PHIL HIRL: This is Phil Hirl, H-i-r-l. I’m at the home of Dick Pomeroy, P-o-m-e-r-o-y. We’re conducting an interview for the R5 history project. So tell me a little bit about yourself, Dick: what you did in Five and how you got there and so forth.

RICHARD (“DICK”) POMEROY: Well, I transferred to Five in 1971 as regional director of personnel. The previous twenty years, I spent in Region Six as a forester, as a timber management forester, the fire management forester on a national forest. I was a job Corps director. I did most anything that seemingly people wanted me to do. So I probably have kind of a little different background than most personnel directors who come from the administrative side of the job.

The interesting part, too, in terms of before I came to California, was that I was a fire boss on a large, 140,000-acre fire in northern Washington, and there I was, the fire boss from Region Six, and most of my staff were from Region Five. So when I transferred down to California, just about everybody thought, Well, maybe Dick knows enough about fire to get us all a grade increase. That didn’t happen.
In Region Five, as I did in Region Six, the first thing I ran up against was a glut of foresters throughout the region. Foresters were considered to be able to do most anything: they can fires, they could locate roads, they could sell timber, they could talk to the public, they knew all there was to know about wildlife, watershed and most anything else. And they would sometimes tell you about it. Foresters could do most anything.

As budgets for timber management really increased in the 1960s and early seventies, hundreds of foresters were recruited out of forestry schools to get the job done. This was easy. Although we were supposed to be using technicians, it was a lot easier if we had more budget to go to the forestry roster that that the Civil Service Commission kept, and just hire a forester off the roster. And so we went on and on and on without any constraints other than budget. What happened on this was that in doing kind of a study on the status of foresters in both Regions Six and Five, we found that we had hired so many of them that it would take, given the numbers of vacancies at the grade nine level, it would take the average forester at least ten years to be promoted to grade nine. This is called stagnation.

There’s [sic; There were] an enormous number of foresters, and this kind of got us in difficulties when we had to recruit other disciplines because the other disciplines verged on the forestry profession, and we didn’t have a lot of room for them. So we quit hiring foresters, or at least we hired just very few foresters each year, and we started bringing natural resource professionals, such as wildlife biologists, watershed management specialists, soil scientists, landscape architects, hydrologists, and on and on and on.

Prior to this, we were not really making many college visits except for engineers, which had been a shortage category. But giving these new disciplines meant that we had to go to different college campus in looking for wildlife biologists and hydrologists and so forth. And
doing this, we found that there was [sic; were] many more professional women in these particular disciplines in college, and minorities as well, that we could recruit than in forestry. Forestry was pretty much an all-male roster from the Civil Service Commission. And so this kind of got us started pretty effectively in providing women or recruiting women and minorities into professional type jobs.

This took time, because we had to, by attrition, have some foresters leave the organization so we could have new jobs in terms of wildlife and watershed and so forth. And so this wasn’t the fastest progress that we would like to have made. But at the same time, the region took two initiatives in the area of personnel management that really kind of helped in terms of the recruitment of other than foresters. The first thing that we did is we set up, established jobs and said this could be, as an example, filled by a forester or by a wildlife management person or by a hydrologist or a forester, so that when a vacancy occurred, the district ranger, forest supervisor could say, “Well, to balance out my interdisciplinary group, I need a wildlife biologist rather than replacing with a forester.” And this helped quite a bit.

The second thing we did—and one of the problems that we had in particular with women but minority groups, too, is that the turnover was pretty fast. They went out for a year or two, and for one reason or another, they would resign from the ranger district in the forest. So we came up with a policy that said essentially that if either the female or the male forester’s [sic; forester?] employee was transferred to another location, then it was regional policy to move the spouse of that particular employee and to place him or her in a position, say on a lateral basis.

And so that gave kind of a security, because before that, we would want to promote and maybe transfer a woman professional employee, maybe one that had gotten married. What do you do with the husband? And that helped quite a bit.
Doing this kind of really increased our ability or progress in hiring minorities and women, and probably we doubled the number in Region Five during my tenure. But the doubling was, like, from 2 percent of the professional workforce to 4 percent. I don’t know whether those are exact figures, but the percentages were so small that doubling didn’t really amount to too much.

The progress then that we did begin to make was probably as much due to the women, themselves, because the women just wouldn’t accept some of the attitudes and things that we men would use on them, so they would just forge forward and did a very good job, in most instances.

Attitudes of men began to change. Came from, in some instances: “I’m not gonna allow a woman to camp out overnight with a man not his wife.” And these were some of the attitudes that were on our rangers in these days. Or, “We can’t let a woman ride in the back of a one-ton stock truck, as they jiggle differently than men.”

HIRL: [Chuckles.]
POMEROY: Now, what that had to do with the work, I’m not too sure. But we put on some sensitivity training, civil rights training, did a lot of trips to different forests and ranger districts to try to bring these kind [sic; kinds] of things together a little bit more positive [sic; positively], and things began to change.

Probably, though, again, the thing that made the greatest impact in terms of the hiring and retention of women and minority groups were they, themselves, doing the job. And then, at the same time, the forest supervisors were very strong. They were very committed and they had good leadership from the regional forester, and so progress began to make itself felt.
Shortly after arriving in my new job, the regional forester called me into his office and told me he had three—

HIRL: And your new job was?

POMEROY: Personnel, regional personal director, yes. Thank you. And he told me there was [sic; were] three things, from his standpoint, that he really wanted me to address. One of them was the work and behavior of the training group; they were not seen as a very productive group in the region.

The second thing was the performance of the employment and classification part of personnel management, which worked for me, because they had a tendency to tell people what to do, not say, “This is how I can help you.” And they also had a tendency to somehow lose some kind of an action; it’s always an “action” being lost, and that didn’t help much at all, when people were waiting to fill a job.

And the last area was in fire management, and fire management, from Doug’s [Douglas Leisz] standpoint, the regional forester, there simply was [sic; were] too many accidents and too many deaths in fire management, and my having a fire management background kind of made me perfect for providing leadership in this particular area.

Okay, let’s talk a little bit about the work and training group. It had two major components in this particular program. One was kind of a type of sensitivity experience, and the second involved what was called team building. The sensitivity experience was one where they went to Pajaro Dunes out on the California coast, brought in a team from different ranger districts and forests, of people, and they probably varied all the way from GS-3s to GS-13s. They put them in a condominium and said, “Survive. Work out your relationships. Do the kinds of things that it takes to live together in a community together and to be whole.”
Meanwhile, during this course of a week, there would be kind of vignettes of thought-provoking information provided to the various people, and so those would be discussion points. When they came out of a week of this, it was a brand-new experience for almost anybody, and many—and most of them really, really liked what happened to them. I remember one fire management officer, an old-timer, grizzled jaw and that, and I remember him saying, “I didn’t realize that people could work together this way. It’s kind of like a family.”

HIRL: Did that training have a short name that everybody kind of knew?

POMEROY: Yes, and I’m trying to remember it. It was thirty years ago. [Laughs.] Do you remember it?

HIRL: No, I can’t remember, either.

POMEROY: [Laughs.] But anyway, I’m sure it did, but it escapes me at the moment. But it really sensitized people to others, and it started bringing groups together. They would get this training prior to the team building.

Now, the team building was a little more structured than the sensitivity training. Team building really included usually a district ranger and his immediate staff on a national forest or on a ranger district, and they would get together with a facilitator, and they would identify the different kinds of problems of production and of quality, performance and so forth on a ranger district, and they would together [buzzing noise begins in the background], with the facilitator—maybe you better turn it off.

[End CD Track 1. Begin CD Track 2.] [Buzzing sound continues.]
HIRL: We’re recording again. I’m with Dick Pomeroy. You were talking about law enforcement when we broke there, Dick.

POMEROY: Yes. Law enforcement especially was pretty new to the region when I was there in the seventies, and I recall one early meeting with the regional forester and staff, where we brought an outside consultant in to give us a sense of what was on the horizon in the area of law enforcement and how it might affect the national forest system. And right of the box, this guy says, “We need a fence around every ranger station that’s at least eight feet high.” The second thing he came up with was that the forest officer who’s in contact with the public needs to wear a sidearm. Well, neither one of those ideas went anywhere. You could just see the forest supervisors and the regional foresters say, “Oh, no!” I think we had the wrong man to come talk to us.

HIRL: [Laughs.]

POMEROY: So that wasn’t the best start, but after that we got some really good people in the law enforcement area, and there was some good leadership. But the problem arose, was that the special agents that we trained worked across geographic lines, between forests and sometimes between regions, and where did they get their direction? So that was one question.

The second thing is who set the priorities? Was it to go out and investigate a timber sale to see whether somebody was stealing trees? Or was the priority in terms of somebody pilfering a campground or doing something of this nature? There was always some conflict between local forest supervisors and law enforcement people in terms of the kinds of things that they would investigate, and secondly, who were they reporting to? And as I remember it, at that time, they reported to the forest supervisor, who had professional consultation from the regional enforcement, and that didn’t work very well. It never did work very well. I recall some charges
that—I don’t think they were substantiated at all—where a law enforcement officer, one of our special agents said, “Well, the forest supervisors won’t let us look at timber sales because it might get into their personal situation.” Of course, when they made that kind of a statement, that part of it was investigated, and there was nothing to it, but it was those kind [sic; kinds] of things.

And some of the law enforcement officers, the special agents really had some difficulties in attitude. You know, they were the big shot that knew what had to be done, and they would move in pretty hard sometimes. I think that that’s been pretty well worked out now. As far as I know, it seems to have come together, particularly from the Washington level standpoint and the regional standpoint.

HIRL: I suppose everybody would wonder what—since you’re the personnel director—some factors leading up to the consent decree or where you fit into the consent decree, [unintelligible].

POMEROY: Yes. The consent decree was actually a part of the Pacific Southwest [Research] Station. The complaint was filed by a woman that was in that particular unit of the Forest Service, and it was against the station director and anybody else that she could lodge a complaint against. I don’t remember all the details of the complaint, but I think the Forest Service stubbed its foot a couple of times, that I could see. But when it went on its way up the complaint system and finally into the courts, the station didn’t have enough people in it to be able to do anything from the consent decree standpoint, so I think what we’re talking about is all of California. And so it started with the station, and then it came out to all of California, and then, in a way, the whole nation. The Forest Service nationally picked up on it.

I think it was probably a good thing, because we weren’t doing that well in Region Five in recruiting and in the upper mobility of women and minorities, so we probably deserved it, but it wasn’t actually lodged against us from some overt action on the part of Region Five personnel.
When it came, I was still the regional personnel director, and I got a first copy of the complaint that was written by the plaintiff and some attorneys, that this is what they expected the Forest Service to do as a result, in terms of responding to the consent decree. As far as I was concerned, it had all process kind of things in it and very little in the terms of, well, what are the goals and objectives and what are the time frameworks? It was like you do all these things immediately, without any measurement or anything else.

So I rewrote it, along with the deputy director of the Pacific Southwest Station. I guess I actually did most of the rewriting. And then we were asked to come into the Washington office, and we went through a review process, and different people in the Washington office, I think including some deputy chiefs and certainly the personnel director and some others. And we got a pretty good acknowledgement that they liked what we had come up with. They said it was workable and we needed to work with the Justice Department, which was the federal end of the complaint.

And so we met with the Justice Department attorneys who were involved in the consent decree, and boy, I left that meeting in Washington, DC, thinking, I think it’s going to work better, not necessarily as good as I’d hoped, but it would work better. So I came back to San Francisco and smiled onto myself about the good job I had done. Wasn’t too long before I got the second version of the consent decree. It was the same as the first one. There had been no changes made.

Now, what happened in between, I have no idea, but apparently just the attorneys for the plaintiff was [sic; were] sufficiently powerful and probably had enough moxie to say, “No, you’re not going to change anything that we wrote,” because they were the ones that wrote it. I was disappointed in that.
HIRL: I wonder what a difference could it have made if what you had done been implemented.
POMEROY: Yes. You know, I don’t even remember what the provisions were in that, but I know I did feel pretty good about it. You know, that was kind of a turn-off for me because I had in my own mind some trains of initiatives that we could take that would make a lot of progress but reduce the pain, and from what I gather from others since I’ve retired, there’s a lot of pain associated with the implementation of the consent decree, particularly about white males were just kind of stopped in terms of their career progression.

But I didn’t see those days because I turned fifty-five, and I have a lot of energy, and I’d been ten years in the same job, and I didn’t want to go through the consent decree, and, frankly, the administration of Richard [M.] Nixon, and so I retired. I was glad! [Laughs.]

