ID FILIUS
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1960-62 HELENA 1962-65 CUSTER 1965-67 JOB CORPS
1967-70 KANIKSU 1970-72 NEZ PERCE

My name is David Filius. I retired in 1992 off the Superior National Forest in Duluth, Minnesota, but for 28 1/2years I spent my time in the Northern Region. I started out on the Helena National Forest, went from there to the Custer National Forest where I worked on the Little Missouri Grasslands. From there I went into Job Corps at a couple of centers: the, the Cedar Flat Center, and the Anaconda Center, where I was a Deputy Center Director. Then I went to be a GS-11 Ranger at Noxon, Montana. From there I went as a District Ranger to Slate Creek on the Nez Perce. From there I transferred to Sula as a District Ranger on the Sula District of the Bitterroot National Forest. That is what I am going to talk about today—the Sula Ranger District.

I was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1937. My mother and father were of Dutch heritage. My mother was a naturalized citizen. She came over with her parents in 1914 at the age of three. My father was a natural-born citizen and his father came over in 1889 as a young man. My dad was born in Grand Rapids [and so was my mother[1]]. My father had to go to work at an early age and he only had an eighth-grade education. He went to night school, later studied the Harvard classics. He always used to tell me he had a complete set of them. He became an accountant at a factory there in Grand Rapids and always had employment during the war. During World War 11 he worked across the state in

one of the war production plants as a supervisor over there. I did have one brother. He was four years younger than me. My brother, Dan, was born in 1941, just before the beginning of the war. My elementary and high school years were also in Grand Rapids. I went to Diamond School, a school about a half-mile or so from home. One of the things I remember about that was that we always had a pledge of allegiance to the flag in all the classes in school. When I got to the fourth grade, I started playing a little coronet. I had a chance then in the fourth, fifth and sixth grade to play the Star-Spangled Banner out of the second-floor window as the flag was raised in the morning, and I played Taps when the flag was lowered in the evening after school at 3:30p.m.

In high school, which was another one-half to three-quarters of a mile down the road from my home from the grade school, I went there in the seventh grade and graduated in 1955. I was a member of the track team where I ran the 120 high hurdles, 180 low hurdles and I was a member of the cross-country team and swim team. High school was a good time for me. I enjoyed high school and got decent grades. I really did not intend to go on to college. I was not getting much encouragement for or against that from my folks since neither of them had gone. I would have been the only one in my grandparents large, extended family to go to college. So, I was not thinking too much of it until an English teacher. Miss Parkers, asked me if I wanted to go to college. I said I was planning on taking a commercial preparatory course rather than a college prep course. She said, "Well, I don't think you ought to do that. I think you

[1] Dave contradicts himself here. Mother came to the U.S. at age three, but then he says she was born in Grand Rapids.

have more potential than that." Before long the minister of our church was asking me some of the same questions and my parents were also wondering if I did not want to go to college. So, that little spark helped me to make the decision to go to college.

I looked around with a couple of my track-buddy friends at several colleges in Michigan: Western Michigan and central Michigan were the two. I got a tuition scholarship to go to Central Michigan College up in Mount Pleasant. They had a pre-forestry course, too. Those were the two reasons I went there: The scholarship and the pre-forestry course. I am not sure why I chose forestry as a major. I guess the thing that probably decided me toward that sort of a profession was the outdoor nature of it. When I was in the tenth grade, my folks took a trip with our family of four in the little camp trailer that we had out to Colorado up over the Trail Ridge Road, Pike's Peak, and those places; and then we drove through Yellowstone National Park and camped there for a while and then on up through Glacier. Then we made the loop back through Michigan. I just remember how fascinated I was about the forest and the trees. I guess, when it came to choose a college course, I opted for forestry, not really knowing too much about it.

At Central Michigan College I was on the college swimming and track teams. I was only there, however, for two years and then transferred to Michigan State in the regular forestry curriculum. I chose the multiple use forestry option over the industrial forestry option. I think it prepared me well for the career that I had ahead of me. I wondered about that, at the time, but when I got on the job, I think I realized what that was for. One was that, although we had a lot of technical forestry courses like dendrology, silviculture, silvics and mensuration and some of those sorts of things, we also had speech, sociology, literature, writing and things like that that helped us to deal with people and that turned out to be important in the training that we had.

There were several of my teachers in forestry school that I thought quite a bit of, but one that probably helped me the most was an associate professor by the name of Nick Carter. He was an older man and he taught forest fire management, for one thing. He was also in charge of helping graduating seniors get jobs. After graduating in June, I was able to get my degree from Michigan State, subject to the completion of summer camp which I did not do between my sophomore and junior year. So, I had to go to summer camp and most of us there were seniors. I took that summer class and then graduated from college and I still had a military obligation. This was in 1959. The draft was still on. So, I was going to get drafted or I was going to have to enlist.

I decided to enlist in a program at the time that the Marine Corps had which was a Marine Corps Reserve Program where you went to six months of active duty to a regular Marine Corps Recruit Depot. After that you were assigned to a Marine Corps Reserve Unit wherever you lived. Well, I did that and was down taking that training in both South and North Carolina. The tail end of it was in North Carolina at Camp Lejeune and I was in advanced combat training there. I got a call one day and it was Nick Carter. He said he had set me up with a job interview for West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company in North Carolina. So, I went to New Bern, borrowed a buddy's sport coat and a tie and flew down to Newborn and was interviewed for a job on their pond pine plantations on the coastal plain. They treated me very well and I came back to a base. A couple of weeks later, my six months was up and I went back home to Grand Rapids. There, waiting for me, were three job offers. I had been writing to different government agencies as well. So, I had a job offer from the Northern Region, the Helena National Forest in the Canyon Ferry

District. I had an offer to come to either Washington or Oregon on—I think they call it the O & C Lands (Oregon and California Railroad Lands) where the checkerboard ownerships that the railroad got. I think it was the BLM that was managing some of those checkerboard ownerships and it would have been a timber forestry position. Then there was the job in the Carolinas from West Virginia Pulp and Paper.

I chose the one on the Helena N.F. It offered a multiple use junior forestry position and I knew I did not want to go back down to the Carolinas. It was still operating pretty much in a segregated fashion down there and the culture was just too much of a change for a boy from Michigan, so I did not go there. So, Nick Carter was a help, at least, and I valued the work that he did on my behalf

The extra-curricular interests or activities that I pursued in college, especially after I got to Michigan State, were not many at all. Study was something that I tried to take seriously. I knew that I transferred from a college of 3,000 to a college of 20,000 and if I did not study, I was not going to make it. So, I did not do much besides forestry club and perhaps a little intramural stuff, but not very much, and that was the size of my extra-curricular activities.

I did work each summer that I went to college. I did several things. My senior year in high school before I went to college, I worked in a furniture factory and a Pepsi Cola bottling company. My first year between my freshman and sophomore years I sold bibles door to door in Grand Rapids. I found that hard to walk up to a door and try to sell something. That was not something I felt I wanted to spend my life doing. Between my junior and sophomore years I got my first job in the Forest Service. I went out to Grangeville, Idaho, and worked on the Slate Creek District as a seasonal piling brush in the camp called Twin Cabins, which at that time was located on Twin Cabins Creek at the end of the Grangeville Salmon Road, which now goes from Grangeville to Florence, but at that time dead-ended at that little work camp. I spent that summer there. The summer between my junior and senior years I went out to work with the forest research on the timber survey. I was hired out of Ogden, but we worked and trained in Frasier, Colorada and then six of us shipped up to the Big Horn National Forest and we put in permanent sample plots for half the summer and then came down to the Arapahoe and the Pike-San Isabel and some of those National Forests in Colorado and finished the summer down there.

I did go to the University of Montana later and I graduated with a Master of Forestry degree from the University of Montana in 1977 as part of the CIFS or Certification of silviculture Program. I was the only ranger, or at least the first ranger, who was selected to go to that program, so that was something that I enjoyed doing as well. It was a special program in the Northern Region to qualify timber people with graduate degrees in a variety of forestry-related classes so that they could write prescriptions that were well based with a broad range of forestry and social concerns. In other words, it gave us an appreciation of the landscape and the wildlife and the other resources that needed to be considered when people were writing prescriptions.

My first job upon graduation fi-om college and the completion of the military was on the Helena National Forest on Canyon Ferry Ranger District. I was a junior forester there and after a little bit of training had charge for their small timber program. In other words, I was assigned to go out and cruise the timber, mark it, administer the timber sales and, in fact, in some cases, even scale the timber. It was a good job. There were a lot of other things going on, Uke I was also a smoke chaser in the summer. That was when we had a lot of fires on the Helena in 1960 and 1961 and I worked quite a bit with the range

people on reading range transects and visiting permits to use and doing that sort of thing, putting in the section comers with the engineers. Whatever it took on the management of the; district, I was fortunate to be able to be involved with it.

My first duty station in Helena (I was a bachelor then in that first year) and I actually lived in was a large, empty room that served as kind of a warehouse adjacent to the office. I lived in there as a bachelor with my record player, my bed and my dresser and went out into the hall to the bathroom. That was where I lived. After about a year the Forest Supervisor suggested that "Well, it looks like you're going to stay onboard. Maybe you ought to get a house or a place to live of your own." So, I got an apartment up town.

I guess the thing that I learned the most on the Helena National Forest was how broad a program the ranger district had: The responsibilities and the relationships they had to the various permittees and purchasers and public. I enjoyed getting out a lot in the field and I enjoyed working with the people that I worked for. It was a small group. It was almost like a family. You got to know everyone on the forest and we trained in different districts. For example, we went up to Lincoln for training. I remember sitting in a little log cabin in the Lincoln Ranger Station and listening to the Floyd Patterson-Sonny Listen fight. Now that goes back a way; that was in the sixties. I remember, just before I was married, being at Lincoln for a training session in aerial photography where we were learning to use the stereoscopes and the photographs and that sort of thing.

Forest Service relationships with local people around the Helena districts were really good. I think people kind of respected the Forest Service. There was not a lot of environmental controversy at the time. People, other than local people, had not found the National Forest yet and the one controversy we probably had on the Helena at that time was with Jay Wellington Rankin. Rankin was a member of the legislature in Helena. He was the largest landowner in the state. He was a very well-known lawyer and he was known to hire ex-convicts to work on his ranches. He tended to be loose and liberal where he put his horses and his cattle. In a lot of cases they were on National Forest land without permits. He was smooth enough that he was able to avoid any sort of prosecution for that. Well, Jack Hinman, the Ranger on the district, decided that that was going to end because they had over twenty years in the files of problems with Rankin. So, we set up a system where I got up in an airplane over the dry range, which was east of Helena and over by White Sulphur Springs which is a patch of national forest land. A lot of Rankin's horses were running in that area. So, I would go up and spot and then there was a crew down on the ground of Leonard Hengel (ss?), Johnny LaRoque, Cloycie Mann and several other seasonals on the district. They were on horseback and trying to round up the horses. They were successful. They got some, put them into a corral and impounded them.

My job then was to tend the horses. There was some concern that some of Rankin's rough-looking character cowboys were going to try to come and get the horses out of the corral. I had just gotten out of the Marine Corps, so they asked me to stay in a trailer over the weekend. So, I stayed in the trailer and, sure enough, these guys rolled up in their pickup and they got out with their cigarettes hanging out of their mouths, big old flop cowboy hats, cowboy boots and spurs. They were kind of a tough-looking bunch, but I walked to the trailer door. At that time there was not a lot of to do about being armed, so I had my 30-30 Winchester and my Marine Corps utility cap cocked on my head and I stood with my lanky body in the doorway dangling my 30-30 out and asked them how they were. We talked a little bit and

soon they got in their truck and left. I never had any more trouble. I guess they just kind of wanted to see who was taking care of the horses and the 30-30 probably did not look too good to them. So, we kept our horses.

The relations with the Supervisor's Office for the district in those years were good. The staff officers were friendly—^usually-and helpful. At my level we did not have a lot of exposure to the Regional Office. I remember going to a Forest Supervisor's meeting where the new Regional Forester, Boyd Rasmussen, was a guest. So, they asked the junior foresters on the Forest—me, Ross McPherson and Dave Poncin—the three of us (I cannot remember the other one). Those were the three junior foresters that I remember. Dave Poncin was at Lincoln and Ross down at Townsend. They asked us for comments and that sort of thing, but that was the only exposure I had at the Regional Office when I was on that first Ranger District.

I have no idea what the operating budget was on the Canyon Ferry District during those years, but I remember that financing was tight because I stayed out in the field quite often. Being single, I would haul a trailer out to a job site and I would stay out there all week and mark timber. A lot of times I would be out there by myself or I would have a seasonal employee stay with me. Jim Mershon, who was later a Ranger at Lincoln and over at Trout Creek, was with me one summer and we stayed out quite often for a week at a time. I remember we needed a cooler for keeping our food and it was toward the end of the fiscal year, which at that time was June 30.

