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Region Five History Project

Interview with:	**Allan ("Al") West**
Interviewed by:	**Larry Hornberger**
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LARRY HORNBERGER: One thing they want us to do is say who's interviewing and spell our names. Okay, it's August 17th, about 10:30 in the morning, and we're with Al West and his wife Joyce, preparing for an oral history of Al. I'm Larry Hornberger, L-a-r-r-y H-o-r-n-b-e-r-g-e-r, and with me is Dave Schreiner, D-a-v-e S-c-h-r-e-i-n-e-r. With that, I guess we'd like to turn over to you, Al, and let you start, I think with a brief biography, if you will. Tell us a little bit about yourself: where you started and what you'd done before you got in the Forest Service.

ALLAN ("AL") WEST: Okay. First of all, it's Allan West, and I'm known as Al, A-l-l-a-n W-e-s-t. I was born in London, England, back in 1933. When I was about four years old, the family moved to northern England to a little community called Harrogate, known for its spa waters and a recreation/holiday area for people. I lived in Harrogate through World War II. I remember the bombing and living in shelters when I'd go to school. And then in 1944, after the war, the family moved to the city of York, an old Roman town that still has a wall around it, and my father had a hotel there, restaurant and pub. I was raised there through high school. While in York I played soccer for my city in the junior leagues and also for my school and went to a private boys' school in the city of York.

In 1949 my father sold the hotel and told us we were moving to Canada, and in the middle of winter we got on a ship and emigrated across the Atlantic Ocean, stopping in St. John's, Newfoundland, and then into Halifax, Nova Scotia. From there, picked up a train that took us through Montreal and then into Toronto, where we resided for a little more than three years. I completed Canadian high school in Toronto, played soccer. It was in Toronto that I met Joyce.

I completed high school, grade thirteen in Canada, and then took my matriculation test and was accepted at the University of Toronto, but before I attended, the family moved to the United States, specifically Long Beach, California, which was the original plan when we left England. I attended Long Beach City College in pre-forestry, and received my AA degree in 1954, and then headed up to Berkeley and received my bachelor of forestry degree. Before going up to Berkeley, Joyce and I were married, and Joyce basically put me through school. She worked while I went through school.

Not being a citizen, I couldn't work for anybody that had contracts at that time with any government entity, so I worked in the summers for the California Alumni Association, and then I couldn't get a permanent job, so I continued at U.C. for my master's degree, a Master of Forestry, and finished that at Berkeley in 1957.

Later I was able to get a part-time work with the government, and started with the California Forest and Range Experiment Station, now the Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station. I had a part-time job doing pollen germination and growth studies in the physiology department of the station. I spent a lot of time looking through microscopes, and prior to dawn, I would climb the pines in the Berkeley hills. I cut off the new growth shoots,

dipped them in liquid nitrogen so they stopped all their growth before the sun came up, and took them for analysis in the laboratory.

Those were my first jobs, but in graduate school I decided I really wasn't interested in spending my time in a laboratory, and so I switched majors from plant physiology to watershed management, and my graduate thesis dealt with snow and the influence of forests on snow. The station again hired me part time to do a worldwide literature search worldwide on research articles dealing with snow accumulation, melt, evaporation and how forests influence that. So that was the beginning of my career in research.

Following graduation, not being a citizen, the Forest Service couldn't permanently hire me, but I was lucky that the University of California could, and so the experiment station worked up a contract with the University, and they hired me until I obtained my citizenship.

In those days, back in 1957, there was a real shortage of scientists and actually foresters, so I was lucky to have the pick of my job. I was introduced to work in Arizona, watershed jobs. Also the San Dimas Experimental Forest, but going up to the snow laboratory after a fresh snow convinced us that that was the place that we wanted to live and work.

An interesting experience: We went up there, Joyce and I. There was about three-foot of new snowfall. We went out in a Sno-cat and we're back in the backcountry, where they were taking measurements, and here comes a dog team pulling a sled with people from the Sierra Club lodge on Donner Summit, so it was just one of those scenes that clinched that we should be up there.

With that contract, we moved up to Donner Summit, and we rented an old ski cabin. It was all built of snow shed timbers, so the walls were absolutely, completely insulated with twelve-inch blocks of wood that were discarded snow shed timbers.

HORNBERGER: Those were from the railroad.

WEST: From the railroad, yes.

Now, just going back a little bit, my interest in forestry really started while I was a young boy in England. Harrogate was out in the country, and I hiked and fished and did a lot of horseback riding. I used to clean stables so I could ride horses and then take off a day or two at a time. I also rode bike through the Yorkshire moors, and really loved to be away and camp. Very active in the Boy Scouts I traveled all over northern England after the war with the scouts. I carried that on when I got into Canada. In Canada I completed the King Scout Award, which is equivalent to Eagle Scout. And then, because of my experiences and my love for the outdoors, I also was awarded what they call the Bushman's Thong, and it was a special award done in honor of Lord [Robert] Baden-Powell, the founder of scouting. The Bushman's] Thong was for those who had lived off of the land for periods of time. I did that while I was living in Canada.

Also through scouting I met foresters for the first time in Canada. They convinced me that that's what I ought to be, and so that's the first introduction to forestry, and my mind was made up. When I came down to California, my focus was to get my education to do that.

The Forest Service was an unknown to me, but as I was taking some of the pre-forestry courses in surveying, biology and botany, the professors took us up for weekends, on several occasions, to the San Bernardino National Forest, and I then began to learn about national forests in the United States.

And then, prior to going to Berkeley, you're required to have a twelve-week summer camp, and that was located on the Plumas National Forest, just outside of Quincy, and that twelve weeks living in tent cabins, surveying, doing appraisals and doing all field type of forestry things and firefighting, I got my introduction in a big way into the Forest Service.

The School of Forestry at that time in Berkeley, was in Walter Mulford Hall. The California Forest and Range Experiment Station also had all their offices adjacent to the School of Forestry, and so that introduced me into the research side of forestry. That's why, once I got out of graduate school, I wanted to seek a career with the Forest Service, and initially, because of my education, wanted it to be with the research side of the U.S. Forest Service.

HORNBERGER: You just mentioned a word I didn't understand. Wacca Wacca Fir, or what was that?

JOYCE WEST: [Whispers] Walter—

WEST: Oh, Walter Mulford Hall. Walter Mulford was a former dean of the School of Forestry.

HORNBERGER: At Berkeley.

WEST: At Berkeley, and they named the hall after him.

HORNBERGER: Right. Thank you.

WEST: Um—

HORNBERGER: Excuse me.

WEST: Yes.

HORNBERGER: I just wanted to say that after these tapes are transcribed, then they'll be sent back for editing [unintelligible], and you'll have a chance to—

WEST: Okay. [unintelligible] do with it.

HORNBERGER: [unintelligible].

WEST: Okay.

The role I had at Donner Summit and the research there was fascinating in that here we were, located off US Highway 40 (now US 80)—old Highway 40, before the freeway went over the top, and the snow laboratory was about three-quarters of a mile off of the highway, so for at

least six months and sometimes longer, of the year, the only way you got to get to your home was using those large Tucker Sno-cats, the big ones that they used in Antarctica. We had two of them; we had Weasels and Thiokols. In those days they didn't have the little snow Skidoos. Joyce learned to operate the big machines. Our older son, Christopher, was born in Truckee, and Joyce had to bundle him up and put him in a basket to carry him in the Sno-cat to get him down to our cars whenever she went to the doctors or so forth. That was quite an experience, or maybe Joyce will add a little bit to it.

The interesting thing, that first year was one of the record snowfall years. We went up to the snow lab in '57, and in the spring of 1958 we had a record snowfall, where we had something like twenty feet of snow in a week. The house that we were in was completely buried, and we had an upper balcony, and we dug a tunnel to get out. We just rode the Sno-cats over the top of it. We didn't drive up to the house that year until August. There was that much snow. Approximately 960 inches of snowfall that year was recorded.

HORNBERGER: Was that the year the city of San Francisco Train got stranded near Donner Summit?

WEST: That was the second time it got stuck. The first time was in '51 or '52, and the second time was in '58. Many experiences of being snowbound up there. When it snows like that, you're up around the clock because the intensive measurements that we had to make to get the accurate snowfall, before it settled—it meant that you continued to measure through the night, so there were many long days and nights doing that.

The focus of my research was primarily on snow accumulation, measuring in openings, meadows and also in the middle of the forest. We then followed up the rate of melt of the snow, using a Mount Rose snow tube. The Mount Rose snow tube was developed by a gentleman

called Dr. [James E.] Church, from the University of Nevada. He was the one that did all the runoff predictions at the turn of the 1900s in the Lake Tahoe Basin. He was about ninety years old at that time, and he wrote the early books on snow surveying and so forth that the state of California used as its model for predicting the snow accumulation and predicting stream runoff.

But I was fortunate enough to have spent time with Dr. Church before he passed away. Bright as could be. I remember him showing me pictures of the early days, where he was going across Lake Tahoe with horses and a sleigh when the horses had snowshoes on them. Just a fascinating gentleman to talk to.

But the snow tube was the main tool that we used to measure the snow. The diameter of the tube was such that you could weigh it within the snow core, and it would tell you exactly how many inches of water in the snow core. The tube itself gave you the depth as you went down to mineral soil.