HIRL: The era you were personnel director was really an era of—the beginning of other specialists. You mentioned that a little, but I wonder if you did get involved with the forests that much and the integration of all of this, soil scientists and [unintelligible] and the forest workforce.
POMEROY: Yes. Good question. The one-two approach to management behavior training, the sensitivity, the team building were very, very helpful and instrumental in making that happen. Some of the problems that we had with that is that people would take in a sensitivity training, and they would say, “Hey, this is the life that I really would like to be able to work within, where everybody’s on a first-name basis and we just respond to each other.” Well, then they went back to their work unit, and oftentimes the person in charge of their work unit had not gone through this training, and the s-h. or whatever hit the fan, so there were some really difficult times relations-wise, because [if] differing expectations that couldn’t be brought together.
And that resulted in some of the visitations that I think I talked about a little bit earlier, because sometimes the unit would just kind of fall apart. Just couldn’t compromise their position or [so-and-so discipline?] just wasn’t involved when he or she should have been, et cetera, et cetera. So we did a lot of kind of semi-sensitivity and team building on the ranger district or on the forest level.

We also used, oh, upwards of twenty or thirty what we called external consultants to work with us, the region, in terms of looking at processes and working with people to really make these units effective. It wasn’t perfect, because there was [sic; were] times when one or another just said, “This is the way it is,” and then they would go public on more than one occasion, and it hit the headlines that “I don’t agree that the Forest Service is going to log here because of this particular flora or fauna,” and then we had to deal a lot with the Forest Service nationally and the Department of Agriculture. And, oh gosh, that went on and on.

Finally, you know, we pretty well had to say, “You got the right to say what you want to,” and some of them did, and they were a little bit maybe over on the one side or the other. So it wasn’t a perfect situation, but it was certainly a lot better. I think that helped just an awful lot.

We had trouble with the career ladders. You know, where do they go from here? A lot of them were grade elevens, but then maybe there was a couple of grade twelves and one grade thirteen in the region, and maybe thirty or forty, fifty or sixty specialists below that level, and so what do we do career wise?

Well, one of the things we really tried to do—and this occurred mostly from the Washington level—was to open up the number of disciplines that qualified to become regional foresters or chief or district rangers. Engineers had been interchangeable in those particular kinds of jobs for some years, but wildlife biologists, no, and watershed people and this were not
part of the disciplines that could qualify to be a line officer. So that got opened up, and so that helped a lot.

And then, as time went by, as I mentioned earlier, we did an interdisciplinary thing, so we had wildlife biologists that—oh, I think some of them probably were timber management officers, although they had a wildlife management background, and they did very well. Of course, we had engineers that were—the chief, [R.] Max Peterson, as an example, was an engineer. But it was a very dynamic situation, and I remember—I think this was a wildlife biologist.

They had a meeting in San Francisco office, and I was invited to attend and talk about career ladders. And very frankly, I didn’t have a lot to say because we were still this culture of, you know, foresters know how to do everything. I recall saying to them that “the system is there now. We’ve opened it up, and now it’s going to be up to you guys and women to make it happen. Talk to your forest supervisor and talk to the district ranger about, hey, when a vacancy comes about, you are now qualified, so go after it.” Well, I don’t know whether they went after it or not, but—

HIRL: I know some that did.

POMEROY: Yes. Well, yes. So that worked really well. Now I don’t know whether that’s an issue or not in terms of career ladders. We had pretty good longevity in terms of employment with our natural resource professionals other than foresters. And the [interesting?] part about that is that even in forestry, we had so many, like I’ve mentioned, hundreds of them, you know?

HIRL: Yes.

POMEROY: At least at some schools, the word got out that, well, if you can’t get another job in forestry, the Forest Service will hire you. That’s not the best way to run an organization. That
wasn’t true in the area of wildlife biologists, for example, or in geology or soil science and this type of discipline. We were able to go in there and really compete for the best, and I think generally we got many of the very best. It’s like [Trinny?] was one of the best.

HIRL: So you think we did get some of the better [cross-talk; unintelligible].

POMEROY: Oh, I think so. I think so. And in engineering we did, too. I don’t want to forget engineering. [Chuckles.]

HIRL: [unintelligible].

POMEROY: Yes. They were so powerful at that time that—in some ways, they ran their own personnel shop. [Ward Gaynoe?] in Region Six used to advise me all the time about what to do. [Chuckles]

HIRL: I’m sure [Donald] “Don” Turner did, too.

POMEROY: Don Turner in particular. [Laughs.]

HIRL: The other day you told me a couple of stories about Paul [Staffum?], and I worked with Paul. Certainly Paul’s got to be talked about in the history of Region Five, and I wonder if you’d might relay a story or two about Paul.

POMEROY: Yes. I don’t think I’d been in the San Francisco office for more than a month when I got a call from a fellow by the name of Paul Staffum, who [sic; whom] I’d never heard of. I soon found out that he was the forest supervisor of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. His message was this: “Dick, I don’t know whether I’m going to be able to work with you or not, so I’m going to come in, and we’re gonna talk about it.” [Laughs.] And, “Set a date, and I’ll be there.” And so we set a date, and he came in. I don’t know, he must have had other things to do in the regional office, too. I don’t know, we must have talked about a half an hour or so, and finally he got up. He must have had an appointment or something or other. He got up. He said,
“You’re okay. We can work together.” And out he went. [Laughs.] And it was always that way, from then on. He didn’t take my advice always, but he always respected it, and I liked that about Paul, is that [sic; what I liked about Paul is that] he respected your advice.

When I would visit the forest—I visited the forest I think on—I don’t recall what happened, but we were traveling. I was on vacation or something or other. And—oh, and I’d had car trouble and that. And that was in Redding, and so I just stopped in to see what was going on. You know, Paul just turned everything over to me legally. You know, so helpful, personally helpful, to be sure that we cut through—there was a winter snowstorm or something or other that we got involved in, but he was—

And I went to his retirement, all the way up to Redding from San Francisco. That was probably the nicest retirement. You talk about accolades. I don’t know how he could have stood all the nice things that were said about him. [Laughs.] Because he liked the idea, I think, of being gruff, a little gruff, but he was an inspiration. And I think it was in Redding, the town, as near as I can determine.

And I can tell you this, that when he retired, we never had a replacement—I’m not talking about any single individual now—that nearly measured up to Paul in that very touchy community of Redding, where there was [sic; were] a lot of political kinds of things happening in the community. We never heard those kinds of things when Paul was there. But following that, yes. [Chuckles.] There was [sic; were] lots of problems.

HIRL: Paul also implemented many of those disciplines on the Shasta-Trinity.


[End CD Track 2. Begin CD Track 3.]
HIRL: Resuming the interview with Dick. Continue, Dick.

POMEROY: Yes. Well, we had a little bit of noise there, and we had to shut down, and I’ll try to pick up where I was. But I think we were doing some team building with rangers and ranger districts. At least in my view, when I first got down there, the one-two process really worked pretty well, but one of the problems we had was that some members of the training staff really believed that in order to learn something, it had to come from well within the individual, so they would not structure anything, and so many of the regional staff that went through this non-structured process really didn’t like it. They found the training group to be unacceptable. They didn’t want them to come out on the forest. In fact, I had one forest supervisor call me up and say, “You give me a call before So-and-so comes onto my forest, because I want to leave.” So that was pretty bad. And so we went through, that particular staff and myself, through some very hard times together.

In part, one of the staff—I put him to work directly for me and told him that if he didn’t really get with it that he could sit down on the first floor of the regional office and review my incoming mail and my outgoing mail and do that all day long. Well, if you know this particular individual, that would have been the most horrid thing that he’d ever done in his life, but I meant it. You know, the way to get out of that bind is to start working with the forest supervisors and district rangers so that they say that you’re valuable. They want your service. You’ve got something to offer. And how you go about doing that is going to be up you, and you’re going to have to work that into the structure of the sensitivity training and team building as well.

[Buzzing noise begins again.]
At the same time, I think I worked something out with the regional forester. I didn’t want any travel money for this group, that we put the group on travel to be paid by the forest or the ranger district, and the travel money would not be held in my office, and so we gave all the travel money back, and if they couldn’t acquire travel money from a forest or a ranger district, then they didn’t [want?] a job. So that was kind of making a pretty good issue out of it.

Well, there’s obviously some very significant changes, and the one individual that [unintelligible]. And they started structuring. They started doing the kinds of things that were within the breadth of the understanding of the first [unintelligible]. They started creating a group of forest supervisors and rangers and fire management officers that really went after them for different kinds of help. And so this was very gratifying. In fact, it was so gratifying that the person that was probably the one that had most of the concern on the part of the region—I actually gave him a [unintelligible] step increase about two years after we started dealing with this. So we felt pretty good about that.

The third area that the regional forester wanted me to look into had to do with fire management, the safety program, and the number of deaths and serious injuries that were occurring in Region Five just about every year. Well, here, I had a fire background, but I was in personnel management, and at the same time, the fire chief in the region was right, you know, entering a retirement period. He was slowing down some, and he was going to go into retirement within about six months or so. And so my ability to effect anything through him was limited, if not essential or possible.

And so when he retired—kind of had to wait for this—we set up a meeting with the Southern California forest supervisors, and this would be the Los Padres and the Angeles and the Cleveland and the San Bernardino and maybe one or two others. Had a meeting on fire safety,
and opened it up and said, “Okay, where do we go from here? How do we do something with this thing?” And we reviewed all the different investigation reports for fatalities and serious injuries that the region had, and spent a lot of time in doing that with the forest supervisors.

The conclusion that we came to was that really the fire people, themselves, the ones who actually fight the forest fires—they know how, that what we really were talking about was accountability and that we had to face up and do the kinds of things we knew how to do and not make exceptions, because it was these exceptions that were getting us into trouble. And so about this time, [unintelligible], “How do we go about making this happen? We can’t just write a letter and say everybody’s going to be accountable.”

So we decided that what we wanted to do was to interview those people who were getting hurt, the ones that had the problem of safety, and so we hired a consultant from outside that we had worked with before, and he worked with the training group off and on during the previous years. With his advice, we decided that we would assess the problem by having focus groups throughout the entire region of California. And so we set up groups of seven or eight, nine individuals, and then we would have an easel paper and say, “Hey, what about fire safety? What’s going on?” And then we would just put on the easel [sic; easel, on] a pad, just as closely as we could, the thoughts that they had.

You can’t believe the amount of paper that we generated doing this through the whole region. But Brian McGuire, who was my safety officer at that time, who was really doing a lot of the legwork and taking some of those creative initiatives to get this project going—he got a group together, and they laid those papers out, and he would ask those that had taken the information, “What are the ideas that came out of them that seemed to have the most heat?” and repeatedly was in information [sic]. And so they boiled the information down to probably six or
seven pages of things that the fire people thought we needed to do in the region to resolve this kind of situation, the fire safety situation.

And so where do we go from here? Well, it was obviously that we had to have an interface between the regional forester and all the forest supervisors and those who had taken the information down. We arranged this to happen—I think it was in Sacramento we did this, and it was really interesting to observe, because here we had a regional forester, Doug Leisz, who was probably—I don’t know what he was at this time; he was either a GS-16 or he was a super grade, and then the division chiefs and forest supervisors who were -14s and -15s. And they were being talked to mostly by fire technicians, who probably—there might have been one that was a grade eleven, but they went from grade eleven on down. And so there was quite a difference between the status or stature, if you will, of the two groups.

Well, Brian, bless his heart, came up with a little slogan that we started out the meeting with: Don’t shoot the speaker.

HIRL: [Chuckles.]

POMEROY: And that came up repeatedly, because the forest supervisors and the regional foresters sometimes heard things that they didn’t like or they didn’t agree with, and so: Don’t shoot the speaker, because what he was doing was representing what somebody had said on the forest. Well, from there, it all got written up, and it was sent out to the forest and this, and people, given that process or being a part of that process, you know, individually decided that hey, they would do something about it, and they did. And so the fire safety program really got so much better than it had been—or [there were] fewer accidents, and we had no fatalities for some years after that.
This is what we called the Fire Safety program—no, Safety First program in Region Five, and it was a precursor, in some ways, to what was it, the FIRESCOPE [FIrefighting RESources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies]? Is that the name of the other one?

HIRL: I don’t know anything about the FIRESCOPE.

POMEROY: Yes, the one where we had incident commanders and these kind [sic; kinds] of things come together. But it was kind of a precursor to that and I think set some really good ground rules to be able to do that.

Let’s see. [Leafs through papers.] Okay, a third [sic; second?] area that the regional forester wanted me to look at had to do with the performance of my own personal personnel management group that assisted me in California, in San Francisco. This was one of the most difficult times of my life, because when I moved down there to take this job, the individual that had preceded me had only lasted a year in that job and he wanted out; it was too much. And so I went down, not knowing this, and it was obvious that nobody really wanted to hear form me in my own staff.

HIRL: [Chuckles softly.]

