INTERVIEW WITH DR. JOSH COLLINS
BY ROGER KAYE DECEMBER 11, 2002

MR. KAYE: This is an interview with Dr. Josh Collins, conducted on December 11, 2002 by Roger Kaye in Fairbanks. The subject is Josh's father, George Collins and his role in establishing the Arctic Refuge. This interview is a supplement to a previous interview with George Collins who passed away in 2000. Josh, thank you for participating here. We'll begin with a little about yourself and what you do now.

DR. COLLINS: I have a Doctorate in Entomological Sciences, and post-doc work in Geology and Geophysics, especially the geomorphology of wetlands and coastal streams here in northern California. I am the youngest of my father's four children, and most akin to him according to all others in the family. He thinks of me as somebody who could talk to him on his terms, and he on my terms. We did an awful lot of that philosophizing together beginning when I was about maybe eight or nine years old and would be taken by him to professional meetings involving conservation topics all over the west. All the way up to his death, I am 52 now, so I was about 50 at the time he died, so we had almost forty years worth of conversations! I think I understand what he was thinking about to some extent. I don't have his own history of course, but he and I talked an awful lot about what he was doing and the meaning of that.

MR. KAYE: That's great. What do you recall your father saying about his role to establish the Arctic Refuge, and his motivation for working for it?

DR. COLLINS: I am going to have to spend a minute or two, kind of setting the stage for this.

MR. KAYE: O. K.

DR. COLLINS: I think, as I was talking to you earlier Roger, I got the impression from you; I don't think you said this explicitly, but I got the impression that you had come at some time after your studies had begun to something of a hypothesis that my father, George Collins, was something like the man in the blue suit in the Shegall painting, in the background, floating around behind a number of other people that were taking more public profiles on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I think that's true, and that's not by accident. My father very seriously, strategically and professionally saw himself as a man of government. Because of that, he thought he'd best serve as a facilitator and a team builder and an encourager of other people who could play more directly public roles in convincing and persuading people, so he always stayed in the background as much as he could. This is something of his nature from the very beginning as near as I can tell from talking to him and his brother, before his brother died. This is something that he was always doing. He was always organizing and leading, but one step removed from the front line. He was a sum total of a lot of other people's thinking, and if he ever had an

original thought, he never laid claim to it. But in preparation for this interview, I have gone over a number of materials, some few hundreds of pages of correspondence, and things going back as far as 1928 when he was only twenty-five years old. And finding through that, a number of themes and some rhetoric consistent from that period almost all the way up to his death. I have also found that then, coming through the writings of people like the Muries, Bob Marshall. Ben Thompson didn't write so much publicly because he was a man in government too. But even David Brower the Leonards, and people who were more in the advocacy position. I see the same words coming up through their language, and I am not sure whether they got that from my Dad. I think it's more likely that they all came to this together. So that's the background to this. My father out there, thinking of something that might be good to do; testing the idea with other people; finding that in fact it might be a good thing to do; and then, assembling people to advance that idea on political, scientific and social fronts at all levels of society from local tribe and city settings all the way up to the federal government. That's a lot of orchestrate. But it isn't as thought he was writing the music, if you know what I mean. They are kind of making this up as they go. So, he's back there, doing that kind of thing all of the time, and giving credit as much as he possibly can to whomever can use that wisely. He ended up with a lot of very good people around him. I think that's part of the story of ANWR the particular constellation of talent and personalities that were available and that applied themselves to the problems at hand. The government played a role that was largely facilitation, some money. He knew of course, as you do too, that none of what these people that were stronger in advocacy such as the Muries and the Leopolds even and Bob Marshall, none of them could succeed with their ideas unless government somehow put the money up. This was not the age of the Nature Conservancy, even, or National Audubon, or any largely private or non-profit group that could afford to buy millions of acres. Governments had to do this at some point, and there was always the effort to build the rationale for government to do the right thing, and to question whether it was the right thing to do, or not. That's the facilitation role that my father played. I don't think, as near as I can tell, the genesis of the idea for the wildlife range, or the international range was a conversation between him and "Doc Lowell Sumner". But it wasn't born out of that only. They got the inspiration from someplace. In fact, that notion of inspiration, where the idea comes from, that is the largest justification for wilderness that my father ever had. For preserving it. The notion that it was inspirational and encouraging. That's a longwinded answer to kind of what his role was there. But the point is, he was a man of government. He understood that. He played a facilitation role. He was lucky enough and fortunate enough, and talented enough to see good people that he could trust who could wage a good argument, fight and debate with each other and from that, something honorable would evolve that would have enough gravity unto itself that it might actually bear the brunt of public debate, Congressional hearings and so forth.

MR. KAYE: You talked about the people that he surrounded himself with. Who were some of the people that influenced his thinking, do you think? Perhaps people who came before he, and Doc Sumner.