Finally, right at the end of the year. Ranger Jack Hinman said, “Dave, I think we are going to have enough money left over so you can go get that cooler you wanted." Well, the cooler did not cost an awful lot. I do not think it cost $20, probably not even $5 at that time. But that may be an indication of how little money the district had. My pay as a GS-7 forester the first year was $4980. This was when Eisenhower was President. But $4980 was not an awful lot of money. On the other hand, I do not think my dad ever made more than $5000 in his whole lifetime in one year working, so everything was relative at the time. People did not make a lot of money. I remember being a Ranger a few years later and I was making $12,000 a year as a Ranger. So, those were years before there had been a lot of the inflation of the sixties and seventies and wages were not real high.

My co-worker on the assignment at Helena was primarily Leonard Hendgel. There was a Ranger, Jack Hinman and Leonard Hendgel and Cloycie Mann, who I think is probably now in his eighties or maybe nineties, was the C&M Foreman. Floss Foster was the district clerk for both the Helena District and the Canyon Ferry District. We did not really have any law enforcement problems that we were aware of There were no law enforcement officers on the forest at the time and we did not seem to have any problems.

For entertainment while I was at that job site it was pretty much going to a movie on the weekend. That was about the size of it. After the first year I went back to Michigan and Betty, a girl whom I had met at college at Michigan State, came out. She got a job in Missoula as a biology teacher at Sentinel High School. So, the winter of 1961-62 I plied the roads to see her and in March of 1962 we wound up getting married and lived in that little apartment that I paid $45 a month for. It was an upstairs apartment and we shared the bathroom with a lady down the hall. We did not have a lot, but we enjoyed what we had.

My vehicle at the time was a little 1961 turquoise-blue Volkswagen beetle, the first new car I ever owned.

There are a lot of questions on this outline that probably do not relate to that first job. We had our first child, Craig, there who was born at St. Peters Hospital in Helena. There were good medical services there. I did not really have any non-Forest Service neighbors. The only family I really had and the only friends we really had were Forest Service people. There were a few people at church that we did get to know, but not on the same depth that we did the folks that we worked for. I was there only two years. In fact, a lot of the jobs that I had in the early years of the Forest Service were only 2-3 years and management used to move us at that time. I woke up one day and Jack Hinman asked me to come into the office. He said, " I think we're going to have you go to work for the Helena District." So, I was transferred over there as the forester on the Helena District. Well, that was a walk down the hall, but that's kind of how matter-of-fact it was. About a year after that I was told that there was a job for me as a promotion to a GS-9 in Watford City, North Dakota. And I thought, where in the world is Watford City, North Dakota. I had been through North Dakota coming from Michigan and I did not see any trees in North Dakota. I said, "What's a forester do in North Dakota?" He said, "Well, you're going to be a lands forester." I asked, "What's a lands forester do?" He said, "Well, he takes care of section comers and signs and recreation is also tossed in, but there are no campgrounds on the National Grassland district." Nobody could really tell me much about what a national grassland district was. So, before I knew it, we were driving our little Volkswagen across eastern Montana to Watford City, North Dakota.

It turned out that Watford City, North Dakota, was having an oil boom and they had about ninety oil wells. My job was to administer oil wells, for Pete's sake. I did not know anything about oil wells, but I found out quick. We had to approve the roads and the pipeline corridors and where they put their ponds and that sort of thing. I worked with Texaco and some of those oil companies on their oil development out there in North Dakota in the early 1960's.

It was a range forest. I mean, it was the largest unit of cattle—of course, they were all Grazing Association cattle— but there was something like 700,000 acres. It was a big unit and hundreds of thousands of animal unit months that were grazed out there. I spent a lot of time with permittees and I drove around the pastures measuring stock water dams and developing a sign program. We did not have too many roads either. The roads on the district at that time were firebreaks that the association made with a road grader and just out across the prairie. There were not any drainage or culverts or anything like that, so every time it rained you wound up getting stuck up to your axles. I think I spent more time stuck for the few years that I was in Watford City, North Dakota, which, incidentally, was on the Custer National Forest—than I had been stuck any place since that time.

When we went to North Dakota, we went there cold. We did not know where we were going to live, so the Ranger had located a couple of places that were willing to rent. We rented a little house across from the station and we rented it for $65 a month. It had an old parking lot out behind the house that we finally spaded up and converted to a garden and lawn with a fenced-in lawn. We were next to a blacksmith shop where there was an old guy who banged around on horseshoes and plowshares all summer long. We got acquainted with him. Across the street I mentioned there was a police station. So, at nights I would often go over there and work as a relief dispatcher in the police station. They asked me if I had a gun. I said, "Yeah. I had a .22 automatic." So, they said, "Bring that along. You're going to have

to tend prisoners." There was a little prison cell down there often with a couple of prisoners in there, so I had my .22 in my boot and sat at the radio as the sheriff went around Watford City making his rounds. We would often check in on the radio and keep things going and communications open. This was right across the street.

The other thing I remember was that the town had a curfew at 10 o'clock. Boy, that first couple of nights there, that siren would go off and we said, 'Tor cryin' out loud, it sounds like it's coming in the front door." Well, you know, a couple of weeks later we had to look at each other and ask if the curfew had gone off yet. You get so used to those things. You do not pay any attention to them after just a little bit.

In Watford City there were was --- The Ranger was an ex-rodman[2] for the SCS. When the Forest Service took the land over from the Soil Conservation Service, this man came over as the District Ranger. He was all by himself Pretty soon, they started staffing the place up with guys like Bob Richmond, Bob Pinzler, who were well known in Region 1. I think we were a threat to the Ranger. He would never let us look at the mail; he would not let us call the Supervisor's Office. We felt like we were confined in outer Siberia there for several years until we had a chance to transfer off that, and, of course, get acquainted before that with the Supervisor and some of the other staff men who made us feel kind of part of the Custer National Forest. But that was an interesting assignment out there in Watford City. I was out there when John Kennedy was killed and remember that quite clearly: Walking home at noon hour, taking my coat off, putting it on the deep freeze and asking Betty if she had had the radio on. We turned the radio on and it gave us more information about the assassination of President John Kennedy down in Dallas.

About three years into the Watford City assignment, I was really wondering where my career was going. We were an eight-hour drive from the Supervisor's Office, so we did not go there very often. We did not see an awful lot of people from the Region or the Supervisor's Office out in Watford City and I was really wondering if maybe I should go back and help Betty's dad on the farm, or if I should pump gas up the street or what I should do. There was a Ranger who had been a Ranger at the Ashland-Fort Howe District by the name of Gerhardt Nelson. -Gerry was a few years older than I was and had a chance to get interviewed for a Center Director position for Job Corps in the early sixties when that opened. This was part of President Johnson's Guns and Butter approach to the presidency and he wanted to get intercity kids working. So, they developed the Job Corps, which was kind of based on the old CCC camps, at least that was the model that we had in mind. During the thirties the CCC's operated with the Forest Service and the Army. Here it was with the Forest Service and the OEO (Office of Economic Opportunity) which was a new office assigned to help run Job Corps camps and provide the guidelines for them. Anyway, -Gary Nelson asked me if I did not want to take a job in one of the new Job Corps camps starting up in north Idaho or central Idaho. Boy, I said, "Yes." I was in Billings at the time at a meeting when that offer came and this was an eight-hour drive from Watford City. I called up from Billings and I asked Betty if she wanted to move. She just had our second child, Kelly, in February of the previous year and this was about April or May. And boy, she said, "Yes." So, I drove and eight hours later got home to Watford City. She had the pictures off the wall, the books packed and she was busy packing boxes. Within a week we left Watford City. It was always an interesting experience, but the next experience in Job Corps was probably just as interesting.

[2] We're assuming he is referring to a survey crewman who carries the rod.

We took our little Volkswagen with two kids now (Kelly was about 1 to 1 1/2 years old) and Betty was pregnant with our third child. We named her Kathy eventually. We got to Grangeville, Idaho, after a long drive from North Dakota. I think we did not stop at night and kept driving. She thought she was going to have a miscarriage. Here we were in a motel, our stuff was coming in a moving van and I was supposed to unload at Cottonwood, which was a temporary place we were going to live because Cedar Flats was not even built yet. I had two small kids, Betty, pregnant as could be, a van to unload, and I did not know what I was going to do. Here comes a knock on the door and it is John Milodragovich, the Forest Supervisor. He said, " I understand Betty's not feeling very good. What I want you to do is take Betty and the kids over to my wife, Dara, and she will take care of the kids. We will get Betty to go see the doctor today and you can go over there and unload the van." They did that; they took care of those kids. Here was the Forest Supervisor talking to just one of the GS-9 foresters who had just shown up for duty and I just always thought that was a real fine person in a supervisory position like that who would take care of his people like that. As it turned out, it was a touch of the flu that Betty had and it was not a miscarriage. Before long, the baby was born a month or so later. We had the baby, a new place to live and a new job in Job Corps. Those were fine times.

Cedar Flats was a Job Corps Center down on the Selway River, not far from where it dumps into the Lochsa. It was up past the Fenn Ranger Station. It was a cedar swamp is what it was. It was a sea of mud when it rained. That swamp had to be drained; buildings had to be put in. We had to put in board plank sidewalks and we put in rock crib walls to keep the whole thing from slumping down the slope. It was the muddiest camp you ever saw. But we had a lot of fun down there. The kids who came there came from mainly back east and down south— Mississippi, Philadelphia, those kinds of places. Selway is a narrow, heavily timbered canyon. Those kids were really kind of off-balance. We would pick them up late at night down in Lewiston and we would drive them clear back up to Grangeville, then clear back up the Selway River. They had no idea where they were. They would get up in the morning and all they would see were trees around them. It was just like living probably on Broadway in New York, but instead of buildings it was forest and the river running down it. It was a beautiful spot, but it was pretty intimidating for a lot of those kids. They had never been out of an urban setting. They were really kind of spooked of being out in the wilds like that. In fact, one young corpsman and his brother, George Washington, and Major Washington, lived down in the Mississippi Delta. We were standing outside talking the morning after I had picked them up down in Lewiston and they were kind of wide-eyed. The sun was just coming up. You could see the sun hit the top of the ridge and then you could see the sunshine start to light up that ridge in a widening band coming down. They saw that movement of the sunrise coming, the sun was behind them rising, but it was showing on the ridge on the other side of the river, and they said, "Mr. Filius, Mr. Filius, what's that shiny stuff up on the mountain!" Of course, I told them that it was the sunshine, but it finally dawned on me how far out of their element these kids were. It was fun to see them adjust to that. Some of them decided they were going to take up cooking or anything that would keep them inside, but others just took to the opportunities that they had. Since most of them had had very poor schooling, particularly the southern boys, we had a school program that taught them reading. In six months', time they had made a lot of progress. Those kids had learned fi-om being almost illiterate and they moved through the grades rapidly. So, it was a time when we felt we were really doing some kids some good and it was a proud part of my career to have worked in the Job Corps.

One of the interesting things that happened at Cedar Flats was that we had an accident near Christmas vacation that was really kind of hilarious in a way. The road was a dirt road leading up the Selway River fi-om the Lochsa Highway. We had a huge propane tank that we got water from. We got water out of the river and it went through kind of a purification plant. The paychecks were supposed to come and they were in the food truck. The guys who got the food stopped and got the mail for all the corpsmen and the paychecks were in the mail. This truck, in the rain and the mud, slid off the road, broke a power line. We had no power up there, the water system did not run; the paychecks were late and the food truck was in the river. The boys were going down to the river, brushing their teeth in the Selway and washing their faces in the morning. The cook, of course, was trying to gin up something on his propane stoves but we made the best of it and had a big hot dog roast out in the middle of the road as the snow was coming down because there was no traffic coming up the road. You know, those were just the sort of things that were happening in the early Job Corps days. It was kind of a fun time. Everybody, no matter what his job, had to kind of pitch in.

We did have some interesting problems in Job Corps with staff, because there were some of the staff who had never worked for a government agency and did not know what the Forest Service was. There were teachers and nurses and people of those backgrounds. We probably were not used to working with them either, but it was a time of blending of a lot of different personalities and the administration of the Job Corps Center down at Cedar Flats was a fun time for us.

When I was at Cedar Flats, I went over to get an interview at the Anaconda Job Corps. Ray Karr was the Supervisor then and John Johnson was the Center Director. We moved from Cedar Flats over to Anaconda. I have written some of this down, so I am going to be kind of reading some of this instead of following that outline.

Our moving van was on the road ahead of us and once again we were returning to Montana. We made our way up the gravel Foster Creek Road north of Anaconda to a newly built and recently activated 220-man center. This center was a modular type of building construction but it was wood sided and without a trailer appearance, like Cedar Flats had been. The site was on a rocky, gravelly lodgepole pine slope, just up from Foster Creek. It consisted of two nice, big garage shop buildings for the work program, an education building, an office, four large dorms, a cookhouse/recreation hall complex and three single-family homes and some staff trailers. The whole place really looked raw when we moved there in 1965. We were assigned one of the houses and the garage was yet to be built. It was just kind of a gravel lawn; gravel and mud.