I also got involved in measuring transpiration from trees, to get the full picture of how much water trees were using, and that was of course mainly done in the summer.

We also, for the first time used something that engineering later used, the nuclear probes. The Chicago nuclear probes were used to measure the ice lenses of snow, the density of snow, and then later on, of course, we used it for measuring soil moisture in the summertime.

Oh, the other thing I was interested in is how cold air backs up against trees and then retards the melting of snow. If you can retard snowmelt for a week, that meant millions of dollars in terms of runoff for the power stations and for irrigation, and so if you could keep the snow in the meantime longer, then it could be of great value to the state. The state was financing some of the research, as were the power companies. PG&E [Pacific Gas & Electric] gave us some funding.

An interesting experiment was putting paper barriers across forest openings to see how the cold air trapped and retarded the melting, so there were many innovative things that we did. But the ultimate was to answer the question: Is there a better way to manage the forest and harvest the forest so that you could accumulate more snow, retard the melting and get more snow out of the treetops meaning less snow interception? Meteorological studies that were done at the snow lab found that the bulk of the storms in California, in the Sierras, come from the southwest, we were able to design a cutting pattern of strips oriented east and west. We called these snow shed studies. And we did those on the Tahoe National Forest at Yuba Gap. There's no doubt that you got more snow accumulated and it accumulated up against the trees rather than being deposited in the trees, and they accumulated on the west side so you got slower melting, and as a result, more runoff later in the season.

The width of the openings were based on tree heights. We did experiments with six tree height widths, four tree heights, but the optimum was about two heights of the trees. Much better than blocks, square blocks or other designs. The problem with the concept, however, was that the public didn't like the appearance of strips. Although they proved to be successful both in Colorado and California, they were never implemented, even though, from a watershed standpoint, they were really valuable.

Our second son Michael was also born on Donner Summit, or in Truckee. Of course, from a family standpoint, the boys were skiing before they were swimming and doing almost anything because we were in the snow all the time. Ice skating on the ponds behind the reservoirs at the Lab was another family activity..

We developed an experimental forest called Onion Creek, five watersheds, each one of them with a concrete dam with a brass weir, so that we could measure the streamflow accurately.

We developed a unique method of keeping the weir open in the freezing temperature with just a hood lined with aluminum paper. The radiant from the water, even though it was cold, was enough to reflect back and keep the weir open so we could continue to measure the streamflow.

Another interesting thing: The very first dam we built was being poured on the day that our eldest son was born. I was at the site, of course, watching and supervising the construction when the call came that Joyce had been taken to the hospital by the wife of another forester. The guys named the dam "Dam Chris."

HORNBERGER: [Laughs.]

WEST: So somewhere on there, they wrote in Dam Chris on Watershed Number Five, which was the control watershed for the research.

I think that we had a great life on Donner Summit. We got involved in the community. I was president of the Chamber of Commerce, active in our church in Lake Tahoe. The kids really enjoyed school. At least the oldest boy did at the beginning of school. That was the first time we were introduced to Art and Diane Carroll, because Diane was our oldest boy's kindergarten and first grade teacher, the school on Donner Summit. At that time, Art was a junior forester down on the Tahoe, on the Truckee District.

HORNBERGER: I know he ended up ranger after you here.

WEST: That's right, yes, later on, and then forest supervisor of the forest, too.

HORNBERGER: Right.

WEST: We entertained everybody up at the snow lab. I remember the deputy chief of research coming out, and I didn't understand what a deputy chief was in those days. Dr. Harper was the deputy chief for research and he came out when the oldest boy was just an infant, and Joyce had to provide lunch for him because once you were at the snow lab, that's all it was. We were

living in the lab itself at that time. Anyway, Joyce was very nervous about serving a deputy chief, but we found he was just like everybody else: a wonderful gentleman and a grandfather who just knew how to take care of our infant son.

So those were some of the—one of many great adventures. Children getting sick up there was another thing, and I remember Chris getting very sick when the roads were closed. Through the forest radio system the doctor told us what to do.

HORNBERGER: I'm going to pause here.

WEST: So life at the snow lab was great. We made some very close friends on the summit who are our closest friends, and we're still great friends with those people we first met up there on the summit.

At that time, beginning in the early sixties, Forest Service research was looking for a new direction. They wanted to focus on basic research, and so the number one thing was they wanted all their scientists to go back to school. So I had the opportunity to go back to complete my Ph.D. and was accepted at Colorado State University. We went to Colorado, made the arrangements and were ready to go when I thought through what I wanted to do with my career, and it was not to be in a laboratory and doing that kind of research. My interest really was the applied research, where I could do something and then apply it to the land.

And so we decided not to go to Colorado State, and I asked if I could move over to National Forest Systems. We had a tremendous working relationship with the Tahoe National Forest, and the forest supervisor at that time, Hank Bernaugh, was very helpful in including me as the director of the snow lab to the ranger meetings, their safety meetings, all kinds of activities. We were part of their social program and everything else.

So working with Hank, he wanted me to talk to [Charles A.] "Charlie" Connaughton, the regional forester. Charlie had started out very similarly to how I did. He did snow research in his early career, mainly in Arizona and Colorado, and so I was acquainted with him. He was encouraging, but he said, "You need to talk to the station director." At that time, that was John McGuire, later the chief. And so John asked me to come down, and I remember him taking me out to lunch and discussing what I really should do in my career. Reluctantly, he gave me the blessing to move on.

After a really agonizing period, I made the decision to take a demotion and get experiences in National Forest Systems. We were offered a position at Lee [pronounces it Luh] Vining on the Inyo National Forest. In the middle of winter, we moved out of the snow lab for the second time, because we did spend one year in Berkeley while I ran the snow program, getting additional snow training at Berkeley and other locations.

We moved out of the snow lab using a toboggan, a large toboggan behind the Sno-cat to get the furniture down to the highway and then moved to Lee Vining in a beautiful home behind the ranger station there. The ranger was an old friend, Jack Reveal, just a wonderful forester from way back that we'd met when he was ranger at Pinecrest, Stanislaus National Forest. Jack was an unusual individual in that he was an artist; he was a photographer, he had written books on forest practices. But his great love was archaeology and anthropology. He was the true ranger with a horse, who would stop at every brush and examine it with a magnifying glass. So it was a real opportunity to learn from one of the old masters.

He turned over the work planning and all of the administrative things to me, which was great, and in two years I learned a great deal about the management of national forests from Jack. I think a highlight, though, because of Jack's interest in anthropology: We applied for special

funding to host the world archaeological meeting field trip on the Mono Lake District. The head of that group was Dr. Louis Leakey, of Africa fame, early man. He came with about sixty other people from around the world, and we had a program for three days, introducing them to the archaeology and the history of the Mono Basin. It was very rich with the mono craters and obsidian, the salt of Mono Lake, and then the history of the Chinese and the various Chinese camps who built the mines and did the timber harvesting for props in the mines in that area. That introduced me to a new, completely unknown side of forestry that I think helped me later on.

But after a couple of years, I was offered the position of the Ojai district ranger, and so we moved from Lee Vining and headed down to Ojai. The interesting thing there was I got the call from Joe Radel [pronounced RAID-uhl], the forest supervisor, that said, "You've been offered a job on the Los Padres," and I left. Joyce was caring for the boys, and I was leaving for three days to go to a training session. I said, "We're going to the Los [which he pronounces Las] Padres. Joyce's only experience of the Los Padres was a visit to the Mount Pinos District at Frazier Park. Joyce, after being remote at the snow lab and at Lee Vining, she thought, "My God, is that where we're going?" and didn't know until later that we were going to such a beautiful spot as Ojai.

So we came down here, and it was a time of change on the Los Padres. New challenges. I remember Fred Bennett, the fire management officer, who was always so courteous and so right, but his response to a young ranger coming in there was, "My God, here's another one to train, and I'm going to have to train him, and then he'll go, but we'll do our own thing again." Fred and I became very close. He taught me the ways of fire, although I had some fire experience starting at the snow lab. I organized the snow lab people into a fire crew, and was on some of the major fires. In fact, in '59 and '60 the snow lab crew were the ones that ran the

retardant bases at Loma Rico Airport for the major fires, like the Donner Ridge Fire, Volcano Fire, New York Ridge and San Juan Fire. Then often would be called out to go on a lightning fire as a crew and so forth. None of the big fires, though, and no Southern California experience. I did have fire responsibility on the Mono Lake District, so I did get regional training at that time. But this was going to be a new experience for me. Fred Bennett did a wonderful job training me.

Also the fire management officer for the forest was Carl Hickerson. Carl, born and raised in the Ojai-Casitas Spring area, knew this country, and he knew more about fire than anybody I'd met up to that point, so I was very fortunate to have them take me under their wings and give me a good grounding on fire.

HORNBERGER: Chaparral country is a little different than in the high Sierra timber country.

WEST: Very different, and I had no experience at that. But I remember, as the ranger, the first fire I went on was the Oso Fire on the Santa Barbara District. I was the Cat boss out there. I needed to start doing the basics and learning that part of fire suppression. And right after that, the Wellman Fire. I started out in plans before they brought in an incident command team. At that time, it was called a Class One team. I was reassigned as a Cat boss again on a sector of the fire, so I really did get that basic training.