DR. COLLINS: I'd have to go back quite a ways, but those materials are not at my hand right now. And I can get these to you so you can read them. This I think is actually an essential part of his emotional makeup and his intellectual makeup. My father didn't go to college. He didn't have advantage of a formal education in the sense of a philosophical education, except through his own readings, and his Mother. Then, later of course through his peers and colleagues that he admired so much. As a boy growing up in northern California, on a very eclectic kind of ranch setting, he would say of his own father, "as a rancher and a farmer, he was good acrobat and machinist". They had a yard full of peacocks and ducks and geese and a monkey or two, and all kinds of crazy things. And his father was always building things. He was a top-notch machinist. But my father contracted a bad fever, and later Polio before he even reach the age of ten. He was on a cot in the backyard or on the front porch for the better part of two years. While his older brother mastered basketball and football and rodeoing all kinds of things, my father was becoming an intellectual, watching things and observing things and spending long time reading Shakespeare, Socrates and things like that at a very young age. He became very philosophical and very intellectual. He tuned himself to critical thought and that carried through all the way in his life. By the time he got into his middle teens, he was at once in art school at the College of Arts and Crafts in Berkley at the time, it later moved to Oakland. He was a part of that move. He was also working summers in Lassen as a hand to his brother who has become Superintendent of Lassen National Park once that was established. During the school year while he was down here in Berkley and Oakland he was attending church services at a nondenominational church that was here at the time. This was in about 1915, 1916, 1917. There was a preacher that was talking a lot about the spiritual qualities of the wild lands, and the importance of communing with nature. He later met another preacher in Los Angeles, when his own parents moved there. His mother was going to see a preacher of the same ilk. My father went to see that man. They talked quite a bit. These were during formative years for my father, when he began to see that there was a spiritual side to the land that he had come to love, sort of intellectually and personally, intimately. For example he did in 1928, so he'd be twenty-five. Its picture of him and a dog, in a hat, with a notebook; leaning against a tree looking out over a forested lake. He says, "Encouragement seems to be the great characteristic of friendship". And then he goes on to say, "But I am sure that the most infinite encouragement I have ever realized, came from nature without any human being as a medium. Encouragement from nature is so much more intimate and powerful than that embodied in the friendship of humans, that theirs seems more as sympathy in this common struggle. If there is anything in this comparison, it would be to say that the more we may learn of nature, the more we are encouraged to live, the better friends we are". So, here is this background setting, largely conjured by himself, without a lot of formal schooling except through pattern making and fine art; drawing and painting, coming

to some sense of the practical and spiritual value of the land. Practical through his work with the U. S. Forest Service and National Park Service at Lassen, and spiritual through his own questioning of the meaning of the landscape as he was drawing it. I think later on, he happened to come across people, who, not thinking the same as him but thinking as much along these same lines began to open up debate. He found friendship there.

MR. KAYE: Who were some of these people?

DR. COLLINS: Well, early on, I think, he found them everywhere he went truthfully. I don't have all of their names here, but there were people at Lassen, when he was a young man. There was a guy named Andy Freid who could not read, or write. But Andy Fried, this great looking cowboy type, with a handlebar mustache and a three cornered tall hat level of sophistication with Thompson and the whole group there in the Park Service and the Interior Department management group. But all along, I think he had good people with him. Then when he finally got out into Alaska, when they'd see him out on his own beginning to do something, the first thing was the Colorado Basin Recreational Survey. This term "recreation" is something that we have to come back to Roger. This is the key term, recreation. But he was sent out to do something on his own, and he found that he did pretty well. He was applauded for that and they gave him more responsibility over time. He began to learn the importance of not doing anything on his own, at all, ever. By building these teams of people that could get the job done, and providing some guidance; providing money, but letting the campaigns; he didn't call them campaigns, he called them 'projects' letting them evolve and giving them enough time to evolve. He told me a number of times that one of the most important things you can do as a person in charge is find the money. Literally buy time for smart people to think. And give them the time to think. He said that sometimes you have to get people to think on their own, but eventually you have to get them to think together. If you make the mistake of trying to think for them, you will fail. You have to let them think on their own, and publish and present that. The sum total of all of that will be much more useful. So by the time he got into Alaska then, early on, with Sumner especially, before that I can't tell you the number of State people. They were working pretty closely with the Territory and then the State of Alaska and with Tribal government too; with leaders at those levels of social structure. And then he would, when they got serious enough, when they realized that they really had something that they really needed to work on, and it was larger than they could do by themselves, he turned to the USGS. These were people that you don't hear very much about that were very important, were; John Reed of the USGS, Gates and Grick of the USGS. These are people who already had such an understanding of those lands in Alaska, that they were not overwhelmed by the scope of geography. They could recognize province. They could disassemble the picture into management units, and understand the risks of drawing those kinds of boundaries, and think beyond them. I know it was Reed, for example, that was the most encouraging [of him] to think about something beyond the boundary of Alaska, something more international. He challenged my father not to think any smaller than that.

MR. KAYE: Was that the International Park idea?

DR. COLLINS: That was the International Park idea that I think first hit the streets of Washington, around the office there, probably in 1951 and 1952. But it was born out of conversations with John Reed, probably a year or a year and a half before that.