As Work Programs Officer I was responsible, along with a good staff, for planning and executing the corpsmen work projects, handling all the center maintenance and supervising any new construction. We had several center work projects, like sidewalks, painting, and landscaping. Before long we developed a good welding program and a heavy equipment program for road building and maintenance. Our work program facilities were down below the center, away from the main office, so I put in a lot of miles on my boots just hustling back and forth.

There were apparently several serious problems on the center in some other staff areas that I was unaware of. One day, our boss, Ray Karr Forest Supervisor of the Deer Lodge National Forest where we were located, came out from Butte, and announced the firing of the administrative officer, the director

of education and the counselor. The Center Director, my neighbor, was being transferred. Karr announced that I would be the Acting Deputy Director, a new position. Steve Sherrick from another center, Trapper Creek in the Bitterroot, was coming and he was going to move in as Director and be my new boss. I went home that night in sort of a spin just feeling fortunate that I had not been among the deposed and wondering if maybe I was not going to be next: It must have been that I was just too new and too busy down in my own workshop to get sucked in to whatever had been going wrong. I think there were some fiscal problems that had developed. Steve Sherrick and I became good friends and we seemed to make a good team. Many of the problems got turned around and the center began to do very well. We built a gymnasium, we fixed up the center, inside and out, and we completed numerous projects for other units of the Deer Lodge National Forest.

Betty, my wife, and I taught swimming and survival floating to corpsmen at the swimming pool down in Anaconda on Saturdays and attended the local Methodist Church down there. Most of our activities, though, were with families on the center. Many of them had a bunch of little kids like we did and our busy life at Anaconda lasted only a brief fourteen months. Then I was offered a chance to swap my job for a District Ranger position at Noxon, Montana, while the ranger at Noxon came in to take my deputy position. These were GS-11 positions and we just swapped positions. I grabbed it.

In the fall of 1967, we moved to Noxon. This time Betty was seven months pregnant with our fourth child, Scott. We decided on a U-Haul adventure and rented one of their big trucks and trailers. At that time what you did was you got a moving allowance. If you could move for less than the allowance, you could keep the difference. So, most every Forest Service employee got a U-Haul, did all the packing and loading and unloading themselves and made a little money on the move. Since that time, they have changed that and it is no longer to an employee's advantage to take a U-Haul truck.

The U-Haul was crammed with all the trappings of our 6 1/2 years of marriage. On the other end we gave it to the outgoing family and they filled it and made their move. Noxon was not very far away from Anaconda, probably less than 200 miles, so it did not take very long to get there. It was a little town of primarily loggers and miners located on the shore of the Cabinet Gorge Reservoir on the Clark Fork River in northwestern Montana. The district was part of the Kaniksu National Forest, which was headquartered in Sandpoint, Idaho, and Harold "Andy" Anderson was the Forest Supervisor.

We lived on the ranger station compound in a nice, new home tucked in among large white pine trees on the west edge of town overlooking the reservoir. It was a beautiful sight. One other Forest Service home was next door to us. Off through the woods on a grassy path was the Ranger Station, garage shop, gas house, corral, and bunkhouse. It was all painted or stained brown or tan earth-toned colors. It was a pretty spot. Although it received heavy rain and snow, the summers were nice, the winters were mild, and it was not too windy. It was a good change from North Dakota. Noxon was only a little town, but thanks to the taxes from Washington Water Power Company's recently built Noxon Rapids Dam, the town was graced with a spacious new elementary and high school. Other than that, it consisted of a grocery store, run by Mack and Marion McKee, a post office, two bars and a Methodist Church. All those buildings were considerably older and they were of wood frame construction. Noxon was located on the south side of the river across from Highway 200, so it was accessed by a steel bridge and the little group at the Forest Service made up an important part of the town. The Noxon District consisted of only a couple hundred thousand acres, mostly heavily timbered and mineralized and included a major section

of the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness of which we shared the management with the Trout Creek District up the road, also on the Kaniksu, and the Kootenai National Forest up north. What kept the doors open at Noxon, frankly, was the timber that we provided to area mills in nearby Libby, Sandpoint, or Thompson Falls.

It was at Noxon that I got my first elk and my only black bear. Noxon was not a well known or much visited part of the state, and elk hunting was outstanding. People who lived here hunted and fished and picked huckleberries and mushrooms a lot and could live mainly on wild food if they chose to. Many people did. In the fall we had another way of making money and that was collecting pine cones. Each fall there was a quota of numbers of bushels of pine cones or Douglas-fir or spruce cones to pick. The families could go out and collect bushels of those things, take them in and get a little money for them.

Again, here at Noxon, my wife, Betty, taught swimming. This time it was in the river and she also did some substitute teaching. We were active in our little Methodist Church with its Sunday morning circuit rider pastor and his piano-playing wife. Several of the other Forest Service families were involved there as well. Our son, Scott, was born just before

Thanksgiving the first fall we were there. The doctor in Sandpoint was concerned about Betty's negative blood test so he thought it might be best to induce a few weeks earlier. As it turned out, Scott was born on the 22nd with a bit of jaundiced color, but he cleared up quickly and is our number four child.

My style on the job was to get out in the field as much as I could to learn the country, to inspect and encourage the field crews and to even help with a lot of the projects. I would often go out tree planting, or timber marking or help in cruising and that sort of thing. It was just a good way to kind of get out with the technicians and the foresters on the district.

Betty was pretty much housebound with our four kids from ages 6 to 1 and, boy, we got a lot of snow at that place in the winter time, so she was home a lot. I managed to play some rough-and-tumble town team basketball some nights, but most every evening and noon hour I was home and managed to help as much as I could. I usually would read stories to the kids and give them baths and roughhouse with them after supper. Other families there were Homer and Emma Lee Bowles and Dave and Ann DeBrilliet, Chuck and Carol Jones and Chuck and Peggy Brooks. They were our closest friends and our neighbors and we worked together. We often hunted or fished and shared meals and holidays together. Over the years I think we have maintained close contact, at least Christmas cards and that sort of thing, with all of them.

It was at Noxon in the spring of 1968 that I first became inclined to start daily jogging. Although I had run track and cross country in high school and had done some of both in college, it had been almost ten years since I had done much running. Now that I was in a management position as the District Ranger, I did not have a steady regimen outdoors like I had had on all my other jobs. When I did get out, it was usually with one of our stouthearted foresters or technicians who acted like billy goats out there in their ability to get up and down the mountains.

Since I did not want a reputation as a wimpy desk-bound ranger, I decided I had better start running. I began a daily early morning mile and was starting in a half loop near the station. Back then no adult in

Noxon was doing anything like that, so I was proud of myself It did manage to get me in some aerobic shape and did enable me to keep up with the troops. Oftentimes I would get stopped on the road and asked if I needed help because there was not anybody in those days of 1968, at least in northwestern Montana that I saw, doing any jogging. Anyway, that became a habit that I have managed to keep up with almost to the present day. At the peak of my running and in my mid-40's I did run a couple of marathons and in training would run 10 to 12 miles before breakfast and then walk or bike to work and back an additional seven-mile round trip. It was a good way to keep in shape and I enjoyed that.

I really liked my job. It had responsibility; it had authority; it had public respect; it was a meaningful pursuit. People envied the work that we were doing a lot of times. They liked the kind of jobs that we had. It was a chance to see and do some fun and adventurous things that you got paid for. A lot of people paid to come out and hunt in that part of the country with outfitters and guides and that sort of thing.

But one day I got a call from the forest personnel officer who offered me a job back in Idaho on the Nez Perce National Forest as a GS-12 District Ranger. Well, I should have jumped at it, but I told him, "Gee, you know, I'm having a good time here. I have only been here 2 ½ years and it was not near enough time to do what needed to be done. I really was not ready to move. It meant uprooting the family again." This was a personnel officer. He was incredulous. He said, "Can you imagine how Andy, the Supervisor, will turn beet red and erupt if I go in there and tell him you are turning down a promotion. Boy, I sure wish you'd reconsider." Well, at that time moving from one place to another was at the initiative of management and not the employee.

Turning down a transfer, particularly for a promotion, might not be the wisest career choice. So, besides, another ranger district and a GS-12 pay would likely be about as bad as tossing Brer Rabbit in the briar patch. I decided to say, "Yes". That was after some spousal consultation, of course, and rethinking how unpleasant it might be to be on Andy's black list, I decided to take the job.

We left Noxon in February of 1970 and it was no simple task. Here we were, almost buried in snow. We had shoveled the roofs and plowed the roads until you could only see out of the top of the windows in your house. Ike Rasmussen, who was the owner of the Chevron station across the bridge, had to come over with his little bulldozer to clear the way into our yard pushing snow up ten to twelve feet so that you could get the moving van in. Betty and I spent evenings boxing up all our stuff. The folks at the ranger station gave us a nice send-off dinner at the Hereford Bar and Restaurant across the river. The church folks had a potluck for us. Within a week or two, here we were—all six of us in our Rambler station wagon (we had gotten out of the Volkswagen) and with a small, blue two-wheeled cargo trailer in tow and our aluminum Shark canoe on top we were off again for Idaho.

Well, Noxon had been a place where a lot of family memories were formed. One time the kids and I sat on a train trestle as a train roared by about four feet in front of us. I would probably get booked for something like that. In another instance, I took Craig, my oldest boy who was 8 years old, snowshoeing for his first time. I introduced the kids to a makeshift Indian sweat lodge that we built behind the house. We smoked meat, rendered bear grease, cut up our first elk, and had misadventures trying to get up and collect pine cones. And we had a run-in on trespass cattle with the infamous rough, tough Edna Hill, who ran cattle, usually in trespass on National Forest land. We had fun times with some of the local people.

Noxon was just a tiny logging community and it was little known anywhere outside the valley, but it was just right for us at that time in our lives and we really enjoyed it.

Slate Creek was the second Ranger District then, that I went to, in 1970. Our arrival in Slate Creek from Noxon in February of 1970 was like going from cold, snowy Montana to Arizona—I mean, literally. Kids at the ranger station were playing in the grass without jackets. Slate Creek was a major drainage into the Salmon River between White Bird, a tiny burg on Highway 95, which was nestled at the bottom of the ten switchbacks on White Bird Hill and Riggins, and White Bird is where the Slate Creek Ranger Station was.[3]

In the 1870's some hot-headed, young Nez Perce warriors killed some white people in the area right next door to where the ranger station was and started Chief Joseph on his running battles with the cavalry and his historic flight across Montana trying to escape into Canada. The Slate Creek Ranger Station was located on a large, grassy flat east and adjacent to the highway and the river. It is still there in the year 2000. Previously, it was an old in-and-out station between Adams Ranger Station, which I think still exists on the district now, and the office in Grangeville. This new ranger station at Slate Creek was built in 1964 during the Johnson presidency.

The site was spacious with a large grassy area for kids to play and plenty of yard and garden space. It had a climate that, literally, you could grow cotton in. We did that one summer; we had some cotton plants growing out in the garden. One of the benefits of the warm summers was the rivers' small, sandy beaches and its clear, rapid flowing water. Since our full family was just nuts about swimming; we named a nearby sliver of land "Filius Beach". After work we would spend a lot of good time sunning, swimming, and floating the fast water in inner tubes, a rubber raft or just a life jacket. We did our share of shooting the rapids as a family in our six-person yellow raft. We thrilled to rapids that we named "Foamy Death" and "Bloody Blackhawk". The kids remember those names and it was a fun time in our lives.

All the kids had playmates their own age while we were at Slate Creek. Charlie and Janet Mosier were there; Art and Joyce Siemens, Ken Gordon and his wife, the Earl Taylors, the Cathermens. There were families during that time that lived on those compounds. Their kids were the same age and they just had a good time together. Our little boy, Scott, was probably the only one who did not have a match in age among the kids, but he was a deep-voiced, feisty little guy and he had plenty of grit. He did not mind getting into games and getting beat up with the big kids, no matter how rough it was. On warm evenings in the summer the kids would often sleep outside in the yard, or during the day they would play under the hose or in the little portable pool. We had good gardens. The kids often earned a nickel for capturing tomato worms. We raised more zucchini than we could begin to give away. Every visitor from Grangeville usually went home with a sack of vegetables. The peaches, the apples, the cherries, the blackberries, the apricots—boy, there was plenty of fresh fruit down there in the Salmon River Valley.

Jim's Pond was an old river meander cut off by the highway in the spring. The high water in the Salmon River forced water up into it, maybe ten feet deep, and it became the year's first swimming hole that we used to take the family down to. So, before we could swim in the river, we had Jim's Pond that we could go to.

[3] We are assuming he is referring to a survey crewman who carries the rod.

The job at Slate Creek, I thought, was a good one. It was the District Ranger position on a larger district with a larger and more complex program than they had at Noxon. Our main program was selling timber, like a lot of the ranger districts back then, and accessing some of the area with roads so it could be managed. So, we had a good engineering program.

