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**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Region Five History Project**

Interview with: Alice Forbes and Bob Forbes
Interviewed by: Janet Buzzini
Location: Redding, California
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[Begin CD File 1.]

JANET BUZZINI: This interview is taking place in Redding, California, in the home of Alice Forbes and her husband, Bob. And that's F-o-r-b-e-s. Today's date is June 4th, 2007. My name is Janet Buzzini, B-u-z-z-i-n-i, and I will be conducting today's interview with Alice.

Hi, Alice.

ALICE FORBES: Hi, Janet.

BUZZINI: Alice, I'd like to begin by asking where you were born and where did you grow up?

FORBES: Well, I was born in San Mateo, California, at Mills Hospital, no longer there, and lived all of my early years in the Bay Area except for about a nine-month stint. We moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and moved back, and it was when I was young and don't even remember.

BUZZINI: Where did you attend school, and what was your major?

FORBES: After attending College of San Mateo, a junior college, as a transfer student in forestry, I transferred to Humboldt State, at that time College, now University, and majored in forest resources management and graduated in 1975.

BUZZINI: Alice, tell us a little bit about your family. How many children do you have?

FORBES: I only have one son, Robert, and we've had a variety of pets over the years, and we currently have a yellow lab named Rocky.

BUZZINI: All right. I'm a dog lover, myself.

Alice, what kinds of summer jobs did you hold, positions that better qualified you for your lifelong dream job?

FORBES: Summer jobs in the Bay Area were difficult, and mostly I didn't work in the summertime until I started at an emporium, selling men's clothing, as a matter of fact. But during school I was fortunate to be able to hire on with the Forest Service in various temporary positions and started back on the Groveland District of the Stanislaus [National Forest], way back in 1972, as a recreation aide, GS-3.

BUZZINI: Wow. Yes. [Chuckles.]

FORBES: And so that was many years ago, and then I went to the timber marking crew on the Shasta-Trinity at Hayfork Ranger District.

BUZZINI: When they were still logging.

FORBES: Yes. Oh, yes.

BUZZINI: [Chuckles.]

FORBES: I was a timber beastie the whole early part of my career. Then I was an assistant foreman in '75 on the Shasta Lake District of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, and then I took over and worked on the timber crew—compartment inventory and analysis, CIA; I don't think they do that anymore, either, on the McCloud District, which is where I eventually got my [unintelligible] conditional appointment.

BUZZINI: What made you decide to pursue a career with the Forest Service? You did tell us what your first assignment was. And when did you sign on the dotted line?

FORBES: For my temporary or permanent appointment?

BUZZINI: Permanent.

FORBES: Permanent appointment was April of 1979. No, I take that back, excuse me. I received my [unintelligible] conditional appointment—yes, April of 1979. Up until then, I worked as a seasonal, temporary in those days, employee. What got me involved with the Forest Service is I come from a family of seven children, and vacations were not Disneyland and that type thing; we always went camping. My first exposure to the Forest Service was with a gentleman on the Sequoia National Forest. I didn't know it was a national forest at that time, even. But we were at Hume Lake, and we always camped at Hume Lake all through the fifties and sixties, and we'd go there. There were a lot of people who were regulars there, and a gentleman came and put on a campfire program one night.

BUZZINI: Forest Service employee?

FORBES: Forest Service employee.

BUZZINI: Do you remember who that was?

FORBES: No, I don't. I know his name was Mac. He was there for about three summers, and he'd come and put on the programs, and then he'd be the one who came and cleaned the campgrounds and everything, and so we got to know him and follow him around. We were his little trash patrol. [Laughter.]

BUZZINI: How fun.

FORBES: He made us all junior rangers, and so I guess that's really what got my interest going. Then I just—as I say, I went to school at Humboldt, and when I first started there—[Pauses as clock begins to chime].

BUZZINI: That's okay.

FORBES: I was the second woman to go through the forestry program, and the first one had graduated in June and I came in September, and so I was still the, quote, “only woman in the program” at that time. And that was [sic; those were] some interesting times.

BUZZINI: I'll be it was [sic; they were], yes.

FORBES: Yes.

BUZZINI: How many years did you spend with the Forest Service?

FORBES: I spent from 1972 in June until December of 2005, when I finally retired.

BUZZINI: Okay. Can you give us a brief rundown on which national forests you worked during your career?

FORBES: Well, I of course started on the Stanislaus, and there are some interesting stories there, but then I moved to the Shasta-Trinity, and I was on the Shasta-Trinity basically from—temporary in '74 until '84, when we moved to the Fremont National Forest in Region Six (in Oregon), at Silver Lake Ranger District. Then we moved on to the Idaho Panhandle [National Forest] in Region One, which was a different experience, and then back to the Klamath [National Forest] [Transcriber's note: When was she there first?], and then I moved over in '90 to fire and aviation in the regional office, and I ended my career in the Washington office as the director for fire ground operations at the National Emergency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho.

BUZZINI: I remember when you were up there.

FORBES: Yes?

[Recording interruption.]

BUZZINI: Well, Alice, I see you've had a long and lengthy [sic] career on a bunch of different forests during thirty-some-odd years, and I think what we'll do is just add that as an attachment to your interview.

FORBES: Yes, I printed this summary out that shows exactly where I worked when, and all the dates. I think it'd be easier than trying to put it all on tape.

BUZZINI: I agree. Okay, Alice, your name was selected because we feel that you can contribute valuable information about the changing workforce, FIREScope and timber management as they relate to your tenure with the U.S. Forest Service. And we have a few questions that we would like to ask you regarding each one.

FORBES: Okay, sure.

[Recording interruption.]

BUZZINI: Alice, now I'd like to ask you some questions about what we call the changing workforce. Over the years of your career, what changes in the mix of disciplines and specialists did you see, and what factors brought these changes about?

FORBES: That's a loaded question, Janet.

BUZZINI: [Chuckles.]

FORBES: When I first started with the Forest Service, we did not have the National Environmental Policy Act. We basically had a workforce of foresters and forestry technicians,

mostly male, who performed Stage 1 and Stage 2 analyses, which are equivalent basically to a position statement and an environmental assessment. So even before NEPA was in place, we still had processes that we were following. The only thing NEPA gave us was the interdisciplinary aspects of it so that now you didn't have one person or two or three foresters sitting around a table; you had to integrate other disciplines. And over the years—that was about the first five years, and then in about 1976, NEPA came in, and we had to develop interdisciplinary teams. This was a new experience both for the Forest Service, who [sic; which] had foresters who did the work, as well as the specialists, the “-ologists,” that were coming on board.

In forestry school, when I went to school, you trained. You had to take soils classes; you had to take botany classes; you had to take wildlife biology classes; you had to take soils—anything, you name it. As a forester, you had to have a touch of all those disciplines. I'm not sure that the -ologists, if you will, had that same well-rounded background from when they went to school. And so what you had was a group of people who came in, who were very devoted to their discipline. And I think that's where we went wrong early on, in not having some kind of an integration training for these people to understand what the mission of the agency was. And so what we had when I became a timber sale planner—they called it an interdisciplinary team, but in actual fact it was a multidisciplinary team. Everybody did their [sic; his or her] own input on their [sic; his or her] own specialty, if you will, and the timber sale planner was left, trying to pull it all together and to negotiate compromises between these people.

I finally had it. At one meeting I won't ever forget I finally stood up, and I said, “Look, timber management is my job. However, this district has a goal of 80 million board feet. That's our assigned sale quantity for the district, and we all have to meet it. Whether I do it, whether

you do it, we all have that same objective, and whether we like the fact we're cutting trees or not is irrelevant. We gotta work together, guys." And that worked for a little while.

BUZZINI: When you say "guys," literally?

FORBES: Oh, no.

BUZZINI: Was it all guys in the room?

FORBES: Yes, pretty much it was. I didn't work with a—well, there was one woman forester, [Susan] "Sue" Wheatley, on the district at McCloud there when I got there, but I really, interdisciplinary wise—we had a male soil scientist, Peter van [Susteren?]. We had a male recreation person in [James] "Jim" [Russum?]. We had—they were all men. I don't think I worked with women extensively until probably ten years into my career. Oftentimes I was the only woman at a meeting with all the guys.

I have to credit the guys I worked with, though, because they were all very supportive and helped me ride along. They knew that I had gone through the same types of things at school and everything that they had as far as being out doing labs and that I knew how to use a clinometer, I knew how to use an increment bore. They weren't going to have to teach me.

BUZZINI: [Laughs.]

FORBES: And so that was a thing that most influenced. But as I say, I think basically it was a law that brought about the change, and then right in 1972 was when the [Jean] Bernardi complaint was first filed. And I think the settlement agreement was in 1975. Why we ever agreed to that, I'll never know. But most of us—I was an original class member—

BUZZINI: I was, too.

FORBES: And most of us who got the envelope looked at it and said, *What does this have to do with me?* Being relatively naïve about legal things and the print was very fine, I said, *This has*

nothing to do with me, and I chucked it. And I think there were two other women working at Hayfork at the same time as I was, and they also received the notice, and they said, “What are you doing about it, Alice?” Because I was the only one that was a forester. They were both from Cal Poly, majoring in natural resources. And I said, “I don’t know what to make of it.” I said, “I’m not doing anything. I threw it away.”

And I wish there had been some clarity of thinking at that time on the region’s part to send out a notice and say, “This is what it is.” Very clear, straightforward. [Clock chimes.] And I think the majority of us would have responded not only “no” but “hell, no.”

BUZZINI: Yes, yes

FORBES: You know, that this is not the way to go about doing business, but—so there were a lot of changes going on through the seventies there and into the eighties that—boy, talk about rapid change. It was rapid change.

BUZZINI: And growing pains.

FORBES: Lots of growing pains, yes.

BUZZINI: Well, then, what stresses or issues did integrating new disciplines and shifting from a more generalist to a specialist staffing cause within the agency, within the region or even within the unit you were working [in]?

FORBES: Well, the changes and stresses that were brought about was [sic; were] number one, we now had to stretch our budget significantly further because we still had the forester numbers that we had, and now we had to hire –ologists, and there wasn’t money to pay for –ologists, and the budget was predicated on a timber sale program, so it was sort of added into the timber sale program. I’ll never forget: It’s ET-118. [Laughs.] And that was to pay for the specialists and everything. So there were a lot of stresses about stretching the dollar, and that put more

emphasis on not only ensuring you got the assigned sale quantity but that you could make up what someone else didn't do.

I think the other conflict that came up within the agency again refers back to what I said. The specialists came in with a specialist viewpoint. I don't think any of them were generalists who could—I think I ran into maybe four or five people in my career who I could say honestly understood that they had a respons—

BUZZINI: They just saw part of the picture; they didn't see the whole picture.

FORBES: Right. But there were four or five who truly understood that the goal was to meet an assigned sale quantity, to protect the birds, that I, as a timber person, had as much responsibility for protecting the owl as they did, making sure that we got 45 million or 80 million or whatever the cut was. And that became a real battle. I mean, a pitched battle on some units. You know, the —ologists—it was sort of, I guess, the start of the breakdown of the, quote, “family, because people weren't talking to each other. It became very uncomfortable at times, trying to deal with those situations and make sure that everything worked.

I think back when I first started work on the McCloud, we were still on the fiscal year of July 1 to June 30th. Well, June 1st, everybody was out of money except for KV [define?] and BD [define?], so needless to say, all the new hires for the summer, whether you were hired as a fireman or a timber beastie or what, you worked KV or BD. And so I think that gave everybody a really good grounding in [the fact that] you're responsible for everything on the unit. A lot of people never came to understand that. They felt that their mission was to protect the owl or to protect the fish or to protect a plant or whatever.

So that became very difficult to deal with, and I think that caused a lot of unnecessary stress, both on the employee, who was trying to get the cut out—i.e., the timber person—as well

as the –ologists, who felt like they weren't being true to their, quote, "discipline" if they negotiated or compromised in any way.

BUZZINI: With the changing demographics in California, what did you experience with changes in cultural diversity as new employees were added to the workforce?

FORBES: [Chuckles.] You know, that's a really loaded question. Most of the areas that—the units that I worked on were quasi-remote, rural, I guess you'd call them, more than anything.

And rural areas tend to be more redneck than—

BUZZINI: Especially like Hayfork.

FORBES: Hayfork, McCloud, Orleans. I had some really big trouble when I went to Orleans, and I was a ranger there. I had brought a black woman from L.A. up to work on my BD crew, and—

BUZZINI: To fill a quota or just you knew of her?

FORBES: No, she had applied for the position, and I thought, *Let's give her a chance*. So we brought her up. Her name was Camilla. And Cam worked out very well. She worked hard. And I had her over to dinner a couple of times. But she wanted to quit mid season, and I couldn't figure out what was going on. The night before she left—well, she told me she was leaving because her grandfather was ill, but the night before she left, she came by the house, and she told me the real reason was that—now, she came up on the bus to Yreka, and we picked her up, so she had no transportation. And she walked down to the store, which—I mean, it wasn't even two-tenths of a mile. And she'd be harassed along the way.

BUZZINI: She was probably the only black person around.

FORBES: Yes, she was. And I finally went to Florence Conrad, who was [sic; ran?] the special emphasis program for Native Americans for the region; she happened to work on my district, and

I said, “Florence, help me figure out here, how can we make this work?” And she says [sic; said], “You’re never going to make it work in this community.” And I said, “What do you mean?” And she said, “Well, when our children were young, they didn’t play cowboys and Indians. They played cowboys and black people (the other, derogatory term).” And she said, “So it’s not going to change, Alice, just because the Forest Service thinks it should.”

And I think that was the hardest thing for some folks to accept, that there are areas where we have Forest Service units where we’re going to have to maintain whatever is there because it’s reflective of the community as a whole, and not try and [sic; to] put square pegs into round holes. It doesn’t work, no matter how hard we try.

So that was an eye opener for me. Indian time was an eye opener for me. There’s just a whole host of things that came along with the cultural diversity that I think we all had to learn and adjust to as best as we could, and sometimes we were successful, and sometimes we weren’t. Like, I didn’t succeed with Cam, so—

BUZZINI: So she went ahead and—

FORBES: She went ahead and left, yes.

BUZZINI: Did you ever hear what became of her?

FORBES: Nope. I know she went back to L.A. I got one postcard to tell me that she got home okay, and that was it.