Then we started having a series of fires on the Ojai District: Piru Fire that was a troublesome fire in that we were challenged by a landowner there. In fact, my life was threatened. Woke me up in the middle of the night with a shotgun because we had decided to do a backfire around his home, which actually saved his home. He and his wife and his son laid down in front of the Cats and wouldn't let us build line. It was quite a scene for a period of time.

HORNBERGER: This was Mr. King?

WEST: Yes, this was Mr. King. The sheriff did put a deputy with me and let me continue to do my job, and I worked directly under Carl Hickerson, doing it. The interesting thing is Mr. King's first remarks to me when I became ranger was that his forefathers had beaten the British and kicked them out of this country, and he wasn't going to take any orders from a British ranger about his grazing permit. So Mr. King and I had had discussions before. He then took us to court, a long, drawn-out civil suit, for destroying his property, which actually we saved, but the judge just gave him a lecture and told him he was lucky he had such professionals taking care of his property. So that was one incident that I remember here.

Fire, of course, was major on the Los Padres but also Ojai, and so I did get involved in more than what was on the Ojai District. But there were many other issues. The oil and gas in Sespe. At that time, there were very little written direction in the manuals on how to manage oil development. The district actually did some of the early work of developing the manual material on consolidation of drilling sites for a pad for several wells, set some standards on sumps and things like that. I think we were the first district to hire a forester who had oil and gas experience in the Pennsylvania oil fields. He later became a forester, and he was assigned as the oil and gas lands forester. He did all of the work in the Sespe field and in Laguna Ridge, out of the Casitas watershed, and in those early days there was a lot of activity going on.

The other major issue while I was ranger, of course, was the [California] condor [*Gymnogyps californianu*s]. The Forest Service was really involved in the controversy over the condor and its decline. The issue of building a dam on the Sespe was still a consideration, and so there was a lot of discussion. The second day I came to work as ranger, I was called by John Borneman from the Audubon Society. The Audubon Society had an office in Ventura for their condor biologist, and that was John. He invited me to go out and look for condors. He felt that

the Ojai ranger at least had to see one. That was one of several times I went out with John. But there was one trip that was very memorable that we saw over twenty condor all at one time. That's just a magnificent sight, and something that a lot of people have never seen, that many in one place in the wild.

With that, though, I was able to get recognition that the Forest Service needed to do more itself, and so we were able to establish our own condor biologist, and that position was set up and located on the Ojai District. That position was filled by Dean Carrier. Dean came from the Arizona Department of Fish and Game, and his appointment was a wonderful experience. Dean was kind of ahead of the time. He was one of those people that who into recycling back in the sixties. He had a real concern on environmental issues, and yet also was very practical. So Dean was also very good in helping me see the other side of forestry and the sensitive side as it relates to the wildlife.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were also doing their research on the condor, and after we built the new office, the leased office, because we'd outgrown the old, original ranger station, we had it built with an office for the Fish and Wildlife Service. So really we had John Borneman from the Audubon Society, Dean Carrier, the district condor biology, and Sandy Wilbur, the research scientist from Fish and Wildlife Service. They were a great deal of help for the rest of the time that I was on the district, very helpful. It was also the beginning of the controversy and discussions over the captive breeding program, because the condor were definitely in a decline at that time.

HORNBERGER: [William] "Bill" [Hanson?] was forest supervisor then?

WEST: Bill Hanson was forest supervisor, yes. I really appreciated working for Bill. He really let the rangers have a lot to say and let them run the districts. A lot of decentralized decision making, which later on unfortunately was not the same as it was in my time as a ranger.

A big tragedy on the forest was the floods of '69, the flood on the Sespe, where a group of young boys, along with one of our patrolmen, [James] "Jim" Greenhill, a deputy sheriff and a chief warrant officer for the Navy were all killed in the flood of '69.

HORNBERGER: Boy Scout troop, wasn't it?

WEST: Yes, it was a group of Boy Scouts. They went to rescue them down at the Sespe cabins down near the Sespe Hot Springs, and they were crossing the river for the last time, and got swept off. The only thing we could determine happened was that all of the debris and so forth had blocked the channel and then gave way and a big wave came down and swept them off. But that was a tremendous tragedy. One survivor still lives in Ojai.

HORNBERGER: They were all crossing on a bulldozer.

WEST: On the bulldozer, yes, a Navy bulldozer. Highway 33 was closed for six months. We couldn't get to Wheeler Gorge, the campground and the housing. We had people up there, and so for the next six months we had a helicopter right behind the ranger station that was stationed there so we could get into the back side of the district; otherwise, we had to go all the way to 126 and Interstate 5 or the old Highway 99 and then back around to come in over Pine Mountain, so it was an all-day trip to get to Wheeler Gorge. But from that, we got a lot of flood money and many projects were done.

Another major item that occurred that probably is lost in history, was the invasion of Indian families from Oklahoma after the passing of the Indian Allotment Act. There was a person back in Oklahoma who was providing documents to Native Americans for allotments for

places out in California, and a lot of them happened to be on the Los Padres and the Ojai District. The people actually came out here and occupied the land: in the condor sanctuary and all around the Sespe oil fields. There were major stories on the national media about them. And, of course, many of them came and saw this land that they couldn't live on; it was steep inside the condor sanctuary and other uninhabitable places. However, with thousands of claims, we had to go through a major study to be able to deny them, and so that took about a three-year process of work by George Roby, who was one of the lands assistants on the district at that time, to resolve the issue. Fortunately the individual who was taking money from all of these families was finally convicted of fraud, but the damage was done. They would come out here and would have no way to go back.

There's one fire that also probably is forgotten, and that was a fire in 1970 called the Little Sisar Fire. It was caused by people firing incendiary bullets in the Upper Ojai, near Sisar Road. That fire started on a Sunday. It was at the same time that other major fires in Southern California took off, and by that I'm talking about 100,000-acre fires. The conditions were just unbelievable. However there were a number of things going for us. The fire was kept to eighty acres under the most extreme conditions. A book was written about it. The focus was we had all the tools we needed. We had a fuelbreak to work from. We had hand crews, including inmates, which was what the book was written on, and then we had air attack so a full cadre of what you want. By having all available resources and being able to backfire, we were able to keep the fire under eighty acres. We received a lot of publicity, and a brochure on the Sisar Fire as an example of the value of all of these things being in place at the time a fire starts.

We made many good friends in Ojai, were very active in our church and Lions Club and so forth. We were able to participate in most of the civic activities, as a unit, the Forest Service.

We had two bowling teams that were in a league, and we had a baseball team and things like that. The Forest Service and the district were very involved in the community.

Our youngest son, Scott—he was born in Ojai in 1970. Soon after, or almost a year after, we were offered the position as deputy forest supervisor on the Sierra National Forest. There, I went to work for Sotero Muniz [which he pronounces as if it were Munez], who was the forest supervisor. His background was in engineering. He became the national director of engineering and also regional forester in Region Three. Sotero and I had a great personal relationship and operated almost like brothers. We just hit it off.

This gave me an opportunity to see the bigger picture, and I was given many opportunities, including details in Washington, a lot of fire experience and fire training at a high level. I basically took care of the internal running of the forest. and Sotero did the majority of the external. And I got really involved in work planning in the new era of work planning. I was one of the early people in development of what we call Advent, and that work planning system that I wanted to focus down at the ranger level and let the ranger tell what he needed and do it in a way that it could be automated. And working with [Robert] "Bob" Gordon in the regional office, in budget and finance, and some other people, we really implemented that process on the Sierra Forest, and probably I was better known for that than almost anything else while I was on that forest.

That was the time our boys were teenagers. The older boys were beginning to grow up. They were very active. That's when I got back into soccer again after having played most of my early life. I'd played soccer for the University of California at Berkeley, and so I was asked if I would help form the Youth Soccer Organization in Fresno, and with another Englishman I had met, I helped do that and was active in that for the entire five years we lived in Fresno.

Not only that, I coached a team, which was one my sons were on, Chris, the oldest boy, and then also helped with the other boy, Michael, and his team. Later I was involved with the high school in coaching their team. We had a championship team that the oldest boy was on that went to the state finals, for under sixteen. That was a great highlight. And then helping the high school team for our oldest boy. That team was undefeated in its high school years. That was the first time I was able to get back into the sport that I loved.

The things that were new to me that I learned on the Sierra Forest was the backcountry, the wilderness in the Sierras, relationships with the Park Service, both Yosemite and Sequoia, we met frequently in management meetings.

HORNBERGER: Was Hetch-Hetchy Dam starting to boil then?

WEST: No, not too much at that time, but I did get involved in the FERC [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission] operations, with Shaver Lake and Huntington Lake, [Southern Cal Edison and the PG&E.

HORNBERGER: On the relicensing.

WEST: On the relicensing, and so that became something else that I gained experience. Plus. timber management and, again, fire. So between those new items and my details in Washington and the fire experience, we had a wonderful experience on the Sierra National Forest.

The other issue I got involved in was the public process to designate a wilderness area. That really helped me for when I became Los Padres forest supervisor and the Lopez Canyon Wilderness. Knowing the public process and the methods used, including the congressional relationships, provided a great period of time in development for my career.