MR. KAYE: What role do you think Bob Marshall had on this thinking? He knew Bob quite a ways before he went to Alaska.

DR. COLLINS: Yeah. Well, this begins to speak something to my father's pragmatism. I know that from conversations with my father, I think you could say that my father loved Bob Marshall. He would tell me that Marshall would sometimes come to visit almost unannounced. And that he could stay for hours, and never repeat himself. He was eloquent in his argument and presentation. But that he was somewhat shy and better on paper, than in front of a big group. He was something of, not "an innocent" but something that, or a person who would do better with some level of buffering and protection. He was strong in heart and will, and physically very strong, but not a government person so much. He was a person who needed to be out there doing his own thing, in their own way because it was wonderful. And to bring him in too much, to build him into a project as an employee, or something like that, would wreck it. He needed to be out there thinking and doing, inventing and exploring and making his statements. That was very valuable. And it wasn't pressure. It was all forward thinking, and visionary. But he wasn't the kind of guy that you'd want to put on a project team because you'd heard him doing that. He was too much of an individual.

MR. KAYE: How about Aldo Leopold? What influence did he have on his thinking?

DR. COLLINS: I don't know the relationship there. They knew each other. Well, I would say that my father knew him. I don't think Aldo knew my father very much. I don't think there was a reciprocal relationship there.

MR. KAYE: What about the influence of Leopold's writings and thoughts?

DR. COLLINS: Yeah, um, there was at the time, we're talking about 1948-1953 as the idea of an Arctic "something" was emerging. As you probably know, before World War II, there had been the idea of the Alaskan Highway and recreational surveys along the highway. When my father got into it, he said that this was no good, "We can't just be looking at the edge of the road, for God's sake. We've got to take a much larger frame of reference for these recreation plans." At some point we've got to talk about the word 'recreation'. So, it was post World War II that got him and everybody thinking about this idea of a larger picture. Leopold's writings were in the hands of everybody. I think my father made everybody carry the Sand County Almanac into the Alaska Project with

them. It began speaking to the idea of what's right and what's wrong with integrity. What's healthy? Beginning to apply to the land the kinds of values that we had, until that time, mostly held for people. Something, or a body of text about the intimate relationship between people and the land and how the land can favor the people. There was also, though, some indigenous, that is both Eskimo and inland Indian thinking coming back to my father also. He was meeting with these people all of the time. He was beginning to see, as he told me, some conversions between what Leopold was talking about and what the indigenous peoples were talking about. All of this began to impress upon my father that these values are really very important. It's the values that we can talk about. That we don't really know very much about the land. We never will, except in the way that we study it, and through our own biases and so forth. The values and the evolution of those values, if our social or moral values and their evolution can be guided by our study of other things besides ourselves, and the land, that might be very helpful. We might save ourselves from ourselves if we look at ourselves from the outside in. I think those were the kinds of things that my father was taking from Leopold. But he was around other good thinkers, all of whom have a lot of egos. My father was the first person I ever heard say, "Ecosystem management is Ego-system management."

MR. KAYE: Really? What did he mean by that?

DR. COLLINS: What he meant at the time, in the context of the conversation we were having, I was complaining. At the time I was playing a coordination role in the Bay Area; setting long-range ecological goals. I have about 160 scientists working with me, or for me or around me. I was trying to field their ideas and build them into something. I was having some trouble with some of the better thinkers who were fighting with each other. That was becoming more of the process. Our eyes were taken off of the prize and we were thinking about things more immediate. Egos were getting in the way. My father said that he had had these kinds of problems himself in Alaska and all over the place. When you get many good people together, they have various needs for gratification, recognition, credit and you have to feed that to them. So you have people who want to be in the limelight and want to do things. They want to save things. They want to be in the magazine. They want their pictures there. It doesn't take away from what the contributions are, or what they have to say. It's not to put anybody down, but he had a lot of good thinkers around him and Leopold was one of the bunch I think, and not right at hand. Leopold was coming through writing whereas he had people like the Muries and Marshall and John Reed and Lawrence Merrium and Starker Leopold (as a younger guy) but still as his father's son in many ways, right around the campfire. These people had a lot of good ideas. I don't think Aldo Leopold was the commanding figure around camp because of these other personalities and intellects that were right there, and who wanted to be heard. They had things to say. Do you see what I mean?

MR. KAYE: Yeah.

DR. COLLINS: I think Zanhiser was another one. I don't think my father liked Thoreau too much. He would read Plato's Republic about once every two years from cover to cover. He made all of us kids read that.

MR. KAYE: Tell me some more about the values, and particular those that he might have found in the Arctic Refuge that caused him to do so much for this place. What is the range of values that he found?