POMEROY: We had a forest wide forest personnel officer meeting, and Doug Leisz attended with me, and I remember thinking at the time, How come the regional forester is attending a forest personnel officer meeting? It’s not his normal pattern. Well, come to find out that the forest personnel officers didn’t think much of me, either, and the regional forester I think was there to take care of protecting me just a little bit.

HIRL: [Laughs.]

POMEROY: Although I had no stake in the past, and so everything could be fresh and new for me. So anyway, this situation of poor relationships between staff members—staff members
telling the forest personnel officers or rangers or whatever the case might be, “You do this,” “You can’t do that,” “You can’t do the other.” Or they would say, “What personal action are you talking about? I don’t remember seeing that personal action. I guess we’ve lost it or misplaced it.” That went on for several years while I was trying to kind of change a few people, because it was really hard for me to put my finger on it in terms of what was going on. So I did make some key changes that were really helpful.

Of course, one of them was somebody that I have an admirer for years, and her name was Esther [Nolan?], who came in as the classification chief. Esther Nolan had come from Washington, DC, and she was just marvelous, just like a breath of fresh air because she was an activist and had a real professional attitude and loved the forest supervisors and the rangers in the Forest Service as an organization. This helped a lot, the turning around of the training group helped a lot.

So finally, when we started getting some of these staff changes, we decided to do two things to try to change the culture of that particular shop. [Buzzing noise has begun again.] We called it—at that time, gee, this was in the 1970s. We called it “visioning.” Now, the vision all over the place today in different organizations, but I don’t think any of us knew what visioning was back in the seventies. And the visioning included people from the entire personnel shop, providing input into the process.

And the process had two parts to it. One was we were to define what we saw as the culture of the unit as it existed at that moment in time. Did we have people in the right place? Did they know what they were talking about? Were they autocratic or were they problem solving?—et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And so different members of the staff wrote it down on flip charts until we were kind of out of words, and we reviewed it together, and it became
obvious—and this was about a thirty-five-person staff—it became obvious that we didn’t like
ourselves very much. [Noise has stopped.]

HIRL: [Chuckles softly.]

POMEROY: And so the next process, then, was: Let’s define the kind of staff we want to be in
terms of our own professional assistance, in terms of how people feel about us from the field in
terms of the assistance that they’ve received, and on and on and on. And so we did that. It made
a tremendous contrast with where we are now. So we did that, and then the question came up:
Well, how do we get this changed?

To my surprise, and I guess if I had thought about it, I might have surmised that this
would happen—but once we had that: “This is the way we want to be as a staff,” people started
being that way. They started changing their behavior, and not just individual behavior [noise
resumes], but small groups would get together and say, “Hey, we’re not working too well.” Our
classification group got together with our employment group, and, well, the last four years that I
was the personnel director in Region Five, we got superior performance ratings, and it was
entirely due to the staff that was really producing in a way that they never had, and they were
problem solving with the forest, and we were able to reduce the size of the staff at the same time.

And so that’s kind of my story. I could talk a lot more about this. In fact, I could go on
and on and on with little vignettes of experience, but perhaps this kind of fills in—the workforce
and training and that work that we did with the interdisciplinary groups that were working on the
national forest ranger districts, and so lots of transition, lots of difficult times, and then a lot of
successes.

HIRL: Just out of curiosity, did you have anything to do with the Job Corps program in Region
Five while you were there?
POMEROY: Well, no, because they had stopped the Job Corps program in Region Five. I thank you for bringing that up, because I was the first Job Corps director in the nation and [actually had been?] interviewed and approved by [R.] Sargent Shriver. At that particular time, in 1964, the question was whether the Forest Service was capable of running a Job Corp center or multiple Job Corps centers in the nation, and so he wanted to interview me. Why me, I have no idea, because I had gone to a panel review, and apparently he said he had to talk to me.

And so I remember going up to the Peace Corps office where he was located. He was the Peace Corps director, and he was also the director of the Office of Economic Opportunity. Waiting for him to interview me—interesting—as to whether or not I was capable of doing the job. Interesting: I walked into his grand office, and he says, “Well, tell me about the Foreign Service.”

HIRL: [Laughs.] The Foreign Service!

POMEROY: I couldn’t help but chuckle a little bit to myself, and I said, “This is the Forest Service, and I’m a candidate for a Job Corps director’s position.” “Oh,” he says. [Chuckles.] And so I talked—I don’t know, it must have been a half an hour interview. I talked for five to ten minutes, and the rest of the time he was saying, “Go out West, young man [laughs], and change everything.” But as a result of it, the Job Corps program was given to the Forest Service and other federal agencies and some industry to be run, and with advice and counsel from the Office of Economic Opportunity.

That program was the most difficult program that I’ve ever been involved with. It was starting from scratch, and in starting from scratch we made up our own rules, and when you made a decision—we had 250 corpsmen. When you made a decision, you got instant response. You know, you were either right, accepted, or they could tell you in no uncertain terms that that
wasn’t an appropriate thing to be telling them. I’m being very polite now in some of my words. because it got very difficult.

But I think this was the most marvelous program, not only in terms of the mission of the Job Corps, which was working with disadvantaged youth, but also in terms of bringing Forest Service people in, and their ability to really be exposed to lots of change and difference and ideas and cultures, because 60 to 70 percent of the corpsmen were probably black, and there was 20 percent Hispanic and one or two Native Americans, and the rest were southern white who couldn’t do the educational thing. It was rough. There were some of us that worked twenty-four hours straight through, without any overtime, just because we didn’t have enough staff, so we brought people in from the ranger districts all over the region. And they would come in for details of ten days or two weeks or sometimes longer than that. [Noise starts.] And we made resident workers out of them. They lived with groups of corpsmen sixteen at a time, and they lived and slept with them, and they worked day and night, illegally. We never paid them any overtime. And you could just see the staff blossoming. It was a miracle. It was a miracle to see this.

I’m a little disappointed in some of the reading I’ve done on this particular project, the Region Five oral [history], that they don’t mention hardly anything about the Job Corps, but it was really quite predominant, and [we] of Job Corps centers in Region Five. But they were all shut down at the time Richard Nixon came into the presidency and Ronald Reagan became governor. And neither one of them had ever set foot on a Job Corps center, but they made a decision that they were all going to close down, and they did.
HIRL: You made that point the other day. I thought that was kind of an important one, that they may be one of the first experiences Forest Service people had [unintelligible] for later, for having an experience in dealing with minorities and so forth. I thought that was kind of important.

POMEROY: Yes, I think it is really important, and not just in having a sensitivity to different cultures but it was also having an attitude that, well, what didn’t work yesterday, we don’t have to do it today, we can do something else. And I think it really had an effect upon performance of Forest Service people, and it certainly had an effect upon the relationships and interdisciplinary kinds of relationships, because at that point in time, we were beginning to bring in—well, engineers for a long time, but wildlife biologists and others, and some of them had been detailed to work with us. The learning experience just was fantastic.

HIRL: Well, I think the Job Corps did some great things in its years, and that’s good to talk about it.

POMEROY: Yes, I agree. [Laughs.] Obviously, I agree. [Laughs.]

[End of interview.]
LINDA NUNES: Good morning. Here we are. It’s April 25th, and we’re having a phone interview on oral history with Richard Pomeroy, former Region Five personnel director. Good morning, Dick.

RICHARD POMEROY: Good morning, Linda.

NUNES: And where do you live now?

POMEROY: I live in Portland, Oregon, and have lived here since 1990. All four of my sons moved back to Portland, where I’ve lived three times, and so I joined them.

NUNES: Good for you. Now, this is our second interview; the other one, in person with Phil Hirl [undated interview transcribed in February 2007], and we wanted to fill in some of the pieces, so we’d really like you to start with a short bio and talk about your first interest and job with the Forest Service.

POMEROY: Okay. I’ll take the latter first, my first interest. I was born in South Gate, California, which is kind of like Los Angeles in sidewalk and asphalt and big buildings and this kind of stuff. I was this little guy, about 120 pounds. [Chuckles.] And never even thought
about being a forester until one day I was in the back seat of a car with my favorite uncle driving
the car, my father sitting next to him, and my favorite uncle, who [sic; whom] I just loved, turned
to my father and said, “You know, Vern,” he says, “if I had it to all over again, I’d be a forest
ranger.” I was about fourteen then. I wanted to be a forest ranger right away, and it just stuck in
my mind, and I went after it and did it.

NUNES: Well, great. So his name was Uncle?
POMEROY: Uncle Jack.

NUNES: Okay. When did Dick Pomeroy start, fourteen years before?
POMEROY: When did I do what, now?

NUNES: When did you start? You were born in South Gate, and then where did you live?
POMEROY: Oh, I lived in South Gate, California, until I was probably nineteen years old, and
from there I went to University of California at Berkeley for four years.

NUNES: Majoring in forestry?
POMEROY: And majored in forestry.

NUNES: What was the forestry school like then? [unintelligible]?
POMEROY: It was pretty academic, because it’s located right in the middle of Berkeley, so
there’s [sic; there are] a few trees on the campus, but there’s not a lot more than that. Except for
the junior year, when we’d get some field work as a part of the college course. This is when we
did our engineering and our measurement of the trees and volumes and so forth and so on. That
was a real good experience. That lasted for one whole summer.

NUNES: Was that up near Quincy where they held those?
POMEROY: It was up at something Meadows. What was the name of that? It was on the
Plumas’ National Forest.
NUNES: Yes, right, okay.

POMEROY: Yes.

NUNES: People have talked about that as their first real experience out in the woods.

POMEROY: Right. Well, that wasn’t my first real experience because I worked summers for the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service and areas like that.

NUNES: And then you were graduating, and how did you manage to find a job with the Forest Service?

POMEROY: Well, I didn’t do very well. [Laughter.] It took me a while. I wasn’t a veteran, and, you know, veterans got five and ten points preference on their civil service examinations, so I didn’t have that benefit; and if you were a disabled veteran, which was ten points, you were automatically employed. So I called up the Civil Service Commission after I’d waited a while and didn’t get a job, and asked whether or not it was possible that I could be reached on the roster, and they said, “No, you don’t have a chance in the world.” So I went back to school and got a degree in education and just contracted for a teaching position in Ojai, California. And no sooner had I contacted [unintelligible] that I got a call from Region Six of the Forest Service, saying, “Hey, do you want a job?” And I said, “Huh?” [Laughter.] And I took it.

NUNES: Yes. What were you going to teach in Ojai?

POMEROY: I was going to teach grade school. I really love kids. I always have. So that would have been a different career, of course, but it was a career that I would have loved dearly.

NUNES: So where did you go in Region Six?

POMEROY: So in Region Six I went up to the Mt. Baker National Forest, and I’ll you a little bit of an idea now in terms of what happened to me career wise. I landed at [Verlot?] Ranger Station. This would be northwest state of Washington, on the Mt. Baker National Forest. Again,
I only weighed about 120 or 125 pounds. I wasn’t shaving but once a week. Very frankly, if I’d been interviewed for this job, they probably wouldn’t have selected me, but they tolerated my selection, I guess.

First mistake I made when I got there was that here is the district ranger and the local farmer standing on a road, looking at some trees just about a mile out of the ranger station, and I stopped and turned to the ranger and introduced myself, and he says, “Well, I’m not the ranger. The local farmer, quote unquote, is the ranger.” [Chuckles.] So I didn’t get a very good start.

NUNES: Yes.

POMEROY: So from there, then, from Verlot I moved on—well, I became a district forest ranger—I got to figure out my times here now. That must have been ’57. Yes, I was not quite thirty years old. I was a district forest ranger till 1961, and from there I went into a fire management job on a national forest. They call them FMOs now. But I was not only an FMO, I was the multiple-use management staff, I was the public relations staff, I was the miscellaneous staff. So anything that came along on the forest, it was kind of assigned to me. I loved the job.

NUNES: So when you were a general forester, I assume, early on, what made you interested in going in the area of fire management?

POMEROY: I was on a forest or in an area where there weren’t many fires, or there wasn’t [sic; there weren’t] many fires in the summertime, so—this is my reasoning, anyway. I kept getting pulled out on fires, and so I traveled a lot in the West, and apparently I did fairly well. As a forester or as a district ranger, I was doing this. And so I must have gotten a little bit of a recognition for doing the job, and so that precipitated my move into a supervisor's office.

NUNES: Although we call it fire management, I see there that it was the multiple-use management.
POMEROY: Yes.

NUNES: Which included land management planning.

POMEROY: Yes.

NUNES: Information and education, and safety and anything else.

POMEROY: You name it, it was there. And so I went in, and I was amazed that they trusted me
to be responsible, particularly for the fire management, because we had hundreds of fires not
long after I got into the forest supervisor’s office.