HORNBERGER: Al, I remember your unisex toilets.

WEST: Oh, you do? [Laughs.] Well, there was some of that, too, yes.

HORNBERGER: That was kind of interesting controversy—

WEST: Yes, that's right.

HORNBERGER: —over the word "unisex."

WEST: That's right. It sure was, yes, yes. I had forgotten all about those, but that was –it *was* a controversy. But, you know, they worked.

HORNBERGER: Sure. Just the term that didn't [unintelligible].

WEST: That's right. Then in 1976, we moved back to the Los Padres and moved to Santa Barbara. Actually we lived in Goleta, not too far from the office. Again, I thought, *Wow, I've really got where I want to be, and this is great*. You know, I loved the positions as assistant ranger and deputy forest supervisor, but you're always anxious to take on the challenge yourself as ranger or forest supervisor, and so I thought that I had died and gone to heaven when I became the forest supervisor on the Los Padres. That was a time of many changes, personnel wise and other things. My predecessor, [Robert] "Bob" Lancaster, a wonderful guy, and I had known Bob for many years, and he was a great supporter of me. Bob knew the forest very well and all its people. Within a year, he had taken many of the employees to the Tahoe from the Los Padres, from rangers to staff officers to fire people and so forth, and it was always the joke that it was the Los Tahoes Forest with all of those people from the L.P..

But it also gave me the opportunity to rebuild and get a new set of rangers. One of the things that I was proud of is the kind of people I was able to place. Traditionally, of course, the rangers were foresters, and we were able to, over time, put in a hydrologist up at Monterey—that was [Robert] "Bob" Brazeale [pronounced grew-ZEAL], and a botanist at Santa Maria. And then we had—I forget what it was now, but we had one other position that was a forester position, so we were able to get some changes in the people. New fire staff with [James] "Jim"

Bates and, Larry, you were on the forest at that time, forest engineer. And people like [David] "Dave" Waite—I mean, the most dependable individual in knowledge about the lands issue. And then Sam Alfano, of course, as a recreation staff. Gerry Little is the—

HORNBERGER: Planning Staff Officer.

WEST: Planning. So we had what I thought was just a fabulous team. I thought, *Well, here's where I want to end up. I'd love to live in Santa Barbara the rest of my career*.

[Recording interruption]

HORNBERGER: Here we go.

WEST: Well, with just a tremendous staff and rangers, it was a fun time to be on the Los Padres. Many things going on. I got, for the second time, introduced to the Watershed Fire Council of Southern California, a council that was very supportive of Forest Service and California Department of Forestry fire activities and the need to provide resources for the use of the wildland agencies. And they were instrumental in getting special funding. They were responsible for funding the fire lab at Riverside.

But Project Firescope [Firefighting Resources of Southern California Organized for Potential Emergencies] was one of the major things. And so, as one of the Southern California supervisors, I was involved with Firescope and of course the development of the incident command system, which really changed the management of fires and made it more interagency, so that we worked closer together and used common terminology and used all agencies to work together rather than taking care of our own jurisdiction. Probably the incident command system that started right here in Southern California had more impact on disaster planning world wide than any other activity, and the Watershed Fire Council was instrumental in getting that started. It's now used by FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] and most fire agencies

throughout the United States and in foreign countries like Canada and Australia and so forth. So that was a major item during my era on the Los Padres.

Also we were looking strongly at prescribed fire. With my background in watershed management, I really was a great advocate for the use of prescribed fire. I had written plans for the Casitas Reservoir watershed, trying to get funding from the Bureau of Reclamation while I was ranger. I did some analysis work on the Sierra Forest and did get funding for that. And so I pushed hard to get funding. Jim Bates and his fire staff did some great analysis on what was needed in terms of a prescribed fire program. Unfortunately funding just wasn't available in those days. Lots of money for suppression, but the time would come, but it came much later, before we could implement it.

The big fire incidents that occurred—of course, the Sycamore Fire that ran through town and burned many homes, and then the aftermath of that, the flooding of homes following that fire in Sycamore Canyon was one of the disastrous fires right close to Santa Barbara. But the big fire was the Marble-Cone Fire on the Monterey District, where a series of lightning strikes started a number of fires, and all of them were suppressed in the early stages except for two, the Marble Fire and the Cone Fire. The two grew together to be a 200,000-plus-acre fire. We set up a GHQ [general headquarters]. We had five Class One fire teams on that, and this was still during the original fire organization, large-fire organization set-up, a GHQ fire boss and so forth. Coordination was done by Myron Lee from the Cleveland National Forest, who did a superb job.

That fire burned for over three weeks before it was contained, and there were major incidents. One was a plane crash, where apparently a professor from UCLA and a friend, flying from Northern California, flew into the fire to look at it and then crashed. That was a major concern because the plane was located within the area we were going to backfire through, and so

we had the family members come in, trying to get us not to backfire, but we couldn't substantiate where the plane crash was and so, with much agonizing, made the decision we'd go forward with our backfire. And it's a good job we did, because it kept the fire out of the Carmel Valley.

The threat to Tassajara Hot Springs, the Zen Buddhist —

HORNBERGER: Retreat.

WEST: —retreat was another major issue, with the governor himself, at that time Governor Jerry Brown, phoning, pleading with us to save it. That was a direct contact. Fortunately a wind shift the night of the advancement of the fire saved Tassajara Hot Springs.

There was another incident that's kind of humorous. Fort Hunter Liggett was an Army tank training—experimental training base, right adjacent to the fire. They had remote controlled tanks. This fire was the first time we attempted to use a downlink for the infrared flights. We had a van on the ground, and the infrared units would fly and then downlink the information, rather than dropping the imagery at an airport that we could pick up and take to fire camp. Apparently the signal from the downlink was interfering with the tanks, and the Army couldn't control all of these tanks running around. We had a great relationship with the general, and the general called me and asked me if we were doing something that was causing the problem. They had to stop these tanks. So anyway, we figured out that it was the downlink by the timing, and so the military decided they weren't going to have their exercises while the fire was burning. So that's another one of those interesting things.

HORNBERGER: To interject, I can remember [Theodore] "Ted" Zrelak as ranger up there prior to this fire. The snow damage in that whole zone left debris about four feet deep—

WEST: That's right.

HORNBERGER: —throughout this whole forested area, from a previous winter, and Ted was really, seriously so worried about a huge fire that he closed that district, that part of the Ventana Wilderness Area.

WEST: That's right.

HORNBERGER: And sure enough, it happened, just as he left or just after he left.

WEST: Yes, it was closed and we didn't have man-caused fires, but who expected lightning in that area? That fire was a good example of a fuel-fed fire rather than one driven by adverse weather. There was no adverse weather on that fire.

HORNBERGER: No, but just huge amounts of fuel.

WEST: Yes. And then the aftermath of the fire, of course, was the rehabilitation. That's when I really got an appreciation for [Raymond] "Ray" Dolan, the staff officer, resource & wildlife staff on the forest, who pulled together a team of experts to do the rehabilitation early on and got on that job even before the fire was controlled.

HORNBERGER: I think Bob Brazeale's hydrologic expertise came into play there, too.

WEST: Absolutely, and his relationship with Monterey County and the flood people up there, the early warning system and so forth.

HORNBERGER: Carmel Valley and Salinas Valley water supplies [unintelligible]—

WEST: That's right, yes. So it was a major disaster in terms of fire, but we mitigated that with some very good rehabilitation measures, and there was never any major damages after that. We had a great public affairs office at that time, with—

Stop for a minute.

[Recording interruption]

WEST: Ed Waldephel was so innovative and put together a great slide presentation and documents about the Marble-Cone Fire that were really good training opportunities for other people. And I remember the Washington office was beginning to put on a course called Fire Management for Line Officers down at Marana, and I was invited to go down there to talk about my role as a forest supervisor on the Marble-Cone Fire, using all of the materials that Ed had put together. And that was the beginning of something, when I was fire director and deputy chief, that I really pushed very hard, the continuation of those programs because I felt very strongly that line officers need to be involved, not so much in the tactics if they didn't have the technical expertise but being available and making appropriate decisions on the external aspects of fires.

Another couple of things. That was the beginning of the night-flying helicopter program. We had a night-flying helicopter at Rose Valley, and it was the time after the unfortunate accident with the L.A. County night-flying helicopter, but we developed procedures and processes, and I chaired the committee that oversaw the new development of the night-flying helicopter program.

It was also the time that the condor captive breeding became a major issue, and the controversy over that.

Marijuana became a major issue, growing of marijuana at this time on public lands. We had all sorts of difficulties up on the Monterey District, especially at Salmon Creek but also in locations throughout the forest, where people would go in and clear a small area or build marijuana gardens under the tree canopy, but then also guard them and keep the public out of those areas. Many of the places on the Pacific Coast, there were trails going right near those growers, and so we had threats of people being threatened and chased off with shotguns and

other things, a very difficult time. We had helicopters flying over that were shot at, things like that.

