is that right? Whose name is on it?" I told her, and she said, "I just would wonder if Jimmy knows about it?" She's a very nice southern lady, and

she said, "Now I can't promise you anything, and I can't speak for Jimmy, but when I go down to Plains tomorrow I'll mention it to him."

She had met McGuire, because when I was regional forester Jane had been on the advisory committee for the Cradle of Forestry in North Carolina. She had made several trips to the Cradle and had gotten acquainted with Voit Gilmore and other people in North Carolina. She was a very solid person and had a farm in Alabama and understood my situation. She knew John McGuire, in fact she asked to meet him when she came up one time. I think it was Monday when she called back and said, "Would you tell chief McGuire to just don't worry about any ideas that he's going to be replaced." She said, "I really don't know how these things happen. The person that wrote that letter is way down in the campaign somewhere. You don't have to worry about it because he's no longer with the organization."

A few months later she said that Carter was interested in her taking a job in administration. She said, "I don't know enough about jobs that are available in administration and what kind of job I might be interested in. I don't know that I want to come to Washington because Charlie's got his practice, he's a doctor in Atlanta, but I'd be kind of interested in something." There's something called a prune book, that lists all of the jobs that the president can appoint. It's a book about so thick that is put together each time an administration changes about all of the jobs and qualifications for them and level and who appoints them and the tenure and all that. So I went to the prune book and picked out about a half dozen jobs that I thought Jane might be interested in and called her back and gave her the information on them. Contrary to what she said about not wanting to come to Washington, she did in fact come to Washington and served as member of CEQ for several years. I lived in California when Reagan was governor of California, and met him then, but I didn't know him. I then moved to Atlanta where Carter was governor of Georgia and met him. I met Bush when he was vice-president, so I met the last three presidents before they became president. It didn't mean a lot, but it's just one of those coincidences.

The Carter administration was an interesting one for us in that McGuire was a quite a senior chief in the views of the Carter administration. He and Rupe Cutler dealt pretty professionally with each other, but were obviously in some cases not on the same wavelength but managed to work things reasonably well. I became chief during the Carter administration, which in itself is an interesting story.

RMP: I had two letters having to do with ANILCA after all this headache of trying to walk where I could. One was a letter signed personally by Carter, expressing appreciation for work on ANILCA and then one from Tsongas who is now running for president.

HKS: For the record that's the Alaska National Interests Lands and Conservation Act, right?

RMP: Right. I mentioned that Tsongas was the primary sponsor in the Senate, and that's a little letter from him expressing appreciation. The only point of those is that it professionally one of the hardest things that the Forest Service ever had to do was to deal with the law. If we had had our druthers we would not have framed it that way. But we were overruled and then had to try to help work the thing through.

RARE II

RMP: Then the other thing that happened at the time that we probably should touch on briefly is the whole RARE II, which happened when I was deputy chief, I hadn't quite made chief yet. That process is probably history, it's already recorded, was actually started by Rupe Cutler when he went to make a speech, I think, in Chicago. People said to him, "Look, we don't know what is going to happen to all these roadless areas out there, they seem to be sort of in limbo. We've had all these controversies about them, and some day we ought to resolve them." Rupe Cutler apparently said, "Well, we had RARE I which wasn't done very well. It didn't include some land that should have been, and it really didn't deal with the final disposition. It just looked at areas that ought to be further candidates."

He was not very knowledgeable about RARE I, so he thought we ought to really do a wilderness area review and do it right, and do it fairly soon and decide the areas that are necessary to round out the wilderness system and make the areas that are not necessary to round out the wilderness system available for other multiuse. And so he came back and sort of announced that we would undertake RARE II. As far as I know there was no consultation with McGuire or anybody else when he made that judgment that we were going to undertake a new review of wilderness areas. That led to that huge review, and environmental statement and led to work by every region, and by every forest to first inventory all the wilderness areas.

HKS: Why was RARE I deficient? Did it lack an ability to anticipate the magnitude of what the real question was? Why didn't that work?

RMP: RARE I really was an attempt to look at the roadless areas and look at the areas that should be furthered studied as to where there should be wilderness.

HKS: I understand that.

RMP: See, it wasn't really an attempt to actually decide what areas to recommend to Congress as wilderness. It was really a sifting through and saying these areas we ought to look at further.

HKS: So it was one step short …

RMP: It was one step short. When the Wilderness Act was passed, you remember, in 1964, Congress had the authority to decide what areas would be wilderness.

HKS: Gave themselves, what, twenty years, or ten years?

RMP: They required a review of the primitive areas over a ten-year period. As far as national forests were concerned it didn't say anything about the other roadless areas. It required Interior to review all of its lands of five thousand acres or more. But there was no such requirement for national forests to review all of the areas. The Forest Service was only required to review the primitive areas for this ten-year period, and did that and sent it to Congress. But there was a huge amount of roadless areas out there, in addition to those, over sixty million acres of roadless area out there. It was a real question of what to do with that sixty million.

It was Ed Cliff who decided in back, I think, 1970-71, in that time frame, that we really ought to look at these roadless areas that were out there. We ought to decide which ones of them ought to be looked at further for potential recommendation for wilderness. That was a Forest Service type of initiative. This was a secretarial level initiative, with the idea that they would go to the president and they would make recommendations to Congress, and Congress would act.

RARE II was quite a bit more ambitious. It involved all the roadless areas, including some areas that had not been previously inventoried that were considered nonqualifying because of roads or evidence of other development. It particularly picked up new lands in the East that had been previously cut over, eroded, or farmed, or so on. This process was brought to fruition in April of '79, and here happens to be a draft of the memorandum to the president from Eisenstat. Eisenstat was on Carter's staff, Jim McIntyre who was director of OMB and Bob Bergland who was secretary of agriculture. It outlines what happens in RARE II and outlines a whole bunch of options in long-term relief and so on. This was in a big book. It really shows you the way that, in the Carter era, lots and lots of decisions went to Carter personally. And they went to him without a recommendation from his staff that says, "We recommend you do this." This one, for example, outlines the background of RARE II. It talks about the initial units of the system, outlines the RARE II process, and then goes into the areas that were recommended for wilderness and non-wilderness and further planning. As a part of the RARE II process, these went out for public comment. Then it came back. The analysis of commerce from elected officials and federal agencies produced changes in the January 4 USDA proposal in overall increase in the acreage recommended for wilderness and outlined what that was.

Some people may be dissatisfied with the process and outline alternatives. Alternative 1 was to reduce the wilderness recommendations to allow for greater oil and gas development, which they would have DOE do.

Another alternative was to increase substantially the acreage recommended for wilderness than what came out of USDA. CEQ and EPA were associated with that. Then it had Alternative 3 to develop a new proposal between the revised USDA program and Alternative 3. It had alternatives 1, alternative 1a, alternative 2, alternative 3, and so on. This whole thing, in a big three-ring binder, must have been a couple of hundred pages in length, went to Carter about 9 or 10 o'clock one night, at the White House, with the assumption that he was going to review that that night. They made the announcement of his decision sometime the next morning.

Whether anybody was with him when he reviewed it or what the process was I don't know. But at least the people working on it at OMB, and I was over there at OMB working on it, apparently that was his normal process was to sit and go through privately pretty much a briefing book of this kind and decide exactly what he wanted to do based on the material. I wondered how in the world any human being could handle all that stuff he was being given.

The Carter White House

HKS: This is for all the government, not just the wilderness stuff.

RMP: Sure. I wondered how many briefing books he had then, whether he was up all night reading this stuff. He had way too much information and not a whole lot of real solid analysis. Maybe that's wrong to say. It wasn't boiled down in a way that somebody said if you adopt alternative 1, these are some of the consequences, if you adopt alternative 2, these are the consequences, and we recommend you adopt alternative 2. When the timber sale buyout came during the Reagan administration, that whole thing was put on one or two pages for him, which was reviewed with him at a meeting. At the bottom of this sheet of paper there was a place for him to initial.

One of my ideas of why the Carter administration had a lot of trouble was that the White House was simply without senior staff. Eisenstat was, I think, a real bright guy as a domestic policy advisor; he was probably in his mid-thirties. Other than that everybody in the White House was young and without any experience. There was no functioning structure there. Things came from all the departments and ended up going to the president.

HKS: He must have gone along with it. He didn't say, "Good lord, I can't handle this paper, reduce it some more."

RMP: I asked Jane Yarn one time how come Carter had such inexperienced White House, and she said, "Well, you know, he ran as an outsider, and most of the people he had that were working for him in the campaign were very young." Even people coordinating in different states may be thirty years old. He didn't have any time before he got elected, really, to worry about what kind of government he was going to put together. Carter took a personal hand in putting his cabinet together. Decided who he wanted in his cabinet. But then he apparently gave his cabinet officers pretty much carte blanche to hire who they wanted to. She said, "Following that process, he ended up by the time he came aboard with a lot of these people that had run states for him and done other important things in the campaign and didn't have a job. And Hamilton Jordan was the nearest thing he had to a chief of staff at that time. And he had been his campaign manager, who was about thirty-one or thirty-two years old. He ended up putting those young and inexperienced people on the White House staff, because a cabinet officer didn't hire them."

HKS: Okay.

RMP: Cabinet officers looked at these young inexperienced people and said, "I've got an assistant secretary who knows more than that." So sort of by default, he ended up getting a very young, inexperienced White House. The idea was that this was going to be a new kind of administration, it was going to be open, and you were not going to have a lot of people that protected the president from his advisors. People were going to have direct access to the president. There just aren't enough hours in the day, or days in the week to function that way when you run the whole U.S. government.

Later on he started tightening up the White House and started providing some structure, but early on anybody in the White House staff could send things to the president. And he was just as loose. Anyway, I always marveled at people sending this much paper through.

This particular version is interesting because it's got a lot of changes that I made in the draft. It was a draft made at OMB and some of it was in error, people didn't understand it. Cutler, who had had a lot of support from the environmental community when he undertook the RARE II, spent a lot of personal time on RARE II. When we brought in the regional foresters for a review of the areas, he sat there and went through area by area, every forest, each of the roadless areas in terms of how the regional foresters had decided where this area should be wilderness or non-wilderness what the resources were. He sat there while the final boundaries were drawn. He showed quite a lot of respect for what the regional foresters were telling him, in spite of the fact that Cutler had come out of the Wilderness Society and in some respects was sort of distrustful of the White House. I say he came out of the Wilderness Society, he'd been with the Wilderness Society but then he had been an extension forester in Michigan.

He was highly environmentally oriented, and when he came to the Forest Service, there was real concern that he would be just a wilderness advocate. But he showed a lot of respect for professionalism in the Forest Service. The regional forester would say this or that or something, he was pretty responsive to it. Even though he might recommend a little more than the regional foresters collectively would recommend, I think the RARE II output was pretty heavily influenced by what the forest supervisors and regional foresters wanted to propose. When they went forward and people saw it, many of his environmental friends really came down hard on him, really gave him a bad time, said he had sold out, he was no longer supporting the kind of environmental things he should be. He was pretty badly disillusioned for a while out of all the flack he was getting from his previous friends in the environmental community.

HKS: Were there other issues that he would look at in detail, or was it just wilderness he felt an obligation to personally examine? It seems strange for an assistant secretary to look at details in any particular subject, rather than summaries. Sort of like Carter getting all this raw data …

RMP: It may seem strange, but the one thing that's happened since the Eisenhower administration is that you started getting assistant secretaries that have smaller and smaller areas of responsibility.

HKS: So there's more assistant secretaries.

RMP: There's more assistant secretaries and you also have the advent of assistant secretaries that have just one or two agencies. At the time of the Eisenhower administration, most of the time you had assistant secretaries covering some sphere of the responsibility. It might be administration or legislation or it might be international affairs or something like that. There began to be a grouping of agencies and putting in an assistant secretary between the agency and the secretary. It began after the Eisenhower administration, and this whole contrast between what was true when, say, Bob Long was assistant secretary during the Nixon/Ford administration, Bob Long had the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service, the Agricultural Research Service, the agricultural library, the Extension Service, and he was assistant secretary for conservation, research and education.

When Cutler came in he first had all that. Then they created an assistant secretary for Science and Education. First, they created this thing called Science SEA, or Science Education and something else that was a combined bureau that had ARS and SRS and Extension Service, agricultural library. Well, nobody seemed to like that because it was kind of a super agency. So they created an assistant secretary for science and education. The point is that Cutler really effectively only had two agencies, and that's SCS and Forest Service.

His fundamental interest was in Forest Service and within Forest Service he was primarily interested in national forests. So he had a lot of time, personally, to spend on national forest issues and particularly on wilderness area questions. He was very interested in a lot of things besides just wilderness areas. He was very interested in the whole wildlife program of the Forest Service, since he had a background in wildlife biology. He had a tendency to want to go look at areas when he reports of what was happening in areas that might be critical. He

spent time in Alaska. When the big argument occurred over a road in California, and the conflict with the Native Americans, he went out there personally and looked at that. When the clearcutting controversy erupted again in Texas, he went personally to Texas and looked at that, so he was very much involved in a broad range of Forest Service activities as assistant secretary.

When he first came aboard he had a couple of fairly young and inexperienced staffers who had sometimes a tendency to call an individual district ranger out there to find out what was happening. That was rather unsettling to everybody concerned. So after I came aboard, I said to Cutler, "Why don't you assume when you get a call from out there from somebody who just raises heck about what the Forest Service is doing, that there might be two sides to that question. And before you assign one of your assistants to go call on that man trying to figure out what happening, why don't you ask us to look into it, and get you some information back so at least you'll understand as near as we can give you what the issue is, so you're not embarrassed by making a judgment on what you heard, you might be in error." He pretty well followed that after that. I assume he told his assistants to cease calling assistant rangers, which as far as I know didn't happen after that unless it was just to get some kind of information.

RARE II then went to the Congress. It was too big a thing for the Congress to do to adopt a national bill, to decide for the whole country what areas should be wilderness and what areas should be non-wilderness, and what needed further planning. Now you may say it was perfectly logical for them to have done that, the problem occurred when you get to Congress, you had some states where the members of the delegation simply did not want to deal with it right now, in their state. It might be because they didn't know what their constituency wanted, it might be that they had an election coming up and they didn't want that to be an issue right before the election. It might be because they personally were new in the office and they hadn't had a chance to be acquainted with it. There's just lots of reasons why it was not timely.

We tried to get Congress to act on the whole thing. It became fairly certain that that wouldn't happen. Then we tried to get them to do regional bills. We might do one for the East or the South or the Pacific Northwest or something, you know, put several states together. We were concerned that if they started it off writing state by state bills, that they'd be so much different from state to state that we would end up with a very difficult to manage kind of system. The administration sent a proposal out to do the whole thing, but in the real world we're going to deal with it on a state-by-state basis. Congress really never did seriously deal with the whole thing. Then of course we had a change of administration, and we had a lawsuit from California, which the judge said the EIS for RARE II is inadequate. So here we are back into another major controversy that in some respects was …

HKS: Who brought that suit? The environmentalists who were dissatisfied with RARE II, or was it industry that brought that suit?

RMP: It was the environmentalist side that brought it.

HKS: RARE II wasn't going far enough as far as they were concerned.

RMP: No. The challenge was, in California, that it didn't adequately evaluate alternatives and it didn't adequately handle things the way they should be in the EIS. It was an adequacy of the EIS challenge. But the real concern was it did not designate as many areas as wilderness in California as desired. That's well documented, the lawsuit and the whole thing. About the only thing I can add to that is the fact that when the administration changed, there was no longer any real commitment to the RARE II EIS that had been done under the aegis of a previous administration. Yet we had a federal court decision that said that the RARE II was inadequate.

When McGuire retired (we now span the my becoming chief gap), he said to me he thought this was a good time to retire, because he said we've got the National Forest Management Act passed, we've got a land planning process started, we've got RARE II sent forward, and he said it looks like a time of reasonably smooth sailing. I kidded him after that that neither of us saw the inadequacy of the RARE II EIS, and which threw the whole idea of whether we could enter wilderness areas that were not recommended for wilderness without further planning. We had not really resolved anything as far as the law is concerned.

Selection as Chief

RMP: Moving back just for a minute to the question of the time I became chief—John McGuire, as he probably told you, had given serious thought to retiring in 1976. In fact, about the middle of our working on the National Forest Management Act, we were up on the Hill and having a cup of coffee and John said, "Do you think it would make a whole lot of difference with getting NFMA passed if I went ahead and retired?" That was the first time that I had any idea that he was seriously thinking about retiring. He'd developed lots of understanding on the Hill, and he had overcome a lot of hurdles and so on. I said, "I don't know John, look at it this way, if you retire and we don't get the act passed, we'll never know whether we'd have gotten it passed finally if you had stayed. So in my view we have a better chance of getting in enacted if you stay than if you leave, because they would respect the rapport that you have with the people on the Hill." John said, "I don't think we'll get a change of administration, but if we got a change of administration it would make it difficult for me to retire after this act passes."

HKS: He was more or less assuming that Ford would be reelected.

RMP: Yes. He said, "I think Ford will be reelected, so maybe it's not a big deal if I stay on. Maybe I can retire in the next year without any real problem." I said, "I don't know who will make it, because of the "throw the rascals out" mentality after the Watergate thing. There might be a lot of people just saying let's throw this administration out and get a new one so we can get a fresh start.

In the file I've got a memorandum that John dictated to go to the field. The gist of the memorandum is that he has decided that he's not going to retire, because he had heard some rumors that he might be thinking about retiring. That's one of the interesting memorandums that was never sent. I've got the draft over in my file, he never sent it.

That was in '76. So John had been thinking about retiring way back then. Then he decided that he needed to stay. I think John felt that he was seasoned enough, and that he had better horsepower than any one else would have in working with a new administration. In fact Cutler indicated when he went up to the Hill and met with a couple of the Senate, making courtesy calls, that a couple of them said do you plan to keep Chief McGuire. When he said yes, they said, "Okay, that's the right answer. Now we can talk about whether you're going to be assistant secretary. [laughter] So he had quite a bit of therapy from both sides of the aisle, and came in with a fairly good commitment to keep John McGuire. And it was finally in '79 that John decided to retire. I would guess it was probably 1978 or '79 before it ever dawned on me that I might be one of the candidates for the chief job.

HKS: Okay, you were deputy. Who was associate? Rex had left, were you associate then?

RMP: No. Doug Leisz was …

HKS: He was still associate …

RMP: Doug Leisz had come in as associate chief. But Doug, you see, stayed out as regional forester in California for a long time. And he had become fairly controversial in California with a new administration, because that was the heart of a lot of controversy over forest management and he was the regional forester. He caught quite a bit of the ire. In fact he had a pretty rugged three or four years there. John McGuire had wanted Doug to come in a couple of times, and he didn't want to come in. Finally he twisted his arm pretty hard, and he came in to be associate chief. But he didn't come in until several years after I'd been in there. When he came in, you see, he didn't immediately become associate chief, he became deputy chief for administration. So, I said it never really dawned on me that I might be a candidate for the chief post in those days. As I said earlier, I would have probably still been a regional forester given my druthers. When I became deputy chief it seemed like enough work to keep somebody productively occupied.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Particularly with all the placing of RPA and NFMA and the whole budget process in P&L. One thing I didn't cover at all when I was deputy chief was the whole RPA thing. That fell in my bailiwick too, you see, the whole RPA, the Resource Planning and Assessment part. John McGuire had reasoned that since that applied to all of the programs of the Forest Service, it wasn't logical to assign it to either National Forest System, or Research, or State and Private, so he assigned it to P&L. P&L had the responsibility for the Assessment. So in addition to everything else, we had to worry about giving birth to the 1985 RPA. They were done first in 1975, and 1980, and I did the '85 RPA.

So I really did not seriously consider being chief, I think until maybe 1978 there was some discussion about who might the future chief be. I looked around and thought, "Goodness sake, they might ask me to do it." I had not really thought about that idea. It didn't any more than really pass my mind. It wasn't, "This is something I ought to do, I want to go out and campaign for it, I want to lay some ground work for it," but it just sort of passed by. I guess it was in June of '79, why I heard second hand that there was some noise going on the Hill that McGuire was going to retire. Then John told me, and I don't know who all. He told Doug Leisz, he told several of us that he was going to retire. Then the next thing I knew, John said, "They boiled down candidates for the chief's job to you and Doug Leisz." The secretary wanted to interview the two of us to make a decision. Leisz I think was in Alaska.

HKS: I think that's what John was saying, he mentioned …

RMP: Doug Leisz was called back from Alaska, and both he and I knew what was happening. I'm not too sure the other deputies knew what was happening at that point. So we sat down and talked about it. I had worked with Doug Leisz in California. He'd come back, and I'd worked for him when I was on the regional forester staff, and he was the forest supervisor. Then he'd come back out as regional forester, and I worked for him for a few months before I went to Atlanta as deputy regional forester. So I'd known him for twenty-five years or so. So we talked about it, and we made a kind of interesting agreement that whichever one became chief, we were going to make it work. Mainly we were going to work together.

HKS: Are you about the same age?

RMP: I think that Leisz must be a little bit older. I'm not a hundred percent sure of that but I think so because he retired in '82, and in '82 I had just turned 55. I think he's two or three years older than I am.

We went over and interviewed with Jim Williams, who was the deputy secretary. Then we came back and Leisz went back to Alaska. Nothing happened for a week or so, I don't know what was going on. I met John in the hall; I was headed down his way for something or other. He said, "Looks like Bergland decided you're going to be chief, and he wants to see you." I went over there and met with Jim Williams and the secretary and Williams said, "You know this is a tough decision. It's really too bad we didn't have two jobs. I'm real impressed with Doug Leisz, with the Forest Service in general." He said, "We want you to be the chief, it's your choice who you want to be the associate chief." I said, "I know you spoke highly of Doug Leisz, well there's no question about it that I want Doug Leisz to be associate chief. In fact," I said, "let's put that in the release announcing the chief." So it's in the news release.

HKS: What kind of questions did they ask? They obviously had your record and they already know who you are, but any political questions at all?

RMP: No, no political questions. I'd known Jim Williams pretty well because he was a deputy secretary. He was from Florida; he was a kind of self-made person. I talked to him and Bergland. He said something like, "How do you size up the Forest Service right now? What do you see the Forest Service doing, what it might do, how do you see your function as the chief of the Forest Service?"

I said that one thing that we needed to understand is that I wasn't at either end of the spectrum, I was in the middle of the spectrum of people. If you look at the environmental side or the other side, you'll find I'm in the

middle. I also said, "You ought to know one other thing about me, you'd probably call me a workhorse and not a show-horse. I'm somewhat of a workaholic, and so I spend a lot of my time in the Forest Service in a hands-on situation. If you want somebody who's just a figurehead for the Forest Service, then I'm not the person that you want in that job. I'm not a highly visible, show-horse type of person."

I said also that I was philosophically pretty much in tune with John McGuire, so I'm not suggesting that if I become chief that I'd want to make a bunch of square corners. I said I'd been very much a part of the National Forest Management Act, Resources Planning Act, and I'm not wanting to take the Forest Service off in some direction, some kind of crusade in some opposite direction. I do have a strong feel for the land and believe it's important to take care of the land. And I said I didn't think I had an enemies list on either side of the political fence. Anyway, that kind of give and take.

HKS: The secretary himself was not involved in this directly.

RMP: The secretary was involved part of the time, but mostly Jim Williams. I went over to talk with Jim Williams, the deputy secretary. Bob Bergland was the secretary, Jim Williams did most of the talking. I recall, I went over to the deputy secretary's office, and while I was there the secretary came in. The conversation took place in the deputy secretary's office most of the time.

I went over there at least two different times, I went over there for the first set of interviews, and then I went back over there later. The same time I went over there and we discussed the thing and they said they'd selected me for the job. They essentially made the announcement the next day, I think; I think it was that quick. They said the news release was partly done and the only thing I did was suggest we insert that Doug Leisz was going to remain as associate chief and a couple of other little things. They had it practically all done at that point. Somebody else was working on the news release.

HKS: I can't get the timing straight. *American Forests*, Dick Pardo's column, says McArdle won't retire unless either Leisz or Max became chief. It doesn't seem like there's enough time for …

RMP: McArdle? You mean McGuire wouldn't retire?

HKS: I'm sorry I mean McGuire won't retire unless either Leisz or Max becomes chief. It happened so fast the way you describe it I don't know how Pardo could write that column and get it published in *American Forests*. I can't put the dates together.

RMP: Do you know when that column was written?

HKS: It was '79, at that time. I don't have that actual column here.

RMP: I think it was fairly well known some weeks before that there was speculation that John might retire. Like I said, it kind of shaped up that Doug and I were the two candidates. Then nothing happened as a result of that; I mean it was just in the speculation stage until McGuire said, "They want to interview the two of you."

HKS: This is one of the letters we got in from the field that suggested questions for you. I don't know the person, it's just a name to me. It's a little cynical. It says Carter's politics stopped Rex, that may be true, and Leisz in favor of you. I'm not sure what Carter politics, it wasn't identified, it could have been the White House itself, or …

RMP: Incidentally, I had said when the first discussion was made with me, Rex Ressler ought to be considered as one of the candidates.

HKS: He is up with AFA …

RMP: With AFA at the time, and I had said if certainly Rex was well deserving of a shot at being the chief, and that I thought he certainly ought to be considered as a candidate. I don't know if Rex withdrew himself from consideration, or how he got out of consideration. I mentioned that Rex was pretty openly against the

reorganization, though, because he was at AFA then and he spoke out against the reorganization, and he was highly visible in the fight against reorganization. I suspect whether he was candidate before that or not, he probably wasn't a candidate after that. I think when Rex left the Forest Service to go to AFA to come out against reorganization, that he knew that he was probably giving up the chance, at least in that administration, to be the chief. I don't know about Doug Leisz's situation. All I know is he had become fairly controversial in California because he was the regional forester and that was the hot bed of discontent with the environmental groups.

HKS: Looks like there could be some vague truth to what this …

RMP: I don't know if you'd say it was politics. I don't even know that my appointment went to the White House. But I wouldn't be surprised if there wasn't a check with the White House.

HKS: When John characterized his selection he said they checked around to see if there were any objections. They went to the Hill, they went to the White House.

RMP: I don't know, I don't know that process. The secretary's office did whatever was done, and I didn't participate in that process.

HKS: But presumably they'd call Talmadge or someone and say we're thinking about this guy, any problems with that? That's speculation I realize.

RMP: I know there was one western congressman. I was over there the last day when they were trying to clear it, they were trying to get it all squared away. Williams said we just had one more base to touch, and it appeared to be a congressman from Oregon. He said that this was coming out of the timber industry side. I think it was probably Ullman.

HKS: Ullman, yeah.

RMP: Who was on the Ways and Means Committee. I have no idea who it really was, but I heard reference to Al Ullman. I know that the timber industry had picked up the idea back then that I might be chief and didn't think very much of the idea. I don't know who weighed in with who. And I don't know that the Carter White House had any thing to do with it in one way or another. I never talked to anybody in the White House. Now it was Ed Cliff that actually went over to the White House and some people talked to him, or was it McGuire?

HKS: It was John. He talked to someone, Halderman's staff or something, and he said they didn't ask any political type questions.

RMP: I never went anywhere except the secretary's office, so I don't know what went on in the White House. I don't know what went on on the Hill. I was not associated with that at all. But there was this little piece in the paper that I just saw in the file that said that Peterson was probably selected because he had more time on the Hill, and more people knew him on the Hill. He was better known here than Doug Leisz, who had come in quite a lot later and then had been deputy chief for administration for a while, which was not a very highly visible position. Doug I'm sure would tell you this too, they actually had a proposal in the early days of the Carter administration to find a place to put him out in California.

HKS: I guess it's not surprising, after a little reflection, that the amount of time you spent in the interview process was pretty modest. You were well known, your record was clear. They talked to you and Leisz. They probably were not worried about which one of you was qualified to be chief.

RMP: As I said, when I talked to Jim Williams he said, "Boy, it's too bad we couldn't select both of you." He said it was a tribute to the Forest Service to have two well-qualified people fit to be chief, and that it was really a hard choice. He and the secretary talked about it at some length. So it was not any great differences in the review. I don't have any idea what tipped the cart one way or another. I've often thought that had Doug Leisz come in a couple of years earlier and had longer exposure to the people in Washington that he very well might have been selected chief instead. By that time I'd been in Washington for five years.

HKS: That's what John said, that it's who knows you at that moment the decision is made has as much to do with it as anything else. The secretary really doesn't have very many choices, I mean there's not thirty people out there, it's pretty narrow.

RMP: That's right. I'd been working with the people he checked with on the Hill. I'm sure a lot more of them knew me than knew Doug. That's not always an advantage.

HKS: If you were irascible, for example.

RMP: You could have a problem with somebody in the department, so the fact that you've been there quite a while could work against you. Anyway, I don't have any idea if the final choice was tilted one way or another. And I never worried about trying to find out.

Doug Leisz in my view was as good an associate chief as anybody ever had and was immensely talented and loyal and supportive. I never once got the idea the whole time I was chief that Doug Leisz had any great pangs that he didn't make it, didn't make the chief job. He was supportive, he was helpful, he went out of his way to be sure that things got done. Doug and I knew each other quite well, so he was not hesitant at all to go ahead and do things. In that respect he was also an ideal associate chief. I had great confidence in Doug, so it was a very easy working relationship.

When the administration changed a year later, the fact that Doug Leisz and I both knew John Crowell was helpful. We both had known John Crowell for a long time in California, and that was helpful in working through some things when John came aboard. But Doug's talents were really multifaceted. Early in the Reagan administration, we were approached with the idea that Penzoil Company might consider donating some land in New Mexico to us.

Penzoil Land Gift

HKS: I don't know about that.

RMP: It turned out to be the largest donation in the history of the Forest Service, something over a hundred thousand acres and worth somewhere around $50 million. Apparently, they first talked to the Park Service about donating to them. After they listened to what the Park Service said they would do with the land and how they would manage it, which included closing out all the grazing and all the hunting, why the Penzoil people said that's not their idea of the way that that land ought to be managed because the grazing was pretty much by small permits from a lot of the Hispanic people. So they came over there and talked to the Forest Service. We'd tried to buy that land several times, but we never could come up with the money. When it was for sale we never could come up with the right amount of money.

HKS: It's adjacent to an existing national forest?

RMP: It's surrounded on two sides by a national forest, so it made a completely logical addition to the national forest. If it had became a national park, it would have been a separate administrative unit, which didn't make a whole lot of sense. But this was a huge donation. It had all kinds of potential problems associated with it, including how much does it change the tax base of the counties involved? It had an outstanding timber contract to another company that had twenty or twenty-five years to run. It had outstanding mineral rights to Kaiser company. There were water rights involved, there were access questions involved, there were questions of whether the delegation would oppose it. We had a new administration that was against acquiring more land as a general principle. So there were many reasons that whole thing would have died at borning.

One of Doug Leisz's responsibilities along the way had been as assistant regional forester for lands in Region 6, and knew a lot about that activity. Earlier on I asked Doug if he would birddog that thing to be sure that we

kept the thing going and try to work it through. He did that. I was only involved about six or eight times along the way. When that came up John Crowell asked what the cash flow was going to be like if we took this land. Would we take out as much money as we put in? It very obviously was not.

HKS: At least for a while.

RMP: Maybe for as long as you could see. It was primarily high country, recreation, wildlife, grazing, and a little bit of timber, but the timber values were relatively low.

HKS: Why did they have it? Was it because of oil leases originally?

RMP: They bought it originally for its mineral values. They had drilled quite a bit, and they had found virtually nothing in the way of oil. It had some coal on it. They said to us later, they had come to the conclusion that Penzoil wasn't really set up to manage that kind of land. They had a huge amount of land out there. They had a kind of mountain retreat up in the area, too. That turned out to be extremely interesting because when they told us they wanted to donate it to us, we got all the information on it. Region 3 was working on it. We found out about those outstanding cutting rights. We said we can't take that land for national forest purposes with those outstanding contracts on it, because they allowed cutting everything above, I don't remember, some diameter, and didn't have any requirements for the disposal of the slash, and this contract had all these years to run. We said nobody will understand that being a national forest with that kind of a contract outstanding. So we said, you've got to buy out that contract. The company came back and said, "Okay, we'll buy out the contract." They paid several million dollars to buy out the contract. Then they came back and we said we needed to have some water rights to go with this land, because obviously it's going to be open for recreation and wildlife and so on. They held the water rights. You know water rights are separable from land.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: They said, "Golly, you're the hardest people we've ever seen to give land to. We try to give it to you and you keep laying these requirements on it before you'll accept it." [laughter] Then there was a major problem to work it through to get the data we needed to show what was going to happen with the 25 percent fund to those counties versus what they'd been getting in taxes. It turned out they were not going to be adversely affected with the 25 percent fund in lieu of taxes, because with the 25 percent fund they got part of the receipts of the whole forest, not just that particular tract. We had to clear that with all the delegation. When we discussed it with John Crowell he asked about the cash flow. We said there wasn't any. He said the administration really didn't want to take on more land.

HKS: That's right, this is a period of asset management …

RMP: Sagebrush rebellion and all that stuff. One thing that was really good about John Crowell that I always appreciated, John intellectually wanted to do what was right, from his viewpoint. He was also willing to listen to a different point of view. So he said, "Tell you what, why don't we have Lyng look at this." This is before he became secretary, he was deputy secretary. We put together this briefing book with all of these pictures of this high country, the elk and deer and beautiful scenery and everything else, and took it over and showed it to Lyng. John said, "I know that's nice looking land and all this, but you know the land really won't produce cash flow, and we've really got more land of that kind than we need. As nice as this proposal is from the company, as generous as it is, we ought to think about turning it down. Lyng looked at those pictures and he looked at John and said, "John, they're not making any more land like that. That land will be valuable for our children and our grandchildren." He said, "So what if it won't cash flow for a while. There's all kinds of other values there that aren't just represented in dollar flow."

HKS: The region was strong in supporting it?

RMP: Yes. The region was supporting it, and the delegation by then was willing to support it. Lyng, who would come across to a lot of people as a real fiscal conservative and so on, also had had a summer home in the Sierras. He understood high country and the value of that to the families and so on. He said we ought to take it.

John was still concerned about the stigmas in the White House, that we're getting too much land and so on. So we went back and we worked up this report. John said, "This really needs to go to the president, something this big, so that the president doesn't get blindsided by somebody's dumb question. This is contrary to what his policies are."

I'm not sure whether we prepared that letter before the discussion with Lyng or after, maybe at the same time, but Lyng said, "John, we're not going to send that kind of thing to the president, that's what he has a cabinet for. I know the president, and he doesn't want these kinds of things sent up to him." Lyng had served as Reagan's director of Food and Agriculture in California, so he knew Reagan quite well.

HKS: Is that because he doesn't want details, or because Reagan wants to be distant from them, so he could say I didn't know …

RMP: No, I think in this case he was saying this is not the kind of decision that Reagan thinks are appropriate for a president to make, that's what he's got a cabinet for. Cabinet officers make these kinds of decisions. Lyng said, "I'll tell you what we'll do. I want you to write a letter, write a little briefing thing to the president saying that Penzoil has made this great contribution of these lands, and then enclose with that a letter to Penzoil to be signed by the president congratulating them on this great gift, their great generosity. The next cabinet meeting that Bob goes to, we'll have him take that over and after the cabinet meeting he will briefly advise the president of this, and give his people this letter for him to sign to send to Penzoil." That's the way it happened.

HKS: Does that mean a cabinet member would have White House stationary so he could actually have the finished letter for …

RMP: No, no. It was a draft letter …

HKS: He would leave a draft …

RMP: … he left with the president for his people to process for him. But it had the correct address and everything else, and all ready for him to send. That's what happened. I mentioned that incident only to say that Doug Leisz had tremendous capability of following through on major things like that, as well as to help ride herd on the Forest Service as a whole. So I was really hoping that Doug Leisz would stay around longer than he did; he was there for three years, almost half of my tenure as chief, three out of my seven and a half.

On Being Chief

HKS: If it's okay I'd like to ask you some generic questions. What it's like to be chief and your management style and so forth. Then we'll get into all the issues.

You'd been in the Washington office quite a while, you'd been acting chief several times I'm sure during that time, and so the first morning you're chief, you drive to work, you walk down the hallway, you walk in the chief's office and sit down. Were you surprised at some emotion you felt? Was it the way you thought it was going to be? Did the people respond to you with deference? Or was it no surprise?

RMP: There's a difference, and you don't think about it too much at the time. I said to somebody afterwards that I was surprised how much better my ideas had gotten since I became chief. [laughter]

HKS: One day you're a peer, and the next day you're chief. You're not anybody from the outside and you've got relationships you've established.

RMP: No. I'd say the people, the top staff and the regional foresters and so on, regardless of where they might have stood on who should have been chief, really rallied around. I didn't sense any animosity or any feeling that this was not the way we should have gone and so on. We really pretty much just buckled down to business. In

fact I made the notes in that notebook, you might look at them, the first day I was chief. This is the first day I was chief.

HKS: Let the record show that these are on sixty-nine cent spiral secretarial notebooks [laughter.] {NOTE: These day logs are on file at the Forest History Society.}

RMP: Right. This says, "First day of chief, 7/2/79." It has an entry about the Alaska pipeline, about a meeting on that. Reported to the Committee of Scientists that we're working on the National Forest Management Act, some questions from the Nez Perce, CEQ's environmental message. Some fires in Region 3 on the Prescott Forest. Some SES jobs that we need to worry about. Then we spent some time talking about future dates.

Suddenly since I was chief I was going to have to worry about attending some meetings that John had planned that he obviously wasn't going to attend. I had to think about which ones that I should take on. There's a National Forest Advisory Committee that was going to meet in November. There was a SPF advisory committee. There was an October 1 meeting of the state foresters, and interestingly enough there was a September 9-12 meeting of the International Association of Fish and Game Agencies, which I now head, in Jackson Hole. There was a 22nd and 23rd September American Mining Congress. We decided then we'd better look at all the things that were coming up and not just accept things one at a time. Look in an organized way at what was going to be happening in the next years, and decide which ones I should do, which ones Doug should do and which ones someone else should do. It was a very businesslike kind of thing; there wasn't anything of any great consequence. I did two things that might have been interesting at that time. I said we really need to think about now what are the dozen things we ought to concentrate on in the couple of years, what do we really want to be about. So we developed a list of fourteen things which we called the forestry agenda.

HKS: Who did you appoint to take your place in Programs and Legislation?

RMP: I asked Phil Thornton to come over.

HKS: I thought he had retired.

RMP: No. Phil Thornton was still there. And I asked Einar Roget to go over to State and Private. The reason I did that was Einar Roget had come out of State and Private, and I knew he really wanted to pump some new life into it. Phil Thornton had been in Programs and Legislation, and was considerably more familiar with the whole breadth of Forest Service activities. Einar had come up through SCS, and had come into State and Private as an associate deputy, and had been my associate in P&L. He was really a highly competent guy, but I just thought that would be a better match, to put Einar in State and Private and Phil Thornton in P&L. See, by opening up that associate deputy job and by moving Einar Roget over, then I elevated Lamar Beasley to be an associate deputy there at P&L. So there were two people promoted as a result of that immediately. One was Einar Roget becoming deputy chief and Lamar Beasley becoming associate deputy chief.

HKS: Did you have meetings every day for the first period of time?

RMP: McGuire had started while he was chief having a little informal meeting every morning of the deputy chiefs and the associate deputy chiefs. Everybody would just get a cup of coffee and come into his office and sit around this round table and try to think about what was coming up that day and the next day and so on. He did that on the basis that it would save a lot of people writing memos back and forth to each other, being sure that we were looking at what was happening in the immediate future, and looking at how to handle it. I continued that. Then we had those what we called information sessions which were normally thirty minutes. They're still being held, chief and staff information sessions.

HKS: Every day.

RMP: Every day, 8:30 till 9 about. I think those are enormous time savers in terms of being sure that things are geared together, that are going to happen in the next day or two. You can handle things without writing a bunch of paper. Then you had what they call chief and staff standard sessions. I started a little thing which was new, and that was to periodically have a chief and staff executive session, usually away from the office, which

usually lasted a day and a half, to talk about where we'd been and where we were going. It was that kind of thing that we did to develop the so-called forestry agenda.

HKS: Did you spend much time on courtesy calls on the Hill or at other agencies?

RMP: Yes. I made some courtesy calls. But things suddenly happen. Immediately before I became chief we had had a DC-3 crash on the Nez Perce forest that killed several people, and we had a follow up investigation of that…

HKS: Was that a Forest Service plane?

RMP: That was a Forest Service plane, a DC-3 lost one engine and when they put power to the other to try to compensate for the loss of that one engine they lost the second engine. They tried to land in a stream and the airplane split open and several people were killed. I had all kinds of information on the Nez Perce DC-3 accident that I wrote down. We had taken action to ground all aircraft and check for fire detection and extinguisher systems for that kind of aircraft and so on. Then I met with the secretary's office and others. I didn't make a bunch of courtesy calls on the Hill, mostly just by the phone because I knew all those people. I didn't feel the need to go up there. Here are some of my hieroglyphics that show alternatives for who should replace me in P&L.

HKS: Okay, then the …

RMP: Immediately I was thinking about the whole Forest Service. So I did some pluses and minuses, and you can see I ended up looking at three, these three checks are the three major options. And one was Einar Roget who was my associate versus me and Beasley versus Roget, and one was Tom Nelson coming over to my job, and Hauser versus Nelson, and there was Thornton versus me and Roget versus Thornton, and Beasley versus Roget, which is the one I ended up with. If you look at my hieroglyphics there that has the most pluses on it, in terms of this evaluation, how they would work.

Then I had to go over and talk to the department and say this is the way it came out, what I wanted to do. Of course, I took some more information over there. And I did discuss this with chief and staff. I did talk to each one of the deputies separately. Mainly that was my little hieroglyphics trying to figure out what were the pros and cons of doing it. But I didn't feel the need to make any square corners.

I obviously felt that there ought to be some changes made. Somebody said to me at that time, you get all kinds of advice, somebody said you ought to rearrange the office, rearrange where the desk is and just change all the fixtures around, just change things to let everybody know there's a new chief. Well that seemed sort of superficial to me, I didn't see any reason to do all that so, I did ask Edith that, who picked out this furniture in here. She said Mr. McGuire had. I said we've got to change some of these colors. So I did do some changing things around.

HKS: Did you use Pinchot's desk.

RMP: Yes.

HKS: I see Dale's using that.

RMP: I said obviously I'm going to keep Pinchot's desk, but I didn't make any great many changes.

Here's this thing we called the forestry agenda that was developed. I sent it to each one of the regional foresters and said here's a number of things that seems to me we need to concentrate on. We'd had a RF&D meeting, incidentally, in connection with the change of the chiefs.

HKS: Interesting, in relation to what recently happened, item number 9 is "continued forest leadership in international forestry." It's still increasing, the importance of that. Somebody characterized it as now there are

four branches of the Forest Service. I don't know if that's too dramatic or not, but International Forestry is obviously …

RMP: Over time, I think the critical change in International Forestry was when we took on those AID projects, and started staffing then and started building up in International Forestry. We did that in a time when there was a lot of interest in international forests. Over time we kept asking ourselves why this was part of Research.

HKS: I suppose Research caught a lot of things that didn't quite fit anywhere else.

RMP: Yes. Historically it was in Research because there were a lot of international research conferences and so on. The International Union of Forestry Research Organizations.

HKS: Les Harper and Bob Buckman were very active in the international stuff.

RMP: Anyway, that was important. After I became chief, a year and a half after when the administration changed, one of the interesting chores I drew is I spent four months as acting assistant secretary.

HKS: I didn't know that.

RMP: When Jim Williams was going out, he said that I was designated. These are the people that are designated as acting until somebody else comes aboard. Promptly when Block came aboard, one of the first things he did was to give me a specific formal delegation to serve as acting assistant secretary, which I did from before the administration changed from about, this was …

HKS: That got you better known over at the secretary's office, too.

RMP: Yes.

HKS: So you moved over there, or did you stay where you were?

RMP: I stayed in the chief's office. I went over there once a day and looked at all the mail and signed all the mail and moved all the stuff over there that needed to be moved. I was there from the 19th of January until mid-May when Crowell was finally confirmed. That was kind of a fascinating assignment, because we were seeing all of the things that were coming to the assistant secretary's desk from other agencies. It gave you a chance to compare what kind of staff work the Forest Service was putting out versus Soil Conservation Service and so on.

At that time there was an Office of Environmental Quality that reported to that assistant secretary, so I had the Forest Service, SCS, and the Office of Environmental Quality. But you don't feel all that comfortable in that job, because the new administration is coming aboard and they haven't established their policies and so on, and you've got a continuous stream of mail to try to answer. But on the other hand, you couldn't just stop the world, so you just had to continue with whatever you thought was appropriate, and that was rather interesting.

I did one other thing. On September 8, 1980, I sent a letter to all the former chiefs and other people that I had known like Connaughton, and a whole selection of people that I worked with. I said tell me in your view of the chief's job in the past, what has been important that the chief did or did not do, and what were characteristics of leadership from the chief's level that you think were important to the Forest Service. I got back some very thoughtful things. The longest came, interesting enough, from Charlie Connaughton. He said, "Your circular selecting ideas on characteristics of leadership which would benefit the Forest Service is received. Now that you ask for it, I'm going to enclose a statement I wrote some time ago about Forest Service leadership. This is not for circulation, but I hope you enjoy reading it. After reading it, please return to me. Hope all goes well. Best wishes, Sincerely Charlie Connaughton, September 8, 1980."

HKS: He didn't want you to keep that?

RMP: He didn't want me to circulate it. He said after reading it please return to me. I did in fact send it back to him. I have a copy of it. It's a very interesting analysis of the various chiefs by Charlie Connaughton.

HKS: All the chiefs he knew.

RMP: He knew all of them. But he starts out with Earle Clapp, and Earle Clapp, as you know, is the associate chief that never became chief. Officially he is always counted as one of the chiefs. He reverted to associate chief, you know, and then retired. They never filled that associate job for a long time. But he says, "Earle Clapp probably did more to shape forest policy in the Forest Service than any man except Pinchot. It is a tremendous distinction for any man, but for quiet, studious introverts like Clapp it's doubly remarkable. Clapp's great ability was as a planner, thinker, and organizer, these traits coupled with courage of conviction and of action made him a remarkable force in American forestry which is often not appreciated."

HKS: There are twenty cartons of Clapp's papers in the National Archives. This includes some rather lengthy episodes on Forest Service issues. He was going to write a book, I guess.

RMP: Then he talked about Chief Stuart. This was apparently typed by Connaughton himself, because it's got all kinds of strikeovers and places where he didn't push the key down quite far enough to capitalize the word. I think he sat there and wrote this himself. I don't know what occasion he wrote this, because he said he'd written this some time ago about Forest Service leadership. It says personalities in the Forest Service at mid-century. But he carries it all the way up and includes quite a piece on John McGuire. Quite favorable. But I don't know what's appropriate to do with this, but it's interesting historically.

HKS: It's hard to know with that.

RMP: Yes. Anyway, I did send the memo out to all the regional foresters I'd worked for, some other people that were peers of mine, and all of the retired chiefs and associate chiefs to Greeley, to Ressler. I said I was new in the chief's job, they'd seen other chiefs operate, they'd seen things that worked well and didn't work well, what kind of suggestions did they have. I got back a whole raft of ideas from them.

McArdle said to develop a list of not more than a dozen things that I thought were important to get done. Write them down, get an agreement with my staff that these are important things and communicate them throughout the organization, so that there would be no question about what I was up to. So I wouldn't lose momentum. This forestry agenda then was published and went to all of the regional foresters, and I asked them to look at their work programs the following year or two and see how many of these they could address. The first few years we regularly tracked progress in this list of items.

HKS: Did you reexamine those from time to time to see if they were still valid, or maybe some should be changed?

RMP: We redid it about once a year, to try to change things around. But quite a few of the things were fairly standard. For example strengthen internal management to get work done with intrinsic dollar and ceiling constraints. I put in that folder of yours a chart there that shows that from 1980 to 1986, we went from fifty thousand full time equivalent employees down to about thirty-five thousand. That's a full 25 percent reduction.

HKS: Is that all OMB driven or is that …

RMP: Budget and OMB. It's budget driven and personnel restrictions driven. I think that may have been the largest reduction made in an agency that size during that period of time, and expected to still carry on the same workload. There have been agencies that have dropped more people than that because they lost a lot of work to do, but the Forest Service didn't lose work to do during that period. This was a period of extremely difficult adjustment to the realities that the budget wasn't going to continue to go up and the people weren't going to continue to go up. We'd been used to since the early sixties having continually increasing budgets and people, in fact we'd doubled during that period.

HKS: In response to the environmental movement and broader issues of the time.

RMP: Just better budget planning among other things. In some respects the most difficult thing that I had to do during my tenure was to try to figure out how to keep the organization going with some reasonable quality work and with those kinds of changes in budget and people. That's where I say probably the willingness of Forest Service people on all levels to rise to that challenge was pretty remarkable.

HKS: Everything was affected with a reduction of that size, every ranger district …

RMP: Every ranger district, every national forest, State and Private, Research. There wasn't anybody left out. We adopted the idea which made it work, I think, we adopted the idea that if we took action to find out ways of doing things better and trying to keep ahead of the rabbit we would avoid a major reduction of force with all the things that that does to you, where you just have to stop and lay off a bunch of people right and left. And you've got to lay them off by the numbers.

HKS: So a large part of this was natural attrition through retirement and …

RMP: We did get approval to offer early out to people, because we reached a point where we no longer could meet the reductions by just taking advantage of natural attrition. We simply had to go down lower than that, and the alternative to that was reduction in force. I don't know if you've ever followed the mechanics of doing things like reduction in force, but you've got to line everybody in the organization by grade and by series in terms of their retention, how they would be retained. Veterans preference has absolute rights. There is consideration for outstanding performance, but basically it's length of service and whether or not you have veteran's preference. And anybody you RIF can displace anybody below them on the RIF roster. Let's say you have a whole bunch of GS-12s, and so you go down and you want to keep just so many GS-12s and you're going to dock three, and you pick the bottom three on the list, and you RIF them. They may be able to go over and displace somebody on the GS-11 list, or GS-9 list, or GS-7 list, any place they can go. And these may be in different units. So this thing boomerangs around all over the country, and when it all gets through, under the RIF system, you don't necessarily have people where you want them.