BUZZINI: And all we have to do is put ourselves in her footsteps, I bet, huh?

FORBES: Oh, yes. I mean, I couldn’t even imagine it. After thinking about it, I carefully watched with a lot of other people. I had another, similar experience when I went to law enforcement for line officers in Glencoe. Oh—the gentleman’s name was Toby. Anyway, he was a ranger from Nevada, and we both arrived on the same plane, and we went to have dinner—

because they bused us to the hotel and left us there, and the only thing open was a Denny's, and so we went there to have dinner. And we sat down, and other people came in after us, and they got waited on and we didn't. And, you know, he and I were just talking, and he says [sic; said], "Come on"—Toby Rhue—that was his name, R-h-u-e. He said, "Let's just go ahead and leave." And I said, "Well, we're hungry. What"—it never clicked with me, being a westerner, that in Georgia there was an issue because I was a white woman and he was a black man.

BUZZINI: Oh, geez, yes.

FORBES: And we got up and left and went another block further [sic; farther], to a Cracker Barrel, where we were finally waited on, but totally subjected during the whole meal to obscene comments from an adjoining table that I'm sure they placed those obnoxious people next to us deliberately. And I just couldn't believe it. I mean, we're talking the eighties here, folks.

BUZZINI: Mm-hm.

FORBES: And yet it was just amazing to me. So while the agency was very accepting and welcoming of these people, the communities were not.

BUZZINI: We've covered a little bit of this, but during your career, what were the traditional roles of women in the workforce and what changes did you observe?

FORBES: When I started with the agency, women were only in clerical roles predominantly. The office unit—when I started as a rec tech, the women's uniform—I had to buy men's pants, and yet it was amazing to me—I had to buy women's blouses. I couldn't wear the men's shirt. Well, the women's blouse had no pockets, and you got a little badge that's about an inch high, and that's what I had to wear for my field uniform. And that was okay. But there were some tough times for the agency dealing with women. There on the Stanislaus, they had a single-wide trailer, and they sort of stuffed me into it. It had been used for storage for many years. It wasn't

the greatest place to live, but they couldn't have me in the barracks because their barracks weren't acceptable.

But generally people tried to get along and tried to make it work. And then gradually, as women came into the workforce, we made other changes and adjustments. For example, the barracks in Hayfork—they were actually built in a way that men and women could use them. they had two shower units, two toilet areas; they had rooms with two to a room but the door locked, and so it could have been a coeducational barracks, although there, too, they chose not to do that. But they did hire enough women that there were three of us in a house. So they took a house on the compound and made it the, quote, “women's barracks,” which worked out fine, and it was no issue.

But I'll never forget Glenn Cecil. We had a woman—her name was Amy [Skyrus?]-as a temporary, who was working on an engine and—what?—this was '73, '74, and they sent her engine off in the middle of the night, and she got up the next morning and went out to go to work, and there was nothing to go to work on. I felt bad because these two women had come up from Cal Poly and been led to believe they were going to work in the office. They didn't even know they'd been hired for the BD crew, the engine crew, and then I was on the marking crew.

Fortunately, the marking crew was all Humboldt guys I went to school with, and so I had no issues, but they hadn't even brought field clothes. We had to go to the store and get them credit lined up till their first check came so that they could get field clothes. But they did it, and they were troopers about it.

Well, when Cecil came around the next day, he says [sic; said], “No way am I sending a woman off my forest. I don't want anybody to know I have a woman on my engine.” And he

wouldn't send her with the engine when it went off district, no matter where it went, even when it went up just to Big Bar [Ranger District on the Shasta-Trinity].

BUZZINI: And nobody could do anything about it?

FORBES: Nobody did anything in those days. She didn't complain about it, and so those days, she was put to work with the BD crew, which was okay with Nancy, because Nancy had been the only woman on the BD crew, so—it was [sic; those were] interesting times. Some of it was very successful, and, like, I say, I couldn't have been as successful as I was if it weren't for the guys who were enlightened and forward thinking.

BUZZINI: You've touched on this, too. Some of this is overlapping, of course.

FORBES: Mm-hm.

BUZZINI: But how did you see the agency, the region or your unit responding to women moving into nontraditional positions, and in your opinion, what worked and what didn't work to facilitate this movement of women into nontraditional positions?

FORBES: The agency—at that point, I was low enough that I really can't speak nationally; I can speak to Northern California probably best. I think in Northern California we were working towards putting women in nontraditional roles. I think there are ways that the agency could have handled it a little bit better. They didn't do Changing Roles until probably, oh, four years after I started working. And I think if we'd have started those kinds of training right up front, it might have helped with the acceptance of women.

BUZZINI: Women have paved the path before you. There were no women.

FORBES: Yes. No, there weren't.

BUZZINI: It was just all new territory.

FORBES: It was all new territory. Like I say, the first time I went to fire camp, it was absolutely amazing because women just didn't go to fire camp. [Clock chimes.] All I was allowed to do was to drive lunches out and come right back.

BUZZINI: [Chuckles.]

FORBES: I couldn't go beyond the fire crew. Now, I did hear at this time that there was a crew of women up on the Lassen [National Forest] and that they were doing really good work on fires, but that wasn't where I was at. I was on the Stanislaus, working for Carl "Rusty" Rust, who was a fine southern gentleman. At that time, none of the wives worked. They did have the wives' club. I was invited once for lunch with the wives' club, because they didn't know what to do with me.

BUZZINI: Were you married at the time?

FORBES: No, I was not. I think on the whole, the men that I dealt with were very supportive of me. But they were able to look at me, too, as an individual and not just as another woman. But that took time. I mean, none of it was overnight. It took six or eight months to get to know them. And then I was fortunate because a lot of them were guys I'd gone to school with at Humboldt, and so they knew what I had gone through; they knew who I was. Some of the other women didn't have it that easy. They weren't accepted nearly as well. I think the region tried; I think the forest tried; I just think that the consent decree was a huge disservice in the respect that the decree brought about mandated change that there weren't enough people to do.

BUZZINI: Setting especially women up for failure.

FORBES: Yes. I mean, the 43 percent goal. I mean, we could have hired every forester graduate who was a woman in the nation, and we still would have been at 43 percent.

BUZZINI: Right.

FORBES: I mean, whether they came from Syracuse, whether they came from Yale, whether they came from Berkeley or Humboldt, we could have hired them all. We could have hired all the women engineers, and we still wouldn't have reached 43 percent. The 43 percent, I think, is really what killed us early on.

BUZZINI: They should have done it more gradually.

FORBES: Yes.

BUZZINI: You know, start at 10 or 15.

FORBES: Well, there should have been a different calculation, if you will. They should have looked at what the pool was rather than just say that the civilian labor force is 43 percent women, so you have to have 43 percent in every grade and series. We needed to look more at the pool, and if there was anything that didn't work, what the agency did was that, was coming to that agreement. But they had some fine mentors in those days. They didn't call them that. But they had folks who would help you out. John Wells was absolutely ahead of his time in helping me out. By the time I was—well, he came to McCloud. I had been married, and I was pregnant, and he developed I think probably one of the very first work-at-home agreements with me so I could stay home six months with my son, which was important to me. Very forward-thinking person.

Had a lot of support from old-timers. Lee [Baylew?]. [Robert] "Bob" Gray. Now, Bob Gray I met in '75, when he was retiring, actually. He said, "Well, it's time for me to get out, by gum, when they put women in the organization" and everything. He kidded a lot, but he was always very supportive of me. Now, I don't know if that's because I was married to Bob or if he really felt like I knew what I was doing.

So there were people around who were supportive and who did things not because it was mandated but because it was the right thing to do and because they had a strong work ethic and

wanted to see it all work. The agency was very lucky that way to have that many people in those days who felt that way.

BUZZINI: You alluded to the fact that we didn't have a lot of what they call in here as sensitivity training, but what did the region try to do to address some of the tensions because of the changing workforce?

FORBES: First of all, they had the sessions in Pajaro Dunes, which—it was interesting, because I was at a level that I didn't get to go to Pajaro Dunes; I only heard about it, but what I heard was Pajama Dunes. [Laughs.] And so there was a lot of—because it was a more touchy-feely training and because people did come away from it very changed, there was a perception that there was hanky-panky going on at Pajaro Dunes.

BUZZINI: [Chuckles.]

FORBES: But true or not, I don't know. But the Changing Roles helped. I think there are some forest supervisors who helped to try and [sic; to] bring things around. When I was here, [Richard] "Dick" Pfilf was the first forest supervisor up here I worked with, but on the Stanislaus I had worked for Sotero Munez [sic; Muniz]. I got into trouble on the Stanislaus. I was sort of set up. I guess I was more naïve than I thought I was. I mean, I come from a family of seven. I should have seen it all, right? There were six girls in my family, and my father always taught us that "you can be anything you want to be." There was one boy and six girls. And so we never had limitations as far as "you can't go be a fireman" or "you can't go be a forester." It was, "If you want to try it, go for it."

Well, I went to fire camp and delivered lunch, as I mentioned. Well, they then proceeded to—they had collected some money, and they wanted me to bring some beer to fire camp. But I didn't know at that time it was a no-no, and in actual fact, that was when it was just starting to be

a real no-no. I mean, people still put it in their red bags—they were green bags in those days. At any rate, they gave me this bunch of money, and I didn't take a government vehicle. I couldn't fit it all in my Volkswagen, so the BD crew supervisor, [Robert] "Bob" [Wattress?], loaned me his car, and I went in the store in Groveland and filled the trunk and the back seat with beer.

BUZZINI: Oh, gee.

FORBES: And drove it out to fire camp that night. It amounted to maybe two beers apiece. I mean, it wasn't like it was a drunken brawl.

BUZZINI: [Chuckles.]

FORBES: But because the engineers who were on the fire weren't invited to participate—now, mind you, they had their Jack Daniels in their bag—but they reported it. So then the ranger, [David] "Dave" Jones—I felt so bad for him because he didn't know, but bottom line is it's his unit, and so he's supposed to know everything that goes on in his unit. He couldn't have possibly known, but at any rate, it got back to the forest supervisor, and so my very first season in the Forest Service, I had a letter in my file, and I had Rusty, Carl Rust, telling me when I'm leaving at the end of the season that I really ought to go look at another career because I had this letter in my file and it was going to be there, and nobody would ever hire me.

BUZZINI: All that because you took beer to fire camp.

FORBES: All that because I took beer to fire camp. And in those days—like I say, this is 1972, and people did that. Anyway, so I didn't listen to him. I came back, but there were a lot of people who helped me out in those days, and there were a lot of people who I feel set me up. Unfortunately, Bob Wattress was terminated. [Riley Yilkee?], who was supposed to be the fire boss—we didn't have incident command in those days yet—he had gone home and left Bob Wattress in charge, his assistant, and so Riley I think ended up with thirty days off without pay,

and then I got the letter in my file because it was my first offense, and ignorance is no excuse for the law.

But the agency was doing things I think to try and [sic; to] integrate and help make it easier for women. Like, the Changing Roles. We had—I cannot remember what those sessions were called—

BUZZINI: [unintelligible] Synergy.

FORBES: Yes.

BUZZINI: For guys to have more [cross-talk; unintelligible].

FORBES: Yes. And there was a session on one of the monitors, not the last monitor, the very first monitor; I don't even remember her name. But I can remember us all going together into a training session and her explaining the decree and explaining that unqualified people were not going to be placed into positions, which unfortunately did happen. And she went around with the goal of trying to make it as palatable as possible, and the region supported her in that. So it was interesting.

They always tried to accommodate dual-career couples, but it became harder the further I got in my career because formerly, they always placed the spouse. For example, [James] "Jim" [Haring?] comes to mind. He went to Mt. Shasta District as the timber staff, and McCloud—we hired his wife as a GS-4. She transferred in, I think, as a GS-4, as a clerk. And so for a long time, that's what happened, is the man would get the transferred promotion, and the woman came along in a clerk position because, quote-unquote, "you could always create a clerical position." But then when women started being more highly paid and their husbands were equivalents or whatever, it became a very difficult thing to be able to move.

I know in fact when we moved here in the nineties to North Ops, North Zone at that time, [Robert] “Bob” [Terrell?] was the forest supervisor, and Bob knew us before we ever left McCloud. He came in after Barney [Coster?]. I think it was Pfilf, then Coster, then Bob. And Bob was a wonderful person. And he called me up, and he said, “Alice, it’s not that I don’t want Bob.” He says [sic; said], “I know you’re both quality employees.” But he says [sic; said], “I get zinged. What am I supposed to do?” And I said, “Well, the region make the choice, because they’re the ones that are giving me, quote-unquote, ‘the counter,’ and you’re going to have to take the, quote, ‘non-counter.’” That’s eventually what happened. They had a position at Shasta Lake open. They had women, but they did hire Bob as the spousal placement, because they got me at the -13 level for North Ops.

But the whole reason we had to leave the region—and I went and talked to Bob about it, because he was the supervisor when we left the region in ’84 here—was because my position was abolished. I was an inventory forester, and they didn’t have inventory foresters anymore; they only had planning foresters. And so my position was the easiest one to abolish because it didn’t involve all the [unintelligible] stuff and everything. So it was bizarre, because for two months and twenty-nine days, I was on the sunrise-sunset list back in ’83 and ’84, and then for one or two days I was off the list because I counted for the consent decree report, and then as soon as the report went in, I was back on the sunrise-sunset list. This went on for three or four times.

And, of course, we had a home; we had a young child, and I finally went to Bob, and I says [sic; said], “I don’t know what to do. I’ve applied for other jobs. I haven’t gotten them. I’ve been a -9 there for four or five years, and he said, “Well, you better just take a lateral.” And

so that's—finally we enlisted his help, and we found two jobs, and he called up the forest supervisor up there, and we lateraled up to Oregon. And that's how we got out.

But the region I think really did try and [sic; to] help men understand, and women understand what was going on. It was just so much so soon. It was so much to absorb. And then there was the anger and the backlash because men were used to getting any job they applied for and all of a sudden that wasn't happening, and caused a lot of problems.

BUZZINI: To switch gears just a little—

FORBES: Yes.

BUZZINI: It's says here, "What did you experience with the growth and staffing of a more specialized fire organization? What kinds of impacts did this cause to historic roles with employees in fire situations and their training and development for staffing large fires?"

