

Smithsonian Folklife Festival Interview

Iris Velez

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Washington DC

Interviewer: Sandra Forney
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Iris Velez: Good afternoon, Sandy.

Sandra Forney: Could you please give me your name, spelling, address, telephone, what your title is, and where you work?

IV: Yes, I'm Iris [rhymes with Edith] Velez, and really, do you want me to spell that? It's I-R-I-S, it's Iris in Spanish. Velez is V as in victory, E-L-E-Z. And my current position is the acting assistant director for conservation and education for the USDA Forest Service.

SF: Iris, tell me something about your background, and your profession and what you're doing now.

IV: Well, I started as a political science graduate student back in the late '70s. I got my master's degree in political science from Tulane University in New Orleans. After that I was hired by the university where I studied my undergraduate, the Catholic University of Puerto Rico. I was a college professor in political science, history and sociology for eight years. After that, looking for more options in life, I was hired by the National Park Service to be public affairs officer of the San Juan National Historic site. I was in that position for two years, and I had no clue of what the Park Service was about. After two years of learning and somehow feeling a little bit, oh, let's say unhappy because I didn't really like the policies of Park Service as much as the Forest Service – that I know now. I was approached by a line officer from the Forest Service in Puerto Rico and he encouraged me to apply for a public affairs specialist position that was going to be advertised in the – then known as El Yunque Ranger District – which I did, and I got the position having no knowledge of what the Forest Service was about. I think that was one of the best decisions I have done in my life because over the last thirteen years I have learned to respect and to appreciate these agencies' values. They're not that different from mine, so I'm very content with the Forest Service. Both.

SF: You had thirteen years with the agency.

IV: Yes. Thirteen years with the Forest Service and fifteen with the federal government.

SF: Was there any special reason why you wanted to come to work for the Forest Service?

IV: I think it was frustration. Unfortunately, the Park Service in Puerto Rico, by the time I was public affairs, was facing a very strong opposition from the local government. As public affairs it was my duty to advise the line officer of the park of practices in dealing with the local government. Some of those were very [assertive], however, my boss didn't trust a Puerto Rican [laughs] unfortunately. He put himself into trouble in several locations by not following some of my advice. So it was pretty much a frustration. I think that by the time I was approached by this line officer in the Forest Service I was ready for a change but I didn't realize it at the time. It has to – sometimes things come into your life without you asking them for it, and that's what happened. Out of frustration with the management of Park Service then in Puerto Rico, I just decided to – you know, “let's look for another option”. I had no knowledge of the Forest Service whatsoever. The Forest Service in Puerto Rico was very shy. It was very, let's say, they weren't as community involved, as open to the public like it did in the '90s. El Yunque, which is one of the beauties of this agency, is a tropical rainforest. It's actually the only tropical rainforest in the system. But it was full of mysteries and myths and misunderstandings, and locals were afraid to visit it. So when I told my parents that I was going to work at El Yunque, they went ballistic. I mean, they didn't want me to go because of all the myths and misconceptions and bad publicity. And actually it ended up to be a very good school for me, not just for learning about the Forest Service but also to being exposed to something was completely new to me. So, knowledge has been always – getting new knowledge has been always a challenge for me. I just want to know things. I am an eternal student, I think. So I had no specific interest, I just got here out of frustration, and I made lemonade out of a lemon [laughs]. So it ended up to be the right place to be for me, as in my values. The agency goes so hand in hand with my personal values on the respect for the land.

Probably something that I should add is: when I was very little, I grew up – I spent most of my summers with my grandfather. My father's father used to have a farm. We have crops: he had sugar cane in one area and tobacco in another. Animals like chickens and ducks in another one, and coffee. So he taught me to respect all the great things that land was providing to the family. So that love for nature, that love for respecting land and “treat land as something precious” come from my father's side - that tradition of being engaged with some sort of land management thing. Besides that my parents are science teachers, and my mother was a well-recognized high school science teacher that won many prizes in the science fairs. I remember summers in my house were full of kids preparing their projects for the science fair. So I was also taught the value of science and knowledge that comes out of it, especially out of research. You know, if you want to know more you have to dig more. You have to make sure you understand the tiny little thing. And that I owe to my parents.