HKS: I can see that.

RMP: You have whoever survived the RIF system, and then you've got to move people. You spend more in reduction in force for a year or two than you save. So we went into this big early out. In addition to early out, we had surpluses in some regions and needs in other regions. I simply didn't want us hiring in one region when we might be laying off people in another region. In other words I didn't want us laying off a GS-11 in Region 8 when we'd be hiring people in another region.

We set up and operated out of Fort Collins what we called, for want of a better name, the pro draft. We brought all the pluses and minuses from throughout the service there. Then we made matches. Remember we've got unions at this juncture. We had, I think, the National Federation of Federal Employees, had a couple of unions anyway that wanted to be involved in this because they wanted to be sure that their rights were being protected adequately. So they went to Fort Collins and watched this, and came away really enthused with that way of taking care of the people's side of things. Then we also said if, say you're in Oregon, and you've got a surplus and that person ends up in Montana, we'll be sure the people in Montana understand that that person is being required to move there, and that it may be a hardship.

It's an alternative RIF, and that you have some understanding and respect for what they've been through. Somebody doesn't say we sent this person over there to prevent them from getting a promotion. It was operated basically at the personnel officer's level in the regions and in here with the deputy chief working with it. After we set all the parameters on the thing, it resulted in placement of almost everybody that was surplus. We ended up with a very few reduction in force. I required at that time that any reduction in force be approved by me personally. That was one of the few times I didn't delegate these things, because I simply did not want us riffing in one part of the organization and still have a need somewhere else.

HKS: I don't want to get too specific here, but you're also under more and more pressure to be hiring certain kinds of people—quotas.

RMP: One of our major dilemmas in this whole thing is that if we'd gone through a RIF, we would have lost the new recruits. The way this thing goes down is the people you lose are your last hired. We would have lost a high majority of women and minorities had we gone to a RIF system. This was the best way to retain a highly qualified younger force by allowing an early out for those that wanted to retire. Because under early out nobody is pressured to retire.

Most people that retired were in their fifties, mostly between fifty-two and fifty-six. Somebody had elderly parents, maybe they had suddenly inherited a business or property or something, but they were stuck for another couple of years until they were eligible to retire. So a lot of the retirements were people who really wanted to take advantage of that, but couldn't. A lot of the retirements were people who were quite happy to retire. Some people, I think, undoubtedly retired because they felt like their career had peaked and there weren't going to be any openings upstairs. Then people that felt if they retired early at fifty-three or fifty-four and got an immediate annuity, they could go out and get another job and between the two jobs they were better off, too. And felt that they would be young enough to get another job.

We didn't have any real criticism that doing this adversely affected women and minorities because just the reverse was true. The fact that we didn't have any new intake was a real problem in the California consent decree, because the California consent decree was entered into in a time when everybody projected an expanding workforce. It was felt that within five years we could make a lot of progress to change the composition of the workforce in California. During that five years it was expected that we would probably recruit an equivalent to half the workforce. With a normal retirement of 5 to 6 percent with the expansion of the workforce, you might change 50 percent in say five or six years. That didn't happen, and so we found ourselves five years downstream not making nearly the progress promised in the consent decree. This has led to all kinds of problems.

HKS: We can come back to that.

RMP: We can talk about that later.

HKS: Now that you're the official spokesman for the Forest Service, did people respect your privacy? Did the press call you home at night?

RMP: I didn't get a large number of calls at home at night. I would occasionally get a call from a member of Congress at home, usually with an apology for bothering me. Usually something very important to talk about. I got a few calls from the press at home, not very many. I wasn't unduly harassed. I mostly got calls at home about major things that happened somewhere in the Forest Service that someone felt I should know about.

HKS: People were informing you of something.

RMP: Occasionally it was something I needed to make a decision on, but most of the time it was information. I told people when I was traveling or if I was at home, I didn't want them calling me up just because they wanted me to make a decision for them, because I was perfectly comfortable with them making the decision. And I had said that to both Doug Leisz and later to Dale Robertson. Do not delay decisions because I am not available if it's a decision that needs to be made, because if the decision needs to be made and you make it, I'll back you up. If I feel I can't back you up for some reason, I'll give you the opportunity to reverse it. And I said there's only about three kinds of decisions that I would want to be informed on in advance and have an opportunity to say something. One is high level personnel decisions, second is major budget decisions, and third is major disciplinary questions. If you've got somebody out there that you're faced with a major question do you take certain disciplinary action, I feel at least I ought to be informed of that and have the opportunity of input if I want to. But other than that, the staff I don't think felt a great need to talk to me at home or talk to me in the field, and so on.

HKS: John made an interesting observation which I didn't follow up on. We were talking about how much chiefs travel, which is mind-boggling for most of us. He said you don't want to stay away too long, you've got to watch

out for the acting chiefs. I didn't say, well, any examples? Did you feel that way, that your acting chief might go too far? You've talked about you gave them a lot of …

RMP: No. I think what John was talking about, though, is something that I would also agree with. There's a lot of interaction between whoever's acting chief or the associate chief or whoever's running the show, between that person and the department and the Hill. You don't want to set up a situation where after a while somebody says, "Where in the world is the chief? I haven't heard from him or he hasn't bothered to appear at hearings, he apparently is not involved in all these decisions. He's just kind of an absent guy who's wandering around." You've got to be sure to be around frequently enough and involved in important testimony on the Hill, and important decisions with the secretary before somebody says he's abandoned his post. And if you aren't careful the chief could travel all the time.

HKS: There's enough going on out there.

RMP: There's enough going on out there. Now in a sister agency, and this is merely a perception, when the Carter administration changed, why the chief of the SCS, who was called the administrator of the SCS at that time, it was really obvious that he was just on a different wavelength than the incoming administration. So he apparently decided that rather than be with all this difference of opinion and so on, he would spend a lot of time traveling and going around to SCS offices and tending important events. He would sort of leave it to Norm Berg who was the associate administrator, sort of work with the new administration on the Hill and so on. Well they got so comfortable working with Norm Berg, both the Hill and the new administration, until they said why in the world do we have this other guy as administrator? So they kicked him upstairs. I don't know if you'd call it a palace coup, but a case where the associate administrator ended up taking over and part of the reason that he took over is the fact that he was there and the other guy wasn't.

HKS: Okay.

Role of Associate Chief

RMP: I didn't have any feelings at all during the time that I was the chief that either Leisz or Robertson, that there might be a coup or something.

HKS: Does every deputy serve as acting chief, does it rotate around? Or is it every time you leave you pick somebody else because of certain things coming up?

RMP: No, acting chief as a matter of importance went out when we created the associate chief.

HKS: I see, okay. So Leisz was acting chief in your absence?

RMP: The associate chief has the same delegated authority as the chief has, unless the chief withholds something from him. So the associate chief over his own title can sign anything, unless it's required by statute or regulations to be signed by the chief, then he signs as acting chief. But see under both administrations, I think going all the way back to McArdle, through McGuire's time, you really were expected to advise the department if the chief and his associate chief both were going to be gone at the same time. And very, very seldom was that done, usually only things like a SAF meeting, or something like that. When we went to the World Forestry Congress in 1978, when John McGuire had led the delegation, he left his associate chief at home. I don't know of any case where the associate chief and chief are both on foreign travel at the same time. Dale said this to me when he was getting ready to be elevated to chief, he said, "I said I've been associate chief all this time, I don't see that there's all that much difference in being the chief." I said, "Dale, you're going to understand downstream that the associate chief is still the number two person, and there's a whole lot of difference in being chief and being associate chief, because when the dust settles it's the chief's responsibility regardless of who decided it. And you're also going to find if you go to a meeting or you go to the Hill to testify it's a lot different in their minds whether you're the chief or the associate chief. And that means you've got to

be probably a lot more careful about the perceptions you're giving. And you've also got to be more careful with your time in terms of how much time you spend in different things."

HKS: The chief might ask the associate chief, like you did with Leisz, to handle certain things.

RMP: Sure. I've got a memo there that I was going to give you that I wrote to Dale when he became associate chief, a memo I wrote him about looking ahead and things that might happen and so on. This is a memo that I wrote to Dale in which I told him I was delighted to have him as associate chief, and I'm grateful Assistant Secretary Crowell and Secretary Block agreed to keep a professional in an important job and that you were approved. I said that the associate chief alter ago role is a difficult one and can only be successful by close communications, and coordination between the two of us over time as we demonstrate our commitment to make it work. Detailed written guidelines spelling out this relationship are probably counterproductive and I would not attempt to do so. I only have a few thoughts that might be helpful.

I said first it is my intent that the associate chief continue to operate as an alter ego to the chief, so the decisions can be made promptly and effectively. I'll depend on your good judgments to know when prior consultation and recommendation to me or vice versa would be appropriate. Nominations for the senior executive service and reassignment of the SES, key budget decisions, and position of major legislation are examples of types of things I would normally expect to consult with you and expect you to consult with me unless circumstances preclude it. I told him I'm not going to make those decisions either, without consultation with you, if you're available. There are certain roles which have somewhat evolved for the associate chief's office. This includes leadership and applying and conducting SES performance evaluations, review and approval of Washington office budget, including staff and review of overall management review schedules, represent the Forest Service in meetings with the department and other related to the senior executive service, leadership and overall coordination of other agencies such as Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM, SCS and so on. You should plan to continue with these. It's trying to say these are the areas that you have primary responsibility on a day-to-day basis. This ends up going on for two pages.

The place where I would agree with John McGuire is that you've got to be careful when there's a new secretary on board, or maybe a new assistant secretary. They expect the chief to personally spend some time with them. If they find out that you're off traveling to different places and so on, it gives the impression that you're not really concerned about them. Recently when Secretary Madigan was coming aboard, I was concerned because I had heard that Dale might be in Brazil for several weeks. I said, "I've heard that you are going to be in Brazil when we've got a new secretary coming aboard. Whatever your responsibilities are to Brazil, they're not there when you're getting a new secretary." So from that standpoint you've got to be careful that you don't appear to be unresponsive to the people that you report to, or you're placing their needs to learn that new job and so on in a secondary role.

HKS: I realize this varies with Republican and Democratic administrations and other factors, but in your dealings with OMB, do you do this directly, face to face? How do you deal with the White House as opposed to the secretary?

RMP: This varies with issues, it varies with assistant secretaries, it varies with secretaries, it varies with administrations. And it can change from one week to the next.

HKS: I speculated that when Bush said he was going to be the environmental president, presumably all the agencies that have environmental responsibilities would pick up on that somehow. Be sure that the president or the proper staff person is kept apprised of different kinds of things.

RMP: Yes. We not only tried to monitor what the president was saying, and what he was saying was important, we also tried to monitor what the secretary was saying. We also sent information to the secretary, proposed things to put in his speeches and so on, and even sent things to the White House for them to consider putting in the presidential statement and presidential speeches, so you're certainly monitoring this.

OMB has a multifaceted set of responsibilities which most people don't fully understand and which interface with many things. For example, all positions on legislation must be cleared through OMB. Now most of the time

during the Nixon/Ford/Carter administration we would come up with a proposed position on a piece of legislation. (You remember that we're tracking merely fifteen hundred pieces of legislation.)

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Most of which nothing ever happened to. Then you get down to the point where somebody asks for a report, they send out a request and ask for a report on legislation, or you're asked to come up and testify. In any one of those places you've got to have a position on the legislation. The rules require that a position on legislation can only be established by the administration, by a presidential appointee.

The Forest Service per se cannot take a position on legislation independent of its department, or independent of the administration. You never say this is the Forest Service position. You say either the department's position is this or the administration's position is this. Either case has been cleared with OMB, who cleared the administration is being consistent with the administration policies. Most of the time when we would do proposed legislation, we would send a draft of the report to the department and OMB examiner at the same time. The department was looking at it and OMB was looking at it.

Now sometimes you had a piece of legislation that you knew was going to be difficult to develop a position on, and you knew that the department might have some strong views on where that position ought to be, or maybe the departments knew and you didn't know where they wanted to go, in which case you did not send anything to OMB until you got clearance within the department. The department may establish different systems for clearing them. In the Carter administration, anything that you wanted to clear in the way of a position on anything had to be cleared through an assistant secretary that was specifically set up and headed by Howard York that pulled together policy analysis, budget, and legislation. They went through a detailed evaluation of anything that was to go forward, that was the secretary's position, and you had to send over option papers with them, together with an analysis of options. It was a big pain in the neck to get anything out of that department in that period.

The Reagan Administration

RMP: After the Reagan administration came in, the position on legislation was routinely cleared by the assistant secretary, sometimes maybe clearance with the secretary or sometimes maybe clearance with the congressional affairs people. But as far as the agency was concerned, you were really only working with the assistant secretary's office, and generally we sent stuff to OMB at the same time we sent it to him.

One other thing did change though in the Reagan administration. Prior to that if there was a meeting at OMB dealing with the Forest Service budget, or if there was disagreement on legislation, when people went to OMB to discuss that, the Forest Service routinely went along. During the Reagan administration they apparently decided that for these policy discussions they would not include agency representatives, so for quite a bit of the time during the Reagan administration, agencies were specifically excluded from those kinds of discussions at OMB. And this was, I think, part of pulling the administration tighter together, and maybe for more candid discussions of things, I don't know.

HKS: Could it be tricky if say Bob Wolf or Jim Giltmier, working with your staff on drafting some legislation, developed a kind of candor where you were groping for language and where you established an appearance of having a position? Or did everyone know the rules and no one ever accused you of having a private opinion? You guys knew each other pretty well, congressional staff and your staff.

RMP: Well, this gets into what you consider you ethically can do and ethically can't do. I had a pretty strong opinion that the Forest Service could not be a professional organization and work through the system to establish relations, and then turn around and try to torpedo something. I felt that was, if you had your best shot within the administration of establishing policy, and you had your say and you got overruled, that you

really shouldn't go up and say to your buddy on the staff, that's not really where the Forest Service is coming from, but that's where the department said we should go.

Now I'm not saying that never did anybody in the Forest Service say to Giltmier well this is the position that we had to take and as you might imagine that really wasn't the position in the Forest Service. But at least to the extent that I could, I said to my people I consider it unethical to lobby against a position that has been decided, that nobody's required to go up and testify in favor of a position that they don't believe in. In fact, I said anybody who's asked to go up and testify, if you can't legitimately carry that position, you shouldn't go. On two or three things during the time I was chief, I would say to the assistant secretary, I've been too involved in that during my career, until I simply could not in all candor carry that position.

For example, when they consented to close out Job Corps, I said I can't carry that position, everybody up there knows I'm an advocate of Job Corps and have been ever since it started. I think it's done great things, and the administration wants to make a change in that, and I can't go up there and carry that. They said fine. I said we can send a technical person, but I think that's an administration policy that you all should carry.

HKS: So what you're saying is the secretary or the assistant secretary should make that testimony.

RMP: If there's a policy position of a new administration that's directly contrary to where the Forest Service may be coming from and everybody knows that, the new administration deserves the right to make it's case. I don't think it serves them well or the agency either well to have you go up there when they can read your last year's testimony and realize you testified on the other side. You're going to be in a real spot then if they ask you about it. How come you changed your mind since last year? You can't perjure yourself.

HKS: Also, you're being pragmatic in this approach.

RMP: Sure.

HKS: You're not a good witness as it were.

RMP: I said I simply won't be a good witness, because my position is too well known. I did not want to carry the testimony on asset management. In talking about selling the national forest land, I said I will not be a good witness for that proposal. And John Crowell said he would carry the testimony. In other words, no animosity there. If you have a professional political interface, it's got to be on some basis that people have some candor with each other. There's also some respect there. When somebody goes up with the professional and testifies directly contrary to that position, that they have a right to reassign that person.

HKS: You have a point. You said you had a pretty good professional relationship with Cutler and with Crowell on those kinds of things, even though ideologically they were certainly different.

RMP: Yeah, in fact I kidded John Crowell and Rupe Cutler one time when they were together. I said it sure would have been a whole lot easier for me if they put you two guys in a sack and shook you up and gave me the average. [laughter] This waft between the two of you was not very easy to handle, and they laughed, and they realized that.

When John Crowell first came aboard, we visited a little bit. We'd known each other for a lot of years. He said, "You should know that I don't intend to ask for you to step aside as chief, even though I know that we have some ideological differences. But," he said, "obviously if you decide at some point you want to do that, that's your decision. I expect that we'll discuss things and we'll wrangle out positions and sometimes disagree and once we make a decision we'll go forward." I said, "That's exactly right."

So John Crowell and I had long and sometimes rather intense discussions as we went through things like wilderness legislation, river gorge, timber sale buyout, and so on. They basically were not acrimonious, they were merely pretty candid discussions of options. I would say to John's credit that he saw himself as an attorney and he saw himself in those kinds of things as kind of a judge. He would sit for hours and listen to both sides of an argument. I can remember Doug Leisz and I going over there, or me going over there with

Lamar or Bob Buckman or others, and going through some major question and sit there for two or three hours discussing it. John had lots of patience to listen to things. Now he might well be coming out different from what we wanted him to come out, but he had lots of patience to listen to the thing.

HKS: So the transition between Carter and Reagan was substantial?

RMP: Yes.

HKS: But it wasn't hard to keep track, you could talk it through, there weren't any surprises, you didn't read in the press about new initiatives.

RMP: Well the Reagan administration had a very well defined agenda. I think it was very clear that the Reagan administration wanted to reduce the size of the budget. They wanted to reduce the size of the workforce on the domestic side, they wanted to streamline things. They wanted federal land to be used more to meet a wide variety of needs, and so the Reagan administration had a fairly understandable agenda. So you didn't have a whole lot of surprises.

Asset Management

RMP: Two surprises during the Reagan administration. We never really understood in advance what asset management was all about. Reagan said during the campaign that the government had a whole lot of land that it should not keep, and they're going to sell some of that land, and put it back into the private sector. I guess in all candor I was thinking about some beaches in Hawaii that the military bought a long time ago. I was thinking about some military bases like Fort Missoula that I thought had long since outlived its usefulness as a military base.

I had in my mind all kinds of places that the government might be wanting to sell. But as far as national forest land was concerned, we had long since tried to exchange outlying pieces of land and consolidate ownership, and I never really thought that the national forest would be a candidate for selling. I was really astounded when they came out and said well asset management doesn't include any wilderness areas, doesn't include any national parks. In other words they were completely protecting all the single purpose land, which seemed to be to be a contradiction where they were supposedly coming from being in favor of multipurpose management. They were completely protecting all the single purpose land and saying that the land that was managed by BLM and national forests would be land that would be sold.

So they sent these guys over from the White House who said these are the rules that we are going to follow in outlining land to sell. They laid out all this criteria, and part of the criteria was when it was scattered ownership. I knew that the primary lands then they were going to fit in that scattered ownership were going to be in the East. I also knew that in many places that scattered ownership, like in Ohio and Indiana, was the only public land in those states. Also in areas like North Carolina. In one of the first meetings with them I said I think we've got some trouble with this criteria, if you just go out and apply it blindly, because it will say that we ought to sell land in Indiana and Ohio and in North Carolina and so on which there's going to be a great public demand to keep.

HKS: What confused me as an interested observer relying largely on the media is that Jim Watt seemed to be a spokesman for the government on some of these issues. He kept talking like he had some authority over national forests. Some of the language got a little bit wild there. Did you just discount that as rhetoric, or did this bother you too?

RMP: He was obviously the point man for this outside the White House, and he was seen as the more familiar with public land than was John Block. He became the spokesman for the government on a lot of this. That was kind of curious, because as far as the way the thing was put together, national parks were not a part of the thing, and neither were national wildlife refuges.

HKS: He used to talk about oil exploration of wilderness areas, over on the Forest Service side of the ledger quite a bit it seemed like to me.

RMP: In all fairness, Watt got some bad press. He never did talk about drilling in existing wilderness. He was talking about doing some oil and gas drilling in areas that people said were de facto wilderness. So people suddenly said Watt is in favor of drilling in wilderness areas. That's not wilderness with a big W.

HKS: The wilderness bill does allow that right? There's a twenty-year window on mineral explorations and so forth from '64 to '84.

RMP: Yes, but that was for locatable minerals. We're talking about oil and gas drilling here, and there wasn't any real indication that there was going to be drilling inside of designated wilderness areas. There were a couple of places where technically there was a lease that involved wilderness areas, but in all cases the drilling was taking place outside the area, doing slant drilling. This got into a big hullabaloo in one place, I think it was in New Mexico where drilling was going to take place outside the wilderness. If you're taking oil out from under the land you've got to have a surface lease, then technically there was a lease that was going to be a part of the wilderness, but no surface occupancy, which would have been prohibited by the wilderness act.

There were also two other places where leases were actually issued in error by BLM, because in the length of time between consenting to leasing and the lease actually getting issued, you may have a long period of time transpire. One place was in South Carolina where we had agreed to oil and gas drilling in an area. When Congress came along and fixed the wilderness boundaries, they enlarged the area and went out over that area that we consented to lease for oil and gas. BLM went ahead and issued the lease, and the area was now wilderness. We found out we didn't have something in our system that kept track of all these leases, and if the wilderness area gets expanded to take any of these leases, quick notify BLM so they don't issue the lease. But the only leases that were issued during Watt's administration that involved wilderness were those that were in error, and were reversed, as far as national forests are concerned. BLM didn't have any wilderness at the time.

HKS: Did you ever meet him or talk to him?

RMP: Oh yes, I know Watt reasonably well. I knew Watt when he was head of BOR, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and met him several times then. He was a very mild mannered guy, and fairly fit the epitome of a faceless bureaucrat. He didn't make any pronouncement that anybody worried about. He left BOR and he was put on the Federal Power Commission. He served for some time on the commission, and he left there and became a part of that Pacific States Legal Foundation.

When he came back as secretary of the interior, he was suddenly this guy that was making all these pronouncements, and it appeared to everyone as some kind of a transformation. Here was this combative guy, and I thought what in the world is going on here? Jim Watt was a very mild guy to talk to personally. We were invited over to George Hartzog's, who had been director of the Park Service during Johnson administration, I guess, Kennedy or Johnson. He had been continued as director of the Park Service during the first Nixon administration.

He invited several of us over to his house for dinner. My wife was not feeling well so our youngest daughter went with us, and so she ended up sitting at the table with Jim Watt. We came back and she said, "Daddy why is he so controversial? He's one of the nicest, mildest considerate guys you'll ever talk to. I can't imagine this guy being this controversial figure." So he just kind of went through this transformation.

Jim Watt was inclined at times to talk broader than just Interior. I was out in Nevada to the Public Lands Council. There was a big argument over how you should handle water rights. We had always followed the policy that since water rights were property rights, that the Forest Service should get the water rights on national forest lands, so whoever we permitted that land to, we would also have the water that went with it. You let somebody else get those water rights and you change the permit, you couldn't get access to that water because they would withhold the water rights unless you bought them out. So we felt it unwise to let anybody else get water rights on national forest land. Well Nevada had decided that since we didn't own the cattle where there

were gazing permits, that the Forest Service was not entitled, or anybody else, not entitled to get the water rights.

HKS: Because you weren't the beneficial user …

RMP: Because we were not putting it to beneficial use, since we didn't own the cattle. This got kind of controversial, and Watt came out to that public lands meeting, and he went down to the district manager of BLM there and personally told him to withdraw the water rights that had been filed by BLM in its name and let the permittee file for them. He agreed with Nevada law that the government shouldn't be getting water rights, the permittee was putting in the development and so on, even though in many cases the government was helping pay for that. So he made a big splash to the Public Lands Council that this was a policy of the federal government now, to have the permittee get the water rights. Watt, you know, was speaking to this group, and he'd invited all his agency heads to sit up there with him who were there at the meeting. He'd invited the director of BLM, and he invited me to sit up there with him. When he announced what he had done on this water rights business to lots of acclaim, somebody said what about national forest lands? Watts said, "It's obvious that the government can't have two different basic policies on this. I think you'll find that this is the policy of the federal government to do this." He never really asked me for a response. And I didn't feel it would be particularly politic at that moment to stand up and say we don't plan to follow this policy. [laughter]

As soon as the meeting broke up, all of the representatives from all of the regions gathered around and said, "What in the world does this mean, does this mean that we're supposed to change our policy?" I said, "Remember what Ed Cliff said a few years ago, don't believe hardly anything you hear verbally until you get it in writing. Until you see something in writing from me or the secretary of agriculture our policy has not changed. Now don't go out and tell a whole bunch of the public that we're not changing our policy, but our policies don't get changed by speeches from the secretary of the interior, even though the policy may end up that way, it isn't as of now not changed." We never did change the policy. In fact, finally BLM had to clarify the policy to say that did not apply where they were using public money to build it, and only in some circumstances, and so on. Finally that, over time, has been reversed.

Watt did at times speak out. I saw him several times over the years, and he was really pretty good for us to deal with, except that one incidence that involved water rights, Watt never openly tried to govern what was happening on national forest land. I don't know much about this but John Crowell said shortly after he came aboard, why Jim Watt said to him, "John, I know being over there in Agriculture where all those aggies are worrying about peanuts and soybeans and all kinds of things that you don't have a thing in common with, that you must feel like you're pretty isolated." So he said, "I'll be glad to provide a desk for you over here so that when particularly we've got lots of things that we're working on in common, you can work as much of the time as you want to over here." John thanked him and said, "Oh, it's not a big deal to come over there when I need to come." Whether he tried to influence a lot of policy through secretary John Crowell, I really don't know that much about that.

HKS: You said there were a couple of surprises, and asset management was one of them.

RMP: Asset management was one and then interchange was one.

HKS: Interchange, that's a new term.

BLM Land Exchange

RMP: Interchange. We had had a long-standing program to interchange land with BLM. In a lot of respects the land base in the West, specific land that was national forest versus BLM is an accident of history. National forests were reserved from public domain based on some maps of the times. You read what happened right before they withdrew the authority to reserve land, they had maps laying out over at the White House and they

were drawing boundaries and so on, and they didn't even have any contour maps at that time. They were just drawn maps, but the best thing they had.

One of the rules were that you couldn't withdraw land that had mining claims and other kinds of encumbrances on it. Quite a few places inside national forests, land that should have been national forests, whole townships were left out because it had some kind of a cloud on it, and couldn't be withdrawn. Then the big area where there was an accident of history related to the O&C lands, so-called Oregon and California land grant lands. Those lands had been granted to the railroad, as you know, to build railroads, and they were supposed to sell those lands to help build the railroad. They got into a whole bunch of problems with those, including some level of graft and so on and so forth, so finally the government bought those lands back.

Those lands had been out of the public domain at the time national forests were withdrawn and reserved. So they weren't available to be withdrawn for national forests, so really you had all those lands out there that are checkerboard lands right through national forests that went to the railroad. Then when they came back they had left BLM so they came back to BLM. So you had all those O&C lands that by all rights should have been national forest, and would have been national forests had they been available to reserve. So anyway, we had had a program of trying to interchange lands to make the better administration, and we did a fairly good size interchange in Colorado.

HKS: So that's why you've got that plaque on the wall. It's the Forest Service shield and BLM shield.

RMP: We were working along trying to do this interchange, and somewhere along the line some people learned about it. When we got into asset management, we had decided that maybe it was high time that we worked it out. I pointed out to some of our people that if you go back and look at the Hoover Commission recommendations, a whole bunch of reorganization proposals, they generally came out of a feeling that the land pattern out there didn't make sense with agencies walking over each other to get to their land. In fact in one hearing that I went to, a Montana congressman said that big cloud of dust that you see in eastern Montana every morning is the Forest Service and BLM people driving past each other to go to their land. [laughter] He said it just didn't make any sense to have the land patterns that are out there, and you've got duplicating offices and duplicating costs and all kinds of things. I said I thought it would behoove us to see if we couldn't do a better job of tidying up that land. So we put a couple of staff people to work to look at maps of areas where we had intermingled land, where we had a piece of national forest land instead of BLM land, a piece of BLM …

HKS: You're dealing with pieces that didn't make sense.

RMP: Yes, it was something we agreed would be a good idea, and we put two people to work on that. Buford, who was directing BLM, who had had a grazing permit in western Colorado, just said it's nonsense to have this land pattern, it didn't make any sense to the permittees, it didn't make any sense to users, it didn't make any sense to the county or anybody else. We really ought to do something about this land pattern.

Out of the blue somebody at OMB that was looking around for an initiative that could be reflected in the new Reagan budget came up with this interchange. Somebody did some calculations from some preliminary work that the BLM had done and came up with some huge savings that could be made if we really did a massive interchange. They were talking about an interchange way beyond anything I had envisioned.

I was on vacation, it was Christmas vacation and the telephone rang and it was Dale. He said, "Hey, we've just gotten word that the White House has picked up an initiative that came out of OMB to really put the whole weight of the president behind this interchange. They're talking about a major interchange where we might be talking about fifteen or twenty million acres, a massive redrawing of the boundaries." We talked about it a little bit, and the basic question he had was the chief of the Forest Service willing to help bring this about, or should they get somebody else to do it. [laughter]

I said. "Well Dale, philosophically we've all agreed with the idea that we should introduce some interchange, and I don't have any problem with an interchange under about three conditions, number one that it's agreed to between us and BLM, and it's not something that's pushed down our neck. Number two that we look out there

at what makes sense to serve the people and the resource and that we don't go through some kind of thing that will result in inadequate people out there to do the job, that doesn't become just a big money saving. Number three that we go through an orderly process to do this, in which we tell people what we're doing and invite public comment. If you've got those caveats, then I'm willing to take modest kind of exchange, but we didn't really know what they're talking about in terms of kind of exchange.

HKS: When you exchange with another public agency as opposed to a private corporation, does the value of the resources enter into the who gets what? I mean if you're going to swap land with Weyerhaeuser, the public deserves an equal exchange, but with BLM, public interest is …

RMP: No. We agreed, since the land is going remain in public ownership, it's not a question of values. In fact we agreed early on in the criteria working with BLM that we were neither going to talk about equal acreage or equal values, we were going to be talking about how we could change the land pattern that would make it better to administer from the standpoint of serving the public. We also agreed that either agency could manage the land, we weren't talking about the inability of an agency to manage a land, that each agency had capability. Buford, who drew the first map, really scared the heck out of me. He was really remaking a map of the United States. I mean he drew a map and said everything in the East goes to the Forest Service, and then he drew a map sort of down the continental divide in Colorado and said everything here goes to BLM and everything there is national forest. I mean he was really making a sweeping map. He said, "If we're going to do this we ought to do something that really does something, we ought not to do anything half-hearted."

About that time GAO issued a report that said that the interchange of land between BLM and national forests is bogged down. This small system that we were doing wasn't going anywhere and that there was enormous cost savings potential to having a big interchange. They estimated some costs savings, they were way outside of the ballpark. Shortly after I got a call from Dale, I got on the phone and called Bob Buford and asked what he knew about this. And he said, "I didn't propose it to the White House, it came out of apparently some discussion with OMB who knew we were doing an interchange." I said, "When are they proposing to announce this?" He said, "They tell me they're going to announce it when the president's budget goes up, which is just three weeks from now."

This provided us no opportunity to brief anybody on what we're doing, we don't have the maps, we don't have the data, we don't have anything. So we're going to suddenly tell the Hill we're going to do this and we're suddenly not going to have anything to give to them. And this is certainly not the way I'm going to do this thing. Buford said, "I agree. I'll try to see if they'll pull it out of the budget, and see if they'll let us work at it at a little more leisurely rate." Neither he nor I were successful in getting it pulled out of the administration proposal. You realize the president's budget is confidential until he releases it. So we're not going to be able to say a thing about this during these three weeks. We can't tell anybody that this is coming, we can't do any preparatory work.

Right before the president's budget went forward, of course it started leaking out. Enough people see it. The president's budget has got to be printed, they've got to prepare briefing statements, they've got to be able to brief the press and all this, and so all this stuff suddenly leaked on the Hill that there was going to be a major interchange, a major shift of national land between national forests and BLM. We started in a deep hole, with the whole idea of an interchange. We also started with expectations from OMB and from at least the Department of the Interior, maybe the Department of Agriculture wasn't really involved at that time. I did brief the secretary on what was involved, and he already knew that we were working on an interchange and thought it was a good idea. But we started in a big hole, so Buford and I had to go up there and brief the Congress on a proposal that had not been defined. We couldn't really give good examples of the size of it, the shape of it and so on.

It immediately started drawing flack from the Hill because they saw it as primarily something to save money. It drew ire from surprising points. Congressman Weaver from Oregon, who has been a strong environmental advocate and on our case on a lot of things, called me up and said, "Chief, I've got to tell you that I've got to oppose this interchange because he said I understand it may involve O&C lands." I said, "Obviously you can't have an interchange that makes any sense unless you look at the O&C lands, because that checkerboard ownership is probably one of the worst things we've got in terms of sensible management." He said, "Well on

most things I'm a progressive, but on this I'm a Neanderthal." Weaver said, "You've got to go through the National Forest Management Act planning process, you've going to end up with some of it being wilderness, you're going to have to reduce the harvest rates because you're going to protect special wildlife areas and all this kind of stuff, and you're going to substantially reduce the timber output on those lands. I just can't live with that." I said, "I must have the wrong guy on the other end [laughter]. Just last week you're giving me hell for how much timber we're harvesting and not paying enough attention to these things, and now you're saying you don't want to give us this land because we might do that." He said, "Look O&C lands give 50 percent of their receipts to the counties. I don't dare touch the O&C lands, they are super sacred."

HKS: Seven counties? Something like that?

RMP: Something like that, seven or twelve. There's a little bit also in BLM land in the state of Washington. There's several counties of railroad lands, and then the BLM has some other lands that are kind of amassed in history. So it shaped up pretty quick that all of the O&C counties, of course, opposed it because they saw it as a threat to the 50 percent, although in our criteria we developed, we said we would not propose to change that cost sharing of the counties for the land that was transferred. We'd retain whatever cost sharing was with it.

HKS: Did you need legislation to do that?

RMP: No, it's part of the package. See it would take legislation to accomplish this whole package.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: When we sent the legislation forward, one of the things we said is that we'd provide for that cost sharing, sharing the receipts to counties. Anyway we entered into a full-blown interchange proposal, and we ended up with this big environmental statement which I gave you. It's in the box, so is the legislative EIS for interchange. That's probably one of the most difficult things the two agencies ever tried to do in their lives, because you're trying to figure out something that makes sense and you're dealing with people that have a deep attachment to the land that's involved.

When we were working on the interchange and started to come down to some conclusions, I asked Ed Cliff and John McGuire to come down. I think McArdle was gone by then, but I asked the two of them to come in. We started in Washington and Oregon. All the BLM land in Washington would go to the Forest Service because there wasn't that much of it. Then we got down to Oregon, and we would have picked up a big hunk of the O&C lands, and pick up a lot of stuff in eastern Oregon, too. Just a little bit of national forest land going the other way. Then when we moved down to California. Here's the Warner sitting over there, completely surrounded by BLM, and of course the Warner would go to BLM.

HKS: I'm not familiar, what is the Warner?

RMP: Warner Mountains. It's northeastern California, which is completely surrounded by a big hunk of BLM land. It looks like a long island. Now the Warners are distinctly different from the area around them, so there was more difference than appeared on the map. But we set forth criteria that if the land was predominantly BLM with a small amount of national forest, it would go to BLM and if it was predominantly national forest with a little bit of BLM we would go that way.

Anyway we came down from Washington, went through Oregon with Ed Cliff, and he said, "Oh this looks good." Then he said, "Hey, what happened to the Warners?" And I said, "Ed we had a problem. As long as the gate swings one direction you think it's all right but you don't really see it swinging the other direction." He said, "Well I guess that's right." That became the problem with both agencies that it was very easy for agencies in the field to feel that it should swing in one direction and not the other.

We had a lot of planning, primarily at the region level, some at the forest level, trying to work out boundaries. We worked for months to finally come up with an interchange proposal that probably in the final analysis nobody was perfectly happy with.

HKS: It wasn't twenty million acres.

RMP: No, but it was a lot of acres. It was substantial. Lots of lots of places where we had two offices we were only going to end up with one, lots and lots of towns.

HKS: Lots of personnel affected by this.

RMP: We came up with a concept though that said people would have their choice. We guarantee everybody a job, we weren't going to RIF anybody as a result of this. If they were in an office that used to be Forest Service that went to BLM they could stay with their agency or they could go with the new agency. We would give preference to reemployment. Anybody who worked with the Forest Service that went with BLM and wanted to come back to the Forest Service and repeat the job, we'd give some priority to them. So the personnel part of it started working out.

HKS: The salaries were equivalent enough.

RMP: Salaries were equivalent enough that it wasn't a problem. What we really found out though, as we worked along on this, is that there's not a whole big constituency on the Hill for good government that saves little bits of money. Because a savings to OMB, which they were pushing, that meant the closure of an office in a small town that resulted in the loss of ten jobs was highly significant in that town. If you had a national forest office and a BLM office and you had a district manager and a district ranger, and you combined and you were not going to have two of those, you tended to drop probably around 10 percent of the people in those kinds of combinations, when you put the two together, not more than that. You tended to drop maybe four, five, six, or seven positions where you combined those. And you also ended up with just one office instead of two, and the person that leased that one office to you wasn't particularly interested in your being able to get rid of that lease.

HKS: On a small scale it's like closing a military base. It's nice somewhere else.

RMP: It's exactly the same thing. Quite a few people out there said, "Well, we don't necessarily love the Forest Service better than we loved the BLM, but we prefer the devil we know to the devil we don't know." And some people had great questions: they were used to BLM grazing permits; what happens when they get transferred to national forests or vice versa?

HKS: I supposed they worked a lot of that out. You set the mechanism in place for grazing equivalency.

RMP: Yes. The fees were not a problem, but the Forest Service had the reputation as being harder on cutting back grazing if there was overuse and that sort of thing than did BLM.

HKS: Do you think this was true or just a reputation?

RMP: I think generally it was true.

HKS: BLM agreed to this?

RMP: I don't know that BLM would agree to it. But if you just looked at the record, there were a whole lot more BLM ranges at that time that were overstocked and in poor condition than there were national forests, because the foresters had been working for twenty-five years to get stocking in balance with range capability. The BLM was hampered for a long time by those Taylor grazing boards. In all fairness to BLM, the Forest Service had had fifty years to do this and BLM really had a very short time to try to get into a multipurpose mold. They were the Grazing Service for a long time, you know, and managing O&C lands. BLM was not really staffed as well as national forests in a lot of cases. BLM, even today, probably is the lowest agency on the totem pole in Interior to get funded.

HKS: It used to be neck and neck with Bureau of Indian Affairs, I suppose…

RMP: In recent years there's been a lot of concern for increased education and health and so on, particularly with secretaries like Lujan who's in now. The first money in the Interior goes to the Park Service. The second money goes either to Bureau of Reclamation or Fish and Wildlife, depending on the orientation of the organization. The third money may go to BIA or somebody, and then poor BLM is down here sunken in the wind.

HKS: Denny did that chart on RPA; the Forest Service did get more timber management money than the BLM did.

RMP: The dollars per acre that were being spent on national forests were higher than BLM. One of the reasons for that is that you've got national forest lands on the average were much more productive. Buford said, and also other directors of BLM, BLM ended up with the lands that nobody wanted, ended up with the lands that nobody wanted to reserve for national forests or national parks. BLM lands on the average tend to be of lower productivity, tend to be desert or semi-desert on the average. They have the Mojave Desert, big areas in Nevada and Utah, and the also have the interior of Alaska. So it makes sense that their staffing is not much per acre. And so they've had a hard time getting funding.

HKS: And they have fewer uses …

RMP: Yes. Fewer uses in a lot of places. They tend to have more single purpose use because they had a lot of grazing land. And BLM didn't really have a recreation program during the time they were in disposal mode, up till '76.

HKS: I've been camping in the Steens Mountains. Tremendous recreational opportunities. In my mind, if the Forest Service had managed that there would have been a lot more formal campgrounds and drinking water and so forth.

RMP: If the Park Service had managed it, it would have been way up here [gestures], if the Forest Service had managed it, it would be up here, if BLM managed it, it would be here, so there's that difference in funding.

Anyway we worked through and finally submitted a draft of an interchange proposal. We had agreed to go through a legislative EIS in connection with it, held hearings all around the country on the interchange. There was just no champion for it. Even people like McClure or Wallop or any of the western senators who philosophically were interested in saving money and making the whole thing work better. The letters they were getting from home said don't do this. But if you're going to save any money, you can't just close district offices and BLM district ranger offices, you've got to get into supervisors' offices.

HKS: Yes.

RMP: When you talk about closing the Forest Supervisor's office in Billings, Montana, Custer National Forest, you're immediately in Senator Melcher's home country. Senator Melcher doesn't particularly like BLM, and he's not interested in them taking over the management of that land. So for all these various reasons I think the interchange failed, never did go anywhere. We spent a lot of money on it. It was well supported in the administration by both secretaries, Hodel had come aboard by then. We were never able to muster the political support. In winding this up and looking back, a couple of mistakes we made that we didn't have any control over is—the interchange was still too big, it was really just too much.

Assistant Secretary of Agriculture

HKS: There's three things I want to follow up on being chief. Then we'll get to issues. One, in response to a couple of memos that you showed me from Cutler, according to my idea of what good management is, he was wrong to have written those, sort of meddling in your turf. The first one didn't like the quality of staff you gave him for a wildlife issue, I think that was okay for him to say he wants better people or not. But then he got

specific. Why don't you bring Mumma in? And the other one was, you ought to try to hire Carl Reidel. I thought that was wrong to put that in writing. Papers take a life of their own. First of all, was it typical that an assistant secretary would make specific recommendations on staffing rather than "I need some help on a subject." Am I off base for being surprised, for one thing?

RMP: I think assistant secretaries who are involved on a day-to-day basis of all kinds of things during the time they are there, they observe as you would the performance of various people. They also have people that they know that they think can do a good job in our agency. So no it's not unusual for an assistant secretary to either express concern about performance in a certain area of the organization or to suggest that somebody be brought in.

HKS: I could see he'd be worried, be cynical. You're trying to go around him by giving certain kinds of advice or weaken his position or something, but anyway …

RMP: First off, in the wildlife arena you have to figure that this was very, very close to Rupe's heart, having been had a wildlife biology background himself. He was more than a little concerned about that area of activity. He didn't feel that we had done an adequate job of presenting that in the budget material the previous year. So he was expressing some frustration.

HKS: I thought the criticism, the generic type—I asked for some staff help and you didn't give me the right kind of help—was okay. But then he started naming names of people. To me that was going too far.

RMP: No. He didn't really say you didn't give me adequate help. He said I'm dissatisfied with the performance of that unit because again last year they didn't do this. This was something he had observed over time that in his view. So he was expressing frustration at that unit, and particularly even with the head of the unit. But this was very typical of Cutler. He could be real frustrated at something. I talked to him about what happened in that case and said you know, I agree that we needed a better developed wildlife/fisheries program, which we had developed. It wasn't a matter of not having it, it was a matter that the people involved at the time where more involved in field activities than they were in getting ready for the budget process.

This is one of the dilemmas you have in Washington. Most of the people that come to Washington are really field oriented people. Particularly during the field season, there's a great tendency for everyone to want to be out in the field and see what's happening and see how the activity's going on. They may give fairly low priority to the budget process, which they see as just putting a bunch of numbers together. Not recognizing that that has a great amount to do ultimately with their ability to carry out the program. So I talked to him about that and said you can bet that as we get ready for the next budget process, I'm going to ground those people and make sure that they spend adequate time in putting together adequate material for use in the budget process. I'll take responsibility to see that it happens. That was satisfactory to him, and so that ended that.

In the other case, I talked quite candidly with him about openings I saw coming up in the Forest Service and about Carl Reidel's capability and what I thought his strengths were and were he might fit in and so on. I said I wasn't sure that Carl Reidel was even interested in one of these jobs anyway. So that one sort of went away because there really wasn't a job that I felt he could be competitive in and that he would see was of the stature that he would particularly look for.

HKS: Did you have senior staff that came from outside of government?

RMP: A few. Most of the senior staff we had though would most likely come from other agencies. Now we did offer jobs and did bring in some people. We brought Petoskey in from Michigan to be director of wildlife. We brought in Einar Roget from the Soil Conservation Service, as I mentioned. We brought in several people from the Bureau of Land Management. We offered jobs in State and Private to several state foresters at one time or another. It's extremely difficult to do that, to get people from state government and sometimes other agencies that are mid-career, because of the way the retirement systems work.

HKS: Sure, there are practical questions.

RMP: And so what we finally ended up doing in most cases was getting something on their IPA, under Intergovernmental Personnel Act. That's the way we got Pete Petoskey, was under an IPA. But I had no aversion to bringing somebody in. Knowing that individual quite well in this case and knowing what that person would likely want to do and what kind of jobs we had coming up, I just didn't see any match.

HKS: I wasn't questioning whether Carl would have been right. I notice you have the original in your files.

RMP: Yes. That was a very sensitive kind of memorandum.

HKS: I could see that.

RMP: So I followed the system that John McGuire started. That's in a folder marked Chief Forest Service, and it has some things that McGuire left in it, as you saw. Quite sensitive memorandums like that were generally handed to me directly, and I just stuck them in that file, and didn't send them to the general file. I didn't want them circulating around. But there were some of the same kind of requests from other assistant secretaries.

HKS: It wouldn't have surprised me if Crowell had sent you a memo like that.

RMP: John Crowell? Crowell was really not one to get involved directly in personnel. There were about two or three occasions where he also expressed great concern about the capability of part of the organization, including some people. In one case he wanted to make a change and bring in somebody particularly, and so on. We were able to work that out to everybody's satisfaction without the necessity of doing what he had originally thought. In all those cases I assumed that the assistant secretary had a perfect right to be concerned, and I had a responsibility of trying to figure out how to channel resources in a way that was responsive to his concern but without necessarily displacing people.

HKS: He's your boss, I understand that, but I was surprised to see how specific the memo was, I was surprised to see the memo rather than waiting for the next time he saw you, sort of off the record. Paper takes on a life of it's own. I don't want to dwell on that, you've answered the question thoroughly.

Your retirement. Everyone retires, but how did you pick the time? Was it set that after a certain age, if everything was going okay, you'd retire? Or did it sort of evolve as the time grew near?

Choosing Retirement Date

RMP: When I became chief, somebody asked me how long I was going to work, because I was almost fifty-two. He kidded me about how long I was going to work, and I told him I'd checked back and there'd been ten chiefs in seventy-five years, I was the eleventh chief so it obviously means that the average tenure is seven and a half years, and I never wanted to be below average. So I told him he could expect that I'd work about seven and a half years.

I also had followed the philosophy that you can stay too long in a job. Going back to that national study that I did on the use of engineering skills by the Forest Service, I discovered that where you had some of your very worse problems in terms of attrition of people, and you looked around in the organization and you found there were a lot of other problems there, there was high correlation between that and excess tenure. There's just something about being in a job a certain length of time that everybody tends to do things they way they do them. In essence you tend to get in a rut. I'd seen a lot of people who I'd felt had stayed too long in a job. So I let it be known early that I wasn't going to camp on the job or anything like that, for an excessive length.

But then in a more pragmatic sense, a chief always has to avoid a change of administration in retiring. You try to pick a good point in a new administration where things are going reasonably well and where you've got two or three people that are good candidates to succeed you. Then make the change in a way so that that person can get established, and develop the confidence of people before the administration changes. That in essence

meant that I had to look either at retiring in either '86 or '87 or had to look at staying through the change of administration in 1990, adequate time beyond that to discourage putting a political appointee in which meant to 1991 or '92.

HKS: When you talk about change of administration, would that include a Reagan to Bush, or would that be a change of party?

RMP: I think change of administration is a change of administration.

HKS: You've got a new secretary.

RMP: You've got new people coming in and so on, and so there can be fairly substantial changes even if the same person succeeds himself. I had sort of fixed in my own mind that I ought to really look at late '86 or sometime in early '87 to retire. Because had I elected the other option of staying past the election, staying a year or so beyond that, I would have been the longest running chief in history. Regardless of what may be said about being chief, and it's a good job, it's an enjoyable job and there's lots of rewards that come with it, it does take a toll. My two daughters who are in the medical side of things said I probably aged two years for each year in the job. I was running pretty wide open all the time.

HKS: Yes. That big stack of your travel calendars, for example.

RMP: So for family reasons and for feeling that there was a right time to retire from the standpoint of right time in the administration. I felt there were at least three good candidates to succeed me. At the SAF meeting in fall of '86, I talked to John McGuire. I said, "John as you realize in reading the clock, you know it's about the time I've got to be thinking about retiring." He said, Yes, I've been thinking about that, I was wondering what you're going to do." He and I sat there and talked about the nuances of preparing for a change.

A month or so later I talked to Peter Meyers, who at that time was the deputy secretary who had been the assistant secretary, and told him that I was interested in making a change. I said I would presume that Secretary Lyng would be interested in appointing a professional to succeed me, and I would just like to get a feel for the lay of the land and what might happen. I guess as secret as you think things are, I wasn't talking to anybody else about this, but the word started gradually to creep down that I might be thinking about retiring.

Periodically some parts of the clientele out there get restless and decide all their problems were somehow associated with the Forest Service, and so the industry in the Pacific Northwest was making noises like they thought maybe it would be a good time to find somebody else who knew more about Pacific Northwest. I was aware of that, because they talked to each other and it didn't take long for the word to get back. Anyway, I talked to Peter Meyers in the fall and then said I'd probably like to do this next spring. We were right in the middle of this analysis of the first EIS on the spotted owl. On one hand I was sort of inclined to stay around until we got that completed, and I was a little unsure as to what the time frame might be on that and whether I should stay. Whoever took my place, one of the first things they had to do was come up with a decision on the spotted owl. I visited a little bit with Lyng on that. He said, "You know the department ought to take some of the heat on the spotted owl next time, instead of the Forest Service taking all the heat on it."

HKS: Was that typical? I always thought the department would rather have the agencies take all the heat.

RMP: Lyng was a very considerate sort of secretary, and he knew all about the Forest Service. He'd grown up in California, had a summer home on the Siuslaw Forest, and was pretty pro-Forest Service in lots of ways. He had known the heat we had taken previously when we had decided certain protection was needed to be taken for the spotted owls and so on. He just felt that it was appropriate for the department to take some of that heat. In fact, he went on a trip with me in the summer of '86 in which he got a feel of some of the heat on that. He was feeling that it was appropriate for the department to show some backing for the Forest Service on this sort of thing.