The Salmon River and the Snake River country had already been well established for cattle and sheep grazing. We had both kinds of allotments under permit to local ranchers for use as summer range. The Hagen Sheep Company out of White Bird ran up in the Gospel Mountain Buffalo Hump country and Walters out of Riggins ran sheep on the Snake River below the Circle C Ranch on Pittsburgh Landing. They were particularly plagued with predatory lamb loss from golden eagles and coyotes and usually hired Basque herders to live in sheep wagons and follow the bands closely. I remember driving up there in the Circle C country on Walters allotment one time and I ran into one of these Basque sheepherders. He did not know much English, but when I drove up to his little sheep wagon, he came out and he started waving his arms and he said, "Mucho coyote! Mucho coyote! Mucho coyote!" He was trying to tell me, of course, that he had all the coyotes he could handle out there.

Fires on the Nez Perce were also a big deal because of the steep, grassy slopes, and the frequent lightning storms and hot, dry, summer temperatures. It would often get over 100 degrees down at Slate Creek. One of the things we did manage to get approved down there finally, was air conditioning. We housed the twenty-man regional hotshot crew right at the Station and we also had a district seasonal smoke chaser crew. There were frequent smoke chaser-sized fires, usually dozens each season, and there was often a larger project fire, too, that caused us to bring in organized crews from around the Region.

During my tenure we were closely involved with adjacent National Forests along the Snake and Salmon Rivers trying to accomplish pre-attack planning and joint fire dispatch agreements. We accomplished some of that. On the Snake River we were able to buy out some of the livestock ranches. We bought out the Circle C Ranch and the Wilson Ranch in preparation for eventual classification of that Snake River area to Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River status.

The jet boats were already well established on the river from Hell's Canyon Dam down to Lewiston and outfitted rafting were just getting started in the early 1970's in a big way. Steelhead and bass were popular game fish on the Snake and on one trip with the Fish and Game I helped haul in and tag a 158-pound white sturgeon. We caught that thing by tying a 3/8 inch nylon rope to a rubber inner tube. The rubber inner tube was tied to a tree on the beach and the big hooks were put in with a big hunk of meat. We would throw that out and leave it overnight. The next morning, we would haul in these lines. We were trying to tag white sturgeon and weigh them. That was kind of an exciting little excursion with Fish and Game people.

Our engineers kept occupied on new road construction. During my tenure at Slate Creek the final length of the improved Grangeville-Salmon road was linked up from about Adams Ranger Station on through to Florence, Montana. Now, this is the same road that ended at Twin Cabins when I was a seasonal back in 1957 and worked on that District. Now this was about 1972. So, that opened the upper Slate Creek drainage for timber harvest and, of course, there were several large sales laid out and sold up in that area then. It was mostly lodgepole pine that we were selling.

The District was considered quite good for hunting. It was during this period that we began using steel gates on some of the logging roads, so that during the hunting season we could prevent over-harvest of the elk. The areas were still open for walk-in hunting, but some of the died-in-the-wool road hunters really made it hard for us to keep gates in the ground. They would pull them out about as fast as we had put them in; but nevertheless, road management planning was underway. I do not know if it was the first time in the Forest Service, but it was at least the first time that I had been aware of it. Later, I think we got better at public involvement and we did not lose quite as many gates.

I had several memorable hunts at Slate Creek. One was the time I took my daughter, Kelly, with me when she was only 8 or 9 and we were out turkey hunting. We ended up shooting both a turkey and a rattlesnake. I took a picture of her being brave, but looking quite frightened while she held the snake on the end of a short stick. Another hunt was up John Day Creek where I spotted some elk across a steep draw. This is steep country, now. I hiked down and back up the other steep face. I shot a big cow elk right on the top. Then I had to go back down the mountain to get my pack frame in the van and then hike back up the mountain to bring down a 100-pound quarter and then back down and up again, covering that 45 percent slope twelve times before that day was done. Talk about pooped! For three days I think I ached all over and was envious of all those guys who seemed to be able to get their elk on the edge of the road. It never happened to me.

The biggest trophy I ever shot was in the same drainage. I hiked up the ridge just after dawn one morning and I heard something in the brush ahead of me jump up and run. I thought, well, maybe it was a deer; but when I looked through the brush ahead, I saw coming down the trail on the other side of that patch of brush a big, tawny-colored tail about three feet long, - twitching and coming toward me on the trail. The trail kind of came down at a slant and then made a sharp, ninety-degree turn to where I was standing. There was a little patch of brush there in that angle. So, here comes this cougar. In seconds and only forty feet away, this big, yellow cougar comes in to view. It was only the second one I had ever seen in my life in the wild, and since I was not sure who was hunting whom, I made a noise at him—"huh-h-h-h"—and I tried to scare him away, not wanting to shoot because I thought, perhaps, it would startle elk. I had climbed all that way up and I was hunting ELK. Anyway, I made that noise to scare him away and the cougar did not scare. Instead, he crouched, opened his mouth, and went “kkkkkkkhhhhhh", at me. I saw all of this through my scope, so when he hissed, I figured he might be thinking "breakfast" and I shot. Down he went with hardly a quiver and the bullet had gone in his mouth, lengthwise through his neck, and lodged beneath the hide on his shoulder. He was 7'4", nose to tail—a beautiful unscarred male specimen. I carefully skinned him out, cut off a hindquarter for eating and packed him down the mountain. I was thinking that this unusual event would at least merit a little feature story in the Grangeville Gazette in the press. I found out differently. As I drove down the road with the animal hide all wrapped up in the back of my van, I went past the rancher (I think Christiansen was his name). He saw blood on my arms and he says, "What did you get?" I said, "Well, I got a mountain lion!" I was excited. He said, "You did? You got a permit for a mountain lion?" I said, "No, you don't need a permit." He said, "Well, you do THIS year. They passed a law that says you need a permit for those lions." I said, "Oh, man! Here I am the District Ranger with a game law violation." He said, "Well, don't worry. I will not tell anybody. I do not like those lions myself" So, anyway, I tried to keep the kill kind of a secret. So, I rolled up the hide and salted it. When I got back to the ranger station, I buried it deep down in the cookhouse freezer. This was October. All that fall every time the game warden would stop in the office on Friday

afternoons for coffee, like he kind of had the habit of doing, I figured, "My goose is cooked. This guy has heard about this somehow." My wife did not make it any easier because she was nervous and urging me to turn myself in. Finally, about Christmas time I was cleaning off my desk and I stumbled upon a set of regulations that said the law was passed that NEXT YEAR cougars would require a permit. So, here I was legal all the time; I had missed the opportunity to make a big deal about this lion and get my picture in the paper and all that stuff. Usually that was kind of unusual then and not too many people had a chance to even see one of those. When they did bag one, there was usually enough of a feature for the sports or hunting page in the paper. All that hush-hush for nothing. The post script of the story, however, is that I got a nice, big mounted rug that I still have hanging in my family room here in Great Falls. I get to tell that story repeatedly every time somebody new comes down to the basement to see that lion hanging on the wall.

At Slate Creek we were, in many ways, out of touch with a lot of the current affairs of the world. This was a time when America was in the quagmire of the Viet Nam War with all of its casualties. This was the early 1970's. We were trying to get out of it. Nixon was the President. Johnson had decided not to run for a second term and there were casualties, civilian riots, and peace marches. President Nixon was linked to Watergate break-ins and impeachment was being mentioned for him. It was a time of serious national discord.

During my last year at Slate Creek in 1973 (we are changing the subject here), the Forest decided that they were going to combine Slate Creek District with the Salmon River District at Riggins. The combined District would be called the Salmon River District, but the headquarters would be at Slate Creek. The fire center would be the district offices there in Riggins. So, I thought, well, I would be willing to stay down here and take on this combined district. Ron Stolson was the Ranger down at Riggins. His family was kind of ready to move off the river, but as it, turned out, we did not have much of a say in it. Ron got the combined district down there at Slate Creek and Riggins. I was moved over to the Bitterroot National Forest and the Sula Ranger Station. So, Betty and I and the kids packed up our growing pile of stuff for the sixth time and headed east over the Lochsa Highway to the Bitterroot Valley and that little town of Sula, nestled just below the Continental Divide along the East Fork of the Bitterroot River. The Sula Ranger District of the Bitterroot National Forest was to be our new home base.

That tells a little bit about District Ranger life on the first two Ranger Districts. (I could tell a little about Sula, but I do not think we have got an awful lot of tape left. Maybe I will get started a little bit with it here and you will get an idea of what that was like.)

Sula, Montana, was, and is, a little community at the base of Lost Trail Pass. It is on the Camp Creek tributary of the East Fork of the Bitterroot River. It boasted a post office, a store and community clubhouse. The little country school had been long abandoned in favor of consolidation at Darby. The old school was used to store hay. In 1973 the older, local residents were mainly second and third-generation cattle ranchers who had homesteaded the area. They raised cattle on the Forest in the summer and hay on the flood-irrigated winter pastures around their home ranches. The six Wetzsteon families, the Vogts, the McClintocks, the Lords, and the Fergusons, made up the core of the community. They were names that had been there for a couple of generations. The Forest Service had four or five families who lived full-time in Sula at the Ranger Station, plus the seasonal crews and several more permanents that commuted from Hamilton. Other residents of Sula consisted of gypo loggers, some small post and pole

plant owners, a few retired newcomers and some seasonal residents. The Hobbs family ran the local store there in Sula. And if Sula had a claim to fame, it was an area along the lower East Fork called Ross' Hole that the famed western artist, Charlie Russell, used as the setting for his painting entitled, "Lewis and Clark Meet the Flatheads". It was sketched from the porch of the old Wetzsteon home. That is the picture that hangs today as the massive oil on canvas in the Senate chamber of the state capitol in Helena. It was an apropos site because, although it is not much recognized or appreciated at least when we lived at Sula, it was the spot where Lewis and Clark camped on their trek over the Bitterroots back in 1805 on their way to the Pacific. It is also a place where Clark stayed and passed through on his way back as he came back from the Pacific and he was going to go down the Yellowstone River. While Lewis went back over Lewis and Clark Pass up in the Blackfoot country and down into the Great Falls area so, he could take the Missouri back and explore the Marias on the way.

Our tour at Sula ushered in kind of a new sport for our family and that was cross-country skiing. We used to have a lot of fun cross-country skiing down through the old Saddle Mountain burn where they are building today, in the year 2000, the new ski runs. At that time, the new trees we are coming up and the snow would cover them. We had a mile or more that we would go up on the ski lift and come down through that Saddle Mountain burn where snow had covered all the seedlings and we would just swoosh through that powdered snow and arced on down through there for over a mile.

In other, more slogging, cross-country trips. Gibbons Pass and Chief Joseph Pass offered a lot of miles of winter enjoyment. This was all only ten miles from our house at the ranger station and we'd often return there for a chili feed or something else good after a fun day of exercise. Another couple of guys and I would often go on longer and more arduous Nordic treks. Altogether one winter I skied out there over 150 miles.

It was just a wonderful time for our family then as we cross-country skied and even did a little downhill skiing on that district. I understand that district is closed now. They are using it as more of a workstation, but for years that was an excellent little District of the Bitterroot. We did a lot of work up there. We had a good timber sale program, a very active small sale program that we worked in roadsides and did kind of tiptoe management following the Bitterroot controversy up there because of a lot of terracing that had been done in the 1960's. It was a very interesting district. The permittees really supported the Forest Service because, when they started, the big Bitterroot Cattle Company out of Hamilton ran cattie all over that country. It was not until the National Forest was proclaimed in 1905 down there and they started fencing out some of the allotments that the small ranchers had any chance at all to raise cattle and have a viable economic option to live there. So, they appreciated the Forest Service and they were strong supporters of the Forest Service.

It was in the 1970's that a lot of this started to change. As those people died out, new people came in, environmental concerns became paramount and the whole culture of the Bitterroot Valley changed from one of ranching and logging to more a retirement community, bedroom homes for people who work in Missoula and that sort of thing. That whole valley has changed a lot since the decades of the 1960's and 1970's.

That is what I am going to continue to talk about today— the Sula Ranger District. On a previous tape I have talked about the earlier part of my career and given a little bit more background and talked about all my career assignments up until Sula.

The one range permittee at Sula I developed the closest relationship with was Stan Boon and his wife, Carol, and their three children. Our son, Scott, and his son, Mark, helped the relationship by being best friends. But Stan was trying hard to make his allotments work for him so, he and I and my range conservationist. Gene Grossman, usually got out in the mountain allotments on horseback once or twice a year. We would ride with a pack string up the trail behind Crazy Creek campground to that rustic old log cabin and from there ride his allotments. It was always a good evening time with steaks and drinks and late-night conversation.