I remember one incident where there was a Forest Service old cabin located at Pacific Valley. I was going to go up there for a weekend with the family, and I got a death threat from some of the people that told me that if I went up to that cabin, I would not live through the weekend. I didn't think anything of it, but our law enforcement people did. And I remember having a guard, law enforcement guard, in a vehicle twenty-four hours a day for almost a week in front of our house, as the threats were that serious. So those people meant harm. Even though we were able to mitigate some of that, it continues on today.

The other big thing: We had a couple of powerful congressmen within our zone of influence. The Monterey congressman was Leon Panetta, and I became very good friends with Leon, worked closely with him and his wife, Sylvia. When he came back to Monterey, we would spend time together and see what's on his mind. Also having a ranger like Bob Brazeale at Monterey who was excellent in outreach prevented a lot of issues from becoming major concerns.

And then in the Santa Barbara-Ventura area, we had [Robert] "Bob" Lagomarsino. Bob was very instrumental in designation of wilderness areas, as Panetta was in Monterey. I had known Bob Lagomarsino for many years. When I was ranger, he was a state senator, and Charles Teague was the congressman. And so I had built, over time, a good relationship. That working relationship also helped me when I moved to Washington and got into my other positions.

The tour as a forest supervisor of the Los Padres really was too short for me. I was here too short a time. I was having what I thought was an opportunity to stay here for the rest of my

career and wanted to do that, but [Douglas] "Doug" Leisz, the regional forester most of the time I was forest supervisor, had moved to Washington, and he became deputy chief of administration. He was trying to make some changes within the technological side of the Forest Service, and he had three staffs: database management, data management and computer management. There was a vacancy in data management that he wanted to fill. Those were three new positions that came out of a study. Doug wanted to move and get the Forest Service into using the technology.

And so he asked me to go back to Washington in that position. This was so strange, to go into a computer type position, where the staff were all computer programmers and no resource people, but—

HORNBERGER: Al, I want to interject that probably due to your use of new technology here in the forest and a couple of other instances too, such as the infrared overflights on the opening day of buck season, I remember—

WEST: Right.

HORNBERGER: —that showed up I think two or three hotspots (some were hot springs) that were actually escaped campfires—the beginnings of a wildfire.

WEST: That's right.

HORNBERGER: And another one was the use of infrared—not infrared but color photography to identify marijuana.

WEST: Right, yes.

HORNBERGER: So your eager use of new technology—

WEST: Yes, that was part of it.

HORNBERGER: —led you right up there.

WEST: And I think my involvement in Advent was another one of those things that did it. But Doug was really a visionary because what he saw was that the data standards were being established by the computer people rather than the resource people, and his vision was we need to identify those data needs right at the ground level, what the ranger wanted, what the forest supervisor needed. And so I was able to build a staff, bringing in rangers, one was Bob Brazeale, and others to help develop that whole side of it. In that role, I also was involved in the beginning of a service wide computer system, the development of the Data General system and its acquisition, which took a couple of years to get that standardized throughout the Forest Service. So even though it was a difficult job, I really enjoyed and I think set a standard for the future and I eventually changed the name of the staff to Information Management rather than Data Management.

I was also fortunate to be identified as a candidate for the Senior Executive Service, and so I received the year-long training to prepare me. Before I had completed my Senior Executive training I was tapped to be national director of fire and aviation management. That was a unique position because it almost operated like a line position when it wasn't. It was so key to the Forest Service that I felt very honored that I was selected. With that, I moved into the Senior Executive Service.

The focus when I got there was to implement the revised fire policy, which had been developed in 1979, it was a change from the 10 AM. Policy. Up to the time, I became fire director, the field was reluctant to accept it, but we gradually developed manual material and training to help revise the policy.

HORNBERGER: You might explain the 10 AM policy.

WEST: Yes, the 10 AM policy, which had been in effect since the thirties, was the decision that responding to the tremendous number of large fires, you would rally the forces necessary to suppress a fire by 10 AM the next day, so that means that whatever you felt that you needed to control that fire by 10 AM or, in today's words, contain the fire by 10 AM, you should order whatever you need to do that.

HORNBERGER: The planning objective.

WEST: A planning objective, which really was an all-out fire suppression model, whereas the revised policy let you take a look at the economics, the vegetation needs. It didn't detract from the need to suppress fire, but if there were some beneficial factors, then you didn't have to rally the forces to put it out by 10 AM the next morning. So it was a shift. Also with that came revised policies in areas, where fire plans were in place, that would allow fires to burn unattended but be viewed and looked at as though they were prescribed fires meeting a resource objective.

It was also during this time that I was able to set into motion the development of a financial model for fire budgeting, and that was the development of the concept of most efficient level. The criteria was that it had to be something that would be acceptable to the administration, to Congress and to the people that use it, the fire people. Working with Research and Policy Analysis, we were able to develop a model, starting at the time that I was director of fire.

HORNBERGER: That's still in effect today.

WEST: Yes, right.

One of the highlights of that position, soon after I became director, was that we had an exchange program with Australia, where we exchanged technologies. The idea was that a group of Australian fire specialists would come to the United States, and then every third year, the

United States would take a team over there. It included the Canadians; Researchers, a state forester and wildland fire specialists. In 1981 I led a group of eight people and spent two months in Australia, sharing technologies of fire. It was instrumental in the loan of our MAFFS units to Australia and also their acceptance of fire shelters and other things.

But we learned a lot from them, too: the use of prescribed fire in the eucalyptus forest, the helitorch. That technology originally came from them, even though we'd been using it. The techniques they used were advanced. Using Ping-Pong balls containing potassium dropped from fixed wing aircraft to set fires in a set way was another thing that we picked up from them. Equipment wise, we shared many technologies. So overall it was a very positive program.

Another interesting role was the work with the Ad Council on Smoky Bear, and their involvement in that continued on into the days I was deputy chief. The creativity of the people in the Ad Council and the competition amongst those creative people to be the one that came up with *the* poster for the year was just phenomenal. And then the annual award ceremony in Washington D.C. was spectacular—just about every year, the Smoky Bear program was given an award as being one of the best around.

Again, I wasn't fire director too long. I, again, would have loved to have stayed in that position, but I was asked to move over to be an associate deputy chief under Lamar Beasley, who was deputy chief for programs and legislation. Again, a new area for me. Though I'd been very involved in work planning and some budgeting, I now had the responsibility for program development and budget for the Forest Service and the process included working with the department, OMB [Office of Management and Budget] and then, of course, preparing documents for congressional hearings.

The long-term resource planning, RPA [Resource Planning Act] was redone during my time as associate deputy chief. We did both the assessment and program under the requirements of the Act.

And then Policy Analysis, a unique group of people that analyzed various aspects of programs within the Forest Service that were being funded without question. They would go into a staff area and look into their policies, analyze and see if it was still valid today and recommended if there ought to be changes. They did some amazing work. Very professional group.

Also in that position, I became active with a number of international activities: the North American Forestry Commission, and I chaired that for the United States between the times that the chiefs got together. So at least once a year I met in either Canada or Mexico on forestry issues, of which we had many committees such as fire, timber, insect and disease, but all coordinated to work together as a unit. From that—well, I'll get into that a little later on.

There was also an organization called the Western States Legislative Forestry Task Force. These were Western states that had forestry as a focus, and they had a state senator and a state assemblyman on a committee that met to deal with forestry issues. I represented the Forest Service at those meetings that were held about three times a year throughout the West.

I was associate deputy chief three years, and there were changes occurring in the leadership of the Forest Service, and I was asked to become deputy chief of State and Private Forestry (S&PF), and that's the position I stayed with until I retired in 1993.

I became deputy chief in 1986, with very little knowledge about the S&PF area. Most people who come up through the national forest system don't have much experience, except in California, you're aware of the cooperative fire program and the relationship with the state.

Under the deputy chief there were three staffs: Cooperative Forestry, Insect and Disease, and it was insect and disease across all lands, both private lands and federal lands, including the Park Service, Interior lands. That all came through the Forest Service. And then, of course, Cooperative Fire.

It was also a time, as I say, of change in leadership. So there was an opportunity for me to make some changes in the organization. Because of my background as director of fire, the organizational change was made for all of fire, both National Forest Systems and Cooperative Fire to come under the deputy chief of State and Private. That took some changes in thinking. It was not something that you'll just say you'll do; it needed some major changes in direction and policy, which I was able to facilitate and do. State foresters were opposed to it originally, but then they saw the value of having it as one staff and the opportunity for them to be more involved with the state crews. And actually they saw it as a big plus as we did utilize more of the Eastern state crews at a time their crews weren't involved in fires, when we had fires in the West. So I could chalk that up as one of the major accomplishments.

The other thing that was new is the differences in the state foresters from the Northeast, who mainly worked with the Northeast area, where the director was like a regional forester, but focused on state & private issues. The state foresters in the South, when I became deputy chief, had just lost the Southeast area, and the regional forester provided the coordination, and so there was a little fence mending that was needed to be done. The state foresters in the West—they had always worked with regional foresters, and so that wasn't a problem, but there was a lot of team building that was required because I was an outsider. I was not accepted originally, but after a while, I think we became very close and had a great working relationship, and the building of the State and Private program.