POMEROY: Yes. But the interesting thing was that in those days, you never knew why you got
selected, because we didn’t apply for a job; they had no applications for jobs. I don’t think I ever
had a promotion roster made out. You just waited until the telephone rang, and when the
telephone rang, you were invited to maybe move jobs, move into a different job, and you were
expected to take it. And the word was always kind of out, informal word, which is very
powerful, was that if you ever turned down a move, don’t expect another offer. And so people
unfortunately just took jobs that sometimes they weren’t all that qualified for, and sometimes,
oh, it resulted in locations where the family and the school system and all this just didn’t fit their
personal situation, and so they would end up in a really bad state of affairs.

So from there—I was out doing an evaluation on the forest, on the ranger district, and
then about a year and a half—and got a call from the regional office in Portland. What they were
calling about was if I could qualify for re-entry in the University of California at Berkeley, that I
could go back and get a master’s degree in fire science and public administration. Was I
available? Well, this was in August, and school started in September. Meanwhile, I had gotten
married and had four sons. So I talked to [Olive?], very briefly, my wife, and off we went.

[Laughs.] That was an adventure in itself.

NUNES: So you had no idea why they had chosen you?

POMEROY: No, they never told me. I was considered to be one of [Merle Lauden’s?] boys. I don’t know whether most people remember that or not, but Merle Lauden was the national fire chief in the Forest Service, and greatly respected and admired for his leadership and his ability and so forth. So he had a tendency to develop his protégés. I had met him once, but really that was about it, and I didn’t realize that he thought maybe I could be one of his protégés. And so I was. So I went. [Laughs.]

NUNES: And you were what, a GS-11 at this time?

POMEROY: Oh, gosh, let’s see. Yes, I must have been a GS-11 at that time, yes.

NUNES: So you were at Berkeley for how long?

POMEROY: For nine months. And that was just a very exciting time. It had its moments. I could tell you about how you find a house for rent for nine months with four sons and a wife.

NUNES: In one month, yes.

POMEROY: Yes. [Laughs.] For nine months. There weren’t very many houses available. But I think the real value of doing that, and I wish they were doing some more of it now, and maybe they are, is that it gets you out of the day-to-day “got to get that job done” thing into a mode of learning and of getting new information, and the breadth of understanding, particularly in the area of public administration and political science. I was going to school with attorneys, Italian attorneys who had come to Berkeley to study public administration. The dialogue and the conversations we had were just beyond reproach. Just my whole life broadened up as a result of that.
NUNES: Instead of getting in a rut, it really helped you see—

POMEROY: Yes. And [Chuckie? Chuck E.?] Ritter later on—Chuck was the organization development man, kind of the Ernie Meadows of Region Six. He did what was called an intensive semester. He used to take forest supervisors out of their jobs for three months and do nothing but introduce new ideas and thoughts and have university professors come in and talk about the world as it exists and as it may exist. It was a marvelous, marvelous opportunity to be selected for that kind of a thing, because you came back renewed, with better vision and a lot of enthusiasm for, you know, saving the world. [Laughs.]

NUNES: And what did you come back to when you first came back?

POMEROY: Well, that’s a different story. I think [unintelligible] at school. Personnel management was always losing actions. If I heard it once, I heard it a thousand times: “Well, I sent that action in and they lost it.” Well, they lost the action that I was coming back to work nine months after I left.

NUNES: [Laughs.]

POMEROY: And so they didn’t have any particular job for me, which was kind of nice from one standpoint, is that I had a six-month time where we settled in Portland, and we rented a house, an old house—they got a lot of old houses in Portland. But it was beautiful, three story and so forth. And had six months of kind of knowing that I was going to go somewhere else, so anything I did during that six months in personnel management, I didn’t have to live with. [Chuckles.] that’s kind of a good experience.

NUNES: Or so you thought.

POMEROY: Yes, so thought. I worked for [Daniel] “Dan” [Bolfer?]. He was the regional director of personnel in Region Six at that time. With the exception of the regional forester, he
was probably the most powerful person in the region because he was so sharp and so directional and such a great speaker that he could charm the scale off of a snake, if you let him. He was a good man, really good man. But he was very, very powerful. And so I went to work for him, and the problem they had in those days was just so many foresters. It was just like we had—I don’t know how many hundreds we had in the region, but it averaged something like seven or eight years for a forester to go from GS-7 to GS-9. That had to be a competitive move; it wasn’t in place. It was a competitive move.

NUNES: So they had to move away or at least move jobs.

POMEROY: Yes. They tried to get them to move, when they went from -7 to -9, to another location for a broadening experience, because there was always this broadening experience and broadening experience. Some of us moved so many times that I think we had a narrower experience, but that’s another story.

NUNES: Okay.

POMEROY: But the better foresters either, or most or them, or some of them, anyway, left the Forest Service. They could get jobs in private industry. The ones that maybe weren’t quite that good didn’t have that many options for other employment, so they stayed. And as the workload then began to really increase in timber management, which was the king—

NUNES: Oh, yes.

POMEROY: That’s where all the money came from,—

NUNES: I remember.

POMEROY: —was timber management, and that was it. So if that happened and the workloads got bigger, it was so easy to hire a professional forester off the Civil Service Commission roster, and so they would hire and hire and hire and hire, and the responsibility was delegated to the
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forest supervisor to do this. Well, Dan Bolfer, bless his heart, put a stop to it, because he knew that it was really affecting our ability to try to get the very best people for forester jobs. And it also didn’t leave any latitude for other disciplines. There just wasn’t any money for anything but these foresters.

And so my job, then, was to put together an assessment center involving different regional directors of different functions, and forest supervisors and one or two district rangers in interviews, et cetera, et cetera, and bring in top nominees from the different forests in terms of their GS-7 foresters. And so we went through the whole process of trying to sort all this out, and came up with what we thought, at the regional level, with regional participation, what we thought was the very best there was. At the same time, of course, Dan froze any recruitment in terms of new foresters except maybe for a few that we—you know, we needed some new blood, but I think it was less than ten for the whole region, when before, we were recruiting forty and fifty a year.

And so that was a real big job, and an important job. It worked.

NUNES: You also did some things with the forestry text also in terms of [cross-talk; unintelligible].

POMEROY: Yes, the forestry test—well, see, this was the stability—a lot of foresters who went up to GS-9 and beyond—they moved a lot. And this, I suppose, from a career development standpoint, might have been okay, but it really destabilized a lot of ranger districts because they didn’t have anybody there with much tenure, and people didn’t know the land. The district ranger [sic; rangers] didn’t know the land that well because they got really busy in terms of making sure that all their big staff were working together. The technicians that came in behind these foresters and working with the technician schools to get them, that really stayed in long
tenure and gave stability to the land in terms of this is the history of what has been, and maybe we need to do some other things, okay, but this is the reasons for it. [sic; transcriber’s note: I cannot recommend how to fix that sentence.] And that really helped a lot and has helped, and I think it does help a lot today as well.

NUNES: Well, even when I was—I’m a little bit younger than you are, so even when I—
POMEROY: [Chuckles.] Yes, I think you are. [Laughs.]

NUNES: There was still the whole thing of which forestry techs got to be converted from temporary to permanent, because there were so few positions.

POMEROY: Yes. Well, that’s another part of it. Part of the culture in Region Six—I don’t know whether this is true in Region Five; I kind of think it was—was that if you hung in long enough in a temporary position, your time would come for conversion to permanent, full-time. And in some cases it was twenty and twenty-two years [chuckles] [before] you finally—you know, it was kind of a tenure thing.

NUNES: Yes.

POMEROY: And they weren’t always the best people for conversion. It was kind of like, “Hey, I’ve been here longer than anybody else, and so it’s my turn,” and so unfortunately, too often the organization said, “Okay, well, we got a slot here,” and they would be put in there. And so it was very difficult in working with forestry technician schools, where they were really putting on two years of really good training, to find room for them in between the temporary employee, who thought the next opening was theirs for a permanent job, and the permanent job that was created. And so these are tough times. We had to do some very difficult things. But it was critical to be able to do this in order to continue a quality job, and I think a quality job was pretty well done, most of the time.
NUNES: So this first detail to personnel management out in Berkeley, then, lasted how long?
POMEROY: Six months. What happened in August of 1964 the Economic Opportunity Act, often known as the War on Poverty, was passed. [Transcriber’s note: It was not known as the War on Poverty but was central to that effort.] That included the Job Corps. Job Corps was one of the major aspects of that particular program. So here I was, on detail, and here I’d been a manager and had all this new education and had gotten to know the region real well and had a good thing going with the regional forester, who [sic; whom] I loved dearly, [Herbert] “Herb” Stone. He was great.

And so after I’d gotten the assessment thing going with the foresters, they asked me to represent the Forest Service in the region in regards to [sic; with regard to] the Jobs Corps program, because it was in the newspapers, and [there was] a lot of publicity going on in terms of what was coming down the line in this piece of legislation, and it was very controversial because there were some communities that were absolutely against what they considered to be a socialized program or a Socialist program, and others who really looked at it with [sic; as a] great opportunity, for no other reason [than] economically because when a Jobs Corps center moved into an area, there was a lot of money that went with it.

NUNES: I guess I lived in one of those conservative California counties where a Jobs Corps center was coming.
POMEROY: [Laughs.]
NUNES: There was quite some discussion.
POMEROY: Yes. Anyway, I was asked to represent the region, and then as time went by a little bit, the national office, Forest Service and Office of Economic Opportunity, which was headed up by [R.] Sargent Shriver, who was at that time also the director of the Peace Corps. They were
asking for nominees for the first Jobs Corps directors, to open up Jobs Corps centers throughout
the United States. And here I was, sitting there again. [Chuckles.]

NUNES: Not yet assigned to a real job.

POMEROY: [Laughs.] I didn’t have a real job. And Dan Bolfer called me in [sic; into] his
office and said, “Dick, I think this is just right for you.” [Laughs.] I talked to Olive that night,
and the next day I said, “Okay, I’ll do it.” It was kind of a change, and it was a challenge.

Didn’t know really a lot about what was going to happen. So I was nominated, as were a number
of others in the region and nationally, and we went trotting into Washington, DC, not long after
that to be interviewed by a panel of “experts.” I don’t know who they were, but it was about a
half an hour interview, but there was [sic; were] six or eight panel members, the interviewers.

They represented the Office of Economic Opportunity, and I think there were some Forest
Service people there, but the lights were so dim—you know, you just [kind of see? got a sea of?]

faces, and they didn’t introduce themselves.

NUNES: Oh, really! So it was like—

POMEROY: No!

NUNES: Oh, my.

POMEROY: And you walked in, and they right away put you under pressure to respond. “What
would you do if you were Jobs Corps director and you found one of your corpsmen and a young
lady from the community doing what they shouldn’t be doing under a tree? How would you
handle that?” And you begin [sic; began] to answer that, and then they would ask you another
question about homosexuality and what would you do if this happened, and what would you do
if that happened? And never did you have time to give a complete answer. I think that was part
of the purpose of it.
NUNES: Right, yes.

POMEROY: To see how you’d respond.

NUNES: You want to know what pressure is like.

POMEROY: Yes. So in a half an hour, which seemed more like five minutes, it was over, and you went back to your hotel room and waited to see what happened, and ready to go home, really. And so I remember I went back to my hotel room and didn’t have a lot to do. But it wasn’t too long after that that I got a telephone call from I think it was Claire [Hendy?], who was a deputy chief for administration in the Forest Service. He said, “Well, Sargent Shriver wants to talk to you.” I said, “You mean me?”

NUNES: [Laughs.]

POMEROY: [Chuckles.] He said, “Yes, only you. He’s called in. We can’t call him.” He had a one-way communication system. He could call out, but you couldn’t call him back. And he wanted—

NUNES: And you were the only person—

POMEROY: Yes!

NUNES: —in the Forest Service he wanted to interview?

POMEROY: Yes. At that time, anyway. And so they had a date, and it was in the Peace Corps building, in his office in the Peace Corps building, which kind of overlooked the White House. And he [unintelligible]. He said, “Yes, I want you to come into our office. We want to brief you on ways you might want to respond to his questions.” One was that you weren’t a fire management officer, you were in charge of fires in northwest Washington. [Laughs.] This kind of a thing.

NUNES: Yes.
POMEROY: The critical part of this interview was, is that [sic; was that] apparently Sargent Shriver wasn’t too sure that the Forest Service could do anything in regards to [sic; with regard to] the Jobs Corps, that maybe he would take over the whole responsibility for everything, hire all the people, separate from the Forest Service, and run these centers all by himself. He was particularly concerned that—like, here I was, a GS-12, I think? Yes, I was a -12 at that time. And he couldn’t imagine anybody lower than about a -16 would be good enough to be able to do this. And so he was kind of suspect [sic; skeptical].

And so the Forest Service was pretty concerned about whether they were going to be in the program, which they really wanted to be, or out of the program—and all the problems that would be associated with that, because activities would be on national forest lands.

NUNES: Even with the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] example in the Depression, they didn’t realize that the Forest Service could do this?