The Community Clubhouse at Sula was probably, and still is, the glue that bound the little Sula community together. It was the site of Sunday church, frequent potlucks, weddings, funerals, meetings, you name it, that's where they held it. It was wood heated and wood framed, and brought the scattered families together. At Christmas time there was always a packed house when, after all the kids recitals. Gin McClintock, the wife of old Johnny McClintock, in her nightgown and nightcap, stood up and expressively recited "The Night Before Christmas". She must have been almost 70 at the time and no one in the Sula Basin would have missed her performance for the world.

Still present around Sula were numerous, scattered yellow-bark Ponderosa Pine called Indian trees, so named because of the large, basal scars where earlier natives had cut off patches of bark to get at the sweet, tender inner bark in the days before white sugar was available from the white traders. There was, and perhaps still is, a similar large pine known as "Medicine Tree" located at the mouth of the canyon below Sula right along the side of the highway. It is down near Conner. It commonly was draped with strands of colored thread as symbols of prayers to the Great Spirit from passing native people.

As in most western Montana communities, elk hunting was an important part of the year in Sula. It took just the right kind of early fall snowstorms to bring the elk into the basin from the high country, but when that happened the hunt was on. Sometimes we had elk right around the ranger station. The whole time I was there, however, those conditions never prevailed, but I did get out and hunt even though I never saw an elk in season when I was stationed there at Sula.

During the early 1970's, the Montana Fish and Game, with our help, transplanted mountain sheep along the East Fork Road above Sula and that herd has done quite well—at least until recently. Although elk are abundant around Sula today, old Fred Wetzsteon told me that when he was a boy, the East Fork drainage had no elk at all. He said he recalled a time around 1911 when they saw their first elk track and thought it was a huge monster pig track.

Our life was a busy one at Sula. Our four kids were all in the Darby school and all involved in school programs, like basketball, football, wrestling and 4-H. Craig, our oldest, had a hive or two of bees that he tended in the open area in front of our ranger station house. When he gathered the honey in the fall, it was almost a whole family effort to keep the spinning, hand cranked extractor going and get the sticky honey bottled up. Our kitchen floor was one tacky mess when that job was over. Honey is probably

about the only good thing to say about some of the spotted knapweed that at that time was still prevalent and gaining a foothold all over the Sula country.

Kelly and Kathy, our daughters, always had some 4-H project going and for a while they were grinding wheat in our electric mill and selling homemade bread at the local store. Scott made his few coins as our woodchopper and fisherman. He had split, stack and haul our wood and I would pay him for that. He was only in grade school, but he did it to get himself strong for wrestling. In the spring he liked to fish for cutthroat trout in narrow little Camp Creek out in front of our house. I would pay him for whatever he caught. Betty was doing a lot of sewing in those years, but she also was starting to enjoy oil painting with neighbor. Barb Abbott. She was doing quite well. Ray Abbott was the Assistant Ranger there when we first got there.

Edgar Wetzsteon told me that his parents cheered the creation of the Bitterroot National Forest in 1905 because the huge Bitterroot Cattle Company in Hamilton, run by some of the Butte copper barons, had cattle running all over the public lands in the Sula area. The local ranchers could not compete with them or stand up to them. When the Forest Service came in and started managing the public land by establishing fenced range allotments, it finally gave the homesteader a chance. The Wetzsteons were proud supporters of forest management, and of course, Gary Wetzsteon, the son of Edgar Wetzsteon, went on to have a full career for himself in the Forest Service. He retired off the Custer National Forest when I was there later.

The district had one outlying work center in those days— the East Fork Guard Station—a few miles up the river. When the Job Corps started in the 1960's, they used it for a spike camp and added bunkhouses and a cookhouse. Their program at that time emphasized conservation projects, like thinning and fencing, but as it evolved into more emphasis on contracted building trade skills they did not come around as much. Instead, the work center was used as a residential summer YCC camp. In those days the boys and girls did do conservation projects and that helped the district a lot.

The district included a fair-sized area along the Continental Divide that was forested by extremely dense stands of lodgepole pine, much of which was dead and on the ground. It was nearly impenetrable. The dead trees resulted from outbreaks of mountain pine beetles that commonly hit the peak of activity when their food source reached maturity at about 80 years. This was when the inner bark reached its thickest and juiciest stage and they would build food and egg tunnels through it, in effect girdling and killing the trees. When this happened, the trees would redden and die and eventually fall down in jackstraw fashion as young trees continued to grow up through them. This cycle would continue until nature intervened with fire. The large killer fires of the early sixties attested to it, and the Saddle Mountain and Sleeping Child bums were the best examples.

Following these catastrophic fires and with the growing demand for timber, the Forest Service response was to offer large timber sales along the Continental Divide to attempt break the disease and fire cycle. This necessitated clear-cutting and was quite effective in many respects. Upper McKay Creek was one such area on the district that had been harvested, and then dozer-piled and burned. I dubbed it, "Oh My God Creek!" because that was a common expression when we took someone up to see it. You had come around a comer through fairly heavy timber and all of a sudden you're in an open, clear-cut, dozer-piled

area that had not yet re-seeded. And so, the contrast was pretty dramatic. Technically, it had accomplished the objective, but in practice, the public was often shocked and unappreciative.

These large landscape-changing harvest areas were starting a huge public backlash against Forest Service management. Another neat idea that was started on the Bitterroot in the sixties were called, "terracing". The objective was to build a system of parallel shallow ditches on the contour across the face of the hillside in order to facilitate pine seedling reproduction by improving water retention and breaking up the competitive pine grass sod. It worked great, just like the clear-cuts along the divide, but it only compounded the public backlash. Visually, it was assaulting and it turned into a clarion call to battle for the budding environmental activist community in the valleys below. To the forester and many of the rural folks these efforts made a lot of sense. They reduced the fire hazard, they produced timber jobs, they improved the survival of tree seedlings, and made more grass for cattle. We also felt it would improve wildlife habitat. To the concerned citizens and their lawyers, the press, and the university community it looked terrible and needed to be stopped at all costs. The infamous Bitterroot controversy had been engaged and it spread to national proportions. Clearly being a District Ranger would never be the same. The public wanted to know about everything we were doing and seemed to want to vote on it or stop it. By the time I came to the Bitterroot in almost the mid-70's much of this stuff had kind of died back a little because they had stopped the terracing and they had stopped the huge clear-cuts. We were trying to be more responsive to the public.

Our small sale timber program at that time, for example, emphasized numerous small roadside improvement sales. Our large sale program focused on removing understory mistletoe Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine, while favoring intermediate harvest designs that left ponderosa pine as a residual overstory component. It was during this period that the Forest Service in the Northern Region decided to begin certifying silviculturists, the foresters who designed timber
sales.

I was asked by Forest Supervisor Orville Daniels, my boss and cross-country skiing partner, if I would go through the training as a District Ranger to demonstrate to forester volunteers that there could be a career beyond the silvicultural specialty. I accepted and began this series of three one-month long intensive graduate-level training courses at the University of Montana, Washington State University, and the University of Idaho. These were challenging courses and resulted in my developing a professional paper, a prescription for treating a piece of forest land, and defending it orally at the University of Montana and at the Forest Service office in Missoula. From this effort I obtained my Master of Forestry degree at age 38 and became a certified silviculturist in Region 1.

A major project at Sula that started after the Sleeping Child burn in the mid-60's and carried on during my tenure at Sula involved the pre-commercial thinning of lodgepole pine. Lodgepole, being a fire species, re-seeded naturally in dense carpets of seedlings after a hot fire. We feh, that by thinning these trees at a young age, they would have the room to grow to commercial size faster. In the early years following the Sleeping Child burn, they hand pulled excess seedlings, or tried spraying them with herbicide after covering crop trees with paper bags. By the 1970's the lodgepole were 3-5 feet tall and about broomstick size. We had crews working all summer long thinning some of the best stands to a 10' x 10' crop tree spacing with pruning clippers. How effective were these efforts? I have never really been back to find out, but my guess is that they are growing well but are probably still more densely spaced

than they should be for optimum growth unless they have been thinned again. The thinning we did certainly selected the best trees and gave them a boost from the dense competition *for* a five year period at least. In any case, the project supplied a lot of young kids with some summer wages and some healthy outdoor work.

Sula, like all the others, was a fun assignment. Our cross-country skiing, my wife's, Betty, bread baking, our dogs, our new friends—the Abbotts, Smiths, the Boones, the Daniels—our canoeing the Bitterroot and Missouri Rivers, our wilderness planning in the Anaconda Pintlers, family trips to Texas. There were so many interesting things my diary mentions about my job and my family at this vital time in our lives. It is probably too much to weave into this highlight account of my time there.

By this time, I had been a District Ranger on three districts and was wondering where to head my career from here. I did not think I needed another ranger district experience, even though I enjoyed it and seemed to be thought by others as pretty good at it. Orville Daniels, the Forest Supervisor who had brought me to the Bitterroot, had been transferred down the valley to Missoula where he was now the Supervisor of the Lolo National Forest. One day I saw him and he asked me if I would consider coming to the Lolo to be his Ranger at Superior. I related my thoughts about going to a fourth ranger assignment, but he said he needed a good ranger and was getting Superior approved for a GS-13 grade. At the time there were only a few GS-13 Ranger Districts in the Region, but he explained that it was a big working district that cut 30 million board feet and had significant wildlife, fire, recreation, lands, and minerals activity. I told him I would be interested for a GS-13, but was reluctant to accept until the upgrade had been approved. Well, a month went by. Although the Forest Service had approved it, the Department of Agriculture was holding back until the new Carter administration was in office. Orville was anxious to fill the job, however, so he played the card of having the Regional Forester talk to me.

Bob Torheim called me in and explained how badly they needed the position filled and shared his feeling that the upgrade was a shoe-in once Carter's people got in gear. He asked me to take the job right now because things at Superior needed some management. They were not going as well as they wanted them to. Since he felt I was the guy and he was the Regional Forester, I agreed to transfer. It was sort of a duty, honor, country kind of response and the trouble was I had to take it as a GS-12 lateral and wait for the upgrade approval from Washington.

1976 was the year Jimmy Carter beat out Gerald Ford and so thus entered in a democratic administration. What did Jimmy Carter do Inauguration Day January 20, 1977? He froze all civil service promotions and upgrades. As you can imagine, my hope for a GS-13 promotion got iced over in a hurry and it never did thaw out. So, there I was, on another District Ranger assignment wondering where my career could possibly go from here. As before, it turned out to be like the proverbial Brer Rabbit and the briar patch situation. It was a pretty good deal.

After another U-Haul adventure, we moved to Superior Ranger District on the Lolo National Forest, which is west of Missoula, about an hour's drive. Superior in 1977 was a town of 1,200. It is located 60 miles west of Missoula, Montana between 1-90 and the Clark Fork River. The town, occupying both sides of the river, was linked by a cement bridge and boasted a nice school system, a hospital, a bank, several stores, plus a large sawmill owned by Diamond International, which was the lifeblood of the community. The mill employed most of the town, either directly or indirectly. The Forest Service, the hospital and the

school were other important employers in aggregate and what they lacked in numbers, they contributed by adding a professional diversity to the town's blue-collar character. We really liked living in town. A rental Forest Service house was available, but too small for the six of us. Fortunately, kitty corner across the street from the Ranger Station, which was a rental office[4], there was a large house for sale. It needed lots of paint inside and out, but was otherwise just right. We were ready for our own home. For $39,000 it was ours. After a blitz weekend, Betty, I, and my cousin, Al House, had every room painted and ready to move in. The following weekend our U-Haul caravan arrived from Sula and by Monday we were moved in enough for me to start work.

Craig, Kelly and Kathy, our children, were by now in high school and junior high, respectively. All three did well in their adjustment to the new environment. Craig made varsity basketball and football. The girls were in JV basketball and track. Kelly worked an early shift at the local bakery. Craig and Kathy worked after school at a local gas station. Scott, our youngest, was still in grade school, but he started a morning paper route almost as soon as we moved there. I think the extra hour or so of time the kids did not spend on a school bus must have weighed on them, because before we knew it, they were all working—either before or after school—all on their own initiative. They would claim it was only because I was too tight with allowance money; but since they were used to not being on much of a dole, they did not gripe too much. Scott was starting to make a name for himself with his interest and success in Little Guy Wrestling. With his work ethic and his intensity, he quickly became a favorite of his coaches, Mr. Kinney and Mr. Conroe.

The year 1978 was a time when thousands of Vietnamese in leaky boats were trying to escape communism. The American pull out in 1974 had left that country in turmoil. Our newspapers and TV had nightly pictures of skinny, little people on densely packed boats on their way to someplace—anyplace—where there was a chance of freedom. A lot of them died in the attempt, either drowning in storms or dying from lack of food or water. In America there was a national sense of compassion and guilt about this, and as a result many families and boat children were brought to America sponsored through relief organizations. In Montana it was the ad in the "Missoulian" from Lutheran Social Services that caught our attention. They were looking for foster homes for individual boat children and since we had room, we felt it might be a good thing for both a boat child and our children if we were a host family. We applied and were shortly approved.