FORBES: When I started, we had the large-fire organization, and I did maps and records. What gradually was happening around this same time as the interdisciplinary teams were growing, fire was more and more going off on its on tangent. Under the large-fire organization—and I think we all knew everybody's job—I was told that the very first day I reported down on the Stanislaus, even though I never was used to fight fire there—I was told that everybody's job was to fight fire. Then, as we got in the—

I took basic ICS [incident command system]. [Clock chimes] I took that course in 1975, when I was one of the first people or one of the guinea pigs, if you will, for the courses that were going on then. And I think all of a sudden, when people had to have, quote-unquote, "this specialized training"—before, you could be a dozer boss if you were a sale administrator because you knew how dozers operated; you didn't have to go and read a book or whatever. You could

be a facilities unit leader if you were an engineer; it was assumed you knew how to set up a fire camp, all those kinds of things.

And under ICS, all of a sudden you had to have all this training, and people reacted pretty negatively to that for quite a while, but then when they saw—ICS is really just the large-fire organization with a few different names.

BUZZINI: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

FORBES: I mean, we went from a fire chief to an incident commander. We went from a log chief to a logistics section chief. I mean, it was just names. But a lot of people perceived that those names carried a lot more responsibility and a lot more training, and they did. You had to go through some training to get there. I think the incident command system was accepted in the region very well after people got the training. It took a while for everybody to get trained up in the region in basic ICS, and then it took a while to figure out who could be grandfathered and who couldn't.

But I think the biggest impact I saw wasn't so much from ICS being implemented as it was the —ologists coming in, who did not have that work ethic and who did not understand or feel the need to go out and fight fire. That wasn't their job. They weren't hired to fight fire.

BUZZINI: Right.

FORBES: And I had more than one person tell me that. Now, there were a lot of them that wanted to help out and be part of the gang, but there were a whole bunch that didn't. And I think that was more of an impact on the fire organization and it [sic; its] becoming more specialized than ICS was. I don't think ICS had a lot to do with it at all. I think predominantly it was the specialization and people saying, "Well, it's not my job."

BUZZINI: What about in the law enforcement organization? What did you experience with the growth and reorganization there, and what tensions do you think *this* caused?

FORBES: [Chuckles.] That's a really touchy question for me.

BUZZINI: It's a no-holds-barred interview.

FORBES: I understand. And the agency generally hires people, I think, who are idealistic, more so, and believe the best in people and not the worst. And so the law enforcement mission was very difficult for people to take on. I don't think people had a big problem when we had Level Twos and Level Ones, but when we got to the Level Fours, the people carrying the guns, I don't think we were as selective as we should have been in some of them. I mean, I had a gentleman—when I was a ranger, I had the dubious distinction of sitting on an interview board, and there was one man that everybody supported to go to law enforcement training but me. Now, this was a man who, when asked about his Vietnam experience—and they said, “Well, did you kill anyone?” sat there with tears in his eyes and said, “No, I know that my bullets didn't shoot anybody.” To me, the gentleman had never gotten over his experience in Vietnam, and I just had to wonder: What happens when he's out there in the jungle, quote, “the forest,” dressed in camo with an M-16 on a marijuana raid? You know? Is he going to have backflashes [sic; flashbacks?].

BUZZINI: Mm-hm.

FORBES: And he couldn't answer those kind [sic; kinds] of questions, and so I couldn't support him. But there were a lot of tensions in the agency with law enforcement. In fact, if you go back to the ABC movie or presentation *Day One* that they did when Jess Bingham and I think it was Jennings were interviewed about timber theft, and they were talking about a specific case on the Klamath. Well, I happened to be the ranger involved in that case, and because it involved timber

and we had a timber sale contract and because the boundary lines were old and in question, I chose to handle it through the timber sale contract with triple stumpage, and they never let me forget that. They wanted to charge the person criminally, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And truly—I mean, there was no clear-cut indication that the theft was anything other than an accident. The lines weren't clear. We did have a line painted at one time on the other side of that particular cedar grove, and—you know. So they didn't like me a whole lot at that point.

BUZZINI: So did you get another letter in the file?

FORBES: No, no, I got no letter. The forest supervisor supported me on it. [Robert] "Bob" Rice was very supportive. Wonderful man. He was very supportive of me as a ranger. But I think the tensions that were caused weren't caused so much by, quote, "law enforcement" as they were by certain law enforcement individuals. They'd put on their Sam Brown belts and their guns, and—I met law enforcement officers that you wouldn't even notice that they were carrying a gun. Roger Newton is a good example of that. Roger would walk around with his gun on all day, and I would never notice it. I had other law enforcement officers—

BUZZINI: They flaunt it, huh?

FORBES: —who would stand there and just run their thumbs over their little quick-load things on their belts and be real obvious, and they always wore their gun everywhere, in the office everywhere. It just—you know. So it became very uncomfortable, and it caused a lot of tension then, and then when they became, quote-unquote, a "stovepipe organization" is I think when the tensions really started, both within the law enforcement organization as well as within the Forest Service. There were a lot of people in the law enforcement organization that did not want a stovepipe. They knew that if they stovepiped, they'd be on their own, and in essence a lot of them were. You know, they were ostracized from the unit they were on. Even if they had been

best buddies with a lot of people, they lost their friendships. Yes, they had other law enforcement officers, but, you know, in a place like Somes Bar [on the Ukonom Ranger District on the Klamath], you know how far the closest law enforcement officer is? I mean, that person was out there on their [sic; his or her] own. And when you don't have the unit supporting you, what do you have?

BUZZINI: Mm-hm.

FORBES: So there were a lot of things that caused difficulties.

And then, of course, the budget issues. The budgets became more and more and more of a problem over the years. It started when we started hiring –ologists and didn't have enough money at that point.

BUZZINI: [unintelligible].

FORBES: And it never got any better. It just kept getting worse. When law enforcement stovepipe came along, they had counted for salaries and things, but they hadn't counted anything for the support. And so trying to find the money to support those people with office space and everything—and that's what a lot of people used to get them out of their office. They said, "Well, you're not paying anything towards computer [unintelligible] utilities. I don't need to have you here. You don't work for me anymore. You go find your own office." And I had a ranger friend who did that.

BUZZINI: Caused a lot of hard feelings.

FORBES: Yes, it did.

BUZZINI: This question here—we've touched on part of that, too, but let me just read it and see if you can add anything. Over the years, what training and/or experiences did the agency or

region do to help you deal with any of the changes that we've talked about, and what do you think worked and didn't, and why? We've pretty much touched on a lot of that.

FORBES: Yes, the Changing Roles sessions. There were a lot of advanced supervisory courses that were offered: LT Squared ["Learning Today to Lead Tomorrow"], MIT (management improvement [training])—anyway, MIT was going on, and I think they all helped to a degree. But realistically, the things that really helped were the changes that people underwent when they went to them. If they went into them with the attitude that *Yes, it's going to make a difference and it'll make me a better person* or whatever, I think they were generally successful. If they went because it was, quote-unquote, "a mandatory course," which a lot of them were, they weren't as successful. People felt like it was being forced down their throats. In the last years of my career, it was like that with the POSH training, the prevention of sexual harassment training. And the amazing part is, women were [chuckles] held responsible because people had to go to POSH training [unintelligible].

BUZZINI: Oh, gee.

FORBES: Gimme a break, guys! But, yes, I think the region did a lot of different kind [sic; kinds] of training: opportunities, organizational development, to try and [sic; to] help people understand the changes we were going through at the time, and how to make them work. But I really think the success depended upon the individual. And, like I say, there are people that got it, and there are a bunch of people that never got it.

BUZZINI: Okay, switch gears again.

FORBES: Mm-hm.

BUZZINI: You being a forester yourself, what do you think was the role or the importance of timber management on some of the timber forests, and how did it affect the culture and organization of the unit?

FORBES: Wow, timber management when I came on was the Forest Service. I mean, I know we're a multiple-use agency, multiple-use sustained-yield, but even sustained yield implies—I mean, that's a timber term for the forest, sustained yield: we want to keep the same amount coming off the ground every year. Well, that could be the same number of fishies and everything, but people associated most closely with the forest.

I had a very good grounding when I first started, because I was fortunate—Earl [Wothe] [pronounced WOE-thee]—I think it was W-o-t-h-e—he was an older gentleman on the Stanislaus who ran their volunteer program, and he had set up an auto tour. He had places that were multiple-use sustained-yield, where he could demonstrate, “Here's the power line cutting across the landscape,” “There's [sic; There are] the Bambis in the forest,” “There's the tree harvesting.” Anyway, he had this auto tour. And so people understood that yes, we were about everything.

But when I got up to the Shasta-Trinity, where the cut was 245 million board feet a year, it was a little bit different story because timber was king, and a lot rode on getting the cut out, and that became the mantra almost everywhere I was. When I became the inventory forester at McCloud, I did a bad thing from the perspective of several people: I sat down and calculated, and there was no way that you could sustain a 90-million-board-foot cut, which was our assigned sale quantity at the time, on the McCloud Ranger District. And we were over-cutting.

And trying to sell that to management—it just wasn't going to work. I mean, they didn't want to hear it. That wasn't a good thing to be saying on a timber district. But we were

mandated by Congress with what we had to cut. I agree that the agency broke it down by region, and then the regions broke it down by forests—

BUZZINI: But it's the people on the ground that really knew the situation.

FORBES: Well, but—yes, and we weren't supposed to tell anybody. And realistically, Congress—those were the wrong people. And then I found out that, well, it wasn't Congress, when I became more attuned. We were telling Congress that's what we could do so that we could get more money. And the timber program basically supported the Forest Service, the rest of the resources and professionals. And so realistically, timber was king. That was well known.

How it affected the organization of the unit was that virtually everybody was impacted. You know, you had a cultural shop; you had a silvicultural shop; you had a small sales unit; you had a timber sale planning unit; you had a fuels brush disposal unit. But they were all associated with the timber management program.

I think one of the saddest things—[Clock chimes]—that came about was when the timber management program was in essence shut down through the Pacific Northwest Plan and the spotted owl decisions. No one sat down and redefined the role of the Forest Service. Or if they did, it didn't get down to the ground level. And so people became very frustrated because their efforts were going nowhere; they were basically led to believe the work that they had done for years and years wasn't worthy of anything, and you had a lot of frustrated people there.

We did nothing to retrain those people, and all of a sudden the money went away until all of a sudden fires started getting it. But everybody was afraid to say, "Well, now we have a fuels program. Let's organize along the same way we did the timber management program because, oh, we're gonna get hit by the greenies" or environmentalists or whoever—"are going to nail us because it's a timber program by any other name."

Well, the bottom line is a decadent forest needs to be cleaned.

BUZZINI: Mm-hm.

FORBES: It needs to have wood cut out. It needs to thrive. A lot of people don't understand that yet. But at any rate—

BUZZINI: The Park Service is getting the flak up there at Lassen.

FORBES: Oh, boy, are they ever!

BUZZINI: Because they're supposed to be preservation.

FORBES: And they always have been.

BUZZINI: Yes.

FORBES: I mean, you don't hear about timber operations in a park too much. I understand that they're trying to sell it as safety trees, but even myself as a forester, I'm a little skeptical that 60 percent of the unit could be hazardous tree removal, [Laughs.]

BUZZINI: Yes.

FORBES: I don't think so.

BUZZINI: No.

FORBES: So, yes, it definitely was an integral part of the culture, and when the timber program went away, it had a major impact.

BUZZINI: So, yes, what happened when the other natural resource professionals became more influential in timber harvesting and other management decisions? And you talked about the earliest collaborative efforts with the ID team meetings, and how did they progress [sic; how they progressed] kind of thing.

FORBES: I think our early efforts—like I say, they were more multidisciplinary than anything, and I think it goes back, now that I think back and look at it a little more—you know, before we

were talking about it—I think a lot of it hinged on the leadership on the unit, both at the supervisor's office and the ranger level. If a ranger took the time and interest and had inclination to sit in an ID team meeting—you know, it only took one or two. And John Wells—he'd come in, and he'd sort of give the pep talk: “And this is my expectation of what you guys are gonna come out with. You're gonna come out with this many widgets for timber and this many widgets for fuels and this many widgets for deer and this many widgets—now, you guys all figure out how you're gonna make that happen.” You know what I mean? It was sort of a down-home thing, but through his leadership, I think we finally got the point where we really did work on an interdisciplinary basis there at McCloud.

I tried to to accomplish the same thing at Avery [office of the St. Joe Ranger District of the Idaho Panhandle National Forest], and I was fortunate to have a strong advocate in [Michael] “Mike” [Gurch?]. He was the wildlife biologist up at the Avery District.

BUZZINI: Oh, yes, I know him.

FORBES: Yes. Excellent individual. Totally—

BUZZINI: The redhead, right?

FORBES: Yes, yes. Totally understood what his role and responsibility was, was [sic; role and responsibility were, which was] to assist in the management of the forest. He and I used to have some knock-down drag-outs, but they were always healthy discussions, and he was one of the few I was referring to who really understood and could support the role of timber, wildlife, everything cohabitating.

But it's really interesting, because when we first started out and they had, quote, “NEPA training,” and everybody went, it sort of enhanced the concept of multidisciplinary, and as the trainers got more understanding and everything, it became more interdisciplinary training as

well, and so I think over time we've developed some good processes and procedures, and they stand us in good stead, even though we don't really sell timber anymore.

BUZZINI: If only we could have the same workforce back then, huh?

FORBES: Yes, well, they have some good people now. They have some who aren't, and they have some who are. It's a different workforce. They have a different work ethic, and I think that's both good and bad. I mean, I can remember there was an expectation of everybody putting in a few extra hours here and there, and if it got to be three thirty and you're supposed to go in but you had one unit to do, you went and did the other unit and didn't worry about it. People aren't quite like that anymore.

BUZZINI: Right.

FORBES: And so it's a little different.

BUZZINI: Okay, let's put on our woman hat now.

FORBES: [Laughs.]

BUZZINI: We'll leave our forester hat behind—

FORBES: Okay.

BUZZINI: —and put on our woman hat. What tensions did you personally experience as our entered or advanced through your career, and why do you think these tensions were so noticeable?