Anyway, the word sort of seeped around. I also visited a little bit with George Dunlop, who was the assistant secretary at that time, that I was thinking about retiring in the spring. That set some thinking in motion in the department. I had not said anything to anybody in the Forest Service that I was thinking about retiring.

HKS: People could read the calendar. They knew about the tradition of retiring in the middle of a presidential administration and so forth.

RMP: Yes. The first time that it got to the Forest Service, I guess George Dunlop was visiting with Dale and indicated that there was going to be a change, that I was probably going to retire. This really startled Dale because he didn't know anything about it. I had normally told Dale virtually everything that was happening in the Forest Service and vice versa. This was probably the first thing I had not shared with him. And so he was sort of …

HKS: Just so you weren't playing favorites?

RMP: I was trying not to. I also didn't want anybody to get involved with lobbying for the job. I felt that it was important that when I left everybody that was qualified had an equal opportunity for the job. Dunlop talked to Dale about whether he knew I was planning to retire and whether he was interested in the job. Then Dale reported that to me. Then I went over and talked both to Dunlop and to the secretary at that point. I think I waited until after Christmas to do that.

Lyng was very, very good in saying, "Now, Chief, the first thing up front I want to be sure that this is what you want to do." Because there was some little concern, on his part apparently, that I might feel that I was being pushed by somebody. He said that as far as he was concerned I could remain chief as long as I wanted to. He said, "I want to make it abundantly clear that there isn't anybody here in the department that's thinking that you should retire." Peter Meyers told me the same thing. Peter Meyers said, "Look, I'd be happy for you to stay as chief as long as you want to and don't let anybody push you outside or anywhere. This is something that you need to make up your mind what you want to do."

I went over what I was interested in doing with Lyng, and I said I'd like to retire this spring. I really wanted to get that EIS out on the spotted owl. I wasn't sure how long that was going to take, but for reasons of the way the system works on retirement, it would be better if I retired as early in spring as would make sense. I think George Dunlop earlier had said, "You're still young and vigorous and even though you want to retire, the secretary's indicating he would like to appoint you chief emeritus."

Lyng said to me, "Why don't you work about half time, why don't you just keep an office and a secretary and work about half time as chief emeritus?" And I said, "I really don't know how I could do that. Number one, if I were going to work half time I'd probably work full time. And Number two, I don't know how I could work half time and stay out of the hair of the new chief. I don't really want to be hanging around appearing to be second-guessing whatever the new chief does. I would be willing to be chief emeritus and to travel and do some training and that sort of thing, if it's something that the new chief wants and is accepted by you."

I went back then after we agreed about the time to do it. I said, "We have an RF&D meeting coming up in late January, and that would be a good time to make the announcement." Lyng said, "Fine, we'll have you make the announcement." Then we talked over replacements, and I gave him a memo which outlined the pros and cons and three different move-ups, including the one that he selected. I gave Dale Robertson and George Leonard as one scenario. Lamar Beasley and Hal West were among the other pairs.

HKS: So for each scenario, you've got a chief and an associate chief, too. He got three or four packages like that.

RMP: Yes.

HKS: Ordinarily would the secretary make a dual appointment, or would the new chief have something to say about who the associate was?

RMP: That would depend on the secretary. You recognize that all the senior executive service are subject to the secretary's approval.

HKS: I understand that.

RMP: The secretary's approval; the extent to which he would control the associate chief position, he probably would and did in the cases I was involved with give great deference to what the chief wants, but there also might be some people he would not consider. Or he might say he would feel much more comfortable with this person rather than that person.

I felt a responsibility to give him some packages like that, because when you move only one you don't look at who compliments somebody. For example the Robertson and Leonard combination, George Leonard is a very experienced person, long staff experience in a variety of positions and a good chief of staff type, that looked like a good complimentary package to Dale. But I don't really know, and you never know, whether the memorandum that I wrote with the evaluation of those alternatives had a whole lot to do with the selections or not, because the secretary makes those decisions. How he makes them we will never know. But I did feel a responsibility to give him some options.

HKS: I didn't check the records, but Dale must be about the youngest chief since Pinchot.

RMP: I never bothered to go back and check for ages either. He's fairly young, and the reason that Dale was elevated to associate chief was that when Doug Leisz retired, we looked around for who might be the associate chief. I talked to all the deputy chiefs about this. We had three deputy chiefs that were the same age as I was. Bob Buckman was the same age as I am, Ray Housely was the same age as I am, and Jerry Miles was the same age as I was basically. Lamar Beasley was the only one that really was substantially younger than I was, of the deputy chiefs. I recognized the principle that you always need to keep two or three people who are moving up the line that can move into key jobs. We recognized that we were in a kind of generation change; we were going on to the next crop so to speak.

I visited with Lamar as to whether he was interested in the associate chief job, recognizing that he had been deputy chief for programs and legislation for two years. He had replaced Thornton when Phil Thornton had retired. There's really no great track record of associate chief becoming chief, in fact there's only two I believe of associate chiefs becoming chief and those were John and Dale. Lamar said, "If I go down there and don't become chief, I'm going to spend the rest of my career in the associate chief's job." The associate chief's job in many people's minds is not in many respects a highly desirable job. In some people's minds not as desirable as the deputy chief's, because the deputy chief has a whole area of responsibility that's very clear. The associate chief does what ever the chief doesn't want to do. And that relationship might not always work real well. Dale and Doug Leisz both sometimes ended up doing something with very little notice simply because I got caught. I'd plan to take a trip somewhere, was committed to take a trip, already had tickets and everything else and suddenly a hearing came up and there was no question I had to go. They ended up taking the trip.

After talking to all the deputies, we decided that we needed to jump a generation, and Dale was the logical one to jump the generation. Dale did not participate in those discussions, he was an associate deputy. In fact Dale was traveling somewhere, and I called him up and asked him if he'd be interested in being associate chief. He said he'd be glad to do that. We had some reluctance of doing that because Dale had never been regional forester and had never been a station director. He'd skipped that level. He'd never been a deputy chief either. So there was some concern about jumping that much. But anyway …

HKS: On the other hand, being associate chief, you have a direct role model. But a deputy, if you jumped in too soon you'd have a lot of responsibility so …

RMP: If you're an associate deputy, it would be easier to move from associate deputy to deputy than it would be from associate deputy to associate chief, where you've got all the programs of Forest Service to worry about. It was a major jump. But that was a very deliberate step on our part after looking at all kinds of alternatives. Now Lamar said, "Obviously, if you want me to come down there I'll do it, but I'm just telling you, it's all right

with me if you go with somebody else." Then when I went over and talked to the department about candidates for associate chief, why I discussed the pros and cons pretty carefully and said that either Dale or Lamar …

HKS: Either Lamar or Dale could do the job, it was either Dale or Lamar?

RMP: Could do the job, and that it really was a very close call. In fact John Crowell, who was the assistant secretary at that time, said, "You know, as far as the package is concerned we could move Lamar over here to associate chief and move Dale up to deputy chief or vice versa. You can sit down and look at them both ways and you really can't come out with any clear advantage. If you move Dale down to associate chief, you've only got one move to make. If you move Lamar down and move Dale up, you've got two moves. In some respects, it would make more sense to put Dale on the job."

HKS: Obviously, Dale must have stood out to have moved up and skipped over those …

RMP: I don't think Dale stood out any more than some others, but he was a supervisor on two different forests, which is sort of unusual. Lamar was supervisor on just one forest and moved up. Dale moved from one forest to another.

HKS: Dale had been in Region 6.

RMP: He'd started out in Region 8 though. Actually, one of Dale's earliest jobs was in the Washington office. He was in administrative management in the Washington office when I was in administrative management, back in the early '60s, and then he had gone and been district ranger in Arkansas. Then he went to Region 6 and was on the staff, and then was a forest supervisor. Dale would have been better off careerwise probably had he been supervisor on one forest and then moved to a regional office. Not only had Dale not been regional forester, he had not served in a regional office. He moved from those forests to being special assistant in P&L, and then to being associate chief. But Dale's a very highly capable individual, so his career had been recognized along the way.

Anyway, we were dealing with the reality of needing to skip a generation, to bring some people up to the top. That was the beginning of the Forest Service having to do quite a bit of this. At the end of World War II we had a whole lot of people that came back to school, and they all graduated a certain time. The Forest Service started growing in size, so we had a whole bunch of people of that age group. You can't bring people aboard in spurts. They tend to move up in spurts. All at once you get people up here at the top who all want to retire at the same time. We were at that point where we were looking for people that were going to stay in place for several years, but they were all likely to retire at the same time. We had to look down and start picking up a new generation.

HKS: John talked about that, too, the responsibility the chief has of bringing people in so your successor has somebody to work with. You really get in a bind if you have all very senior people.

RMP: Yes, you really have to look at two things. I've always said the first responsibility of the chief, in addition to being responsible for handling the job, is to identify and train several people that can be his relief. Also to look down at the organization and look at all kinds of people that are moving up and try to identify people that can be future leaders.

HKS: Other agency heads might not feel that strongly because their successors will probably come from outside the agency. Certainly more often than in the Forest Service.

RMP: In fact we were discussing that out in Seattle week before last. The National Park Service announced the future organization of leadership, and mentioned identifying future chiefs and future deputy chiefs and so on. One of the conclusions we reached is that if you have strong agency heads, they don't feel the need to do that.

HKS: I can see that, sure.

RMP: If the number two level is also political, they don't feel that need either, so there's nobody really looking at developing the future leadership to run the organization. People at lower levels don't aspire to that job anymore, because it's not available. The tendency is they want to stay in the field; the key jobs are in the field. You get a self-fulfilling prophecy; you don't develop the cadre of high caliber people to take top jobs because the jobs aren't available. And nobody is worried about them being available. I had never really thought about it that way, because in the Forest Service it had always been second nature that you're going to worry about a future crop of forest supervisors and district rangers, stations directors and so on. That's just ingrained into you.

HKS: I was going to ask you how the chief emeritus thing came about, but you've answered that, so …

RMP: It was not my idea.

HKS: You have official status in the government. Because of the projects I've worked on for the Forest Service, I've been able to travel federal rate on airlines a couple of times, but the bureaucracy for each ticket was staggering as a civilian. That's all worked out for you; as a retiree or chief emeritus you can just call the travel agent and fly to Seattle and the plane ticket is covered by the agency. You have this financial arrangement with the agency still.

RMP: Chief emeritus is more of a title than a privilege in that I really function under a volunteer agreement. The legal way I function is as a volunteer. I don't take any trips anywhere unless somebody has asked me to go to Pinchot Institute, for instance, to do the management policies seminar.

HKS: I realize that …

RMP: In those kind of cases I have a travel authorization and travel just like any other volunteer would do. I never have had any idea that I should have an office or secretary. My former secretary, Sue, has been kind enough if I'm going to travel somewhere to a Forest Service meeting to speak to make the travel arrangements and see that I got a ticket, which is very nice. I do about four or five training sessions a year for the Forest Service, of one kind of another. This year I did the two management policies seminars up at the Pinchot Institute. I did the wilderness conference in May out in Montana, and I did a Region 9 leadership conference, but all those are specific requests. I was also the grand marshal at the Cody's frontier day parade, recognizing the centennial of the Forest Service. That I did completely on my own expenses, I figured that was a sort of personal thing. They took care of some of the local expenses, but the Forest Service wasn't involved in any of the cost of that. I will also be on the program of the centennial next month.

HKS: In Colorado.

RMP: In Colorado, along with John McGuire. In fact, if I had thought about the idea of a chief emeritus, John McGuire would certainly be one, and certainly Ed Cliff and McArdle before that were probably more deserving of the title than I was. I never thought of that.

HKS: But you used them for a sounding board sometime anyway.

RMP: Oh yes. In fact, I asked Ed Cliff one time to go make a speech to CCC alumni. They had asked me to come speak and I couldn't work it into my schedule. I thought, "By golly, the guy who would do a bang-up job at a CCC alumni organization, and who knows more about the CCCs than I'll ever know, is Ed Cliff." I asked Ed to go and represent me and make the presentation to the CCC alumni association, which he did. He was, as you would expect, tremendously well received.

So yes, all of the former chiefs have historically given some help. Before we had the volunteer authority it was more difficult to do, because you didn't have authority to pay them or pay their expenses.

HKS: You've given a couple of examples of what you've done. You talked about how you advocated against the appointment of …

RMP: Jim Cason.

HKS: Cason. Why don't you just describe what happened?

International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

RMP: The first thing about that was that that was something I reluctantly decided to do. I didn't relish the idea of opposing a president's appointee, I'd never done that before. Probably never do it again. But when I read in the paper that this person was likely to be appointed, I thought well all I know about that person means that would be a disastrous appointment, particularly at this point in time. Obviously, the president doesn't really know the qualifications of this person and doesn't know the things he was involved in, otherwise he would never have appointed him to that job. Somebody else has to be behind this.

I was trying to figure out what I should do about this if anything. Of course, by then I was the executive vice president of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. When you're in that kind of a job, you can't really do things independently of your organization. There's some people who think you have two hats that you can put off and on; it doesn't really work that way. I was also mindful of the fact that I would have to consider if that organization would think it appropriate for me to be involved in this type of thing. I gathered a little information together above what I already knew and came to the conclusion that I really needed to oppose him. I talked to Jack Berryman, who was my immediate predecessor, and went over the situation with him.

HKS: At the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies?

RMP: Yes. Jack was very helpful and very analytical, going through the material. He said, "You know, there is a time you have to take a stand on something." Then I called the incoming president of the organization, Molini, and talked to him at some length on the phone about the situation. I talked to a couple of other officers in the association and said I could do two or three different things. I could number one, not do anything, and not oppose him. If we didn't oppose him, if he got confirmed, which he may well have, at least we wouldn't have fouled up our working relationships with him on the part of the association. Number two, I could oppose him personally and try to not involve the association in it. They are going to probably relate mostly to my position as former chief anyway and not as executive vice president. I could try to keep the association out of it. Or number three, I could oppose him with the full weight of the association.

After looking at the material and considering it, the association said I should oppose him and I should oppose him with the full weight of the association behind me. Meanwhile, before we ever got to that point, Peter Meyers, who by that time had left the department as deputy secretary, said, "I understand that you're opposed to Cason." I said. "Yes, I am." And he said, "Would you be willing to talk to him about it?" I said, "Sure." So I lined up a lunch with him. By that time I had come up with four major things that he had decided, really about the only major things that I could find he had decided while he was in Interior as deputy assistant secretary. And in all four cases, I just could not figure that the decision that he made was consistent with the public interest.

HKS: Why did you judge these to be improper?

RMP: Let me just give you one of them, which is probably today easier to look at than it was then. We were trying to develop a way to handle the question of adequate protection of the spotted owl in the Pacific Northwest. Remember you've got intermingling land. If you're going to have a plan that involves a spotted owl, you can't do it without looking at all those lands.

HKS: Right.

BLM, Spotted Owl, and Other Issues

RMP: So while I was still chief, we tried to get BLM to work with us and try to put together a coordinated plan across the agencies. We didn't get very far. First off, they said, "O & C lands are different. We ought not to have to worry about this business." The bird was not in danger at that point, we were just trying to prevent it from getting that way. He then said, "We believe the Forest Service is using a lot of poor information." He didn't say that to me, but to other people.

So he appointed a team of biologists from BLM—there may have been a couple of Fish and Wildlife Service people on the team—to look at the spotted owl and make a report card. He asked them in particular to look for information gaps where we might not know as much as we should. They came up with a report in which they concluded that if BLM continued the way it was going, the owl was, without question, going to be threatened. They said in essence that they should join this major effort to protect the spotted owl.

Now, what do you do if you're in a responsible position in an organization and you receive that kind of information from the best people you can find—in fact the people that you appointed to look at this—and recognize that you yourself are not a biologist? You know very little about the subject matter. He was enraged that these people would come out with that kind of conclusion. He ordered all the copies of the report turned in. Apparently, he also destroyed copies, ordered them impounded, and ordered the team to go back and change the report.

HKS: The last step is pretty harsh.

RMP: I think any of it is harsh. He could have asked questions or he could have said, "I don't think you considered this part of the report adequately. You should really look at the data here." Or he could have said, "Let's have this peer reviewed." Any of those types of things. I think one of the things you've got to expect from an administrator who has people do things for him is if there's an area he doesn't have capability in, he has to pay attention to what they come up with.

HKS: That's pretty logical.

RMP: Not that he necessarily has to do what they recommend, but at least he has to handle it responsibly. Several things were wrong with that. Number one, you're not going to get those people to do you an objective job again with that kind of treatment. Number two, it's irresponsible when handling a public resource to ignore the best scientific information that's available. It's probably a violation of the law, in that you're supposed to protect and prevent the plants and animals from becoming threatened or endangered. In a responsible way, you should take advanced action. Well, as it likely happens in Washington, there's nothing as permanent as a report that somebody's destroyed. [laughter] So the report surfaced.

HKS: Disgruntled staff or somebody let it out.

RMP: Somebody probably had it on their word processor. I don't know where it came from. That's case number one. The second one, which I consider almost as bad, or maybe worse, is that when the 1920 Oil and Gas Leasing Act was passed, it said in the future that oil and coal would not be subject to location as a mineral, but would be leased. If you remember, Pinchot had the idea that you should lease oil and coal. He got into a big fight with Ballinger on the subject. Finally, Congress in 1920 passed a law that said in the future, if it's not locatable, it can be leased. But as Congress always does, they put a protection of existing valid rights in the law, and so there were a few claims around for oil shale that predated 1920.

There were some claims in Colorado that just lay around all that time for oil shale. There are no real records that anybody had done anything about them, because everybody assumed they were worthless. Along came the Synfuels project to try to make oil out of those. At some point some of those people that had had those old claims decided that they ought to try to pad those claims. Congress found out about this, and was trying to change the law to prevent that kind of thing from happening. Obviously, somebody going back and padding a pre-1920 claim that they'd really done nothing on was taking advantage of a historic loophole.

HKS: Would it be practical for somebody to tell the BLM to clean up its files? There are an incredible number of transactions. I'm not being critical here, but obviously they work on things that are active and stuff stays in back files.

RMP: As far as the record indicated, the people didn't do anything so they didn't make any attempt to file anything even if there had been clear records. That part got complicated later, as to whether the people might have done something and the records not been complete and that kind of stuff. But anyway, ultimately there was a court case where the district director of BLM figured padding these claims didn't make any sense. The local manager said, "This doesn't make any sense. This is taking advantage of some kind of loophole. These people haven't really done their assessment; you can go out and look on the ground and there isn't any evidence that they've done anything. There isn't anything in the record indicating they've done anything. This is nuttier than a fruitcake."

They filed an action in district court, which appeared to be a sweetheart kind of action in which the district judge says. "Just because BLM doesn't have information, doesn't indicate for sure they didn't do anything." The court said that BLM ought to issue some leases. Both the local BLM director and the regional attorney thought they ought to appeal that case. There was obviously a wrong kind of decision, not justified by the record. They didn't feel like a good job had been done of defending it.

Right in the middle of this in comes Cason as the deputy assistant secretary. They ended up not appealing the case even though an appeal was recommended. They issued patents to those people for all those claims, and did it for $2.50 an acre just for the administrative fee of transmitting these lands. We're talking about lands that within two months were sold for somewhere around $30 million. They paid about $50,000, so obviously the people weren't interested in mining it, they wanted the land to sell. It was high mountain country in Colorado that was extremely valuable for recreation and other purposes. It wasn't a mining thing at all.

HKS: The sort of thing that Jack Anderson would get hold of.

RMP: Sure. He did later. Not only that, but Cason flew to Colorado and met with a bunch of other miners. He explained to them how they could also benefit by requesting a transfer, but they'd need to do it in a hurry because Congress was getting ready to change the law. Maybe I'm overstating that, because I wasn't there, but he defended his action as that was the law until Congress changed it, and he was merely advising people of how they could proceed.

HKS: Did you in fact ever feel that he had any direct personal benefit from these decisions or was this just his philosophical approach to the job?

RMP: I certainly didn't have any evidence that he benefitted personally from any case. When he and I discussed this case he said he didn't think that land going into the private sector was necessarily bad. The government had too much land in the West already, and if you put that land in the private sector it was likely to be developed which is good for the economy. Philosophically, he felt that the land going from the government to the private sector was a good idea.

HKS: He's not alone in that.

RMP: I don't object to the idea that maybe it was all right for the land to go into the private sector, but that land belonged to all the public. They should have paid a fair market price for it. They used a loophole in the law and a poor defense of the government position. The defense should have been on the part of protecting the public interest, which is what he was responsible for.

HKS: If there hadn't been this special mineral or oil and gas, if it were just public land, would it have been sold at an appraised price? Is there a procedure for setting value on public lands in general?

RMP: Sure, you appraise it.

HKS: But it had a special category, that was the loophole.

RMP: Yes. It was sold at just the cost of transferring it, two and a half dollars an acre, which was really obviously less than the government is going to have to spend to do the job. There was an old, old formula that they used. They did negotiate with people and got some special provisions in the transfer. I was equally concerned about his activity in connection with the spotted owl, because I knew one of the first things he'd find when he reached Agriculture was that the spotted owl was going to be a big problem.

HKS: Let's make sure this is on the record. You were opposing this because he was about to move into Agriculture, which was in your territory. If it had been in Interior you wouldn't have …

RMP: No, I'd probably have felt the same way if he'd gone to Interior. Maybe not as strongly, depending on what his responsibility would have been in Interior. If he'd had some responsibility for minerals in Interior, that probably would have been all right. But he was suddenly going to be responsible for 191 million acres of some of the most important land that belongs to the public in the world. It just seemed to me this guy wasn't likely to use staff wisely to make important decisions in the public interest. All of his track record indicated that.

Another case, which we don't have time for, involved the figuring of royalties on coal. There had been a formula in place that was used until right about the time of the elections in 1988. They decided that the coal companies should be able to deduct certain costs before they distributed royalties based on the percentage derived from this formula. This had never been done before. It had been based on gross value, until they suddenly decided they should deduct from it. They applied regulations providing that state and local taxes would be deducted before they computed a royalty. This was just a direct gift to the coal companies involved, taken out of the pocket of the federal and state government without benefit of what I would call due process.

In that case, he said that that was really somebody else's idea. He was just carrying out the responsibility that somebody else had given him. But still his name was on the piece of paper that was signed. I mentioned earlier that anytime you sign a piece of paper you're responsible for what it says. Anyway, I had a long lunch with him and went through all these cases and went through his rationale. It was not a confrontational luncheon.

Jim Cason said, "I was working for a secretary then that felt this way. I was an appointee in that department and I was trying to carry out the wishes of the secretary. In a couple of cases the secretary or the assistant secretary felt real strongly about something." I asked him if there was any record that he objected to what was happening or that he had indicated that he believed the wrong decision had been made or that the decision ought not to be made that way. Or, in the case of the mineral thing, that the law ought to be changed because it was inequitable to give people a gift because somebody filed a piece of paper fifty years ago and hadn't done anything since, and you're suddenly going to give them that land. Was there any record that he dissented from all that? And he said, "As a political appointee you don't really dissent. I didn't have much choice but to go along."

Political Appointees

HKS: Do you think that's true, that a political appointee just goes along?

RMP: I would hope that political appointees would have the backbone to oppose things that they don't think are right.

HKS: It strikes me as strange that he would say that as sort of a rationale.

RMP: Well political appointees don't have any tenure, but he was saying that as a political appointee you don't really object to the kind of things that you know your boss wants done as long as they're not illegal. Anyway, when we finished this luncheon I said, "Jim, from this discussion with you I gather that you have some capability." He'd come from a miner family, and worked his way up, pulled himself up by his bootstraps. Having

come from a fairly poor background, I would have been inclined to have been supportive of somebody who had come from that kind of background. I said to him, "It seems to me you've got quite a capability, but you really can't untangle yourself from these four cases because your name is there in each case. You signed the documents. You're now defending the actions that were taken which paint a record of unconcern for the public interests at large. I don't see how you can untangle yourself from your record. I would recommend that you ask that your name be withdrawn from this appointment and ask them to give you an appointment in an area where you don't have all this baggage. You can start with a fresh slate and show what you would do when you're not following somebody else's instructions." He thanked me.

HKS: So it was a fairly unantagonistic …

RMP: It was not antagonistic. It was very candid. I had all the information on these four cases. I spent a lot of time on my homework, and it wasn't really until I got to those four cases that I decided. I did not develop the cases, there were Freedom of Information Act requests made by other people for those records of those cases. Somebody sent me those from another organization. They just bundled them up and sent me all the record on those four cases.

HKS: You weren't acting as chief emeritus, you were acting as head of International.

RMP: Yes. In fact, I made a point of not talking to anybody in the Forest Service or in BLM about this case. I asked for no information from either agency, and I built a wall between me and the Forest Service during that period. I wasn't talking to anybody, because I did not want any indication that somehow I was acting for the Forest Service, or that I was getting inside information or anything else. So I was very careful to get my information, which was available to the public, completely from other sources. A Freedom of Information request had been made by some other organizations who got the material. I was not in any way involved in any secret information. The information I had was available to the public. After I got all the information, Jan and I were going to Richmond. I took my dictaphone and dictated a testimony while I was driving to Richmond. I had the facts of those cases down pretty well. In addition to those four cases, it's kind of scary how people can be an assistant secretary with that little background. In fact, I would say if the government's in peril today it's because there's been a tendency in the last twenty years to appoint assistant secretaries who have line authority over major agencies who have practically no background on the subject matter.

HKS: These are people that have been involved in campaigns.

RMP: That's right. Usually in their thirties, with virtually no experience and maybe no education on the subject matter at all. And they're there for an average of about twenty-two months. Paul Volkner, who did the Volkner Commission report, was highly critical of placing this layer of people above the agencies. He said they were a great potential handicap to the president's ability to carry out a program because the president couldn't possibly know these people. They were there primarily, in most cases, to get another job on their resume to get a bigger job somewhere else. They haven't held responsible positions outside. It may be their lack of progress outside that brings them into politics, and ends up getting them these jobs. I said in my opening testimony that if Cason had sent his qualifications into a panel looking at qualifications for people to be assistant secretary, they would have simply stamped it unqualified and sent it back. He had graduated from college, worked a short time for a retailer, and worked a little bit in real estate development. Then he helped run a campaign for someone that was unsuccessful. He was then appointed as special assistant to the director of BLM as a result of having received some notoriety in helping to run a campaign that was unsuccessful. From that he became a special assistant to Buford after a year or so. As far as I know there's no record that he did anything good or bad. He then became the deputy assistant secretary, and here he was going to become assistant secretary with responsibility for all the programs of the Soil Conservation Service and the Forest Service.

HKS: The analogy may not be apt, but it was almost like the stereotyped grizzled top sergeant facing the brand new shavetail out of ROTC. He's got the authority but hasn't been tested yet.

RMP: I think the difference there, though, is if this guy was a first lieutenant it would be all right. But this guy is really the general now. I mean if you think about an assistant secretary as the general officer level, and if you started running the military by putting people like that in as generals, you can imagine what might happen to

the military. This again is not an isolated incident, as I testified last year about the change in government over time.

HKS: Testified to whom?

RMP: To the Government Operations subcommittee, which had nothing to do with confirmation, but was testimony about the changing nature of government and personnel and the people in top positions. The tendency to have an assistant secretary who is young and inexperienced with no academic background let alone experience in the subject matter over an agency that is mostly headed by people with twenty-five or thirty years experience. They're going to be in that job just twenty-two months on the average. That's about as good a recipe for disaster as you could put together.

HKS: You testified as chief emeritus.

RMP: I testified at their invitation as executive vice president of the International. The chief emeritus title is an honorary title, it's used when I'm involved in training or something like that, but I would never go to testify on the Hill under that title. I think that would be presumptuous.

HKS: It came up in your testimony that you had many years to observe this.

RMP: Sure.

HKS: Tell us a little bit about International. First of all, what's its correct name?

RMP: International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

HKS: And this is a nonprofit?

RMP: It's a nongovernmental, nonprofit organization. This organization was established in 1902, three years before the Forest Service.

HKS: Is that right?

RMP: The states were concerned about two things that led them to establish the association. The fact that wildlife and people who hunted wildlife crossed state boundaries, and the need for some cooperation in management of fish and wildlife. Also there was concern about the idea that the federal government might move in and usurp state responsibility for management of fish and wildlife. But I think more than that, there were at that time market hunters who were hunting game in one state and selling it in another state. There were obviously rivers crossing state boundaries in which there were fishery problems that were common to both states. The association was established as a way for states to cooperate in fish and wildlife management. It had several names along the way; once upon a time it was called the Association of Fish Wildlife and Conservation Commissioners, I think. The International name came after about fifteen years. It included Canadian provinces that were adjacent to the West and Midwest. The organization now represents state and provincial agencies in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, plus a few other countries around the world. For example, Taiwan is a member, as are Guam, the Marianas, and the territories. It's an agency membership, not a citizen's organization.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: We work to facilitate cooperation between the states on things of mutual interest. For example, one of the major things that came about before I was executive vice president was the approval of what's called the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. This plan deals with waterfowl that nest and hatch their young in Canada and then spend the winter in the United States or even Mexico. You've got a lot of these migratory birds of various kinds for which, unless the countries cooperate, any country operating alone can't handle the concerns.

I went to work for them in 1988. I had worked for them during the time I was chief. I knew Jack Berryman quite well; in fact he lives about a mile away from here. They'd always been a very cooperative group as far as the Forest Service was concerned, although historically there are a couple of lawsuits that involve the International and the Forest Service that had to do with state and federal authority. But anyway in the last twenty-five or thirty years the two organizations have had a very good working relationship.

HKS: You mentioned in passing that your temporary secretary walked down the street with a $100,000 cashier's check. Does quite a bit of cash flow through this group?

RMP: No, not very much. What we do is collect dues at the beginning of the year. With banks going bankrupt you can't let the dues build up to more than $100,000 in one bank or you're in jeopardy. In fact, the bank that we were using as our primary bank, the Madison bank, was taken over recently. Luckily we had established a policy some time ago to not let the build up be more than $100,000 in one bank. We have a small reserve which we've kept in T-bills, or Ginnie Mae. This T-bill that she was working with was the dues that we collected last fall. When we got them we put them in a T-bill, and the T-bill matured the day before yesterday. We didn't want it to sit in that bank, First American in this case. The same day it went in there I wrote an order for a cashiers check to the Bureau of Public Debt, so she was making a check made out to the Bureau of Public Debt to buy a T-bill. It wasn't a negotiable instrument. She's our business manager. Actually we're a small budget outfit.

Below-Cost Timber Sales

HKS: Let's talk about issues. There's a lot of them and it's inevitable we'll talk about the ones that are most pressing today. You may not agree with my list but let's get started. If you feel that one's not really important or is adequately covered by an article that you wrote, let's skip over it.

I worked for the Forest Service in the late '50s on a ranger district. It was a big timber district, 44 million feet you're allowed to cut. Mainly I cruised timber for appraisal. We had the gross value of the timber, and from that we subtracted development and other costs to come up with a stumpage price for an advertised bid. We had minimum stumpage requirements. I never understood how anybody could have a below-cost timber sale. The issue won't go away. I read in things like *American Forests* that the Forest Service admits that it has below-cost timber sales and it's going to quit doing it. Is this just a fuzzy term? It's obviously an issue.

RMP: I don't think below-cost timber sales is the issue. It never has been the issue; it's really been a question of whether national forests ought to be primarily used for other purposes. You would never run any kind of a business in which you made money on everything you sold. The real question is if you're running a business, do you make a profit? At the end of the year or quarter are you making more money than you're putting out? You obviously spend money for investments. For example, the year you bought your house, that house was a below-cost purchase, wasn't it?

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Or if you went out and bought a house that you were going to rent out, you obviously spent more that year than you got back on that house. So all investments by their very nature are not returned the same year. One of the real problems in this whole below-cost timber sale thing has always been how do you consider costs? Consider the investment that you're making in many sales. You're making a sale to thin a stand in which, if it weren't thinned through a timber sale, you'd have to spend money to have done, and you might leave the stuff lying on the ground. If you do it through a timber sale, you might not get back the preparation cost.

There's been an enormous increase in the cost of preparing sales nowadays with all the requirements that have been put on in the last twenty years. Now, before you can do something in an area, you need to examine it; look at archaeological resources; do a detailed analysis of the different kinds of wildlife, and the impact the sale will have; do an analysis of the impact of the sale on streams; and go through some kind of a NEPA statement,

whether it's a statement or analysis. The cost of preparing sales, bringing in all the other disciplines that you need, has enormously increased the cost of doing business. This is probably good, although I think sometimes more money is being spent on the documentation in some cases than it's worth. It's almost like going to the doctor and saying to the doctor, "Before you can do something in my case, you've got to sit down and write down all the alternatives that you've considered. You've got to evaluate all those alternatives, and lay them out for public scrutiny. Then you've got to respond to all comments before you can go ahead and do what ever you were going to do." I've kidded some attorneys that if you required them to do that before they filed a brief, they would never get a brief filed.

HKS: You've made the point in your Starker lecture that if judges had to file alternative statements and EISs and so forth, it would certainly change the way they do business.

RMP: Yes. Be that as it may, that has increased the cost. But back to the below-cost business. Most below-cost sales happen in the eastern part of the United States where you're working with young stands that are just now ready to be thinned. A lot of the below-cost sales happen because we had a road system in the East and in the West in many cases that went up streams and crisscrossed streams. That is no longer an acceptable way to do business. We've tried to move the road, or to put drainage in to make the road acceptable in terms of damage to the terrain, which is a long-term investment. We're also making that road usable for the general public for several years. So there are many cases where there are good reasons for a particular sale to be below-cost, because you're making investments for the future.

HKS: I can see that, maybe it's a bookkeeping problem …

RMP: No, it's more than a bookkeeping problem, it's a wrong way to go about making a decision. The only way that I know that you can make a decision in a multipurpose framework—and incidentally Krutilla, who was secretary of the Wilderness Society and has written this big book on multipurpose economics, agrees with this—is to look at alternate management strategies for a piece of land, and decide you want to produce this mix of values. Now how do I go about producing that mix of values? And what are the costs and benefits of producing that mix of values? Part of them are monetary and part of them are nonmonetary. Then you decide the best way to produce this mix of values is to go at it a particular way. I will get the most the maximum benefit by going after it this way instead of the other way.

If you get more benefit by not making a timber sale at all, you're not going to make a sale regardless of whether or not it turns a profit. There are places where, in my view, the Forest Service might be making timber sales that show a positive cash flow that we should not be making the sale. It may mean damage to other values that more than offset whatever income may come from the sales. In fact, the major controversy in the United States today is not in areas of below-cost sales but in areas where sales are highly profitable.

HKS: That's right, Region 6.

RMP: In Region 6. So the primary issue here is not below-cost sales. The primary issue here always has been the whole question of how do you evaluate management alternatives for forests?

HKS: I always felt it was unfortunate, working in Region 6, that timber had to pay for everything. Timber had to pay for the recreational values on the land so we got the access road and then we put a larger road in and charged it against timber for public access. I realize that was a source of money but I thought it was too bad that you had to do that. And yet no one has complained about below-cost campgrounds, or below-cost wilderness areas, or below-cost fishing. Why does the government have to make money? It's here to serve the public, and it's kind of a bum rap.

RMP: I think the government ought not to be giving away resources below fair market value because then you're giving it to one person and not another. If the government is selling timber below what it's worth on the market, that's wrong. Or any other commodity. I think you agree with that. Since the public owns that timber and whatever else is there, I don't see anything wrong with the road coming out of the receipts of that timber, unless it is a better road than is needed for an immediate sale. They're taking a reduction in stumpage price to do that, so they're buying that road with wooden nickels, so to speak. There isn't anything wrong with that

philosophically. I think the problem is when people start saying you've got to charge that whole cost of that road against timber, and if timber doesn't carry it all, it's a below-cost sale.

HKS: That's what I was thinking about.

RMP: That's the problem.

HKS: Everything is charged against timber. It certainly affects your management plan in terms of silviculture.

RMP: When people used to talk to me about below-cost sales, I said it would be possible to make every sale a positive sale if you're willing to buy that kind of silviculture. For example, as you move into drainage, you may look at that drainage and say we've got serious problems up here with insects and disease up at the head of that drainage. Rather build a road a mile at a time and keep the country torn up so that visitors can't get in it at all, we ought to go ahead and in one contract, which would cost less, build a road for the next several miles. We'll log the sale, and then we haven't disturbed the stream several times. We've done this the way any logical person would do it. If you do it that way, that first sale is going to be below cost, if you try to charge all the costs off that year. But that's obviously the best way to go about it. I think if anybody sits down and looks at it and looks at the alternatives they'll agree that's the best way to go about it.

The problem is below-cost sales were seized on several years ago as a way to say the government is selling timber that they are not getting their money back from. There's an idea that you're giving away the government's resources. To people who have a superficial understanding of what is happening, it does look like the government is giving away government resources.

HKS: Do I remember correctly that GAO has agreed that there's been some below-cost timber sales?

RMP: There's always below-cost sales, I don't think anybody has ever argued against that. I wouldn't argue that there haven't been some below-cost sales, there have probably been. There have been some sales made that shouldn't have been made. I went to Region 1 a couple of years before I retired. I looked at what they were doing to get access to an area and looked at the timber that was there and investments that were made and said, "This doesn't make sense."

HKS: You're talking about the Bitterroot.

RMP: Yes. So there's obviously places where the Forest Service timber sales level is higher than it should be, if you look at all the values. But you'll never find that if you just look at below-cost statistics. The Forest Service may have been selling timber in places it should not have been sold, where the values were positive.

There is another part of that equation. There was a below-cost timber sale symposium about three years ago, Joel Fisher, who worked for RFF for a long time, went. He sat there and listened to it for a while and near the end of the conference he said, "Do you realize that everybody is shifting sides on this question? That one time the timber industry said we ought not to be considering all these other values. Primary criteria for managing the forests ought to be how much timber there is and how much it costs and the pure economics. The road ought to be this size for that sale, that sort of thing. And the environmentalists are saying, 'No, you ought to consider everything.'" He said, "Now you just neatly change sides where environmentalists are saying that unless the sale carries itself you shouldn't make it, and you ought to look at just the income and the outgo. And industry is saying we've got to look at all these values."

Another person in that conference said, "Environmental groups are going to rue the day that they pushed the question of below-cost sales, because two things are happening. One is that people are asking why these costs so high? They'll be doing less of this and less of that to reduce the cost size, so that the income will carry the cost. The other side of this is as stumpage prices increase, as they will, particularly with what's going on now in the Pacific Northwest, you won't have any below-cost sales, and you will have lost that argument."

As stumpage prices go up, two things are happening. In the East, the forests are growing back now to where the values are much higher. You're changing from primarily relying on just pulp to being able to get some other

high value products, which remarkably changes the income. Plus the fact that on most forests the road systems are there, so you won't have the high investment in roads. You'll have some rehabilitation costs and so on, but you won't have the high primary access costs. I think below-cost sales will disappear as an issue soon because of those things.

Below-Cost Grazing Permits

HKS: A different resource, one I know very little about, is range. About a month ago there was a PBS program sponsored by Audubon on grazing on public lands in the Southwest. It was interesting. There was a statement made which may or may not be true but it didn't jibe with my understanding; historically, the debate between the Forest Service and the livestock industry has been whether to charge market or administrative value for forage. The industry always advocated the Forest Service shouldn't charge more than the cost of administration for a range. Obviously, that would be beneficial to the livestock industry. The program said that the Forest Service was not charging enough to cover administrative costs, and in fact these were below-cost grazing permits. In addition, grazing caused environmental damage. Was it accurate to say that the Forest Service is not charging enough to cover the cost of administrating the permits?

RMP: The grazing fee that is charged has nothing to do with administrative costs. The grazing fee that is charged is embedded in law.

HKS: I understand that, but the allegation made on PBS…

RMP: It's true the cost of administering the range, but again this is multipurpose administration of the range, is not being paid for by the grazing fee.

HKS: So the market value of the forage is being met.

RMP: No. The grazing fee has nothing to do with market value. Contrary to the timber side where you are required to appraise the timber and sell it at fair market value and advertise it, grazing fees historically have been issued by whoever owns the base property. This was set up to stabilize the grazing industry in the West and to promote the compatible management of private/public land. That has a lot to recommend it if you have somebody on a particular allotment year after year. At least in theory you get a higher degree of concern for the condition of that range since they're going to be back there next year. If they overuse it, it's going to be detrimental to them. A lot of permittees have done a fair amount to improve the range by putting in water development, fencing, and so on. There are a few permittees that do a good job of stewardship on that range. I think the problem is, and it is a real problem, that there's a formula that was developed some years ago that sets up a system of determining what the grazing fees are going to be. That grazing fee has nothing to do with anything except the formula.

HKS: Is this formula set in FLPMA?

RMP: No, it's set up in the Public Range Improvement Act. I think it's the PRIA formula. That governs both BLM and national forest grazing in the West. It doesn't cover the East. The eastern fees and national forests fees or national grassland fees are set differently. But I was in P&L at the time that grazing fee formula was under consideration, and I objected to it at that time because it really has a factor that relates to the ability to pay in the formula. It's a complicated formula that relates an index of some years ago to a forage value index of today. It relates the selling price of beef at two different points in time. The way that formula works, if beef prices are not going up as fast as grazing forage values, you actually get a reduction in grazing fees, even though private land forage prices are going up.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: They're one of the costs of production. You use the cost of production in this formula. You measure changes in the cost of production versus changes in the price of beef. If the price of production is going up faster than the sale price of beef, the grazing fee goes down. That gives you these weird results. That formula was supposed to be in effect for five years. At the end of that time the two secretaries were supposed to make recommendations for a future fee. The Forest Service and BLM did go through and make a study and consider a whole bunch of alternatives. They came out with the recommendation that the prior formula did not work very well, and should be changed. We evaluated several alternatives. Unfortunately, that report from the two secretaries got controversial in a hurry because it would have increased grazing fees. They were to be based on fair market value.

HKS: Why does the livestock industry have so much clout on national forests when economically it's not that significant? A small fraction—around 3 percent—of livestock forages on public lands, most of it's fed in feed lots. The industry's been able to maintain this unusual economic pattern through all these years.

RMP: I think this is a case where percentages are misleading. There's a very high percentage of livestock in the West on national forest land or on BLM land.

HKS: Summer range.

RMP: Yes. It is an extremely important thing in the West.

HKS: A cow has to eat all year around.

RMP: Right. So if you use the numbers that people tend to use, it's sort of like saying that the water is only six inches deep on the average. You can drown in six inches deep on the average because that means it's twenty feet deep in some places. Using those numbers is misleading in terms of presenting the true importance. Grazing on national forest lands and BLM land is extremely important in the West.

HKS: And the livestock industry has political clout.

RMP: They have political clout out there. I don't agree with the Synar proposal that would immediately jump to the full fair market value. You're going to find a lot of people abandoning those national forest and BLM ranges, and you simply can't take that kind of a change overnight. One of the things that's happened in this system, because the rates charged for grazing are obviously below market price, is that those grazing permits have taken on a value. The current owners of a lot of those base properties that have a grazing permit with them have in effect bought those grazing permits with what they paid for the base property. If you suddenly try to capture fair market value in those grazing fees overnight, those people cannot do that because they've already bought that below market price in the grazing permit.

HKS: Theoretically they're paying the full market value somewhere in the system.

RMP: If they bought the base property at a reasonable price. If they've had the base property all this time, it's been a long-standing subsidy. If you sell it, in theory, to somebody else, they're going to pay you an amount of money that includes the capitalized value of that below market price.

HKS: I suppose it reflects the perceived power that the livestock industry had in Pinchot's time. The Organic Act specifically talks about timber, appraised at fair market value. That concept for timber was set up in the Organic Act, but livestock has been handled differently right from the very inception of the agency.

RMP: Livestock grazing on public land was an adjunct to ranchers in the West historically. In the early days, the primary concern was to merely get the livestock under permit, and to control the use on the range to prevent overuse. It came out of a whole historically different thing. I tried to say that it's probably not equitable for a permittee on national forest or BLM land to pay the theoretical full market price on a comparable base with private land, because they're not getting the same rights. They're sharing that range with recreationists, with hunters, fishermen, and others. They're required to bring their cattle on the range exactly when we tell them to and move them off exactly when we tell them to. They're required to rotate the cattle on the range according to

a plan that we approve. They may fix the fences and do some water development and all kinds of things. In all fairness, it's not the same if you have a hundred AUMs of forage scattered over a thousand acres as it was if you had a hundred AUMs of forage on ten acres. The costs of handling the livestock is different.

What I proposed working with our people back in '84, '85, '86, was that we discount the theoretical fair market value by about 20 percent. It looked to us like about 20 percent of costs that you could figure on the average that were attributable to the fact that you were using a public range. There were additional costs over private range. Also, we wanted the grazing permittees to realize that they were not paying a full fair market value because they were expected to share the range with other people, and were expected to undergo these kinds of hardships. We further said, "Let's increase this fee, and abolish the formula. We'll go from where we are to this new system in five years, or some other period of time, phasing it in, so that we don't bankrupt a bunch of people or drive a them off the range." That concept was supported by USDA, and I thought we had a shot at getting it sent up to Congress and that it probably would be bought.

This was a particularly bad time for the grazing industry. It always seemed like it was a bad time, in the price/cost squeeze that they were in. They went to the president, and they got to Reagan down in Palm Springs right before New Year's. He issued the executive order that said the prior formula would continue to apply. That's where it stands now. Now Synar has introduced a bill which would jump in one fell swoop to fair market value. That's in the Interior-related agencies' appropriation bill, on the House side.

HKS: To the extent that you can characterize it, is that something that the environmentalists are proposing, or are the free-market value economists saying that you should have fair market values. What's behind this Synar proposal?

RMP: I think it's primarily being pushed by two things. I think it's being pushed by environmental groups who figure that this use of the range by the grazing interests is detrimental to the range. Certainly in some places it has been, but in a lot of places not. It's also being pushed by the fact that the Congress now is trying to find some money. We talked to the timber-related agencies appropriations staff day before yesterday, and under the budget agreement they've only got so much money they can use in their pie. If they can raise some grazing fees, they can spend some more money. So you've got a new ball game there.

Congressman Ralph Regula from Ohio has introduced a compromise bill that would be pretty close to what I was talking about that we had thought was a good idea earlier. Here you've got another polarized position where some of the cattleman are saying not to raise this fee at all. Others are saying it should be raised to full fair market value. Neither one of those, I think, is a good long-term solution. The Regula solution looked reasonably good, in that it would recognize the reality that they were not getting the full fair market value benefits from the range. But here again you're talking about a long-standing situation. It's also like the fact that recreation has always been free on national forests, to a large extent, even though we believe in free market and so on in this country. I've kidded my wilderness friends that they are all for free market in other uses but ask them to support a ten dollar fee to use a wilderness area and you find them all running for cover.

HKS: What would Jim Watt say about grazing fees? He wanted to use public lands more economically, and yet the livestock industry is caught in a bind here. No matter which way they go they're being inconsistent.

RMP: I don't really know what Jim Watt would say about that. I never discussed it with him. I know that one of our problems when we were trying to get this report cleared and sent to Congress was that some of the people in Interior were adamant that this grazing fee ought to be raised. They said the reason that the costs were so high to manage grazing was because of all these new requirements that had been put on. Grazing fees would practically cover the cost of administration if those costs were reasonable. They blamed environmental groups for helping raise the costs beyond what was reasonable. We had a very hard time getting Interior aboard on this. Interestingly enough, John Crowell and Peter Meyers and George Dunlop were all for adjusting grazing fees to some reasonable amount. They felt the whole system of grazing fees didn't make sense. In fact, we had a former deputy secretary who asked us to develop a system where we would auction off grazing permits.

HKS: Economists always propose that kind of auctioning approach.

RMP: I think if you can get an equitable price system that would be fair to the permittee and the public, there's some disadvantages to the auction system from a pragmatic standpoint. After all, the national forest land is just summer range.

HKS: That's right.

RMP: It has to be a compatible kind of arrangement, because you've got to get them off national forests and put them somewhere. If you have enough people with private property you could probably run an auction system. We put out the bids on some rangeland in the East where there's lots and lots of private land and lots and lots of people who like to use national forest land. We do put it out under bids, in some cases, and it works okay. The people who get those bids have a short-term focus because they don't know if they're going to get them next year. They're not in a position to invest money in water developments or fences or any of that type of thing. The government has to handle all of that.

Above and beyond that, I think the remaining problem is that in the real world there's still some national forest and BLM ranges that are overstocked. There's been a long-standing attempt to try to get stocking down to the carrying capacity. Unfortunately, that's not easy to do because anytime you start reducing numbers in this day and age when people are working pretty close on margins, it's pretty hard for a person who has a three hundred animal permit to suddenly reduce to two hundred.

HKS: Do you have disagreement among the professionals who work in the livestock association and the Forest Service staff over what the sustained yield capability of the range is? Is the number of cattle that could graze per year fairly well-documented, or is it still, you have your experts, I have my experts, and they don't agree on carrying capacity?

RMP: You get some disagreement between professionals. I think in most cases there's certainly a consensus between professionals. The livestock industry is still able in some cases to get a university staffer to take issue with a Forest Service request to reduce the stocking. Usually what they do is to raise questions about do you have enough data, is the trend long enough, or maybe there are other ways of going about it. Certainly in some cases an alternative to reducing stocking is to increase investment to better distribute livestock, because you may overuse some part of the area. It ends up being those kinds of disagreements, because livestock have a tendency to use the better part of the range where they have better grass and there's water near by and so on. Cattle are perfectly capable of overusing a part of the range while the rest of it has lots of forage. In some cases it's a management problem of getting even utilization, it's not that it's overstocked.

The other problem that BLM has worse than Forest Service does is that if you've got a range that is semi-desert, where the moisture is very, very low, it takes an horrendous amount of time for that range to recover. It may not recover if you simply take the livestock off.

HKS: Sage comes in, and you've got a lot of things to do.

RMP: You get a change of vegetation; you get enough erosion to change the fertility at the surface of the soil; you get a situation where it may take anywhere from fifteen to fifty years for that range to improve.