In the fall of 1978, we were called to Missoula to pick up a 16-year-old boy from Vietnam of Chinese extraction named Taung Kwak Hun (?). In our van, the six of us drove to Missoula to meet the skinny, shy, probably scared but brave young man. In the dark drive back to Superior I am sure he was overwhelmed by the size of our family and his lack of ability to decipher our chatter or communicate with us. Fortunately, he did speak a little English and he read even better with the help of a dictionary. Taung's family was still alive back in the Chinese section of Saigon and consisted of a mother and father, two older sisters, a grandmother, and a twin brother. The grandmother had fled China in the days of Mao's great march in 1949 and she had paid in gold to get Taung out of the country. Taung's mission was to eventually get them out as well. Now here is a little 16-year-old who left a twin and a large family to set sail on his little boat. Here he is in the United States.

[4] The District office was in rented office space

Despite his language barrier, Taung started school right away in the ninth grade. He worked very hard and with total emersion he learned enough to get by. Most of the time at home he was most comfortable in thongs, shorts, and a tee shirt despite the colder weather. He did like our food, but his digestive system seemed to need large doses of rice for him to function well. His parents wrote to him with the cautions and encouragement of any good parent. Before long he was comfortable enough with his routine in school and study that he wanted to start earning money. Well, son Scott came to the rescue. He signed him up to help deliver papers in the morning. He and we all had many adjustments trying to understand each other, but he was accepted as one of us and stayed with us for several years. Eventually, he graduated from high school in Billings, bought his own new car, graduated from electronics school in California, got a job, brought his family over to live with him, and he is doing well as a new husband and father in San Jose, California.

Times were busy for us in Superior. Betty was on the town council, having won on a write-in vote. I was voted on to the school board. In that town it seemed like almost any warm, willing body could have a turn.

The Ranger job in Superior was one that involved supervision of more people than at Sula, including a zone engineering crew and a bigger program. Compared to the Bitterroot, however, this part of the Lolo received very little adverse public attention. There was little in the way of appeals, public protests, or public meetings and I was able to conduct the responsibilities of the job largely during normal hours.

The timber program at Superior was a big one at 30 million board feet per year. About 10 million of this was in small sales. The district was heavily forested with several species of pine, Douglas-fir, true fu-, cedar, and western larch. This latter species turned a beautiful golden color in the fall and made the drive up the St. Regis River along 1-90 just gorgeous. Our main effort in timber harvest was to regenerate older stands that had not been consumed by the 1910 fire. Each potential sale area was first assessed for other multiple-use values; and if we determined that a portion of the area could be harvested, we designed the roads and harvest units, estimated the volume and base price, and sold the timber to the highest bidder in sealed bids. The sales were all administered by our own people whose job it was to assure compliance with the sale contract. Once the harvest was complete, logging slash was treated, new trees were planted, and unneeded roads were gated or put to bed. Despite the environmentalist who would have people think that timber harvest was bad, I guess I always felt good about the way we were managing the forest. Visits to those same areas today would show that to be true.

Life on a Ranger District was certainly one of variety. In 1979 we got involved in the search for a local bank robber. Someone came into town, held up the bank on the other side of the river at gunpoint, fled by car up into the mountains behind town with the loot up Flat Creek. Our local sheriff drove in a rush up to our station and asked for as many of us as I could spare to be deputized and help with the search. He also wanted maps, radios, and trucks. We turned out about a dozen employees with equipment and carrying our own weapons. We were placed in vehicles and began to drive roads. Before long, we found the robber's car stashed in the brush and assumed he was fleeing on foot and trying to tie in with someone back along the highway. After a long day and an all-night monitoring of various road junctions to no avail, the search was called off. We never heard much about that until several years later the robber was caught in another robbery and he admitted he had eluded capture in Superior by sneaking down a steep, mountain face to the freeway in the wee hours of the next day.

We also had some exciting forest fires near town between 1977 and 1980. On one project, a fire behind town, we were trying to keep fire from burning residences. One retardant bomber got so low, he took the tops out of several trees and returned to base with Doug-fir needles in the cockpit. Another fire we had up in the Cedar Creek country resulted in the crash of a WWII B-17 retardant bomber that had made too tight a turn; it lost power, crashed and burned into the timber. That time, the sheriff and I had the helicopter up to the site and packed off the pilot and co-pilot in two body bags.

A more pleasant experience at Superior was my relationship with George Gildersleeve. George was an elderly gold miner, who spent each summer with his wife, up on his gold claim at the head of Cedar Creek. He had several neatly kept log work sheds and lived in a log house on the claim. Once having been a more active and productive miner, George and his wife now kept busy with a little mining mixed in with a generous dose of entertaining old friends and warding off would-be claim jumpers. Before I got there, one of our engineers had entered George's claim on National Forest Service land and hauled off several loads of gravel for road repair. Well, George was incensed when he found this out, because he maintained that it was his claim and it was valuable ore. He wanted to be paid for the gold that we had hauled away, of course. Since he had no way to value the loss of the amount of gold and the district had no way to reimburse him for merely a guessed value, they were at a standstill and they had been that way for quite a while. One of my first jobs as Ranger was to solve the problem and avoid a potential lawsuit. He was a gruff, barrel-chested, old miner who knew he had been wronged and he expected restitution. I explained I knew we had done him wrong but could not pay him cash for something we could not value. But I said, "George, we still value your friendship and your support. Is there anything else that we might do or find some way that we could make amends?" George thought about that and he finally said, "Well, he'd sure like it if we could fix the steep approach from the road to his cabin." Since we operated a road grader, I agreed on the spot. The next day we had the grader up there to lower the short, but steep grade. George was once again a happy man and relieved that the battle was over. On my next visit he felt we ought to celebrate. Before I knew it, he was in the kitchen rummaging under the floorboards and he came out with two long-necked brown beer bottles of ice-cold homebrew with which we toasted our new peace and friendship. Pretty good stuff he made! On one or two other occasions after that, we managed to repeat the ceremony, and I found out that he must have had numerous visitors who stopped off for the same reason. Whenever George's name was mentioned in Superior, the tales of his homebrew hospitality was never far behind. I always felt that part of my success in Superior was due, in part, to how George and I resolved that situation. In any contest, between a Ranger and a well regarded local citizen, the populace was waiting to see how the feds would treat one of their kind. Their perception that I accomplished it in a fair and practical way, with no loss of face for George, seemed to help in my acceptance within their community.

In May of 1980 another unusual event occurred one Sunday while our family was enjoying an outing at the National Bison Range near Ravalli. We had driven up onto the buffalo range, and the day was sunny and warm, the spring flowers were brilliant, the deer, elk and buffalo were plentiful and everything seemed green, fresh, and clean. At about 4 p.m. when we felt it was time to head home, I noticed a build-up of dark storm clouds in the southwest. As we drove back towards St. Regis over the cut-off road, it was apparent we were about to get a storm, because the clouds I saw earlier were building higher and getting darker and more ominous. As we drove, though, I noticed with curiosity how dusty the roads appeared to be. Each time a car passed, it would kick up a little cloud of dust. By the time we reached St.

Regis we decided we would better stop for dinner with the five kids. The truckers kept stopping in and remarking how bad the dust was getting. One of them said he had heard on his CB radio that some volcano on the coast had erupted and that the storm cloud was a huge cloud of dust and ash coming our way. It was now 6 p.m. and getting dark enough outside for lights. Now, remember this is May. We finished eating and we headed the 10 miles to Superior with our lights on. What a ride! It was like driving in a blinding snowstorm at night each time a semi passed. The gray ash was visibly accumulating on everything. By the time we arrived home, things were really eerie. It was quiet, calm, and dark. Dogs were silent; birds were not chirping. As we looked out our window, the lawn, street, and houses all had kind of an ashen, ghostly appearance. The street lights came on automatically and cast a muted glow that pierced the gray. Across the street other neighbors were like us, staring out their windows at the strange sight.

Radio and TV reported non-stop on the growing and uncertain effects of such a major catastrophe. Mount St. Helen in Washington had literally exploded, devastating huge, forested areas in the vicinity and dropping vast quantities of ash as the cloud moved east with the prevailing winds. Some cities reported up to six inches of ash fall. By the next morning, we had one-quarter of an inch in Superior, Montana. Was it toxic? Was it abrasive? Would it destroy engines and lungs? Would it smother or poison crops, plants, or soil? Would it cause a temperature change that might affect life or weather on the planet? These were all serious questions that were being bandied about. But, what should we do ourselves? School and businesses were initially closed, but soon they opened and people began moving around, brushing off porches, sidewalks, and cars, changing filters in their cars, and finding a neighbor to talk to. At the Ranger Station we broke out our fire pumps and began washing the ash off our vehicles and buildings. We pumped water from the river. Birds that had hopped silent and befuddled in the early morning ash had now resumed puzzled chirps. Once we heard that the ash was not toxic, then normal living resumed. Our field crews had to wear dust masks the rest of the summer. We found that saw blades dulled up quickly and dusty conditions prevailed in the woods for weeks and months after that. It was certainly the most monumental, natural event in anyone's memory. But compared to the Mt. Mazama eruption of 12,000 years ago in the same area. Mount St. Helen, they said, was puny—but not to us.

The further, unusual thing about the volcanic ash fall was that it occurred the day before our house was to go on the market and shortly after the Diamond mill had closed. Not good omens for a successful home sale. I had earlier been asked to apply for GS-13 Deputy Forest Supervisor positions on the Custer and the Flathead National Forests, which I did. By May I had been selected for the Custer job in Billings and now we were trying to move, once again, in another U-Haul adventure. Futile at first, but in seeming answer to our prayers, our house sold to the local school principal for the exact amount we were asking and the exact amount the local bank still had available for low interest home loans. We had re-roofed the house, painted it inside and out, finished off the basement, sided the garage, built a back deck, and in general, made the house look spiffy and respectable for the sale price of $60,000, Not a bad gain in three years.

We were off to Billings for move #10. Wow! This was big-town living in Billings for us; bigger than Helena 20 years earlier, and far bigger than any place we have lived since.

Billings was a sprawling city of 90,000 along the Yellowstone River in eastern Montana. The climate was dry and mild and the character of it was distinctly urban—at least for us. It at least had street lights and buses, if not high-rise tenements or ghettos.

This was 1980 and our oldest son, Craig, finally did not come with us. He had just graduated from high school the day we left. As school board chairman I had proudly presented him with his diploma. He got a job at the newly restarted sawmill at Superior, working on the green chain. Once he finished helping us load our moving van, he stayed behind and actually never lived at home again with us. Scott, our youngest boy, would rather have stayed behind as well. He had made good friends in Superior and he was not looking forward to making new friends with a bunch of wimpy city kids. That first summer he played hermit and he lost himself in trying to read every Louis Lamour western paperback he could lay his hands on. Kelly and Kathy, our two daughters, made a fabulous transition. They seemed to take solace in each other's company and the attractions of the big city. Betty decided she had been playing the role of a closeted housewife and mother for too many years, so she signed up for art classes at Eastern Montana College. I hit the road as the Custer's new deputy—either going to meetings on forest-related business, or visiting our seven far-flung Ranger Districts.

The Custer was not only the nation's largest grazing forest, but we managed land in three states, had both National Forest and National Grassland Ranger Districts, had a major oil boom in progress in North Dakota, a sizeable wilderness management challenge in the Absaroka-Beartooths, plus mining, fire, lands, and recreation programs. In general, there was lots going on and I often traveled three weeks a month, usually by charter or commuter aircraft. Our farthest District, the Cheyenne, was 750 miles east in North Dakota and several were 300 miles or more. What we figured was if we would go west 750 miles instead of east 750 miles to North Dakota, we would be 50 miles out in the Pacific Ocean. So that gives you some idea of the size of the Custer National Forest, at least in terms of how it was spread out.

When I worked in Billings, it was all in the office trying to resolve people problems or budgets or just trying to keep up with the avalanche of reports, the permits, the plans, the meetings. This was still several years before we had personal desktop computers, so paper and typists and telephones were the norm for getting things done. Being a Deputy Forest Supervisor was a weird job compared to being a District Ranger. To be honest, it was not nearly as much fun. For one thing, being second fiddle was an adjustment and trying to communicate everything, both up and down, and be the boss alter ego to seven Rangers and nine staff was a new challenge. The good people on the Custer helped a lot. We managed to get a lot done and still remained on good terms. Nevertheless, my impressions of those first few months were that with all the work to do, the Custer could have used one less Chief and a few more Indians.