DR. COLLINS: This is the idea of 'recreation'. And this is comes through because one aspect of his career was that he was a very good government employee. I think he bent protocol a lot. The first time was when he refused to wear the Government Issue Ranger uniform at Grand Canyon. He designed his own uniform and had it tailor made to him. He said to his boss, "Fire me, this is what I am going to wear. I can't stand the other thing!" That was the beginning of the picture of his willingness to step aside or bend protocol to make things happen. He was still a loyal employee. I have some letters that he wrote to different bosses of his when they were asking if he wanted a promotion or wanted to move on. He would write letters explaining his thoughts and his debate. It was clear that if they wanted him to do this, he was going to do it. He took the role at the National Park Service in Alaska very seriously. He was coming in at a time in Alaska when the role of the Service was changing quite a bit; from the idea of saving the best examples of wild places from volcanoes and fumerals to canyons to tall trees or whatever. Saving the best examples of that to really taking on the idea of providing opportunity for recreation that would supported by the State Parks and Recreation efforts and burgeoning mandates at the time. And then finally, that in order to provide those recreational opportunities into perpetuity, these places, unless they were special monuments in dedication to a particular feature or person, these places had to be self- sustaining. That was a very big idea.

MR. KAYE: What do you mean by that?

DR. COLLINS: Well, he meant, they meant; I don't know where these ideas originate, but he says this, he writes this, but I think they were evolving from camp site. I actually see these ideas coming through. If you go through the correspondence between my father and any of these people we've talked about so far you see the letters going out and letter coming back. They begin to sound like conversation around a campfire. They are not as formal as you might expect. They are very philosophical. They wander quite a bit. They aren't like a chess match through the mail. They are like an exploration of ideas through the mail.

MR. KAYE: Interesting!

DR. COLLINS: When I say, "he says this or he says that" I am not sure who says what, when. But coming through the writings that my father was not orchestrating, but

nurturing and encouraging, are the ideas that something is large. The land, the piece of land, the project, which is always about land; first of all, land itself, the term "land", and I think this does come largely from Leopold, that people are part of the land and not something separate from it. This is a very important idea for my Dad. It is something I don't think he came to until his middle years in the 1940s and 1950s. People are part of the land, they are not separate from it. The land is large in a number of ways. It is noteworthy on a national, even global level because it challenges the idea of multiple use. It challenges the idea of consumptive use. It forces a debate on how the land should be used. In Alaska, the whole debate natural resource, "conservation" way beyond wise use, but preservation. My father hated that idea. But putting land into a form of title or public ownership that would preserve or enable ongoing natural process, basically evolutionary process on a natural scale would at some point because of human population growth force an issue, a choice between that and something else; mining, oil, God knows what. But it was large if it advanced that debate already, if it forces the whole debate. He liked the whole debate up there about oil. He thought that was important for society to face that debate as soon as possible. He thought that the first Hearings that failed to establish the Range brought out very important public points that had not been brought out through the campaign that he had helped facilitate through the wilderness magazines and that whole part of society. They had not really brought out the debate by native peoples, by ranching peoples, by the oil industry; it had been too one sided. In their campaign to get the thing going he thought it was a pretty successful effort when they got to the first Hearings and the public debate started. He thought that this debate, unto itself, was important, and a measure of success. So he thought the idea was value because it was large enough to cause that to happen. That in itself was important. Now, "self-sustaining", this is where it begins to move into science. This is where he needed Starker, Darling and Reed and people like that to start telling him what is something that is self-sustaining. And the idea that emerged was that, "Is it large enough to permit the ongoing evolution or co-evolution of some focal species?" The Caribou presented that opportunity. If they could do something to permit the ongoing co-evolution of people and Caribou; they knew that Caribou and people had been around each other for thousands and thousands of years. They knew that there was a relationship there that had so affected both people and Caribou that neither species would probably be the same without the relationship. So the wanted something that would permit the ongoing evolution of that. He said at one point, "I guess if we had never had any people up there, we would have wanted to keep the people out." But since the Indians and Eskimos had been there for a long time, there was absolutely no justification to prevent them from doing what they had been doing for such a long time. He said that was the thing to keep doing. That was the idea of people as being part of the land. So it was self-sustaining if it was geographically large enough to enable the ongoing evolution of the relationship between people and the land. The Caribou and the indigenous harvesting of Caribou represented that. Now the challenge was that they didn't think they could hold people to their historically sustainable ways. They already had guns, they were going to get snow mobiles. So that was something he felt they never got to: is it really fair to keep these

people in check, rather than to let them advance into a new technology. And, if they did that, would the area ever be large enough? That was the idea of 'self-sustaining'.

MR. KAYE: O.K., this evolutionary process; of course Leopold wrote quite a bit about the value of wilderness to enable processes to continue, not just species we like. I get the sense that your father agreed with that.