I don't know why I went into political science [laughs]. But definitely I do – at the time I thought that, becoming engaged in partisan politics, and I could make a difference, but I think I desisted and discontinued that after being exposed to all the great things that I have been exposed through the Forest Service.

SF: So you spent some time in the Forest Service in Puerto Rico.

IV: Yes.

SF: Any other locations? How long have you been in the Washington office?

IV: I detailed – I was a detailer in South Carolina for probably six weeks, and also in Florida – National Forest in Florida and – as public affairs, of course, and also with The International Seminar for Forest Management. It was a program that, if I recall correctly, it was a program with the Michigan Ann Arbor University. I'm not sure if it was Michigan State or Michigan University, but it was in Michigan. And wow, we travelled most of the United States by either airplane or car, and we went to New Mexico. I had never been in New Mexico before and I was exposed to the Native American land. Oh, my gosh, there were so many things in that six-weeks detail that I learned that I was so, so appreciative. And then the trainings and the orientations that the agency provides for the employees that I have attended over the years give you the opportunity for networking, to know people, to being exposed to other cultures, other ways of thinking, and that is always fascinating. Every time I have a meeting somewhere it is a cultural experience for me. In Puerto Rico you value that because Puerto Rico is a tourist destination, so you learn how to respect other cultures, so that is great. So I feel like home.

How did I get to the Washington office? Well, a little bit more about frustration [laughs]. It takes – I don't know, maybe, I hate to say that, but now I am thinking that it takes frustration in order for me to move from one place to the other. With the Gore administration – well, Clinton/Gore administration, there was [tape drops out 12:52] emphasis on reduction in force, reinventing the government, all these “reinventing” things. I mean, I never seen, so fortunately there was a door that was open and apparently it's not closed yet. People keep reinventing what I think they've already invented but anyway, that's another issue.

The forests suffered, or went through, a series of attempts for reinventing or reorganizing. Back in 1999 a decision was made to eliminate the position of public affairs. It was not apparently needed according to the leadership of the forest. That was really unfortunate because I thought - not just because of my line of work - but I thought that it was a wasted opportunity in a forest that is so highly urban and is so highly used by tourists. It doesn't make sense to me but that's a different story. I was devastated. I left my heart and soul in my work. That decision – to me – was not made out of conscience and reasonable thinking. So the option that I had in order to stay was to be an interpreter. And, excuse me, but that's not what I was thinking of my future. And besides the fact that no one decides my future other than myself, and that's what line officers don't understand sometimes, but that's a different story then again.

But then I have this great opportunity to come for three weeks to the conservation education staff. That was in June, July 1999. And I found this terrific staff in conservation and education, and I just click. The situation there was not as good as I thought, and honestly I was feeling mistreated. I honestly thought that it was a very unfair move. But I'm here, and ever since I got

to the Washington office as a program analyst – GS11 – that has nothing to do with program management. It was a very dull administrative – dull to me – administrative position and I was really, really, really tired of it after four months. I thought I was gonna die. And then all of the sudden the National Symbols Coordinator resigned to go to a great position with agriculture international doing some interpretation. I'm not quite sure her position – the title of her position, but when she resigned I got the chance to do National Symbols Program Coordinator position as a detailer. And wow, I mean it's – putting all my creativity and all my passion and all my “anxious to prove to myself that I was good – that I was respected at last”, and it paid off. I applied for that position, and thanks to many things I got it [laughs]. I've been the National Symbols Program Manager for the Forest Service ever since 2000. So I was extremely happy because it was like a reward. I felt that it was as a reward for all the things that I have done.