FORBES: Oh. The main tensions early on in my career—I don't if they had so much to do with me, but some of the guys I worked with, their wives didn't like the fact that they worked with a woman. And when we went on a spike-out, the wives were horrified, so there were personal tensions, but not that I couldn't do the work; it was more, you know, "What are you doing up

there?” Like [chuckles], whatever. And then, of course, there was always the need to prove that I could do the job.

BUZZINI: Right.

FORBES: There was always the worry that, *Well, are they going to accept that I know how to do this job?* When I went to McCloud, to do the compartment inventory and analysis work, I was made the assistant crew foreperson there, and it was interesting because I really ran the crew because the guy who was the, quote, “foreman”—he never went out with us, ever. And once he found out that I knew what I was doing, I ran the crew every day. And that was okay, but it hurt because I was only a GS-4 and he was -5. So there were some things like that early on in my career that caused some grief, but over all, I really think I had a lot of support and a lot of advantages that some other women may not have had by virtue of the fact that I was advancing right along with guys I’d gone to school with, who knew my capabilities. And so I maybe didn’t have quite as much angst to deal with as some other women in the program did, that I know did.

But as I got on through my career, every time I advanced to a new job, I had to prove that I knew how to do the job.

BUZZINI: Again.

FORBES: Yes, again. You know, it got really old. When I moved to Avery, Idaho, as the timber staff officer, I was the first woman staff officer in timber on the Panhandle, and I got there, and unbeknownst to me, the ranger had done some things before I got there, and so I’m there about two months, and I have this one employee who was just rude, outright obnoxious to me. Couldn’t figure out, couldn’t figure out. So one day I had a young woman, Cindy [Lackey?], who was a timber planner, and she was having trouble doing an appraisal. Well, I had done lots of appraisals. But this was the new transactional evidence appraisal, a new kind of

appraisal that they were going to try out on the Panhandle. [William] “Bill” Faulkner in the supervisor's office, the one that ran it—

So I sat down with her, and we worked through it, and I said, “Well, under the old one, we’d do it this way, but this one is doing it this way.” And, I mean, I sat with her all afternoon, and we got through this appraisal. And it was about five o’clock, and Lee hadn’t gotten home yet. I said, “Why are you”—and he says [sic; said], “I really need to talk to you. Let’s go outside.” So we went out on the back porch, and he said, “Tell me what your background is.” And I said, “What?” He said, “Just tell me your background, please, if you don’t mind.” I mean, this is the first time he’d been polite to me, so I thought, *Whoa!*

So I went—you know, even though I had doubts about why he was asking, I went through the whole thing and told him my background. And he said, “Oh,” he says [sic; said], “I owe you a huge apology.” And I said, “What?” And he says [sic; said], “Well, before you got here, [Groock?] had got us all together and told us that you didn’t have a lot of experience but you were a great manager, and that’s why they hired you.” And he said—he had to fight for the -11 job that I got. And he said, “He led us to believe that you didn’t know squat about timber.” And I said, “Well, I’m sorry about that.” And from then on, he was a very strong supporter. Now, it’s interesting because the ranger that did this to me avowed and alleged to everyone that he supported women, but I don’t think he did. [Chuckles.]

So, yes, there were a lot of different situations like that. I think every place I’ve been, I’ve had an employee or employees or peers who have spoken up and supported me when maybe management didn’t.

BUZZINI: In wrapping up this section, by the time you retired, the situation *had* changed because you proved you could do the job no matter where you were.

FORBES: Well, some of the situations had changed. I think there was better acceptance. I'd been to other regions, I'd been around the horn, if you will, and so I did have some strong acceptance from a lot of people for the job that I was doing. I think there are still women out there that don't have that kind of support.

BUZZINI: Oh, yes?

FORBES: But by the same token, I don't want to leave the impression that the situation has totally changed, because—

BUZZINI: For you or other women, huh?

FORBES: Yes, because I think there's still a lot of change, but if I could do one thing, I'd—and, you know, you can never go back, and hindsight's 20/20, but somehow I would like to have everybody have a day off, whether it's with pay or with what, I don't care, but have a day off and be required to have a brainwashing or something, telling them, "Be nice to your fellow man," duh, duh, duh, duh, duh. And then all the grievances be gone, and then let's start over.

I mean, the consent decree only served to exacerbate the situation with the other minorities, because everybody all of a sudden needed to have their [sic; his or her] piece of the pie. And I don't see that as changed significantly. Now they have an Hispanic complaint. I'll be honest with you, the second time, when they went back to have the consent decree reinstituted—thank you, Lisa [Donnelly?]
—I'll be honest with you, I headed up a campaign, if you will, and I lined up key workers on every forest, and I got a petition going. I still have them all. We filed them with the court at a friend of a the court briefing, asking that these complaints be dealt with on an individual basis, that the class not be reinstituted.

Unfortunately, the class was reinstituted on a very narrow basis, but once again, it was the Forest Service that shot us in the foot, or I should say our attorneys, because they chose to

expand on what the judge's ruling was and so I feel really bad because I really believe that where we are today is very much a function of the Department of Justice and not anything the agency wanted or could have had any impact on.

I mean, I was down there in 1990—yes, '90, when we rewrote manuals and directives, and with Joyce [Meroka?] and Paul Barker, and there was nothing that could be done. The lawyers were going to have it their way.

BUZZINI: Right.

FORBES: But I am proud of the fact that the one time we went to court with Jeannie Meyer [sic; Meyers?—the consent decree monitor] and it was over the selection of the Ukonom ranger after I left—I was on the selection panel, and she had made a big deal about our selection and that we used legal criteria in the selection, because we had written down whenever a person had a detail as a ranger or line officer, as part of the selection. But it wasn't listed in the criteria that that was a fact.

Anyway, bottom line, she took us to court over it, and I was the agency witness, and that's the only time we ever won against the monitor. The judge just looked and reamed her out because—I shredded the documents, I admit it. But they weren't legal documents at that point in time. We had to redo them all. We had to reconvene the selection panel, we redid all the paperwork, so I shredded the set that wasn't appropriate. I felt they were working papers. Fortunately, the magistrate agreed with me and told Miss Meyers she shouldn't have it both ways.

BUZZINI: [Chuckles.]

FORBES: But as to the situation changing, I don't know. And I certainly don't know what goes on with selections in Washington or anything, but I can tell you that myself and Janet

Anderson Tyler, who was a well-qualified woman who was in the Washington office and who actually was the acting assistant director at the time—all applied for the assistant director position, and they ended up giving it to a white male, so—

BUZZINI: Wow.

FORBES: [Chuckles.]

BUZZINI: After all was said and done, huh?

FORBES: And both Janet and I were eminently qualified for the position as well. So, yes, after all was said and done, I'm not sure the agency still walks the talk.

BUZZINI: Well, we're wrapping up our session on changing workforce. How about we take a break before we get into fire and timber?

FORBES: Okay.

[Recording interruption.]

[Transcriber's note: The recording resumes with a background noise, probably from a fan.]

BUZZINI: So, Alice, we're going to switch gears once again and talk about timber management.

FORBES: Aha.

BUZZINI: During your career, how, and if so, why did working in timber help or hurt you [sic; your] or others' opportunities for advancement?

FORBES: I worked in timber basically the first fifteen years of my career, and timber was the, quote, "area to be in" in those days. They had the money, they had the resources, and I think that basically anyone in a timber program when I started out had many opportunities for advancement. And I think as we got more into the Monongahela decisions, Jersey Jack, the

[unintelligible] decisions up in Montana on the NEPA stuff and the clear-cutting and the cumulative effects, that's when it began to hurt people's opportunities to advance in the agency. But over all, I worked my way up through planning, tree improvement, silviculture into finally a timber management office position on the Panhandle, and I felt that that was a good place to be until, once again, working on [a] land management plan and just discovering that the forest could not sustain the cut that they were assigned by the region, and that's when I was looking for a ranger job and came back to California and then went into fire, believe it or not, at a very high level, which was unheard of in those days.

BUZZINI: Good for you. So under the label of the importance of the timber targets, I want to ask you how important it was for your Forest Service administrative units, your district, the forest to meet these timber harvest targets.

FORBES: It was very important. You were told that it was a hard target that your dollars were tied to, so if you wanted to get dollars to your unit, you met your timber sale quantity. I know that the chief often is asked to put out his letter that says [sic; said], "[The] fire season is so bad, and we need you all to respond, and you don't have to meet your timber target." Well, I can tell you in '87 the Washington office was saying that, the regional forester said that, [but] the forest supervisor said it a little bit differently, so—it was very critical that you met your targets in order to make sure your dollars were not cut.

BUZZINI: Were there significant changes in the relative importance, and if so, why?

FORBES: Yes, there were changes over time. As NEPA came into being and we had to spend more dollars on planning, people began to realize that we were not going to be able to meet the targets that were set forth. Again, I think that when decisions were made and it began to lose importance, people began scrambling for ways to increase funding to the units because you got

funding based on your assigned sale quantity, and all the –ologists, if you will—ET-118—associated with it, but the –ologists didn't really have money of their own.

BUZZINI: Right.

FORBES: And I think that's one of the fallacies with Congress, was that they tied all of this into the timber sale program, which was fine until such time as we could no longer meet our assigned sale quantity, and when the dollars started to go, these other functions—I mean, Congress doesn't give us money, enough anyway, to go out and count spotted owls. They don't give us enough money to do soil classification in and of itself. Those things were accomplished using supplemental timber dollars. And now that that's not the case—I mean, they aren't there—I think that's why we changed, and unfortunately—in my book it was unfortunate because we are now not redeeming our responsibilities as stewards of the forest.

BUZZINI: On that site, one of the beliefs of the organization was that persons who failed to meet the cut would be punished in some way. Did you witness any of that punishment or harassment?

FORBES: No.

BUZZINI: Well, good for you.

FORBES: No, I didn't [clock chimes] because it never happened on my watch that we didn't meet our target.

BUZZINI: Good.

FORBES: The forest supervisor or the ranger, whatever position I was in, made it very clear that not meeting the target was not acceptable, and so we met the target. There wasn't a punishment per se, but when I was the timber staff on the Panhandle—and [on] the Panhandle in the wintertime, you can't get out and do much. I mean, it's iced in. The St. Joe River is frozen.

And so I got permission from the ranger—and bless [unintelligible name] for something anyway—he gave me permission to use the other permanent people, who really, quote-unquote, “didn’t have a whole lot of work to do.”

And we basically sat down, a group of about ten of us, took all the maps on the unit, and I made what I called my black map. What we did—because in those days you didn’t have PowerPoint, so it would be even more impressive with a PowerPoint demonstration today, I’m sure, but in those days you didn’t have PowerPoint, and so we made a map of the unit and put it on the overhead projector, and I put an overlay on and I colored in—we had nine of the thirteen trophy elk hunting areas for the whole state of Idaho on the Avery District. We [unintelligible] right at the edge of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. You name it, we had it.

And so by the time you put all that on there and you put the cutting history—and I laid them all on there, and then I laid the ten-year plan on top of it, and when all was said and done—now, mind you, I never used a black pen. Everything was black except this little white dot in the middle that was [Hoyt?] Flat, which was the ranger station.

BUZZINI: Oh, geez! [Chuckles.]

FORBES: That was only sustaining at cut of 45 million [board feet] for seven years. After that, it dropped to ten, and in the second decade there wasn’t anything to cut.

BUZZINI: Wow.

FORBES: So [Crocker?] wasn’t happy with me, but he says [sic; said], “Well, we’ll present this to the leadership team.” So I went in, made the presentation, and [William] “Bill” [Morton?] was the forest supervisor at the time, and he called me in, and he said, “You’ll forget you ever did that. And the land management plan will produce 235 million board feet a year.” And I said,

“Well”—and he said, “I don’t want to hear any more about it. That’s the facts.” So my black map exists, and—

BUZZINI: Wow.

FORBES: So basically I was ostracized at that point, and yet all the other—at that time there were seven districts on the Panhandle; there’s [sic; there are] only three now, but at that time there were seven—and all the other timber staff officers—their rangers went home and had them do the same thing, and basically the Panhandle couldn’t cut anything in the second decade of the land management plan. And yet their harvest was 245 [sic; she mentioned 235 above].

BUZZINI: Well, you’ve just about answered the last question of this section, [which] is: Were you comfortable the levels of the timber targets. [Laughs.]

FORBES: No. I was comfortable cutting trees. I’m comfortable with managing the forest. I rarely was comfortable with the targets that were set, only because we couldn’t meet other resources and do that timber cut. I mean, we could do the timber target; there was no question.

BUZZINI: Everything has suffered.

FORBES: But by the time—like, for example, on the Panhandle situation, by the time—you had to leave an area to grow four and a half feet tall to provide thermal cover for elk, and then you have the fact that we had checkerboard ownership with Plum Creek Timber Company, and they clear-cut their 640 acres, and you looked at all these factors, our cut was way too high. If we were solely in the business of selling timber, yes, we could sustain that cut. And we could have sustained it on McCloud Flats [on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest].

BUZZINI: Right.

FORBES: But when you look at all the resources—and that’s what I was charged with doing as an interdisciplinary leader, as a timber sale planner, [which] was to look at everybody’s

objectives, not just the timber objective but everybody's, and come up with the best mix. And so, yes—no—I wasn't always—very rarely was I comfortable with the timber target assigned or the assigned sale quantity or whatever we want to call it, solely because we couldn't sustain it, and I think that's been shown over time.

BUZZINI: Yes. Okay, changes in timber harvesting during your career. What major changes did you experience in timber harvesting on your units? And the list goes on if you want to address some of these?

FORBES: I think the major changes had to do with the fact that when we went into NEPA and we had to be more responsive, if you will, to —ologists, I think all of the folks on the unit who wrote Stage One and Stage Two's had some understanding of, like, for wildlife, the thermal cover, the hiding cover, but they may not have been as strong an advocate for that, and so they may have allowed a little more timber to be cut than when we got the —ologists on board. And the —ologists definitely changed the way that we harvested.

Of course, we always—wherever I was, we had mills, and people work in the mills, and that's what the communities were, and so consequently there was always pretty much community support for the timber program.

BUZZINI: In the small communities.

FORBES: In the smaller communities, yes, until—when Mt. Shasta—we got the [unintelligible], and then you got more green people in there, and then, “Oh, we don't want to do this” and “we don't want to do that.” Silviculture prescriptions—I don't think they had any impact, if you will, on what we were doing. I think harvest levels, budgets, those were the keys, and they were very closely linked, and if our budget went down, it was difficult to maintain the same level of harvest that we had.