DR. COLLINS: *Completely!* Absolutely! Even at Lassen Park, as a little boy, maybe I was ten years old. I go to Lassen. He didn't like going to Lassen because he said the Park was not large enough to encompass the processes of geology that are manifest at the surface of the land so that people can see it. That, Shasta, Lassen and the Modock Plato those should all be one large Park. The same thing with Great Basin National Park. What the hell good does it do to have Great Basin National Park if you don't take in as much of the basin as you do of the range? And Yellowstone, there was the recognition, this comes from a number of early writings, that it isn't large enough if we even have to worry about the ranchers killing off something because it gets outside the boundary. It was the same at Grand Canyon. He took part in the horrendous slaughter of large predators like Mountain Lion in Grand Canyon. That taught him early on, and the predatory release of the Kybab Deer which the populations which just blew up and taking over all of the meadows and changing the flora. He saw all of that. And he said that there was a lot of process here that we are not accounting for in our management plans that we need to account for. So he was always aware of that. I think art got him to that quite a bit too. By the time he got into Alaska, he was well aware of process. I think the Colorado Basin Survey, dealing with a very large watershed like that, and understanding the affects of downstream conditions with upstream processes, and upstream conditions on downstream processes reinforced this idea that what you are really after is the conservation of large-scale process, not just place.

MR. KAYE: You know, Biologist Lowell Sumner who your father called his partner, "Doc", was considered a visionary in this within the Park Service. Obviously, they had a lot in common in this. Do you recall Sumner talking about this as well?

DR. COLLINS: Oh yeah, all the time.

MR. KAYE: Now, you knew Sumner didn't you?

DR. COLLINS: I knew Sumner, but I was a young guy. But he had such a large impact on me that my son is named after him. My son's first name is Sumner. Doc, and I knew him later on too. As I grew up we still went and visited over in New Mexico. We talked quite a bit. Sumner was an unusual intellect in the sense that he used the term for me that I still use, which is "zoom lens ecology"; being able to zoom in and zoom out of scale and time and space; seeing relationships and different scales of time and space. He was thinking this way all of the time. He would be walking through a field and he would be

walking through time and space. He was always seeing process. He was rather mathematical, and he was very, very careful. And this was part of the partnership; he could check my father's numbers all of the time. He was, I don't know about a mathematician, but he was very good with figures and very careful with data. He provided that quantitative aspect to what he and my father did together. He could check anybody's work that way. But he also did see both. He looked at the evolution of habitat. He was good as a habitat guy. Not just landscape. It wasn't just geology it was habitat. And so was Starker.

MR. KAYE: Do you mean Starker Leopold?

DR. COLLINS: Yeah. But Doc was more attentive because Doc was also a National Park Service employee. So they had that holding them together where other people were coming on as consultants or short-term employees, and part of a team. Doc and my father were held together by their common employment. That was part of it. I have a favorite memory of Sumner. When we were at Zion National Park, I can't remember why the hell we were there. My father had some business. Doc was there. I imagine that my father was trying to find something for me to do while they met during the day. We were down at the Naturalist's Headquarters, which is I guess where they were going to have their meeting. The bunch of younger Naturalist's, I think they were probably graduate students, were heading out early in the morning downstream across the Springdale Valley there, or whatever it's called, looking for some particular species of lizards. Sumner said, "Josh, if you go and park yourself on the rock out behind this place and wait long enough, I'll bet you'll see the same thing right in your own back yard here." He took me out, hunted around and put me on a rock, and told me where to watch. And he told me to come back and report to him when I saw the lizard. It was only a matter of a couple of hours, which for me it was not hard to sit up there and watch things for a couple of hours. I came back in and said that I had indeed seen this lizard, which was a small side blotch lizard. So, here these other guys had traveled twenty miles to go and collect this thing, and it was twenty feet out their back door. That was the way Sumner was. He knew things, but he wouldn't try to put anybody down. He was never that kind of a guy. But he was, he knew his natural history. His field wisdom was exceptional. He taxonomy was exceptional especially with small mammals and birds. His sense of process and how ecology is kind of a thin veneer of life on top of geomorphic process was very keen. He understood all of that.

MR. KAYE: So, it seems that much of his motivation for the Arctic was to preserve an area of ecologic and evolutionary process to go on its way?

DR. COLLINS: Yeah, absolutely. He had, I think a rather stricter sense of ecological right and wrong than my father did. My father was more willing to except that we don't really know what we're looking at, what really matters, what people think about it. And we need to preserve it in order to advance our thinking and our understanding of

ourselves. Doc was more keen to; this thing is important for it's own sake. We need to protect it for that purpose. These species are that important, and didn't have to translate it back into human terms.

MR. KAYE: I see.

DR. COLLINS: So, he definitely saw. Another experience I had with him was sitting at the breakfast table at his place in New Mexico. He disappeared from the table. He had a big window overlooking his menagerie of habitats out of the door. He suddenly appeared stage left outside with a shotgun. He obliterated a Starling, a bird. He came back and sat down and said, "That's one less Starling in the world". He had a sense of right and wrong in the ecological world. He didn't like invasive species. He liked a sense of integrity being the assemblage of species that had evolved, co-evolved or that had been there for a long time together. That needed to be protected, and the processes that would sustain that needed to be protected.

MR. KAYE: He was considered to be a bit radical or eccentric in the Park Service because he was rather visionary. When people were thinking just recreation, he was thinking ecological process… is that that you are trying to say?