HKS: I was at a meeting in Albuquerque or one of those southwestern towns where a range specialist said that most of the sagebrush areas in the American West are due to overgrazing by the Spaniards. There was massive overgrazing in pre-American times. I thought, my goodness, I wonder if that's true that hundreds of years later the range still has been locked into the sage, and can't get back to grass. I didn't know if that was true or not, but he made the statement.

RMP: There certainly was lots of overuse in the West before modern times. I'm not sure what the native vegetation was. We're finding out now that sagebrush has a tremendous range of values in forage. Some of it has very high value as forage.

HKS: Is that right? I thought it was worthless.

RMP: No, in fact some sage has very high value. It may well be that a lot of the West was shrub country originally, and that may be its best use. It may be that grass came because people burned the other, trying to get grass because that made it look like the East. It's pretty hard to know what the native vegetation was in some cases, because of the overuse and fire and other things that have happened in the West in recent years. But there isn't any question that there's still, in my view, an unacceptable percentage of national forests and BLM ranges that are overstocked. That's a relatively small percentage of the range as far as national forests are concerned. It remains a fairly high percentage for BLM simply because number one they've got a more difficult problem because of the nature of the ranges, as I mentioned earlier. And secondly, they didn't really get into the intensive range reduction and so on until more recently. The third thing, and you might as well lay it out, is that there's lots of political pressure anytime you start reducing stocking on ranges.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: With the preponderance of political appointments in recent years, BLM's state directors simply have not been able to do some things they want to do. We had great pressure coming up the line all the way to me a couple of times from a forest supervisor who was really doing his job and trying to bring stocking in line with carrying capacity. I had some people come in at one point that demanded that I remove the forest supervisor who they felt was being unduly harsh in trying to handle this problem. Of course, they didn't say unduly harsh, they just said he was being arbitrary and wasn't looking at all the information. From all I could find out, he was doing exactly what needed to be done. They demanded that I move him. I said to them, "If you want to insure his tenure you just demand that I move him. [laughter] So that went away.

I was told by a couple of BLM district managers in that same state that they admired what he was doing but they couldn't possibly do that, because they wouldn't get backing. Let me finally add, though, that I think responsible range use of national forests and on BLM lands in the West is perfectly valid use that contributes significantly to the economy of that area. I don't buy at all the Audubon Society idea that you ought to be getting rid of all the livestock on the West terrain. That doesn't make any sense. That's the best and highest use of a lot of that range, and managed properly it's compatible with a lot of uses. That means, though, that you've got to pay attention to riparian areas. We have a lot of riparian areas that need to be rehabilitated from past overuse. Cattle do tend to stay in those riparian areas.

We've got overused ranges that need some help, we've got some areas where you've now got a conflict between big game grazing and cattle grazing. Some of it's apparent, some of it's real. It primarily relates to winter range. If you have an area where you have large numbers of elk, they're coming out of the mountains in the fall. Out in the West more and more of those valleys that are privately owned have houses, particularly where there are ski areas or other mountain towns. There's very expensive development in those valleys. The land is no longer available for the elk. So you're finding more and more elk now are being pressured, and are heading for the limited public range. Those same ranges are being used for winter use by livestock. In some cases those are privately owned lands. So most of the western states now are trying to do specific work to deal with that livestock/big game interaction. There's a symposium next month on that subject, trying to deal with that. Maybe that's more than you want to know about the subject.

Oil and Gas Leases

HKS: Let's talk about another subject which I also know nothing about but still involves BLM—oil and gas leases. A couple of people wrote in saying if you're going to interview Peterson, ask him about oil and gas leases. I don't know if that's really significant overall to the Forest Service and your role as chief. Obviously, they're important in some areas and not others. Is that something you feel we should put on record?

RMP: We might as well. This is probably one of the most complicated subjects that we're talking about, because there may be substantial oil and gas deposits underlying national forests. The relationship between BLM and the Forest Service on oil and gas leases is a complicated one. For the public domain lands in the West, the authority to lease those lands remains under the secretary of the interior under the 1905 Transfer Act. So the BLM has

the authority to issue oil and gas leases on national forest land in the West. In the East, you're dealing with acquired land. In the East the acquired lands require the consent of the Forest Service to lease those lands or allow prospecting. In '87, Congress enacted a law that extended that basic requirement. The leases are issued by BLM, they're administered by BLM, at least some aspects are administered by BLM, we'll get into that later.

The real difference of opinion that surfaced a few years ago, finally, was the question of how do you go about this whole process of allowing for prospecting and leases for oil and gas? It's entwined with NEPA, and how you do an analysis of downstream impacts. Think about a piece of land about which you're deciding whether you should make it available for oil and gas drilling. When that question is first asked of you, you may not know whether there's anything there or not. If there's anything there, you don't know how deep it is. You don't know the permeability of the underlying material, so you don't know what the spacing of the wells are going to need to be.

HKS: Is the prospecting process really destructive? A lot of roads, heavy equipment, and so forth?

RMP: The prospecting process may or may not be, depending on whether you've got access to the area. If there's road access or other kinds of access you can usually go in and do the prospecting without a great deal of damage, but in some cases, like in the overthrust belt, where you're talking about very deep wells and very big equipment, you have to build major roads to get in and do the prospecting.

HKS: Because of the size of the equipment.

RMP: Because of the size of the equipment and the nature of the drilling. You've got to have water, you've got to have crews, you've got to have a lot of logistic support, you've got to have a lot of equipment there for testing and so forth. We got into a big hassle in Wyoming where I wanted to try to do this by helicopter. If you can do the prospecting by helicopter, you may be able to dramatically reduce the impact, and find out whether there's anything there or not, so you know whether or not you've got a legitimate find. The pragmatic problem you're dealing with here is that historically, when an oil and gas lease is issued it allows for prospecting. Then if you find anything you have a right to develop it. At least that's been the interpretation. If you're going to do environmental assessment of this whole thing, and if that's the right scenario, that in prospecting you've got a right to develop, then the only way you can look at those impacts is to look at the whole impact, not only the prospecting but the full field development. That's an extremely difficult thing to do, to look at prospecting versus full field development.

HKS: Because you don't know what they're going to find.

RMP: Because you don't know what they're going to find, you don't know what spacing is going to be, you don't know what kind of support facilities on the surface are going to be. In many respects you are shooting in the dark as far as knowing what the real impact is going to be.

HKS: What kind of staff people does the Forest Service have? You hire geologists, oil geologists, well geologists …

RMP: Mainly we're looking at surface impacts, not at underground impacts.

HKS: So it's up to BLM to determine if it's a valid claim, as it were, to go with the value of the patent.

RMP: They don't go to patent in this case, this is the lease. It's not a two-stage process in this case. They probably will issue a lease initially. But process-wise, the whole question is how do you do a reasonable analysis in order to answer questions like what is the impact on streams, what's the impact on wildlife, what's the visual impact, what's the all over impact of this? You're sitting there grinding out this big analysis, which is based on an immense amount of speculation.

HKS: Which is subject to all kinds of heat from the industry side.

RMP: Not only that, but also from the environmental side that says what if you're required to put a well every half mile because of the permeability? Suppose that you do this? Anyway you go about analyzing this, anybody can attack it and say you might find this or you might find that, but you don't know for sure. You can spend more time on analysis, it doesn't necessarily get better, but you've got information. The only way you know what's under the ground is to stick a hole there. You can go around and count the trees and you can count other things on the surface, but when you start talking about what's the impact of putting a whole bunch of holes there, what are you going to find down there, you don't know until you do it. So I proposed early in to John Crowell that what we ought to do is to separate prospecting from leasing. And we ought to analyze first the impact of prospecting. Many times it's very low.

HKS: I could see that.

RMP: Sometimes it's detonating things on the surface and reading the seismic activity. Many times you issue a use permit from which they come in and prospect and then they go away, because they didn't find anything. I thought we should separate prospecting from leasing, because we could immensely simplify this whole process. We could save all kinds of money in the analysis, and we could quit spinning our wheels and doing analyses which don't go anywhere. Anyway, I was saying let's separate prospecting from leasing and do the analysis of prospecting first. Let's look at what we find out during the prospect stage. If the company doing prospecting finds out there is oil and gas there they'll likely at that point know how deep it's going to be; they'll have some idea what the spacing is going to be; they'll probably drill a few holes in the prospecting stage and they'll know what the permeability of material is. Then we can do a reasonable analysis of the probable impacts of development, and then we'll write conditions that are appropriate to the site.

There's a precedent for doing that. That's the way the Federal Power Commission's licenses are granted. Companies are given a preliminary permit which gives them only the authority to do exploration and analysis and design, but does not guarantee that the license is going to be issued. The preliminary permit holds their place and prevents somebody else from coming in and filing. This appeared to be a very reasonable way to go about it.

Well, this is one of those things that neither the environmental groups nor the industry liked. Industry said, "Not only do we have to fight to get the prospecting permit issued, which people may be against, but during the time we're prospecting you raise the specter that people will decide that they don't want the drilling. You allow a political firestorm to build that will be telling the Forest Service you shouldn't issue a permit." Industry then immediately called that a contingent rights stipulation, which really required them to risk their money doing the prospecting with no assurance that if they found something they would have rights to it.

Environmental groups didn't like it because this allowed an expedited issuance of prospecting permits with a much simpler kind of environmental analysis. They had a much better chance, they figured, of stopping oil and gas drilling if they could attack the whole statement and say, "It's a house of cards. You haven't really gotten everything figured out," which is to a large degree true. They've shown that clout by stopping oil and gas drilling leases issued in Montana, where they said, "You haven't adequately considered all the possible impacts of this thing." It's very difficult to say that you have if you really don't know what's there. The court in that case said unless we had held back the authority to deny development in the issuance of the permit up front, we had to do a full environmental statement that looked at all the downstream consequences.

HKS: As you said, it's enormously complicated.

RMP: Yes. Anyway, here's another case where BLM said they could do an adequate analysis up front. But a lot of BLM land is semi-desert land and fairly flat where the potential consequences are not that great. They said, "We've done lots of analyses that nobody's attacked," which is true. They said it was just the Forest Service that didn't know how to do analysis. So we've had that little bit of friction between the two agencies.

After I retired I was asked to become a member of the National Academy of Sciences committee, looking at onshore oil and gas drilling, that came out of an act of Congress. We met for the best part of a year, several times. Geologists, state geologists, people from the oil and gas industry, people from the Wildlife Federation, all sat and looked for about a year at this whole process. Lo and behold, we came out with a modified version of

what we'd proposed originally. It was significantly different in several respects. Some people called it continued rights made over. It was different in that what we proposed to do was to say that if you have this prospecting, where somebody is risking money, and you decide not to allow the development to be done, we should set up a fund and reimburse the people for the costs of that. One of the concerns for having this downstream authority to say no was that you might make it more difficult for people to get money to do prospecting, and it might reduce the bids people would make. You might end up conditioning what was being done and saying how it was going to be done, and you might say well you can't really develop this little piece of the lease this way because you've got to meet this kind of spacing, or you can't do it on those steep slopes. We thought the times we'd have pay a company back would be few and the government would probably earn more than it would spend if it removed that risk.

We recommended that kind of a system. Interestingly enough, that's what's done in offshore drilling. The prospecting is separated from the final authority to develop. If you decide not to let them develop, the government can under some circumstances return the investment that they made in the exploratory work. So we were not recommending something that was way out.

Again, for some of the same reasons that industry and environmentalists opposed the other system, they didn't like this one either. It changes the historic precedent that when you get a permit you've got the rights to go all the way through development and the devil take the hindmost. Theoretically, and you can look at the Osceola phosphate case, if that were an oil and gas permit, that company could have gone right ahead and done that work, regardless of the consequences.

HKS: Seems like things that industry and the environmentalists are opposed to have a tough time in Congress.

RMP: Sure they do. That's one of the practical problems of a democracy. Those who are directly affected, in this case environmental groups and oil and gas industries, if they agree it may or may not be in the public interest, it just means from their point of view it's okay. If they disagree that may not mean that it's in the public interest either. In this case they neither one like it, even though I think it's obviously in the public interest, and I think that's what will happen downstream. Mark my word, in ten years that's the way oil and gases leases will be made. Because the Forest Service is not going to agree to granting permits with an analysis that can easily be attacked.

HKS: Industry, pragmatically, is going to have to go along with it because it won't be able to get through the EIS process.

RMP: Right now they're not doing any drilling anyway of any consequence. But if you suddenly get a need for a lot of drilling, industry is going to adopt that as a pragmatic way to get going. There is a National Academy of Science publication on onshore oil and gas leases.

HKS: The Public Land Law Review Commission put together a volume on oil and gas leases. I recall seeing the title on the spine, I didn't look inside the volume. That may have been offshore drilling, but I thought it was oil and gas leases on public lands. A whole bunch of volumes on that came out in the '60s.

RMP: Yes, that's right. I don't remember ever really dealing with that. The Public Land Law Review Commission report died a natural death right after it came out. BLM never paid much attention to it.

California Consent Decree

HKS: Another situation that's still hard for me to grasp is diversity in the workforce. Philosophically I'm all in favor of this, but I wonder about the impact on our government and the cost. A couple of years ago I was browsing through the Forest Service directory, looking in Region 5. You look at the personnel assigned to civil rights, and the consent decrees, and this is a very expensive proposition. First of all, what is the consent decree, for the record?

RMP: The consent decree is an agreement that the Forest Service entered into with people who filed a court action claiming that the Forest Service was not promoting women adequately, and that they were underrepresented in the workforce. It grew out of a case at the Pacific Southwest Station. A woman there applied for a job, and when the certificate went to the selecting official, and he looked at the certificate, he said there wasn't anybody on there who was well qualified for the job. He asked for it to be readvertised. That part is very clear.

What happened after that isn't clear, but apparently when it was readvertised, people at the station contacted some people and told them they ought to apply for this job, which is not too unusual. They went out and shook the bushes a little bit and said to people, "It's not as expensive to live in Berkeley as you might think. It has some advantages like your kids can go to school here." They started drumming up some additional applicants for the job. The woman who applied for it was at Berkeley, as I read it. They selected a man for the job, and she filed an action which eventually was turned into a class action suit claiming that the record indicated that the Forest Service had not given adequate consideration to women in hiring and promoting.

HKS: What's roughly the date of this?

RMP: I think the original action dates way back to the middle '70s.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: The consent decree was finally signed, I think, in 1979.

HKS: You were chief then.

RMP: Just about the time I became chief. I really had no knowledge of what was happening with the consent decree at that point, because when you get into consent decrees and settling things in court, you're represented by the Justice Department and by the Office of General Counsel. They looked at that case and said that the numbers looked pretty bad, if you just looked at the raw numbers. We had a woman general counsel for USDA at that time, who said, "It looks open and shut that the Forest Service has not really reached out to bring in women and promote women. You've been happy to have this all male Forest Service. If you go to court on this your case is not good." For whatever reasons, the consent decree was signed, and I don't ever remember being advised that this was about to happen, just that they decided to settle the case rather than go to court with it.

The consent decree that was written commits the Forest Service to use all feasible methods to increase the representation of women in the workforce with a goal of reaching equity in the workforce by a certain time. There are a lot of undefined words in there, describing what the Forest Service would do. As I said earlier, everybody had a vision that we were going to be bringing in lots of people and that we could reach this. Different people had different ideas about what represented equity in the workforce. For example, if you count the workforce in California, about 44 percent of the workforce is women. If you count the number of women foresters in the United States versus the number of men foresters in the United States, the number might be 10 percent. The question is, is your goal to be represented in the profession as a whole, at 10 percent, or is it 44 percent? That's a whole different question.

Anyway, the consent decree was signed and committed us to use all feasible methods of to increase representation of women in the workforce. The region out there with Zane Smith as regional forester did a lot of work to go out and recruit women. They conducted special training sessions for women to bring them along, they looked at particular needs of women in terms of mobility, in terms of child care, in terms of what kind of job they could be assigned to that would make them competitive, and emphasized women for several years.

At this time we were not hiring new people. The turnover was quite slow, because during that period not many people were leaving government because there weren't many other jobs. It was a period of very low turnover. I was told every once in a while what they were doing. We got into some pretty difficult questions when it came to selection at the national level. The question became if you had a woman on a certificate who was just barely

qualified, should you select that woman in preference to other people on the certificate who were better qualified? Simply because diversity in the workforce was an important thing to the agency.

HKS: It's a tough one.

RMP: That is a very difficult question. I'd said that diversity was important in the workforce, and we ought to be reaching it. We ought to be particularly careful that we're not grading a woman down on a competitive basis simply because she hasn't been through the same chairs that somebody else has been through. We had to look at the real capability demanded in the job. If I talked to somebody who had real capability of handling the job, even though they might not have been through the conventional chairs, I was inclined to go ahead with that person.

As you probably know from the record, we selected the first woman for supervisor early in my tenure. We had just begun to make district rangers out of women. We'd made a whole bunch of district rangers out of women who were well qualified. They'd come into the workforce as foresters, engineers, landscape architects, and wildlife biologists, so we were beginning to get a good supply. But were we getting a good supply at the GS-7, 9, and 11 level? We had a real tough time when it got to dealing with GS-13, 14, 15, and supergrades, simply because we didn't have a population to draw from. If there was a population out there somewhere, every other agency was in the same bind and they were trying to get them too. So minorities and women became very hot property.

HKS: I was going to ask was the policy for minorities the same as the consent decree? I realize there's different statutes and all these civil rights acts and what not, but you've been talking about women so far. Did you have the same problem with trying to have a black as a GS-15? Maybe even tougher.

RMP: Somewhat different, though. In some cases we had blacks in the organization in professional positions for some time. For example, Leon Anderson, who headed our human resources program, had been working for the Forest Service for fifteen or twenty years. We had a smattering of blacks in the workforce already, including at higher levels. But the basic problems were similar.

This became a particular problem in California because we began to get grumblings from Hispanics and blacks that we'd already had a white man organization, and now we were going to move white women up. The Hispanics and blacks were going to be disadvantaged. This was particularly an undertone coming from southern California. There we have a heavy Hispanic population of fire prevention people and some professional foresters. We suddenly had white women as assistant rangers and rangers who were supervising an all-Hispanic technician force. Some real cultural problems began to surface. The Hispanic women didn't like the idea of their husbands working with a white woman.

You never know how big this is because you just get undertones of it. Anyway, the consent decree was not a big problem. It seemed that we were making progress. Other regions were trying to move along, too, recognizing that what was going on in California was probably going to happen elsewhere.

HKS: Did this Berkeley lady get the job out of all this?

RMP: She got a settlement of some kind, but I don't remember all about it. It may have been that she was right, too. It may have been that she should have gotten the job originally, but that got lost in the shuffle. There may have been an old boys syndrome at work. I don't know. I was told by people who seemed to know her that she was fairly abrasive and they didn't think she was really well qualified.

HKS: I would think the experiment station would be less likely to have good old boys than a national forest would.

RMP: I would think so.

HKS: Lot's of weird people work in experiment stations. They are more used to that.

RMP: I would say in Berkeley in particular you would think that the people there were pretty broad minded about looking at all kinds of different people. They've had whites and blacks and Hispanics and Chinese and Japanese and women and they've had a real diverse workforce for a long time. You would not expect this consent decree to come out of Berkeley. You would think it more likely that it would come out of the South or the Southwest or somewhere.

Anyway, this consent decree worked pretty well, and we were making progress in training and promoting people and bringing the women along. Everything seemed to be moving along pretty well. I think one thing that blew it up was the action of the Justice Department. We were financing some people out there that were acting on the part of a class and monitoring what was happening and being involved in the training sessions. We set up a fund for them. The person spending that money, in the view of this Justice Department guy that got involved, was spending it pretty liberally. He exhausted the fund faster than we thought it was going to be exhausted. They got all involved in the thing and said, "What in the hell is the Forest Service doing following a consent decree like this anyway? This looks like reverse discrimination. It looks like it might be quotas. It might be illegal for the Forest Service to appear to give preference to women. This is not equality, this is not what the civil rights laws say." So we got into a fairly major hassle.

HKS: I thought you were supposed to give preference to women in order to balance the ratio.

RMP: This is one of the real problems ever since affirmative action came into being. On the one hand you are expected to increase the representation in the workforce but there's nothing in the competitive system that says you can give five more points to a woman. There is for veterans. When we decided to give preference to veterans, we assigned a number. Everybody knew they were getting preference and it amounted to five or ten points. The other thing … on one hand you're supposed to be following an absolutely competitive system, but you're supposed to be making progress towards equity. It's not at all easy to figure out how you do that. In a lot of cases it was never an issue. There's lots and lots now of highly qualified and highly dedicated women in the workforce. I stated a couple of times that on an average the women in the same grade level in the Forest Service are probably just an edge above the men.

HKS: Do they have to be in order to succeed?

RMP: They had to have that kind of dedication to move into a man's world. They have somewhat overcompensated by being increasingly dedicated. Once in a while you find somebody who has moved up simply because they think that's their right, but that's a real exception. By and large the women as a class were highly competent. We were making pretty good progress. Left to our own devices we would have done all right. But we ended up with some militant people on the class action side and Justice Department on the other side who initially said, "The hell with this, we're going to stop this thing. It runs out next year, we demand it stop at that point with class actions. You haven't gotten anywhere near what you promised to do back in '79, when we signed a consent decree."

This whole thing went to a judge who looked at it. "According to the numbers," he said, "you haven't anywhere near got to where you're supposed to be. I'm going to call the secretary of agriculture in contempt of the consent decree if you don't make this kind of progress." This was a great shock to Lyng who up until that point I don't think even knew there was such a thing as a consent decree. Immediately now this was going to be a big issue in administration. Lyng, who was very strong on the idea that we needed to give equality of treatment and we needed to progress in bringing minorities and women along and who wanted to set an example himself in his own office, was horrified at the idea that he might be held in contempt of court.

HKS: It would be a good sound bite for the nightly news.

RMP: Lyng said we needed to do everything we could to show by the record that we'd made progress. We had to get out from under this consent decree, because as a matter of policy this administration does not need to extend a consent decree. We had said the way to handle this whole thing was to agree that we hadn't made as much progress as anticipated to begin with and simply extend this consent decree for a couple of years. I visited with the class action people who, to a large extent, were Forest Service employees. Most of them understood the problem that we had in trying to increase the number of women because we simply weren't

recruiting people. Some also felt that we had pushed a little bit too hard in some cases in that region. Some women were feeling that when they got a promotion, people were saying they hadn't gotten it because they were qualified, but because of the consent decree. In some respects that would cheapen their promotions. Some were saying they didn't like getting promoted under the stigma of being so because of a consent decree. These were people who would have gotten a promotion on their own whether or not there was a consent decree.

I had thought that by extending it a couple of years, that we would be able to get through it. The Justice Department would have no part of that. This is when you get into this whole big mess that the Justice Department is your lawyer. Do they do what you think they ought to do, or are they calling the policy decisions? In this case they really began to call the policy decisions. As a consequence, they would not agree to extending it, or to our negotiating. So we ended up in a confrontation in court, and the court ordered the extension of the consent decree. We spent a whole lot of money above what we would have had we been able to negotiate, which would have been less acrimonious. That's one of those cases where I guess I feel that the Forest Service became a pawn in a fight between the Justice Department and the consent decree people, who saw this as much broader than the Forest Service.

HKS: A couple of white males in the Washington office first mentioned the consent decree to me. I'd never heard of it. Their characterization was that the Forest Service was taking money from the rest of the nation and pouring it into California. They saw it in a very negative way; men were jeopardized and vital programs were being hurt because of the amount of money that was being transferred from programs sent out to support the consent decree. Was that based upon information they had, or an exaggeration? Was it really that expensive?

RMP: I think the idea of the Forest Service taking a great amount of money away from the rest of the country to put into that was not correct. It was quite a bit of money at a time when we were going through a potential reduction of foresters. People were saying we were putting a disproportionate amount of money in California, and a disproportionate amount in training women in California. If you did an analysis, it would probably show that we worked a little more in California on a per capita basis than anywhere in the rest of the country, but the amount of money wasn't significant enough to have disadvantaged the rest of the country. As I recall, that special training cost about half a million dollars. In a Forest Service budget of two billion it's pretty hard to show that that's going to unbalance the budget.

What did happen was that the consent decree became in a way in California the all purpose excuse for things not happening. I was astounded when I went out there to hear people saying, "I'm going to retire early. I'm not even competing for any jobs anymore." These are white males saying they didn't have a chance. The data didn't back that up. Numerically, more than half of the promotions were still going to men.

HKS: But fewer than would have been ten years ago.

RMP: But fewer than would have, yes. But if you didn't get a job promotion, and you had to go home and tell your wife that, it would have been easy to say you would have gotten it without the consent decree. You might not have gotten it anyway. But then you start saying to people, "We don't get things done on the forests because the damn women are always off to training sessions right when we need them." Some of the women were saying, "I resent the fact that I'm required to go to these training sessions, which somebody thinks I need, when my male counterpart is not required to go." So you've created all kinds of tensions in the workforce, which I think is unfortunate. Interestingly enough, if you look at the numbers, several other regions have made equivalent progress with a whole lot less dissention.

HKS: There's not a spotlight on it so they can just carry out a normal process.

RMP: Well they're doing it without being under the stigma of the consent decree. Under the consent decree, there's got to be a committee review for each promotion. There's an awful lot of bureaucracy in that California consent decree, which tends to set one part of the Forest Service against another. I think the Forest Service would be much further ahead if they could get out from under the stigma of the consent decree. But I've said to people, if you look at the Forest Service as a whole, the consent decree has been a painful thing. It's been a painful lesson though for the Forest Service as a whole. Society is placing some emphasis on having a workforce

that's representative of the public they serve. And the Forest Service, in all fairness, up until probably the early '70s, had not made a whole lot of progress.

Workforce Diversity

RMP: When I went to Region 8 and looked around at the makeup of the workforce, the absence of blacks in the workforce in areas of responsibility was conspicuous. We had a young black by the name of Chuck Dooley, who is now the personnel officer down there, who had been brought on the staff specifically to try to reach out to recruit blacks in the South. To try to make some progress in bringing the blacks on board. There are many reasons why Forest Service work had not attracted blacks in the South. To them anybody who worked in the woods was probably a pulpwooder, which was not a job that you aspired to if you were black.

HKS: If you're working your way out of the ghetto, why do you want to work in the woods?

RMP: That's right. And if you're working in the woods you're not wearing a tie and coat and you're not in a respectable profession necessarily. The blacks that had capability were trying to become doctors and lawyers and other things. Forestry or wildlife biology was not what they particularly aspired to. They had no role models in the Forest Service. There were no black wildlife biologists, or foresters, or engineers. They didn't really see a professional job there. All the people they saw working for the Forest Service that were black were working in the woods doing menial jobs. You had a system reinforcing itself.

I said to the forest supervisors in the South, "We've got to make progress on this. And I expect by this time next year you'll be able to report to me some progress." A couple of them said this was difficult. I said, "I know this is difficult. A lot of the jobs that we expect you to do as forest supervisor are difficult, but by this time next year I expect you to report some progress to me in tangible terms. Don't come to me with excuses. This is going to be an element we're going to rate on your performance rating next year." I had a couple of forest supervisors say, "I understand that language. By next year we will show you some progress." And they did. They went out and recruited some people and began to bring some people aboard. They decided this was something that the top management wanted done.

HKS: That's right.

RMP: There was certainly no discrimination involved in that. They simply went to places where they knew blacks were and convinced them that it would be a good idea to take a job with the Forest Service. We found some people that had degrees in closely allied fields. We could bring them aboard in technician forces and get them to take some additional work and qualify. I've got some respect for the forest supervisors in the South who took that on as something that needed to be done. But in doing so, I think we avoided potential class action lawsuits that would have been successful. I told Chuck Dooley my desire was to work him out of a job, that recruitment of blacks was going to be something that we all were going to work at. We were going to have a special staff assistant to recruit blacks. The first opportunity we had we made him a personnel officer for the region. He was well qualified and an extremely capable individual.

HKS: I noticed in the directory for Region 5 there are a lot of Hispanic names in Personnel. I assume they're better able to attract minorities if they are perceived to have already made it.

RMP: I think having role models is what you're talking about. When Sotero Muniz was regional forester in Albuquerque, that region had a tremendous number of Hispanics. You didn't have to tell Hispanics that there was a possibility that they could get ahead, you had living examples. If you go out to an Hispanic school and you tell people that if they go to work at the Forest Service they can get ahead, and they ask who's done it, and you don't have anybody, then you've raised the question of your sincerity. Or you just have one or two token people that are in jobs like special assistant for so and so. For a long time we hired blacks and made them a special assistant or, like in Chuck Dooley's case, we made him special recruiter for blacks. This was the way to have a token person in some people's minds. In that case I don't think it was, it was a sincere attempt to reach

out. But the organization matured to the point where the whole organization is looking to get a diverse workforce in a nondiscriminatory way.

Now when I met with Forest Service people up in the Pinchot Institute and they brought up diversity of the workforce, I said, "Remember that the diversity of workforce is not an end in itself, unless you can show by diverse workforce that you're serving the public better, and that you're doing a better job of resource work. It doesn't just become an internal objective. Then you fail. A diverse workforce should be able to do a better job. It should be able to serve a diverse public diverse better." But that's the objective, not internally to have different numbers. I think that's the challenge as people look at diversity of workforce. How do you create a diverse workforce that will be an excellent organization reaching out and serving people they're supposed to serve? That's the objective.

HKS: Intellectually, it's like bringing in other professions.

RMP: It's like having an interdisciplinary organization. You don't have an interdisciplinary organization because you want to have an interdisciplinary organization, you have an interdisciplinary organization because it's going to perform better. Just like an interdisciplinary organization is more difficult to manage, a diverse workforce presents some challenges too. I remember when I was in Atlanta, we recruited a black accountant who reported on a particular forest. He could not get housing in any part of the town except the ghetto. To his credit, the forest supervisor there called me up and said, "We've got real problems here. We've got this new black accountant who came aboard, and he and his family can't find a place to live in a decent part of this city." He went to the leaders of that little town and told them about this person being discriminated against while trying to get reasonable housing. The leaders took that problem under their wing and worked out a way to get this person housing. There are places where there's discrimination yet in our country. No question about it. If you're going to create this diverse workforce, it's going to take managers like that who take some personal responsibility for making it happen.

When I was in southern California, on the San Bernardino Forest, we had an outstanding young fire prevention technician who was Hispanic. Sam Jarvi, the forest supervisor, had decided with the district ranger at Arrowhead that he would make an excellent fire control assistant for that district. That is an assistant ranger type of position, which is a very responsible position in Lake Arrowhead country. Lake Arrowhead was owned at that time by the Los Angeles Turf Club as the elite of southern California. Without question Hispanics were discriminated against in southern California. Many of them were illegal immigrants, and were called wetbacks. You had the same problem in southern California that you had in the South with blacks.

I drew the chore of talking to Ray about going up to Lake Arrowhead to be the fire control assistant. Ray said, "Those people will not accept me up there because I'm Hispanic. I just would not make it there, I know that." I said, Well, Ray, there probably are some people that would discriminate up there, but why don't we give it a chance? You try and we'll back you up. I think you have the capability of doing such a good job there that people will not even worry about whether you're Hispanic. Certainly they won't in a short time." So he took that job. And within about five years he was hired as the Lake Arrowhead fire chief. He retired there as one of the most popular people that has ever been assigned to that part of the country. In this case, he saw discrimination, which may have been there, but it was a bigger barrier to him than it was to us.

HKS: I could understand that. You've got to go there with your family and live in the area. You don't want to be discriminated against.

RMP: Creating this diverse workforce is going to take long-term commitment of the organization. You've got to be careful about how fast you try to do it, in my view. You can't spend forever doing it, but if you try to do it in two or three years, you're going to obviously discriminate against a whole lot of people. You're going to create a backlash in the organization that could tear it up for a long time to come.

HKS: And the programs are going to suffer.

RMP: Programs could suffer. You spend a lot of money, you create a lot of dissention, if you aren't careful. Any time an organization is in turmoil internally it doesn't do well getting its job done. I think you have to be careful

about how you do it. You have to recognize that there are a lot of human emotions working here, and you've got to know that they're there. You've got to know that the people think those emotions are valid. If you've got a whole bunch of white males, Hispanic women, black women or men, and they really think they are being discriminated against, whether they are or not, perception becomes reality.

One little incident when I was in California. We had a particular person who we'd placed in a supervisory position, who was Hispanic. It was a mistake to have selected that person, just like you make mistakes in selecting white people or any other kind for supervisory positions. This person would get so upset in certain situations that he would throw his drafting instruments on the floor. This was in a mapping situation. Anybody that's working in maps is working with those tools. Some of those people have got tools that have literally been handed down, and the first thing you do is take great care of these instruments. Throwing them on the floor when he'd get frustrated was completely unacceptable. And he had a boss that was not very considerate.

Anyway, so his supervisor, who at that time worked for me in California, came in and talked to me. He said, "We've got a problem. Among other things, this person thinks his problem is he's been discriminated against by his boss." I said, "I can't understand how he'd think this is related to discrimination." And the supervisor said, "The most important words you said are you can't understand. You see, if you've been discriminated against all of your life, you see discrimination where it may not be. You don't have a feel for that." He was right. That's one of the more difficult problems. People that have been victims of discrimination see discrimination where it may not be. This is a particular problem when you're trying to deal with performance questions. You have people of all colors and races who do in fact have performance problems. It becomes extremely difficult to deal with because the person sees it as discrimination rather than a performance problem.

HKS: That's right. I didn't get the job because a woman got it, that has nothing to do with my performance.

RMP: You would talk with this white person that didn't get the job and you would say they didn't get the job because they weren't evaluated as being as capable as the person hired. In the first place, they might not believe you. In the second place, they'll say that isn't really true, that you gave that person that job because you're trying to meet a diversity target. The very worse thing that could happen in my view is people would say to somebody, I really would like to have gotten you that job, and you're really a good candidate for it, but I had to do this to meet a diversity target, when the person really wasn't the best qualified.

HKS: But you're trying to let them down easy.

RMP: You may be trying to let them down easy, but what you're really doing is building resentment. You're being dishonest in that case.

HKS: Universities openly discriminate. They have open positions—women only, minorities only—for teaching. It's less so now, but when this was first coming into play in the '70s, it was almost impossible for a white male to get a teaching job as a junior faculty. There wasn't much hiring going on and they had to get some women on the faculty.

RMP: I've said to the head of OPM I think it would have been much better for the government to just openly say we're not representative. We need to bring on more women and minorities, and just like we did with veterans we're going to give them five points preference. You're not going to hire somebody that's unqualified, but you're saying there is a benefit of having a diverse workforce, and above board give them a five-point preference.

HKS: With some kind of an expiration date, though. After ten years or so.

RMP: Sure, just for the next ten years, or fifteen years or some other time until you've rectified the imbalance. We recognized it was a good idea to give veterans credit for the fact that they'd been in the war and bring them aboard. We did that, and nobody yelled discrimination. I think right now the problem is, on the one hand we say you've got to look at people completely with equality, on the other hand we expect you to promote certain people faster than others. That's a mixed message. Particularly if what you're doing shows that you're actually giving preference. Then it's being two-faced to say you really aren't.

HKS: You told the forest supervisors in Region 8 they'd better show some progress in hiring blacks.

RMP: That's right. In that case I was saying there are blacks out there if you go look for them. You haven't been looking for them or encouraging them. They went and spoke to the local high school, and they had sons or daughters or friends that they were encouraging to take a natural resources career, but they weren't interacting with any blacks. I think reaching out to a broader recruitment base is one of the ways to bring quality people aboard.

HKS: The blacks are outside of the loop so if you just stay within …

RMP: You tend to reinforce what you've already got.

Endangered Species and the Spotted Owl

HKS: Yes. Let's look at another subject. You've mentioned endangered species several times. The spotted owl is a symbol. What is the broader long-term issue? There's an endless supply of potential endangered species. How does any resource agency taking a long look come up with long-term management plans when you have this undetermined variable? Can you really worry about it? What's the next endangered species going to be, and what do you do?

RMP: In theory we try to understand more of the species that are present in an area and try to move out well in advance to prevent having to take action because it's endangered.

HKS: The agency did this with the spotted owl. The agency had been studying the spotted owl for ten years or so?

RMP: More than that. What happened in the spotted owl case is that there was lots of land at one time that would have supported the spotted owl. Over time this area was reduced by harvesting on private and public land. The old growth is essentially gone on private land. What you had was the owl marching backward to stay in the old growth. Pretty soon the only place that old growth existed was on national forest land. Suddenly you're faced with the fact that if you're going to prevent this creature from being threatened or endangered, the only place you can make a stand is on that small amount of public land. That suddenly puts all of the pressure on those public lands. It's not that the Forest Service took action but the accumulated impact of what everybody was doing, public and private.

One reason the national forests have a lot of endangered species is that's an area of land for creatures who need old growth habitat. I think the spotted owl is symptomatic of a bigger problem in our society. We apparently don't know the habitat requirements of a lot of creatures. Over time we've modified the habitat where the only remaining suitable habitat is on national forest land. The elk was a plains animal that went into the mountains.

HKS: I didn't know that.

RMP: Yes, the elk was originally a plains animal. The buffalo was a plains animal. Now it's in large numbers in Yellowstone Park. But the reason that the spotted owl is a big issue in the Pacific Northwest is not only because it's a spotted owl, but because there are probably another half a dozen species that are old growth dependent. This has raised the whole issue of how much of that old growth needs to be retained in the Pacific Northwest if you're going to prevent certain species from being threatened or endangered.

HKS: Is it true what I've been reading that the spotted owl is in fact an indicator species? Or is that an assumption?

RMP: No. It was selected as an indicator species, and I think probably is an indicator species of old growth in general. You've got the marbled murrelet and the plain martin both, which may be mixed up as potentially threatened or endangered species which may be old growth dependent. It raises two basic issues. Number one, we seem to never know enough in advance about what the requirements of these creatures are. We started an accelerated old growth research program in the late '70s and then accelerated in the early '80s.

HKS: Is that why Jerry Franklin went to Washington?

RMP: I think Washington made that recruitment. We sent Ken Mayes out to head up that accelerated project which was coordinated with BLM and primarily Oregon State University, but we also had the University of Washington and other universities that were involved, including the University of California. But when you start dealing with habitat requirements of things like owls, and you're dealing with how they interact with the whole prey system and reproduction and so on, it's not easy to get quick answers. It's one of those things that in hindsight we should have been working on twenty-five or thirty years ago. We should have done the research on old growth dependent species then. I've said several times that we tended not to get interested in research until we have a crisis, and then we want instant answers. If you look at acid rain, the Forest Service had a symposium in Delaware or Ohio about twenty years ago in which we were trying to deal with deposition. Nobody came.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Now we're doing crisis stuff related to global warming. Fifteen years ago you couldn't have gotten three people to attend a meeting to discuss the question. In many respects that's symptomatic that we don't really want to research until we suddenly need answers, then we want instant answers. When we first took action in the late '70s to try to deal with what we saw as an indicator species that was on the decline, some people were saying there were only about fifty pairs around.

Some people think there's only fifty pairs left and they're going to disappear in the next ten years. It's one of those old stories. If you don't have your data, one number is as good as another. We tried to start getting a better database. We started finding out where these creatures are, what their habitat needs are, and so on. In the meantime, we decided we'd better do something to try to protect the nesting areas. We set up a system of protecting the tree, the nesting area, and immediate surrounding area, which we'd done for the bald eagle and the peregrine falcon. That had been a common way of looking at protecting a species, to protect the nest site and reproduction site.

We first protected a hundred acres and then we moved it up to three hundred acres and finally went to a thousand acres. Every time we increased that we had all kinds of howls from people that we were way overprotecting, that we were moving in advance of knowing anything. There's a little book written by George Craig who said we don't really don't know what we're doing. We're protecting an area that we don't know if we ought to protect or not. There's some evidence that the spotted owl can live in second growth. The Forest Service is being too cautious and too energetic in protecting areas. When I announced that last protection of moving up toward a thousand acres, somebody in the Pacific Northwest said they needed a lifeboat and life jacket and I had thrown them an anvil.

The basic thing here was we were moving based on the best information we had at the time. Some people said we were moving too fast without adequate information, and other people were saying we weren't moving fast enough, and we ought to take a lot more precautions. More recently, the Jack Ward Thomas committee said, "You really can't go at it looking at nests and foraging areas and strips between. You've got to protect whole blocks, because you need the interaction to keep getting that genetic diversity."

HKS: You need corridors and all this other stuff.

RMP: You've got to have large blocks. We think you need about twenty pairs of blocks, rather than this individual pair or individual reproduction area. They concluded that the other system was flawed and we should go to the big blocks. In all fairness, that's a change in scientific opinion between those two points in time. I'm inclined to believe it's correct, at least it's the best science we've got now. But the impact of that is entirely

different from the other approach. The impact of that is much greater. When we published this supplement to the environmental impact statement, when there was a challenge to our previous decision, the department looked at it and considered that we had overstated the impact. We had gone too far and should redo it. When we looked, we decided we hadn't gone far enough.

HKS: This was Crowell's office looking at this.

RMP: Actually the person that looked at this was Doug MacCleery. He felt that the people had raised some valid points that we had not looked at all the research. It had been four years since we'd looked at it. It seemed we'd published regional data in three years and we should take another look at it. He issued a decision that we should take another look, which we did. Contrary to a lot of people's opinion of the way we'd come out, we looked and it came out that we needed more protection instead of less. That's been the history of looking at the spotted owl. Every time somebody looked at it, and looked at more information, they decided that we had not protected it well enough.

What makes it more difficult to solve in the current situation is that the owl has always been an indicator species. We're not looking at just the question of how much the owl needs, we're looking at what a mix of old growth dependent species need, which is a much more difficult question. To add more complexity to it, people are now saying really we need to look at old growth in terms of its values, and not just as it relates to a species. They're saying this is really an old growth issue, independent of wildlife. That raises a question how much of the remnant old growth should be maintained as old growth in terms of volume of values that it has. In some respects, some people say this a repeat of the wilderness question. How much of this land do we need to set aside and maintain as old growth for the values that old growth has? On the Hill now the argument is not just how much we need for the spotted owl, but how much old growth do we need as a component of the forest that we are going to perpetuate?

Hatfield particularly sees to a large extent that this is a replay of the Oregon wilderness area argument with different values being put forward. I don't know if Hatfield has said this, but a lot of these people have said this really isn't an argument over the spotted owl. This is really a rerun of the wilderness area question, with different players. We now have a question of whether you're going to give priority to the protection of some of these more exotic values or more difficult to define values, or are you going to protect jobs? It's become a rallying cry; are you going to protect people or animals? Are you going to protect old growth values or people's jobs? It's now becoming a major national environmental issue. Somewhat like the Alaska land issue in which industry came to me and said this was going to be jobs versus the owl. I said not to get involved in that kind of a characterization because you're going to lose. There have been jobs lost in the Pacific Northwest due to automation and other reasons. This job loss is not horrendous in the scheme of things. Even in the state of Washington, the number of jobs that are there for the state as a whole are not that great.

HKS: Somebody in the Washington office told me that the worst-case scenario for the spotted owl is that the agency would lose two thousand employees in Region 6. That sounded very significant to me since the agency only has thirty thousand nationwide. I don't know where that number came from.

RMP: I don't know where that number came from either. The people involved in the preparation of timber sales—a formidable task nowadays—are from lots of disciplines. It involves foresters and wildlife biologists and landscape architects and engineers and all kinds of people. If you're cutting the sale program in half you're going to reduce the number of employees by quite a bit. I certainly would not think it's two thousand. I would guess they're probably talking about seasonal people, they're not talking about regular employees.

HKS: They obviously wanted to make it sound as bad as they could.

RMP: I would say that that's probably an overstatement. The region has about five thousand employees; I doubt that we're talking about more than one thousand of those five thousand over time. But that raises a bigger question; should we be putting that activity into other kinds of work? The use of forestry in the Pacific Northwest is shifting, and we probably ought to be making public investments in other things. I'd probably be considered in the middle of where this thing ought to come out, philosophically. I think it's possible to arrive at a reasonable solution to the wildlife/timber conflict with something like 25 to 30 percent reduction in the timber

harvest level. You need that kind of slack in order to provide the protection that is now deemed necessary for the other species. Some other people are talking about cutting output in half or more. The wild card in this is how much this so-called old growth as a value of it's own is going to be involved. I think it's unfortunate that we have such a polarized position out there right now. What's happening is environmentalists think they've got this won. The timber industry thinks this is one case where they're going to talk about major cuts in jobs and enlist the help of unions and others to weigh in on this. Both sides think they're going to win this case. Anytime you've got two sides that feel as strongly as they do there isn't anybody looking for a compromise solution.

HKS: I know the entire town of Forks, Washington closed down, including the schools. The town drove to Olympia to protest to the governor.

RMP: You've spotlighted another thing. I said in the scheme of things this is not that big a deal nationally in employment, or even timber supply. It's like the six inches of water again. The impact on individual communities can be quite severe, and I don't think the society as a whole or the Forest Service can be insensitive to those kinds of problems, because they are real problems. I said a couple of years ago that we need to figure out a transition. There are ways that you can work out a transition that doesn't endanger the birds, and doesn't endanger other old growth dependent species. Society ought to work out those sorts of transitions. You can work out those kinds of transitions and have some empathy for the communities involved and work it out in a way that doesn't just chop them up. Anytime you start to create that kind of economic dislocation you're talking about potential for families losing houses, families disintegrating, suicides, and all kinds of economic and social dislocation.

HKS: It's pretty hard to sell a used log truck in western Washington right now. No one is buying their log trucks.

RMP: Part of that is, of course, the economy itself is down. The housing market is down. It's like the when we were in the middle of the acid rain hysteria. Every tree that died was hit by acid rain. Now, people figure that every job that's lost in one of those communities is because of the timber supply, and it may not be that at all. Some companies are taking advantage of the fact that they've probably got more efficient mills and they're closing mills in some of those towns and would have done it anyway.

HKS: Now's a good time to do it.

RMP: Now is a good time to do it. People keep blaming it on the feds.

HKS: Yes.

RMP: Industry dropped several thousand jobs in the '80s, in a move to improve efficiency which they needed to do to compete. They lost about twenty-five thousand jobs. Sorting out the truth from the hysteria is happening on both sides. Some people will say if you cut one more tree, the spotted owl is going to be endangered, etc. The decision of the Fish and Wildlife Service is not that the owl is in danger today, it's that if the trend continues, it will be. It's then classified as threatened because of the direction things are going. The other thing the spotted owl raises as a philosophical issue is that certainly there's got to be responsibility from other owners besides the national forests. BLM is not, in my view, carrying its weight on the issue.

HKS: O&C lands have been pulled out of it, haven't they?

RMP: No, the Endangered Species Act applies with full force to the O&C lands. There's nothing that exempts the O&C lands.

HKS: I just read the O&C counties are really facing severe budget cuts because receipts are way down. Is that the general economy or …

RMP: O&C receipts, I think, are down because of the general economy.

HKS: It's not the owl.

RMP: I don't think it's because of the owl at this point. There's not that much of a drop. If you take the owl into consideration, in many cases the harvesting on BLM lands has left these little islands where they're the threatened species. Unless BLM acts now to try to take them into consideration, and prevents cutting up all these blocks, in a few years downstream they're going to have a catastrophe on their hands. They're going to be stopped cold under the Endangered Species Act.

One of the philosophical questions this raises is what responsibility do you have as a private landowner to be concerned about a threatened species? Not the legal responsibilities, but what kind of ethical responsibility do you have? What responsibility do the state and county have? Surely all the responsibility for protecting this endangered species can't finally rest on the Forest Service.

HKS: The railroads and Weyerhaeuser and Georgia Pacific and other outfits own a lot of private land. Plus the guy with the twenty-acre woodlot. Not too many individuals would have twenty acres of old growth, I guess. Is it well established that old growth is better wood than second growth? I've been hearing that second growth does a pretty good job.

RMP: I would say that the present scientific information indicates that the further south you go, the more able the owl is to adapt to second growth.

HKS: Is it nesting or is it food supply? Or is it both?

RMP: It's the whole ecosystem. It may be prey; it may be competition from other kinds of owls. They can nest in old growth that's younger, but what the Interagency Scientific Committee determined is that apparently as you go further south, into California, for example, the forests develop old growth characteristics at a younger age.

HKS: At what age?

RMP: That's one of the dilemmas of calling old growth, old growth. It's not a particular age. Old growth is a characteristic of a stand. If you go to the sand pine in Florida, sand pine stands are very old in sixty years. They start falling apart before they get to be one hundred years old, and they're gone shortly after that. Different stands develop old growth characteristics at different ages. What they were saying in northern California is that some of the stands develop old growth characteristics that support the owl at about one hundred years. Further north, up on the Olympic peninsula, it may take both larger areas and older trees to develop these characteristics. It may be you're reaching the extreme range of the owl when you get further north, that they're more adaptive to the south. For purposes of forest management, it's very well established that you need stands with old growth characteristics. How old that has to be is a different question.

HKS: I've heard the figure two thousand pairs, but whatever the number is, it's more than numerical, it's a geographical range, too. You could say, "Let's write off the Olympic peninsula and have all the owls there. Let's just go ahead in other places, as long as we have two thousand pairs." It's not that simple under the law.

RMP: I'm not an expert on the law, but I think you've got two questions. The Interagency Scientific Committee said if you reduce the geographic range, if you write off the Olympic Peninsula and some other areas, then because you are restricting the range of the bird you may need more owls. The safety of a species partly depends on the range.

HKS: That's right.

RMP: They were saying if you reduce the range, you're going to have to have more owls. Doing that may have been counterproductive. That's one question I don't know fully the answer to. But the Endangered Species Act does talk about a goal of recovering the species throughout its normal range. We were discussing the grizzly bear recently, and obviously you're not going to recover the grizzly bear over its normal, historic range.

HKS: Or the wolf.

RMP: Or the wolf, so there's some trade-offs there. One of the problems we have in working with the Endangered Species Act is that when the act was passed, most people were thinking about the endangered species were going to be in very small areas. By definition, if it's endangered there's not a big amount of range left. People were looking at areas that we knew, and they were thinking about species that weren't but in very small areas. They were endangered because they were in very small areas. I'm not sure anybody talked about endangered species that had a range that involved three states and very large areas of land. We really haven't figured out how we're going to interplay the Endangered Species Act with some other objectives. As a society, we say we don't want endangered species, but do you allow any management at all, and if so under what circumstances? Critical habitat doesn't necessarily mean no management. But it means management in such a way that you don't endanger the species.