And symbols is a very small program. National Symbols includes the Woodsy Owl Conservation Program, supports fire prevention in the management of Smokey Bear Fire Prevention Campaign, and also manages the Junior Forest Ranger Program. It's a very small - it's a program that is not seen as, how do you call it in English? It's not a fancy program. It's symbols, like one person referred that to me once: [dismissively] “Oh, that's symbols.” And I said, “Well, those symbols are protected by congressional law, and the Congress provided for their own source of funding. So I'm sorry but I might not have the fancy desk of a land management or resource management program, but I have a program that is protected by congress.” So I think that perception is a lot but if you put a little bit of reason behind the knowledge, oh, you can do great things. Instead of looking at this as “oh, this is a kid's program,” hey, kids are the future of our nation. This is a program protected by two congressional laws. This is a program that provides for its own source of funding, and it gives you the exposure at the leadership level in order for you to – once you do great things – being recognized for it. What else can you ask for?

SF: Will you tell me a little bit about these programs and some of your ideas to...

IV: Promote them and develop them?

SF: Improve them?

IV: Well, I'm a strong believer of strategic planning. I think that in order for us to be more responsible with our taxpayers' money we need to deliver, and we need to deliver according to what's current today, what's necessary – not only for the audience that you intend to approach but also for the agency you're working for. The first thing I did once I got into the position was to ask leadership, “What do you want me to do with Woodsy? Woodsy has been in a shelter for so long – do you want to revive him? Do you want to put an end, forget about it, start all over again? What do you want me to do?” “Oh, no, we want to revamp it.” “Okay.” So I don't have all the answers but I do have a great network of regional coordinators for conservation education that were eager and supportive of Woodsy Owl and its conservation message. So I just invited some of these great minds to a strategic planning session and with the collaboration of our field

regional coordinators and some folks from the forest and district level as well as some people that – they worked with Woodsy, you know – we got the first strategic plan to revamp the icon. Also as far as that, we decided to revamp the licensing program which is the source of funding that the congress provided for the conservation program to develop further. I'm very honored and very proud to say that the first three licensees for Woodsy were signed up three weeks ago. I think that was a great achievement. And I think this strategic planning session was a very unique one. One of the attendees was very concerned about why I'm doing a strategic planning session in four days. "This could be done in two days." Well, before the strategic planning session even started, I brought the former director for what was NRCE - what used to be Conservation and Location – Natural Resource Conservation Location...

SF: NRCS?

IV: NRCE. That was Pam Godsey. And I invited the contractor that the Forest Service hired to deal with Woodsy. Her name was Anne Grant. She was the president of the image company. I invited Neil Howe. He is a PhD, writer of a book called [*Millennials Rising*] to provide a generational perspective and a little bit of more understanding of what the New Millennials, or what the new kids, what the new generation trends were. And I also invited people who can talk about the program itself, before my time. There was Denver James, that is the acting director for conservation education and he provided a great historic perspective for the program. So with all that information we started our strategic session. The two full days of strategic session and the comments from the participants were remarkable. I mean I was so happy that I was doing something that the agency could feel proud of because we were doing a good job in order to revamp the icon. And so far we have completed all the actions of this strategic plan and I need to schedule another [laughs] strategic planning session to – like the phase two of the strategic plan because I did it all! So we'll see.

Smokey Bear Fire Prevention Campaign: what we do with fire prevention is we provide support. The national fire prevention coordinator does not have the staff needed in order to take care of specific programs within the Smokey Bear program, one of which is the Smokey Bear National Awards. There's a lot of logistics that this program entitles, and unfortunately they don't have the staff. While we're doing a great service to them by taking care of the logistic and helping them out, we also take care of promoting Smokey and I – and this is something that I'm very proud because I did it myself – I submitted a proposal for the development of the Smokey Bear Educational Program, and The Fire Prevention Community Regional Coordinators approved it, and I was so happy. So we're working on taking Smokey back to school. Taking Smokey where it's most needed, with the schoolteachers, with the kids. And now, this coming year that we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of Smokey, we're going to the National Science Teachers Association Convention as well as others, and we're going to promote the sixtieth anniversary and we're going to continue promoting the fire prevention message "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires" with the teachers. We are committed to that and they're very pleased that we're taking that step forward.