DR. COLLINS: Was he? Oh yeah. This is important, this idea of recreation. This is, and I'll send you some of this material where I have outlined it a little bit. I find, when I looked at your list of questions and began going back over; I found something from 1955 that I know because of the language that my father wrote. He apparently wrote it for Merrium. Merrium signed it as the Regional Director. It was to a group of State people up in Oregon. It begins, "The meaning of the word 'recreation' obviously should be the same to all member of your group. As you said last month in your discussion with Mr. Ben Thompson, in order that they may work together with a common understanding of the basic subject." He goes on, and says finally, "in section one of the 1916 Enabling Act of the National Park Service, also quoted in part later on herein, the term 'enjoyment' we feel is synonymous with 'recreation' in the broadest sense." And that term, "the broadest sense" will come up over and over again in the writings. Here is something from 1956 where he is reviewing a paper entitled Human Geographic Research in the North American-Northern Lands, by Kirk H. Stone. Stone is talking about the frontier quality and recreation on the frontier. In the margins, my father has written, "No! The only frontiers are those of the mind! We only have preservation of primitive values now by man. He already has the frontier licked." So the term recreation, I could go on for just a second; here in a 1973 treatise entitled, Consideration of the Arctic National Wildlife Range and the Proposal for a Trans-Alaska-Canada Gas Transmission Line. My father says, "There is an urge in man, not necessarily logical to test himself in primitive or hazardous surroundings. It's our heritage from our earliest ancestry. We go to the wild lands to experience the power and beauty of elemental scenes and forces that bring us physical pleasure and spiritual stimulation. It is as simple as that, a reawakening, a

revelation, an inspiration. It is the essence of recreation in the fullest sense of the term." So, what he means by recreation is reawakening, revelation and inspiration. If you go back to his 1928 Christmas card, he means encouragement. To get out into the wilderness is to be inspired, and encouraged. Now things that we talked about in terms of recreation, the values of the large areas, the wilderness that were large enough to be self-sustaining like the International Wildlife Range, was that they are ongoing, they are evolving, they are beyond good are bad. They are "right" because they are unto themselves and can evolve naturally without the medium of man, as he would say. So if you bring that idea of recreation as a place, as he says to you when you interviewed him directly, a place that lets your mind drift, then you can see that this is a place where you can stand and look out and realize that you are looking upon something that is right because it is ongoing, evolving and self-sustaining. The processes are ongoing, evolving and self-sustaining. And you can therefore look out into the countryside and let your mind drift into a land that you don't know perfectly except that you know it's the right place. And if that place has gone through a careful debate about how else it might be used, and come to the same conclusion; it needs to be set aside for it's own sake and for the sake of the people who learn from simply being there, and being encouraged and inspired by it; then you've provided something that would improve our understanding and make people better. That was his idea. That was not Sumner. Sumner would say, "Fine George, that's great. Let's make sure the Caribou are safe!"

MR. KAYE: Sumner was more a strict ecoscentrist I guess. But getting back to your father, is that really a spiritual value he was talking about, this humility in the larger perspective?

DR. COLLINS: Absolutely. That's his sense of spirituality.

MR. KAYE: Tell me what he meant. [end of side A]

DR. COLLINS: ….of such and such, and this is Bob's Mountain. He liked the idea of that. He liked names like Cedar Brakes, Short Falls. He liked names that were illustrative of the condition, or better yet, that said something about the process. He loved the term 'delta'. He thought delta was a great word. Everything about it, he liked. Another one was 'alluvial fan'. These were terms he liked a lot. And the idea that you had to name one to distinguish one from the other he thought was not too good. So, he didn't like the idea of place names. And he had noted that the…and this is how I know about this; because I had come to the realization that this place around me, San Francisco Bay, has no formal name. It has never been actually named. The bay doesn't have a name. There was an effort by EPA to establish a name for it, and they were going to call it the San Francisco Estuary. I wondered why it had to be named after San Francisco and why it couldn't be called the Sacramento Estuary. My father said, "Josh, you need to go back and talk to the Federal Board on Geographic Names. They will have rules." And he told me to see a specific person. I had another reason to go back to Washington. While I was

there, I went to the Board of Geographic Names and I happened to see this older gentleman. It was the week he was going to retire. He was somebody who had known my father. I introduced myself and told him this whole story. He directed his staff to bring out maps and confirm that there was no legal name for San Francisco Bay. He told me that the rules for naming the bay were that it could not be named for a city or a person. They had to be named for the river flowing into it or for the connection to the Ocean. And if either of these were named for a person, so be it. But they had rules on this that were not often followed. My father thought it was much better to name things because of their landscape orientation or position or quality or condition that for a person. At the same time, he knew that he wasn't going to have much luck getting the [sounds like] Point Rays established if he didn't have the Clem Miller Nature Preserve in the middle of it. At some point he realized that assigning name was a way to get something done.

MR. KAYE: I wonder if he felt that naming it after a person was a bit pretentious and not very consistent with humility?