And then the court decisions—as I mentioned, Monongahela with the clear-cutting decision, and then we couldn't clear-cut, and then we could clear-cut, and then you couldn't clear-cut. I mean, it was just a thing. And then Jersey Jack and the [unintelligible] decision up there in Montana that said, well, you can't piecemeal a plan; you have to have a plan for the area. You can't do an EA [environmental assessment] on the road on a 10,000-board-foot sale and turn back next year and come in and do a 20,000-foot sale or whatever and come back the next year and do something else; you have to look at the cumulative impacts. And so those were some of the major, I think, decisions that affected our whole being.

And then in—it would have been the mid eighties, I guess, with all the situation going on up in Seattle with the timber theft and the Forest Service employees who were complicit with that, there became a real concern of, *Oh, am I going to be perceived as doing something wrong?* And so then it further impacted people on their willingness to put up timber sales and things.

I think that fire salvage was a normal thing we did after '77. The Hog Fire, the Pondosa burn—

BUZZINI: I was on the Hog Fire.

FORBES: Yes, I was on Pondosa. And it was never a question about, you know, are you going to reforest or whatever, are you going to salvage the timber—we did it. Now, the Biscuit Fire—they can't even get the timber salvaged out of there, and so in—what, twenty years we're talking?—there's been a significant change in what the agency is able to do. I think some of that's a function of the changing societal norms and mores. I think some of it's also a function that we've kidded ourselves over the years, and we have done some things wrong, and we were never willing to admit it. Now it's coming back to bite us.

BUZZINI: You've talked about a little bit of this in the past, but of course the timber program changes. Which laws or other Forest Service [unintelligible] changes or court orders caused the greatest changes to the Forest Service timber program during your career, and why?

FORBES: I think NEPA and the [National] Forest Management Act, 1980, National Forest Management Act [pronounced NIFF-muh]. NFMA and NEPA are probably the two biggest laws that came into place that changed how we did timber up until, of course, the time of the Endangered Species Act. I think the largest change came about with the Endangered Species Act, but it wasn't because of the act, it was because of the people who chose to pick the spotted owl as their mantra. They went forward with their mantra, and I can't say that the owl is an indicator species; they say it's an indicator species. I've seen owls in second growth doing quite well, spotted owls. I don't know if you read in the paper recently the barred owl now.

BUZZINI: Yes.

FORBES: They're going to shoot barred owls so they can protect the spotted owl. It's one of those things: When you mess in nature [chuckles]—I know we're supposed to be part of it—but I think those are the greatest changes other than the laws or the court decisions that I mentioned. [The] Monongahela decision on clear-cutting was far-reaching, very far-reaching. They significantly impacted how we cut timber. It was no longer accepted that clear-cuts were, quote-unquote, "necessary."

There are some areas where the only way to handle it is clear-cuts. I understand that people don't view the pine forests in the South as being very beautiful, because down in the South the pine forests are—they're farms. They're tree farms. They're growing trees for a purpose. In the West, they wanted to maintain old growth. But I can tell you, and it's way before its time—I don't know if you've ever been to the [Showe?] plantation on the McCloud

District or not, but it was a research project, and PSW [Pacific Southwest Station] did it. And when I got there—if I hadn't seen the stumps, I would have assumed it was old growth, if hadn't walked through it and seen the stumps.

And so I did a little research, and it was a selective harvest. Basically they've gone in and thinned it twice, and to me the Showe plantation on the McCloud Ranger District is one of the premier examples in the whole United States of how we can do it right, because everything—it's a textbook example of a selective cut, inter-planting, thinning, thinning again, and ending up with a stand with all the characteristics of an old-growth stand: the multi-layer, the understory, everything. I mean, it's just a great example.

So we can do it, but it takes time and money. And the forests that I worked on—we never got the money to do the thinning, you know, if we couldn't sell it. And, of course, in those days you couldn't sell pecker pole—excuse me!—small timber. [Coughs conspiratorially.] BUZZINI: [Chuckles.] I've never heard it called that.

FORBES: Yes. You just couldn't sell it. If it wasn't at least a fourteen-inch-diameter log, forget it.

BUZZINI: Yes.

FORBES: And even those were hard to sell unless they were usable for telephone poles. Yes. But those are the major laws that I recall.

BUZZINI: Okay. To what extent did Forest Service budget direction control the timber sale program, and were there significant changes in the degrees of control?

FORBES: It controlled it a whole lot. Quite honestly, on most units, 90 percent of their budget was the timber sale program and support functions. They'd get maybe a little fire money and maybe a little BD money and a little reforestation, but basically it was timber that ruled the roost.

[Clock chimes.] The intimidation—I don't know how true it ever was, because I did not observe a reduction in my budget if I didn't—well, I always met a target, but those that didn't meet their target—I didn't see them getting any reductions.

In fact, that's one of the things that really bothered me from my time on the Klamath, was I would meet a target and an adjoining ranger wouldn't, and yet nothing would happen to them [sic; him or her]. I'm going, "Time out here. This isn't the game as I was taught it." It's not that I—I mean, I didn't want to meet my target, either, but—anyway, a whole other story.

At any rate, the budget and the timber sale program were very intimately tied together, and when we stopped cutting as much as we were cutting, Congress, I think, finally realized that in the budget process, and we had a few pretty lean years until the, quote-unquote- "fire program" picked up the slack.

BUZZINI: Okay.

I want to talk now about timber management and some of the specialist relationships. How would you characterize the relationships between timber management people and other specialists on your units during your career? And you have touched on this, too.

FORBES: Yes, I've touched on it. I think initially, when we first started bringing, quote, "-ologists"—and by the way, "-ologists" started out as a very derogatory term, and it's now pretty much accepted in the vernacular, and I don't think it's considered derogatory. But when specialists came on board, initially there was a lot of resistance because foresters had training in all these areas, and so they felt like, "Well, you're coming in"—

BUZZINI: "Why do we need them?"

FORBES: Yes, "Why do we need you? You're casting aspersions on my ability." They weren't really, but that's how the perception, I guess, was. And then over time, I think we came to

appreciate—“we” being foresters came to appreciate having some of the specialization, particularly when we could—I don’t want to say “use it to not meet a target” [chuckles], but that’s what it was, when we didn’t want to cut somewhere and a specialist could come up with a reason not to. But I think there are still people who are skeptical of the –ologists at times, but I think during my career they’ve become an accepted part of the norm, and I think when they opened the ranger ranks to, quote, “-ologists,” under the consent decree is sort of when people really started saying, “Well, they’re not all bad people.”

BUZZINI: [Chuckles.] Which specialists were members of the workforce? (That’s kind of a silly question.)

FORBES: I don’t know what that question really meant, quite honestly. I thought, *Mmm, what does that mean?* The only thing I could tie it together with was—

BUZZINI: Like, name the ones that were on the ID teams or something?

FORBES: No, I was thinking more along the lines of those who participated in fire, participated in other disciplines other than just our own—

BUZZINI: Oh, I see.

FORBES: —is how I looked at that one. Mostly, I found probably over my career—I tried to figure it out—and probably about 20 percent of the specialists really became integrated and understood what the Forest Service was about and would fight fire and everything, and I think the other 80 percent just stayed in their specialty, and I’m not sure they ever really understood the Forest Service—

BUZZINI: The big picture.

FORBES: Yes, what we were.

BUZZINI: So what tensions did you experience as a result of this?

FORBES: Me personally? I didn't have a lot of tensions except a couple of times I had [chuckles] a few little tête-à-têtes with some specialists outside the room to explain the—I don't know if we want to call it the mission or whatever, but as I mentioned before, sometimes I had to make it very clear to them that the timber target wasn't only my target, and my target was their target as well. I mean, everybody's target on a district—you know, they don't come down from the supervisor's office and say, "Okay, timber staff, you have to meet this quota; and recreation staff, you have to meet this many people days; and range, you have to have this many animal unit months." I said, "They hand the district the targets set, and that's what *our* objective is, is to meet all those targets." So sometimes there were some tensions in that regard as far as dealing with –ologists.

BUZZINI: How do you think, then, the Forest Service management dealt with some of that? Probably on a case-by-case basis.

BUZZINI: It was pretty much a case-by-case basis, although, like I say, they did put on NEPA training, and it did get better over time, and folks were required to go to it, and so I think over time, that really leveled out to a degree. I think there are foresters, however, who will still tell you that –ologists were the ruination of the agency.

BUZZINI: Especially probably the typical white male timber beastie.

FORBES: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. I don't think it was –ologists. I absolutely blame the consent decree for what happened in California that spread to the rest of the agency, if you will. Between the consent decree going on, that timing, and the spotted owl timing, it was just ready for the crash, and unfortunately I don't know that management was proactive in coming up with—

BUZZINI: Heading it off.

FORBES: Yes, a new mission. Everybody understood timber management. Dale [N.]

Bosworth in his last years when he was chief—you know, he came up with his Four Threats, and I think he intended that those be the byword, if you will, the mission in place of the timber program, but it was never spelled out that way, and our budget system never responded that way, and so it's made it very difficult. And then with the centralization going on, we keep getting further and further [sic; farther and farther] from the land.

BUZZINI: And consolidating districts.

FORBES: Right.

BUZZINI: The Shasta-Trinity went from, what, six to three or two?

FORBES: Yes. No, I think they have three. But it's like the Panhandle. The Panhandle started out as three individual forests, the [unintelligible], the St. Joe and the Coeur d'Alene, and then it went to one forest, the Idaho Panhandle National Forest, with nine districts, and then it went down to seven districts while I was there, and in the last years of my career, we had a meeting in Coeur d'Alene, and the deputy forest supervisor came to do a presentation, and they're now down to three districts, and it's the Coeur d'Alene, the [unintelligible] and the St. Joe. So what originally was a forest is now a district. I'm looking at that, and I'm trying to understand how—

BUZZINI: To manage something like that.

FORBES: Yes, how do you manage it, number one? But also how is that serving the people?

BUZZINI: Right.

FORBES: And caring for the land? If people have to drive three hours to get service—"Well, we left some service centers open." Well, it's just very difficult when we keep closing district offices. We just keep getting further and further [farther and farther] from the land, if you will. I

mean, I've talked to people who don't even get out in the field at all hardly anymore, and they call themselves foresters, and I'm going, *What are you a forester of?*

BUZZINI: Yes.

FORBES: You know, *What do you do?*

BUZZINI: Computers and paperwork.

FORBES: Yes, exactly. Processes. And that's what killed us with the consent decree, was all the processes.

BUZZINI: To wind up this section on relationships [both chuckle], how did the training, support and career paths of timber management people and specialists vary?

FORBES: Initially I think they started out together with the NEPA training. I mean, everybody was supposed to go to that, whether you were a timber dude or an -ologist or whatever. And then I don't think it was training so much as specialists went to, quote, "specialist meetings."

We had the Society of American Foresters, of course, for the foresters. Well, they had the wildlife society or they had soil scientists or whatever, and they would tend, on a unit, to get together, much like some women did early in my career, which I can talk about later. But they would go, and that was their support group, and that was who kept them on line and kept them—

BUZZINI: They had commonality.

FORBES: Yes, they had the common thing that they were all wildlife -ologists, and so that was their support group.

BUZZINI: I guess it's good to be able to talk to your own, huh?

FORBES: They were always able to talk to their own. And so I think over time, they got a little more support on the districts, but some of them would never get district support because they never understood that their mission in life was to support the goals of the district; they only ever

were loyal to their –ology, their specialty, and that was a very unfortunate thing for them. It used to be career path wise that you had to have had time in timber to be a ranger; you had to have time in fire to be a range. With time and with more –ologists and –ologists coming in without that background, the career paths changed for everyone. I mean, it wasn't just timber people and –ologists but everyone. I mean, there are people who started as district clerks who became rangers, for want of another term. But that's back to the Changing Roles thing that I didn't mention that I probably should have.

BUZZINI: Okay, there's [sic; there were] specific controversies. Probably there were controversies about the timber management program during your career.

FORBES: Right.

BUZZINI: What was your perspective on some of them?

FORBES: Clear-cutting. You know, I'm trained as a forester, so I understand there's a time and a place and that you need to clear-cut sometimes. I think the Forest Service—and I have to speak in generalities because it's very difficult to pinpoint and say, well, Bob [Austin?] is a silviculturist, designed this 120-acre clear-cut just so that we can meet a timber target. But I think that's where we lost some of our credibility, because I think that's what some people felt that was going on, was that we were clear-cutting to meet a target. And so that was a tough one.

And the even-aged management, the land management planning—in the land management planning base, there were standard component lands that we were supposed to manage for multiple use. I mean, you had your special areas in the timber management plan, and you had your research natural areas, you had all this other stuff, but standard component you were supposed to be able to manage. But unfortunately, the public would not accept that. The areas where we could manage even-aged management were out at McCloud Flats. People didn't

want the McCloud Flats to look like a Southern pine stand. And so that's when we dealt with a lot more publics on that.

I think the one thing that the assigned sale quantity and timber sale targets, the hard targets led us all to do—and I think we all did some things that we're probably not proud of, but we cut some areas that we probably shouldn't have cut. For example, out on the flats, there are a lot of areas where you have flower pots. [Coughs.]

[Recording interruption.]

FORBES: I'm good. We'll get this one done.

BUZZINI: All right, go.

FORBES: We cut in those flower pots, which were areas of dirt and the lava flows, and some of those trees were old. I don't even want to say how old. They were old, trust me. And once we cut them, there was nothing going to grow back there. And so there were a lot of us that resisted those kind [sic; kinds] of timber sales, but there wasn't a whole lot you could do about it. [Clock chimes.]

Salvage sales. Those always get to me because you tie salvage sales generally with some sort of an insect infestation or a fire event, and so really the timber is already gone. And so rather than lose that value, we should cut it out. That's a forester viewpoint. That's my viewpoint. Unfortunately, there are those who feel like we need to just leave it there. Well, of course, insect infestations—if you don't do a clear-cut, you're going to continue to have the problem, and you're going to run the risk of losing everything and have a bazillion acres of clear-cuts.

BUZZINI: Bark beetles [unintelligible].