HKS: If the issue is not maintaining old growth, per se, but habitat for owls, would some selective logging be acceptable?

RMP: That's exactly what we've been discussing recently. If you're going to create an old growth habitat for a species that otherwise might be threatened or endangered, do you allow some management, and if so, what kind of management? The Interagency Scientific Committee said since we don't know what kind of management we can do at this point, and still retain the old growth characteristics, at least for the near future we ought not to do anything except research, which we ought to do in other areas, too. Congress, in one of its versions, said when it sets up these areas it doesn't intend to allow anything to be done. In other words it's going to be virtually wilderness management. Is that required to perpetuate the species? We don't know at this point.

HKS: There's already roads in a lot of these areas.

RMP: In some areas there are a few roads. But the road per se is probably not a problem, as long as you've got adequate habitat. These animals are out at night so the disturbance is minimal. This owl is a very human-friendly owl. In fact, you can hold up a mouse and an owl will swoop down and take it out of your hand.

HKS: Is that right?

RMP: These owls are not one that the disturbance of the domestic tree is a big problem for. You're not talking about human disturbance; you're talking about the prey. There's also competition from other kinds of owls, that's a factor. Anyway, we're having a hard time in our society of figuring out how to handle these complicated problems. We've generally gone back and asked Congress to legislate something, and that may not be the best way to handle these kinds of problems. You're asking a body that doesn't have any kind of real scientific understanding to try to legislate a solution. Unfortunately, they are being pushed by people who are more interested in winning than they are in the merits of the case. One thing that Congress did do in this last session, they paid quite a bit of attention to the Interagency Scientific Committee report, and then they did ask for people to go out independently and look and come back with a series of options which they just completed.

HKS: What was learned from the snail darter episode? I'm not sure I fully understand it, but it was claimed to be endangered and turned out not to be and the Tellico dam was held up for a while. That was extreme. Have people learned some kind of lesson from the snail darter, which they are trying to apply to this, or is it all forgotten now?

RMP: I don't know whether it had anything to do with snail darters. Snail darter was a means to an end; it was a means to find some way to stop a project that a lot of people thought didn't have much merit.

HKS: Some people are claiming that's what the spotted owl is.

RMP: There may be some people that are using the spotted owl as a proxy for other objectives, too. But I would consider the spotted owl quite different. You have, I think, a valid indicator species here. The snail darter was considered a newly emerged species in that stream, and it turned out it was also in other streams.

HKS: Somebody explained to me that maybe Congress should amend the Rare and Endangered Species Act, because it's too extreme.

RMP: Congress did set up this so-called God committee. The secretaries of several departments head a particular project of great importance, and they can override the Endangered Species Act and authorize the project. The God committee has never functioned. Some people have grave reservations about the utility of the God committee. The God committee was based on the idea of reviewing an individual project.

HKS: Most projects don't have national significance.

RMP: Most projects do not. If I were calling the shot on the spotted owl right now, I would adopt the recommendations of the Interagency Scientific Committee as an interim step. I would then use that report, which is the best thing we know, with whatever adjustments might be found that might be appropriate after more intense examination. I would proceed on the basis of that interagency scientific report for the time being. Unfortunately, that's again a proposal that would be in the middle and it's not supported by either end.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: That makes it difficult for Congress to deal with it. My own prediction is that whatever ends up being decided here will end up being pretty close to the Interagency Scientific Committee report.

HKS: Congress would be glad to have a way out of this dilemma of having extreme polarization. This is a respected report from a respected body, so in this case, even though there aren't many advocates for the middle ground, it might prevail in Congress.

RMP: That's what I think will end up prevailing. This is a place where the Bush administration has lost a great opportunity to take some leadership. The Bush administration, which has expressed great concern for being environmentally responsible (in fact, Bush said he wanted to be known as the environmental president), missed an opportunity to adopt the Interagency Scientific Committee report, and to then move on. If the Bush administration had supported the Interagency Scientific Committee report, Congress would probably have adopted that and gone ahead. The problem is that we've got some powerful political forces that don't want to do that.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: The only statement the president has made on it is that he wants to find a way to protect the owl and protect jobs. He wants to find a balanced solution, which is a laudable and probably an appropriate statement for a president, but the question is who's going to define that in specific terms?

HKS: Does an agency get in trouble if these hot items get to the White House? Rather than being solved at the agency level?

RMP: Certainly an agency doesn't want things to continue to escape to the White House. In this case, BLM is saying it's going to protect all those owls. We need to harvest all the timber we're harvesting now and still protect all those owls. Which they can do, for about two years, and then the world is going to fall out. In my view, that's an irresponsible position, but politically very attractive.

HKS: Gets you through the next election.

RMP: Gets you through the next election. So if you take a short-term focus, you can say to the White House that if the Forest Service would just adopt our position, we'd be home free for the next couple of years. Of course, the reason everybody is concentrating on the Forest Service is because a high percentage of the land involved is national forest. Nobody will let the Forest Service get by with that position. BLM doesn't have their plans finished, and so they're saying they don't know what they should adjust to until they run the numbers and go through the planning process.

I said to the state director in Oregon, "You know why it's never going to come out. If you read those numbers and you provided the text that the Interagency Scientific Committee indicates, you know you're going to go from about nine hundred million board feet to about half that much, right?" From what he knows of the land, he knows that. But until you get your plan finished you don't have to make that change. It gives you some time. That's the tough thing that the political system doesn't do very well. If you don't mean to do anything for a couple of years, don't do it. Even though the implications downstream might be very grim.

HKS: You can always hold out hope that new research will find different answers.

RMP: If you're the assistant secretary somewhere, and you are interested in not making waves until we get through 1990 elections, that's a very appealing course of action. Why in the world, in an election year, do you want to try to deal with this can of worms, when there ain't no winners?

HKS: Maybe that's a good place to end this session.

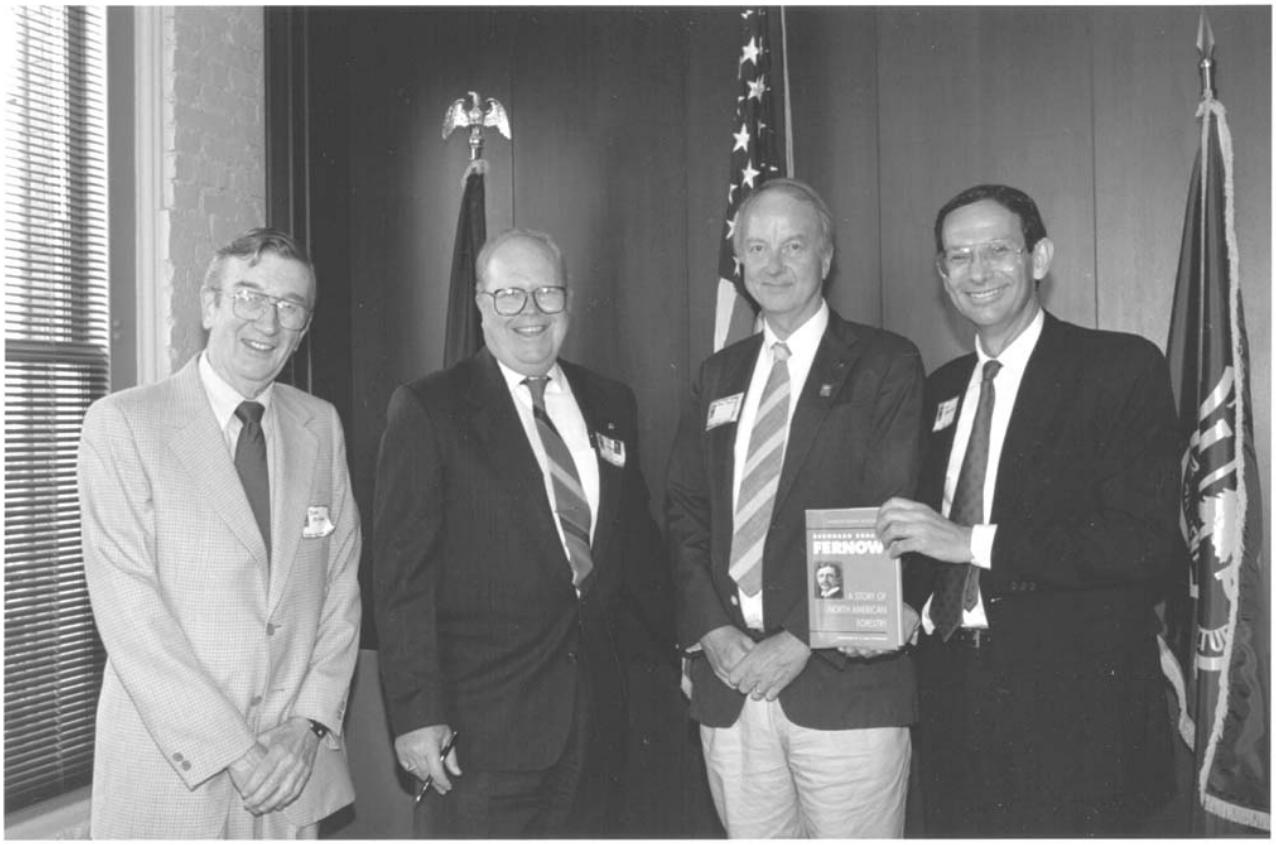

Figure 2: John McGuire, Ralph Max Peterson, Harold K. Steen, and Dale Robertson at a book signing party; 1991. McGuire, Peterson, and Robertson are all former chiefs of the U. S. Forest Service. Harold K. “Pete” Steen is the former director of the Forest History Society. [Photo courtesy of the Forest History Society, Durham, N.C.]

Second Session: May 19-20, 1992

Decentralization

HKS: Let's pick up where we left off last August. It strikes me that there's less decentralization than there used to be because of NFPA and …

RMP: NFMA.

HKS: Right. Computers requiring standardization of procedures and whatever.

RMP: I said to people several times that in things like decentralization you had to run as hard as you could to stay anywhere near even because there are trends which run in both directions. As communications gets better and as user groups organize to make their wishes known at various levels, and as you get more legislation, what's happening on one forest is immediately known what's happening on another forest, so there's some degree of what I would call departure. What different forests are doing can't be too far off of that in other forests unless there are very good reasons for it. Let me give you an example. I went down a little part of the Salmon River, the River of No Return, a few years ago by float boat, and in the process of doing that I was in three regions on about four or five forests and maybe as many as six ranger districts. Now as far as the public is concerned that's one river. So you can't suddenly be faced with a whole lot of different policies or a whole lot of ways of doing things on the same river. So there has to be some reasonable consistency. In that specific case, there's historical Forest Service tradition we do things different on this forest than on another forest. Well, that was causing a fair amount of public criticism because on one forest let's say you're expected to use some procedure where everything you took in you took out, even including your ashes and so on, and a very high standard. And on that forest, let's say, you could only camp in designated places. That was the forest's way to control the impact. So on the next forest they said, "Oh well, with the level of use we have, people should be able to camp anywhere, and we don't believe in concentrating use because if we concentrate use we just get higher impact. Now that you can't explain to the users. That difference of opinion. In fact those forests have come a lot of ways now in getting some consistency.

But if you have timber sales on one forest that say you can bury slash as a slash disposal method, on the next forest you say you can't, if the conditions aren't different you have a hard time dealing with that. So over time there's been a need to at least maintain what I call reasonable consistency. Not uniformity, but some reasonable consistency so that there was a demonstrated reason for what was happening. Now what I tried very hard to do was to leave that decision making to coordinate between districts to the forest supervisor and coordinate within forests to the regional foresters and so on. If you don't do that, if you don't get some reasonable consistency, then you aspire to Congress to make laws to say this is the way it's going to be done. Some of the more difficult things to handle on that, and this is the final example, is when you get something like wilderness where there's high visibility across the country. We had one area where a person died in the wilderness, and someone looking at the policy of emergency or action necessary to protect life or property reasoned that that person was dead and so there was no particular reason to let them take the body up in the helicopter. That simply is not an acceptable response.

HKS: I can see that.

RMP: We had to move in real quick and handle that. We had to immediately say to people you can't just refuse to let people go in and get dead bodies, people that have died in there.

HKS: What would be the limit of that? You couldn't punch in a road to get a body.

RMP: Oh no, no, no.

HKS: But a helicopter, you're talking about helicopters.

RMP: We're still saying whatever you do it's got to have minimal impact on the wilderness. The use of helicopter is very transient. If the person was fairly close to the road you might say hey we can go in and get that person by stretcher. The point is, there's an acceptable level of decision making on that and if you don't get reasonable consistency that can be defended then decisions continue to creep up. For example, for a long time it required chief's approval to use chain saws in wilderness or to use mechanized equipment to do some things like that, and we had some suggestions that we delegated all the way to the district ranger. After examining that in some detail we said, number one the district ranger is going to be under enormous pressure in some cases to approve that type of use. Number two, in order to maintain at least reasonable consistency we delegate out to the regional forester to make that decision. So in a round about way I guess I'm saying you've got to keep working to keep decentralization going.

I don't think computers centralize decision making. They did standardize information. In other words when you have computers you can't have one person trying to deal with national reporting, and that's one of the reasons you've got computers is so that if you have say a report on how many timber sales you sold last year, you've got to have some standardized data that doesn't give from one region information in chains, and another region in miles, and another region in some other measure. You have to use some consistent other measure so we can add them up on the regional basis or national basis. So there's a lot of work done on standardizing units of measure. But that didn't centralize the decision making on where to make a timber sale.

NFMA and Planning

HKS: The difference between the Multiple Use Act and the National Forest Management Act in terms of field discretion, that is substantial.

RMP: I don't think it was as substantial as it looks. Did you know for example Ed Cliff used to approve every timber management plan on a national forest?

HKS: No, I didn't.

RMP: Personally.

HKS: Was that a matter of style?

RMP: Well, they required approval in the Washington office.

HKS: Was that right?

RMP: Yes, and Ed Cliff used to approve them personally. A lot of plans, and this is one of the reasons I think NFMA came about. Some plans you could approve at the forest level, some at the district level, some at the regional level and some came in here, and there wasn't any particular rhyme or reason about it. The multiple use plan, which supposedly is the most important plan that was made out there, was approved by the forest supervisor. If you wanted to issue a ski area permit, only the regional forester could do that. The timber management plan came all the way to Washington. So NFMA said what the plan will be, the plan for a forest will be approved by a regional forester on the recommendation of the forest supervisor. So basically it put the forest in a planning mode. If you go all the way back in 1960 in gearing the national forest for the years ahead there was a study that recommended that the forest be the planning unit. That was one of the central recommendations of that study. In fact what happened is that some of the planning was above and some below, and the forest never really became the planning unit until the NFMA passed. So I think on balance NFMA made planning more consistent, I don't think it really centralized it.

There is a potential for misuse of NFMA; for example I would not let the policy staff of the Forest Service get mixed up in a plan for national forests. There was technical review of forest plans by the land management

planning staff. They would look at a forest plan and they would say this display doesn't make sense, you haven't completed the economic analysis of this, it was a technical review, but they didn't deal with what alternatives you should adopt. That was off limits because the regional forester was supposed to make the decision which was appealable to the chief.

HKS: Human nature being what it is, if the plans look a whole lot different wouldn't there be some how come the Willamette is doing this and the Umpqua is doing that?

RMP: Maybe in terms of analysis and terms of the alternatives they are examining and some of that type of thing, yes, but not in terms of should the a timber sale level be this level versus some other level or should they have this area set aside for a roadless area, none of that type of thing. The real examination was the reasonable display of alternatives. Doug MacCleery did in fact review along with John Fedkiw quite a lot of the early plans from the standpoint of did they have an adequate economic analysis, did they have an adequate display of alternatives, did they constrain the alternatives predisposed where they wanted the outcome to be. And so quite a few of the plans would come back saying all of the alternatives for this forest plan fall within this narrow range. None of the wider range of alternatives examined. The economic analysis here does not apparently consider secondary impacts, this type of thing. But we worked very hard to prevent the department or the chief's office from starting to preempt the decision.

The only thing running contrary to that principle is that there is no question that the administration, John Crowell and MacCleery, had a strong view that the western forests particularly ought to be able to produce more timber than they were producing. John expressed that view emphatically and personally. But in spite of expressing that view very emphatically, to my knowledge John never looked at a forest plan and said I want you to pick this alternative, or I want you to pick some other alternative. He pretty well stood back from that and only acted when an appeal came.

The interesting thing about a couple of appeals the department took, in one case of the spotted owl. In that case my decision of a regional guide for the Pacific Northwest, they directed us to go back and look at the regional guide in terms of how much we had set aside for the spotted owl and so on, because there was a lot of criticism of the amount we had set aside for spotted owl protection. In fact when we reviewed that whole decision and collected the additional research and also the additional information on how many owls were out there and so on, we ended up with a decision that actually called for setting aside more than the original decision. That decision was not overturned.

HKS: Let's talk about Section 6.

RMP: Section 6 directed national forest planning to be done, the so-called planning section. It contained guidelines for planning, it contained some statements about protecting lakes and streams, and it required providing a diversity of fish and wildlife and so on. The guts of NFMA was Section 6 that directed all the planning.

HKS: Was there a shift under Reagan?

RMP: Right after the Reagan administration came in, somebody had said that they ought to look at the Section 6 planning arrangements because they were unduly complicated and the Forest Service hadn't done a good job of explaining what they were doing and so on. So the Reagan administration in their regulatory review did ask for a review of the Section 6 regs. We went through a formal notice that the Section 6 regs would be reviewed and revised. We got all kinds of public comment; the department participated vigorously throughout that. When the dust all settled, the changes that were made were very minor. They were mostly changes that were a result of experience to date, in terms of clarifying the regs in a few places. At one point there was a proposal to change the reg as it related to wildlife and there was a very minor change there, but I don't think it was substantial. My prediction is that right now that wildlife provision of Section 6 may in fact get changed under the current review.

HKS: You've got the actual statute there.

RMP: Yes. I'm looking at Section 6 which relates to land management planning. One of the things it says is that the regulations that are developed are to specified guidelines which require the identification of the suitability of land for resource management, providing for obtaining inventory data, provided for methods to identify special conditions or situations and so on. The next section says specify guidelines for land management to achieve the goals of the program which a) insure consideration of the economic and environmental aspects of various systems of resource management including the related system of silviculture and protection of forest resources to provide for outdoor recreation including wilderness, range, timber, watershed, wilderness, and fish. This was the one that was controversial. Provide for diversity of plant and animal communities based on the suitability and capability of the specific land area in order to meet overall multiple use objectives, and within the multiple use objectives of the land management plan adopted pursuant to this section. Provided where appropriate and to the degree practical for steps to be taken to preserve the diversity of tree species similar to that existing region controlled by the plan. Okay, when the NFMA regs were written, and I can't give you a verbatim on that, this was interpreted to mean, and stated in the regs was to maintain viable populations, at least minimal viable populations of fish and wildlife species throughout the area covered by the plan in the forest.

This then has raised questions. Let's take in the case of the spotted owl. Suppose that in the recovery plan that's developed for the spotted owl it says that certain lands are necessary for recovery, but suppose that doesn't include all the national forest. Then the question is does this minimal viable population cover the rest of that forest that's outside the recovery plan? I think a good reading of this would say it probably does. And that's one of the things the judge picked up on in ruling on the spotted owl region. So I think there is probably some revisiting of that provision going on right now. My personal opinion is that that would be unfortunate if that happens because if you don't maintain viable habitats throughout a national forest and you go to the idea you're going to kind of divvy the forest up, I don't think that's going to be very satisfactory for anybody because you're going to end up with a whole bunch of so-called dominant use areas. Unfortunately, particularly for fish and wildlife that don't stay in one area of the forest all winter, maybe move out, that's not going to be a very satisfactory solution to any of the fish and wildlife issues. And it's going to cause people to want to set aside larger areas if in the planning process you're going to be able to neglect whole pieces of the forest as relates to fish and wildlife.

HKS: Have the decisions on the owl and other species been made on terms of Section 6 as opposed to the Endangered Species Act?

RMP: The judge in the one case on the spotted owl ruled specifically that the Forest Service had violated this particular provision of NFMA. Some of the cases have turned on NEPA compliance, that you comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. Some have turned on the Endangered Species Act, but others have turned on this portion of the NFMA. So there's a mixture of laws that have been used. Since we don't at this point have a resolution to where the owl decision is finally going to rest, there's some interplay between these laws.

HKS: I remember when NFMA was passed. It seemed to have been the end of the antagonism between the environmentalists and management agencies and industry. Everyone seemed to be satisfied. If you read the literature of 1977-78, a feeling of good will. That didn't last very long, did it?

RMP: Well that was pretty superficial, if you look at what those groups were saying just two weeks before the act was passed. I remember that the National Forest Products Association had a big rally and said if this act passed it was going to double the cost of 2 x 4s and it's going to dramatically increase the cost of housing which is going to prevent all kinds of people from houses. People from the environmental community said if this law passes it turns all the discretion back to the Forest Service, it will be a disaster. So everybody was claiming disaster on both sides two weeks ahead of time. Finally when the act passed, everybody sort of declared victory. And I suppose that's normal.

There is, Pete, an inherent idea in people's mind that if you do long-range planning and you do a valid planning process, that somehow you'll come out where they want it to come out. I would say to you Pete if you and I walked out and we did a plan for this forest, I'm just assuming that when we're through you and I will be in pretty well agreement. But when the plan comes out and seven or eight different groups look at it and they say well now, we lost in this process or we gained, then people are unhappy with the plan. They may have thought the process was fine. Let me add one other thought to that. The National Environmental Policy Act that requires

you to lay out alternatives is a very logical process but what it causes to happen, though, is when you lay out those alternatives and evaluate the alternatives, it's immediately obvious to every interested group out there which one of those alternatives are best for them. So invariably one group will lobby for this alternative because they see it provides a better future for them, and another group lobbies for another one. None of those interest groups will ever deal with a so-called optimum plan, because in an optimum plan somebody's going to not have as much as they would on another. So the planning process in some ways polarizes the public.

HKS: I suppose.

RMP: By outlining a whole bunch of futures. For example, if I come out with a forest plan and one of the alternatives cuts the timber output of that forest in half, and you represent the timber industry, you're not going to be for that. If one of those plans makes three-fourths of that forest wilderness and you represent the Wilderness Society, you're going to buy that one before you'll buy one that makes half of it wilderness. So in some respects that planning process in itself tends to break people apart.

HKS: I suppose when you list their pet idea you acknowledge that it's a valid alternative, suddenly that validates their position …

RMP: Sure. In fact, one of the things that happens is the different groups that believe in that alternative will use your own data to say hey this is a viable alternative, it has these kinds of economic benefits and these kinds of environmental benefits and why aren't you buying this one. Are you buying this one? So it is hard to get a clientele in the planning process, it's hard to get a clientele for something in a multiple use framework that represents some kind of optimum. I'm not sure what to do about that, but it seems to be a little bit of a by-product of the planning process.

You also see that groups sometimes will come together around an alternative which they think is a reasonable compromise, but then the minute one group goes and breaks away from that compromise and starts going back to the one they proposed, then everybody breaks apart. I remember in the Flathead National Forest there was a tremendous amount of work done there to bring a lot of people along with something that looked as if it would represent a reasonable compromise to all the competing uses, and it looked like that was going to work pretty well. Then at the last minute a couple of organizations decided to appeal and so on and in a remarkably short time there was some, I don't know, fifteen or twenty appeals on that one plan. Because everybody wanted to maintain their position.

HKS: Isn't there a bill, or something's happened very recently about reducing the access to appeal?

RMP: Yes, I think there's been an overreaction to it. You can appeal a forest plan, but in essence once the forest plan is approved you can ask a forest supervisor, for example, to take another look at something informally. He'll put it out for public review for thirty days, but there's no appeal. I frankly think that's a mistake. I think that in the short run it will spawn a whole lot more litigation. Because you see if you don't have an appeal you can immediately go to court. You don't have to exhaust your administrative remedy, you've already exhausted them. A lot of people are concerned that this will result in less willingness to listen to public concerns.

HKS: But the forest industry is saying that this is a good thing, to reduce that appeal process.

RMP: I think that represents their frustration, which is logical, some of it. Some people simply waited until something was going to happen and then they appealed, and at least they would delay things. And this frustrated people. But the data does not indicate that appeals have been a significant problem to the forest industry. It's resulted in some delay, but lawsuits are what's been devastating to the industry in the last three or four years. I think the data shows that only about 5 percent of the timber sales nationally are appealed, and only about 1 percent of those were delayed through the appeals. Now that was frustrating to people, but think of what happens if somebody who is unhappy with one of those goes to court, and maybe ties up the whole area for the next two or three years. It's not unusual for court decisions to take that long. I think there was a need to reform the process.

This is a very personal opinion; I suggested a few years ago after I left the service when they were looking at the appeal process that they might have a $500 filing fee if you wanted to appeal, because right now you could appeal with a 29-cent stamp. And there were appeals that came in that were turned out on a word processor that were identical to a previous appeal with just changing the name of a forest or the name of a sale. And some of those from the same person. In a few cases they didn't even change the name in all the places of the appeal. And for 29 cents one could sort of stop the whole Forest Service while they went through a big appeal thing. Now you could have required a $500 filing fee and then say if the appeal is found to have merit and the person prevails if there was something wrong with this case, then we'll refund their money, or something like that. At least you would take out just the personal appeals because they only cost 29 cents to appeal. In some cases there appeared to be some law students at school who appealed just to get the experience.

HKS: I imagine.

RMP: But I think the current thing looks like it's throwing the baby out with the bath water to completely eliminate the appeal process.

RPA

HKS: In 1976 in a *Western Wildlands* article you asked, "can the forest and rangelands continue to serve us well, the answer is yes." The reason for your optimism was RPA. In 1975 RPA things were just getting going. From an outsider's point of view, RPA has been shot at by just about everyone outside of the agency, I don't know if that's a fair characterization but that's what I see. It doesn't have many public supporters outside of the agency. What happened? There's planning process, everyone agrees that planning is good but it's been criticized by forestry professionals, economists, the whole range of things.

RMP: I think that maybe there was an unreal expectation of RPA, and maybe I even had some unreal expectations. But if you think about it a little bit, managing a complex system of public lands, being concerned about production of natural resources on private land, and about research and so on, I think everybody decided we needed a better frame of reference. We needed a better look at the future supply and demand in renewable resources. Anytime you do projections about the future they are subject to all kinds of different perceptions about the future. I mentioned earlier that people had sort of a naive impression that if you look far enough ahead and you looked at the future of supply and demand and so on you would obviously come out with their piece of a pie.

HKS: That's right, sure.

RMP: I know that the industry for example thought that if you really look at the need for renewable resources and you look at the long-term future, the need for housing, and you look at the long-term need for a variety of things that needs to come from the national forest, and you look at the fact that a lot of private lands are not being continued in production of goods and services and so on, going into second homes and so on, they look at this and say well the long-term future of the national forest ought to play a bigger role in timber supply, right. It's not unusual. On the other hand suppose that you're a fisherman or hunter or you are a wilderness advocate, and you look at those same public lands and you say look, the private lands are being closed to fishing and hunting, a lot of it is, it's no longer going to be accessible. It's going into second homes and so on, so the habitat is no longer there. So we need a bigger hunk of this national forest to fit our needs. So coming from different points of view, everybody who liked the planning process again thought that the result would be that their piece of pie would get bigger. Well the problem is that you can't make the pie bigger for everybody.

HKS: That's right.

RMP: The thing we lost, I think, in RPA is that the only way to meet future needs that are growing in all kinds of things is to figure out some better ways to make uses harmonious, and to be able to share the land better. The national forests are not big enough to partition them off and to have big areas for single purpose use. Now it's

sort of like your house, it would be sort of nice if you had enough rooms in the house for everybody to have a room of their own that nobody else used.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: If you had a twenty-room house for your family you could do that, you know. On national forests we've seen more and more demand for fishing, for hunting, for skiing, for trail use, for all kinds of public use like that. People are saying hey we've got to meet our future oil and gas needs from these lands. All these needs are increasing, and there seems to be less willingness on some people's part to share those lands. Of trying to get legislation that will just kick somebody else off. In fact some of the more difficult things that I dealt with while I was chief was different kinds of recreation use on the same river.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: The argument between float boaters and power boaters on the Snake River in Hell's Canyon. They each violently opposed what they thought what was too much use by the other one. Float boaters thought when we're floating down that river we don't want those big power boats coming up that river and destroying our peace and solitude. Besides we think they're dangerous in some cases. The jet boaters are saying look, those float boaters have got 150 miles above that, why can't this river be primary for our use? It's those uses that people want out there in a multipurpose framework that inherently cause conflict.

HKS: Is it a fair characterization that in 1960 Congress passed the Multiple Use Act and that since then they've been dealing with single purposes like wilderness, wetlands, in a sense reneging on the concept of multiple use? I'm trying to get a framework about how to characterize the '60s and '70s in terms of Congress. Are they being logical or illogical?

RMP: I think what you saw in the '60s and '70s is Congress responding to demands from users out there. Now the wilderness controversy of course predates the Multiple Use Act.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: It was I think 1956; Humphrey introduced the first wilderness act. The Gila Wilderness was set aside in 1924, forty years before the wilderness act passed. So wilderness had been an underlying issue for a long time. Congress finally said in 1964 that wilderness is too important a decision for an agency to make. The Forest Service had set aside a lot of land for wilderness up until that time administratively. When they passed the Multiple Use Act they a little bit put the wilderness question aside. In '64 they passed the Wilderness Act and they said wilderness is hereby declared to be complimentary to the Multiple Use Act. Then as Congresses come along and passed Wild Scenic Rivers Act and Endangered Species Act and so on, Congress was saying hey we're not just going to leave the multiuse decision all up to the agency. We're going to tag some of these lands. Particularly this has to do with public use lands, used by people. All that legislation you're talking about, whether it's Wild Scenic Rivers or national trails or national recreation areas, had the Congress giving specific direction for land that has high public use. So they said we're just not going to leave this up to agency discretion, we want you to give special attention. Members of Congress will say one reason they did that is that they felt that the Forest Service, left to its own devices, would tilt too much toward the timber side.

HKS: Do you think that was a fair characterization?

RMP: I think the agency was changing its emphasis, but apparently not changing it fast enough to suit members of Congress, or at least not fast enough to suit interest groups.

HKS: I suppose Region 6 is what people look at when they think about timber management. It still dominates the picture, at least it does in my mind, and maybe that's because I was raised in Region 6.

RMP: Region 6 with its huge inventory of old growth, and it's really huge. The national forest started dominating the timber picture out there, particularly the '70s and '80s, and put enormous pressure on Region 6. Back as early as the middle '70s, I was saying to people out there you've got to look at this oncoming crunch because

people are moving to the Pacific Northwest because they like the amenities of the Pacific Northwest. They like the snow-capped mountains, the ability to ski, the ability to use the trails and the streams and all that. At the same time those same lands are in demand for people who want them for wood products, and the concentration of more and more coming on the national forests because the private land was cutover, so it was industry land cutover. So you were seeing this huge demand heading right for the national forest. It was very obvious it was going to be a crunch there. It would be a crunch between timber harvest on those forests and their demands for other uses.

Now in the best of all worlds we would have began in the '60s to try to make some faster conversion of industry to second growth, where they would aim some of the new mill capacity and so on to second growth. We would have developed more thinning technology. We would have developed some less impactful silvicultural techniques for the visual impacts. We made all those changes but not apparently fast enough. And I think that's a message that in hindsight you could say is that members of Congress and industry out there kept saying well you've got lots of volume here, you can meet the needs one more year. But this was postponing the day of reckoning.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: That's the reason that when it did finally come, and was aided and abetted by the concern for endangered species, potentially endangered species, threatened endangered species like the spotted owl, the transition was a whole lot more painful than it would have been if it started earlier.

HKS: When I was a senior at the University of Washington in 1957, on a senior field trip on the Weyerhaeuser/Clemmons tree farm, one of the head foresters said that one of the biggest problems the company had was how to get rid of all this old growth before it falls over. They had fifty years' supply. Well that was thirty-five years ago that that guy made that statement, so they were looking ahead for this transition anyway. It happened sooner, but there were no real surprises except the calendar, the timetable is the problem in that sense.

RMP: The timetable and the fact that he was looking at a volume that probably was more than what was actually there, and the rate of harvest was greater than people predicted at that time. See this whole export of logs was not predicted at that time, and that's been a significant amount of the timber supply problem in the Pacific Northwest. Not only has there been a huge domestic demand but this big oversees demand that feed on the Pacific Northwest. It certainly helped from a balance of trade standpoint and all that type of thing, but it's contributed significantly to the lack of timber supply in the Pacific Northwest, that overseas trade of logs.

HKS: Getting back to RPA specifically. Have the assessments been controversial? Have people generally accepted the numbers?

RMP: Yes. I think the numbers have been reasonably accepted because most people, unless they're an economist, may argue a little bit with the numbers but they don't pay that much attention to numbers. The only part of the numbers that may have been controversial has been some people have questioned that there was going to be that much future demand for red meat, and some argued with the population projections, but since that just talks about the supply and demand, unless you're an economist you don't argue too much with it.

HKS: So it's the programs.

RMP: The programs, because that's where impacts start appearing. It's when you actually start saying where that demand is going to be met that people start dealing with the impacts. Again one of the problems is that when you start looking at that demand, one of the places that they fell right on top of each other was the Pacific Northwest. You've got both increasing recreation demands, increasing concerns for threatened endangered species, and a concern for timber supply. It falls right on top of each other in the Pacific Northwest. And you've got a very high concentration of public land that has the inventory on it. The freight train crashed there is what it amounts to.

HKS: I'm aware of the controversy. There was an RFF conference in '81, I remember the date vividly because it was the day Reagan was shot. The conference was on RPA and everyone was critical of it, for a variety of reasons, mostly people that were economists. There were a few people there from the Forest Service defending it or explaining that it was working. It was rather dramatic to me as an observer. Maybe it was a stacked deck, maybe they invited people to critique.

RMP: No. I think if you ask me to a conference involving RPA, I would have some criticism of it. I would say, you probably should have done this or done this or done this …

HKS: It's not the law, it's the …

RMP: It's not the law. I read that criticism from the RFF thing, and one of the things that they generally said was the whole process is too complicated. It has not laid it out clearly enough. That we recommend that the part of the document that is devoted to the particular resource that they were concerned with be expanded to cover three or four additional things, but that the length of the document be reduced. So almost every interest group said it was way too long and too complicated but it did not adequately cover the part of it that they were concerned about. And that's kind of a predictable thing, because very few people look at the RPA in terms of kind of an intellectual exercise, they look at the piece of it they're interested in.

HKS: So looking back, during markup you would say let's change this section in RPA because it's not going to …

RMP: No. I think if I were going back to look at RPA, I would say that the law is pretty solid. I think there was a kind of naive assumption that the presidential statement policy that was be in RPA that was so controversial that it even communication at OMB was going to ask the president to veto it because they thought it tied the president's hand on future budget requests. The idea that RPA by laying out future needs would somehow result in greatly enhanced budgets turned out to be partially true. Congress, when it's looking at competing needs, is going to react to a good case that's put together, but they aren't necessarily going to provide everything that's there, no more than they'll provide everything that any other agency requests. So I think there were some naive assumptions in on that. I don't think that provision is all-important. At the time we thought that was essential to getting an administration commitment to RPA, and now OMB has got it all figured out where they just put in there that in consideration of these other priorities and so on the president decides to do this. It doesn't mean a thing. So there isn't any particular commitment to that provision. So that was a naive expectation. I still it's all right to be in there, but I don't think it's a big as deal as we thought at the time.

HKS: From the management point of view, what's the difference for planning between NEPA and RPA?

RMP: A great difference. NEPA is developed around we want to build a road from here to there and there are four different ways of doing it, which is the best way? We want to make a timber sale out here, what's the alternative to that particular sale? There's been practically no programmatic EIS stuff. In fact the only real programmatic EIS of any consequence was the one that was down on the roadless area deal, and that one failed because the court started applying site specific tests. You can't do a site-specific analysis of a few thousand roadless areas and ever put it in a document that anybody could ever read.

HKS: That's what McGuire was saying when I interviewed him, they thought a single EIS would do it for wilderness.

RMP: But the reason for that was that NEPA was never designed as a programmatic thing. The framers, Senator Jackson, may have had a programmatic view, but he said in making a decision, the decision makers should lay out the environmental consequences of that decision along with the usual economic impacts and other things, and then say why he picked the alternative he picked. When you're dealing with national forests nationwide there are two billion alternatives. So you really can't lay out all the alternatives.

HKS: So in a sense both are valid, both are necessary at this …

RMP: I think if I were doing it over again, and I think we talked about it for about five minutes, the National Forest Management Act, the process that specified the National Forest Management Act of a plan for an area of

land and saying what the environmental economic and social consequences are of different plans and considering alternatives is a need for processes, if you think about it, for a forest. I think we probably should have said that is the need for process for this forest.

HKS: Maybe that would simplify it. It would have a separate process for NEPA, that would be …

RMP: We would say the way you comply with NEPA for a national forest is to go through this planning process, because we had great problems early on with both during the National Forest Management Act and the analysis that was needed to support that and then someone saying well where's your NEPA document? And how we fitted this together was a lot of thrashing around early on. I think we'd have been further ahead had we said the NFMA process will be the NEPA process for national forests. Then when you get to the project level then you apply NEPA at the project level. I think it would have made the planning process more understandable.

State and Private Forestry

HKS: Shifting gears substantially here, State and Private Forestry as an operation is not well understood by the general public. Yet it's very significant in the East. Talk in general terms about State and Private Forestry. Does it make sense to have it as a separate operation, like in Region 9, but less so in Region 8.

RMP: In the first place I think because nonindustrial private forest land represents about 60 percent of the commercial forest land base in this country, you simply have to pay attention to the health and vigor of that part of the forest land base. So there has to be a state and private program. I think the question of how you organize and carry out that program has always been a tricky one. In fact the only reason that there's an Area, a so-called Area in the Northeast, there used to be one in the Southeast, is that during the early '60s there was a committee formed that had a person from OMB name of Deckert and Ed Schulz from the Forest Service and several others that looked at the Forest Service and looked at its programs. They said land in the East is overwhelmingly in private ownership. State and Private Forestry as part of those two regions but the regional foresters pay too much attention to the public land. They actually recommended separating State and Private nationally into a separate organization. At that time Ed Cliff was chief and after considerable discussion Ed said well if this is a good idea to have this separation, which he was not convinced it was, try it in the East and see how it works.

HKS: I see.

RMP: Setting up the two areas in the East was a trial of how this worked and it was supposedly going to be reevaluated. The reason the one is up in Upper Darby initially, the idea was let's try State and Private with Research in one place and with National Forest Administration in another, with the idea that maybe one of the main things we need in State and Private is research and education. Maybe tying in a research station will facilitate that, and that way we won't have to have different support organizations, too. The Northeast Station will support that new organization, and in Atlanta the region would support that new organization. I think that was, at the time, somewhat of a questionable decision because in some respects a federal, state, and private organization is hard to get a handle on. It neither has responsibility for the private land, because that is the responsibility of the state forester, and neither can it speak for the public land because that's under NFA. That creates some real frustration.

I remember when I was in Atlanta, there was a new State and Private office that was going around about that time in North Carolina. It was going to be kind of a zone organization, you know, with certain states. They said well we want to make State and Private visible up here, and we want an office on the road with a flag flying and so on. So I said what are you going to do when somebody drives in and says we've got a fire? You're not a fire organization. Or suppose somebody rides in and says we want a timber sale, and you don't have a timber sale. You're a support organization to the states, and making you visible to the people to come ask you things is not your role. You see a backup role is a difficult role to understand, it's a very important role. But anyway, the basic point I guess is this. You asked me about the State and Private organization. It needs to be people that

understand that you're going to get your job well done through the states primarily, you're a backup organization to the states. That's a very tough role for a lot of people, because you are not the person who is dealing directly with the public.

HKS: Is State and Private primarily driven by Clarke-McNary? What other statutes are there?

RMP: The basic law that runs the State and Private now is the 1978 Renewable Resources Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act. That updated the old Clarke-McNary act, the old McNary and Sweeney, the CM-2, you know, all that stuff that was in those earlier acts.

HKS: Before Ed Cliff's time, how was State and Private Forestry administered? Was the funding out of the National Forest …

RMP: No, no, there was a deputy chief for State and Private all that time, but the field organization all reported to the regional forester.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: All that happened in '64 was in the East these two areas were set up. They were coequal to national forest regions. During my tenure I eliminated the area in Atlanta, the Southeastern area was in Atlanta, for the simple reason that operationally we never quite figured out how to handle a lot of duplicated functions. For example, in Atlanta we had a State and Private organization concerned with fire and a National Forest organization concerned with fire.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Okay. Both of them were monitoring what the weather was going to be like, where the forces were, and all this kind of thing. One of them was concerned about fire on national forests and the other was concerned about fire on the state and private land. The fact is you never knew where the fire was going to start. I couldn't see having two fire organizations; it just didn't make a lot of sense to me. When you talk about insect/disease, the insect/disease might be on national forest and it might be on private land. Having two insect/disease approaches didn't seem to make a lot of sense. So when you got into the nitty gritty of it, it seemed to me we were duplicating expertise at a time when we really couldn't afford to duplicate expertise. I reasoned that the same person that was available to get help to a national forest that wanted to have a tree nursery or had an insect disease problem could be the same person that could help the state if they had a problem, from the regional office viewpoint, that is. In other words, lets suppose that you have a southern pine beetle outbreak in Alabama. The same person that's going to give assistance on private land ought to give assistance on national forest land. And it ought not to be over in some different organization. So we recombined it in the Southeast. It's a little bit more difficult in the Northeast because the regional office is in Milwaukee and that's a long, long way from a lot of the private land in the Northeast. So the two remain separate in the Northeast.

HKS: State and Private is primarily protection? Insect, disease, that sort of …

RMP: No. The important things that State and Private did besides protection and insect disease are things like tree improvement programs. Tree improvement programs have been in place throughout the Southeast for example that result in genetically improved trees growing on private land, it's primarily been carried through the State and Private organization. The utilization studies have been made of sawmills and how to improve utilization have come out of the State and Private organization. The large tree planning programs that have been on private lands with technical backup for these tree planning programs have been provided by the State and Private organization. State and Private is the technology transfer agent on things like treated bridges, on this new forest legacy program in the Northeast that's looking at the use of agreements or easements that sort of thing as an alternative to fee-title acquisition to improve management of land. That's come through the State and Private organization. So I would say that equally important things that the State and Private done has been outside the protection area, have been in management utilization.

HKS: The State and Private person at Upper Darby is in a sense another regional forester, of that caliber of individual. How do you find experience and how do they demonstrate that kind of skill? I don't know if you appointed one when you were chief.

RMP: Yes. As I said earlier, it takes a fairly unique person to do that job because you do your job primarily through persuasion. You do your work through assistance and persuasion and you're not in this highly visible kind of a position, it's a different role.

HKS: Who are you persuading, the state forester?

RMP: The state forester primarily. In some cases you're helping persuade state legislators that they ought to be doing something to help providing matching funds and so on through the state. You may be working with the state to deal with an insect/disease problem. You've got to do certain suppression activities and so on. But it's a hard role. In fact I said that for everybody that worked on national forests, it would be good training for them if they worked State and Private for a while. They'd learn how to cooperate with people, how to get things done where you can't just order people to do things. And they would learn the value of working with different groups. So I was a promoter of the idea that you moved back and forth between National Forests and State and Private. Both of them gave you some valuable experience.

I think the bigger problem of State and Private since at least the late '70s is that we got into a long period of people saying is it really necessary for the federal government to provide any assistance, particularly financial assistance, to get improved management of private land. In fact the forest industry went through quite a period of saying, well if the government will just get out of the way and let the marketplace give guidance, all kinds of people out there will grow trees if the money is there. Give us capital gains and give us this sort of thing, we'll see that the trees get in the ground. That's probably true for large landowners that have people that can look at long-term investments and can look at spreading income over time, because they've got a big enough land base that little bit of income isn't all. But if you look at an individual land owner that has 100 acres of land, and you look at the return is forty or fifty years in the future, and the landowner doesn't really know what to do to that land, history would show you that you're not going to get very good management of that land unless there's some kind of a program to provide some kind of assistance. We saw that, I think, the great increase in getting conservation applied to the farmland came through the Extension Service and the Soil Conservation Service, by being there to give specific assistance to landowners.

HKS: Does the Forest Service ever stumble over the Soil Conservation Service?

RMP: Yes. There have been at times some little problems. There was a time when SCS was saying well now we need to hire our own foresters so that we can give complete advice to the landowner on soil and water and forestry and so on. Basically we said, helping the farmer do a plan if they've got some forest land, you ought to say we'll help you prepare a complete plan, but get the state forester to be a member of your team for that. Don't duplicate that staff. That generally has worked. There have been some localized problems, but generally that has worked.

HKS: I would have thought that when the Reagan administration came in, the idea of federal money to the states would have been ideologically on the table right away. Was there scrutiny at that time?

RMP: Yes, but ironically the scrutiny of State and Private programs started during the Carter administration. Some analysts at OMB that were looking at this zero-based budgeting idea said is it really necessary to provide this, is this kind of funding necessary? If this is something that needs to be done, the states ought to do it. Should the federal government really do anything here? So there was a beginning of an idea we were going to phase out State and Private during the latter part of the Carter administration. When the Reagan administration came in that was put right back on the table again, shouldn't we phase out this assistance to the states, and if the states think this ought to be done they'll do it.

That philosophical question of whether something should be done at the federal level or the state level was a very difficult one to deal with in the early 1980s. But if you draw back from this a little bit and you look at the idea that things like insect/disease don't know any boundaries, you look at the fact that many of the things

come from forest land transcend all kinds of boundaries. And you talk about the long-range nature of forests. There's a hundred times more reason for the federal government to be concerned with forests than there is for the annual crops, where you can make a decision every year if you happen to have your own mix. Unless you protect the forest now you simply can't meet the needs in the year 2010, if you wait till the year 2000 to say we don't have enough forests. We don't have the lead time. But there was a very hard time in the early 1980s; in fact I'd say there was a hard time all the way up till the time that Bush came into office. George Bush became convinced that you simply had to have an initiative to plant trees and to do things on the private land that would meet future needs of this country. So he launched this huge big plant a billion trees, America the Beautiful, and so on. But for at least a decade there, transcending the Carter and the Reagan administration, State and Private was very difficult to keep going, and was on the chopping block all the time.

HKS: When I lived in California, this would have been in the '70s, the state forester for California at a SAF meeting said that without CM-2 money there wouldn't be state forestry. And my reaction to that was, has CM-2 become sort of capitalized into the state operations and you can't get it out? How do you ever get the states to take over, assuming that would be desirable?

RMP: I think the whole question of what the federal government ought to do and what the states ought to do is a big, big question, but I would come back to say that one of the shared resources that we have in this country are our forests. We share them across state lines, we share them along rivers that are interstate rivers, we share them with for meeting all our needs, and certainly there is a role for the federal government. There's also a role for the state. So I think the State and Private program, which is basically based on a 50/50 funding, is probably a pretty sound one. During the Reagan administration when they were all set to phase out State and Private, I said well maybe you could change the percentage of funding so the state funding was a higher proportion. But there remains a federal role in seeing that we have forests for future generations. You probably could make a heck of a lot better philosophical case for the federal government being involved in forests than individual rapid transit systems or in elementary education where you're talking about local school districts. There's huge amounts of federal money in those. Or even the health care system. States certainly have the ability to finance those.

HKS: This federal money for forestry, is that budgeted so much for fire, so much for insects, so much for reforestation, or are these block grants, or does it vary from state to state or … Is that an issue?

RMP: It is and it is not. In the early 1980s we changed the appropriation structures for State and Private to have I think three items. One was renewable resource protection and one was renewable resource management, and I forget what the third was. We tried to get to the point where a state could be financed based on its plan, a comprehensive plan for the state, which would be somewhat like a block grant. The Congress did in fact provide some flexibility. Unfortunately, about the time you get Congress interested in providing some flexibility, why somebody else says we want to provide more money but we want to provide it in the West because they've got a bad fire year, we ought to spend it all for fire. So there's that force that tends to keep zeroing in on one thing. There's been a little more flexibility but not as much flexibility as might be desired.

HKS: When you're planning next year's budget, when you're getting ready to go to Congress, the state foresters have been consulted and you sit down and you try to add all this up. Fifty pieces and you come up with the State and Private budget some way or other, each state is consulted.

RMP: Yes, and that's really done through the regions and through the Area. But in the real world the federal budget, in spite of what people are prone to say, changes only incrementally plus or minus year to year. You've got to have a good reason for the change. If you're going to change, first you're going to have to make an argument to even keep anywhere like you had before. So in putting the budget together we usually consulted with the state foresters and said now, what's the real major thing that's bothering you out there that you can't really handle? We tended to work on an issue that was most of the time national or at least regional. I know, for example, we looked at what was happening with tree planting and we were seeing lots and lots of trees being put in the ground by all kinds of different people. We were saying if these trees get put in the ground we're going to need more money for protection of those plantations from fire, insect, and disease. So we might

come forth with a modest increase in a fire budget maybe directed toward that, or maybe directed to prevention if we saw that we were having continuing high losses.

In one case analysis of the timber supply situation in the East indicated that there was not a good market for hardwood, and it was hard to get people to grow hardwood which had all kinds of other benefits. Hardwood is in many cases preferred to softwood, if you're concerned about maintaining farmland, hardwood areas along streams, maintaining a good wildlife habitat and so on. But there was all kinds of low grade hardwoods out there that nobody knew how to utilize. So we asked for some specific money to do specific research on demonstrating how to use low grade hardwoods. So the State and Private budget tended to be sort of driven by an analysis that sometimes it came from the RPA, what the future needs were of a resource like hardwood resource, where the hardwood resource volume was going up every time you did an RPA and the softwood was showing a lot of pressure on it. And you say how can you transfer so much pressure to hardwoods, and you do it through improving utilization.

Research

HKS: Until last year the other main division of the Forest Service was Research. How much did you have to do with Research when you were in administration? As a regional forester, in terms of setting priorities for Research and again as chief. How independent is Research from the day-to-day hustle and bustle of a management agency?