DR. COLLINS: It was not consistent with humility and it was also, as he said many times, "It will always be tied to power or money, or both". It's tied to position. It's got nothing to do with… He didn't mind that Clem Miller thing out at Point Rays because Congressman Miller had done so much beyond the call of duty to establish that Sea Shore. He thought in Alaska that Seton and Reed, those were very important names that weren't getting used enough up there, if they had to use names. But he was quick to point out that there had been people living there for thousands of years, and their names were pretty good too. Of course, there are a lot of place names that are indigenous.

MR. KAYE: Did your father talk about Fred Seton at all?

DR. COLLINS: Yeah, he did.

MR. KAYE: What did he think of Seton?

DR. COLLINS: You know, I can't recall at this time. I can tell you that in the things I am sending you; you'll have to pour through it, but there is some…Let me look at this one thing and see if it's there. I know that [Collins reading through papers]. There's another big name; Clarence Rhode Seton around all over that part of your part of the country promoting, and getting Seton to understand things. I know that my father had something to do with causing that to happen. I've got his whole history here and on page 199 in the index that says there is something about Fred Seton there. He doesn't pull many punches in oral history. Cause most of the other people are already dead, so I guess he is at liberty to talk about them. I think it was 1960, just about the time he retired that the Range was established in Alaska. [reading] "It was the last official act of

it's kind by Secretary of Interior Fred Seton on December 6, 1960". Didn't you call me Roger, on December 6th?

MR. KAYE: Yeah, I did! [laughing]

DR. COLLINS: I didn't realize that. [reading again] "In issuing Public Land Order #2212, did this come from pressure from yourself or another conservationist?" Collins says "Sure that's where Olaus and Mardie helped out an awful lot. But the person who really did more than anybody was Clarence Rhode. He flew Fred Seton all over Alaska. Now who was Clarence Rhode again? He was Regional Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Alaska and an outstanding man." "Lage: He gave Fred Seton a first hand look at it?" Collins: "Oh yes!" Lage: "a personal commitment?" Collins: " At the hands of a man who was infinitely well acquainted with all of Alaska and devoted to Alaska, a real Alaskan." See? There's that term again? A "real" Alaskan. He wasn't born there but he practically raised himself there. He flew bush pilot jobs there with several outfits before he ever got the Fish and Wildlife Service. He was a boat Captain on a national aircraft carrier and so forth. He sold Fred Seton on this thing. So, I don't know, there may be more about Seton in there some place. But it was clear that somebody had to sell Seton on this thing, see?

MR. KAYE: Yeah. Well, I think there was a group of people; Sig Olson who knew your father well. I think he had a role in it too. He was close friends with Seton. Did your father talk about Sig Olson at all in relation to this?

DR. COLLINS: Yes, but you know, I don't know anything about that. The name is very, very familiar to me. Who was he?

MR. KAYE: Sig Olson was at one time the President of the Wilderness Society. He wrote quite a few books on wilderness. But he is in there in this series of correspondence with your father and Murie, and Zanhiser on this proposed Range. Of course we don't know who did what to stimulate public comments and support. That, unfortunately is lost. I think people like your father who worked for agencies wouldn't want a record of that. But there is enough. We know that there is a lot of records, letters and public pressure exerted on Seton, but we don't know; well, first there's no record of what happened to the letters.

DR. COLLINS: When you talked to Mardie, did she have any recollection of that?

MR. KAYE: I don't believe I asked her about that. But it was widely regarded that there was a campaign and Stewart Brandenburg for example, who knew your father well and admired him, told me that the National Wildlife Federation generated huge amounts of letters and support. Unfortunately, we don't know where it went. But I suspect that your father had a role in that, and probably Doc Sumner.

DR. COLLINS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: But there's just no record of it.

DR. COLLINS: I think there may be a pretty good paper trail in these boxes I am going to send you. The amount of correspondence between my father and people outside government about the Range or Refuge seems to increase drastically, right after he retired. So, I know that the Conservationists Associates group, their primary interest was Alaska and the Refuge at that time. You may be able to find a lot of stuff in that. I don't remember seeing anything with Sig, but there was an awful lot of correspondence in there.

MR. KAYE: I have a last question I wanted to ask. Your father received a medal, or some award from the President didn't he?

DR. COLLINS: Oh, yeah. [remembering]

MR. KAYE: Can you tell me that, and how he accepted that?

DR. COLLINS: You might want to talk to my sister Roxy, who by the way sends her regards to you. She would have a better sense of how this came about. It was through Senator McCain, I believe of Arizona. I don't remember the politics behind it. It's the kind of thing where you're going to have to check me on this, but it's I think, the States through their Senators…it was some special program that George Bush, Sr. had going where he could recognize the conservation efforts of people. I think this was done through nominations within States. Then, it wasn't like a beauty contest where the best one was chosen out of all fifty states. If you got nominated, and your nomination was forwarded by the State Senator you'd get something. I think that's the way it was working. My father had a number of these kinds of things. And this was very late in his life. I don't have the award here. It was decided that I would take my mother and father back to Washington for the ceremony so that he could receive this thing. I think my sister Martha came with us. We got back there, and got set up, and one of the things my father did was visit with his secretary that he had had while he was in Washington in the 1930s. It was a really remarkable visit. She had saved a lot of things from my father. She was a very good secretary I understand. Anyway, when it came time for the ceremony there was a drizzling rain. It was supposed to be in the Rose Garden, but it was moved to the Old Federal Building, I think. We went to go in and the security people said that we couldn't all go in. My father was in a wheel chair. He could walk, but very slowly. He had this thing called post-polio syndrome. If you have polio, and you live long enough, it sort of comes back. So he couldn't get along very well, and he was worried about falling. We had him in a wheelchair. Because of that, they allowed that one person to go in with him in to the ceremony. My mother, his wife of some fifty years or more, and my sister had to stay outside in the scantiest of cover in the drizzling rain while my father and I