FORBES: Yes, bark beetles. Oh, there's [sic; there are] all kinds of them that are—*Ips*, just—and so I always supported salvage sales. But now we've gotten to the point where even those are questionable because once again, a few people don't understand that a tree can look green, but it's been girdled by fire and the cambium layer is dead; the tree is dead. For all intents and purposes, it's dead on the stump. And we need to harvest those if we're to get any value out of the timber at all. Now, in '87, PSW came out with guidelines that a marker could go out with to determine salvage timber. But again, if there was one green branch on it and it was on a logging truck, environmentalists were immediately screaming, "You're using this as a cover to cut green trees." And the trees were dead. I mean, I went out with a crew. I know they were dead. But we can't tell the public that. So we lose credibility because for some reason, we can't sell our story and tell our story well enough.

And herbicides—when we lost herbicides, that was a disaster for us.

BUZZINI: Yes.

FORBES: Terrible, terrible thing because all of a sudden we would plant a plantation, and before it even had time to take root, the manzanita was back, and because we couldn't spray, we'd lose the trees, so we'd go in and clear that same acreage again—of course, taking credit for it again, because we had to do all the same work, replant it, no herbicides. It was real [sic; really] interesting because we were—[Chuckles.] We had a different kind of relationship with Champion [International]. But we had an area on the Mt. Shasta side of the hill that we wanted to spray, and so we did all the assessment work we needed to do. We had [unintelligible] to the regional document at that time, the EIS [environmental impact statement], and everything was all set, and there were protesters on our side of the hill. It's the only time I can remember

[chuckles]—and I know it had to be John Wells; it might have been John Nelson; no, it's [sic; it was] John Wells—getting a thank-you note from Champion, saying, "I'm so glad you had that thing going on on Mt. Shasta. We got all our spraying done on our side of the hill with no problem."

BUZZINI: Oh, geez! [Laughs.]

FORBES: So they got their spraying done; we didn't. But I think that that—you know, all of it, over time, the over-zealous—

BUZZINI: [unintelligible].

FORBES: Yes, the over-zealous timber harvest, the perception of cutting green trees—all of that served to erode the public's confidence in our ability to manage the land. And then when we did have a major faux pas—I'm trying to think of the name of the road—

BUZZINI: You mean like the [Go?] Road on [New Orleans?].

FORBES: Oh, yes, well, the Go Road. Yes, that was another whole story, but no, there was a road, and the engineers didn't pick up on the fact until after we were building it that there were de—[Pause.] Granite. Why can't I come up with the name? [Transcriber's note: She means decomposed granite.] It's not "decomposing."

BUZZINI: I'll tell you what: When you see the draft—you'll be able to read this again, and—

FORBES: I'll know it then, yes.

BUZZINI: —make your notes.

FORBES: Okay, I'll do it. It's not "decomposing granite." But anyway—and that was a major faux pas, to put a road through there because it was constantly sliding, constantly sliding. So I think there were just all these kinds of things that led up—and then because the Sierra Club and everyone was able to get so much emphasis on the spotted owl—I mean, here the president

comes out and there's a big old council thing and everything in the Pacific Northwest, and they assign Jack Ward Thomas and they write the Northwest [Forest] Plan, and the interesting part is when you look at it, the Northwest [Forest] Plan and a lot of those land management plans are in direct conflict with each other, and nobody's bothered to change them. And I'm just going—

BUZZINI: [Laughs softly.]

FORBES: Anyway, so I think that led to a lot of lack of trust in the timber program, and I think we did it to ourselves and just didn't do the appropriate things that we needed to do.

BUZZINI: Okay, Alice, before we go into fire, let's take a little break.

FORBES: Okay.

[Recording interruption.]

BUZZINI: So, Alice, let's turn our attention to fire now. What conditions led to project FIREScope [FIrefighting RESources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies], and were involved in the 1970 fires, and what was your job and location in 1971?

FORBES: Well, actually, I wasn't working for the agency in '71, but after I came to work for the agency in '72 and '73, even though I was in Northern California there was still a lot of discussion and angst about what FIREScope was going to do. FIREScope actually was organized in Southern California in response to the 1970 fires that they had there—Malibu and all the others, and they were so horrific and so discombubered [sic; discombobulated] in their response, the agencies involved, both state, federal and local, that FIREScope was chartered to develop a way that we could all work together and use a common language and use common names for the resources and better manage a fire incident.

So even though I wasn't intimately involved, because of my job, I did hear a lot about FIREScope in the '70, '71 era. Some of the folks that were working in fire at that time—Glenn Cecil, Bob Gray—those kind [sic; kinds] of folks all were very concerned [about] how it was going to impact how we did business. So yes, I was aware of it.

BUZZINI: Then when did you actually become involved in FIREScope, and in what capacity?

FORBES: I actually didn't become involved in FIREScope until later in my career. In 1990 I went and took the [position as] assistant director for operations of Northern California, and at that time part of that position was to serve on the North Ops board for FIREScope. There were two operating times in California, Southern Operating and Northern, and I was chosen to be on the Northern Operating board as the rep.

That was an interesting experience because that's another meeting—now, I'm talking 1990, mind you, and went to my very first FIREScope joint meeting in January, and it was in San Luis Obispo, and I'll never forget, because I'm in a room with twenty guys, and I'm the only woman, in 1990, in the fire organization. And so here I am, the only woman there, and they had just decided they had to update their charter, and they decided that—they hadn't even thought about it until I was sitting there—

BUZZINI: [Laughs.]

FORBES: —because they'd already made all the changes [clock chimes] and proposed changes, and they were reading them aloud, and they had “chairman.” I didn't care what it said. And finally one of the guys spoke up and said, “You know, Alice is probably one of the first one of many that we're going to have with this group. Maybe we ought to just say ‘chair.’” So they had a little vote on that. That was pretty interesting, back to the changing workforce, I guess, but—

BUZZINI: Yes.

FORBES: —at any rate, yes, so I was the first woman member of one of the operating teams for FIREScope, and that was 1990.

BUZZINI: Did you receive special training for implementation of FIREScope products, and how did you learn of the organization structure change and other features?

FORBES: Yes, I knew about FIREScope before I was on the operating team by virtue of the fact that in 1975, '74 and '75, I believe, they were implementing basic ICS training and teaching people about FIREScope and the incident management system, incident command system, and so we went through a training, and then we were a guinea pig class, I guess you could say, because we were able to say, well, we didn't think this met the need or that met the need. But it was a joint training with the Mt. Shasta-McCloud fire people as well as the district people that wanted to participate. And again, because it was made as a voluntary thing, there were a lot of people that chose not to participate, and so it became very exclusive later on because if you hadn't been to the training, you couldn't go to a fire, and yet you wanted to go to a fire, but you couldn't go to the training. I mean, it became a real Catch-22 for a lot of people.

But, yes, so I received a lot of training in the actual on-the-ground FIREScope stuff. I didn't receive a lot of map training until the nineties, because that was also a FIREScope product, but the basic structural changes and things like that, I learned very early on.

BUZZINI: FIREScope continues today until the Office of Emergency Services' leadership, with the present focus on combating terrorism. Have you continued to stay involved with this effort?

FORBES: I was up until my retirement. I worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], who [sic; which] was moved into the Department of Homeland Security now, and Office of Emergency Services actually reports through that rank now, And I think that's the

beauty of what was developed in Southern California, and I'm so thankful that the folks that developed FIREScope way back then—[Richard] "Dick" Barrows and several of the others, and [Richard] Chase from PSW—had the opportunity—

BUZZINI: Foresight.

FORBES: —or the foresight to think outside the box, because what they did develop is something that can be used for incident anywhere in the world. And that was what they were trying to do, and I really feel like they accomplished that. Apparently so does FEMA, because ICS has been adopted as the national management system, and so I think that will stand us in good stead. ICS has been adopted internationally. Australia has Australia ICS. New Zealand uses that. Canada uses ICS now. Several countries have adopted ICS. And so up until, like I say, I retired, I was heavily involved. Now I just sort of hear things, so I'm technically not still involved.

BUZZINI: For this next question, then—you've touched on part of it already, but what are your summary thoughts about FIREScope after thirty years of operating experience in the multi-agency process, and did you imagine that FIREScope projects would become the national and international emergency management organization?

FORBES: As I said, I think the foresight and the thinking outside the box that was done by that group of individuals in developing FIREScope thirty years ago was just phenomenal for that time. And the fact that it has maintained for so long as a management system, with very few changes—I mean, the basic ICS [training] I took back in 1975 is basically what's taught today. To me, that's just really phenomenal. It's got durability, and it's a very practical program.

I did not imagine it would ever go international. National, I felt like it would because the federal agencies in California were all pushing it very strongly, and so there was no huge

surprise in 1978, when the National Wildfire Coordinating Group accepted and adopted NIIMS [pronounced NIMS}, which is the National Interagency Incident Management System, which includes ICS. And then when the mandate came down through the Department of Homeland Security for FEMA and the National Fire Academy to develop the National Incident Management System, which is “one-I’d” NIMS—we have “two-I’d” NIIMS and “one-I’d” NIMs—but now we only have NIMS, by the way. Nationally they’ve said no, there is no more two-I’d NIIMS; it’s only one-I’d NIMS.

BUZZINI: I’ve never heard it called that.

FORBES: Now we’re working towards that, but I just think it’s phenomenal that something that was developed by a group of individuals—

BUZZINI: In Southern California.

FORBES: —in Southern California has taken on a life of its own and has managed, with very little change, to become a very successful tool used nationally and internationally.

BUZZINI: On this question, we touched about the hurricanes, but do you have any thoughts as to how FIREScope design and function could be applied to other problem areas involving multi-jurisdictions?

FORBES: Well, by virtue of Homeland Security Directive HSPD-5—I think that’s what it is; it’s a presidential directive—everyone now has to use basically what are FIREScope products and functions to manage incidents, and so law enforcement wants to learn it, everybody wants to learn it. I think that’s where the fire agencies have been spreading themselves a little thin, is in trying to respond and help. I mean, we’ve used APHIS. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service uses ICS to manage the bird flu, they’ve used it to manage the turkey issue in Georgia or wherever it was back East, and so as far as it goes—

BUZZINI: The sky's the limit, huh?

FORBES: The sky's the limit. It can be used for anything. It just takes the wherewithal and the desire of the individuals involved to want to use it and to learn to use it. Unfortunately, again, law enforcement thinks they have a better system, and so—I don't know if you remember the [Canterra?] spill up here?

BUZZINI: [unintelligible].

FORBES: —in Shasta Lake.

BUZZINI: That was a bad summer for me.

FORBES: Yes.

BUZZINI: [Chuckles.]

FORBES: Yes, and there were ninety-six agencies—state, federal and local—involved, and realistically—they called it a unified command, and it really was not; it should have been a liaison officer with those people. And the Coast Guard was in charge, but the Coast Guard at that time didn't have enough ICS training to realize they could have managed that as an ICS incident, and so CDF [California Division of Forestry] stepped in a little bit, but still it was very unmanageable. But now that the Coast Guard has bought in—knock on wood—hook, line and sinker—not a pun intended—

BUZZINI: [Laughs.]

FORBES: But now that they're all involved, it really is—it can apply to anything.

BUZZINI: Yes.

FORBES: Oil spill, no matter what. From the smallest incident to the largest, you can handle it with ICS.

BUZZINI: Well, to wrap up our FIREScope section, as the FIREScope product produced some radical changes in operating practices, how were these received by your Forest Service folks not involved in FIREScope? Was there strong interest or size [sic; considerable?] resistance?

FORBES: The ICS didn't make a whole lot of change, but the dispatch coordination and the multi-agency coordination, the map group—that was the biggest change that affected people, I think, that I saw. Folks were okay with parts of ICS, but they really felt like inviting your neighbors in was not a good thing at that time. I think that there was some resistance, but I think over time—well, people saw it worked, is the best way to put it. And the more successes, the more doubters were won over. I can't point to any real resistance to ICS or to FIREScope because, like I say, ICS—I didn't hear a lot of resistance to it, and I realize at that time I was not in fire, and I was only doing the MACS [Multi-Agency Coordination System] and reference parts of the world, but it was mainly the MACS and the need to coordinate with other people. Up here, people didn't see that as a need because in Southern California you can't have a fire—

BUZZINI: Without [unintelligible] multi-agency—

FORBES: —without twenty people being involved. But up here, for example, you can have a fire on the McCloud that won't affect anybody else but the McCloud, and so no one ever understood and wanted to learn or take the risk to learn about the MACS and MACS operations and how it worked. And so there was a lot of resistance, and there was still resistance even into the nineties to having a Northern California MAC group because—

BUZZINI: What for?

FORBES: Fires up here—you know, we have the key players at North Ops. You have CDF and you have the Forest Service, and that's all you needed because those are the key players in

Northern California. Very rarely is there a local jurisdiction involved. So it became a very touchy situation for a while, but I think now it's accepted nationally fairly well.

BUZZINI: Alice, it sounds like even though you're retired, you're still following the events, what happened in all these areas.

FORBES: Well, I've been trying to keep up with some of it, and I've only been retired now for about a year and a half, but it's an interesting time for the Forest Service.

BUZZINI: Okay, we're going to wrap up our interview in a few minutes with some memories and stuff. Let's take another break.

[Recording interruption.]

BUZZINI: Ready to roll.

FORBES: All right, we're ready to roll.

BUZZINI: So, Alice, before we wrap up our very newsworthy and interesting—

FORBES: [Laughs.]

BUZZINI: —interview—I mean, I've learned things from you that—it's just been a joy, but before we conclude, I'd like for you to tell us some of your most outstanding Forest Service memories.

FORBES: Oh. After thirty years, you have a lot, a lot of memories. I'll start with one that—

BUZZINI: You can put names and dates in there, too.

FORBES: As much as I can, I will. In '72, when I started and I was working as a rec tech, I knew about cleaning bathrooms and all that stuff. No issue. But one of the things I had to do was collect campground fees, and so I went out on Groveland to collect the fees. I didn't know

that this particular weekend it was Hell's Angels weekend, and so I'm going through the campground, and this was before the time of Level Four's in law enforcement. I go through the campground to collect the fees, and I thought, *Well, I'm not going to be a ninny*, so I walked up and I said, "Who's in charge here? You haven't paid your fees yet." And they said, "You and who else is gonna make us?" And I said, "Sir, I'm going to have you to leave if you don't pay your fees." And about that time he had this big Jim Bowie knife he'd been sharpening up, and he whipped it in a picnic table right in front of me, and I'm going, *Oh*. I said, "Okay, sir, okay."