RMP: Some would say too independent and others would say not independent enough. In fact, one of the interesting questions I was asked by Bob Long one day, who was assistant secretary at the time, he said why should the Forest Service have a research organization? Why isn't that part of agricultural research? He said if you attach research to the Forest Service, isn't there some chance that the rest of the Forest Service will capture the research and the research will be just devoted to short-term problems and won't really be looking at long-term questions. And I said well that's a very good question. You've got to look at the other side of the coin, if you attach Forest Service research to ARS where there's no direct association between the researcher and the practitioner, well you're going to end up with a research program that's devoted to whatever the research people want to do without any relevance to real life problems.

That's one of those tensions you have, there is a tension between short-term needs and practitioners and the need to do credible long-term research, and there's no perfect answer. Now if you look at some of the more recent analyses that have been made of major research accomplishments in the last fifty years, the large research laboratories that are insulated from the real world tend to be nonproductive. In fact, your experts will say most major breakthroughs have come through what we call skunk works, very low budget types of operations that tend to be related to the real world. So what I try to do, both as regional forester and as chief, is recognize that you really need some of both. You need some research that's oriented to resolving the real life problem that the southern pine beetle has been chewing up the southern forest now for at least a hundred years, and the best solution we have to stopping the southern pine beetle is to cut the tree down. Well that's not a very acceptable solution for the southern pine beetle. So beginning about twenty-five years ago we tried to put some concentrated attention to how we solve what we called the four big bug problems, one of them being southern pine. And one of the things that they discovered is that you can do a prevention strategy where you look at the mix of species, you look at the age of trees and look at all kinds of things and people can tell you what are susceptible stands. You need to take preventative action rather than to get into a suppression mode. So there have been some fairly good guidelines developed now which are very helpful in reducing the intensity of southern pine beetle attacks, it doesn't stop them all; I mean it's not a panacea.

On the other hand we've had some very good research in North Carolina that dealt with such questions as how does a tree grow in different kinds of soil, what are the factors affecting its growth? Which is really sort of basic research. We've had research out for forty years on the effect of atmospheric deposition on trees, long before anybody talked about acid rain there was interest in just what's the budget going into a forest, what's coming in, what's going out, what does it do with the stuff that's falling into it. That research has proven extremely

valuable now when you start looking at something like acid rain. So in the real world you need both kinds of research. You need both the short-term research to help managers solve real problems that are known and you also need research that is oriented to simply understanding the forest better and understanding its interaction.

I think having a separate research organization in the Forest Service is a fairly good way to do both. Bob Buckman will tell you that I was pretty darn active in forest research. In fact one of the fairly unilateral decisions I finally made was that researchers should be evaluated, not only in terms of the research accomplishment but in terms of who knows anything about it. What have they done to make sure that somebody knows about their research. So-called research implementation. And that was extremely controversial.

HKS: I've been reading about performance review for scientists. This is what you're talking about.

RMP: Yes. I picked this up on a trip to New Zealand where one of the things they are expected to do is spend a certain amount of time in what we might call extension work. That does two things. It tells people what they found out and it listens to the practitioners' problems. Now the thing that you've got to factor into that is some research is really so basic it just feeds into some other basic research. It depends on whether the user of this research is going to be another researcher or going to be somebody who's trying to do something out in the field. So the extension work has to be appropriate to the particular type of thing. Early on people said well scientists are not good at this so-called extension work. The answer to that is that most good scientists are. For example Jack Ward Thomas, who's been one of the more prominent researchers, has been an outstanding guy when it comes to extension work. Now there's a few people that want to stay in the lab and they don't want to get out of the lab, and they don't want to talk to anybody.

HKS: Peter Koch.

RMP: Peter was an excellent …

HKS: That's what I was going to say, also the trade literature is full of stuff by Peter Koch.

RMP: But he was an outstanding evangelist for what he was doing.

HKS: Yeah.

RMP: Most research needs to have a user in mind and have some contact with users. I believed that when I wasn't in research, when I was in southern California. I was trying to understand the way those chaparral forests responded to fire and flood and so on. I was over at the San Dimas Experimental Forest at least once a year if not twice a year just to look into the research they were doing and what they were finding out. I think I was stimulating to them and they were stimulating to me in terms of what they were finding out. I think unless you have that kind of close tie you run the risk of a researcher finally deciding nobody's really interested and it becomes just an afternoon exercise. Then you also have real problems of getting it put into practice when they find out something. So I was a strong supporter of research. In fact I made the point many times in testimony that I thought Forest Service should devote about 10 percent of its budget to research. Which if it were done now would make the research budget about $200 million a year.

HKS: Not quite twice what it really is.

RMP: Yes. I do believe that a vigorous research program has substantial payoff both in improving what you do and how you do it. And I said you know we ought to just consider research an investment. And I think that's one place the whole country has been in error in not seeing research as an investment, and that's where it's the Japanese and others have invested substantial amounts of money, in research. I think we underinvested in research for years now.

HKS: It's hard for me to judge the numbers because I don't know what inflation has really been to know how much the budget has increased in real terms. In terms of the physical plant and number of scientists, research

has really increased over the past twenty or thirty years. It's startling how many research laboratories have been constructed and that sort of thing.

RMP: In many respects Dr. Harper is the father of the numerous research labs. Dr. Harper saw that members of Congress are interested in things they can dedicate and things that look like progress, and so he came up with the idea that let's come up with a whole list of research labs to be constructed around the country. Before 1960s the Forest Service research facilities were deplorable. They were not modern, the laboratories were crude, the facilities were poor and so on. So Dr. Harper came up with this big list of research laboratories and sort of put it out for the world to look at. He was more pragmatic than a lot of people. He had an idea of the ones he thought were the most important, but if somebody wanted to give him one that was number fifteen on the list instead of the one that was number two, he figured well next year maybe we'll get number two.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: So I think Dr. Harper presided over more research facilities being built than anybody before or since. Wherever you look in the country and you see all these research laboratories, they were built in the '60s, basically, major research facilities. A few of them were built in the '70s, a few of them in the '80s. There's a research facility in Asheville for example and some built in West Virginia in the '70s and '80s, but most of them were built by Dr. Harper in the '60s, and then followed on with Keith Arnold. But unfortunately it was much easier to get the buildings than it was to get the staff.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: So the big fight in the '70s and the '80s was to keep the staff, because actually we lost ground in the number of research scientists in the '80s. We actually had less research scientists at the end of the '80s than we did at the beginning. We had real problems throughout the Reagan administration years of just keeping place with inflation, with the number of scientists. And the other thing that really put pressure on the research budget is the huge interest in acid rain research. We saw a substantial increase in that kind of research but a substantial part of it came out of other research.

HKS: RPA must have put a demand on research. Was there any budgetary recognition of this?

RMP: Yes. One of the things that we added in the RPA was a substantial increase in research. We got some increase in money as a result of RPA. But RPA laid a pretty solid foundation for research. And we did get a couple of fairly good increases in research early on in RPA. But then we were hard pressed to keep those in the late '70s and '80s.

One of the problems about research that always gives you a problem in a budget situation is it is hard to articulate in any one year what will happen if you don't fund a particular research increment, a particular add-on. Or even if it's a decrease it's pretty hard to demonstrate any bad things are going to happen. Let's say you're on national forest administration side and they were proposing to cut recreation. You say well now look we're going to have to close a bunch of campgrounds out there, there's a measurable impact. Or if you cut the timber budget you're going to have less timber sales. Or if you cut fire we're going to get more fire. Now you can cut research in any one year and you can't demonstrate very easily those kinds of consequences. That's true of any investment, so unless research is looked at as an investment, it's a problem. We took John Crowell up to the Forest Products Laboratory. Both Bob Buckman and I thought was a good place to take him because it showed all kinds of research underway that had fairly easily understood outputs and would really potentially provide some real benefits. He looked around the Forest Products Laboratory and his conclusion to Bob Buckman and me after that was we're way too far ahead here.

Forest Products Laboratory

HKS: Too theoretical.

RMP: He said for example in some of the hardwood research when we were trying to use low grade hardwood, he said why worry about it. We've got lots and lots of hardwood out there, and we've got lots of timber on the national forest that we can sell and make a profit, and actually bring money into the treasury. Why are we spending money trying to figure out how to use hardwood when we've got lots of softwood; all we've got to do is get it and bring it to market. So he's saying we're too far ahead in this research. And of course you just can't automatically say that's wrong, you know, because his perception was with the budget cuts that we had and we needed to balance the budget. You remember that in the early days of the Reagan administration particularly there was a heavy push to balance the budget.

HKS: I remember that.

RMP: It was only later that people decided that the deficit doesn't count. But in the early days, John and a lot of people in the OMB and government were really pushing on deferring any cost that can be deferred. So he's saying here's a place where we can defer some research. This is all very interesting, it's very good research but we can defer some of this for five years and nothing great would happen. Well that was a considerable disappointment to both of us. But the point is that's not a wrong conclusion, that's a conclusion that we felt that research had enormous benefits and that was an investment that the country needed to make because of the payoff. For example right now we're using hardwood in papermaking; we can use say 40 percent hardwood. Now that does two things, it reduces the amount of raw fiber that we use, and it enormously reduces the problem of cleanup of the huge amounts of stuff that's left on the site. And so that was just like finding a new several hundred acres of trees.

HKS: If an OSB plant …

RMP: Oriented strand board is used in all kinds of stuff. If you look back at a trend in history, research has generally paid for itself five and six and seven and eight times over.

HKS: Did anything actually happen? Crowell made this observation, did that affect …

RMP: He just said he wasn't going to support any increase in research. I finally arrived at an agreement with him that we could have inflationary increase in research. But he figured a $100 million research program was plenty big.

HKS: He didn't care to go into the Forest Products Laboratory versus the experiment stations. He said you've got a lot of money; you shift it around and let them …

RMP: He had some feel of priorities, and I think a fairly good feel. For example he was a real supporter of the need to get more information on old growth dependent wildlife. We said look we're moving into the old growth and the old growth is being reduced and so on, and we really don't have a good handle on old growth dependent wildlife. That's potentially going to be a real tough subject unless we get some research. He was a real booster of research in the old growth dependent wildlife. He was not unsupportive of that other research, he was just saying he didn't think we needed to do more. In fact we may be further on ahead than we needed to be. And I think that represented his feel of the pressure on the budget.

HKS: Something had to be cut so …

RMP: … had to be cut and you could cut that without great consequences. As I said that's not necessarily wrong, that's a perception that somebody who's saying, you know you don't have all the money you need and here's a place you can defer for a year. Research is always something you can defer for a year.

HKS: Well not really. If you have a scientist what do you do, put him on another project? I mean as a practical matter you can't really shut the project down, can you? Sort of like a water faucet turn off and on.

RMP: He was not saying that we ought to decrease the amount of research. He was just saying I'm not going to give you any significant increases in research and don't ask me to, because I think we've got plenty. He was saying we've got plenty of money to handle a vigorous research program. You ought to look at priorities, look at where you can assign people and so on. And that represented his particular judgment for the need of research.

HKS: I don't want to get too far away from research right now, but where else did he want increases in terms of management and what else did he feel could be deferred in terms of National Forest Administration?

RMP: He was a very strong pusher for looking at costs where they occurred. He felt that the Forest Service was not hard enough on itself in reviewing costs. In other words, he was real interested in what it cost us to build a mile of road, how much it cost to put up a timber sale, how much did we pay to get slash disposed of, all of the cost structure and probably was a pretty good influence on him saying the Forest Service is not very cost conscious. This is a problem in most government agencies, most government agencies don't even know what something costs, any kind of a private entity or private sector type of a cost accounting. We were looking at a forest plan or something and what's it going to cost if we do that. So he was pretty darn concerned about costs where ever they occurred.

HKS: Such as site preparation, fire and logging?

RMP: Whatever the cost.

HKS: Those kinds of cost.

RMP: Let's say we were looking at reforestation, and he'd look at us and say is it really costing you that much an acre to do reforestation? And he'd say well I know this company out there that does it for about half that. We looked at the company costs, he was really talking about the contract level costs, not the costs when you consider the whole cost of the company. But in some cases the company costs were less because they didn't have all the complexity of contracting that the government has, or all of the requirements of contracting that the government has. So I guess the basic message is that John Crowell was quite concerned about costs where ever they occurred, and was concerned about how much we spent training people, how much we spent sending people to meetings. How much we spent in international travel. Pretty much exercising the large questioning of the Forest Service budget, not just in research.

HKS: The cost-benefit analysis for everything.

RMP: Or cost and effects.

HKS: Okay. To get back to the Forest Products Lab, maybe it's because they deal with products rather than management, but it always seemed to me that the lab is really autonomous, about as autonomous as an operation can be. When you look at the way the chief's reports are written, it's always AND the Forest Products Lab. It's something different than everything else.

RMP: The Forest Products Lab is unique in the world, it's one of a kind, there's no other. Since 1910 when it was established it's been a premiere worldwide laboratory, and certainly it's more autonomous than some. On the other hand, I think you'll find over time the chief's office exercised a substantial amount of direction over what the Forest Products Lab did in terms of kinds of research. Part of that was in terms of kinds of projects that would be undertaken, the research that Ken Kirk has done up there, things like use of different kinds of biological principles in terms of everything from treating effluent from paper plants to mushroom growth in the decay of forest products has been somewhat directed from Washington.

A substantial program up there began in 1964, as a result of the last earthquake where a lot of houses fell apart. I think it may have been FHA that issues loans that asked the question, why did these houses fall apart. So the Forest Products Lab took on a project of looking at how you held houses together, how you prevent losing the roofs and all this kind of thing. That resulted in the truss-framed house, which was a specific reaction to something that didn't start in the Forest Products Lab.

It's true that the Forest Products Lab, I guess, has been more independent than some others. One final thing on the lab, over the years the Forest Products Lab has had a very vigorous interactive program with its users. At least once a year they have a review of the projects up there, the progress on those projects, they have a special relationship for the papermaking people that come and look at what they're doing. They have invited people from other places in the Forest Service to review what they're doing so the forest products lab has managed to keep their operation pretty user oriented. Maybe more user-oriented than anybody else, because they're mostly doing client research.

HKS: The proprietary interest in corporate research. By the time we find out about it, it's old. But here's the Forest Products Lab moving across that barrier. Has that been an issue?

RMP: The Forest Products Lab has maintained a pretty open process, and I think it needs to do that. Even though industry might be fairly secretive about what they were doing, it hasn't been much of a secret. For example, the Forest Products Lab figured out that by applying pressure for a very short period of time on a papermaking process you've got a bonding of fibers which gave a lot more strength to paper and a lot of the reuse from several kinds of fibers. Now it didn't take a magician to know that when the Forest Products Lab came out with that about every papermaking company around was going to try to figure out how to apply that. So even though the companies didn't advertise what they were doing, everybody knew that they were doing it. The laboratory that industry runs down in South Carolina, which is run by Westvaco, they are there to find out what research the Forest Service is doing in basic genetics and so on and how can they apply that, how can they speed it up to do user greenhouses and so on. Really I think that's a very productive way to hand off research. That means the Forest Service doesn't have to carry out certain types of research.

International Forestry

HKS: One other aspect of research. International forestry, and the opportunity or requirement that the Forest Service work with AID, FAO, other institutions in a way it hadn't done before. Was this all logical, or did it take a lot of work?

RMP: I think that the separate deputy chief for international forestry was kind of an evolutionary thing that a lot of people saw coming. If I'd had an opportunity during my tenure I would have probably done that. For at least the last twenty years the international work has not been primarily research, but there continues to be a research element. For example, one of the more productive things that has been done in international cooperation research has to do with looking at potential biological agents that would help us with some of the introduced pests. For example the gypsy moth is not a real big problem in the part of Eastern Europe and so on where it is and probably if we're going to be successful in the long run of controlling the gypsy moth we've got to have some of its natural enemies. There's been work done that way.

HKS: Right.

RMP: There's been quite a lot of work on various kinds of genetics from overseas. Quite a lot of work with countries like Australia and so on that have similar fire problems. Kind of helping Australia as it develops priorities using our research. But more and more in the last twenty years you've got a country like Brazil wanting to establish something like a national forest system. Or they want to figure out how to handle the fire problem or an insect/disease problem. You're not looking primarily at researchers to giving that kind of help. So Research was kind of the custodian of international forestry but used people from throughout the Forest Service. As that effort grew and grew it didn't really make a whole lot of sense to keep it attached to Research.

I looked at it two or three times in terms of where to put it, and decided, short of creating another deputy chief, having it in Research was as logical as having it in anywhere else. But beginning about fifteen years ago now, Tom Nelson who then was in State and Private, also deputy chief to P&L, he was one of those I think that so early on that the Forest Service could have a pretty major impact internationally and when we got into some dealings with AID. AID said we'd like to have this work done and we've got some money but we don't have any

people. So Tom Nelson talked to me and then Bob Buckman talked to me and I said how many people are you talking about. Well we need probably five or six people, but AID will provide the money. And I said shoot we can't even count within five or six people how are we going to come out ceiling-wise so why don't we agree to do that. Then there was concern that's soft money, suppose they don't give it to us next year. In other words it's only five or six people, we can figure out what to do with five or six people. So beginning back then with first with Tom Nelson and then Bob Buckman we began to do a lot more work for AID.

HKS: Right.

RMP: The first study that was done for AID was looking at forests worldwide in terms of fuel needs of people, what was the impact. The Forest Service did that for AID, and then we began this thing called the Forestry Support Program, where the Forest Service basically acts sort of as a middle man where they have directors for a different part of the world, and if a country in Latin America needs a certain kind of assistance they come to that group and they know all the consultants available to give that kind of help. So the backup might be from National Forests, it might be from State and Private, it might be from a university, it might be from a consultant. That work that we've begun then has just continued to grow, and finally when the Congress passed the 1990 farm bill, they figured the Forest Service really needed an improved charter. We wrote a little charter for Research in international forestry into the 1978 Research Act. Up until that time there was just a little bit of authority in the earlier research act that talked about exchanging seeds and a few things like that, and we were using that as our little wedge to have authority to do international forestry. We put a little more in the 1978 Research Act, and then it was the 1990 farm bill that suddenly spelled it out. I think it was sort of the maturity of the program by then that caused Congress to move in and do that. So it's kind of an evolutionary process.

HKS: I realize that with a $100 million budget a few trips overseas doesn't show up that much, it's below radar for Congress. But still when you look at Harper, Jemison, and Buckman's prominent role in international forestry, high up in IUFRO, didn't anyone say hey, if you're always short of money why don't you cut back international? Was Congress ever skeptical of this?

RMP: Periodically Congress lashed out at the amount of money that was being spent for travel. A couple of years they cut back travel by a small percent. Senator Sasser from Tennessee one time criticized the number of people that the Forest Service sent to an SAF meeting. He said that the guidelines were to send only one person to a meeting and this was a meeting I think in St. Louis or somewhere the Forest Service had fifty people at an SAF meeting. Why was the Forest Service wasting all of this money sending people to meetings? Every once in a while someone would come out that people on the federal payroll were going on junkets overseas. One time one of the stations in publication talked about somebody who had just returned from the Pacific, and they'd stopped on this island and this island and this island and looked at this and the article was headed Island Hopping. The little research station publication, someone sent me that with a note that said what do you think people on food stamps think about this? So you always had to be kind of careful that the travel was justifiable and you try to avoid the appearance of a junket. For example, Forest Service had guidelines that if you were on an overseas trip, if you wanted to take leave to see something the amount of leave, the length of leave couldn't exceed the amount of time you were there officially. You didn't want somebody going to Germany and spending one day making a speech and spending the next two weeks on leave.

HKS: I was aware of that regulation. I don't travel very well, it takes me about three days to get over jet lag. To go to an eight-hour meeting the second day there would be impossible for me. So as a practical matter how do you get around that? You do have to recover from this trip.

RMP: I think generally speaking if you're going to go to Europe and back you shouldn't just go over there for an eight-hour meeting. If you plan things well you say, "Well now, while I'm there we've got a cooperative work going on in Denmark that I ought to see how it's going. I ought to tie in with what's happening in Germany with this." In other words you ought to spend enough time there to make the trip pay, too. And what you end up with saying, well probably I need to spend four or five days there altogether. Then you get enough productive time to not just have jet lag in both directions.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: But because an overseas trip is going to cost a couple of thousand dollars, you don't just want to rush over there and for an eight-hour meeting and come back. In most cases you'll want to accomplish more while you're over there.

HKS: I don't know if you have an insight into this $150 million that Bush is making available, some of to International Forestry I would assume. That is a major increase in the $10 million budget, whatever it is. Potentially this is a big stepping stone for International Forestry, it may not last very long.

RMP: I don't know who deserves the credit for it, I'm certainly not going to take credit for it. I made a couple of trips with Bush while he was president and was impressed by his personal interest in natural resources, particularly his interest as he looked at forests and asked questions and so on, a very keen observer of nature, he's an avid fisherman and so on. He appears to want to do positive and tangible things, you know. And he was impressed by what he's seen on what's happening to tropical forests, that rather than to wring our hands about things we ought to figure out some pragmatic things we ought to do to help this country. As I read the thing, what he's saying is rather than just signing some other agreements and so on, I want us to do something positive as it relates to these forests of the world. And that ought to be a living legacy that we leave. I'm not sure where all that money's going to go, but I would assume it's going to go into probably a whole variety of things, probably some of it will be funded out to AID, probably some of it will go out to the Forest Service, probably some of it will go out to the Office of International Cooperation and Development. I suppose there is quite a lot of agencies that will spend that money. Not all of it will be Forest Service and International Forestry but, a certain part of it should be.

HKS: Of course Congress has to agree with this, right?

RMP: Congress has to agree with that. And I don't know whether Congress will agree with it or not, but I have a hunch that Congress has a pretty high degree of concern for tropical forests and so on too. That's one of the things that fueled the 1990 farm bill provisions related to forestry. So I suspect they'll have pretty good support.

Farm Bill and Forest Legacy

HKS: Some of the people in the field suggested questions for you. Why is the farm bill used as a mechanism to deal with the Forest Service? I mean does it make sense to you that the farm bill has Forest Service stuff in it?

RMP: Sure. I used to have a different opinion than I have now. [laughter] But if you look at the players in the farm bill, if you look at Senator Leahy of Vermont who's chairman of the full Senate Banking Committee now, Vermont is a major state and forests are a major concern in Vermont. Now if you look at who chaired the Senate Ag committee previous to that, why you run on to Senator Talmadge of Georgia, and forests are a major concern to Georgia. Forests are primarily handled by the Department of Agriculture. That's the primary department that has concern for forests. It also represents a way that the Senate Ag committee can provide direction. Senator Leahy is a lot more interested in forests to tell you the truth than he is in maybe crop support for wheat and peanuts or something else like that. So I think you're finding the interests of the major players in the Senate, that you move over to the House and you look at the long-term chairman of the House Ag committee was Foley. You'll find a lot of people on those committees that are interested in forests that are interspersed with agriculture all over the United States. Sixty percent of the forest land is in those same areas as the farms. I think there's more than a natural tie there than maybe we would have seen before.

HKS: Because of the way Congress is structured.

RMP: Well, and because of the way the country is put together out there. We have a tendency to see forests in this country primarily in terms of public lands, and that's a misconception. More than three-quarters of forest lands are in private ownership.

HKS: The "forest legacy" under the 1990 farm bill, is that what we've just been talking about, or is that a special issue?

RMP: That's a special thing in the 1990 farm bill, one of the special things. There is very little public land in the Northeast, either federal land or state land. The Adirondacks in New York is the exception. Most of the northeastern states are still more than half forest, you know that, the state of New York is still more than half forest.

HKS: I've driven through a little corner of it, and there's a lot of forest.

RMP: A lot of forest. New England states in general tend to be gaining in amount of forested land as agriculture wanes. There is great concern in New England over loss of forestland. But in the real world you're not going to go up there and have massive acquisition programs, you're not going to acquire large amounts of land to create national forests and this type of thing. So for about twenty years people have been thrashing around, how can we encourage land in the Northeast to remain forested, and thereby have open space and all the things we associate with the quality of life in New England?

We work with various and sundry State and Private programs. State and Private programs, particularly during the '80s, tended to have an economic question of where can you grow the most fiber, for example, or timber. And that tended to be the Southeast, not the Northeast. Leahy was interested in all this time in what we can do in the Northeast to provide this forestland base. So he was part of this thing called the Northern Land Study, to evaluate how you can look at forestland in the Northeast. That was done just before the 1990 farm bill. So the farm bill now became the vehicle for how can you implement a northern forestland study.

I'm going to tell you a little story that is not a matter of public record. The congressional staff on the Hill, including Tom Tuckman who was on Leahy's staff, had worked very hard to work out something for the Northeast, but the administration was not all that supportive about doing anything. The forest industry basically was not supportive, they didn't know what might be cooked up, and so this whole follow-up on the Northern Land Study sort of faltered. I talked to the National Association of State Foresters who were right across the hall from where I am now, and they said the National Forest Products Association was against some kind of a special northern program, somehow based on the easements or something. They saw that as being the heavy-handed government putting more restrictions on the use of private land. Finally Tom Tuckman expressed some real frustration to me that this thing wasn't progressing very well and said how about giving me a hand and see if we can work something out. At that time these areas were called forest reserve areas, and I told him well number one I think the word forest reserve is a bad term to apply to these areas because forest reserves were the public lands that predated national forests.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: That's going to be a very confusing term to people who think of forest reserves as public land. Second is that raises the question reserved for what? And is that really what you want to do is have reserve lands? People saying what are you reserving for, you reserve one for twenty years or thirty years or something else. Anyway, I spent quite a bit of time on Tom as we looked at how this might be recast. We took a whole bunch of synonyms, and we started trying to figure out what we'd call these things. One of the ideas was to call them heritage areas, which have already got a life of their own with these areas that are primarily historical areas and so on.

HKS: Yes.

RMP: So anyway in about a couple of hours there one evening, Tom and I decided number 1 that we should call these forest legacy, so we called them forest legacy programs. New England is very much historically oriented, and what's better than retaining part of our legacy. That removed the idea that somehow these were reserved and restricted and so on. Then we hit on the idea of maybe making this a pilot program in the Northeast, which would remove the idea that it was massive new program for the whole country. To make a long story short, we went to the Senate for markup on this, presented it as a new thing, a pilot program for the Northeast, a southern congressman asked, how come the Southeast is left out of this. He said the Southeast ought to be

eligible too. And I think Bond was the next one, Missouri, he said is this a voluntary program? So we re-described it by then to be a voluntary program, you enrolled your land. The answer was yes it was a voluntary program.

HKS: Is this something that would be administered or is administered by State and Private Forestry?

RMP: Um-hum.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: So Bond said how come you left Missouri out? As we talked a bit more Gorton from Washington who had been expected to lead the opposition to that provision, said, how come you left the Northwest out. And you know that provision passed without any opposition, when a few days before it was seen to have no chance. Anyway I think it was a perfectly logical thing to do. Nobody knows at this point how successful it will be. If a lot of people opt into the program I think it will be quite successful and it could certainly be a viable alternative to massive federal acquisition or trying to put on a bunch of regulations that don't seem to work.

HKS: How does this differ from FIP, which I don't understand very well?

RMP: Oh, this is quite different. What you do in this, you actually enroll your land through an easement program. It's a multipurpose program to begin with, in other words you enroll your land in a multipurpose program.

HKS: Is it like a tree farm?

RMP: No. A tree farm is purely just growing trees.

HKS: But there is a plan. The landowner volunteers, I'll make a tree farm out of this.

RMP: No, not a tree farm. He volunteers I'll keep this land as forestland over a period of time, and during that time I will do certain things. He might say what I want to do, I want to put some trails in this area, I want to do some wildlife habitat improvement, and even get certain cost sharing and so on for different practices that are approved. He might say I want to do some thinning in the stands, and I want to do certain kinds of work. It's not restricted, the kinds of things he can do. But he can't convert it during that period, he can't convert it to summer homes or townhouses or he can't make it something else. He covenants that during that period he's going to maintain it in this kind of a situation, and he's paid a certain amount of money to do that. The land remains on the tax base. It doesn't prevent timber harvesting, but the timber harvesting has to be done according to the plan. If it's necessary it may have to protect visual values and so on. He's voluntarily agreeing to give up some rights in terms of his management during the period of this easement, but he gets all kinds of benefits. In some cases he may reduce the taxes on it because he has deliberately said it will not go into subdivision and other kinds of …

HKS: The greenbelt concept too.

RMP: It's a greenbelt, but it's a greenbelt with a very light handed government. The government doesn't force anybody to enroll. Very interestingly a couple of towns up there are themselves putting the money together to put some of this land into that kind of a practice.

HKS: Towns are scrambling to meet open space requirements too.

RMP: This is a whole lot better than going out there and acquiring land and taking it off the tax bases and just let it sit there. I look right here in Fairfax County, there's all kinds of land here that was acquired that's just sitting. I mean it's not even being husbanded well. So I think that may well end up being a very creative program, and it's fairly low cost. It's a lot less costly than a lot of other approaches might be. Let's say you're a farmer, voluntarily putting your land into some kind of open space plan where in return for doing that you get some lower taxes and maybe you don't get run off the land by increasing tax rates. It may be a whole lot better

than the entity coming out and acquiring them. I think the forest land thing may be the forerunner of some new approaches to handling forests where they are really under pressure from development. And that's the kind of thing that lingers in certain areas that are under pressure.

HKS: In the Durham area the farmers are complaining about being zoned out of their retirement equity, that the city people say that you can't use your land for your retirement financing and …

RMP: I think the power of the public to exercise its control over land use through zoning has got some real serious pragmatic problems. You can darn near take the value of somebody's land by the way you zone it, and the problem is that the guy next door may have already had that use of his land and then suddenly your zoned against it from your land. For a little piece of land I have, they drew a master plan for Loudoun County and right down my fence line on the west side they showed that for expansion of a little town, and beginning at my fence is open space.

HKS: [laughter] Sure.

RMP: Does that mean that I'm expected to provide the open space for all those expensive houses around there? That doesn't appear very equitable. That's the problem with trying to rely on a blunt tool of zoning to do everything. You can do some things with it but I think you've got to provide incentives for other types of uses.

HKS: Is urban forestry handled through State and Private Forestry?

RMP: Yes sir. And I think urban forestry has been one of those things that has been a whole lot more successful than people have given it credit for, but it's not all that visible. When I lived in Atlanta, Ray Shirley was the state forester. The only time that he appeared on television in Atlanta that I ever saw was when he was talking to people about how to take care of their trees in the urban area. When we had an ice storm, for example, he was on TV and said don't go out there with something and beat on your limbs to get rid of the ice or it will break the limbs off. If you've got a tree bending all the way over here's some things you can do to help it, some things you can't do. Or if you've got an insect/disease problem, here's the way you can do it. He got some real credibility with the public, and here's a person concerned about trees that knows something about trees. When people start knowing about trees as it relates to their houses, then you can start teaching them about forests. And so I think urban forestry in addition to paying huge dividends in reductions in air conditioning costs, reductions in heating costs, improvement of property values and so on, is one of the things that if foresters are going to do extension work, they'd better start in the city because that's where most of the public lives.

HKS: I'm assuming urban forestry includes the suburbs.

RMP: Sure, it does. In fact I think I'd try to get the people to change the word urban forestry to community forestry or something, because people started relating urban forestry just to the urban areas when there's lots and lots of small cities and so on and places like where you live where commercial forestry isn't important, but you wouldn't consider it urban area.

HKS: Yeah.

RMP: But you're talking about forests as it relates to a community, which could be a fairly small town. In fact John McGuire was defending urban forestry on the Hill one time and Burdick was in the chair, North Dakota. He said to McGuire why in the world is the Forest Service doing something called urban forestry? John said well Mr. Chairman, maybe that's not the best name, but what we're really talking about is looking at the way trees (this was in the research side) help reduce air conditioning costs, help reduce heating costs. He said you remember out in the plains of North Dakota of all the plantings around farmsteads and shelterbelts and so on, that's all a part of it, looking at the way trees help with where people live and so on. Burdick said that's awful important stuff. [laughter] But he had thought of New York, you see. He wasn't thinking about the Dakotas.

Wilderness

HKS: I've gone through my general questions, and now we have an infinite number of topics we can go through. Wilderness. Helicopter ban for testing lake acidification. Is that significant?

RMP: Okay, let me talk about two or three things under the general heading of wilderness. At the time I became chief, as you recall, we had completed RARE II and we had all those recommendations for areas to be made wilderness and areas that were not to be wilderness, and so on. There was maybe a fairly naive assumption that after we completed the RARE II analysis that Congress would handle this as one big package. They might pass a nationwide bill that would say these areas will be wilderness and we will somehow get through the big controversy over wilderness areas. As you know that proved to be a wistful idea.

Early in the '80s, with the new administration coming aboard, the question was how was wilderness going to be dealt with. Are we going to still push for some kind of a national resolution, a regional resolution or what? Specifically I was going to have something called release language. If you designated certain areas of wilderness, what are you going to say about the areas that are non-wilderness? There was practically no progress made for about two or three years, primarily because of the question of release language. Finally the department said well we'd better see if we can't get some things moved on, because the whole management of national forests were vulnerable to court challenges. The court said that the RARE II EIS was inadequate. This meant that if we were going to sew up some of the wilderness questions we were going to have to do it through individual points and plans or something.

I got involved in it with the department's agreement in trying to work through release language. The question was, was there going to be something called hard release, soft release, medium release, or something. It ended up as written by that special history on wilderness, sort of conducting shuttle diplomacy between House and Senate, the warring factions trying to work out something called release language. Gradually, I think it was 1983 or thereabouts when we finally got agreement, if we designated certain lands as wilderness that was going to hold at least for one generation of planning. Then when the second generation of planning came around, they could look at everything again. When that agreement was made, we actually had the greatest movement of being a solution to the wilderness question in '83 and '84 than we'd ever had in history, getting that resolved. The areas we failed on were like Idaho and Montana which are still not resolved. But we basically ended up getting a resolution.

The second part of the puzzle, I was saying okay we've got the allocation question sort of behind us of what lands are going to be wilderness and what lands are not going to be wilderness. We've really got to concentrate on how we're going to manage these lands that are now called wilderness, because you're talking about 20 percent of the national forest system is now called wilderness.

It's a misnomer to think that a wilderness is just there and you don't worry about it, because there's a limited number of places you can go in the wilderness and there's a great tendency for people to congregate around the first place that you get to from the trail area. So you're getting considerable overuse in some wilderness. You're getting people thinking that if they went in wilderness not only did the wilderness have to look like Kit Carson, but you ought to play like Kit Carson. You ought to chop down a few trees to make your bed of boughs and all this kind of thing, and we were getting significant deterioration of wilderness. I think it was '85, we had this big wilderness conference in Idaho to try to get all kinds of groups that were interested in wilderness now to turn from the fighting over what lands ought to be wilderness to some cooperation and how do we manage these lands.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: I had been convinced over a period of about twenty years that you simply had to be pretty zealous and protect the wilderness values, if you were ever going to have anything called wilderness very long. I told you earlier about the Air Force wanting to install a radar gap filler on Mount Gorgonio. But over a period of time everybody and his brother thinks they want to put something inside the wilderness, and each of them looks good.

HKS: Sure.

EPA Samples Wilderness

RMP: You've got the sheriff's office wants to put a repeater up there for an emergency, search and rescue, you get astronomers. Within our own government you've got people wanting to put stations up there to measure rainfall or snow or something else and they want to put antennas up there, and transmitters and all this. Even the Forest Service itself at times would find it desirable to have facilities back there. But I became convinced if you go that route you're not going to have something called wilderness downstream, and if wilderness is important you ought to try to keep it. This led to this specific case that we talked about here on this helicopter ban, is that generally speaking the people who have asked us to violate wilderness are supposedly friends of wilderness, but they just want to do their particular thing. In this case it was EPA, the Environmental Protection Agency. In one of these acid rain studies that they were doing said we believe that a lot of high mountain lakes are becoming more acidic, and we need to make this nationwide test of lakes.

HKS: Was it was Truman who banned the use of fixed-wing planes over the Quetico-Superior?

RMP: Well, that was the use of air space. These people actually want to land on the lakes to take samples. So EPA said well we're going to measure all these lakes and we're going to do it by helicopter. The Wilderness Act has a statement that says that where the landing of aircraft has been well established on the day of establishment, it may be allowed to continue. So there are some airstrips in wilderness. But generally speaking the rules did not permit the landing of aircraft unless whatever needed to be done was either an emergency or you couldn't do it some other way or that was the way it had minimum effect on the wilderness. So EPA came and almost announced they were going to do this, and our people handling this said no, you really can't do this without special permission and it's unlikely we'd grant such permission. Their reaction was well this is good, and besides the president wants to do this. So our people said well where's your NEPA analysis? And this is the organization that is responsible for being sure that people comply with NEPA.

HKS: That's right.

RMP: Did you know that EPA had never made a NEPA statement on anything like this? Didn't even know how to begin. So they ended up coming to meet with me, and they gave this story that they've got a tight deadline and they've got to get this done and this is part of a national survey. We said why can't you do it by ground method? They said well all of our protocols have been developed based on helicopters and if we take a sample and carry it out on a horse and it gets shook around and it's two days old by the time we take the sample it won't be comparable with this other sample. Therefore the results may be suspect, and we simply can't have this whole nationwide survey screwed up because you wouldn't let us go in the wilderness.

We spent days and days and days with our staff and theirs negotiating on that. We finally convinced them that they had to do a NEPA study, and they really had to do a realistic look of why they couldn't do it by ground methods. They just weren't interested in doing a realistic assessment of this, and it was obvious that they were going to try to go over my head on this thing. Peter Meyers was the assistant secretary by then, and I went and talked with him. EPA plans to roll us on the subject because they plan to go to the secretary and go to you have you overrule us. I said they're not going to deal with us unless you send some kind of signal to them that you just simply are not going to overrule us unless they prove that there is no other alternative. He talked to the people at EPA and he told them he thought we were on pretty solid ground and he was not inclined to overrule us unless they could prove their case. That put them in a whole lot better frame of mind for negotiations.

Finally we agreed that we would double sample a certain number of lakes with both ground methods and helicopter methods a few places just to prove that there wasn't a difference between the samples obtained. In other words we said we recognize that you need some validation of the procedure, and if there's a difference between the wilderness and outside you won't know whether it was due to methods or due to real difference.

So we said okay, now how many places do we need to do this? We had our statisticians working with us, and we agreed to do double sampling on just a few lakes to do this foundation.

Right at the end of this when we were really down looking at each other on the eyeball to eyeball, EPA said well this is all well and good, but we simply don't have the people and the time to do the sampling within the time frame that we're allowed in order to get this job done, which is on top of the president's priority list. He's got meetings with Canada coming up and so on, we need to know what's happening. At this point I said how much money were you planning to spend doing it by helicopters? They told me, and I said we'll take the money and do the job for you. We can do it in that time frame with our people out there. We'll guarantee to meet your time schedule. Now that's what you would call luck.

The Forest Service people are absolutely great. They took that as almost a personal challenge. [laughter] We got all the samples; in fact as I recall the only place that we ended up having problems was where we were supposed to be doing the helicopter sampling and had problems with the helicopter, bad weather and so on. I think helicopter mechanical problem or something. But anyway we got it all done, the comparative samples showed that the variability between methods was not a factor. When we got that done and we succeeded. All over the country there blossomed these pictures of helicopters with a big NO drawn through them. We had a big celebration with the EPA, the administrator of EPA and myself and everybody was really proud that we carried this off and we'd gotten a result and at the same time we respected the wilderness values and we didn't spend as much money as we would have the other way. So this was one of those win, win, wins. What it did, it sent a signal to field people that we were really serious about protecting wilderness values.

One of the awards that I've got around here is a primitive skills award. It was given by Bill Worf as the representative of the wilderness people for showing leadership and protecting wilderness values. The important thing was that we said hey, if the wilderness resource is important, we've got to do things at times that are inconvenient, we have to do things that are creative, we've got to look at other alternatives other than just doing business as usual. I seriously feel that if we're going to maintain wilderness values out there, we've got to do it. We can't just do business as usual.

Free Burning

HKS: How about free burning? That's a tough one.

RMP: No, I don't think it's that tough. When I say no I don't think it's that tough, maybe that's too quick an answer but there is a place for fire in wilderness. Now unfortunately the fuel build up has been allowed to continue in wilderness until we have a lot of wildernesses that have a level of fuel built up that you simply can't just let nature take its course at this point. I've said to some people it's tantamount to have piled newspapers on your porch for about thirty years, and somebody says I'm going to let them decay naturally. There's been an artificial creation of a buildup of fuels there. This is what of course plagued Yellowstone Park.

They'd had that tremendous build up of fuels in the park, and contrary to what people said it wasn't only the lack of suppression, it's the fact that you had our old friend the mountain pine beetle there that was suddenly killing all those trees. Suddenly you had a situation where more than half of the lodgepole pine was killed, and you've got a huge amount of fuel standing there. Historically what has happened to that fuel, there was fire. That was as plain as the nose on your face that that's going to happen again. Now you can either just sit back and wait until it happens and try to man the barricades and get run over, or you can take proactive work. So during my time I successfully asked that we adopt a policy of using prescribed fire in the wilderness. We tried to reduce those fuel conditions, reduce that unnatural accumulation of fuels so that when we got a lightening fire we could safely allow that lightening fire to remove fuels without having a major problem.

I guess I was impressed when I looked at wilderness in Montana, particularly where typically you've got canyons going in and you've got a trailhead and it leads up to wilderness. Particularly in those canyons and a lot of places you had tremendous build up of fuel that occurred there over a long period of time. Some of it was

related to insect/disease, some of it was related just to the age of the trees and so on. That was the primary area that people were going to be going in and out. You just knew at some point you were going to get a fire started in those areas, and you weren't going to be able to stop it because there was no fuel break. It was just going to wipe it out. Particularly when those areas were adjacent to private land, you knew you were going to get fires on the private land, you were going to get all of the objection that we'd seen in 1988 when fires ran out of wilderness areas onto private land.

Even though it was during my tenure that we adopted the idea of using prescribed fire in wilderness, in all fairness we didn't do much of it because it takes money and takes manpower to do it. But I'm satisfied that we are going to retain public support for the wilderness. We've got to manage the fuels in the wilderness, hopefully as naturally as possible. If you ever get the fuel buildup reduced you probably can let lightning do its historical thing of removing fuel. Now I always objected to calling this let-burn, because it's not a let-burn at all, it's an evaluate burn and determine whether or not that particular fire is doing good things or bad things, and then depending on what the result of that analysis is then you decide whether you allow it to continue to burn for a while or whether you suppress it or how you react to it.

HKS: What are the constraints on mechanization for fire suppression?

RMP: Legally speaking you can do whatever's necessary in the wilderness to suppress fires. I think practically speaking though you've got to consider the fact that one of the things you don't want to do is to put marks in that area that are permanent marks unless you have to. So if the fire is burning inside the wilderness, then ordinarily you shouldn't use mechanization to just prevent the spread of fire in the wilderness. But if it's necessary to prevent the spread outside of the wilderness, then you use mechanized methods and most of the time you do that outside the wilderness. So in most cases you shouldn't have to use heavy mechanized equipment inside the wilderness.

HKS: But you might use slurry drops or something. Use hand tools.

RMP: Sure. The whole idea in wilderness is you use the minimum tool necessary and you use the tool that provides the least permanent marks on the land, the least permanent impairment. I guess it's like you're sick, if I chop a leg off that's going to be a pretty permanent thing.

HKS: That's right.

RMP: I would try other methods to cure whatever's wrong with you short of cutting the leg off. I think particularly in the West where mechanized scars tend to be there maybe for a hundred years, you're going to be pretty careful about using much mechanized equipment.

HKS: You said a few minutes ago, "if the Forest Service wants to maintain public support for wilderness." I didn't know where you were going with that; wilderness might be taken away or there might be more legislation?

RMP: No. I told a wilderness group in Montana last week, paraphrasing from Gifford Pinchot, that wilderness would be there as long as the people wanted it to be there. I think the Forest Service has got to be concerned, it's important that wilderness not be seen as threatening the surrounding land.

HKS: Like insect buildup in the wilderness area.

RMP: Or fire buildup. During the fires of 1988 in Montana there's no question that fires ran out of wilderness areas and ran out of the national park onto adjacent land. That was somewhat blown out of proportion but it still in fact happened. You don't want surrounding land owners to get the idea that wilderness is inimical to their best interests. It is important that you not get this huge buildup of fuel in wilderness, so that every twenty or thirty years you have fires coming rolling out of wilderness destroying the surrounding land. I think the same general concern is for insect/disease. Again, we should do work on insect/disease on the periphery of the wilderness, rather than deep inside the wilderness.

HKS: How about predators taking cattle and that sort of thing? Is that much of an issue in terms of wilderness? That's so remote I guess there's no ranches near.

RMP: There's some grazing use and so on inside the wilderness but I think the whole predator thing is a different kind of problem. Anyway what I was saying is that you want people to value wilderness, you want people to value the wilderness experience, you want them to see that it's a different kind of a thing, it's not the same thing that you did by going to a park for the weekend. It's really an experience to understand and be involved with nature in a way that you can't do in a city park. If it provides the same thing a city park does then you haven't got anything. So I think there is a place in the scheme of things for wilderness. Now how much of the national forests ought to be wilderness is a whole different question. I would think that 20 percent now, that 20 or 25 percent of the national forests are going to be wilderness within the next few years is probably an appropriate amount.

HKS: Is wilderness still controversial the way it was, or are we sort of settled down?

RMP: I think the controversy now is pretty much in Idaho and Montana where the Congress has not resolved the question. There is some wilderness concern entwined with endangered species like the spotted owl. The primary concern of some people is keeping the area like it is. That's their primary interest. The spotted owl may be a means to an end. There's a lot of people who are concerned with the spotted owl in its own right. So there's some peripheral concern for wilderness in other areas, but I think the main wilderness battle in terms of allocation of lands as far as the national forest are concerned are substantially over. There's a lot of concern for Bureau of Land Management lands, where the wilderness fight is not really enjoined yet. But the primary concern I think is primarily Idaho and Montana.

HKS: But this other issue that without proper management the wilderness can have a negative impact on the surrounding area and cause another kind of controversy.

RMP: That's right. I think it's important that we try to be responsive to that concern within the context of still having a quality wilderness. But see I would rather, personally, remove some of that excess fuel by prescribed burning to restore the lower level of fuel build up in order to reduce the likelihood that we're going to get a major fire that's going to cause a great conflagration on surrounding land. I think that's fully compatible with the idea of maintaining conditions as near natural as possible. I was real pleased when some of the leaders in wilderness like Bill Worf and others saw that a prescribed fire proposal for wilderness made sense. Because you're trying to return it to natural conditions. You're trying to get rid of that unnatural buildup of fuels that's there. In the process of doing that you're also going to reduce the likelihood that it causes problems in surrounding country. From that standpoint it was a winning thing. As I say there's not as much done that should have been done.

HKS: There's bound to be major insect epidemics in wilderness areas from time to time. What can be done to treat that?

RMP: I think we need to learn more about the preventive side about insect disease control, the conditions that lead to that. One of the things that we know now is that we probably prevent insect disease buildup by having a variety of age situations. You see the wilderness itself gives you a different age structure. So it might well be that the wilderness itself may help you reduce the problem by also observing how does the buildup change inside of the wilderness. What are some of the natural conditions that exert control? You've got a first-class laboratory to observe that in, the wilderness, which may help you handle it outside.

HKS: Sure. In the '20s that was one of the rationales for having wilderness. You have this benchmark, same site, you could look at it.

RMP: In fact the whole research side, the whole business of what does wilderness help us understand in terms of research to me is one of the great untapped things for the wilderness. In other words there has been very little use of wilderness as a control area, what's happened in here, and what happens out here, and observe those two situations. We haven't really done much of that. We haven't looked at the processes to be developed in wilderness in terms of what we might learn outside. And I would predict in the long pull we may decide that

is one of the primary values of wilderness is use it as a benchmark, use it as a method of understanding what we have.

HKS: Probably the most common single question we receive at the Forest History Society, worded differently, is what were the forests like before Columbus, before this, before that. People have this great interest in natural areas.

RMP: And wilderness provides you with that benchmark. I think that benchmark a hundred years from now may be a whole lot more important than we see it today. Because there are a whole lot of areas that are sort of old growth natural areas outside of wilderness, that's going to be coming fewer and farther between.

HKS: There certainly aren't many of those areas in Europe.

RMP: No there aren't, and there aren't very many in the United States either, except for research natural areas and so on.

HKS: Obviously wilderness is a subject we could talk about a lot more.

RMP: I would bet that in a hundred years from now, Pete, that one of the great contributions that the Forest Service made to society in the nineteen hundreds may have been the evolution of the whole idea of wilderness, for that's a uniquely American contribution.

HKS: Sure is.

RMP: It was sort of brought forth by the Art Carharts and the Aldo Leopolds and the Bob Marshalls, and it's a uniquely American contribution. All out of forestry professionalism.

HKS: Yes.

RMP: And so I think it will be considered a uniquely American contribution to forestry, even though it's been controversial.

Budget Cuts

HKS: We hear a lot about Gramm-Rudman budget cuts. Were they in effect when you were chief, or is that after?

RMP: That was while I was chief. Gramm-Rudman Act, named after Senators Gramm and Rudman, it was also technically Gramm-Rudman-Hollings, after Hollings of South Carolina. That act said that when the Congress added up all of its estimated expenditures for a year and looked at the estimated income of the year, and then looked at what they agreed on as being the deficit, if they were going to run beyond that deficit there was an across the board cutback that would bring the deficit down to the level that they agreed on. It wasn't a balanced budget requirement. There was a reduction each year in the amount of the deficit, so each year Gramm-Rudman was to bring it down to that deficit.

On the one hand the total amount wasn't as big a problem as it was the inflexibility of it, because it started out, as I recall, at 4.7 percent. But it didn't come into place until the year was quite a ways along. If you realize that a lot of your costs are fixed, a 4.7 percent cut, say almost halfway through the year amounts to double that for the balance of the year, and if you've got a lot of costs that are fixed, it's very difficult in some accounts to make a 4.7 percent decrease. So we had to do some real scrambling to figure out just how to deal with it, not only in Washington but throughout the Forest Service. It happened at a time when there was a lot of economic stress outside too. The Forest Service went along in doing this, but I would call it a problem, it wasn't a crisis, it was a significant problem. It was a problem more in some accounts than others. For example, it did not

permanently take away continuing appropriations, they were just held up for that year and then released like K-V Funds, so as I said, it was an irritant, it was a problem, it was not a crisis.