For the Junior Forest Ranger Program we have a national steering committee composed by people from the Park Service, from the Forest Service, and the state of North Carolina. We put together the same concept – a group of minds – people who have experience with these kinds of fulfillment programs, and we’re defining the new Junior Forest Ranger Program, and hopefully if everything goes as planned we will be launching the new program along with the hundredth anniversary of the Forest Service. And that’s our goal.

Meanwhile, during the winter Olympics of 2002 the Forest Service initiated alternatives. They put together a team to develop alternatives for the visitors of the Olympics. One of those alternatives was the Junior Snow Ranger Program under the Woodsy Owl Program. And the response of that program was remarkable - from the kids, from the parents, from anyone who was exposed to it. The Junior Snow Ranger Program is a fulfillment program. It encourages winter recreation ethics among those who use ski areas, and teaches kids to understand a little bit more about issues regarding winter. Like avalanches, like – I forgot the process – but there are certain animals that change the color of their skin according to the environment. I’ve forgotten. I’m not a science person. And also, promoted winter ethics, the taking care of winter fragile ecosystems, the use of the trails appropriately. And because of the response we made it national. Now we have all the permits and everything done, and all the approvals, and it’s a national program. Very successful, and we are in the process of getting the partnership with the National Ski Area Association, and see if we can implement the program through them. Actually we are now implementing it through our Forest Service ski areas, but we would like to expand the offerings and work in partnership with them. We have, as a result, we have a page, the Junior Snow Ranger, and there are more activities for the kids to do and for the managers to implement with – you know at their side. It’s a growing – I won’t say growing pain – I’ll say, as a growing opportunity. And, you know, I’m from the tropics. I’m from Puerto Rico and I really don’t know anything about winter recreation other than what I have learned through the Junior Snow Rangers, because I have not experienced – I haven’t been in a ski area. I haven’t been in – I don’t know what activities are associated, and it was a learning experience to me so I feel a little bit like a child too.

SF: When you were talking earlier you mentioned some innovative ideas with the Woodsy program and Head Start.

IV: Yes. We had a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed last summer with the Head Start Bureau and the Woodsy Owl Program. To me that was a big hit. The Head Start Bureau has a population – well, serves, I’m sorry - a population of nine hundred million families in America, and that’s a lot [laughs], that’s a lot of families. And Head Start is divided into three main service audiences: the Native Americans, the migrants, and the inner cities. Those are the audiences that we’re trying to outreach because those are the audiences that either hasn’t been exposed to a national forest; it hasn’t been exposed to outdoor recreation as we understand outdoor recreation, and hasn’t been exposed in conservation ethics – outdoor conservation ethics. And it was my – based on the strategic plan that I talked to you about before - we decided that the Woodsy Owl

Program will focus on pre-k through third graders, and we will put emphasis on the non-traditional groups. Well, Head Start has our population for the Woodsy program. So I said “This is the right match. This is the perfect match.” When I presented first the idea to the Head Start Bureau people, they couldn’t believe. They were so happy and so thankful, and we have been working on how we’re going to implement this MOU because we really want this MOU to work. I think in the next couple of weeks we’re going to have a big meeting where we need to define exactly what our future steps – in order to get into the point that if you have a Head Start grantee in XY community you can contact a Forest Service person in this other area and then you can work together on a conservation program.