POMEROY: I don’t think Sargent Shriver knew what the Three Cs were.

NUNES: Okay

POMEROY: [Laughs.] We never mentioned it. But anyway, it was kind of funny. The time came when I was supposed to be interviewed, and I went into the Peace Corps office and got to his office. And his secretary, who didn’t seem like she had anything to do—she just kind of sat there, very entertaining young woman, and we talked and talked and talked, and there was a big office behind her, and she said, “Well, Mr. Shriver is busy doing something or other,” so I had to wait for about a half an hour. And she said, “Oh, Mr. Shriver is available now.”

So she gets up, and she leads me down the hall. The office behind her desk wasn’t his real office. His real office was in another location on the same floor. Oh, it opened up and had
all these mementoes from the Peace Corps and all this kind of thing, and there he was, sitting there. And so she introduced me real quickly and left.

I walked up, and he says, “Well, tell me about the Foreign Service.”

NUNES: [Laughs.]

POMEROY: And I said, “What?” I said, “I’m the Forest Service. I’m not part of a foreign service.” “Oh.” [Laughs.] So I had an opportunity to talk for about ten minutes, maybe, and then he kind of anointed me to, “Young man, go west and save the world” kind of a thing.

NUNES: Oh, wow!

POMEROY: He was quite a charismatic man. He never realized that I came from the West, but that was all right. I didn’t worry about that. And so anyway, he said I was okay, apparently, and the Forest Service was in. And then I’m not too sure what happened. I think others went in and were interviewed after that, but I’m not too sure whether that was true or not.

NUNES: So you went to the Jobs Corps center?

POMEROY: I opened up the Wolf Creek Jobs Corps Center near Roseburg, which was a bastion of conservativism. Had the John Birch Society centered there, and southwestern Oregon in particular was really very, very conservative. And so I was the director there, and I think we went in the middle of a storm in December, January when we got to look at the center, because the regional office had been doing the work in terms of getting the center to be built. It was thirteen miles, I think, south of Glide, Oregon, and then another eleven to get from Glide to Roseburg, so we’re [sic; we were] way out in the boondocks.

So they had meanwhile built the center. That’s a beautiful building, but with a sea a mud. It was about six inches of mud everywhere in [sic; around] that center. I had been given a certain number of staff people, education—people that were recruited by the Jobs Corps administration,
OEO. And we were going to do some training and so forth and so on. But we couldn’t get in off the main highway with that six inches of mud.

So we kind of got our heads together and said, “Okay, well, we gotta do something with that mud.” So we went back to Roseburg, where there was a Forest Service warehouse, and somehow or another we got a whole bunch of lumber together, and we spent a couple of weeks, I guess it was, building boardwalks so we could go from building to building.

NUNES: How long did you have to prepare before the first corpsmen arrived?

POMEROY: The first corpsmen was [sic; arrived] in April, I think it was. Yes, so there was [sic; were] a number of months there.

NUNES: And you talked in your previous interview about what an important assignment you thought it was for many of the people who came in there to work with the corpsmen. What was it like for you?

POMEROY: Scary sometimes. You know, feelings of great, oh, wonderment in terms of what I was doing, because there was [sic; were] no guidelines to speak of. We were given some training and could talk to Maryland and when we got back into operations, we found out the training really didn’t fit the circumstances, and so we had to kind of start from scratch. See, we had between 200 and 240 Job Corpsmen came in within about a month and a half, and they were all new. And some of them came from the Deep South, and they were really marvelous, marvelous young men. And they were all men in these [sic; those] days.

But there was a whole bunch of really negative leadership came in, and these were the leaders of—maybe you remember the burning of Detroit and Hunter’s Point and inner cities of many of the major communities in the United States. Well, the leaders of those burning activities were brought into court, and the courts gave them—“You can either go to trial or you
can go to the Jobs Corps.” And so we got them in Jobs Corps. Oh, it was—you know, at times when—a lot of things happened.

But anyway, the point is that there’s [sic; there were] only about twenty-five of us, maybe thirty, and four of those were VISTA [Volunteers in Service to America] volunteers, who were kind of unstructured, were kind of floaters, to run this center, residential, thirty-one miles from Roseburg, 240 plus or minus corpsmen. There were sixteen to twenty-two years of age. And put on an entire program of—you know, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

NUNES: Right.

POMEROY: Wow! That was really, really difficult. And broken windows and ripped mattresses and on and on and on and on. Stolen butcher knives, you know?

NUNES: Oh, yes.

POMEROY: I never thought I’d ever have to take two dozen butcher knives away from fourteen fellows, each of whom was 50 percent bigger than I was. [Laughs.] And you found yourself having to do things that—

NUNES: You never thought you’d be able to do.

POMEROY: You either did it or you’d lose it. You know, you’d lose the whole program, at least your Jobs Corps center. And while you’re [sic; I was] doing these kinds of things, I think I gave thirty talks in twenty days to chambers of commerces [sic; commerce] and junior chamber of commerces [sic; chambers of commerce] as well, and Kiwanians and PTAs and on and on and on and on. There was a radio person that owned a radio station that talked about Pomeroy’s “nigger babies.”

NUNES: Oh, my!
POMEROY: Oh, he was just really bad. I was called a Communist by members of the junior chamber of commerce.

NUNES: I was just going to ask, before you started into that, was there any local support?

POMEROY: The interesting part of the local support was that come Thanksgiving—and the worst time for working with the corpsmen would be working on weekends. We would have a program on the weekend, but they didn’t have to participate. If they got too much time on their hands and they just laid around thinking, trouble seemed to manifest itself.

Well, here comes a Thanksgiving, and that’s essentially a four-day weekend. And what do we do? We were working overtime. I worked twenty-four hours a day every fourth day right straight through, as did three other of my immediate staff, with no overtime. We were bringing people in from all over the region, detailers from the forest to help us with maintaining order and putting on a program. Probably had twenty more or so that would come in on detail at a given time.

And so here comes Thanksgiving. We were tired and really were beginning to develop leadership that was taking responsibility, but we hadn’t arrived yet. But we had them for four days, and we couldn’t require them to do anything in the program and so forth. Well, somebody came up with an idea—and I’m never too sure where ideas come from, except I try to glom onto the best ones, and [someone] said, “Why don’t we see if the community will invite them to Thanksgiving dinner?” I remember at the time thinking, *Anything’s worth a try*. Of course, there were some that we wouldn’t let out of the center because they were pretty tough, but probably 80 percent of them were far enough along at that point in time that we could trust them to go into the community.
And so we advertised in the newspaper and got the word out, and, you know, we ran out of corpsmen.

NUNES: Wow!

POMEROY: Not only for Thanksgiving dinner but quite a number of them—they stayed in houses for the whole period, four days. From then on, gosh, we had all kinds of good people, good people from the Roseburg community in particular and Glide as well—Glide is really pretty small. And it worked out well, really well.

NUNES: What did you learn most about yourself in that experience that helped you later when you were regional personnel officer?

POMEROY: I certainly got—you know, I came away from it—we had tremendous success, tremendous success in terms of people graduating and moving on. And I really came out of it with a sense of potential that’s in all of us to do more than perhaps what we’re doing and that we have to sometime [sic; sometimes] be called on to do it. Because I saw miracles—I call them miracles of the spirit, because some of these corpsmen, who come [sic; came] from horrid, horrid backgrounds. They went well beyond expectations that we had for them and for they had [sic; they had for] themselves.

And so I came out of the Jobs Corps with a sense of, hey, people are all right! [Laughs.] That there wasn’t anybody that we couldn’t handle if we had the time, and usually we had the talent to be able to turn them around, because we—well, I can’t go into all the details of it, but we had some really bizarre things happening, using straitjackets and this kind of stuff just to maintain order.

NUNES: Oh! And you were very far from any additional help.
POMEROY: Oh, yes. And we used psychiatric help from the veterans hospital there in Roseburg. We had—just people responded. They just responded. For at least three or four months, we were right on the edge of whether we were going go under or whether we were going to maintain the program, and we maintained the program.

NUNES: Wow. How long were you there then?

POMEROY: From the beginning of the detail, probably two years or thereafter [sic; a little longer]. I think I had done my thing at the time. I remember getting really tired.

NUNES: Well, it sounds like you would with twenty-four hour days.

POMEROY: Oh, yes. And I couldn’t eat. I wasn’t sleeping. In fact, the forest supervisor made me take two weeks off because I came close to a nervous breakdown. The hardest two weeks I ever had, because it was kind of like a spring unwinding.

NUNES: Right. And what was happening with all of the boys at this time?

POMEROY: Oh, the boys were wonderful. They were playing basketball with the corpsmen [laughs]—you know, this kind [sic; kinds] of things. Ollie was sewing buttons onto the sleeves of some of the corpsmen, and we had—let’s see, Mothers Away from Home were the women. Had a night with the corpsmen who need [sic; needed] instruction in sewing and putting buttons on the coats. And, oh, we had a course in: How do you ask a woman for a date? And how do you set the table? And should you eat with your fingers or a fork?

NUNES: So the Forest Service wives volunteered.

POMEROY: This is all volunteer, yes. And we didn’t pay a dollar in overtime in this whole program. It was all gratis. [Chuckles.] So I came away from it just knowing, understanding that, Boy, this world is something else again.

NUNES: The potential in people.
POMEROY: Yes, potential in people is just beyond possibilities. I know that we had some corpsmen there that had IQs of 140 or 150, and we couldn’t always handle every one of them, because some of them were so steeped in negative behavior that if we kept them, they would have undermined our whole program, and so within that, we had all kinds of communications needs with the staff because every had a different group of corpsmen they were responsible for, so there was no eight to five kind of a thing. So you had meetings at night; you had counseling sessions in the evening; you had breakfast meetings. You were meeting with different members of your staff and corpsmen twenty-four hours a day, it seemed like.

NUNES: That does sound like it would not take too many years to need to go into something else.

POMEROY: [Laughs.]

NUNES: So what did you do?

POMEROY: In terms of?

NUNES: After.

POMEROY: I guess—you know, I got a call from Dan Bolfer, and apparently he liked what I had done on that assessment, and he wanted me to come in, with promotion, as branch chief of employment and employee relations, unions and civil rights and et cetera.

NUNES: So these are still non-competitive promotions?

POMEROY: Well, no, this was competitive because I got promoted, but it was some kind of administrative agreement. I had to go under some kind of a program to do it. I don’t know what the structure was.

NUNES: Okay.

POMEROY: But it’s amazing that when the upper management wants to do something—
NUNES: Yes.

POMEROY: —they seem to be able to do it. And so I went in as the branch chief for everything but classification and employee development. I’d never [unintelligible]. I knew nothing about personnel. It was really chaotic. The person that occupied the job before me—he left. I don’t know what happened. But it just was a real monstrous situation. Apparently Dan thought I could handle it. And so for the first year, I guess it was, I didn’t handle much of anything but trying to get things to happen. And what I found was that where the action started, there had to be about five initials on the action before it got to Dan Bolfer for signature, and he signed everything; he didn’t trust the staff or me, really, even though he selected me. He controlled everything.

So finally we had a team building with part of the organization development program that kind of opened up our communication system. I told him that I was tired of writing things that he’d just change the writing all the time and held it on his desk, and by God, if he wanted me to do a job, he better let me do it. And he said, “All right, from now on you sign anything you want to sign.” And that really did a lot. That really did a lot. He just didn’t pay a lot of attention to me from then on unless there was a problem, and was always available. And so it worked out.

I know I had one women—this is the beginning of civil rights, at least from my standpoint. Prior to this time, there wasn’t much in the way of—oh, they talked a little bit about civil rights, but there wasn’t much steam behind the program. This would have been in the sixties.

And so I got a call from a fellow that I considered to be a very close friend from that moment on. His name was Mack Moore. Mack was down or up on the Olympic Peninsula, and he was a forester, and he was going to attend a civil rights training session that was put on by the
community, and there was [sic; were] going to be some city council members and different people, authoritative people from the community in terms of some really hostile things that had happened in the community particularly in regards to [sic; with regard to] ethnic minorities.

And so Mack said, “You know, you ought to come up.” I’d never met Mack before this. But he took the initiative. And he said, “You ought to come up and join us.” And I said, “You know, I think I should,” and so I did. That was just—that was the hardest training session I think I’ve ever been [on]. I mean, there was a lot of confrontation and on and on and on. I was glad it was over, but I learned a lot. You know, kind of that way.

NUNES: So that started you with Mack.

POMEROY: Yes, that started our relationship. And then from there we designed our own civil rights training program in Region Six and identified people from all over the region to help minority groups and women and so forth and designed a program and put it on throughout the region. As I recall, everybody was required to attend. And it was probably 70 percent successful with 30 percent fallout.

NUNES: Which isn’t bad for—

POMEROY: Not bad at all. Those were tough. You know, there was a lot of opposition to civil rights and so forth. [unintelligible] nonsense, you know? They just didn’t believe it in.