One of the big things that happened during that era was the urban and community forestry program. It was a program of funding for around the $2 million level, at the national level, and then President [George H. W.] Bush Sr. came forth with his America the Beautiful initiative, which was to really enhance tree planting and care in communities. It was his wife, Barbara Bush, who really spearheaded that effort. But the legislation also established a national Tree Trust, Forest Service seed money, to establish a trust, with the idea that they would raise funds and then sustain it to help communities with tree planting. It also increased the Forest Service appropriations to about $30 million. That's a big thing. The legislation also set up statewide urban community forestry advisory councils, and the Secretary of Agriculture Advisory Council.

There was a lot of opposition, mainly by some of the environmental groups, to get that legislation through. They couldn't understand why a Republican would be offering that kind of legislation. But it was my job as deputy chief to get that legislation passed, and I spent a considerable amount of time trying to rally friends, state foresters, the International Society of Arboriculture and others to help get that legislation through Congress as part of the farm bill. Many hearings, many meetings with congressional staff, and an agonizing periods of time. Finally the legislation was passed as part of the Farm Bill. It strengthened the overall State and Private Forestry program as a new section in the 1990 Farm Bill and amended the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act..

It strengthened the program in many other ways, like the Legacy Program, which was focused on purchasing land in the East for conservation easements. A number of new programs were put into the legislation. State foresters were very instrumental in getting it passed. The

state foresters and the International Society of Arboriculture were two of the key organizations that did it.

I was the secretary's representative on the Urban and Community Forestry advisory council, and initially formed a council once the bill was passed. It was called NUCFAC [pronounced NUCK-fack], National Urban and Community Advisory Council, and it has been a very effective council that has been allocating funds. The program has made a difference in the whole area of urban tree planting throughout the nation, and the funds continue to rise today.

The other major issue while I was deputy chief was the Yellowstone [National Park] fires. Even though I went out to those fires several times early and a number of them did start on national forest land, it became such a such a political issue, that these fires were being left to burn. When there was no progress in controlling them, and the people from Wyoming and the other Western states became very concerned over the smoke and loss of business, because the park was close. President [Ronald] Reagan asked the secretary of agriculture, secretary of interior—the secretary of agriculture was Richard [E.] Lyng; secretary of interior was Donald [P.] Hodel, and the secretary of defense, actually the acting secretary of defense at that time, [William H.] Taft [IV], to go out to the field and report back to him. I went out with the three of them to the fires, toured the fire with them, held meetings with the citizens who were very irate. I remember being escorted from the airport to the meetings with law enforcement, both local law enforcement, Interior and Forest Service law enforcement. It included officers sleeping outside our hotel door during the trip. People were very upset.

The issue was really that fire is good; let 'em burn versus some method of control. The Forest Service fires that were burning outside the park, once they hit the park, the orders were, "No suppression." Unfortunately, we were in the middle of a drought. We had no way to stop

the fires. Once the Park Service agreed that they needed to be suppressed, we had so much fire that it was beyond the capability of firefighters to control.

One of the Los Padres rangers, former Santa Barbara District ranger, Denny Bungarz, was responsible for the incident command team that saved Yellowstone—the Old Faithful Lodge, and did a wonderful job. How he saved all of those buildings was unbelievable.

Anyway, the aftermath of that was significant, negative publicity that pressed for a full investigation. We put a team together under the leadership of Charles Philpot, who was head of fire research, and they came forth with a number of recommendations. Then it was my job with an Interior representative to go around the country, mainly in the West, holding public meetings and taking input into what people felt. From that we developed an implementation plan to revise policies, which were done and implemented.

HORNBERGER: There were some policy changes?

WEST: Absolutely, yes, major policy in coordination between agencies, fire plans in place and approved prior to the time, allowing fires to burn without suppression action. Then certification by line officers that if they did in fact allow a fire to burn that they certified they had the personnel ready and available to suppress the fire if it exceeded the limits that were established. Another was to establish drought as a factor in fire predictions prior to the time of allowing fires to burn without an immediate suppression effort.

HORNBERGER: A new factor, then.

WEST: New factor, yes. So I think it did have some effect. At that time, the military helped us. I know we had in excess of 30,000 personnel on those fires, including two battalions from the military. It was an interesting flight from Washington, DC. We took off in one of the presidential small jets out of Edwards Air Force Base, and there were two three-star generals

who sat with me. As we were going along, now, "Al, what would you like to order?" I said, "Well, you know, I can't say till we get there and see what the incident commanders say they need." "Oh," he says, "let me call up General So-and-so" and called back to the Pentagon saying, "Be ready with this. Be ready with that." It was a new experience of how the military operates when they have the secretary of defense with them.

Prior to going out, I briefed all three of the secretaries in their offices, Secretary Lyng and then Secretary Taft and Secretary Hodel, with very well-prepared briefing boards. So even though it was a tragic time, the loss of almost a million and a half acres, it also was a new experience to be involved at that level. There were a lot of unhappy people who lost property, and the inability to settle claims and so forth in a timely way. That was one of the long-lasting problems we had.

As deputy chief for State and Private Forestry, I also had a role in the international activities, and, even though we had a staff director of International Forestry under Research, State and Private, because of its role in technology transfer, also played a role. I was very involved with the North American Forestry Commission, as I mentioned, but also in the World Forestry Conference. Was on the team that represented the United States in Paris in 1991 at the World Forestry Congress. Also on the team that went to share technologies with Japan, Spain and Great Britain. I was the chief coordinator with the Forestry Commission in Great Britain. There were many really wonderful, positive opportunities to share our knowledge with others.

During the same time, I was involved, through the fire community, to improve diversity in fire. Working with the fire staff, we developed the early Women in Fire Management conferences, and working primarily with Region Six, we organized a number of symposiums to try and broaden the base. We probably were late starting, but it really set the new direction. It

also spun over into the Society of American Foresters, and I was instrumental in leading the Society of American Foresters in developing a diversity conference in Texas.

Again on the international side, we were so highly regarded throughout the world for our fire work, I was asked to go to the university of Aix-Marseilles.

J. WEST: Marseilles.

WEST: It was in the town of Aix-en-Provence, France, as a keynote speaker for a symposium on fire law. I spent a week there with people from all over the world.

HORNBERGER: Relating to the liability—

WEST: Liability, yes. And then I hosted a worldwide fire conference in Boston, looking at the urban-forest interface. During my time as deputy chief, we became very involved with the National Fire Protection Association. They're the ones that set all the fire building standards. We initiated a program called Wildfire Strikes Home. After we developed the concept, a couple of years later, we hosted this worldwide conference. It was an outstanding conference, on the worldwide problems in the wildland-urban interface. Many of the things developed are still in place today..

HORNBERGER: And there was some funding headed toward creating buffers between the urban interface.

WEST: Right.

HORNBERGER: Wildland fire.

WEST: That's right.

HORNBERGER: And that resulted—

WEST: Wildfire Strikes Home was the beginning of the use of the interface words and the concern about what you do, when you have forest coming into communities. Also how the

agencies responsible for the properties outside public land or outside the national forest, all interact with one another.

HORNBERGER: I find that so interesting, Al, just sitting on your porch, looking out here. We can see fuelbreaks right here.

WEST: [Laughs.]

HORNBERGER: You probably helped interface with this community—

WEST: Yes.

HORNBERGER: —when you were a ranger here.

WEST: I sure did. I remember the Ojai fuelbreak that went across the face of the foothills above the city.

J. WEST: [unintelligible].

HORNBERGER: [unintelligible].

WEST: Yes. You know, it's interesting how things come back from early in your career that you're able to mold into national policy and direction later on.

HORNBERGER: [unintelligible] experiences [unintelligible]?

WEST: No, you sure don't. The downside of my time as deputy chief, though, was the air tanker issue. As we analyzed the air tankers and the age of the air tankers, we knew that we had a major problem with the World War II planes.

HORNBERGER: Particularly private industry's planes.

WEST: Yes. They were surplus planes that we were able to obtain through various authorities, surplus them and then certify the tanking to meet F.S. Standards. We were looking for the new generation of air tankers, and the C-130s came up, and they were being made available by the

military. Working with GSA [General Services Administration] and the military, we worked on a program to acquire these new air tankers, the C-130s.

HORNBERGER: The Forest Service.

WEST: The Forest Service, yes. We did it under an act called the Historic Aircraft Act, where a historic aircraft was acquired, then you loaned the surplus aircraft to a private company and they in turn would make available a historic aircraft to go into a federal aviation museum of some kind.

HORNBERGER: There was an exchange going on.

WEST: Exchange. Unfortunately, one of the air tanker program people used the C-130s illegally over in Kuwait, when they had the oil fires. These air tankers still have ownership with the government, and they can only fight authorized federal fires, and they're not to go out of the country. Not only did they take them to Kuwait after Desert Storm to fight oil fires, but they also ferried supplies with them, which is illegal. With that, of course, that opened up the whole issue of the authority and so forth After it was reviewed by general counsel, they found that the Forest Service did not have authority for the use of the Historic Aircraft Program. Other agencies do, but the Forest Service didn't have authority for the Historic Aircraft Act, or its implementation. So we had no authority to make available these surplus aircraft in exchange. That led to a very intense investigations that went on—in fact, it went on—lawsuits, criminal investigations until just a year ago. Well, this July I was finally relieved of any further testimony—a year ago July, so in 2003 they finally settled the last case. So that was a long period of time, and difficult trying to recall all the decisions made as the program was initiated.