Another addition that this MOU brings to the table is the concept of family. In conservation education we have not addressed the concept of a family thing. We’re talking about kids, we’re talking about teachers, we’re talking about college students, we’re talking about – but we’re not talking about families. The beauty of the Head Start is that it engages the parents or the caretaker in activities with the kids. And within these activities they have to have a purpose. They always serve the purpose within the socialization, whatever it is, within the process, whatever element they would like to enhance in this audience. And we’re very excited about it. This is something great. It is not usual. I call it the “untraditional partner”, but it’s so good and it’s so right that we could have – I mean if we already define the audience, well, these people are dealing already with that audience, so why don’t we take advantage and let’s work together and help these kids to be familiar with the concept of conservation.

Why Woodsy? Because Woodsy is very appealing to young kids. I have experienced that. I have seen very small children embracing, hugging Woodsy. The older you get, the least appeal to kids, but with very young children Woodsy is a hit. So let’s take advantage of it. Let’s use this mechanism that the agency has in order to promote our conservation message. I think we have great tools, it’s just a matter of using them, and Woodsy is one of the best. And also we have this great reception from the Head Start Bureau leadership, and they didn’t hesitate in signing the MOU, so that’s a great avenue that opened new challenges for us, so we’re looking forward to it.

SF: Iris, you were also mentioning that we in the past had a partnership with garden clubs.

IV: Yes.

SF: And that they’re looking for new, contemporary, innovative ways to work with us in the Forest Service. You mentioned one of those opportunities. Would you care to talk a little bit about ...?

IV: Certainly. The National Garden Club of America is a very well known, respected organization, and they have been in partnership with the Forest Service for over twenty years. And with the Woodsy Owl Program and the Smokey Bear Program we had what we called the “Poster Contest”. The Poster Contest is a contest that we celebrate every year with elementary school kids, and we want to somehow use that avenue in order to promote conservation or fire

prevention, in the case of Smokey. Well, there have been many changes within the Garden Club, and they are extremely tired of the image that the Garden Club has developed over the years, which is the ladies with the white gloves doing gardening as a hobby. They want to become more a spokesperson for those who are interested in gardening, and how can they help the community in many ways - not just being good gardeners and beautifying the surroundings, like they called “beautifying America”, but also learning: how can they do better? How can they become better gardeners? I had an interesting conversation with several members of the garden club during their last year’s national convention, and they are interested in working closer with agencies like the Forest Service, in order first to get knowledge, and second, develop programs where they can raise money to help us improve the conditions of the land. There used to be a program called “Penny Pines”, I don’t know if you remember. Well, they are reviving the “Penny Pines” program, and these are the kind of things that they want to do. They want really to leave a tangible product or a tangible program or something that people can see and say “Wow, look what the Garden Club had done for the Forest Service.” I think they’re looking for those kinds of opportunities and those kinds of partnerships. Also they want to learn. They want to know what’s happening. They want to understand: Why – what is global warming? Why – I used to plant this kind of plant and now I can’t because the soil conditions have changed, or whatever. They want to understand why. Things that they probably took for granted in the past they don’t want to take for granted anymore. They really want to know why. And they were asking if I knew someone who could provide a talk or a seminar on specific topics. One topic that has most of their interest is urban forestry. That is the topic that they mention on several occasions. The pruning, the silvicultural activities that they could be engaged in, or that could be recommended to keep proper health of a tree. So those are the kinds of things they’re looking for. And I think that is a great opportunity and I’m not sure we’re – I think the commitment is there but I don’t see that we have the synergy that is needed in order to have this happen. I don’t know, maybe I’m overlooking. I don’t know what’s going on in every single program, but from my little “symbols world” we’re doing our best and we’re trying to help them with information. Putting them in contact them with whoever could provide whatever they need. Those are the kind of things we’re doing.

SF: You mentioned they could be very helpful in spreading the word – no pun intended – regarding invasive species.

IV: Absolutely. One of the things actually that the Forest Service is engaged is in the Prevention Through Education Initiative with the whole invasive species threat, or challenge, or issue. Let me tell you, it is the best group to convey your message because they are the gardeners. They are the ones that is the world’s mouth. Sometimes you learn more if someone that you know tells you what to do, what not to do, rather than investing in a brochure that probably no one is going to read. I think that is a great avenue there, and unfortunately then again I think - we all have a lot of work, but some effort needs to be oriented towards engaging the garden club in this

invasive plants initiative. I'm going to do my best in helping that happen from my little "reign of symbols" [laughs].