So I went back to the office—

BUZZINI: Oh, geez.

FORBES: —and I got Jim—and I want to say his name was [Alvs?], but I'll find out his name exactly. But I told Jim what happened, and he's just laughing his head off. And I said, "You knew they were out there before you sent me out to that campground, didn't you?" And he said, "Well, yeah." So he went out there, and he managed to get the fee, but when he came back, he had a big hole in his shirt, and I said, "What happened?" He had to trade his patch off his uniform shirt for the fee! [Laughs.]

BUZZINI: Oh, my gosh.

FORBES: And I thought, *Oh, well, I guess that's negotiation and compromise*. But that was one of my early memories with the agency. There are just a lot of moments that you think about and you wonder, *Why did I do it that way? Why didn't I do it some different way?*

In my career, I've had three commendations from my employees. The employees of the timber management group in Avery gave me a very nice certificate of merit signed off by all of them, and the smokejumpers at the Redding smokejumper unit gave me a plaque and a write-up,

and then my employees at Ukonom also, after the '87 siege. So I have those things to be proud of.

Difficult moments, though. I worked very hard to get my degree. I was in school for almost seven years. Most people do it in a few less [sic; fewer] than that, but I [chuckles] was a slow learner! No, I just had to work a lot, and I didn't take as many units as I should have. But I got through and graduated. So when the consent decree came along and the 43 percent, that really sort of frosted my bacon because we could have hired everybody that graduated and never would have made it.

And then the Forest Service started doing these little scholarship things, and of course that really rankled a lot of us because all of a sudden they were sending people to Cal Poly to get eighteen units—

BUZZINI: Oh, I remember.

FORBES: —and all of a sudden they could be a professional forester. That really hurt a lot because I really worked hard to get my degree and to get to where I am.

But I think the most trying experiences in my career, and memorable, were when I was a ranger. I went to the Somes Bar, Ukonom, Ranger District in July of '87, and my first month there, I had an employee die from leukemia, acute leukemia, didn't even know he had it, and his family was all back East, and so I had to take care of all the arrangements and everything, which was a new experience for me, totally. And then I had an employee who had a brain tumor and who was a threat to the employees on the district. And then on August 30th the fires started, so—
[Laughs.]

BUZZINI: That's [unintelligible].

FORBES: Yes. So that was a pretty memorable time for me, and I can remember because Bob had to—he worked on the Orleans District, and he was working fire, and I was the resource adviser, and so I had to go up to area command meetings. We had an Aerostar van at the time, and I had bathed my son, and he was—what? Eighty-seven he was nine years old. And so he'd get his bath and put his jams [pajamas] on, and I'd make a bed in the back of the Aerostar van, and I'd set off to area command, and we finally had to get my mother-in-law to come and stay because it was just getting too hectic.

And so the [sic; The] fires ended at the end of September basically. We still had some burning, but that's when—I got back from a training session, and I had an urgent message to call the forest supervisor's secretary. She'd left me her home number, so I knew it was critical, so I called her, and she says [said], "I know you just got back, but you have to be in here on Monday for a full staff meeting, and Bob wants to know what the adjustments are to your ten-year timber sale plan," et cetera, et cetera. And I went, "Oh, okay."

BUZZINI: [Chuckles.]

FORBES: So I called my timber staff, who decided he didn't want to do that on his weekend, and so I got two of his employees to come in. Gene Graber was one of them, and I'll be honest with you, I would support and promote Gene Graber any opportunity I had because he really saved my bacon. We basically put together a ten-year plan from scratch, because unbeknownst to me—because I had only been there for two months, and I really hadn't had time to get into it—they didn't have a ten-year sale plan; they had a five-year sale plan and nothing for the next five years. And so in that [sic; those] two days of long, hard work, we put together a ten-year sale plan that we could be proud of. And we took it in—I took it in on Monday to the staff

meeting, and I'm sure they were all expecting me to just say, "Well, I don't have anything," and they were much surprised when I did.

BUZZINI: Bet you got a brownie point for that one, huh?

FORBES: Yes, I did get a brownie point for that one. And then I took my award—Bob Rice gave all the rangers awards for their response to the siege, and so I took my award—Bob and I talked about it, and we decided that the best thing we could do is—so we bought T-shirts for the whole district with our award money that basically said you [unintelligible] rehab and recovery and [unintelligible] helicopter [in haybales?] and—

BUZZINI: I think I saw those.

FORBES: Yes, I still have one. So those things, I'm proud of. But there have definitely been some experiences.

BUZZINI: Do you have a lot of do-over moments, if you could do it over?

FORBES: Oh, yes. There are a lot of things I might have done differently. Probably would have handled the black map thing a little differently with the forest supervisor because I think Bill Morton after that really didn't support me, felt like I was one of those environmental geeks or whatever.

I had to notify the parents of a young lad that died on the [Kramer?] Fire. That wasn't an easy thing to do. The forest supervisor was out of town, and I was the highest-ranking Forest Service official in Boise at the time, so had to do that. That was very difficult.

But lots of memorable times, lots of memorable people. We used to have—McCloud—I can remember we had pot-lucks probably once a month at our house, and everybody's brother would come. It was never a formal invitation; it was never "A through L, bring this" or "A through M"; we just ended up pot luck, and somehow it always worked out. [Chuckles.]

BUZZINI: That's probably back when it was still a family, right?

FORBES: Very much, very much, still family like. The consent decree hadn't begun to wear people down. And I think that was the hardest part of being a ranger, was dealing with the consent decree and the processes. It's interesting because Jane Westenberger was in the regional office when I was here on the Shasta-Trinity, starting out. Wonderful lady, just a great lady.

BUZZINI: I know. I had occasion to work with her, too, in San Francisco.

FORBES: Did you?

BUZZINI: Yes.

FORBES: I never got to work with her per se, but she wrote me a really nice letter when I was doing the Committee Against the Consent Decree stuff the first time, and then when I took on the Lisa Donnelly thing, she sent me a check the second time to help out as well. She often said that had we known what the lawyers were doing to us—and I had the opportunity to work very closely with Paul Barker and Joyce Meroka on a lot of the consent decree stuff, and [Ronald] “Ron” Stewart, and I can tell you, I don't think there were people who worked harder or believed more in what could be accomplished than those folks, but the problem was, we had a monitor who was a “cross the t's and dot the i's” kind of person, and we were not going to win against Jennie Meyer. As I say, that's one of the proudest moments in my career, was [sic; one of the proudest moments in my career was] when I testified. That was the first and only time we won against her in court. And I was the only witness, so I feel really proud that time [chuckles.]—

BUZZINI: That's great.

FORBES: —that for once we were able to prevail. Really, it was only common sense. It was just that she, by that time, had lost the vision of the common sense, I think. I mean, the things I hated the most, I think, about the decree were the number issues and the fact that—well, when I

got to North Ops, by that time we had to come up with a way to get more women in fire, to go to fires, not in fire jobs so much as in red-card qualifications, because somehow Jeannie Meyers had become convinced that unless you had ex-red-card qualification, you couldn't do something. She called me her "good ol' boy in women's clothing," is how she described it, because she and I had a two-hour phone conversation once. When I was a ranger at Ukonom, I had a vacant position at Ti-Bar, which was one of our fire stations, for a caption, module leader, and it was a GS-7.

And I am talking to this woman—because there was a woman on the cert, but the woman wasn't remotely qualified. I had three gentlemen on the cert who were eminently qualified plus. So I tried to explain to her that, "You know, this GS-7 position—they have responsibility for five people's lives on the fireline, and if they don't know what they're doing, they can get people killed." "Oh, the Forest Service would never put anybody in that position for a GS-7." And I said, "Ma'am, it happens every day." I said, "I really think you need to come out on some of these units and"—

BUZZINI: See it on the ground.

FORBES: —"see what you're asking." And she never—[Clock chimes]. Like I say, she just called me her good ol' boy in women's clothing. And I worked really hard to try and [sic; to] explain to her that we weren't hiding behind a safety shield. Some people may have; I don't know. But in this case, we definitely were not. And yet she just would not listen. So I think the biggest thing that affected my career was the consent decree and the 43 percent, because every place I went, I had to prove I was capable of doing the job. I'll be honest with you, if it wasn't for [Sidney L.] "Sid" Nobles and Dennis [Durr?] and [Jerry Clements?], I don't think I would have been successful in fire. But every meeting we went to—and Sid went with me for the first

year, because he was the deputy there at North Ops—he actually gave me his credibility, if you will. He gave me credibility, and it worked very, very well. Andy Anderson, the fire chief in Quincy—I mean, I was over his—

BUZZINI: I used work [unintelligible].

FORBES: Oh, did you?

BUZZINI: Yes.

FORBES: Well, you know, he had his fiftieth year as fire chief and his retirement party.

BUZZINI: Yes, I heard about that, yes.

FORBES: Yes, we went over for that. I was honored to be able to go over for that. And I just—you know, I can't say enough about what those people did and how they mentored and helped me out. I think [Kenneth] "Ken" [Grigsby?], who's now up—well, he's retired, I'm sure, but he was up in Region Six—[Donald] "Don" Campbell came from private industry and was the planning forester. He just recently passed. [Richard] "Dick" [Gizzable?], who the whole time I worked for him had cancer and I never knew it. He never told a soul. And then Don Campbell came in after him, and Don was always very supportive. There are just so many, as I say, men who were very progressive, and so it's really hard to separate and say, well, this one was nasty to me on this occasion.

The Forest Service was so refreshing when I came to work for them because when I graduated from college, I went to Simpson Timber Company, and I was sitting across from the vice president, [James] "Jim" [Rodalius?], because I had heard they had an opening, and I wanted to put my application in, and I had gone to human resources, and they referred me to Jim. Now, Jim is somebody who knew me because I had been in the forestry club and I'd been in the SAF [Society of American Foresters] student chapter there, and he knew all about what I could

do, he knew I had the same training, and he sat right across the table from me and said, “No, we’re just not ready to hire a woman forester yet, Alice.”

And then I heard about CDF having interviews and went and sat before George [Grogan?] and a woman from the state personnel office, and there was one other gentleman there, and I can’t remember who it was, but they interviewed me, and when it was all said and done, Grogan stood up and shook my hand and said, “Well, it was very nice to meet you, but as long as I’m the area chief here, we will not hire a woman.” Point blank told me that. Then proceeded to hire two guys that were lower on the certificate than I was. And I did call and find out that, well, the reason they hired them was because [sic; that] they could find them, and they couldn’t find me in the summertime. Now, I had given them my summer address at Hayfork, but, no, they went ahead and hired the other two guys. And that was okay. I didn’t care at that point.

Then I went to the log scaling bureau, and, “No, we’re not ready to hire women yet.” So by then, I’d worked the summer at Shasta Lake, and I’d met Bob and everything, and we were going to get married, so when I moved to Mt. Shasta [chuckles], I went to the local hardware store—and this is in 1975—no, ’76—[Ramshire?]-I was in Ramshire—the hardware store, Ace Hardware. He advertised a position, and when I went in and interviewed for it, he said, “Okay, I’m going to offer you the job, but I really want a man for the job, but I can’t afford him. I’d have to pay him more money.” And I said, “Well, you can just keep your job.”

So then I went to Champion, and [David] “Dave” Marshall was a Humboldt graduate, so I thought I had a fairly good chance with Champion. They were advertising an inventory forester, and I’d been doing compartment inventory for the Forest Service in the same area for years. He basically went around town and told everybody I had the job, and then I didn’t get it.

Another woman got it. She did graduate from Humboldt. But her uncle also happened to be a [unintelligible] champion out of Portland. So I went to Dave, and I said, “Well, Dave, what’s the deal? I thought I had the job.” “Nope, I thought you did too, Alice, but Diane has connections.” I said, “Oh, great. Thanks much.” I said, “I hope you’ll tell everybody in town that so they don’t wonder why I didn’t get the job you told everybody I was going to get.”

And so when the Forest Service finally came around with a permanent job offer, I jumped at the chance. And as I say, a lot of women say they had a lot of problems, but I don’t know if it’s because I was married to a Forest Service person—I don’t know what it was, but I never seemed to have a lot of those difficulties. I had difficulties with one boss, and my only difficulty there was that he treated—we had another woman who was a JF [junior forester], and she’d gotten out of her JF year, and—I won’t use her name, but he gave her a higher performance rating than I. I had trained her. When she came to the unit, even though she was hired as a forester, she didn’t know how to use a clinometer, she didn’t know how to use a diameter tape or an increment bore. And so I trained her with all that, because she’d gone to a different school that didn’t have outside programs, and she’d majored in natural resource law. Never planned to be a forester. And he gave her a higher rating. And the only reason I saw it is he accidentally left it on the copy machine, and I flew down the corridor, and I had it out with him, and I said, “I can’t do this. I did twice the work,” et cetera, et cetera.

So I went to the ranger about it, and that’s when I got changed from a planning forester to an inventory forester and I went to work for the silviculturist because I couldn’t work for the planner anymore because he just—

BUZZINI: [unintelligible] you.

FORBES: He did. Well, I mean, he kept saying, “I know that you’re capable of much more.”

And at that time, you know, if you got fives (because we were on the five scale system), if you got fives, you got transferred; if you got fours, you didn’t. And his whole excuse was, “Well, I knew you were capable of much more.” And I was already doing—I mean—

BUZZINI: [unintelligible] to cover his butt.

FORBES: Yes. I did ten position statements; she did five. I did four timber sale appraisal packages, huge packages; she did one. I did four EAs; she did two.

BUZZINI: Did she go on to make it a career like [sic; as] you did?

FORBES: Yes, she did. She still works on the Shasta-Trinity, as a matter of fact.

BUZZINI: [unintelligible].

FORBES: [unintelligible].

BUZZINI: Yes, but I bet she didn’t get to be a GS-16 like [sic; as]—15—

FORBES: Fifteen. No, she didn’t.

BUZZINI: Yes. So see?

FORBES: But that was her choice.

BUZZINI: Your perseverance and your [unintelligible]—

FORBES: Yes, endurance.

BUZZINI: —and show them you could do it, right?