NUNES: But it’s also a way to say, “Here’s where the Forest Service is going. You’re welcome to come along with us and show management’s commitment to it.”

POMEROY: That’s right. And we had some powerful speakers. I remember one black girl that worked in my shop—I say “girl” because she seemed like she was only sixteen or fourteen or whatever, but she was over eighteen.

NUNES: Yes.
POMEROY: And we enlisted her in the design. That woman had more going than I had ever—she’d been buried in my staff somewhere. She really had a good head on her, so she participated. I think she was a GS-4. And she participated in the training and the design and so forth and so on. And I remember not too long after that, I asked her to come into my office, and I talked to her about development and career and these kind [sic; kinds] of things that you normally do. And she says, “Well, Mr. Pomeroy, I don’t want to be a career—I don’t want to go up in the organization. I just want to relate to people.” And she said, “There’s nothing more enjoyable than for me to go to the grocery store and just interchange ideas with the grocery clerks.” And so she wouldn’t take opportunity to do anything with. I’ve often wondered—you know, I got moved, and so I often wondered what happened to her.

NUNES: In that case, I think many of us wish we hadn’t taken on so much responsibility.

POMEROY: I’ve never met anybody quite like her. She was—

NUNES: Did she continue to work for the Forest Service?

POMEROY: I don’t know. I don’t know. It wasn’t too long after that, I got moved.

Let’s see, what else was there?

NUNES: You were still very active in the fire organization, at least.

POMEROY: Yes, I was. That was kind of interesting because it involved my move to Region Five. I was a fire boss or incident commander one after I had gotten out of school, so for the entire period as the Jobs Corps director and personnel management I was also fire boss and subject to going out on a large fire anywhere in the West, really, which I did.

The last fire, though, that I was on was in—let’s see, I was on fires June through September of 1970.

NUNES: The whole three months.
POMEROY: Yes, different fires but I was on a fire assignment almost the entire period. The last one I was on was about 140,000 acres up in north-central Washington. I was the fire boss, and we had—oh, gosh, it was quite an exercise in strategy, fighting that forest fire. We had people from all over the United States as well as, of course, Region Six. As time went by, I remember they gave me twenty-four hours off, and the fire coordinator for the area got a hold of me and said, “Dick, what would you do?” He said, “You got these fires, and we need to demobilize, but we need one person to be the overall fire boss. You got any ideas on that?” I knew most of the people. I said, “No, but at this point I don’t care.” [Laughs.] “All I want to do is go back to my room and sleep.”

Well, that night I got a call from him. He said, “Well, we’re getting rid of almost everybody except you, and Region Fivers are coming in to work with you on this”—it was about 140[,000], 150,000 acres then. And so I spent, oh, a couple of weeks anyway, the last two weeks working with those professional fire people from Region Five, who were the best, as far as I’m concerned, there was in the world. And so we had at it.

Well, we finally, along with a little help from the rain—the fire season ended, and they went home, and I went home, and all of a sudden the next spring I got a call, saying, “How would you like to be the regional personnel director at Region Five in San Francisco?”

NUNES: Let me ask you, before we move on—

POMEROY: So I accepted, and when the word got out, boy, the expectations of the fire people was that they were all going to be GS-16s, I think, because I understood--[Laughs.] I understood.

NUNES: Understood their pain, yes.

POMEROY: Yes, I understood their pain.
NUNES: On that last fire—around 1970 was when women started to appear in fire camp.

POMEROY: Oh, yes.

NUNES: [unintelligible]?

POMEROY: That was one of those humorous things. I still wasn’t thinking of women in fire. That just didn’t compute with me. Not that it wouldn’t have been okay, just never thought about it because the work was so arduous and so forth, and so I was a typical macho male, and although I have learned a few things.

NUNES: [unintelligible].

POMEROY: So I was on that fire, and I was the fire boss, and I was getting, I remember, really tired. The service chief had set up fire bosses’ tent. It was not too big. Probably six or eight people could get in it, but it was reserved for me. This one particular day [chuckles], it was after dark by the time I got in off of the line, and I was just really—had it. And so I go to the tent, and I crawl in, and I think I took my boots off, and I couldn’t help but notice that they had a little bit of light there. Maybe they had a flashlight or something, but there was [sic; were] sleeping bags there with people in it [sic; them]. But I was too tired to even think about it.

Well, one or two of them woke up, and they were all women, and [chuckles] women had come in [sic; into] the camp, and this was their camp, not mine. And I got in the wrong place, and oh, did I exit fast on that one! But that was my first experience with women in the fire camp, and since that time, of course, it’s become very, very usual.

NUNES: Before that, were women in administrative positions out in camps?

POMEROY: No.

NUNES: Okay, not at all.

POMEROY: Not any fires that I was on.
NUNES: Okay.

POMEROY: No. It’s just like how do you shower? Shower facilities or all these kind [sic; kinds] of things. Those can [unintelligible], but they just weren’t. [Laughs.]

NUNES: We’re back to have you come into Region Five, so would you like to take a short break?

POMEROY: Yes, I wouldn’t mind a short break.

NUNES: Okay.

POMEROY: Yes.

NUNES: I’ll just put us on pause, then, and I’ll wait to see when you come back.

POMEROY: Okay.

NUNES: Okay.

POMEROY: Thank you.

[Recording interruption.]

NUNES: Okay. Ready? Okay, we’re back talking to Dick Pomeroy about his move now to Region Five as regional personnel officer. That was in nineteen seventy?

POMEROY: One.

NUNES: Okay. So what did you find?

POMEROY: Yes, well, it wasn’t much fun. I don’t know, I seem to get into these situations too often. But I went down kind of uninitiated and unaware that my predecessor had asked to leave prematurely because he was just worn out. I don’t think he’d been there too long. But what had happened, what was happening was that there was a strong personnel management staff of about
forty people, but there were a lot of conflicts between the various staff groups and between the staff and the forest and the different divisions within the regional office. So I spent just an awful lot of time just being the peacemaker and not knowing really what to do.

Other than being a peacemaker with the staff and some travel to the forest and looking into the organizational development program, that was kind of my job for the first three or four years. I’m not too sure how this happened, but somehow or another, the idea came up—again, when ideas come along, I’m going to grab them; I don’t know whether this one came with me. There was no such name as futuring in those days in terms of organizational development.

And so anyway, myself and my immediate staff [sic; my immediate staff and I] figured we would do some futuring. We kind of designed what we wanted to do. It was just really three parts: One was to define who we were in as good a terms as [sic; in the best terms] we could. By “good” I mean real terms, in terms of the way we saw ourselves operating between ourselves and the region. And then, given that, then we would define what we wanted to be, how we wanted to be. What would the future look like, given our ‘druthers, in five years or ten years or next year? And then given those two exercises being completed, we’re going to do some strategizing in terms of how to get from one to another.

And so we got cross-sections of the staff—there was [sic; were] forty people, and every one of them had a pretty tough job, but we would pull out members of staff, and we would interview [them], and [use] reams and reams of easel paper, in terms of what they thought initially how they were viewed by other people in the region. And it wasn’t very pretty. But they were very objective. I think they were very anxious [sic; eager] to do this, because they didn’t like what was happening, because one of the things that floated around down there in Region Five at that time was that there may not be a heaven on earth, certainly not here, but
maybe we can hold out for some other kind of a heaven. People were pretty unhappy with their performance, but they didn’t know quite what to do.

So anyway, we defined all this and typed it all up verbatim, and none of us liked what it said. And so the next exercise came along in terms of: What would we like to be? How do we define optimal relationships with, say, a forest personnel officer?

NUNES: So initially was this just the regional office personnel doing this?

POMEROY: Just the regional office personnel doing it, but for the region.

NUNES: Right.

POMEROY: Looking at the region.

NUNES: I was just wondering if forest POs [personnel officers] were involved in this.

POMEROY: No, we just didn’t have—[Chuckles.]

NUNES: Have the relationship yet.

POMEROY: No relationship, and we just had to do it. It was our problem; it wasn’t theirs. I think we had a pretty good idea of what they would say, anyway. I think they just as soon we disappeared, to be honest with you. And so we defined what we wanted to be like, and that was [in] pretty definitive terms. We were pretty clear in terms of how we would like to be, how we would like to be viewed, how we would like to be valued, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. It’s [sic; It was] a long process. We got out of the regional office to do some of it. Oh, we talked and talked and talked about it. And it probably took six months for the process to kind of unfold itself.

Then we got into the third phase, and we found out that we really didn’t need to do a lot of strategizing, that people were beginning to move just unilaterally. Once they had the vision,
once they had the vision of who they wanted to be and how they wanted to be seen by others, they just started doing what they really knew how to do.

NUNES: It’s amazing, isn’t it?

POMEROY: It’s just amazing. And we put it in the performance evaluations for the staff, but that didn’t do it; it was they wanted to do it. They wanted to do it, and when they saw what they wanted to do, it worked. Gee, it was just—we did have a few key personnel changes, too. We really, as a unit, got high evaluations for the last four or five years that I was personnel director.

NUNES: Great.

POMEROY: Those evaluations—I don’t know whether you remember those or not, but the forest—I don’t know whether they envisioned it or not, but the forest every year rated the various divisions in the regional office.

NUNES: Right, yes. That still happens.

POMEROY: Is that still happening?

NUNES: [unintelligible].

POMEROY: Okay. Oh, we were down at the bottom of the dregs when I first got there. Then we got [unintelligible] than anybody ever got in the last four or five years. Gee, it’s [sic; there were] just nice things being said about us, and that was kind of [chuckles] hard to hear.

[Laughs.]

NUNES: [unintelligible] so used to reacting to the other.

POMEROY: Yes.

NUNES: Well, now, you mentioned the infamous letter [unintelligible].

POMEROY: [Laughs.]

NUNES: What was that about?
POMEROY: Yes. It’s just a sign of the—I think both of them were—I don’t know. The infamous letter was—you know, I thought that was pretty darn good. I knew exactly how sweet I could be and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And I was going to put it down on a piece of paper and get a memorandum out to every person in the region, which I did. What it had to do with was this whole area of the issue of [booming?]. It was a major issue then because at that time, they started questioning—and these days it’s like questioning whether they really wanted to accept the transfer. You know, it was kind of a new age, the seventies.

NUNES: Right.

POMEROY: And they weren’t all that susceptible [sic; amenable?] to moving like my culture, my original culture with the Forest Service had been. And so I thought, We really need to clear the air, so I wrote this memorandum, a one-pager, and I talked about how sweet we were at the regional office, in terms of moods and so forth. The family came right up there as being very important, and we were communicating in terms of family values and needs and tenure and, oh, kind of on and on and on. None of it was very debatable. It was very nice.

The problem was, is that the first paragraph said something along the line that the region has the—let’s see, the authority to move a person, but it was the exercise of the authority that I was going to talk about further down into the page. That really hit the fan.

NUNES: Because people only read the first part?

POMEROY: They just got to “the authority,” and once they saw that, oh my gosh, I found—and I signed it. It was my signature. And I found bulletin boards and ranger districts and swastikas and all that kind of stuff. It was just tragic! [Laughter.] And so I kind of learned a little something from that. I’m not too sure what it was, but in written communications you need
to do a little more than just sitting down and writing a memorandum and thinking people are going to understand what you’re trying to say.

NUNES: I guess probably because you started with the, quote, “bad” part, which they I guess didn’t know.

POMEROY: Well, yes. [Laughs.]

NUNES: [I assume?] the rest they couldn’t hear.

POMEROY: So finally that kind of blew over, and I was certainly glad of that.

The other one in terms of the swaps: One of the problems we had—and it just seemed to be more paramount—you know, in California, in contrast to Oregon and Washington and also in California later on, as times goes [sic; went] by, people began to talk more and make decisions, more decisions about themselves. And I’m having a blank moment.

NUNES: Okay. What they did with their personal lives was as important as their career?

POMEROY: Oh, yes. And in regards to [sic; with regard to] their taking responsibility for the personal life, they had surfaced many, many more things in terms of their needs for schools, the needs for the wife or the husband in terms of their jobs, earning capacities and maybe taking care of their parents, because this was the time when parents started moving in with their kids, in their later years. And so all this kind of thing really surfaced, and we had no way really of figuring out who should go where and when and what and that type of a thing.

So our swap day was probably a couple of days. Each year, anyway, we brought all of the forest supervisors in, and they had identified and written a short paragraph about each of their employees that needed some kind of a move to better their living situation, and they talked about the capability of that particular employee and what kind of a disciplinarian [sic] and so forth—and we would put this up on a board or an easel at a meeting. And the forest supervisors would
swap. They’d say, “Okay, I’ll take Joe or Jane, but how ’bout you taking So-and-so?” It was most interesting, but done very sincerely and very carefully.