SF: So Iris, tell a little bit about the kinds of tools that you use in your work and research.

IV: Well, can I mention something that I forgot to incorporate besides the symbols program? And as I mentioned earlier, the acting Assistant Director for Conservation? And one of the challenges that I'm putting myself on [laughs] is somehow providing information for those who decide to teach kids at home. What is it called – "home schooling"? I think the Forest Service has a great opportunity to become the lead on federal agencies that provide information to those who decide to keep their kids at home and teach them at home. The Forest Service has remarkable information on inventory of resources, of science – I think that's one of the best tools that the agency has, and I think these should be available for those parents that decide to teach kids. That's one of the things that I would like to accomplish before I complete this detail assignment – a resource for the parents that are dealing with the homeschool situation, and provide the alternatives for them to get information to get the appropriate knowledge on what they need to, because that hasn't been done by any other federal agency that I know of.

And going back to the question...

SF: The tools...

IV: The tools.

SF: You're very creative...

IV: Yes I am. I'm very creative [laughs].

SF: An innovative thinker. It seems that you have a strong relationship and collaborative approaches to the work that you do. Could you add to that?

IV: Yes, as I mentioned earlier before the recording, that is hard. Looking for tools in the kind of work that I do is – it could be a little embarrassing, because I don't want people who see this tape to think that I'm like Mohammed Ali – "I'm the greatest, I'm the greatest." No. But the thing is that you need specific skills to have positive results or to have results that could be used by others. In my case I think, as you mentioned, creativity is one. If I don't know the answer, I look for who knows the answer, and that humility in recognizing the fact that I don't know everything, that there are experts in specific areas that should be your collaborators in whatever the project is. I do have that humility. I'm not shy to say, or embarrassed to say I don't know. If I don't know, I just don't know, but I look for the answer. The other thing: being flexible. In today's world there is no one way to look at things. There are different approaches, and somehow you need to work on getting those approaches a chance to demonstrate their vision of what is the truth. I think that flexibility, that open-minded, that – I think it has to do with the fact that I'm a Puerto Rican and I'm not an American and I treasure diversity. So diversity of people,

diversity of ethnicities, diversity of ideas – that’s the beauty of the world. Otherwise it would be very boring. I think that diversity of the various approaches, looking at one thing, and somehow you feel like you’re molding a specific situation based on all these sources of information – I think that’s the beauty. It’s like playing God. It’s like- yeah, it’s like playing God [laughs]! You just create something. And that’s cool! That is so exciting. My mind is always working. I have problems with sleep, because it’s very hard for me to relax, because my mind is always somewhere. That is one of my biggest tools.

The other tools, of course you know is the mechanical things we use every day - the computer, the internet, the resources that you have in your office to work with: your assistants, your collaborators, your partners. I think that instead of tools, I would call it probably qualities. Humility is one of them, to accept that you don’t know everything. I know how to listen. Listening helps. It helps to keep you out of trouble and keeps you out of committing mistakes – unnecessary mistakes. Understanding differences, and also recognizing the value of peoples’ ideas, because it comes from a different brain. It comes from a human being and it deserves respect, and I’m very, very respectful. I am very concerned about that. I want people to respect my ideas, and because of that I – and also longevity: listen to those with experience, learning from other peoples’ experiences. When I was little – this is just a comment – I was always with people who were older than me. I never had friends my age. Never. Actually I graduated from college at eighteen. All my friends were plus twenty. It was not because I was intelligent; it was because I had nothing else to do other than studying, so I took care of that. But the thing is that you listen to those with experience. You don’t have to hit your head in the wall to know that it hurts. You don’t have to because somebody else has told you. So you don’t have to do it yourself unless you are stupid, but that’s not my case thanks God. So, listening to experience, valuing experience. And I will say this as a corollary: I have heard many employees, especially here in the Washington office, that are so offended by the newcomers in the agency because they don’t listen to them. They don’t trust them. And you have people here that have like thirty, thirty-five years of experience. And you are not listening to them? Hello. You have a problem. I think that experience is extremely valuable, and also the ability to establish or look for consensus. I am very concerned, especially because of my experiences in strategic planning in reaching consensus. You don’t have to agree, but at least you need to feel comfortable with the decision, and if you’re bringing partners to the table, you need to offer at least the comfort of consensus because everybody feels in the same page. So I think that more than tools will be skills, and those skills of course I have gained over the years, hitting my head to the wall, knowing that it’s hard, sometimes.