FORBES: Well, like I say, I was shocked when I got the job in Redding, pleased that I got it, in fire, because Kenton Clark actually called me up and asked me to apply, and I said, “Ehhhh.” I knew that Sid Nobles had been acting since [Donald] “Don” Spence had retired, and I thought, *Oh*—you know? And I remembered Sid, but I didn’t know a lot about him, and I said, “Well, let me think about it.” So Bob and I came over here, and I went and sat down and I said, “Now,

they're asking me to apply." And he said, "Well, I'm a technician. I can never get it. They won't do a -13 technician, so," he says [sic; said], "if you're willing to learn"—and he says [sic; said], "What *do* you know?" And so I explained to him when I started and everything, and he knew that I had worked and helped support fires and stuff all my career, even though fire had never been my primary job. And he said, "Well, let's give it a shot."

And so, like I say, Bob Terrell was supportive, Kenton Clark was suppor[tive]—everybody was very supportive. We had a battle royal for a long time about placing my husband at Shasta Lake. Shirley Moore, who was personnel officer in the region at the time, called me up, and I said, "There's a simple answer: Withdraw the job offer." I said, "But these are the terms that I have to have." I said, "I have a son. We have a son. We're not going to separate our family." And she says [sic; said], "Well, won't you consider"—because we had put a mileage factor in there, and we knew that it would eliminate Yolla Bolla [Ranger District on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest] and Weaverville, because we didn't want to have to commute that far.

BUZZINI: Oh, God, no.

FORBES: And so finally—oh, gosh, what was his—[Lawrence?] "Larry" [Bembry?], who was deputy regional forester, said—Shirley Moore and bumped it up to Larry Bembry, and I told him—I says [sic; said], "Well," I said, "I can't blame Bob Terrell, because he's not getting a counter for anything for taking my white male husband, but," I said, "this is the job we'll take, and it'll meet our needs." And it took about two weeks, and they finally came through. When the consent decree report was almost due, they decided it was more important to have a GS-13 woman in fire on the report than it would hurt to have a GS-9 white male.

BUZZINI: Oh, my gosh.

FORBES: Yes. So we got the offers, and we moved here, and we were very happy here, and I really didn't plan to move from here. And then Pat Kelly got—he was the center manager up in Redmond and always a strong supporter, again, and he got me involved in equipment and chemicals, and between he [sic; him] and John Roberts in Region Six—supported me there. And then they let me handle a virtual office out of here. [Mary Jo Lavin?] did that for me. And [Joseph] “Joe” [Cruise?]. I mean, there's [sic; there are] just so many that have helped along the way.

BUZZINI: It's what you call teamwork and being part of the family and supporting people—

FORBES: Yes.

BUZZINI: —and watching their careers go.

FORBES: Yes. And [Richard] “Dick” Henry was outstanding. I mean, I can't say enough about that man. [unintelligible], for all his foibles [chuckles]—he was a very strong, strong supporter. He and I would have knock-down drag-outs on the phone, but he always—

BUZZINI: But that's healthy, too.

FORBES: Yes.

BUZZINI: You have [cross-talk; unintelligible].

FORBES: He always supported [the fact] that I could do the job and that he knew that I was going to do the job. It was an interesting career. It's one I wouldn't trade. There are moments of things I would go back and do differently.

BUZZINI: I think we all would.

FORBES: Yes. But all in all, except for the changes that are taking place—I just—

BUZZINI: Do you still wish you were part of it?

FORBES: No. I went out at the right time. There were just too many straws that broke in that last year. And when I realized that I could no longer be effective—I felt like up until the last year, I was pretty effective both as a supervisor and a leader, and then that last year, when I could no longer effect change or anything, I just—I was glad to be gone. And now I'm really glad to be gone because—

BUZZINI: [Laughs.]

FORBES: —all the budget woes are going through, the whole Albuquerque service center thing—it's just not the agency I went to work for.

BUZZINI: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

FORBES: And I think up until the last—probably the first half of my career were [sic; was] the best. I mean, most people say that. But I know there are some good people left. There's [sic; There are] the [Neal? Neil?] Hitchcocks, the [Torry?] Hendersons, the people who can carry on and carry on well if they're allowed to. But, again, that's a big question. You know, are they going to be allowed to do the job? Are they going to have the ability to do the job? Because we don't have—

BUZZINI: [unintelligible].

FORBES: Yes. I mean, I look at—you know, there's still a receptionist in Mt. Shasta, I think there's [sic; there are] still people in the McCloud office, but I don't know that they have rangers there anymore. I don't think they have anybody in charge anymore. I don't know, it's somewhat a sad commentary, but I also think it's a sign of the times that now there are more into paperwork exercises. They don't do [cross-talk; unintelligible].

BUZZINI: We lost the personal touch.

FORBES: Yes, and we don't do the fieldwork that we used to do. I mean, I can remember in the big timber days on the McCloud, we had a BD crew, we had a trail crew, we had this crew, we had that crew, and I don't understand the budgeting process well enough, I guess, or—where's the money going? And then I look, and I see where the money has gone.

BUZZINI: For [unintelligible] down on the ground.

FORBES: Well, it's just like on the Shasta-Trinity. That new office—when they were over on Park Marina, their rent was \$500,000 a year for that building. When they had this new one built, they're now paying a million and a half.

BUZZINI: Talk about being at the service for the public. [cross-talk; unintelligible].

FORBES: I know. But, I mean, it's just the million and a half. Where did the more million dollars come from? It came from fire. And so that's just that many more resources they can't put on the ground, because somebody has to pay the bill, and unfortunately fire is the big dog now. But the fire program—when we went into NFMAS [pronounced NIFF-muhs; National Fire Management Analysis System], which was the budgeting process for fire, you were allowed to put in for overhead, but nobody ever anticipated that kind of overhead, that fire would end up paying 80 percent of the overhead for the whole forest.

And so when you look at the entities that we have out there, like the engines that this region bought—you know, going from the Model 41 that could go on the roads that we have to now this Model 62 that can't go squat anywhere to keep up with CDF Joneses or whatever. To me, that wasn't the right decision to make, but—yes, I just have to—like I say—[Dennis?] “Denny” [Bungars?], [David] “Dave” Nelson—there's [sic; there are] any number of the North Zone FMOs [fire management officers] that were here at the time I came on board who just were—

BUZZINI: Doug's going to interview Denny on FIREScope. His name got added. I proposed his name from the get-go. He got lost in the shuffle, but he's in there now.

FORBES: Yes, Denny Bungars, Dave Nelson—they were strong, strong supporters. John [Moppen?—you know, a lot of people say, “Oh, John Moppen,” duh, duh, duh. John was a very strong supporter of me, and I just—you know. The thing I think that I had that some of the people didn't was because I was the only woman in forestry school, I learned how to accept things that I probably shouldn't have accepted. But for me it didn't mean anything because I just learned to let it roll off my back, and so whenever I went to a new place and we'd have our transition meeting, I'd tell my employees, “Hey, if I'm standing there and you're offended that I don't look offended or if I don't say something, then you need to come and tell me that that offended you, and I'll see what I can do to fix it. But,” I said, “there's a whole bunch of things that you might take offense to that I don't.”

And I'll give you one example. Jack White. You know Jack White.

BUZZINI: I do.

FORBES: Jack White always called me “Sis.” “How's it goin' today, Sis?” Jack White's a good ol' Oklahoma boy, and my dad's an Oklahoma boy, and in our family, that was an expression, so I understood where Jack was coming from. He didn't mean it as any disrespect to me. In fact, it was more a symbol of his respect for me. And Jack was always that way. And one day a woman was there who took offense to it. And I said, “What?” “Well, that's disrespectful. He's not respectful of the position that you have here, being his counterpart,” blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I said, “Time out. I don't have an issue with it. If you have an issue, you go talk to him and take care of it, but,” I said, “don't piss him off to the point I don't have a relationship, because,” I said, “I've known Jack for fifteen years.” By that time, I'd known Jack

fifteen years, and he didn't call me Sis to start with. I mean, he would have given me the shirt off his back. But it's just in perceptions.

BUZZINI: Is he still alive?

FORBES: What?

BUZZINI: Is he still alive?

FORBES: I think so. I haven't heard that he passed away. He was working for [unintelligible]. I know he got fired from them, or they asked him to leave. I don't know what the deal was, but it was not pleasant. But anyway, so it's just a matter of—sometimes maybe I should have let things bother me that didn't.

BUZZINI: No, that's probably why you survived without much [sic; many] ulcers or something.

FORBES: If someone said the F word or something in front of me, well, I'd tell them I didn't appreciate it, privately, not publicly.

BUZZINI: [unintelligible] one of the guys, right?

FORBES: No, [unintelligible] the guys never bothered me.

BUZZINI: Yes, me neither, because we worked for [unintelligible].

FORBES: But I did do one thing [chuckles]—I was going to tell about that FIREScope board meeting, one of my memorable moments. I think I might have mentioned it, the day we were talking, but we were in this meeting, and they were changing the bylaws, as I said. They'd gone from "chairman" to "chair," and every time there was a change suggested, [William] "Bill" [Zieson?—pronounced ZEE-sun] would say, "Oh, I'll get my girl to make that change. I'll get my girl to make that change." I don't normally take offense to these kind [sic; kinds] of things, but he was just so obnoxious about it.

So we went out on a break, and Andy Anderson and Sid and I were standing there in the parking lot. They were talking about the meeting and everything. Nobody told me Zieson had walked up behind me. And so Sid says [sic; said], “Well, how do you find your first meeting?” And I said, “Hey, I’m pleased at the meeting except for that Zieson. If he one more time says ‘I’m gonna get my girl to fix that,’ I’m gonna stand up and say, ‘No, Bill, don’t bother yourself. I got my boy Sid here.’”

BUZZINI: [Laughs.]

FORBES: I mean, everybody just [unintelligible]. Well, Zieson was behind me, and he says [sic; said], “I’m really sorry you took offense,” and so we just started laughing. But, I mean, it was just so funny, because here Zieson was doing that—and I know a lot of people get angry at me because I would take notes at a meeting. Well, I took notes for myself anyway, and if anybody ever wants to see them, I must have hundreds—

BUZZINI: Boxes?

FORBES: Oh, I have boxes up in my attic of notes from when I was a ranger. I think I started it when I was a timber staff. And I don’t know why I initially started. It was like a little diary to start with, and then it just got—I have conversations, calls, meetings, you name it. Well, I was always taking the notes anyway, and so whenever I was asked in a meeting—I had a woman tell me once, “Never refuse to take the notes at the meeting because that’s the most powerful position you can have.” I discovered that to be true.

BUZZINI: It’s like being a supervisor’s secretary.

FORBES: Well, you take the notes at the meeting, and you can slant the discussion and the notes. I mean, whether you do it intentionally or unintentionally—and I know I never intended for some of it to come out the way it did, but I always won. [Laughs.]

BUZZINI: I'll bet you did. [Laughs.]

FORBES: And no one ever challenged them, was the amazing part.

BUZZINI: Good for you.

FORBES: But since I was taking them anyway, I never minded doing that, like I say, because I could influence the outcome to a degree, and I felt like it was always a very powerful position. I know some people are offended if they're asked to take notes at a meeting, but that was one thing that—like I say, it just never bothered me because I could influence what was going on.

I can tell you I have wonderful friends and wonderful memories, and the most important mentor I think I ever had—well, there are actually four of them. John Wells, Pat Kelly, Dennis Pendleton, who mentored me in the later stages of my career, and Bob Rice. They were all very instrumental in helping me take that next step. As I say, if it hadn't been for John and his work-at-home agreement when they were unheard of in the—I mean, that was '78—and developing the work-at-home agreement with me, who knows if I'd even still be working for the Forest Service?

BUZZINI: So good things did happen because of good people, huh?

FORBES: Yes, lots of good things.

BUZZINI: You talked about memories. What are you most proud of with regard to the role you played as Forest Service employee?

FORBES: [Pause.]

BUZZINI: There are probably a couple of proud moments, I'm sure.

FORBES: I think I'm most proud of the three awards I got from my employees, because I think they basically made me feel like I was doing the job I was supposed to do. And then out of my

many employees, I've had at least six that have gone on to become rangers and actually move up in the organization.

BUZZINI: That you helped mentor.

FORBES: That I helped mentor. I had a woman send me a note the other day, and she says [sic; said], "I don't know how much you realize you mentored all the rest of us," and it made me feel pretty good. So I think helping women in the organization, and men, get to realize their goals—I think those are the things I'm most proud of.

BUZZINI: Well, Alice, is there anything else you'd like to add before we conclude our interview?

FORBES: You know, I thought about this whole thing for all last week, when we set up the time, and I have so many stories, but I think I gave you the most critical ones that needed to be said. The rest of them—yes, they're nice but. Maybe one day I'll get out my notebooks, or if anybody knows where I can send my notebooks if somebody ever wants them, for any reason, "The Day in the Life of a Ranger" or whatever, I would certainly be glad to make them available to him. I'd have to probably go through them and edit a little bit [chuckles], but—

BUZZINI: Well, don't they have a forest museum of sorts?

FORBES: Well, they have a museum up in Missoula, but I don't know—

BUZZINI: I mean here locally in Region Five, or it includes your whole career, doesn't it?

FORBES: Well, yes, it starts in Region One and ends here in Region Five.

BUZZINI: I'm sure other retirees have their memorabilia they want to—

FORBES: Oh, I think there's a whole bunch of them that have notes.

BUZZINI: It's something you should explore.

FORBES: Some people have put it [sic; them] in books, like, you know, Bob Gray wrote a book.

BUZZINI: And [Gilbert] “Gil” [Davies?] [cross-talk; unintelligible].

FORBES: I don’t want to write a book. Oh, Gil’s been very prolific. [Laughs.]

BUZZINI: He’s given me every book he’s written. [unintelligible] for them.

FORBES: I’ve missed one of his books, the latest one. I haven’t gotten that one yet. I have the *Humor in Uniform* and one of the other ones, two of the other ones, I think.

BUZZINI: Well, Alice, I want to thank you so much for taking time and for sharing a part of yourself with us.

FORBES: Well, thank you, and I hope I’ve participated enough to give information that’ll help.

BUZZINI: You have.

FORBES: We’ll go from here.

BUZZINI: All rightie.

[[End of interview.]