These were all laterals. They had nothing to do with promotion. These were all laterals. And presumably—I don’t have a lot of feedback on it—presumably it did some real good stuff, but we never communicated to the field very well about this particular process. Somehow or another, it gave me a bad taste in my mouth, but it did work, and I think a lot of people were taken care of. And so those swap days existed for quite a while. I don’t know whether they still do [it] or not.

NUNES: I think it would be impossible [cross-talk; unintelligible].

POMEROY: I think would be impossible, too. But we were desperate. People had to move. We had no agreement in terms of where—you know, from the different units, because they were independent entities in terms of who they are. There was no agreement in terms of how to do that.

NUNES: Right.

POMEROY: So it worked, for its day. It had its day.

NUNES: You talked about the organizational development piece in your previous interview and also the Safety First program, but on the firefighters’ retirement, that was something you wanted to mention.

POMEROY: Yes. You [unintelligible] me to talk about change of jobs first?

NUNES: Sure.

POMEROY: Yes, maybe I ought to do that, the recruitment effort, mobility and retention, because then I’ll get back to the other. It kind of fits in here.

NUNES: Okay.
POMEROY: The training that we put on in Region Six, we brought down to Region Five. Did a lot of civil rights training there, too. But we still had the problem of forester. Even though in Region Five—I don’t know whether I did or whether it was done prior to me, but that had been slowed down quite a bit, and so there was [sic; were] a few more opportunities happening, new bodies, so to speak. So we came in with this [sic; these] interchangeable, interdisciplinary jobs. And I had at this time, if I remember, Esther [Nolan?]. I don’t know whether you remember her or not.

NUNES: The name’s familiar.

POMEROY: She was the branch chief for classification. She had been in the chief’s office and so had quite a bit of experience from that standpoint. And so together, we really put together a program of interchangeable jobs. If you had a forester, as an example, a professional forester in this [sic; in a particular] position and there’s [sic; there was] a vacancy, well, here was a job description that did the same job but it was for a wildlife biologist. Finally, we had cleared them in one job description and just multidisciplined them, that the wildlife biologist and the soil scientist, et cetera, et cetera, could do these jobs, so when it became vacant, the person that was selecting the replacement could do so from any one of the particular disciplines. And that was interchangeable jobs.

And that helped quite a bit, because women and minorities were beginning to come in rather, quite well, really, into the organizations, in these other disciplines. [The] forester discipline still at that time didn’t have women in it. It was Earth Day came along. Of course, that was in the sixties [sic; April 22, 1970]. And that started women into [the] forestry profession. But by and large, the foresters were white and male.

NUNES: Did you have much resistance to advertising jobs that [were] interdisciplinary?
POMEROY: No. Well, a little bit from—

NUNES: [unintelligible]?

POMEROY: From maybe the chief’s office [unintelligible]. They thought we were a little bit looser than we should be. That pleased us no end. [Laughter.]

NUNES: I think they meant it as a caution.

POMEROY: [Laughs.] I don’t know. But it really helped. It really opened the system up. We also did what was called interchangeable jobs, where particularly at the GS-7 and -9 and to some degree at [the] -11 level, the work that the technician did and the professional forester was—the differences between them was [sic; were] purely coincidental. They were essentially functioning the same. So we couldn’t set up a forester position and then on it say, well this could be filled by a forestry technician, et cetera, et cetera, because you couldn’t mix the processional and the technician grades.

NUNES: Right.

POMEROY: Not grades but series. And so we just set up dual jobs. We just had two job descriptions. Esther Nolan did a lot of the work on this.

NUNES: That would have been a tough one, too.

POMEROY: She prepared these jobs, [typical?] jobs in advance, and made them available to her forest so that if somebody had a real good technician coming along, that maybe had gotten out of a technician school or something, or whatever the case might be, and they had a vacancy, they could be either a forester or a technician. They may decide [sic; have decided] to put it in a technician’s position, or they may advertise [sic; have advertised] both of them.

NUNES: Yes, that’s what I recall, is they would advertise it at a [unintelligible].

POMEROY: Yes, I think maybe they did.
NUNES: [unintelligible] tell [unintelligible] what it was.

POMEROY: Yes, I think they did. I think they advertised them together, and then, depending upon what the individual person who was selected qualified for, they put them in that particular Series. And that worked very, very well. In the last year of Esther’s work, she got really burned out in the classification job, so the last year she worked for me directly and spent full time just really doing this kind of work in terms of opening up the system. And so we really got our heads together in terms of everything we could do to open it up, because we were recruiting pretty heavily, beginning to recruit pretty heavily in terms of these other disciplines. We had to have career ladders. We just had to have career ladders.

Some of them just weren’t able—like, a landscape architect wasn’t qualified to become a line officer, [as] an example, but we could set up positions, interdisciplinary positions where they could go up at least to a -12 or -13 level position. I remember I got invited to talk to groups that had their meeting[s], landscape architect meeting or wildlife biologist meeting, and I was often asked to be a part of that and had an opportunity to explain what we were talking about in terms of this interdisciplinary thing. I remember ending up—oftentimes my comments, with, “Well, if you really want something to happen, you’re the one that’s going to have to make it happen. You know what can be done now, so don’t let the manager get by with keeping you out of the system.” I think that worked.

NUNES: I’m sure you ran into people in the landscape architect, wildlife biologist meetings that should have been line officers or should have had that opportunity.

POMEROY: Oh, absolutely.

NUNES: [unintelligible].
POMEROY: Absolutely. Some of them were really great managers. Engineers—some of the best managers that I’ve met have been engineers. And, of, [R.] Max Peterson [who became chief of the Forest Service] was an engineer.

NUNES: Going back to Esther and how you utilized her skills for—a lot of the most powerful women at that time, say before 1970 or around there, were personnel officers. A lot of personnel officers weren’t women on the forest, but their principal assistant was a woman who knew everything [chuckles] on that forest about personnel.

POMEROY: They’re the ones that made it go.

NUNES: Yes, yes.

POMEROY: [Laughs.] Experience.

NUNES: [unintelligible] in transit, yes.

POMEROY: Yes.

NUNES: And I saw that, too, in the regional office, at least in admin. Personnel was really a place where women were in powerful roles.

POMEROY: Yes, right.

NUNES: And not in others.

POMEROY: Right. And we had an upward mobility program going, too. I’ll bet you remember this. It was really kind of difficult at times, with the reclassification of some of the women’s jobs, typically women’s jobs into two-grade administrative position[s] with a career ladder, and trying to make sure that those jobs were unencumbered. It wasn’t simply a matter of changing the grade level and providing upward mobility opportunities to somebody that really should be maybe at the clerical level—you know, really wasn’t all that spunky. And so we did a lot of work in terms of how we could create actual vacancies in the administrative area so there could
be true competition, particularly among women, although I think some men did compete, but it was mostly women. It was easier to start in personnel management because I was right there on the same floor. [Laughs.]

NUNES: Right.

POMEROY: [Laughs.] It worked. It was kind of interesting. But, you know, everyone—that’s an overstatement, but we all think we’re deserving of a particular job when we apply for it, and when it doesn’t happen, we can get pretty upset about it, and so we spent a lot of time counseling and trying to help people help themselves to a better future. But those are tough days, but you have [sic; had] good days, too.

NUNES: And you also—I know the percentages weren’t very high, but you did increase the number of professional women.

POMEROY: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Well, we were doing some college recruiting, and we really didn’t need to—well, we did in terms of wildlife biologists and so forth; we didn’t really need to in forestry. But as we began to get women and ethnic minorities into forestry areas, as an example, we would go to forestry schools and ferret out—I mean, I’d talk to the dean, as an example, and say, “Hey, I’m really looking for your top people, male and female.” And oftentimes the females were identified as being amongst their top.

NUNES: And you made those visits yourself.

POMEROY: What?

NUNES: You made those visits yourself, to the deans?

POMEROY: I did sometimes. I usually made the initial visit, and maybe once a year if I could, yes, because I wanted to set the climate in terms of what we were looking for in terms of ethnic
minorities and women. I wanted to be sure that the school understood about the kind of jobs we had and that they would do the counseling, a lot of that.

And then we also set up internships. I think they were all probably filled by women and ethnic minority [sic; minorities]. And those really worked out well for us, and we set those up on forests and this kind of a thing. So we were really going at the time that the consent decree came along.

NUNES: And you had, in your first interview, talked about how it started on your trip to Washington to try and [sic; to] rewrite it and put it into some reasonable shape.

POMEROY: Yes.

NUNES: And then Justice changed it.

POMEROY: Yes.

NUNES: Do you have some stories about—because it looks like you got out just in time.

POMEROY: BALLARD: [Laughs.]

NUNES: You retired in 1981. [Laughter.]

POMEROY: I did.

NUNES: What do you remember about what you anticipated would happen and what really did?

POMEROY: Well, yes. You know, the consent decree really generated out of the Pacific Southwest Station, and there was [sic; were] some things that happened over there that I won’t try to repeat, but I think we deserved it, or they deserved it. But when the consent decree was finally formalized, the courts didn’t figure that the Pacific Southwest Station was big enough to have a consent decree for, so they included the entire region, which was okay with most of us.

At least it was with me, because we needed some help, particularly with standards and, oh, some
of the kind [sic; kinds] of nonsense types of regulations that we had to abide by, and we thought we could get some help from the consent decree, which they did.

But then when I saw the consent decree, it really was the one that came originally out of the courts—it struck me as being more in terms of, well, you got to have a monitor, you got to have this, you got to have this kind of—it was kind of like a staffing plan. And to me it wasn’t very satisfying. I was more into trying to set some goals and some occupational goals particularly in terms of women and minorities. Well, this is [sic; was] women, but we did it together.

And the chief’s office seemed like they were feeling the same as I was. So anyway, I was called into the Washington office along with the deputy director of the Pacific Southwest Station to rewrite what might be a better consent decree, a more meaningful consent decree, not a watered-down one but a more meaningful one. So we did this, and as I remember, we presented it to—let’s see, we went from there and we got the okay from some of the divisions and so forth. And I think they involved chief and staff in on it, too, so it was all go.

And we went to the Justice Department as well and worked it through the attorneys and this, and they liked it, and so wow! We patted ourselves on the back and came home, and then—NUNES: “Think of all the things we can do.” That’s the [unintelligible].

POMEROY: Yes. And then the consent decree came out, and it was the original one.

[Laughs.] Apparently somebody in the chief’s office said, “Yeah, well, we won’t try to substitute something or other.” I can understand why that happened, but it was kind of disappointing to us.
I met some of the people that they were talking about at the beginning of the consent decree, and I was fifty-five years of age. I’d been ten years in the position. Can’t somebody else [unintelligible]?

NUNES: Could you foresee what a huge impact it would eventually [cross-talk; unintelligible]?
POMEROY: Pretty much so, pretty much so. You know, if I’d have been ten years younger, I probably would have done it. I probably would have stayed—well, I’d have had to stay, but I could see where there’d be a lot of pain involved and a lot of opportunity. Maybe I should say opportunity first and pain, too. And I was sympathetic with both. Maybe I could have done something or other, but I’m not too sure I could have.

NUNES: I think part of this when, you know, when you saw it come back with all that process-laden piece, [unintelligible] your creative hands—you know, you’re a creative person, so—
POMEROY: Yes. Didn’t want to do it.

NUNES: Yes.

POMEROY: So anyway, I retired.

Now, you wanted to talk about organizational development.

NUNES: Okay. Well, you did talk about that in your previous one, but if you want to talk some more—
POMEROY: Yes, in Region Five it was quite a bit different.

NUNES: Okay. No, but I mean you talked a bit about the Region Five piece. I think you got up to the Ernie Meadows area, but you hadn’t mentioned, going back to your old civil rights training friend, Mack Moore, came in and what you intended him to do.

POMEROY: Yes. Well, when I first got down there, the organizational development program—this would be 1971—was in full blast. We had a big training group. They had two
alternatives, two parts to it, really. One was the Pajaro Dunes—live together with a small group of people and kind of do your thing without much help from anybody else.

NUNES: They were sort of encounter groups.

POMEROY: Kind of an encounter group, but it really wasn’t structured at all. There was no structure to it, and so it went all over the place. And then the other alternative—strategy, not alternative but second strategy was to use that experience and do some team building to improve the performance of [one?] team.

There were some problems with that in that the organizational development group—they go to the place where “nothing was viable unless it came from the individual” kind of philosophy. It had all to come from within. I agree with that to a very large extent, if you do a little guidance along with it. And so we worked on that quite a bit and got some of the guidance going, where they brought in outstanding people in different kinds of fields: psychology and sociology and organizational development, and they would come in and give short lectures to trainees who lived and worked in living groups, about ten people in each living group. And then that would be part of a discussion thing that would occur subsequent to the lecture or lectures.