HORNBERGER: [unintelligible].

WEST: Well, it started in 1990—actually, before 1990. We knew we needed a new generation of aircraft, now we find that those C-130s also had problems. We also knew these were the -A models, the early models that weren't the same as the newer models. But I think the decision was right to look for the new generation of airtankers. There may have been other things that we could have worked out with the military that would have taken all the agony out of those investigations.

HORNBERGER: Looking forward, though, don't we have now a dearth of available air tankers?

WEST: That's right.

HORNBERGER: And it doesn't seem like the private sector is going to invest in air tankers, so somewhere the government is going to have to do some investing in this infrastructure.

WEST: Yes, we need some form of new legislation. Through my work with the North American Forestry Commission, there was a law on the books that foreign firefighters couldn't come to this country and be paid when we had major fires—when Canada or Mexico had major fires, we could send assistance to them and be paid for it, but when Canada sent to us, we couldn't pay. So one of the pieces of legislation that I was instrumental in getting passed while I was deputy chief and testified on was to allow us to be able to pay foreign firefighters.

HORNBERGER: Like reciprocal easements.

WEST: Yes, right. I remember—it's just reminding me of a funny incident. Congressman [Jack] Brooks from Texas was the congressman that was chairing the legislation hearing, and I was testifying before him. Joyce and our youngest son were in the audience as I was testifying. Big hearing, because there was some controversy over it. The southern pine beetle was a major issue in Texas, and Senator Brooks told me—he said, "Mr. West, I will give you anything as

long as you take care of that southern pine beetle down in Texas." And he says, "I don't mean by taking two by fours and smashing them between it."

HORNBERGER: [Laughs.]

WEST: That brought a roar from the audience, but he did fortunately push that legislation through.

HORNBERGER: It was important to him.

WEST: Yes.

[Recording interruption]

WEST: Let me just mention a little about the family. The two oldest boys, of course, were born at Truckee while we lived on Donner Summit and lived the early part of their lives at Donner Summit and Lee Vining. We did a lot of camping together throughout those times, and so two of the boys ended up in forestry. The oldest boy went to Berkeley and got his bachelor's and master's degrees there, and that was on his own interests, not by being pushed by me in any way. In fact, he got his interest by walking a road location with a geologist out of the regional office on the Pine Ridge District of the Sierra.

J. WEST: And [Royde?].

WEST: And Roy Droege was the ranger, and from that experience he decided that's what he wanted to do. He started to work with the Forest Service and then moved to private industry in Oregon.

And then the youngest boy—he didn't have as much experience as the older boys, but he just enjoyed the outdoors, through scouting. He was an Eagle Scout, and he enjoyed the backcountry and then just decided, while we were living in Virginia, that he wanted to be near his older brother in Oregon and went to Oregon State. He was fortunate enough to get a

cooperative program with the state of Oregon, and every year was involved in fire crews with the state. He had always been involved with volunteer fire departments, which is unique to the East. While he was working summers, he'd become a sleeper in different fire department in Oregon, so he had his room taken care of and didn't have to find an apartment. After graduation, being in that cooperative program, the state of Oregon gave him a permanent position, and he's now doing commercial thinning forestry, but he is active in fire and he's on one of the Oregon state fire teams as a safety officer.

The third son—that's the middle son, Michael—his interest was always different from the others. He was the one that wanted to be an author and write, and into fantasy and all of that, but he was turned around by a professor of engineering in northern Virginia, who convinced him by saying, "Mike you ought to go into engineering at Virginia Tech University." He went there and then was trained by Exxon to become an environmental engineer. And so in some way they're all involved with the resource side of things, although Michael more from the engineering standpoint.

And, of course, Joyce has always been involved in whatever positions, active in wives' groups or spouses' groups, both at the forest level and then in Washington, DC, she was very active in the wives' group there in pulling that together for many years.

I was always involved in the Society of American Foresters, on committees and so forth. I was chair of the national convention that was held at Washington, DC. Again, Joyce took care of all of the leisure activities for that convention, and was very involved.

HORNBERGER: She was always a wonderful hostess. .

WEST: Official hostess, right. And then I was voted in as a fellow in the society back in the eighties. Our community involvement has always been with the Episcopal church, Joyce more

so than me, but we've always gotten in it. And then the service clubs. I'm a great believer in service clubs, and I think it's valuable for the Forest Service employees to be involved, and so I was in Lions at one time here in Ojai but then the Rotary Club later, in Fresno and Santa Barbara, and now, after retirement, back into Rotary in Ojai.

Since coming back, I've been very active, upon retirement. Was president of the Ojai Rotary Club, have gone to several of the international conferences with Joyce, but I've kept myself busy with organizations like the International Society of Arboriculture. I sit on their board of directors, and I'm president of their foundation, the Tree Fund Foundation, that raises money for research and then gives grants for tree research.

There's an organization called Trees America of which President Bush is the honorary chairman. Again, it's involved in funding of tree programs in the nation, and I'm on the board.

I did sit in the stakeholders advisory council to the secretary for the National Fire Plan.

HORNBERGER: Like the Quincy Library group?

WEST: Well, a little, but it was for implementation of the National Fire Plan and giving input to primarily the research side. I continued on with the Watershed Fire Council. I was appointed by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and currently chair that organization. Then I was on the board of directors of the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy, supporting open space in the Ojai Valley. Then I—let's see, what else? Oh, there's the Concerned Resource and Environmental Workers [CREW], a youth group that work in the forest.

HORNBERGER: Here in Ojai.

WEST: Here in Ojai, and now outside the community. I was on the board for a number of years and now I am an advisor to them. And in addition to church, I was president of a small private elementary school board. So in retirement I've also kept myself busy.

HORNBERGER: So that's what you do with your spare time.

WEST: [Laughs.] That's right.

HORNBERGER: And then in the meantime, you have an orchard here, too,—

WEST: That's right.

HORNBERGER: —to take care of.

WEST: I was fortunate to buy some raw land, some brush-covered land in Ojai, in the east end, and before I retired, we had it cleared. One of the great bulldoze operators that helped fight fires all over Los Padres, [Robert] "Bobby" Gooden, cleared it, and then made a spot for the house. The architect sited this house, and then we planted a Valencia orange grove, so we've got about nine acres of Valencias. So we're very happy. There isn't anything in my career that I wouldn't do again. Maybe Joyce would say she'd have preferred not to live in certain locations, but it—and the Forest Service was extremely good to us. We've had a great life.

HORNBERGER: [unintelligible].

Joyce, I'd like to ask you to—you've been listening to this now for a couple of hours, and I know Al must have omitted a few things, but I think there's a wife's perception here, and I know you played a huge part in Al's career, or really it's both of your careers now. Maybe you've got some comments to add.

J. WEST: Well, yes. I feel fortunate that Al was willing to let me be part of his career instead of leaving it at the office and coming home. From the very beginning, I was really hands-on and involved. At the snow lab, there wasn't a secretary, so I did the secretary stuff and never, ever felt left out. I always felt included, and it was my way of life. I had occasional part-time jobs, but not a career. My career has been a Forest Service wife.

HORNBERGER: Sounds like a good partnership to me.

J. WEST: I wouldn't change it. Through the Forest Service, we have had some incredible experiences, chances to live in very different places. When I moved to Berkeley with Allan, as he was entering his junior year, I thought, *What a tiny little town*, coming from Toronto, Canada. *I'll never survive living here*. Little did I know that our first assignment after he graduated would be Donner Summit. [Laughter.] That was interesting. There was a real sense of community up there. Even now, you didn't see your neighbors; they weren't visible—you had this sense of community. We were able to get involved, and as Al mentioned, formed some very strong friendships that are still active today, and appreciated from, I think, both our friends' side and from ours.

Probably the most difficult place for me was Lee Vining. We were so isolated. In winter the highway department put a barricade gate at the bottom of the Tioga Pass road at 395 up Tioga Pass. The ranger station was beyond the barricade. The ranger's wife did not live full time on the compound, so I was the only woman there other than the clerk who came during the day. We had two little boys. But we took advantage of it, too. We were able to do a lot of things with the boys. We would go with Al and take a picnic, as there was nothing to do. We had no radio, no television. We were—

HORNBERGER: Lots of outdoors.

WEST: We were isolated. But the setting was absolutely—I mean, the back side of Yosemite—I mean, what can you say? But to shop you had to drive sixty miles down to Bishop on what was then a two-lane road, or if you needed shoes or something for the children, you drove all the way to Reno. So that was different, for a city girl. And I think the fact that it was only two years left a good taste for me, because it was a two-year experience, and we survived. We really got very close as a family because you sat and played board games, and you did

everything together. The oldest boy learned to ski, and I learned to ride a chair lift coming down the mountain, which takes a bit of courage. But we would go up to June Mountain. That was the school P.E. program in the winter, is the children would go skiing.