The Custer Ranger Districts in the early 1980's were swamped, particularly in western North Dakota on the two districts of the Little Missouri National Grasslands, where Td worked 20 years earlier. The ninety oil wells that I had to keep track of at Watford City in the 1960's had now grown to several hundred in the 1980's and most of them were recent or in progress. This time laws required that we prepare an environmental assessment for each action. Oil company reps would fly in daily expecting to put their caravan of fifty oil-rig trucks directly into a proposed federal land well site and begin drilling. Since we had limited staff to process all the required paperwork, we had to work on a first-come, first-serve basis. If a permit was not available when the company was ready to roll, they just had to wait. Their cost for

having all their equipment stand idle was a reported $7,000 a day. Well, that is a lot of coins. Needless to say, the representatives nearly camped on the Ranger's desk until he signed off on the permit. Since the Region required that only Forest Supervisors could approve the permits, the representative would immediately fly to Billings with a prepared permit and camp on our doorstep until approval was granted. Well, it sounds terribly bureaucratic, but because oil wells involve roads, well pad, waste pit, power hookups, salt water lines and storage tanks—often on more than one ownership—it was a complicated activity to assess the impacts. Just the coordination with state and county agencies, and grazing associations, and permittees took a lot of time. Normally, a private business would charge a fee for all this extra work and could meet the demand by hiring more people. Not us. No royalties were coming to us in the way of fatter budgets, and there was little appreciation for the increased workloads by those who were at the tap to trickle some down to us. It was stress city! Fortunately, we had a marvelous, innovative bunch of thinking people dealing with these problems and they developed streamlined ways to deal with the complex situations on the ground. Eventually, the Custer developed models of oil patch management that were used elsewhere in boom-style situations.

During the second Reagan administration, there was an attempt to streamline federal land management in a nationwide proposal called, "The Forest Service BLM Interchange". It was largely a political response to the so-called sagebrush rebellion down in Nevada. In Montana, I was assigned, along with Bob Gibson off the Helena and three BLM employees, to lay out ways to interchange our lands. In general, the Forest Service would logically assume responsibility for western Montana timberlands and the BLM would assume management of the eastern Montana and Dakotas' grazing lands. On a map that looks simple. Had the two agencies been sharing equal capabilities and mission, it would even have made sense. Most of us involved in national forest grazing, however, either as employees—or even as ranchers and permittees—saw the situation as having little public benefit for grazing lands. President Reagan, however, was preparing to accomplish all of this quickly by executive order. To those of us out in the field, it seemed like madness, and it kept progressing.

One day all the employees in our Billings office were called into the conference room and Regional Forester Tom Coston and the BLM State Director took charge. They said a decision would soon be made in Washington to eliminate the Custer National Forest and our office in Billings. The Beartooth Ranger District would transfer to the Gallatin National Forest in Bozeman, and all our other Ranger Districts would remain in service as BLM field offices. Billings employees of the Custer would be reassigned to places like Dickinson or Miles City. Well, stunned silence ensued. Our employees were aghast with visions of personal disruption and unplanned costs of moving households and families. It was presented as kind of a "fait accompli" and we were not asked what we thought. But, boy, I will tell you after the meeting, did I ever get the brunt of their anger, their frustrations, the panic, and the torpedoed morale. It was not long before this heavy-handed attempt was shot down and chilled politically, but it certainly made all of us on the Custer feel expendable and threatened.

Coming to Billings as the Deputy Forest Supervisor figured to be a brief 3-4 year stepping-stone to either a Washington office assignment, a staff job in a region, or if I was lucky, a Forest Supervisor, assignment. Besides the interchange study, I took on other special assignments. One involved a study of how our watersheds in the Region were being managed. I traveled the Region and presented the findings to the regional management team. In fire management I followed my interests and became a fire boss, or incident commander, on an eastside class two fire team. I was also a regional representative to a

national Change-on-the-Range initiative designed to improve and coordinate Forest Service rangeland management. So, beside the normal on-forest duties, these and other special assignments were normal expectations of a Deputy Forest Supervisor in the early 1980's.

During my first year as Deputy, my boss was Dan MacIntyre, a crusty veteran of ten years on the Custer, and some previous experience down in Arizona. He was an excellent supervisor and a fine person. By the end of my first year, Dan took a special reassignment and for three months I was left as acting. He was then replaced by a first-time Forest Supervisor, Jim Mann, who transferred in from Washington, D.C. Jim was strong-willed, ambitious, knowledgeable and a hard-charger. Although our personalities were a lot different, we hit it off pretty well and he made every attempt to market me as a Forest Supervisor. In 1984 he got promoted to Regional Director of Fire and Aviation Management in Missoula, and I was reassigned as Acting Forest Supervisor.

After four years as Deputy, I felt ready to take on a Forest Supervisor assignment of my own. Although I would have preferred this on the Custer, I feh that the chances of promoting from Deputy to Supervisor on the same forest were slim. At least, that had been my experience and the advice that I had been receiving from others higher up. I knew my name was on a national list to go anywhere. I expected the transfer at any time.

Finally, that job in Billings as Acting and as a Deputy for Jim Mann turned out to be a pretty good deal, because, although I never expected it (that we would get an assignment on the Forest), that is exactly what happened. Our son, Scott, had been really wanting to finish high school in Billings. He was in no mood to move at all. Kelly and Kathy, our daughters, had already graduated from high school. Betty was a good trooper and willing to go wherever we needed to. So, Scott came to Betty one day and said he was praying every night that we would not move. Betty told him, "We're praying every night that we would move-especially before school started." We needed to get our act together, so the three of us sat down and we listed all the things we wanted. We laid it out in a simple prayer asking for God's help. By golly, it worked! It seemed that in almost no time I was offered a Forest Supervisor job right there in the Custer and Scott got to finish high school in Billings.

Another interest in our life in Billings revolved around recreational volleyball. The Forest Service entered a co-ed team in the city league. Betty and I both joined. Benie Lee and his wife, John and Carol Gibson, Wayne and Patty Smetanka, and several singles and couples made up a team that for several years took the city championship. Our son, Scott, and Mary Smetanka was both in the same grade in junior high started playing when they were both in ninth grade. Some of our most fun games involved weekly practices and other social events with those people. Both the kids were developing into star athletes at Billings Senior and they added a lot to the fun and competition as they sacrificed their nimble bodies for those hard to reach shots. By the time we left Billings, we had an office display case filled along the top with our volleyball mementos.

I mentioned that I traveled frequently in my job as a Deputy and the same was true as for Forest Supervisor. Often, I would be winging my way back and forth from the Dakotas in single engine Cessnas to or from meetings with grazing associations, state agencies, industry representatives or District personnel. Occasionally, we would have to dodge thunderheads and storm cells. Mostly, the trips were smooth, allowing me to either catch upon paperwork or simply rest. On one trip back to Billings from

Dickinson, however, we had some trouble. The weather was calm and we were within 16 miles of the airport in Billings when the engine gave out. I was in the co-pilot seat and Linda Ward Williams, our archeologist, was in the back. The lady pilot from Lynch's Flying Service had the stick. We had just come down to 8,000 feet when there was a pop in the engine. Almost immediately the cockpit filled with smoke and the airplane was without power. We were over rough badland topography, a mile or so south of Interstate 94, and not far from Shepherd. Well, the badland was no place to try to land a plane. Things got pretty tense in a hurry, because there was no place below us to land and we were merely gliding and losing altitude. Quickly the pilot banked and headed toward the freeway in the flat, irrigated fields along the Yellowstone. Her plan was that if the highway was too crowded, then the fields would have to work. Well, the only sound was the air whistling by and the pilot broadcasting May Day's. Linda and I kind of smiled weakly at each other, cinched up our seatbelts even tighter, and uttered our silent prayers. We swung over the highway and headed west. An opening in the traffic appeared and our pilot went for it. So, we were kind of coming down behind a pickup truck and not too far ahead of a semi. We touched down and quickly taxied to a stop. Linda and I bailed out of the door and pushed the plane over to the shoulder of the road. In minutes we were joined by ambulances, police cars, sheriff cars, fire departments, and nearly every first response vehicle at Huntley, Ballantine, and Shepherd—those little communities east of Billings-could provide. This had been too close a call and I began to wonder if all my flights were not using up some of my precious luck too rapidly. Anyway, a patrolman dropped me off at my door and except for a squib in the paper and a lot of retelling, our momentary adventure was history. Linda Ward Williams, incidentally, whom I had hired as Forest Archeologist, went on from her staff job to become the District Ranger on the Beartooth Ranger District in Red Lodge. In 1995 she was killed in a winter car wreck on the way to work in Red Lodge, so that was her tragic history.

The time in Billings involved several overseas trips for us that were personal trips. We went to India; we went to Israel and Egypt. We had a chance to go to Switzerland.

By 1988 things were going well for the Custer. We had completed the draft of our Forest Plan with public involvement meetings in each of the three states at several locations. We had completed a lengthy permit process for the platinum-producing Stillwater Mine south of Columbus. That mine had its opening ceremonies and started production. We had made good progress on range management improvement across the forest. We developed and refined an excellent wilderness education program for the Beartooths, and our lands program was really cooking with good land exchanges. In general, we were making things click in many resource areas. Of course, we were all proud of it.

In June of 1988, however, after a dry winter and spring we got our first wildfires near Camp Cook and Ekalaka. They were some of the first fires in the region. Temperatures all of a sudden in June soared to 105 degrees and we had winds of 15 to 30 mph that became erratic and shifting. One fire in the hills south of Camp Cook and another in the Long Pines west of town were started by lightning. Both fires grew rapidly and soon Ranger District crews and local firefighters were just kind of overwhelmed and asking for assistance. The first fire was controlled in a day or two, but due to the high temperatures and the winds, the Brewer fire in the Long Pines kept eluding capture and making run after run over the lines. Finally, a class 1 overhead team under Dave Poncin was called in to battle that pesky blaze. They set up fire camps in the outskirts of Camp Cook and called in numerous organized crews and aircraft. The Sioux Ranger District headquartered in Camp Cook consisted of seven scattered land units once composing the old Sioux National Forest. These units stood out like green ships on an ocean of tan prairie grassland and

were forested with ponderosa pine and aspen. The Long Pines unit was the largest of these at 70,000 acres. It was hilly and in addition to being a cool, shaded summer escape from the hot prairie, it was the habitat for an outstanding herd of whitetail deer and flocks of wild turkeys. The timber provided the Don Knapp Sawmill with studs and timber for a local market. The grassy areas provided forage for livestock.

The Brewer fire, however, was rapidly burning up these precious resources in great gulps. The locals in Camp Cook and Ekalaka were justifiably nervous, scared and even angry at our failure to put the fire out quickly. They were certainly not familiar with the operation of the big fire team and they wanted to help far more than the fire team seemed to invite. The fire boss, Dave Poncin, was throwing our best people and equipment at the raging and shifting fire; and even with numerous retardant flights from Miles City and Missoula they were not getting the fire under control. I ended up coming out to meet with angry and questioning citizens in a town meeting in Ekalaka. I explained the situation to not only the citizens and town fathers, but also to Congressman Ron Marlenee. Worst of all, a blow-up crown fire trapped some firefighters and one was seriously burned within his tiny fire shelter. It took about a week of hard-fought fire line construction, aerial fire bombing, and several miles of rancher plowed fire lines around the grassy perimeter before the fire was controlled at 50,000 acres. Almost the entire Long Pines unit was affected. Many acres were blackened to just stark, limbless snags.

When the mess of a large fire aftermath began, we had a review team that was formed, a rehab team of resource specialists was assembled and several crews began relocating property lines and assessing damage. Of course, finding scattered cattle, replacing miles of destroyed fence, making archaeological surveys and reseeding the area to prevent erosion—all were undertaken even as the embers cooled. The timber cruising team began to determine how much timber remained and how much burned timber could be salvaged. Others had to assess to what extent existing sale areas were destroyed. The trouble was this was only June and other parts of the State were starting to experience large fires as well. People that we needed to help us were being called back to other, more pressing assignments. Yellowstone Park and, of the Lolo and Helena were all ablaze, so we did not have the luxury of keeping our attention on the aftermath of the Brewer Fire.

In Storm Creek, a tributary of the Stillwater River south of the little towns of Columbus and Absarokee, west of Billings on the Beartooth District, there was a small lightning fire occurrence in late June. At 8,000 feet and in an area of wilderness with virtually no serious escape fire potential we decided that, rather than attack the fire, we would follow our preplanned prescription and let it bum with only periodic monitoring. We feh that within our collected fire experience, known weather patterns and fuel potentials that this fire (Storm Creek) was most likely to smolder around in a creeping ground fire and be doused with rain or snow. No rain fell in June and when the hot, dry weather continued into July, we decided to line the fire on the north end to prevent its movement toward the private land in that direction. With that accomplished, the fire was still almost benign and within prescription, so we assigned an observer to keep us informed and let it creep around. I flew the area, myself, a couple of times to assure myself it was not a threat and it looked pretty tame.