There were I guess two other so-called sequesters, that's what they call them when they require you to make certain across the board cuts. It really caused a problem in dealing with receipts, because some receipts it merely delayed a year. But some of the grazing receipts I believe from the eastern states or something. We had already paid out a proportion of those receipts and so the ruin was that first we had to take everything away from the rest of the year because we had already paid out so much of the fund. That was kind of a special problem. I would not call it one of the great problems of my time as chief, it was not as difficult, to tell you the truth, as overall budget cuts. The Forest Service had several years when every year the budget was less, so we ended up during the time when I was chief making about 20-25 percent reduction in the Forest Service staff altogether.

HKS: Is that right?

RMP: And that's a tough thing to do, that's a real tough thing to do.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: That's a real tough thing to do. In fact, the Forest Service has never made that kind of cutback in staff before or since except when the CCCs quit.

HKS: This is typical throughout the government?

RMP: Yes, but it was typical throughout some of the domestic part of government. It was not true to government in general because the defense part of government was going up all this time.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: In fact going up significantly during the military buildup, and there were some other agencies that tended to go up during that time. So it was not across the board, it was just particular agencies where if you didn't get any more funds than you got the year before, just a little bit more inflation and increases required you to make staff reductions.

HKS: What happened to the civil service? These people were laid off?

RMP: What we actually did is we used a whole series of things like offering early out, people could take early out who wanted to retire early. We did not really do any significant reductions of force where you actually force somebody to retire, but we put restrictions on hiring new people throughout the Forest Service. Any time an opening occurred somewhere we used somebody who was already within the Forest Service. As I told you before, one of the more interesting things we did is we saw that we had too many people in some regions and not enough people in others. We put together what we called at one point a pro-draft, in other words we took the people from each region that came in with all their vacancies as well as their surpluses and they matched people up. If we needed a GS-9 Soil Scientist in Region 9 and Region 6 had an extra one and Region 5 has got an extra one, and we managed to place all of those people that were willing to move.

That turned out to be quite constructive, because people became convinced that we were in fact trying to deal with some real reductions. We asked unions representatives, for example, to watch that operation. Come in and participate and watch what was happening. They would become convinced that the agency really was trying to take care of people. We also said to the receiving regions, look you're going to end up with somebody in your region who maybe didn't particularly want to come there, but put yourself in the place of that person and welcome that person and recognize that it's up to you to be a good host in getting them oriented in the region.

By and large that was quite constructive, it was a good thing for the Forest Service I think in terms of recognizing that if we all work together on something, we could do a good thing in placing people. We wouldn't go through the trauma of reduction in force. Reduction in force, the way the government works, is a

tremendously traumatic thing. The reason early out was important is that we really needed to get rid of some positions in the upper levels in GS-13, 14, 15 levels, but if you tried to drop one of those positions through reduction in force, you would say file reduction in force against that particular position and the incumbent in that position, or you eliminate that position, the incumbent in that position could bump somebody else if they had bumping rights either through veterans preference or years of service and so on, you could end up with a boomerang, end up with ten different people being affected before you finally actually terminated somebody at the bottom end of that pecking order.

HKS: The goal was dollar reduction, so a GS-14 is worth one and a half 7's, or two 7's, or however it works out.

RMP: Right. Not only that but if you went through the bumping arrangements with everybody getting their salary protected for two years, it actually costs money to run a reduction in force in the short run. Plus you've got a lot of very unhappy people who suddenly saw their career cut short. That's the reason offering an early out for people who wanted to retire early is a very humane way to do that. Interestingly enough it was a tough thing to get permission for early out because the Office of Personnel Management who controls whether you can offer early out, their rule was you could only offer an early out if an event, like a one-year budget problem or something, resulted in a certain reduction, then you could come and ask for early out authority.

Well, we didn't meet that criteria. So the department said we don't think you're going to get early out authority. I was very concerned about the need to get early out authority, so I went personally and met with OPM, with Constance Horner then who was, I believe was chairman of OPM, and said look your OPM is going around telling agencies you ought to be creative, you ought to be finding better ways to do things, and you've got this silly rule that it has to be one event. We've got a whole bunch of things going on over a period of time budget wise and new ways of doing business that didn't require the same number of people and so on. I said why have you got this silly rule that it has to be one of them, why can't it be three or four. She turned to her staff and said why does it have to be just one, why can't it be three or four. And she said we'll take a look at this. So we got back in thirty days or a week later or something and we got word that we were going to get authority to work it out.

Now I have to also admit to having mixed emotions on early out, because when you offer early out, people leave that carry a tremendous amount of expertise with them, and they are typically very good people. They leave because they have another opportunity outside, they may have elderly parents that if they leave they can help take care of them. In some cases you had somebody still working with a spouse who had already retired and this allowed them to retire to join the spouse. But anyway, there are lots of good reasons for people to retire who want to go ahead and retire early, but I had some real mixed emotions at seeing people with long years of service.

HKS: What was the criteria? Over fifty-five or thirty years' service or what?

RMP: It's a combination of age and years of service. As I recall if you have twenty years service or more and you're fifty, you can retire. If you have thirty years service you can retire at any age. So it's a combination of age and years of service. Typically the people that retired were about fifty-two on the average. They were people who wouldn't lose a tremendous amount in retiring early in terms of 2 percent per year. They also were still young enough to maybe be able to find something else to do. But I think the youngest people we had to retire, there might have been one or two that were forty-eight or something, but most of them were between fifty and fifty-five, the average being about fifty-two.

HKS: They graduated from college when they were twenty-two and worked for thirty years.

RMP: Yes. We had people to retire everybody I believe from GS-5 up to GS-15. What that did then, it left the younger people who were just beginning their careers, it left them with their career ahead of them, it didn't just drop out that whole group. Of course one of the dilemmas we had at that time was that there was lots of concern about building a more diverse organization in terms of women and blacks and Hispanics and Asians and Native Americans and so on. Because of they way people had come into the academic system then to jobs that the Forest Service, those people were concentrated in those lower grades. So had we gone through a reduction in force we would have lost a very high proportion of those people who represent the diversity that the agency

was being requested to achieve, and I think rightfully criticized for not having made much progress, or as much progress as we'd like to make.

HKS: It was significant. Did that continue on into Dale's term?

RMP: No, that was all over by the time Dale came in because we had gone through the worst of the budget cuts by then and had stabilized the budget, stabilized the staff at a level where we could continue, where we could support it. In fact the Forest Service during the Bush administration has done reasonably well budget-wise, particularly the non-timber side. I think the Forest Service pretty well could be facing some serious problems next year with the reduction of timber sales. There will have to be some kind of a staff reduction, and whether that can be done within the Forest Service again as it was before without reduction in forces I don't know. I just haven't heard that much about the numbers.

HKS: I hear some pretty staggering numbers but I don't know how much that's rumor and how much of that is fact.

RMP: Well there's very large numbers in the three regions affected by this reduction. It's the primary …

New Perspectives and Clearcutting

HKS: Let's continue on with that. Is this related to New Perspectives? The reduction in clearcutting that has been announced in the paper or the plan to reduce clearcutting. I don't know the timetable. Is that related to this?

RMP: I don't know that it is. New Perspectives has been around for about three or four years, and I don't know that much about it except that Hal Salwasser has been one of the key figures. I talked to him early on, he came up to brief me about it. I said at the time: Hal, trying to look at the forest instead of the trees has been a refrain that I know of since Art Greeley was regional forester. The first time I heard him speak he talked about the need to look at the whole forest and look at all the things that are in the forest. We began a vision-management kind of concern for the forests twenty-five years ago. So to me New Perspectives is probably more of an organized way to bring in the whole bundle of values that the public has been expressing in which you're talking about everything from not only visual quality but biological richness and looking at the impact over time of practices and so on. But quite frankly I don't think there's a whole lot new about New Perspectives. I think it's really more of a way of packaging a whole bunch of things.

The significant reduction in clearcutting as a silvicultural tool, which was announced a couple of weeks ago, is said to be a part of New Perspectives. I think that again is more of an evolutionary thing. If you look at the numbers, the Forest Service has been reducing the percentage of volume that it obtains by clearcutting for the last twenty-five years, and that is primarily related to much less old growth. Those numbers are tied to 1988 as a base year; 1988 I think was a record harvest year. So that would be a very high year in terms of acres of clearcut. If you take the reductions that are going to happen in Regions 6 and 5 related to endangered species, and reductions probably in Region 1 and 4 that will happen due to wilderness designations, you are going to move quite a ways toward that 70 percent even if you follow fairly standard procedures.

I think the bigger part of applying that will be in having announced a 70 percent reduction in clearcutting, one of the questions is does that apply to the Service as a whole or does that apply to one region or two regions or does it apply to an individual forest? Because some habitat types are much easier to have alternative silvicultural systems. As you well know the real difficult types are lodgepole pine, sand pine, Douglas-fir, and the southern pines in general. Some of the southern pines like longleaf you could use for various types of shelterwood. But anyway the big problem would be to fit that announced goal into the scientifically known silvicultural systems out there.

HKS: Was this, you think, a shock to the industry, or have they been expecting this? I haven't seen much reaction to this about layoffs or housing starts or price of houses. Do you think it's too soon to get that reaction?

RMP: I suspect that industry doesn't know how to evaluate it. There was a quick reaction from this new industry organization, American Forest Alliance.

HKS: Con Shallou works for them.

RMP: Con Shallou works for them. I saw a quick reaction from them saying this was just another move that was going to reduce timber output in the national forest. I suspect a lot of industry was waiting around to see what this would really mean where they live, because it also lists a whole bunch of exceptions. If you read all of the exceptions and apply them all to places they might apply, it wouldn't do anything. This of course is what a lot of the environmental groups picked up right away and said we're not sure this is for real. Because for one thing, it's doubtful that many environmental groups think that seed tree silviculture is significantly better than clearcutting. Or even that shelterwood is significantly better.

HKS: In other words even age is the issue too, and aesthetics.

RMP: I don't think even age, or uneven age. It's really the impact on the lands, the perceived impact on the lands, sometimes the real impact on the lands. I think it's a good idea to continue to try to find silvicultural systems that are less visually impactful and less impactful in some cases on other values. I think the trick will be to figure out how to do that and be able to regenerate the forest. Clearcutting is not a tool the Forest Service ever used in my knowledge because they liked it. In fact, you know particularly in the East the Forest Service had to really be convinced by research that it was a good idea to clearcut in the eastern hardwoods. But anyway we'll have to see how that all works out, and it is certainly a good idea to continue to do research. Unfortunately, a lot of that earlier work was done on shelterwood in the West was relatively unsuccessful because of the trees that were left blew down. There's been quite a bit of research since then trying to see how you can work at a stand and select trees that you can leave and may not blow down. But I think that will be one of the big things, when you put one of these new applications on the ground. In the first place the reaction to it may be just as bad as it is to clearcutting by a lot of people. Second is that the remaining stand blows down. You're going to have a fire problem.

Biological Diversity

HKS: The National Forest Management Act talks about maintenance of biological diversity, which has been discussed and debated. In a managed stand, the second growth, the issue of biological diversity is a whole lot different. I'm not sure what diversity you maintain if you're in a managed stand, second rotation already. How do you see that?

RMP: I think everybody agrees as a principle that diversity is a good idea. You can be talking about diversity in terms of age of trees, you can think about it in terms of species of trees and other things including the associated wildlife. You can think about diversity in terms of the organisms that live under the trees under the ground and so on. So when you're thinking about diversity you're thinking about the sum total of that biological system. Now it's true that the biological diversity in the second growth stand is different than the biological diversity you have at an old growth stand, but interesting enough, as you well know, there are more species in a younger stand than there are in an older stand. More species of trees and grass and shrubs.

If you want to find the maximum number of types of grass and sedges and shrubs and trees and everything else, probably about a two-year old clearcut of eastern hardwoods gives you the maximum diversity of species out there. As they grow up, as the canopy starts to close, you start getting a drop out of some of the things that don't tolerate shade. So you get a change. To me you're going to have a different kind of biological diversity out there in a second growth stand. When you look at that biodiversity on a broad scale, retain some

old growth is an important part of the total biodiversity scheme of things. When you think about biodiversity, the question is are you thinking about it on a national level, international level, regional level, local level, watershed level, or acre level. And it's going to change at each one of those levels.

HKS: Right.

RMP: In fact I think the SAF publication that came out recently on biodiversity is one of the best I've seen in terms of recognizing various levels of biodiversity. The fact of the matter is all those levels are important, but you can't have everything everywhere. It's a proposition.

HKS: This next question doesn't fit contextually with the New Perspectives, but it is the closest thing we have here on my list. Recently *Audubon* magazine had an article that says, if I read it correctly and I think I did, timber sale receipts go directly to the Forest Service, giving impetus for overcutting. Is that a correct statement?

RMP: No, that's an incorrect statement.

HKS: That's my understanding, too. Are you surprised that *Audubon* would carry an article that is factually incorrect?

RMP: No I'm not surprised that *Audubon* would carry an article that's factually incorrect, because almost any organization has all kinds of people that write for them and the person that wrote for them in this case was either ignorant of the facts or, if they knew what the facts were didn't bother to worry about them. I would hope that it was ignorance. But I've seen mistakes in facts in industry publications, I've seen them in the *Washington Post*; it's not too uncommon. The real world, as you know, is that all the receipts go to the treasury, 25 percent of the receipts go to the counties. The Forest Service is authorized by law to require deposits to do reforestation of the sites and other sale area betterment. And the same with the National Forest Management Act of 1976, it could also do wildlife and fisheries habitat work.

HKS: Would K-V …

RMP: There's a little bit of work that can be done specifically on the site, but there's certainly not any big incentive for the Forest Service to do timber sales because the money comes to the Forest Service, that's preposterous.

HKS: I knew it was. *Audubon* calls us from time to time and asks us for some facts and information. So I assume they routinely check the facts.

RMP: I would think so. I don't know, I never even saw who the author of that article was.

Small Business Set-asides

HKS: I don't remember. Okay, small business set-asides. I know what they are for timber sales and other things. How significant are they?

RMP: Small business set-asides are fairly significant in some parts of the country. That's a complicated program, but basically what it was set up to do is to insure that small businesses didn't get driven out of business by the actions of large business. Now by its very nature since it acts to set aside certain sales to small businesses, it acts to reduce free and open competition, so it's been criticized by those who say it reduces free and open competition. On the other hand, if we had a small business and you had a large business in the same area, but the large business had plants elsewhere that were not in a competitive situation, they could probably bid sales away from that small business to the point where they could run it out of business, because they could just run in the hole there for a while in that operation and therefore force that small business out. There's significant

advantage to forcing the small business mill out, or your competitors, whoever they are. On the other hand because of the way the set-aside works, you could end up setting aside a sale in a small town for some small business buyer that is located some distance away, and you could end up with the mill at that time closing that happens to belong to a large business because he can't get any timber. So there's no way to make a perfectly equitable situation.

HKS: Is a small business a corporation that has fewer than five hundred employees?

RMP: Yes.

HKS: That's a pretty large forest products firm.

RMP: In fact over time, companies have made a management strategy that says we've got to keep the size of our company from exceeding five hundred, and there's all kinds of ways to prevent having five hundred employees. You can contract with companies to do all kinds of services for you. You can do contract hauling, contract logging, you can do just all kinds of contract work, as long, as I understand it, as long as the contractor is not in essence an employee of yours, as long as it's a valid contract. For example contract hauling was all kinds of haulers out there, you don't own those haulers, they can work for somebody else too. But yes you can have some very sizable businesses that are technically small businesses.

During John Crowell's tenure, because he had been critical of small business set-asides, he made a promise during his confirmation that he would recuse himself of anything that involved small business. He did that quite properly, and so far as I was ever able to determine he did that with complete integrity. In fact maybe he'd gone further than he needed to. He was recused of having to involve small business or of having to involve Alaska timber sales because Louisiana Pacific was a large mill in Alaska with a large fifty-year sale. So if we got an appeal or something else, or we had to deal with the Small Business Administration on sales, or deal with Congress, we had to bypass John Crowell.

HKS: Is there a certain percentage of contracts, is there a quota?

RMP: By area.

HKS: By area.

RMP: Small business set-aside is a complicated system because you start out with a set-aside target based on historic patterns. Now that can change over time. For example if there's not a demand for the small business sales, the small business share can get smaller. It also can get larger if the small businesses buy more. So it's a complicated procedure to change it. Because it can change over time, and because that effects the next value of your quota, a few sales that end up affecting that quota can be very important near the end of the period. So over time the Forest Service looks several times at how to prevent people from manipulating it. You ought to be able for it to change over time to make those industries change it, but you don't want it to be able to be manipulated by somebody saying well if I buy these three sales I can change the share next time to my advantage.

HKS: Our experience has been that in the past ten or fifteen years all of the contracts announced by the Forest Service's History Office have been small business or minority business set-asides, so the Forest History Society as a nonprofit is ineligible to bid on any history contract. I don't know how typical that is throughout agencies.

RMP: I don't know why that particular decision was made, but with timber sales that have to do with historic share. In the East, because historically small businesses brought most of the sales, the set-asides got very high. This raised the question should there be such a thing as nearly 100 percent set-asides? Because if there is nearly 100 percent set aside, then you've in essence permanently excluded any large business from that area. And so you no longer have a competitive, potentially a competitive situation.

HKS: It starts approaching the sustained yield unit concept.

RMP: Yes. So one of the ideas that we worked with over time was trying to say that set-asides should not exceed say 80 percent. Or to leave 20 percent where you could at least have competition. Let's say you'd like to get a plant in that would maybe utilize a lot of material that's not currently utilized. The question is are you going to find a small business in that business. Or is it going to be a large business? One of the ideas was to retain a certain percentage, never have more than say 80 percent set aside. Set-aside always was a problem too from the standpoint that except for some products and some situations, you were not supposed to be just a conduit for a large business. In other words you aren't supposed to buy the sale and immediately just sell the logs to a large business. You would be nothing more than a logger. That, though, became very controversial at times because in essence you had to own a mill, you had to own a manufacturing plant.

HKS: I can see that. So the logging companies were forbidden by this.

RMP: Yes. And the other part of this was that what percentage of the product should you be allow to sell say to a large business. This became a problem in Arkansas I recall, because one of the high value products on sale in Arkansas were trees that could make a power pole, either a power pole or telephone pole, straight enough and that size. There wasn't anybody in the business of producing power poles at that time in this area that was a small business. So what percentage of the sale could go to a large business?

I remember going up to see Senator Bumpers, he asked me to come up and see him, and he said why shouldn't we just eliminate all sales by small business people, because if you allow them to sell anything to the big business they're just going to become a conduit for big business. Why do we let them sell anything to big business? So I gave him the power pole example, and I said if you put that restriction in place, you haven't began to hear from small business people down there who it really makes a difference to them economically to be able to sell those power poles rather than to cut it up into 2 x 4s or something. We talked about it for a while and he said, this sounds like something I'll stay out of. [laughter] Which he did. But there was always that kind of a problem with small businesses. Under what circumstances are they really a captive of a large business.

HKS: It's also the fundamental problem you saw every day at having national regulations for a nation as diverse as this one.

RMP: That's right.

HKS: You've got to have flexibility on …

RMP: You've got to have flexibility. The other problem that plagued us once in a while was a small business who did some business with a large company, say sold them power poles or something, and that small business might get into financial trouble. If the large business loaned them money, at what point did those kinds of dealings make the small business a captive to the large business. This continued to plague us in Alaska with charges that the small businesses were just in fact creatures of the large business. I concluded by the time I was finished that there was a reason for small business set-aside sales to prevent pirating by large companies. But it certainly adds to the administrative complexity if you feel like you're in kind of a solvent-like situation all the time trying to decide.

About midway through my tenure, some small business person I knew quite well came in and he said I'm going to go out of business in the next several years. I said how come, and he said well, the company that's my competitor in that area is a large business. They said they're going to run me out of business. I said well how can they do that because you've got a small business set-aside, and he said because they control the banks in the area, and I can't get loans. And I also need to sell chips, and the only company that's close enough to economically sell chips to is that same company. And they just won't take my chips. I can't afford to run a sale when I don't have a market for chips, and I'm losing my ability to borrow money.

HKS: Sounds like they were in a violation of banking laws to me.

RMP: You see the problem is that what they were saying is they had people on that bank board who probably didn't know much about the business and they might have somebody from that big business on that banking

board or the might have somebody who knew the big business who would say how is this person doing and they'd say well you don't want to loan to them. There's all kinds of ways not to loan to people.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: He recognized that that company was probably going to buy his company and then they are going to shut it down. They don't really plan to operate it. Because if they shut it down, every sale that they buy they're paying about $50 a thousand above the appraised price because they've got competition. If they didn't have competition they would pay the appraised price.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Therefore if you multiply fifty times the amount of timber that's being bought in this area, they can afford to buy my mill and shut it down and thereby amortize within a few years. I had reasons to believe that person. So I said to him well, you ought to see if you can't find other sources of financing and if you really have any evidence, any real evidence that this company is doing this, then that's in violation of the banking laws and so on, you ought to take action. When I retired, he came back finally and said well I did find some other lender and it looks like I'm going to be able to stay in business. But he was convinced at one point that he was gone. I never really did know which large business he was talking about, because there were several large businesses in the area. But he was just telling me the real world that he was seeing.

Timber Sale Bailout

HKS: You may not approve of the term, but it's a term that is used, timber sale bailout. That was in the late '70s, right, the price of stumpage dropped and the de-escalator clause didn't work. The people were stuck with a lot of federal timber they couldn't afford to pay for, they said.

RMP: As you recall the middle of the late seventies were a time of unrest and inflation in which we running 10, 15, I think as high as 20 percent, almost 20 percent inflation. Most of the sales in the West were sales of three years or more, and a lot of companies were buying and saying they were cutting it in a fourth to a year. With that kind of inflation you could afford to bid a lot more than the current price.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Particularly in the west side of Region 6, those companies there had specifically rejected the idea of an index that sent prices up or down. Because they said when we buy a sale we want to know what it's going to cost us. This worked fine as long as the prices were right. Looking back, you said boy, that sale that I passed up three years ago, I should have bought it because I'm paying a lot more now, so that sale was a bargain and I didn't know it. There was a recession at the time making the companies pretty nervous whether or not they were going to be able to get future sales. Both of those things added to a speculators situation. When inflation went so high that at that time President Carter said, we've got to raise interest rates to try to put a break on inflation, when that happened the bottom just fell out of the housing market overnight.

HKS: Right.

RMP: When the bottom fell out of the housing market, the price of lumber just plummeted. So here you had this situation where these companies had this tremendously high priced timber under contract that they would lose millions of dollars if they harvested and ran through their mills. Now on the one hand my basic feeling was you signed a contract, nobody forced you to sign a contract and you've been making a lot of money recently. Prices have escalated when you bought sales and there was no escalator on them. You didn't come around saying to the Forest Service can we give you a little money back because these sales are a whole lot better buy than we thought they were going to be. So you've made your bed and you're going to lie in it. John Crowell was highly indignant about that. He believed in a free market and you live or die by the free market. But if you

looked into that with a little more objectivity in terms of what happens if you take the attitude I'm going to let you live or die, you find out that the chances of the government ever getting that money back in those contracts is virtually nil. Because there isn't any mortgage of any kind on those, you just agreed to buy something.

HKS: You've got a deposit and that's all you have.

RMP: You've got that deposit. Many of the companies had a deposit which was really very minimal. Maybe in bidding they had a bid bond which turned into something called a payment bond. They just had a bond that said they would pay. If they didn't pay you had to get the money out of the bonding company. And over time, in order to reduce the carrying costs of sales, and in order not to have government timber bringing in a lot less money, there has been a tendency to reduce both the deposit and payment bonds. So if you looked at that real hard, you'd figure that if these companies went broke, the government would probably get a nickel on the dollar. Certainly one thing the government didn't need was a bunch of abandoned mills and a bunch of logging equipment that probably didn't work by the time it got to the government. Because you see, everybody else would have been in line first, the first mortgager was in line, the person who has the loan on the equipment, so any new equipment that probably had a loan on it the company would have gotten. The Forest Service would have gotten a bunch of old worn out equipment that it would have been lucky if it would have run. They'd have ended up with mills that it would be lucky if they would have run. I became convinced over time that it would be better to figure out some way that the companies could continue to operate those things, at least most of them. Then we should look at adjusting the price.

We looked at adjusting the length of contract, the term of contract. So the first thing we did was we extended the contract, we merged the authority we had to do some of the emergency expansion, which just meant they were still under contract but they had another year, two years to cut it, and hopefully the prices would pick up. Well the prices didn't pick up, and so we had two kinds of extensions along the way. One we called a soft extension and one we called a hard extension. Some of them required rates to be escalated and others didn't. Finally it appeared to me that we were simply going to have to figure out a way for the companies to be able to, in some cases, get out of some sales, but hopefully the to operate most of the sales. But by the time the company came in and there was a 1930s situation during the big depression where the companies were just allowed to turn in the sales with no questions asked. They just came in and say I don't want the sale, you've got it back. So eventually they came in and said we're just going to give these sales back to you. I said, in the first place we don't have any authority to take these sales back, and in the second place that's certainly not equitable for you just to give us back the sales that you don't want but keep the sales that you want to operate.

Then industry started looking at other bells and whistles that they might get in a big timber sale bailout. My first impression was why don't we sort of share the pain here. For example, let's suppose that the current appraised price of the sale was say $100, and you got it for $200, why don't we just split the difference and you take 50 percent of the pain and the government takes 50 percent. It's kind of like you contracting somebody to build a house for you and suddenly the prices went out of sight and the person said I can't build it for that price. It was an unprecedented price thing that he could not have anticipated and so on and he said if you hold me to this, I'm going to go broke, and therefore you won't have your house anyway. And you say well, I'm certainly not going to give you this whole increase in price, but maybe half of the increase. So I was looking into negotiating, you know kind of negotiating half way in between.

We had all kinds of bills in Congress that were trying to deal with this. The administration for a long time was opposed to any of these bills because the first bills that went in were way too liberal, in terms of what they would have done in the grand perspective. Finally after a whole bunch of negotiation they ended up with this tremendously complicated bailout law that allowed you to turn in a certain percentage of the sales or the floor of a certain amount, just turn them in with a payment of a fixed amount. For certain other sales there was another kind of formula, and this had to do with the net worth of your company. It also had an upper limit of how much you could turn in. It was the darndest complicated formula that you ever saw.

Senator Metzenbaum ended up being one of the key people in demanding this formula. I remember that George Leonard and I went up to talk to Metzenbaum because he was raising cane about what he thought was too liberal a thing. He was the one who said you ought to differentiate between whether it's a small business or

a large business, and what the net worth of the company was. Well we weren't at all sure we could even figure out what the net worth of a lot of the companies were and particularly with companies that were able to shift dollars around, how reliable were the numbers that you were going to get. So we were concerned about ending up with such a complicated formula you couldn't administer it. But we went up talking to Metzenbaum a little bit. Metzenbaum looked at George and me and he said you guys may know something about forests but you don't know blank from blank about business. He said companies can't move assets around the way you guys seem to be thinking they can and so on and so on and so on. Well, he may have known something about business but he didn't know as much as he thought he did because some of the companies did in fact move assets around. Anyway it ended up being a tremendously complicated formula, and when it finally passed and the question was, was the president going to sign the bill.

Secretary Block and Assistant Secretary Crowell went over to a meeting at OMB, it may have been the White House, I didn't go. The question was should the president sign the bill or should the president veto it. We had been working on some kind of a briefing paper, so we put together two briefing papers, both on one page. One was the case for signing, and the other was the case for vetoing. It was a good case both ways.

HKS: Sure, I can see that.

RMP: So Block went over and he met with the people there. He said I think the president should sign this bill. He said it's against some of the free market principles we've been standing for, but he said if he doesn't sign it the government's going to be in one big whale of a fix with all of these mills and all these sales and everything else. So he said, you know, it's like being in a ditch and we've got to figure out a way to get out, but he said my assistant secretary thinks the president ought to veto it. So I would like to give him an opportunity to tell you why it should be vetoed. So John Crowell outlined the case for vetoing. At the end Stockman, who's the head of OMB, apparently said well I think the president should veto and they should just have the Forest Service negotiate with each one of these companies some kind of a deal under some kind of guidelines. In the first place nobody knew what the Forest Service should use as authority to do that. In the second place nobody knew what the Forest Service would use as guidelines. Congressional leadership, particularly from the West, was really asking the president to sign the bill, and the president was going to be, I believe, in Oregon the next day with Senator Hatfield, right in the middle of the big problem area. Anyway they took the case for signing it, and sent it to the president with his recommendation that he sign it, which he did.

HKS: There were some companies like Roseburg Lumber that had a very, very high percentage of federal timber; other companies had a much smaller percentage. So I imagine industry really wasn't at all united.

RMP: Oh no, industry was really split on it. The National Forest Products Association went up and said well, some of our companies think there should be a buyout and other companies think there should not be a buyout. There's no way that that whole thing could be equitable, that was one of the tough things about it. Let's say you were a company that simply didn't bid up sales beyond what you thought you could reasonably harvest and therefore you didn't have much under contract because you had been very prudent, you found yourself disadvantaged because your competitor now had a whole bunch of sales and got a break of being able to turn in the ones they wanted to turn in.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: So there's no way to be perfectly equitable.

HKS: Not too many years ago we saw on the nightly news all the farms being auctioned off in the Midwest, so the government plays hardball sometimes.

RMP: Yes. I think in all fairness in that Farmers Home Administration thing, if they looked at the cash flow situation of those farms and they looked at how much they borrowed, and it looked like there was any way that the person could continue to farm the land and make it, they let him do it. They even wrote down the loans. They would reappraise the land, and they would write down the loan, maybe all the way to its current market value. But in many cases there wasn't any way that the person could make it, they'd simply borrowed too much

money at too high interest rates. So Farmers Home did in fact write down lots and lots of loans, but the farmer still couldn't pay.

People say that the timber sale bailout cost the taxpayer a lot of money. I think the record would be pretty clear that the timber sale buyout made money for the government, because in fact, in virtually all cases the remaining contracts were in fact operated. The government got income from it. Had the government taken the other approach and just demanded that they either operate the sales or go bankrupt, I think there would have been a tremendous number of bankruptcies that would have substantially reduced competition in areas where those areas went bankrupt. The Forest Service would have to redo those sales, reoffer them, and go through all the expense of redoing and reoperating them. When we started chasing those bonding companies to try to get that little bit of payment bond out of them, and even if they got it, it would probably cost as much to collect it many times as it was worth. So I think the taxpayer made money by the timber sale bailout.

As I told some people, it's not a question of what you do in a perfect world, it's what do you do when you are dealt a hand that's not a very good hand. You try to make lemonade out of crushed lemons or something. That was a very difficult time because most of the action on that happened during the Reagan administration. The bailout happened at the end of the administration that was very committed to free market principles, and one of the principles is that if you've done something foolish you suffer the consequences. So it was a very hard thing for that administration to agree to a bailout. The administration only did it I think when they finally decided that it was the lesser of two evils.

HKS: What was learned? Indexing is now mandatory? What happens?

RMP: Oh, I think a couple of things were learned. I think one thing is that the Forest Service after that instituted substantially more deposits on sales and also set up a payment schedule which you pay whether or not you harvest the timber. And you start paying right away.

So one of the things that happens in a case like that, if you look at what the Forest Service was doing back over the twenty-five year, thirty year history, you'd say that what the Forest Service has done is working quite well. That by reducing the up front cost, the Forest Service is getting a little more money out of the sales, and that by making the sale period longer it allowed the company to build the roads under some kind of reasonable schedule and dispose of the slash, it gave them flexibility in operations and so on. In other words everything worked well if you didn't just crank in that high inflation. High inflation was the problem, so I think what this says in the future, if the Forest Service sees another inflationary spiral going it better certainly take another look at how it sells timber. But the whole idea of making the timber sale operator put more money in the fund and then a payment schedule certainly took away the incentive to see a sale as a way to just simply operate in the futures market.

Wetlands Protection

HKS: Wetlands protection. This is becoming and will remain, I think for a long time, a major issue. Right?

RMP: Right. That's an issue that's really mostly come up since I retired. It's pretty much an issue in my current job. On one hand I think that everybody recognizes that wetlands are of significant importance to society, they are important to the landowner in many cases, they provide groundwater recharge in some places, they regulate the rate of runoff by the area of wetland filling up and the runoff being slower than it might be otherwise. The wetland tends to process waste. If you have the runoff from a farm going into a wetland, you've got fertilizer and manure and pesticides and so on in there. That wetland acts like a miniature treatment plant. In fact, most sewage plants are biological treatment plants, and that wetland is just a big biological treatment plant. It not only treats the waste but it filters the water, quite efficiently. So there's a lot of value to wetlands which are recognized.

The other part of that proposal is we've lost over half our wetlands in the United States since the United States was established. During, I guess, the first 150 years of our being a society, wetlands were seen as a place that breeds mosquitoes, as a place that's foreboding, as a place that didn't have any value because if it turned out to be marsh and so on. They're not places you'd want to swim, and maybe not even places you'd want to fish, they're not having much water. So many people saw wetlands as being of no value to the land in spite of having these other public values.

What's become controversial is that beginning about twenty years ago with acts of Congress dealing first with navigable waters, we first said, going back I believe to an 1899 law, that you couldn't dump refuge in navigable streams because people didn't want navigable streams plugged up with trash. So the Corps of Engineers was told that they could regulate the deposition of field material or any other material in navigable streams. This was extended to wetlands adjacent to navigable streams that affect the navigable streams. So gradually wetlands protection is stressed over land under the Clean Water Act. I think the number is that about three-fourths of these wetlands are on private land, so then you get the question of how much can you appropriately regulate what somebody does to their private land without running afoul of constitutional questions of taking and so on.

Now our own organization that I'm with now, The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, we primarily try to approach this through like the farm bill through incentive programs. Beginning in 1985 the farm bill said if you're going to take all of the benefits that you get out of farm subsidies and farm loans and so on, in return for doing that you won't be guilty of the so-called swamp-buster violation, you won't mess up your wetlands and you won't break out new land. The basic thing behind that was you certainly wouldn't want to pay people to take land out of production and so on. On the one hand if they were going to break new land or if they were going to fill land that they could plant a crop on, so the 1985 farm bill said you can't convert a wetland and grow a crop on it; that's a controlled crop. In 1990 we changed that to say you can't change your wetlands so that it's capable of growing a crop. The previous provisions required you to actually plant a crop, one land owner could convert the wetland and five years later somebody would plant a crop on it and not realize that that was prohibited.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: There was a real record keeping problem. Plus what you were trying to do was to stop it from being converted to begin with. It's kind of a carrot and stick approach, you say to the person you have the benefits of the farm bill providing you don't break out the wetlands. The other thing that's being done now in a lot of states is that both private organizations and state organizations are entering into an agreement with the farmer, maybe Ducks Unlimited or somebody else, entering into an agreement with the landowner to say we'll give you $50 per acre per year for this wetland area. Maybe in return for that they might get to hunt, fish or something else. In other words an agreement can be to protect the wetland. That's worked reasonably well. In the 1990 farm bill there was another provision which authorized a system of wetland easements in which the government would pay you for an easement for your land. In return for that easement you would restore wetlands, these are converted wetlands, in fact they used to be wetlands, but you would restore that wetlands and you would agree to protect it as a restored wetlands for a period of time. That's just an example and nobody knows quite how well it would work. But the basic thing I believe that's made wetlands controversial is this clash between society's wanting to protect wetlands because they have a lot of values to society versus the concern that if you tell somebody you can't do anything with that land, you've just got to keep it like it is, have you taken that land, have you violated the Fifth Amendment against taking? And that's where it remains right now.

HKS: There's some national forests in North Carolina on the coast that are all wetlands.

RMP: Yeah?

HKS: Potentially they are. I guess the definition is still kicking around.

RMP: There is an exclusion in the Clean Water Act for something called normal silviculture. The question there is, of course, what's normal. But there is a recognition that as long as you don't alter the wetlands itself, as long as you don't drain the wetlands or build a wetland, that you could practice growing trees on that land. In fact

that may be one of the better uses of the land, because that gives the person some economic value out of the land. You're not taking all of the economic value, you're just managing the land as a forest which may include timber harvest, it may include hunting and fishing and whatever, recreation.

HKS: So to drain wetlands in order to plant trees is out. If there are already trees growing there you can have normal silviculture.

RMP: Draining land to plant trees, if you're a farmer and you're getting benefits from a farm bill, you can't do that, that's a violation.

HKS: How about a lumber company?

RMP: A lumber company that's not having anything to do with the farm bill and so on, it depends there on whether they are in violation of something called Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which is different from the farm bill. That's a whole different part of it. There you see the exclusion is for normal silviculture. If you're draining it and converting the land for something else, that's no longer "normal" silviculture. Normal silviculture is supposed to be the kind of practices that have been used there before, not a new kind of practice. The chances are you can grow some kinds of trees on that land.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: There's a couple of controversies that are looming or have loomed with connection with silviculture on these lands, and that is with the advent of concern about biodiversity. Some parts of EPA have said wait a minute, by normal silviculture we don't mean turning that into a monoculture. Others have said, well now wait a minute, that was what was done here before, that's what's normally there. Then they say well prove that that was done here before, you know. And it may be difficult to prove what was done there normally, in other words what kind of mix of species would be normal silviculture, and should species mix be a consideration in so-called normal silviculture. There's been quite a bit of discussion going on in the last couple of months on that, I'm not sure what the outcome of it is. The bigger issue of wetlands in general is coming to terms with how much society can regulate land, realistically, without paying something for that restriction.

There's a case right now before the Supreme Court which may test that. It's a case from the Carolinas where a person owns some land along the beach and the state came along, I believe under the Coastal Zone Management Act, and said we shouldn't allow any construction of houses in front of this line toward this beach in order to protect both the property and the beach. Well somebody owned land there that was going to build a couple of houses on it. Their land didn't extend far enough back so they could have moved off of that, so this person said wait a minute, this is a taking. And the lower courts were mixed whether it was a taking or not, so the case is now before the Supreme Court. I believe the lower court said it was a taking and that the person was owed about a million dollars for their land, something over a million dollars. It went to the next level of court and they said no that was not a taking, it was an exercise of zoning authority. And then that's before the Supreme Court now.

HKS: That's a pretty significant decision when that comes down.

RMP: Will be, yes. The Supreme Court might duck it by saying the person could have asked for a waiver and didn't to those restrictions. [laughter] I don't know. But I think there will be tension. State of Arizona just passed a law recently that said if the action of the agencies in the problem of getting the regulations substantially changed the value of the property, that's not the exact words but the implications are that even though you haven't prohibited any use of it if you had a major impact on the value of land by regulations, then maybe you'll have to help pay for that. Now that's a staggering kind of an idea, because anytime you zone land, any time you draw lines on a map and you zone, some people are lucky and some are unlucky the way those lines are drawn.

HKS: Zoning, traditionally, has increased value of land.

RMP: Zoning has traditionally increased value of land in terms of providing protection maybe of the land, and typically zoning tried to protect things that were already there. But more recently if organizations zone say for open space and you happen to end up with your land being in an open space category, or with restricted density, it can also substantially reduce the value of land. There's a big fight right here in Fairfax County over so-called down zoning. And they had one zoning in place there before and people bought the land based on that and then the county down zoned it. The question is, is that a taking? The county here now is just going through a procedure where they have now up zoned it again. They're reversing the down zoning.

Air Quality

HKS: Air quality. Is that an issue for the Forest Service other than smoke from fires? Are there other air quality issues that the Forest Service is concerned about?

RMP: Yes. Air quality, particularly as it relates to wilderness areas, is an issue. As you recall, the Clean Air Act provided that wilderness areas above a certain size were Class 1 areas, which is a no deterioration area. Other bills including one that passed in Virginia made special provisions on air quality. But the big thing on air quality is that if somebody proposes to put a power plant in somewhere and it significantly reduces the air quality in one of these Class 1 or Class 2 areas, the manager of that land gets involved in saying to whoever is issuing that permit that the issuance of that permit is violating the air quality in this area.

HKS: Has that been happening?

RMP: Oh yes, that's happened.

HKS: In the East?

RMP: In the East and in the West. The Forest Service has been involved in the East, but the Park Service has been involved in several places. This is a whole new area of interest and concern and that power plants can be a long ways outside of the national forest. It just has to be in the air theater of the place that is affected.

HKS: Must have been pretty startling the first time that the power companies faced that issue. They did not anticipate that problem.

RMP: Power companies had not anticipated it. The more stringent requirements of the Clean Air Act, particularly the more recent Clean Air Act, is probably going to clean up power plants to the point where this won't be a significant problem. The other part of the air quality problem, of course, is from fires, particularly from prescribed fires. There's been a reasonably good working relationship with the air quality people in this state by saying to them look, if we don't do prescribed fire you're going to get this load from this accumulated vegetation all at one time in a wild fire. The question is do you want to get it under conditions in which we may be able to burn where we reduce the local air quality less than we would otherwise. Or do you want to wait and let it go up in a wildfire in which you're going to get a tremendous deterioration of air quality? Generally the Forest Service has been able to work with states. It's been more difficult in areas where, when the local people would like for you to burn because the smoke will escape right away, maybe in conditions in which it is not safe to burn.

HKS: That's right.

RMP: You see, so it narrows your window, it narrows the number of days that you're able to burn. You've got to deal with the question how many days are really going to be such that you can burn and then how many of those days that you can burn can you do it and meet the air quality requirements.

HKS: I remember living in Portland. Between the farmers burning their stubble fields and the Forest Service burning the slash, Portland is a pretty smokey city at certain times of the year.

RMP: One of the things that's going to reduce that problem is that as you get higher utilization of fiber on timber sales, and particularly as you move away from the old growth cycle, you're going to have a lot less volume of stuff to burn on the ground.

HKS: You mentioned earlier—I hadn't heard of this before—burying slash.

RMP: It's usually done in connection with the slash that's along the road.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: It's been done in some places. Let's say that it's an area where it's very hazardous to burn and where other disposal methods cost a lot of money. There has been some burying of slash in the toe of the fill slope along the road. There has been some burying of slash that originated from roads in other kinds of locations. I don't know what percentage of volume of slash is done that way, but I would say there's been a significant increase of burying slash in the prism of the road.

HKS: A lot of chipping along the roads, too.

RMP: And a lot of chipping is being done. But again, as you get into things like whole tree chipping and that sort of thing, you end up with disposal systems that will produce less slash. Anyway, I think the smoke and air quality from fires will be with us for the foreseeable future. In many places you've got potentially a safety problem on the roads that can be created by either wildfires or prescribed burning. If you burn and the wind whips across the road and blocks this building along the road, you could potentially have very hazardous conditions. So burning has become a much more sophisticated thing.

One of the more interesting things that we ran into not long after I became chief was that the Forest Service had over a long period of time a well developed system for sending people on wildfires. In other words if you were sent on a certain type of wildfire, you had to have a certain type of a red card that showed what your qualifications were and you had to have gotten those qualifications by going through some kind of training and experience. You typically started at the bottom, maybe as a crew boss and you worked up to a sector boss, and finally a line boss and so on on that side. Or you might have started out as a maps and records officer and gradually done some crew boss and sector boss and some of that and finally ended up being plans chief or move over to service chief. There was a well-developed sense of how you got there.

There were a couple of escaped prescribed fires, and a review of those fires indicated that there were people that were involved in those fires that didn't meet anybody's standards of qualifying people. We suddenly realized that we had a double standard. If we were lighting the fire off, almost anybody could do that. Of course I guess the idea was in prescribed fires, usually the fire danger isn't very great because you're not burning under those conditions, and so almost anybody could do this. So we didn't have any requirements for training of people in the various positions. We didn't have any real requirements for a prescribed fire plan that went into some detail of how you're going to do the fire, what kind of conditions you want, what kind of results were you looking for, and what kind of a contingency plan did you have if the fire that you intended to be a fairly small fire became a big fire. We had quite a set-to on this, and we finally came up with some guidelines and said look, if you're going to light a prescribed fire, you have to meet certain training requirements, and you have to have a plan that is approved, and you had to have adequate forces on line, and so on, so on, so on. One regional forester said, in typical fashion, well let me tell you this, if you let a slash fire get away, that may be the last of your career. If you really took that attitude, people weren't going to do prescribed fire.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: But on the other hand, from a public perception standpoint and from a standpoint of resource damage you really can't afford to let many prescribed fires get away from you. Some of them are going to get away from you; you're going to have unforeseen weather conditions, you know you're going to have conditions that just turn out to be different than you thought they were, but you can't have very many of them get away from you. So we put out these rules, and I told the crew if you follow these rules, if you follow these requirements, if

you have trained people, if you have an approved plan, if you follow your plan and if you have a contingency plan and you follow everything through and the fire still gets away, you're not going to be hung out to dry. That's acceptable; it's acceptable to take the risk after you've done reasonable things to reduce the risk. But it's not acceptable, if you go out there without a plan, with untrained people, then you're going to be in trouble. I'm not going to protect you. That worked quite well, and the Forest Service went back in to the prescribed fire business and I think it's doing reasonably well.

That was kind of an acid test because we had prescribed fire in Region 1 that resulted in death. We had a major prescribed fire in Idaho that caused lots and lots of criticism of the Forest Service. I said to some people that letting a prescribed fire get away that's a big one, that really does spectacular things is sort of like blowing up the Challenger, particularly if you have fatalities associated with it. It's going to look like you didn't know what you were doing.

Mount St. Helens Eruption

HKS: Was Mount St. Helen's eruption significant to the Forest Service?

RMP: Yes. It was quite significant not only from the standpoint of being an event that was seen around the world, but it was initially quite a test of the local Forest Service and other agencies' capability of handling a major emergency. I was most proud of Bob Takarczyk, the supervisor of the Gifford Pinchot Forest, and his crew and the cooperators out there because they had seen the changes in that mountain that had taken place over time, and the steam coming out of the mountain, and they recognized that the thing might blow. In fact the USGS had done a little report on the potential eruption of Mount St. Helens, and that publication that they put out was a classic definition of what might happen with the exception of first, they couldn't predict within any hundred years when it might happen. And second, nobody anticipated that loud of a blast. Everybody was looking for a conventional vertical blast. I happened to be out in Region 6 and visited the Gifford Pinchot, in fact flew over that area on a Wednesday before that thing erupted on Sunday. I asked Bob Takarczyk what kind of contingency plans they had in place if the thing blew up; by now they had closed the area from public use.

The governor of Washington, who was Dixy Lee Ray at the time, had put an enclosure actually outside the forest in the so-called red zone. Now you could get permission to go inside that zone if you had reason to be there and had some kind of permit or permission and if you had radio communications and this sort of thing, or if you were a scientific person studying it or something. I stuck a copy of that contingency plan in my briefcase, it wasn't too big. It just said here's what we're going to do if we have a blow up. The USGS will do this, the county sheriff's office will do this, the Forest Service will do this, and it had all the contact names, and it was a basic little contingency plan. A real nice little contingency plan. I was down in Georgia at a dedication on that Sunday and I got home here and walked in and Jan said you have a call from Bob Lake and it's urgent. She said you did know that Mount St. Helens blew up? I said no I didn't know that.

I said well I've got the contingency plan in my briefcase, let me pull it out. I pulled it out and looked at the phone number out there that was supposed to be the contact name. I called and I got right through. He told me exactly what was happening. It was a blow up, what was happening with the rescue. The big problem that we had in those first few days, in addition to just rescuing people, was we simply didn't know the implications of that ash that was being produced. We didn't know whether that was a deadly ash as far as people that breathed it. We didn't know whether this was the beginning of a whole stream of eruptions. We just didn't know.

The ash was like talcum powder, but when you rubbed it between your fingers you could feel that there was a grit in there. It was more like a material you use to finely finish a gunstock or something. Anyway, getting back to the first day or so after the explosion, a lot of people who were away from their homes couldn't get back. It closed the port there because you couldn't get up the river. That ash went right through the breathers of cars; a lot of the police and other emergency vehicles were wrecked by that going into the engines. Places as far away as Spokane and Pullman were getting all kinds of ash fall. Nobody knew what was going to happen when

it rained with all that ash, you were going to have huge problems. They were rumors that it might wipe out the apple crop because of its effect on insects. Immediately in the vicinity of Mount St. Helens there were huge lightning strikes that went through that ash and you had fires throughout that area that was caused by the hot blast as well as lightning. So it was about as near as you could visualize what hell might be like. The real question was how are you going to deal with all the fear that was being churned out.

After talking to a lot of people during the evening, I went to the office the next day and I had called the department to tell them that this was in fact on one of the national forests and that we were very much involved in the search and rescue and pretty well had that in hand. But I said you know there are lots and lots of people that are really scared out there, people are out of their houses, they don't know what the results of all of this is going to be and so on. So the first message I got back, this was from OMB to the department, was for god-sakes don't play this thing up because it's likely to end up costing a lot of money. It said you remember that the senator that's in charge of appropriations committee is from the area, so you can expect all kinds of demands for emergency money to go out there, and you need to play this down.

HKS: No one was concerned about federal liability, as such.

RMP: I don't think federal liability as much as it was here was a big emergency and you're liable to see all kinds of demands for money to dredge the river, to provide housing, you know, open bonanza. So they were just real concerned about opening up the floodgates to the treasury. I said, how in the heck are you going to play down one of the most significant events geologically to happen to the United States in a hundred years? How do you propose to play this down? They said well just try to contain people's worrying about the money side of it. I sort of stewed that day and the next day as we starting getting in more and more reports, and some of the earlier reports told us that maybe the ash fall wasn't quite as bad as we thought and that people had been moving it off their houses. We had some meetings with people trying to figure out what it meant to crops, what you should tell people to do if they've got it on their lawns, in addition to getting it off their houses. It's too heavy, now what do you do? We had medical people out there. We put together a little team out there in the region as part of a federal emergency management organization.