Then we came to Ojai. I had not a clue where Al West was bringing me when we came to Ojai. Driving from Interstate 5 on 126, all of a sudden here's all these orange trees, orange groves, and I thought, *You know?* And then we came over Dennison Grade and dropped into this valley, and there was a big staff on the ranger district, and they just came and welcomed me and made me feel such a part. We started a really active life. The forest as a whole had a very active wives' group. We made a cookbook, the Ojai district wives' cookbook, and had a real sense of community and of caring. It was probably a real comfort level. And the community accepted us, and we felt very, very much a part of the community here.

It was the first time we purchased a house. We had lived in Forest Service housing.

The snow lab in itself was an experience. The office and the kitchen were on the main floor, and whenever I would bake cookies, all the men would gravitate into the kitchen.

HORNBERGER: [Laughs.]

J. WEST: Can't understand why. And then upstairs we had a tiny living room that was so small that a nine by twelve rug, you had to tuck one end under.

HORNBERGER: [Laughs.]

J. WEST: And then two small bedrooms and a bathroom that all the men who worked at the snow lab had to use as their bathroom facilities when they were working, and so when you'd go to shower, you would pray that you'd remembered to lock the door, and you'd hear these boots clumping up the wooden stairs. But, you know, that also really helped me get a feeling of belonging to the Forest Service family. I mean, living right in the middle of it all. And it was a

good experience. It really was. And then it was pleasant to—we lived in a very nice house, as Al mentioned. It was only two years old, a new Forest Service house, in Lee Vining that looked right up the valley to Yosemite, to Mt. Dana.

Then we came here and had a wonderful time. The timing was perfect for us to move to Fresno. Our oldest son was in intermediate school, and he just did so well in the Fresno school system. It was a wonderful move for him, a good move for all the children. Our youngest son was only one when we moved there.

That was a good time. It was a good time for the family. We had opportunities to go a lot with Allan in the summer. We got a camper on the back of our truck, and when he would have to go up to Huntington Lake or whatnot, we'd go out and camp, and he'd go out for the day and do his Forest Service thing and come back to the campground. I think that was one of the other seeds for Chris to become involved in forestry, and very possibly for our youngest son. They actually were able to see what their dad did. He just didn't go off in the morning and come back at night.

And then we had the good fortune to be moved to Santa Barbara, to the Los Padres, and it was like coming home. There were so many people still here that we knew when Al was ranger. Just had a wonderful time, and I remember when [Douglas] "Doug" Leisz called Allan to say that he wanted him to move to Washington. He said, "I don't want to go. I'm really happy here, and you promised me five years." [Laughs.]

We went, and it was a wonderful experience to live back there. We were fortunate to find a very good neighborhood. We looked for one, because we had this nine-year-old, this child born later in life, so we had to find a neighborhood that was child friendly. Our son Michael went back with us. He started college back there. He had graduated from San Marcos High

School in Santa Barbara. Chris was already married and back here. And all the advantages of living back there were just—

HORNBERGER: Where did you live back there?

J. WEST: We lived in West Springfield, in Fairfax County [Virginia], just outside of the Beltway. When we got a map from the realtor before we went there, we said, "Oh, we're sure not gonna live outside the Beltway"—you know, looking at the commuting. But commuting really was easier when you were just outside the Beltway, and there was a large population of Forest Service people, and Al got into a carpool within a week, so that didn't make too much of a strain for him, getting back and forth. There were just so many opportunities back there. And then, as Al moved up in his job, [there were] opportunities for me to travel with him, and for us to host some really interesting people in our home. It was good.

HORNBERGER: I recall, too, you were really active in the wives' group there.

J. WEST: They had an active forestry wives' club, and I started right away. I ended up as president. We did a lot of stuff. We raised money, and we commissioned—it was started, I think, when I was president—Rudy—

WEST: [Rudolph A.] Wendelin.

J. WEST: —Wendlin, who was the Smoky Bear artist. Also was a sculptor. He did bronze. And he did a bust of Gifford Pinchot. The forest wives paid for the casting of that. We raised enough money. And the very first one went to the chief's office. The second one cast went down to—

WEST: The Cradle of Forestry.

J. WEST: The Cradle of Forestry. And so Sandy Droege came in behind me as president of the wives' group, so three of us women drove down—

WEST: It was the dedication of the visitors center at the Cradle of Forestry in North Carolina

J. WEST: So we drove down for that. That's right. And then dedicated this bust.

WEST: Remember, [David] "Dave" Hammond was a ranger on Mt. Pinos District of the Los Padres.

HORNBERGER: Yes.

WEST: And Dave was the deputy forest supervisor on that forest, and Joyce told him what the ladies, wives' club wanted to do, so he calls up Joyce and said, "Joyce, I need your bust measurements." [Laughter.]

HORNBERGER: So what did you tell him, Joyce?

J. WEST: I said, "Whatever, Dave."

HORNBERGER and WEST: [Laughter.]

J. WEST: And we've often laughed about that. But that was a real highlight, too, as a women's group. And at that time, there was a huge membership. And then it started to decline because women who were transferring in with their husbands had careers and were working. They just didn't have time. Some of that was not because of personal careers; it was driven just due to costs for housing and whatnot. They felt that they needed to have the second income. And then other women had gone back to work and had their careers. But apparently the women's group is still going. I hear from Jan Peterson, Max Peterson's wife, that they're still keeping it going. But those were good years back then.

WEST: Yes.

J. WEST: They really were.

WEST: In fact, when I retired and we came back, Joyce really had a tough time coming back to Ojai, even though she knew people. She really missed that activity that was back there.

J. WEST: It was like there was action! You felt the—

HORNBERGER: Where the action is.

J. WEST: Where the action is. And I volunteered for eight years for the American Forestry Association, retired Forest Service—

WEST: The former director of the cooperative fire.

J. WEST: [William] "Bill" Tickla recruited me.

WEST: And Hank DeBruin

J. WEST: And Hank DeBruin. They both recruited me. They didn't want me sitting around idle.

WEST: [Laughs.]

J. WEST: So I would go in one day a week, and eventually I took over the champion tree program.

WEST: Big tree.

J. WEST: Big tree program. And just kept all the records, and then every other year, they printed a new listing of the trees. But it was a good volunteer job for me to do because I did not have to be there every Wednesday, and if Allan was traveling or I wanted to go see our married children, I could just call in and say, "I won't be there." I couldn't be gone when we were ready to publish, but the rest of the time, they just let those nominations stack up, and I took care of them later. So it got me involved in the forestry community, and they would often call me "the Forest Service mole."

HORNBERGER: [Laughs.] I have a question: How did you meet each other? How and when and where did you meet each other?

J. WEST: We knew each other soon after Allan arrived in Toronto because the friends he made had been all the boys I'd gone from elementary school and some of them through high school with. And so I knew this fellow, who had this strong accent that I could not understand. And then his friends dared him to invite me to a big Boy Scout dance.

WEST: Well, no, no, that was the square dance.

J. WEST: Oh, that's right. Oh, yes. The first thing.

WEST: [Laughs.]

J. WEST: I was a Girl Guide leader, which is like Girl Scouts. We met up on the second floor of this elementary school; the Boy Scouts met in the basement. The scout leader—his girlfriend's father taught square dancing, so he said, "Why don't we all get together and learn how to square dance?" So we met in the basement, and everybody paired off, and there's me and our friend, Al West. And he turns to me with his Yorkshire accent, and he says, "Well, I guess I'm stook with you."

HORNBERGER and WEST: [Laughter.]

WEST: So fifty years later—

J. WEST: He's still stuck with me.

WEST: Fifty years of marriage later.

J. WEST: Yes.

HORNBERGER: That's great. How wonderful.

J. WEST: So here we are.

WEST: The other big thing was we always loved to entertain, and we always had open houses and, when visitors came, had dinners. That really was fascinating. The foreign dignitaries that

came to Washington that we'd take home at night, and also the Forest Service visitors from all over, but I think the entertaining was one of the highlights.

J. WEST: It was.

WEST: And it also was very good for our kids, too.

HORNBERGER: Yes. Well, I know from experience that Joyce always made it seem so informal and casual and easy for you folks to entertain, but it was just amazing. It was very comfortable to be entertained—

J. WEST: It's such a nice way to get to know people, to have them in your home. Coming back to Ojai, like Al said, at first I really had withdrawal. I'd go back every fall, because I had never lived in a house in my lifetime as long as we lived in the house in Virginia, for fourteen years. Never had I. So I set down pretty deep roots.

HORNBERGER: But you maintain those friendships, too.

J. WEST: Yes. Oh, most definitely. And here, we've met a marvelous group of people, who are very active in the community, as we have become. It's really fun to wake up every day because you know there's something going to happen.

HORNBERGER: Ojai offers kind of a cross-section of people, very interesting people.

J. WEST: And, you know—

HORNBERGER: [unintelligible] Ojai [unintelligible].

J. WEST: It's different. And the majority—I would say 90 percent of the people who live in Ojai live here by choice. It isn't a community that you're transferred into because there's a lot of businesses and industries, and so that makes a difference about how they feel about the community. It really does. It's a great place to live.

HORNBERGER: before I turn the tape off, but I have to put [unintelligible]. Today is—

WEST: We did that.

HORNBERGER: We're in Ojai.

WEST: At the residence of Al and Joyce West.

HORNBERGER: Okay, good. So we got that done.

WEST: Good.

J. WEST: That was fun.

[End of interview.]