I thought it worked pretty well, but the problem was—and I went down and went through it. The group that I worked with was just marvelous. You know, we had—I don’t know, I was a -14 at that time, and now it’s probably the highest grade, and then I think we had a GS-3 clerk, and we really built community. It was amazing to me. And we took in some lectures and became very fast friends.

But too often, people were nominated who—“We’ll send them to this, and the region will fix ‘em, make ‘em whole.” Somehow or another, they were problem employees.

NUNES: Right.
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POMEROY: That didn’t work very well. And then there were some others that just hadn’t worked [in such an environment] and [had] done the same things so many times for so many years that to be put into that environment, it just burned them up.

NUNES: Would be threatening.

POMEROY: It was threatening. They didn’t want anything to do with it. Well, both of those kinds of people badmouthed the program quite a bit, so that was part of what we got back and part of the regional problem and the reputation gained. I don’t know, it seemed like sometimes the people who are just satisfied talk three times more than those who were really quite satisfied.

NUNES: Right.

POMEROY: And then a lot of times, they’d go back—the ones that really liked it—they’d go back to their work units, speaking a different language, so to speak. And the community and the feelings and the love that kind of evolved amongst the work groups at Pajaro Dunes just got in the way, and even got in the way sometimes of husband-and-wife relationships back home. So there were some real negatives there. So we restructured and got, of course, the “lecturette” into the Pajaro Dunes part of it, really worked hard to be sure that forest supervisors and division chiefs didn’t nominate people that were poor employees. The design was really best for good employees and making good employees better, rather than—

NUNES: Yes, well, a lot of people came back to the forest and were—because I experienced from that end, when people came back. And it was almost like they’d been on another planet for a week, and would come up to you and say—

POMEROY: [Laughs.]
NUNES: —“It’s all going to change, and you’ll love it.” You know, not many people [cross-talk; unintelligible].

POMEROY: “What’d you do?” “Well, we went shopping together.” [Laughs.]

NUNES: Well, and then we had spouses meeting with forest supervisors saying, “What have you done to our husbands?”

POMEROY: Right, yes, so there was [sic; were] all kinds of things like that that we tried to do. But we started a little more—we didn’t require it, but trying to get people from the same units—or we’d concentrate on certain areas, like maybe the Angeles would send more people in this particular time and these would be people that would connect one way or another back at the—

NUNES: [unintelligible] a support system when they got back.

POMEROY: Yes, so there’d be something there, other people that they could talk to, and that helped. And then, of course, in team building—we started our team building, and I thought that went pretty well. We used both internal and external consultants to do the facilitating of those. But it was always hard to describe the value.

NUNES: Yes.

POMEROY: I remember one instance, and this was in the Willamette National Forest, which is in Oregon, where they had problems on a ranger district between engineering and timber managements. Well, they had the engineers at one into the building, and the foresters on the other. Well, out of the team building they decided, well, maybe we ought to move the pre-sale forester and the reconnaissance engineer side by side, in the same office, so they could talk. That had an amazing effect upon that particular ranger district. That little thing.

NUNES: Yes, you would [unintelligible].
POMEROY: Yes, but it really was marvelous. But it was hard to identify that kind of a thing. So we had—let’s see, Ernie and company—finally down the road they left the organization, and we weren’t allowed to fill in. We had one deputy regional forester who really—he told me one—I don’t know, he didn’t like the organizational development and did everything, really, he could to bury it. He was successful for quite a while. We had a change in regional foresters earlier than that, and the new regional forester didn’t really know what we were talking about in terms of organizational development to begin with. And [Robert W.] “Bob” Cermak and I really—

NUNES: Was he deputy regional forester?

POMEROY: Bob Cermak was the deputy at that time, yes. He and I knocked heads together to figure out how we could influence the regional forester in terms of an organizational development position. Bob had worked with Mack. Mack had been his personnel officer in North Carolina. And, of course, I knew Mack from a long time ago. We both kind of had Mack in mind, because Mack had gone on and gotten a master’s degree in organizational development. And so we had him in mind, but we weren’t very convincing with the regional forester. Finally just I think just maybe by erosion, the regional forester broke down and said okay.

I tried to manage it so that Mack worked for the regional forester because this was a management alternative. This was a management thing, not a personnel thing. And was only partially successful with that. I had to do all the support for Mack. But I didn’t supervise him. I was very careful never to even sound like a supervisor. We had an arrangement—we had a mutual respect going—an arrangement that, you know, if he wanted me to review something, a position paper or whatever the case might be and wanted my advice, why, I’d come on in and I’d
give it, but he didn’t have to worry about whether I saw it or not, you know, any more so than
anyone else.

NUNES: Right.

POMEROY: And then that worked real well. And like Mack said, “Yeah, then you retired.”

[Laughs.]

NUNES: Well, I think, you know, in terms of coming in, Mack was very personable and tried to
get people to him, but also he was an ex-forester, so they probably figured he would go—

POMEROY: Foresters could do anything, huh? [Laughs.] He is a nice guy.

NUNES: Yes, very.

POMEROY: We still visit with him. So that’s about it, isn’t it?

NUNES: Well, we still want to hear about what you’ve been doing since you retired.

POMEROY: Oh, my.

NUNES: And your family.

POMEROY: The real reason I retired when I was fifty-five—I retired on my fifty-fifth birthday.
That was December 14th, and I was a full-time seminary student on January 2 of the next year
and spent three years in seminary.

NUNES: Where did you go for seminary?

POMEROY: Right there at Pacific School of Religion. It just was on the north side of the
campus. And really—it started giving me insights in terms of some of my experiences, a way of
being able to talk about them differently and to understand them differently, particularly that of
the Jobs Corps. I could understand why people had that potential. It was marvelous. And
there’s a lot of theology that goes into that.
And so after that, I went in the Peace Corps, Olive and I together, for two years in the Dominican Republic, which was just more of the same learning process. I think life is learning, and life is process.

NUNES: And what projects did you work on?

POMEROY: I worked as a forester, and Olive worked as an environmental ed person, but actually we did community development in terms of working with people. They didn’t know how to go from A to B. They could talk about A, they could talk about B, but they never knew how to go from one to the other. And so we talked about what it meant to reach agreement, how to reach agreement, how to include people, how to plan, these kinds of things.

NUNES: Sort of capacity building in terms of—

POMEROY: Yes, and it really worked. Then went back and visited, and they’re building on it. They’re doing more of that all the time. And the Dominican Republic is very poor country. We lived with the mosquitoes and the tarantulas, outhouses, and the lack of running water and electricity being turned off all the time.

And since that time, then, let’s see, I wrote a couple of books. A theologian by the name of Paul Tillich, who’s one of the great theologians of the twentieth century and I think he’s probably one of the great ones of all time, very progressive thinker, not a dogma [sic; dogmatic] or a doctrinal person but had a lot of background in not only theology but philosophy and literature. He was an amazing, amazing person. And so I wrote a couple of books on him.

NUNES: And are they available to people?

POMEROY: Oh, yes, they’re in amazon[.com]. Yes, you can get them out of amazon.

NUNES: You can get them on amazon? Okay.
POMEROY: Yes. At least the last time I looked. [Transcriber’s note: What is available on amazon.com is Paul Tillich: A Theology for the 21st Century. His In Search of Meaning is listed as out of stock on BestPrices.com.] I don’t look very often. I still get royalties and all that’s great. I get probably thirty-five dollars [unintelligible], something like that, in royalties. But it’s been since the eighties or nineties that they were published.

And what else have we done? Oh, gosh, I worked a lot with homelessness. We opened up a homeless shelter in a church here in Portland, family shelter, and men, women and children.

NUNES: It must be hard to find.

POMEROY: They what?

NUNES: Those are hard to find.

POMEROY: They are hard to see. They’re there. Oh, you mean a homeless shelter or the—

NUNES: Yes, the ones that will combine a whole family.

POMEROY: Oh, they’re almost nonexistent. In fact, we were the first one that would do that because the popular way of looking at it was the man and the woman had to be separated, and there’s some reason to believe that, but in our case it worked out very well, with some exception [sic; exceptions], and sometimes I had to be the enforcer. We just couldn’t—the man particularly was just so far out that we couldn’t do it. But we’ve helped—we had a couple of childbirths there and this kind of stuff. Well, we have twenty, twenty-five people six months a year. And that started in 1992, I think it was, ’93, and it’s still going today.

NUNES: Still going strong.

POMEROY: Yes, it’s been really interesting. And right now I’m working with what’s called the Archimedes Movement. I just heard this morning—this is a healthcare reform proposal that’s led by ex-Governor John Kitzhaber, who is a medical doctor as well. I just heard that it
got kicked out of committee [unintelligible] hearing, and starting Monday I’m going to be having
to spend quite a bit of time at hearings and this kind of stuff. This is advocacy. I hate advocacy.
I hate to do it. But somebody’s got to go after the system sometimes.
NUNES: That’s right. So you’ll be appearing at hearings and trying to push it through.
POMEROY: Oh, yes.
NUNES: And it’s for healthcare reform?
POMEROY: Yes, healthcare reform.
NUNES: Archimedes.
POMEROY: Archimedes. Look it up on your computer.
NUNES: I will. [Transcriber’s note: http://archimedesmovement.org/]
POMEROY: Google it. To me, it’s pretty darned exciting. If we don’t do something on
healthcare reform soon, we’re just going to go—you know, “berserkle.” “Berserkie,” I guess, is
the word for it.
NUNES: You and Olive have been married how long?
POMEROY: Well, we’ve known each other since she was fourteen and I was sixteen.
NUNES: I see.
POMEROY: And we were married when she was nineteen and I was twenty-two, and that was
in 1949.
NUNES: My!
POMEROY: Can you imagine that?
NUNES: Yes.
POMEROY: Time flies.
NUNES: And you have four sons?
POMEROY: Four sons.

NUNES: Can you tell us their names and what they’re doing?

POMEROY: Well, let’s see, one of them is—what is it? Oh, one of them is retired. Can you imagine that?

NUNES: What did he do?

POMEROY: [Laughs.] He was a computer nerd. He worked for ADT Corporation for years and did very well with them, and decided that he’d had enough and retired, and he’s got his own home here. In fact, that’s the son where I’m at now.

NUNES: Okay.

POMEROY: And then I’ve got a second one, who—

NUNES: And his name is—I’m sorry, what is his name, the oldest?

POMEROY: Oh, that’s Jeff, Jeff Pomeroy. Then there’s a John Pomeroy, and he’s—oh, what do you call them? In construction, house construction. General contractor. And he’s been in business for a long time. It’s just too much work. He’s the only one that’s produced any grandchildren for us, and they were both grandsons. There are no girls in our family. So he’s a general contractor.

Then number three son. What is he doing now? Oh, he works for the veterans hospitals, and he does computer systems and implementation of system. He and his wife—they’ve got quite a deal. He and his wife have the same jobs. Their office is in their home. Her office is downstairs; his office is upstairs, and they have coffee together.

NUNES: Sounds perfect.

POMEROY: [Laughs.]

NUNES: And his name is?
POMEROY: That’s [James] “Jim.”

NUNES: Jim.

POMEROY: That’s Jim Pomeroy. And then [Joseph] “Joe.” I have a forester son, Joe, and he’s on Mt. Hood National Forest. He’s a fire specialist, kind of like his dad—was.

NUNES: And what forest does he work on?

POMEROY: Mt. Hood.

NUNES: Mt. Hood.

POMEROY: Mt. Hood National Forest. So we got all four sons real close.

NUNES: It sounds like life is good. You live in Portland.

POMEROY: Yes, and we’re trying to maintain--[unintelligible] of our relationship keeps getting better all the time. It’s just about as good as it can get.

NUNES: Well, that’s wonderful to hear, because you’ve always been a personal idol to me.

POMEROY: Well, thank you!

NUNES: Whenever I would hear of you, I would think good things of you, and although we never worked closely together—

POMEROY: No.

NUNES: —I always felt good in your presence and knew you were doing [cross-talk; unintelligible].

POMEROY: We did have a glass of wine once in a while together, as I remember. [Laughs.]

NUNES: That’s right.

POMEROY: Over at the India House?

NUNES: The India House, yes.

POMEROY: Yes, yes. Been a long time.
NUNES: That’s when we worked in San Francisco, there was opportunity to talk after work.

POMEROY: That’s right, right. [Laughs.] So anyway, I guess this kind of concludes the interview.

NUNES: It does. And thank you so much.

POMEROY: Well, I do hope you’ll come up and see us, though.

NUNES: I will do that.

POMEROY: You did once, you know.

NUNES: I did once, yes.

POMEROY: And we have an extra bedroom.

NUNES: all right. Well, I appreciate it. It would be wonderful to see you.

POMEROY: Okay.

NUNES: Okay. Thanks so much.

POMEROY: You bet, and thank you. Bye-bye.

[End of interview.]