The fear factor I would say was one of the more difficult things to handle. The team of the Federal Emergency Management Administration had moved in the Forest Service office on the Gifford Pinchot and the real emergency part of over right away. It didn't last too long. There was some searching for survivors inside the blast area and there were some early survivors that were picked up but anybody that was going to survive in there was pretty much gotten out in the first several hours. We then began to recognize that we had problems like Spirit Lake didn't have an outlet now, so it was going to fill up and then it was going to spill out and it was going to gorge when it started running through all that ash, so we were going to have potential major flooding downstream. We also had a huge operation to try to salvage timber. Secretary of Agriculture Lyng, at my recommendation, had designated that area as a geologic area some months earlier. The question is now where this is a geologic area and where this spectacular phenomenon had happened, did you want to go in and salvage everything, or did you want to leave the area sort of alone to be able to witness the recovery of that area from that kind of event. It represented an unprecedented opportunity to track the recovery of an area. So we decided right away that we ought to look at retaining at least a quarter of the area where we would not do salvage, and where we would devote it to scientific work and looking at the recovery of the area and so on. That really focuses a bit later.

HKS: But the emergency plan was working.

RMP: The emergency plan worked quite well, to get people out, to rescue them and so on. But there was a lot of fear out there from the terms of are we all going to get tuberculosis or other kinds of problems from breathing this stuff.

HKS: Was the Forest Service the only federal agency involved in this?

RMP: No, no, no. The Forest Service ended up being kind of the focal point because the Forest Service was there with an emergency operation. And so the Forest Service became the communications center. The U.S. Geological Survey was involved all the time in helping predict what was happening, and did I'd say a fantastic

job of providing advice, both before and after the eruption. The Federal Emergency Management Administration came in after the declaration of emergency, but you see FEMA usually can't get on site and get set up within say forty-eight hours, it takes at least that long to move people in, get set up and going. By the time the forty-eight hours is over the initial emergency is over. The Armed Forces were involved to a considerable extent with the use of helicopters and so on, the sheriff's office was involved there in at least two counties, the state police were involved, the companies that owned those lands were involved, the power companies and so on, so there was a huge number of county, state, and federal agencies involved, but because it was on a national forest and because the Forest Service had the emergency organization in place, it ended up being kind of a focal point of the original work. I'd say in Washington for FEMA who sent people out, we were the ones that where the most knowledgeable about what was happening of the federal agencies. We talked to the department quite often and kept them up to date. By the time Wednesday morning came along, I was saying maybe I ought to go out there, because I'm always the kind of person who likes to be on site when there's a lot of things happening. I thought maybe I ought to go out there and at least size up the situation and get some kind of a feel of what the salvage problem is going to be, how much the area we're going to leave like it is. Also several Forest Service people were adversely affected by this thing.

HKS: In an extraordinary situation like this, who controls? The regional office or the national forest? It's on the Gifford Pinchot, right?

RMP: Yes, but in a situation like this, real early I'm sure the Gifford Pinchot started asking for assistance from the regional office in terms of helicopters and backup. It was handled pretty much like a fire situation. Of course it's quite close to the regional office there.

HKS: Right.

RMP: But Bob Takarczyk and his crew remained sort of the focal point.

HKS: Bob was the supervisor.

RMP: He was the supervisor. But I was a little frustrated in that I thought this is a time that the president ought to really get out there waving the flag. I mean you've got a lot of people adversely affected, you've got a lot of uncertainty going on, and if your leader is going to really be visible, this is the kind of place he ought to be visible. As I say I was thinking about it. So I called up on that Wednesday morning and I was talking to the department, and I talked to a guy that I usually talk to in the White House and I said that I'd been keeping up to date on what's happened at Mount St. Helens. I said this is really a time when a leader ought to be out there waving the flag, and create interest in this thing. He said well are you thinking about going out there? I said I'm thinking about the president going out there. He said, the president? And I said yes. I think this is a time the president ought to be out there, showing concern for the people and concern for this big impact and seeing that the resources of government are being brought to bear on this problem zone, and I think it would be a calming, I think it would show great concern and so on.

HKS: Reagan is president, right?

RMP: No, Carter is still president. This is 1980, which is election year. The guy said I don't know about this; well I guess we can talk about it. He said there's been some discussion about what's going on out there, I've kept people up to date. Anyway I left the office to go, I think to a SAF luncheon or something, and I was going directly from there to the airport. I got through with the luncheon a little bit before I thought I would and went back to the office and Sue said, oh I thought you were going directly to the airport, and I told them I couldn't contact you because you were heading for the airport to catch an airplane. The president is going out there and they wanted to know if you wanted to ride along. She said I told them I didn't know anyway to get in touch with you because you were on your way to Dulles to catch an airplane. They said well you could join them when you get out there. So I flew out commercial, but Carter did in fact go out in Air Force One.

Bob Takarczyk guided him over the area and showed him the area. The president did in fact get very much involved in waving the flag and showing concern. He was the one that described it as looking like the craters of the moon. You may remember that definition of the area stuck.

After that we found that apparently the dust wasn't that hazardous, but they did recommend that people wear surgical masks over their face and people do things like fill up their breathers in their cars with some oil to help take the ash out. It turned out that the timing of it in May happened after the apples had been pollinated, otherwise it could have been a tragedy to the apple. It turned out that the ash had some fertilizer elements in it, so it was kind of a top dressing on a lot of these farms, so it turned out to be a whole lot less of a disaster than it appeared to be in terms of the surrounding area. Then we ended up drawing up plans for a portion of the area that we would keep and the portion of the area that we would go ahead and salvage in and so on. It ultimately turned out that Congress took that up and designated that as the Mount St. Helens National Monument. It's now a designated area by Congress and they went somewhat beyond the areas that we had recommended. But they stayed pretty close to it.

HKS: Is there any private land in that?

RMP: There was quite a bit of private land; in fact, one of the companies owned the very top of Mount St. Helens. We had been working on the exchange because it appeared that the top of that mountain probably ultimately ought to be in public ownership.

HKS: That goes back to the railroad land grants probably.

RMP: Yes. It was Burlington Northern I think that owned it. We had worked out the exchange and had it all signed and sealed and ready to go, and went to Burlington Northern for final acceptance, and set it down on the person's desk that was supposed to approve it. He sent it down for one more look by the attorney and that night Mount St. Helens blew up. [laughter] So that exchange was no longer appropriate. In fact somebody called and said you ought to come get your land, it's down there on a bunch of the national forest off the mountain. [laughter] But the Forest Service was directed in connection with the designation of the monument to exchange the private land involved within the monument.

HKS: I know Weyerhaeuser is still working on the various adjustments, the tax losses, all the things. Even today they are still working on that.

RMP: Weyerhaeuser moved in to really a very very prompt salvage of the timber. There were a whole lot of things in the management of salvaging timber in addition to the usual problems. Number one, a lot of the trees were broken off up about fifteen or twenty feet in the air, and you look at that and say why in the world did that tree break off up there. If you're a student of physics you could figure that out, that's where it should break off. When it gets down below that and it starts to get larger, it's got a cross-section that's larger and you don't get that much more leverage, so there is a place up there where it's supposed to break off. Sure enough those trees figured out the place to break off. In many cases it took all the limbs off of the trees. It took pine cones and everything else and flipped them for miles.

One of the early questions was, will those trees be stressed and will there will be problems with using that lumber for structure purposes. Another question was how much ash does that have in it and what kind of a problem is that going to produce for chain saws? Then what about putting people in there to do the work on that, and working men don't like dust because when we stepped in that dust, that dust you know just blew up and really engulfed you. What about working equipment in that area? All of those problems were addressed. It turned out the trees were not structurally damaged, and it turned out that when it rained that ash sort of set up until there was less of a problem with ash. But moving those trees out of there in that ash covered area was a problem with the people's side. You had to request special equipment, you could only make a few cuts through a tree and you had to resharpen your saw or replace the blade. Lifting meant you lifted a tree up or something even though the ash was sort of set up, why you stirred up all this ash. So it was quite a problem.

HKS: I flew to Portland during the second eruption a month later. They turned us back at the Oregon border. We spent a night in San Francisco and then went back up again. It was a rather interesting experience to walk out of the airport with all that ash on the ground.

RMP: Oh yes. Having been out there on the Wednesday before it blew up and the Wednesday after it blew up; it was really inconceivable the change in that country. To look at the trees that were blown down almost ten miles away from the top of the mountain, full-grown trees, and they all landed in the same direction basically.

More on Decentralization

HKS: Do you want to talk about decentralization some more?

RMP: Yes. One of the things that might be worth putting on the tape, it doesn't have exactly to do with this whole business of decentralization as it much as it does have to do with the whole question of would a different organization serve the Forest Service better in the future. In other words, is there a real need to examine how many regions, how many forests, how many districts the Forest Service should have. Is the four-level organization obsolete? All of those kinds of things. Several times during the time that I was chief and right before, those things were looked at conceptually. As you probably remember the Forest Service was trying not having ranger districts in Alaska. We tried to operate directly from a forest level, not have a ranger district. You operate from a forest level and if you need to send somebody out to handle a recreation problem, you send somebody out. If you need to handle an insect disease problem you send somebody out. Part of this was because in many cases there wasn't a good location for a ranger station in some remote areas, and there may not be a school there and so on. So you were going to have people out there without their families during a large part of the year. That organization without a ranger district didn't work very well, though, because the public in an area had no one person to turn to. It was almost like if you had a bank but you had no branch, even though it might not be that far to go to a central bank, without a branch bank to go talk to, even though you saw employees, it didn't seem to work very well.

Then we started dealing with such questions as how big can districts be and still cover the job. There was two obviously opposite trends running, and I think that's still a problem with the Forest Service. One is that as you get more intense use of various kinds, there's really a high priority of being able to know the land that you're managing, and have the person that's on site be really intimately acquainted with the land. In fact, Sam Jarvi used to say that the one thing that the district ranger ought to be is a person who knows his district better than anybody else. It reminded us that someone said the best fertilizer for a farm was the owner's tracks.

HKS: LBJ used to say that.

RMP: Somebody did. The feeling is that the district rangers should intimately know their land. By the time that we really got into this question in some detail, I'd done enough international traveling and looked at what was being done in other countries. I was impressed by the fact that countries like Germany that are well-known for forestry have forest managers in charge of extremely small areas, like ten or fifteen thousand acres. Much smaller than we've got. But that person on the ground does practically no paper work. They're on the ground working professionally. All of their paperwork is done by somebody else, always support is provided. They don't have an interdisciplinary staff at all. It's a generalist operation. They can in some cases call for additional help, but they don't have anybody on their staff, except maybe a technician or two.

Historically Ed Cliff had been very much opposed to larger ranger districts. That general feeling was expressed by people like Ray Hauser, who was a real advocate of not having ranger districts that were too large. So we did a little bit of examining places where we would, say, have two rangers in the same town. There's quite a few places in the West where there's a limited number of sites you can have headquarters. The Forest Service had pretty much gone away from having a summer headquarters and winter headquarters, where we actually moved the rangers in summer and winter, to having year-long locations. But in some places the only town that was available was the same place for two different districts. We looked at some things like common support for those two rangers so you didn't have to have two different organizations. In some places we combined those. But if you combined them then you ran into extremely large districts and that ran into questioning how much familiarity could there be on the ground in that area.

Then we looked at whether we could reduce the number of regions. In fact you can reduce the number of regions; with modern air transportation and communications and so on, you can have a regional office darn near anywhere, depending on what you perceive as the role for the region. But if you look at regional boundaries that have been established for other things, like all the Interior agencies are all in the so-called ten standard regions, all the other agencies of the government virtually have gone with these ten standard regions. They tend to be in large metropolitan areas. If you go to the West you'll find that the regional offices are in places like Denver, Seattle or Portland, San Francisco, and the Forest Service headquarters like in Missoula and Albuquerque and Ogden and didn't fit any of the ten standard regions. So if you were going to reduce regions and you were going to at the same time conform to this ten standard regions, you were going to end up dropping some of those regional offices, maybe all three of them. That's where the Forest Service got in trouble in the early '70s and got an appropriation rider that says you can't change regional boundaries without the consent of Congress. And you can't spend any money to even study the question.

After looking at that quite a bit, I concluded that it was highly unlikely that the Forest Service could realistically change regional boundaries. Realistically you weren't going to pull the Forest Service out of Missoula. On one hand you could come up with an organization that would use Missoula or Ogden or Albuquerque, but then you wouldn't be conforming to the ten standard regions which the thought or philosophy said you had to be. So I thought you're probably not going to get permission either to do that, so it appeared to me that that was kind of a lost cause to try to change regional boundaries. The better part of valor was to try to reduce the size of the Washington office and the size of the region as we were reducing the Forest Service as a whole, so that all that impact didn't fall in the field.

We did in fact reduce the size of the Washington office, reduce the size of the regional office. National forest staffing actually tended to pick up, increase over time, primarily because of putting in new NFMA planning and some of that type of stuff at the forest level. But I would say that that remains a live question today.

The office of Inspector General of the Interior just took a devastating swing at BLM by saying their four-level organization is obsolete, that it results in duplication at each level. What he actually did, he looked at a person at their lowest level, which is their area, and said well you've got a person out there that's a forester that's doing work that's say associated with timber sales and somebody in the district office is looking at that, and somebody in the state office is looking at that. And you've got a forester in your headquarters office and they must be doing the same thing, and so it's duplication. They did the same thing in minerals and any other activity. They weren't doing the same thing, but it appeared at least to OIG that why can't the one guy do it and why do you have to have all these three additional layers.

I think probably with the advent of having more things through computerized techniques and so on, theoretically you're going to need less people at the middle-management level in both in Washington and the regional office and on the forests. I think at least in the short run you'd probably be better off to examine what's most efficiently done at each of those levels and how many people you can reduce at each one of those levels. Probably in some places can combine a few forests. Probably can combine a few districts, technically you can combine a few regions if you can get a tool to do it. Someone said the Forest Service was either awful smart a long time ago when they went to this four-level organization or it's way out of date now. And it may be some of both. But that's going to be a live question, how the Forest Service responds to the organization questions.

Unit Planning

HKS: I suppose ecosystem management as opposed to functional management may have some impact at the forest level, anyway.

RMP: In Atlanta we moved into what we called unit planning at that time, which was trying to look at all the resources of an area and make a plan for how we're going to manage those resources in an integrated way. I was concerned that particularly the parts of the organization that dealt with vegetative management was

pushed in different directions. We had wildlife, timber, and range organizations that were separate, and we had a talk about it. We said look, the wildlife people on the region are primarily looking at the vegetation out there in terms of how you can change it to either benefit or not harm wildlife. The timber people are looking at how you can produce timber and the range people at how you can produce grass. Anything one of them does affects the other ones.

So I put those all together under one staff director in Atlanta—Wildlife, Timber and Range—with the idea that you needed to manage this vegetation pretty intimately, for all of those purposes. Now that's another definition of biodiversity, or another definition of New Perspectives or something else, of trying to put everything back together, and looking at it. We did some simulation work on how whole forests would look over time under different kinds of management. As you can expect the people concerned with either one of those activities, though, didn't like the idea of having them together.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: They didn't mind having them together as long as the person that was in charge came out of their particular side of the equation. In other words it was all right to the timber people if you had the person in charge coming out of the timber shop, it was all right with the wildlife people, if you had the person coming out of the wildlife shop, or all right for the range people if the head of it came out of the range shop. But over time the Forest Service is going to have to somehow deal with this problem of at one time trying to integrate what's happening. At the same time the public out there is primarily interested in those various goods and services you're providing.

There's not anybody out there in the public that I can find who says we'll be satisfied if you practice something called ecosystem management. We don't care whether you do anything except what we want done. In other words, they're going to say well it's great to practice ecosystem management, are you going to have any trails? Are you going to have any campgrounds? Are you going to harvest any timber? What are you going to do that affects wildlife? So ecosystem management ends up being kind of an umbrella within which people are looking for certain goods and services. The ultimate test that the people are going to apply, does the forest appear to be managed better, are we getting a better mix of goods and services, is the forest healthy? All those kinds of things. What really at this point is probably a buzz word, landscape ecosystem management. I don't know that the people are going to stand up and salute that if they don't like the results they see. I guess the basic point here is that the Forest System probably will have to change, should change it's strength at least of the functional organization, which incidentally has been losing strength now, functional organization of the Forest Service has been losing strength for at least twenty years.

HKS: I've been told that only the Washington office is still on functional lines.

RMP: The functional staff in the Washington office has just a small percentage of the power they want to have. See at one time, if you were a head of a functional staff in national forest management, you were allocated all the funds. You made the decisions. The budget actually allocated, it but you made all the decisions where the money was going to go. That was a tremendous amount of power. That was taken away about twenty years ago, where the line officers were the predominant deciders of where the funds were going to go with some assistance from those staff. I went back to California in '66. I got concerned because when we finally would get the money it wouldn't match. We could get some things like, we'd get money to build some campgrounds without the roads.

HKS: Right.

RMP: Or we'd get the road money without the campground. Well, getting the road without the campground wasn't quite as bad as getting the campground without the road.

HKS: Right.

RMP: Because if you built the road you could always add the campground later, but getting in and building a campground then trying to put in a road system didn't work very well. So I said to Jack Deinema we ought to

figure out some way of, in the first place, combining our submittals from the region so that at least we submit a package that's integrated. Right now the recreation shop can present recreation facilities, and the engineering shop can produce a road program, and unless they really work at it they can't be sure that they match. Somehow we ought to have a unified budget. The problem was the chief's office wasn't set up to even handle a unified budget. The recreation people asked for money at one time, and road people at another time, and timber people at another time. There wasn't even any common time to turn in the requests. There's been a tremendous change in that length of time in the whole budget process, in the whole allocation process, to try to better integrate things, and try to see that you're asking for the right things. Then in the early '80s, we got involved in this so-called pilot study in which we tried additional flexibility to spend money. In fact, that's probably one of the last things I should talk about, because …

Pilot Unit Project

HKS: The pilot study.

RMP: The pilot study, because, it's broadly been misunderstood in the Forest Service. There's a book out that describes the entire credit for the pilot study for being the brainchild of Dale Robinson, which certainly is not true at all.

HKS: Which book is that? It's a public administration type book?

RMP: Yes.

HKS: Okay.

RMP: I forget what you call it; it's called something like *Champions*. It features a whole bunch of different people in government as heroes, you know, of doing something. That's not because Dale didn't have something to do with it, because he did, but this is one of those *Reader's Digest* kinds of things where the author writes that just one person suddenly had this idea in the middle of the night and championed it through and was the father confessor of this whole thing.

The pilot study, in fact, grew out of a frustration. About 1981 we had a new administration on board, and they were talking about substantially reducing the cost of government, streamlining the government, reducing unnecessary paperwork and all this kind of thing. We had begun to get a variety of complaints from the field that said we're just drowning in paperwork out here. We're being required to make all kinds of reports and do all kinds of paperwork that to us appears to be rather nonproductive. How come you don't get rid of some of this paperwork if you're trying to streamline government? This was true in the personnel area; it was true in virtually every area.

Jerry Miles, who was our deputy chief of administration, who I'd known for a long time, all the way back to when we had worked on something called productivity improvement, talked about that. He said we ought to figure out some way to utilize this popular notion that paperwork ought to be reduced and get the administration behind some substantial reform of the paperwork that's been required. When you look at the personnel area, for example, we found out that a whole lot of this stuff we were doing, we were doing because the office of personnel management required you to look at, make all these classification reviews, even though it was a temporary job. Or you had to individually classify jobs, you couldn't group classify, you couldn't look at all the ranger districts that you had in the region and decide that this one ought to be this and this one ought to be something else. You were supposed to look at each job on a one-to-one basis and decide what grade it was going to be.

A lot of things were happening that to us didn't us didn't make a whole lot of sense. So we went to a meeting of the deputy regional foresters for administration and the Washington office counterparts. One of the things that we worked up was a kind of challenge to them to figure out a way that they could reduce paperwork by at least

25 percent. Because they were part of the group that were complaining, and aptly so, that they were drowning in paperwork. We said now, you guys are the ones that can tell us what paperwork you really can do without. We also had had a lot of complaints that the manual had just continued to grow. Once it had started out being a very small manual, now you have a whole bookshelf full, and the people were adding to the manual and never subtracting anything. So we put them together with an associate deputy chief group and gave them the charge of cutting the manual in half. And we said we want you to cut the size of the manual in half, but we don't want you to do it by making smaller print. [laughter] We want you to really make it by reducing the size of the manual.

They took on that job with a lot of enthusiasm, in fact they adopted a philosophy that said when in doubt, throw it out. In other words you don't need to give that instruction. Assume that you pick people that have some intelligence and have some ability to adapt to their local situation, and don't give them a whole lot of instructions that they don't need. Give them all the flexibility you can give them. Then we thought, we ought to tell the department we ought to get rid of all this whole bunch of reports.

Jerry Miles is the man who masterminded putting together this big letter asking them to eliminate all these reports. For example, GSA required a detailed space utilization report on offices, which for the Forest Service, numerically, were mostly ranger district offices. Of what godly use was a report on all these ranger district offices on how much space was being used, and how much you've changed that over the year in which it might change about 15 percent depending on whether you added or subtracted a person. If you reduced staffing by a person, it showed poorer space utilization, which gave exactly the wrong signal. So we went with a whole bunch of these things to the department and asked for agreement to eliminate those reports. There was one on fuel utilization, all of the vehicles out there, which had also the same problem. If you drop some vehicles out of the fleet because you were reducing staffing it might show a less utilization. Anyway, we got the standard line back from the department that these forests and stations reports were all required by higher authority. While they were sympathetic of our concern, they didn't have any authority to eliminate it.

This is the reason I said the whole thing was born out of frustration. We went back to the drawing board and we said now, how are we going to do this. We decided that we asked the department what we would like to do is to pick some units out there and ask them to identify all kinds of things that they are doing that don't make sense, and give them a lot of flexibility for how they're doing the job. Even give them flexibility in the use of funds within certain parameters so they can move funds around if they think they can save money in the process and get a better product. If this district uses plus on this fund and minus on this one, the next district might go the opposite, so nationwide it would tend to balance out. It wouldn't be within the chief's authority to shift funds.

Gradually then this pilot unit concept came up. We could adopt certain regions and certain stations and so on as pilot units to test this whole idea of reducing the amount of paperwork and giving them additional flexibility. These units were identified, and when the districts did a detailed look at the things that they felt they could do without, paperwork that they were pushing and so on, they found out that a whole lot of things they were doing the Forest itself could change. And if the Forest couldn't change it, it turned out the region could change it, because a lot of the things they were doing were required by the region. When it came to the chief's office, we found out some of the things that were being done the chief's office could change, and we didn't even need to go to the department on them.

We made a commitment to the field that you identify what you're doing as nonproductive, and we'll go to whatever level that we have to try to get relief from that on a pilot basis. We went to the department and said, we're not asking for blanket authority to do this, we'd like to try it on a pilot basis. We said look this is an opportunity to improve productivity. By that time John Franke was in the department as assistant secretary. He was on a presidential council on management improvement, which was asking the agencies to innovate on how they could improve management. He suddenly saw this as a way to say here's something that's being done that has some potential of picking up the creativity of people to do things different to save money. We've been working an idea that the people could share in the savings that they made. We suddenly had a whole pilot thing born here. It was about at this point that Dale got involved in it, he'd become associate chief by then, and we did rely on Dale quite a bit to help carry the thing through. He's by no means the author of it, in fact he wasn't even around when it started.

HKS: I kind of remember that. In some newsletter somebody talked about a pilot project on the forest in Texas. Dale was going out.

RMP: I don't want to take away from Dale as being one of the real spark plugs of the thing. I think the unfortunate thing about that though is that if anybody should get credit for the origination of it or the incubation of it, it probably should be Jerry Miles. Many of the earlier discussions, it was only Jerry Miles and me involved. Then the staff itself, there was everybody from Ray Housley to Bob Buckman and others got involved with it. This was before Dale was ever on the scene. It's caused a little bit of static within the Forest Service, and Dale did have a major role in it. Some have given him the credit for originating the idea, which is not true.

HKS: I suppose that's always a problem. The insiders know what really happened, and somebody writes a book.

RMP: The whole idea of giving people additional responsibility (now called empowerment of people) began to take off. John Franke became one of the spark plugs over in the president's mansion in the management and improvement organization. It finally got to be called something called total quality management, TQM, which now is government-wide. They set up a whole group over in the OMB to shepherd this thing. Dale among others is on that board of directors of that TQM outfit to keep TQM alive and well. It's one of those ideas that germinated and went all over the place in terms of trying to capture the creativity of the people in giving them more freedom in how they do things. It's really consistent with Tom Peters' excellent ideas of the entrepreneurship of Gifford Pinchot III, all of the things that we say we've got to loosen up the organization and make it not quite so rigid and allow people to innovate and so on.

One thing that was a corollary that I should mention was something called productivity improvement teams, or PIT teams. We were aware in the early '80s, obviously, of Japanese success in using the so-called quality circle teams, which was saying that the people doing the job really know how to improve on how it's being done. They know an awful lot more about it than some so-called experts. So we put together these things called PIT teams. PIT teams were predominantly from the activity that was being examined, and we decided it should be a diagonal slice of people, it should be people from the field, from the various offices and so on, and so that involved all levels. They would look intensely at an activity, and we decided that we would concentrate on activities that cost a lot of money service wide. They should examine that activity in detail and come back to us and tell us what should be changed.

In order to prevent that from being stopped anywhere in the organization, we said these PIT teams should report directly to the chief and staff. We gave them some commitments that we would approve what they came up with. So those PIT teams were somewhat separate from the pilot study, but it was the same idea, to examine things in some depth throughout the organization and then to loosen up the rules, or to do things some different ways. Those productivity teams made some real substantial recommendations on improving how we did things, and probably deserved much of the credit for the ability of the Forest Service to drop about 25 percent of the staff and still carry out an increasing volume of work.

HKS: I'm sure.

RMP: Which to my knowledge has never been done before. Now there were some things the Forests just quit doing, some things you couldn't do with that lesser organization. By and large in terms of numbers of visitors, in terms of all the other indicators of workload, the Forest Service was conveying handling an increased workload with a substantially less staff.

Summing Up

HKS: Okay, to put a cap on this, looking back, any regrets, things that didn't work out after all, or didn't have time for it, or Congress didn't play ball or whatever?

RMP: Sure you have a lot of regrets. I think anybody looks back and says if I had to do it over again I would do the thing just like I did it, that must be the height of arrogance. I think I made several mistakes in implementing the National Forest Management Act, some of which I was a party to and some of which I really was not. I think we simply made it too complicated. Part of that was because the Committee of Scientists that was established by the act really were people who were interested in the state of the art kind of planning system. You had people that wanted to be sure there was adequate data on all kinds of things, and that you really analyzed all the alternatives and somehow predict all the consequences of those alternatives, and that you could predict the economic implications of all this. In the real world there was nowhere that that kind of a system was in operation, and there was not the computer technology to handle such an analysis. Anyway we got embarked on a planning system that I think was too complicated. I think had we settled for a simpler planning system for at least the first time around, that we would have ended up with plans that were nearly as good.

HKS: The complexity was self-imposed. Were any of the outside advocates demanding complexity?

RMP: A lot of them were outsiders. There were a lot of people out there who said when you do your planning you obviously have got to have all this information and you've got to examine these alternatives and to dig deeper you've got to do this and to do this you've got to do something else. So a lot of the complexity was really by the Committee of Scientists, by our own staff, and by external groups. As Rex Hartgraves said, we've inherited trying to put together all the earlier planning. He said we got ourselves in a spot where we were trying to learn how to ride a bicycle while we were assembling it. We did create a planning system, essentially one that didn't exist. We ended up with a computer system which was basically designed to handle timber scheduling as one of the predominant computer pieces. I think we'd have been better off the first time around if we'd gone through a simple planning system. I don't think we'd have lost much in the way of efficiency.

There were two kinds of things that drove us to the complexity. One is the almost absolute need to have it computerized. You simply couldn't handle the amount of data that was involved without being able to have a computer. The other was the process requirements of NFMA and the National Environment Policy Act. By the time you had those two process requirements together, you were forced to compare alternatives and you were forced to push economic analysis, environmental analysis and so on to rigidly compare alternatives and to predict the outputs of quality and all that. In some cases, the Forest Service almost found itself needing to come up with numbers that were based on the best judgment when there weren't really any numbers around. If I'd known what I know now, I would have gone for a much simpler planning process in NFMA for the first time around.

HKS: How about successes?

RMP: I'll give you a couple of more disappointments. I think the California consent decree that I told you about earlier was one that potentially could have been handled a whole lot differently. I was deputy chief at the time that was first came on the horizon, and then I was chief during the time that a lot of it ran. Here the Forest Service didn't have any real feel for what a consent decree was. We agreed to a whole bunch of things in that consent decree that nobody had reduced to numbers. We agreed to take all practical steps. We agreed to a meeting of diversity that represented the population and so on. We agreed to a whole bunch of impossible things in that consent decree, and particularly they were impossible at a time when we were reducing staff.

HKS: Could you really contest or negotiate the decree? Could you have?

RMP: I don't know. But at least we should have. We should have tried to make it more specific. In other words if someone said we want the Forest Service organization to replicate society in terms of women in the workforce, we should have said in every grade in every series within five years? It had been fairly obvious that you couldn't do it in every grade in every series, because there were very few women in the workforce at that time, in the professional workforce.

If you had made any kind of a reasonable estimate on how many recruits we were going to get, what might be the loss in those recruits, it would be fairly simple to say you can't meet what turned out to be the estimate. For example, when it came down to cases the idea was that in every grade and every series you ought to have 44

percent women, because that was the number of women in the workforce in California. But the percentage of foresters in the workforce was say 10 percent. Now it makes a great deal of difference whether you're measured against 10 percent which is the number of foresters in the workforce or you're going to be measured against the total women in the workforce. And nobody knew which of those two numbers was being agreed to by those early contestants. So the consent decree then became a matter of great frustration, both to women and men as the Forest Service found itself unable to meet the literal numbers. I think the Forest Service felt and Zane Smith, who worked very hard on that, thought if we show good faith efforts, that that was adequate. Well, good faith efforts that don't reflect numbers that people are looking for turn out to be unacceptable. I think the region was doing pretty well and the women knew that the Forest Service was doing about all it could, that people were making new progress, that people were being placed, people were being recruited.

Lo and behold along came the Justice Department at that time that suddenly said what in the world is this consent decree out here. This looks like quotas to us, which this administration's against. Who in the world agreed to this thing. We've got to get rid of this thing. Because see we were running toward the end of his term. Since we hadn't obviously met what had been agreed to, although we made some good faith attempts, I personally will say why don't we extend it a couple of years. As long as we're making progress, maybe even extend it five years. Within that length of time, since we are making good progress and since the people are basically Forest Service employees and know the progress we're exceeding, maybe that will be acceptable.

The Justice Department was having no part of that and said there isn't any way that we are going to agree to your doing that. We want you to document the progress that you've made. We're going to take the position that quotas are illegal and that you are not to be involved in this thing that looks like quotas. They said that your person that's monitored this whole thing out there has spent way to much money. You should not approve another dime being spent. So we got into a kind of a fairly good size hassle with the Justice Department over the whole operation of that thing.

About that time the attorney for the class action out there said, well if you're going to play hardball, I'm going to play hardball. I'm going back to the court, and I'm going to ask that the secretary of agriculture be held in contempt, because it's the secretary of agriculture who is the civil rights officer for the department. Dick Lyng had been a very progressive person in terms of wanting to hire women and minorities, he had taken some real strong action in Arkansas where SCS had a problem. Dick Lyng, without any question, was very much in favor of a diverse organization, and he had demonstrated by the people he had appointed. He said I'm going to hold the agency head personally responsible for taking action. Suddenly, here's Dick Lyng going to be faced with a citation for being in contempt of court. He practically knew nothing about this whole thing.

I went over and talked to him. As he usually was he was very cordial, but it was obvious that he was very disturbed about this. He said, how in the world do we get to this kind of spot. It looks like we haven't done what was promised. Who signed this thing and why was it signed and why did you allow it to be signed, and how did we get to where we are? So I gave him a little bit of background on it and I said well, Mr. Secretary, the Forest Service and I personally have a responsibility here, because this was a Forest Service agreement and we simply were not able to live up to what was agreed to. I was not personally involved in that at the time, but I knew about it. It had some adjectives in it, and I didn't understand what the adjectives meant, and neither apparently did anybody else. But we got to this spot, and it's the Forest Service's failure, not the secretary of agriculture's failure. He said I appreciate that but you recognize that I'm a cabinet officer appointed by the president, who people are dinging on right now for civil rights things. I'm the person they're going to hit on for the consent citation.

Suddenly the Justice Department, who had been gung ho that we were not going to deal with quotas and all this kind of thing, got in the spot of we've got to take all of the action we can to prevent the secretary from being cited for contempt. By that time the wells had been so poisoned out there that there's no way that you could get anybody to convince them that we were suddenly the good guys again. We were willing to be enlisting and all this. The judge did in fact hold the secretary in contempt and ordered the extension of the consent decree for several more years or if the Forest Service put up a lot more money than we would have put up otherwise during this period of time. So the implication of the Forest Service ended up being twice as bad as if we'd gone ahead and worked out the thing as we were about to do.

I looked back and said could we have prevented this by doing something different when we agreed? We had a more realistic agreement, were there some steps that we should have taken that we didn't take along the way. In other words, there surely was a way to handle that with of impact. I guess the Forest Service just now is potentially going to get out from under the consent decree. It's not that the consent decree itself is so bad as it is the fact that an agency ought not to get to a spot where it has to do what should be done to get a consent decree. When you're in consent decree, women that get promoted, for example, say you know this whole consent decree has cheapened my promotion. Now people say she didn't get promoted based on merit, she got promoted because of the consent decree. The fact of the matter was that person might very well have been promoted, whether or not there was a consent decree. By and large there's a big cadre of very capable women out there.

It also provided a ready made excuse for any man who didn't get promoted, and instead of saying well maybe I didn't really prepare myself well enough, or maybe I really am not demonstrating that I can do the job as well, well that person got it because of the damn consent decree. Quite a few people said they just gave up competing for jobs, because the idea was that women were getting all the jobs. That wasn't in fact true. There's now litigation from somebody who said they were ranked as best qualified, or highly qualified for a job, and there's been twenty of those jobs open and they've not been selected for a one of them, and those twenty that were open, most of them went to women and obviously it was just reversed discrimination. All during that time there was a real touchy situation with Hispanics and blacks who were saying that the consent decree is just a way that you figured out to promote white women. Before you were taking care of white men and now you are taking care of white women, and you're discriminating against us and we're also a protected class. When you start turning an organization against itself that way, in a region like that, it's not a good thing. I've told all the other regions, you'd better take the consent decree as a warning to get your house in order and be sure that you're taking adequate action to go out and find and recruit women and blacks and Hispanics and that you're giving them full opportunities to get qualified and that you're not running any kind of an old boy's syndrome and that you're really building a diverse organization. If you don't and the consent decree falls on you, you're going to have some real internal organization problems pulling it off. So anyway the consent decree is one that I might have handled differently.

Even more recently I've looked at this whole spotted owl thing. Had we done some things differently on that could we have prevented the train crash that's occurred. I'm not sure whether we could have or not. We in fact tried in the late '70s and early '80s to get other agencies to join to protect the habitat for the spotted owl. Industry roundly criticized every move we made to protect the spotted owl. In fact one of the guys out there said when the industry needed a lifeboat, I threw them an anvil by putting this additional protection on the spotted owl. Industry was trying to recover from a big depression and so on and the worse time since the '30s and suddenly they thought the wilderness problem was solved and suddenly it came back again in the form of the spotted owl. Some groups who basically were advocates of the wilderness, when the wilderness bills were passed, decided they'd protect the areas they wanted by use of old growth dependent wildlife.

That infuriated people like Hatfield who had helped pass the wilderness bill. Anyway you look back at that and think if we'd gotten research started a little bit sooner and we'd been more rigorous in understanding that whole thing, could we have prevented the crisis which occurred. The answer is probably yes, we could have if we were smart enough to know exactly what we could have done at the right time. I'm not sure whether we could have influenced it. I got the real heavy criticism; in fact it came from Lyng several times, in 1986. I know he was asked to fire me several times by industry because I was too environmentally oriented, that I had put too much protection on the spotted owl.

Lyng said to me, why are you doing this? Why are you taking this action? I said remember that the spotted owl is an indicator species, and indicator of the forest health and indicator of old growth health, and it's like the canary in the mine. If we don't take action now, if the owl ends up being threatened or endangered, what you see now is just like a Sunday school picnic compared to what kind of a problem you're going to have. Even though Lyng didn't know a lot about the subject, he accepted that as a fairly good concept of what was the matter, so Lyng did not in fact interfere with our actions on the spotted owl.

When he was asked in a public meeting out there on that trip to the Pacific Northwest, what do you think, do you think the Forest Service has over acted or underacted in this case? Lyng said I'm not sure that I can make a

judgment except that it seems to me like where they come out might be about right. He said do you realize the owl is an indicator species, and all this. But in spite of that, he had lots and lots of pressure that Forest Service in general and me in particular were being too responsive to the concerns of protecting the spotted owl. It turned out that I was not vigorous enough. Whether I could have been successful I don't know.

HKS: The woodpecker was listed, I think in '67 or '68. It's not as dramatic as the spotted owl but it's …

RMP: The red-cockaded woodpecker is about 1 percent of what the spotted owl probably is. There are several reasons for that. In the first place national forest land is not as predominant in the Southeast, so if you tied up all the national forest land in the Southeast you wouldn't have the impact of the spotted owl. The second is that at least the strategy for protecting the red-cockaded woodpecker has been to protect a relatively small area that includes the colony. The first area that we protected for the spotted owl was three hundred acres for a nest, that's a pretty good-sized area of old growth. The template for a red-cockaded woodpecker, an area that we protected or the osprey or the bald eagle or any of the species, has been the size that's been required for the spotted owl. That's one of the reasons why some of the people are saying that this whole spotted owl protection is an overreaction, that the owl is probably more adaptable than people think it is and that this action of the Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest and the action of the courts are just a huge over reaction to something called science where the scientists say it's their best judgment that this area needs to be protected, they really don't know.

The impact of the spotted owl is way and beyond anything we've ever seen, unless it would be something involving the salmon out there now which apparently will be listed. If we had really spent more time with Interior, could we have gotten BLM to join in the overall conservation strategy, could we have gotten the state to add the state lands, could we have pushed research along further. In other words, could the outcome of this have been less of a crisis. The answer is, it probably could have been. But it turned out not to be.

On the success side, I guess history will have to judge some of those. The Forest Service probably had as high a level of challenge during my tenure as its seen in a long time. We had an abrupt change in philosophy in the administration. I told Rupe Cutler and John Crowell one time, two of them together, that having one person that came out of the Wilderness Society and one who came out of Louisiana Pacific is not what you'd really like to have. I says if they put you two guys in a sack and shook you up and gave me the average I'd have been better off. To a substantial degree there was a pretty major change in overall philosophy, and particularly the administration coming in with its strong push to reduce spending and staff. Going through a period of reducing 20 to 25 percent of the Forest Service staff and still keeping the Forest Service going and still keeping it to be a strong organization, was a tough thing.

Certainly I didn't do it alone. The deputy chiefs, the regional foresters, the forest supervisors, the district rangers, everybody in the whole organization participated in that. But I think the one thing in that that was different during that period that I see right now is that the Forest Service pretty well stayed together during that period, in other words, we realized that we had some major problems, but we sort of figured we were rowing together, and so there was a cohesion there. When we found that we simply had to reduce the staff by a certain amount, we went through this thing called the pro draft. Everybody felt like they had a piece of the action, and this was a fair thing to do. When we went through other reductions in staff, when people felt like they were part of the decision making and that it would become a fair decision, even though there was a fair amount of dissension going into it.

I think that the challenge of getting the Forest Service through this time, we realized we were putting of the new National Forest Management Act plans on line. We were essentially resolving the wilderness controversy by getting all these state level bills passed. We launched these pilot studies. We launched the challenge grant program, which we enlisted outside people to help do a major projects, everybody from Trout Unlimited to the Wild Turkey Federation. Then these major agreements to get other people to help us out. All of that was born out of kind of adversity, so it ended up being a time of a fair amount of progress for the Forest Service in terms of reaching out to a lot of people outside the Forest Service, of getting people in the Forest Service thinking that the Forest Service would be responsive to new ways of doing business. I think the primary success was really kind of keeping the Forest Service going; keeping the Forest Service as a creative, productive organization

during some pretty darn tough times. Simply getting through and improving the operation of the Forest Service in reaching out to a lot of outside groups was probably the major kind of success.

I mentioned this challenge grant program. That's one thing of which is again not something that's primarily to my credit as much as it is to a whole lot of people. We had all of these Job Corps centers out there, and we were trying to have the centers do work programs. One of the problems we had was getting materials. We also had deteriorating campgrounds all over the place. So one of the things we discussed at long length in the early '80s was some idea of getting an appropriation from Congress to buy materials to rehabilitate campgrounds and maybe rebuild ranger stations and maybe rebuild trails and all kinds of stuff. Then get volunteers or companies or other people to join in an effort to rebuild campgrounds or to rehabilitate an area. A couple of the major timber companies like Kaibab Industries out in Arizona said yeah, they would be interested in maybe helping rehabilitate some campgrounds. They got involved in helping take people on guided tours of the campgrounds and showing them what forest management was all about. There was an interest in getting some money that would be matched.

It turned out that one of the first organizations that was interested in that was Trout Unlimited to do stream work and so on. And I mentioned earlier the Wild Turkey Federation. Don Knowles who is now over in Interior, in the deputy secretary's office, was up on the Hill in the Senate Appropriations subcommittee. We said if we had some money we could get it matched. He said do you really think you could? I said yes, I think we could. Bob Nelson, who is now the director of Fish and Wildlife, was one of the key figures along with others, so they gave us some money, that started out being called discretionary money and then it's also been called a challenge grant, in which they gave the Forest Service an initial appropriation of just a small amount. I think the initial appropriation was a million dollars at that time, with the stipulation that it had to be matched, either in money or in kind. Goodness, that came right away. That challenge grant program has doubled and doubled and doubled and doubled and quadrupled since then, and now it's been extended to all the other federal agencies. The Fish and Wildlife Service now has a challenge grant program, the Park Service has a challenge grant program. Here was a little thing that was born out of adversity in the Forest Service, which now has gone government wide as an idea for private/public partnership, and you get resource work done. Several of the states now have so-called challenge grant programs. The whole volunteer program exploded during this time.

The Forest Service had gotten its volunteers in the national forest program, we authorized I think in 1974 or '75 after I came up here and without limits on how much could be done. By the time I left we had more volunteers than we had employees. I'm told now that the Forest Service last year had a hundred thousand volunteers, and that whole mushrooming of volunteers came out of the Forest Service, came out of adversity again.

We kicked off a program in '82 or '83 with a department that we called Touch America projects, TAP, which was done with a person by the name of Pat Kearney, who was assigned to Senator Block's office. She was looking at some public/private initiatives that were related to use. She said what could be done that would be related to private/public initiatives in the Forest Service. She came on and talked to Jerry Miles, and he came in and talked to me. We decided that there were a lot of youths out there that were basically high school age that really didn't have anything to do in the summer time. They had a lot of energy, and that this represented a substantially untapped resource. So within a very short time we put together this thing called Touch America Project. Pat's idea, which she was very strong on, was that this ought to be to a large extent private industry financed. We got some private industry financing and worked with the American Forestry Association to help do some logistic work.

We came up with caps that said TAP on them. We put out a little simple, one page agreement that could be signed. The idea was you took public sector like the Forest Service, you took a youth group, not an individual youth but a youth group, it could be a 4-H or Boy Scout or Lion's Club group, it could be any kind of group that we could put together, and a private sector sponsor, you put those three together to do a project. The private sector sponsor could be somebody like MacDonald's that would provide lunch or Roy Rogers or a local delicatessen, a local lumber yard might provide materials and transportation, tools or something, and we would just draw up this little simple agreement and we would agree what each one was doing and you would do it. And within a remarkably short time, in that first year we had ten thousand kids, ten thousand youngsters that were working in so-called Touch American Projects.

Interestingly enough, Pat Kearney, who considered that her major accomplishment, went to the White House to work on private sector issues after that. She came back to the department and served a short time as acting assistant secretary, and then went from there to EQ on the staff and I think is back with the Bush campaign. She still considered that Touch America Project as maybe her most enjoyable and creative thing and still her major focus is of private sector initiatives. And incidentally, the President's Commission on Environmental Quality, appointed about eighteen months ago, has a natural resources group. This Presidential Commission on Environmental Quality, guess what, is looking at the private/public sector partnerships that can improve the environment.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: And there's going to be a huge workshop in Washington in September bringing private and public sector people together that have demonstrated how they have gotten together to improve the environment. Really these little things that were just embryonic things and were brand new, the whole idea of volunteers is a new idea for the government. Before the '70s, you couldn't allow people to work for you.

HKS: Worried about liability and things.

RMP: By law you had to classify the job, and they had to be paid exactly their classified wage. We had to get a law passed to cover tort claims and liability and all that kind of thing to make it work. Anyway it was all those new things that came along so that during the seven and a half years that I was chief. It was not a case of just trying to get through. I've told a lot of people that the whole idea that necessity is the mother of invention, but adversity also can spawn creativity.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: In fact somebody said to me how in the world did you ever come up with something called Rise to the Future, which is a special fishing program that the Forest Service has which is considered the best one in government. I said, I don't know, it's part adversity. Recognizing that we had a major fishery out there, we had limited money that we could devote to it, and just getting a challenge grant program out there, we were trying to figure out how we could put this all together. I put a patchwork together and they came up with this initiative and they came up with the name Rise to the Future. All I did was approve it. I gained an abiding respect that if you give people some freedom in time of adversity, and tell them if you come up with a better idea out there to do things, and you come up with a program that makes sense, we're going to buy it. There's no limit to creativity. If you look at these things I've been talking about, why didn't the Forest Service have a volunteers program in the '50s or in the '40s.

HKS: Sure.

RMP: Why didn't we have challenge grant programs years ago? They were there; I mean we could have done it. What's sitting there on the horizon that should be picked up today? Somebody's going to figure out something in 1992 and 1993 saying why didn't we do that in the '70s.

HKS: That's a good place to stop. Thank you for such a thoughtful interview.

Appendix: Guide to the R. Max Peterson Papers at the Forest History Society

Forest History Society Archives, 701 William Vickers Ave., Durham, NC 27701

R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS (1970-1990)

Scope and Content Note

Collection consists of one carton of papers pertaining mostly to Peterson's career as Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. Materials include daily planners, budget records, copies of testimony before Congress (concerning proposed laws affecting the management of forest resources), copies of speeches delivered by Peterson at various organizational gatherings, copies of U.S. Forest Service news releases, and miscellaneous reports, correspondence, and memos. One photographic negative (subject unknown) and nine 8" x 10" photographs of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Tree Planting Ceremony held in January of 1984 were removed from these papers during processing and placed in the biographical file labeled "Peterson, Max" in the Forest History Society Photographic Collection.

Custody Information

Max Peterson donated his papers to the Forest History Society in August 1991.

Biographical Information

Ralph Max Peterson (1927-) was born and raised in Doniphan, Missouri. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Missouri in 1949 and received a Master of Science degree in Public Administration from Harvard University in 1959 as a result winning a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship. Peterson began his career with the U.S. Forest Service in 1949 as an engineer assigned to work in the national forests of California. He completed watershed management and fire control assignments in California until 1959, when he transferred to the Northern Regional Office of the Forest Service in Missoula, Montana. In 1961 Peterson moved to Washington, D.C. to work with the U.S. Forest Service's Engineering and Administrative staffs. In 1966 he moved back west to become a regional engineer for the U.S. Forest Service in California. In this post, he developed a number of innovative engineering approaches for building roads, bridges, and recreation areas. In 1971 he was selected as deputy regional forester for the U.S. Forest Service in Atlanta, Georgia, and one year later he became regional forester for forest programs in thirteen southern states. In 1974 he accepted the position of deputy chief of U.S. Forest Service for Programs and Legislation. In 1979 he was appointed by President Carter as chief of the U.S. Forest Service, a position he held until his retirement in February of 1987. While chief of the Forest Service, Peterson achieved agreements with Canada and Mexico to facilitate improved North American cooperation in numerous forestry programs.[1]

BOX ONE: Miscellaneous Items

- Seven stenographer's notepads (containing personal agenda notes) dating from 1979 to 1987.
- Ten memo calendars (daily planners) dating from 1974 to 1988.
- Two pocket-sized address/telephone directories dating from 1980 to 1981.
- Copy of consulting forester George A. Craig's work *The Spotted Owl and Wise Forest Use* (Sacramento: Artprint Press, 1986). Work was commissioned by the Western Timber Association.

[1] Stroud, Richard H., ed. *National Leaders of American Conservation*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985, pp. 301-302.

BOX ONE: Files

File #1: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
Budget Records
(Fiscal Years 1980-1983)

File #2: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
Forest Service 75th Anniversary
(1980)

File #3: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
News Releases
(1983)

File #4: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
Peterson's Speeches
(1983)

File #5: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
Testimony
(1983)

File #6: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
Federal Timber Contract Payment Mod. Act
(1984)

File #7: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
RPA Report
(1985)

File #8: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
Federal Executive Development Seminar
(1986)

File #9: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
Miscellaneous
(1970, n.d.)

File #10: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
Miscellaneous
(1979-1980)

File #11: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
Miscellaneous
(1982-1983)

File #12: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
Miscellaneous
(1985-1986)

File #13: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
Miscellaneous Items:
Pete Steen's History Project
(1979-1990)

File #13: R. MAX PETERSON PAPERS
Iconographic Materials
(1984, n.d.)

BOX ONE: Notebooks

BROWN NOTEBOOK: Contains memos, maps, and pamphlets pertaining to an April 1985 tour Peterson took of the Kaibab National Forest in Arizona. Also contains information about the endangered and threatened fish and wildlife of Arizona forests and rangelands.

BOOKLET/REPORT: Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (February 1986) concerning land management interchange between the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

BLACK NOTEBOOK: Miscellaneous information about proposed transfer of land between the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. Includes reports, maps, memos, and historical background information. Concerns the land management of areas in western states only.

BLUE NOTEBOOK: Briefing book on Operation Delta Nine, a 50-state cannabis (marijuana) eradication effort planned for August 5-7, 1985. Government agencies involved: the Justice Department's DEA, the FBI, the National Guard Bureau, the U.S. Forest Service, and land management agencies of the Department of the Interior. The Forest Service's involvement was necessary because many marijuana fields were known to be cultivated in our national forests.