Meanwhile, the multiple fires in Yellowstone Park and elsewhere were starting to demand more and more suppression resources. The Storm Creek fire was in an area where little resource damage could occur, so it had low attack priority and, therefore, suppression forces just were not readily available for it. Clouds of smoke billowed daily from the Park and national media attention and most of the local news

coverage was focused on Yellowstone. Gardiner, West Yellowstone, and Cook City—all little |5ark boundary communities—were smudged in continually with a pall of smoke. The Yellowstone Park policy of letting wildfires bum had been set aside weeks earlier in favor of an all-out attack with aircraft and hand tools. The West Yellowstone airport was one vast supply depot and fire base camp. It looked like a third world country over there; Tent camps dotted the perimeter of the airport like refugee or hobo encampments and yellow-shirted, Nomex-clad, hard-hatted, and grimy firefighters were everywhere. Several times I flew into West Yellowstone and we were almost down to 100 feet before we could see the runway.

On August 19, 1988-the same date on which the infamous 1910 fire had blown up,-our little Storm Creek fire and most of the big ones in Yellowstone Park started to rage. Whether it was the north wind blowing or a wind sucking from the large Park fires to the south. Storm Creek began to move south, up canyon. Our man on the ground, Tom Alt, was there when all of a sudden Storm Creek roared to life in a blazing crown fire. In a short afternoon the Storm Creek blaze turned from a benign little fire to a huge conflagration that rolled up the canyon like a freight train run amok, consuming trees, a log bridge, a log Forest Service cabin, and very nearly Tom Alt, himself Tom fled to the refuge in a meadow near the cabin and he managed to survive the surrounding blaze inside his emergency foil fire shelter. By that night Storm Creek had burned well out of its drainage and had consumed most of the fuel in the larger upper Stillwater drainage. It was now burning at nearly 11,000 feet and threatening to bum over the hill into Cook City. The wildfires in 1988 almost defied suppression until well into September. The historic Old Faithful Inn and places like Cook City were saved only by the valiant efforts that kept the attacking fires at bay. Finally, after rains and snows finally came - and only then did the terrible fire season in 1988 abate. They were worse by far than the fires in 1910.

The Brewer fire in June had been a forewarning, but seldom had eastern Montana fire conditions been predictive of serious fu-e potential in the higher and wetter mountains to the west. As we found, not even 30 years of fire suppression experience was significant when Mother Nature decided to unleash her forces. The fires of 1988 produced many a beautiful red sunset and consumed thousands of acres of wilderness forest, many scattered man-made structures, and cost millions of dollars to suppress. They were largely a result of our overaggressive[5] efforts after 1910 to insist that all fires were bad and suppress them whenever they occurred. This resulted in huge, unnatural fuel accumulations throughout the mountain west that burned like gasoline when weather conditions got seriously hot, dry, and windy. Today, natural fire is being used much more to keep fuel loads at less dangerous levels in the backcountry and wilderness.

While all this fire activity was going on, another chapter in my life was beginning to unfold. I had known at rating time the previous fall that I would be the Region's only supported candidate for promotion to a GS-15 Forest Supervisor position. In Region 1 all except one of the thirteen national forests were GS-14. I had been in Billings now for eight years, over twice as long as I had been anywhere in the Forest Service. I had worked in Region 1 for 28 years and I was 51 years old. Did I want to stay in Billings until retirement or consider one more move? I did not really want to move, but a promotion would boost my retirement annuity. Since I was ranked for a promotion, we talked it over and we decided to go for it. I was on a

[5] The opinion stated here as fact, is certainly debatable

national roster for all the GS-15 forests that might come open, and I had received notice that I had not gotten either the Boise or the North Carolina jobs. Early in June, a week or two before all the fire action started, I had received a call asking me to fly out to the Eastern Region headquarters in Milwaukee and interview for the job as Forest Supervisor on the Superior National Forest in Duluth, Minnesota. What a change that would be from the Custer. From the largest grazing/forest with major oil and gas activity in mountain wilderness to the largest National Forest east of the Mississippi with major timber harvest, wolves, and the huge Boundary Water Canoe Area Wilderness. The interview with Regional Forester Butch Merida and his two deputies, Larry Payne and Jim Jordan, lasted only about an hour and I left the next day with no indication of a decision one way or the other. In the rush of activity that followed I nearly forgot about the job opening. Two months later in early August, while on a field trip at Camp Cook, I got a call at my motel offering me the Superior job with a reporting date of September 11. What a surprise! What an honor!

While ash from the early September blow-ups in Yellowstone dusted the hood of our car in Billings and a pall of smoke hung over the state, once again we undertook the not fun task of moving. We had all our worldly possessions in boxes in a moving van and we were heading east to a new Forest, a different Region, and indeed a different Forest Service and local culture. This time we left all of our family behind. Craig and Kelly were both married. Kathy was graduated and working in Billings. Scott was in college in north Idaho. Betty had to close her successful pottery business that she had developed in Billings, but she was planning to rebuild it in Duluth. I had no real idea what I might get into in my new job, but with two cars, a Coleman camper and a canoe we bee-lined it to Minnesota in the heat of early September.

Betty and I arrived in Duluth Labor Day weekend 1988. As we topped Thompson Hill before heading down to Duluth, we could see the brilliant blue vastness of Lake Superior dotted with boats, freighters, and colorful sailing craft. We were back home to live in Lake States country for the first time in almost 30 years. As we headed down the hill toward town, it looked almost as if an evacuation was taking place. All of Duluth appeared to be in their vehicles heading south on I-35 to the Twin Cities. There was a continuous Une of cars, campers, or car-canoe or car-boat combinations and all were vacating the resorts, the lakes, the beaches, and forests of the upper Great Lakes for their return home after Labor Day. No traffic like this existed in Montana.

This move gave us the same feeling that we had experienced when we moved from Helena to Watford City. Here we were without a home. We had our possessions in a van somewhere along the way. We were going to need to find a home. In Duluth we lived for the first week in the Raddison Hotel and ate our meals in restaurants. By Thursday, after a busy four days of house hunting, we had eaten in plenty of beaneries and we had walked through several houses. We had made an offer on a nice home in Hermantown on a 2 1/2 acre wooded lot, but then we had to attend a meeting nearly 500 miles away. We had been invited to attend an Eastern Region Forest Supervisors, Regional Foresters, and Director's meeting on Mackinaw Island in Michigan. So, Friday we traveled east again across northern Wisconsin and upper Michigan and there we met other couples and boated to the unique, historic automobile free community and tourist mecca of Mackinaw Island. For the next several days we met for business, we socialized, we got acquainted with the new people I would be working with & for, for the next few years. It was a good time, especially in that scenic and historic setting.

The most important thing to happen to us was the phone call from our realtor telling us we had bought a new home in Hermantown. Buying a home was one thing; closing on a loan for one was another and we had 60 days before we could move in. Well, thanks to Kathy Hetterich, my new secretary, arrangements had been made for us to rent a small two-room cabin on stilts up at the local ski area at Spirit Mountain. We lived there in the little cabin for 60 days in the fall, leaving our household goods in storage. It was a beautiful hardwood setting with plenty of colorful oaks and maples and even the curious black bear. With time on our hands after I got back from work, we often enjoyed hiking the variety of ski trails.

Each day I would go to work and was rapidly getting acquainted with all the new faces of staff, rangers and about 200 Forest employees. I spent as much times as I could on the Districts, and in the field, seeing and reviewing the many ongoing projects and the wide variety of camps and resorts and outfitter facilities. There was also plenty of time getting acquainted with the wide variety of people that we did business with, in industry and other agencies or special interest groups.

My daily diaries in a journal that I keep here at home of my day-to-day experiences in Duluth are well chronicled. We dealt with downsizing, that is, reducing personnel in the Supervisor's Office. We wound up closing the Isabella Ranger Station. That was unfortunate. but fiscally a necessary thing to do because the Forest was overstaffed for the program and budget we currently had. We were something like $2 million short and we just had to do something about that. We delt with a number of positive programs as well. Our experience and dedicated staff were good to work with.

We got involved in a number of other activities. We went to Europe, Switzerland, one time for a wedding of a cousin. Betty made a couple of trips to Russia during that period. That was when Russia was starting to move away from communism and she had a chance to go with a church group. She went over to the city of Petrosovask and was over there for about ten days. Then she had another chance, in the winter 1991, to go to Kiev in the Ukraine where she worked as a helper at CBN, Christian Broadcasting Network. They sponsored a major effort in Kiev to introduce Christianity to that recently communist-ruled nation. It was at a time when things were just tough. The ruble was not worth much. She wound up living in an apartment with a woman, her daughter, and a mother-in-law. It was a tough time over there and we were glad when she got back.

I really enjoyed most aspects of the Superior, to tell the truth, particularly the many opportunities to get acquainted with the Boundary Waters. This huge, lake land wideness is just unique in the United States and it is a wonderful, beautiful, complicated place that is special to many far-flung interests. It is a sprawling area of nearly a million acres. It is dotted with lakes, rivers, and wild north country—fully deserving of its wilderness classification. It was by far the most controversial piece of real estate on the Forest and probably in the Region. It always dominated the biggest chunk of our attention. The area had only been set aside as wilderness after a considerable amount of recreation, logging, habitation, and motor use had occurred for decades. Therefore, the perpetual contests were between those with a commercial interest to serve the recreational public and those, whose goal it was to curtail some of those uses they felt to be inappropriate or illegal. Emotions often ran high between opposing parties and as the managing agency, we were often in the middle and unable to please anyone.

The Superior was also the host forest in 1990 for a national Rainbow conference. This was a large, unstructured group of largely hippie types that seemed to gather annually around the period of the

summer solstice somewhere on the national forest socialize, smoke pot and celebrate the season. Their search for a site started in January with a small scouting camp and once the site was announced in late May, the ragtag crowds would start to move in with their jalopies, their buses, their tents from all over the country. By July 4 those masses of people grew to 10,000 people up in the forest opening near Tofte. It was a major law enforcement effort to just keep things in hand. The encampment was largely peaceful, but really counterculture and weird. There were lots of open nudity, bartering, chanting, confusion, and clutter. It ended fairly quickly, though, when the group vacated to New York for a Grateful Dead concert. Except for a dead, overdosed young man and some unpaid bills, it was mainly just an unusual and hopefully infrequent intrusion of a collection of people not many people understood or appreciated in the north woods of Minnesota.

During my tenure on the Superior, we launched the first years under the guidance of a new Forest Plan. We took on the preparation of a management plan for the Boundary Water Canoe Area Wilderness. We harvested 90 to 100 million board feet of pulp and saw logs annually, incidentally, without appeals. We built a new log LaCroix Ranger Station in Cook, Minnesota. We developed good partnerships with the Minesota Dept. of Natural Resources and we accomplished some ideal land exchanges, installed several handicapped fishing piers, built the unique Fall Lake Wilderness dam in the winter and we developed a joint Forest Service-DNR fire center in Grand Rapids.

My experiences on the Superior were overall good, worthwhile, fun, and challenging. Many of them involved considerable controversy and difficulty, but I was well trained for that and well paid so I did not have any complaints there. But some of the time I felt there was too little appreciation internally and externally from those who either did not want action, or preferred their own twist to the decisions that were made. But that was life. We had a three-plane air force of collector quality Beaver float planes that we used for fire, search, and rescue, and other resource uses' and there were also plenty of canoes and other watercraft. I really enjoyed the lake country around Lake Superior and the many things to see and do in that small environment.

When I decided to retire in late 1992, after I had already been eligible for 6-8 months, I guess I was ready to go. At my age in the outfit there were not many other places to go and I really did not look forward to another move anyway. My life had been exciting and enjoyable with many friends and memories gained along the way. Our life, though gypsy-like in terms of our constant moving, helped our family look to each other for support. As a result of our overall rural environment, our four children turned out as stable, hardworking, honest adults. I never minded the fact that I had not worked further up the Forest Service ladder or been assigned to either the Washington office or a Regional Office. My career was that of kind of a maverick, you might say; like they talk about line officers in the army coming up from the enlisted ranks. I enjoyed being a line officer and I was in that capacity on four Region One Districts, and two National Forests.

My career ended on a good note with well wishes from many and all sides of the issues and from all levels of the outfit. We developed Forest Service friends who became almost like family in every place we lived. We keep in contact with many of them. I also got to work on some of the most beautiful, wildest, and scenic forest and rangelands in the United States. That was the thing that many of my childhood friends could only dream of, or if they wanted to see them, they were going to have to pay to do it. Launching out on the coming years of retirement would be our next challenge. We had our health,

we had each other to ply the years ahead with and we started out in the winter of 1993 with a new diesel truck, a 31-foot fifth-wheel trailer and a southbound heading. Hopefully, this half century plus of my life would be just another good start on many adventures ahead.

So, there is two tapes that kind of explain some of the experiences I had. I didn't have a chance to do this at the 2000 reunion in Missoula with an interviewer who might be asking questions; but I think I filled in some of the highlights of my career, and maybe lend a little flavor of some of the places we worked during those years that I was there that might add a little to the history of the Northern Region and perhaps the Eastern Region. If there is a need to go into any of this on an interview basis at some other time, I would be willing to do that. Meanwhile, thanks for this opportunity. I appreciated the Forest Service and I hope that this is maybe some useful information to somebody along the way. This is Dave Filius signing out on October 25, 2000.