SF: So what potential exhibit, display, demonstration, ideas, issues, that sort of thing, would you recommend for the festival, the Folklife Festival on the Mall in the year 2005?

IV: Well, I’m not too excited about the exhibit part – I told you that [laughs]. It’s necessary because that’s what it is. It’s a festival – we have to show and tell. What I will like to do if you

allow me to is to provide at least four topics that I think should be addressed in whatever way, but I think that the public deserves to know.

The first thing is that the Forest Service has the best employees in the whole federal system. I work with interior and I have friends in other agencies. They might have some other amenities that we don't have, but the greatest thing – the greatest resource this agency has is their employees. And I would like somehow that to be shown and reflected throughout the whole exhibit. We're committed. Most of us are here or have – not like - in my case, I was here by an accident, however it has become part of my value system. Most of the people in the Forest Service are here because their value system is congruent with the agency's value system. So, hey, we need somehow to showcase. This is a great opportunity for people of America, other people from all over the world, to know a little bit about this agency, what this agency is about. It's not trees, it's people, and they are the greatest resource. That's one thing.

The other thing is multiple use. The beauty of Forest Service is the multiple use policy that somehow established the whole management approach of the various programs. I mean, we can have electronic sites, we can have camping grounds, we can have fishing areas. We can have this and that, and all that in a sound way, so people from other generations to come will enjoy them because the resource values hasn't been violated, hasn't been disturbed in a way they will disappear. So I think that, Hello? Excuse me? That is the point. That's what makes Forest Service different from other agencies: that multiple use concept that hasn't been – let's put it that way – it hasn't been as exploited as it should. I think that's the beauty of this agency.

With that, of course, comes the science, because in order for us to have all of these great uses we need to have the right science. We need to value our researchers. Most of our land management planning is based on the research that these researchers conduct. We base our management decision – or we should base our management decisions in science - science that we self-generate as a result of having this great research unit. I think that the public is definitely in need to know that we do our own science. It is not a science “accommodated to”, it's real science by real scientists world-known. We are generating information that could be used in schools. Because for instance if someone comes and asks a question about geology or about, let's say, history – the civilian conservation corps of the thirties, well, we have an archaeologist that is supposed to acknowledge, recognize, and provide that information to the information people and the education people so they can distribute that information out and disseminate that information. So, science, and then the natural resource science: I mean, why you need minimum flows in the watershed, why you need this and that? Well, scientists from the Forest Service discovered that you need this because of the sustainability of the water ecosystems. How you do electrofishing - and I know there is a bit of controversy in electrofishing, but that's the only way you can do fish surveys! And these are results from research. And I think we need to acknowledge that.

And of course, what I call the fun thing, which is education. We need to translate all those resource beauties, our historic, cultural beauties, and put some use to that. It's not only for the

managers. It's not only for the ecosystem crew that is going out in the field. No, it should be part of the school curricula. Those findings should be incorporated in the school curricula. Either through conservation education or the posting of signs, interpretation, we should somehow convey those messages and send those messages to the people who will do some work with it. We need to have that component in order to have the whole [story].

SF: Yeah. And I can put that in my report.

IV: Thank you.