went in for the ceremony. If you've been through something like that, you know that there are layers of protocol. My father hates that kind of thing. When we got in, I kind of went in the wrong direction and we found ourselves looking for an elevator to go someplace else. My father was trying to remember how the hell the building was laid out. He hadn't been there probably in thirty or forty years. Along down the hall came Gephardt and whole bunch of other Senators heading toward the ceremony. We all rode the elevator together. I don't remember the details of the discussion, but my father was lobbying for Anwar at that time, in the elevator, heavily, and knew his facts and his figures, and knew who he was talking to! And now, so that I am feeling squeamish, the elevator was slow, I remember that. We got off, into the little theater area and as you probably know, Senators of either side of the isle like to get as close to the President as possible, all of the time. They were trying to figure out through their aide, which side the President was going to come in on. There is all of this pomp. And I am leading up to something here, you can tell. There is a lot of pomp and ceremony, and layers of protocol people around the stage. I began going down towards the front of the theater seating where my father would be near the stage. We were intercepted of course, and I had to say who we were. I was told that I could drop my father off, and take the wheelchair back. But I couldn't stay with him. So I did that. I ended up having to sit some distance from him, off to one side. When the President came out, and made a little speech thanking these people. He then went over to shake the hand of one of the recipients. My father was closest at hand. Bush is a tall man. My father was just a little bit taller. To my surprise, when George Bush got up there and reached over to shake my father's hand, my father stood himself up! He was half an inch or so taller than the President. He shook his hand and then said something to George Bush. The cameras were going off and so forth. The Presidents expression changed from sort of a big open smile to kind of a stern look. There was a parting of the hands, and my father, wearing a smile, sat down. The whole thing came to a close of course. I went over and got my father and I said, "What did you say to the President?" And he said something to the effect of, 'I told him to stay the hell out of ANWR!'

MR. KAYE: Is that right?! [Both men laughing] Oh my!

DR. COLLINS: I said, "Dad, I think you were supposed to say 'thank you very much Mr. President'"! He said, that at his age, you only have so many opportunities left, or "use every opportunity open to you".

MR. KAYE: Oh my, that's a great story!

DR. COLLINS: I have been trying off and on ever since to get copies of those photos. I can't seem to find where they are. A lot were taken, and I thought it would be kind of fun to have that. It would been neat to see if there actually was a change of expression. [laughing]

MR. KAYE: Is there anything else you'd like to add. I've taken an awful lot of your time.

DR. COLLINS: No, I'm O.K. I would add that I have done my best to pour over many hundreds of pages of letters and background materials from my father's own files so that I could sort of calibrate and validate my own memories of conversations. And you must appreciate that I am looking at conversations that I have had when I was a young boy in some cases. We just built upon those conversations over many, many years. So I feel like I understand my father's philosophy, his motives, his larger principals very well. I understand some of the context for that, some of the arguments. But many of the details of correspondence, interaction, administration, I don't know much about on any one of his projects. My understanding of him is more of a friend, than a father, and much more of that than as a colleague or a professional. That would be the limits of my qualifications.

MR. KAYE: Well, thank you very much.

DR. COLLINS: Thank you, it's been fun.

[The following is a separate phone conversation between Mr. Kaye and Dr. Collins]

MR. KAYE: Yeah Josh, after the interview you mentioned one other thing that was very interesting. You talked about a proposal to name a Sea Shore after your father. Could you tell me about his response to that, and why he responded as he did?

DR. COLLINS: Just as a point of clarification; it was a meeting before the Sea Shore had been established. Lots of things were being discussed. There had been, in a meeting, not a formal proposal but a suggestion by people who were much involved on the local side, that some part of it be named for my father.

MR. KAYE: Which place was this again?

DR. COLLINS: This was the Point Rays National Sea Shore, a part of that. There was already some effort to use Congressman Clem Miller's name to help justify and advance some of the larger proposals, politically. And I don't know what the motive behind using my father's name was. Maybe it was to acknowledge his role. Anyway, the suggestion came up in the meeting. I attended a lot of meetings with my father, and I think this was very uncharacteristic of him. He was a very affable man with a huge sense of humor. And he was very deferential in a meeting, even one that he would be leading. But when this suggestion came up, he turned stern, and it seemed to me that he grew about two feet taller, and said, emphatically, "NO!" Now, he and I have talked about that kind of thing since. And the problem that he had with giving a place the name of a person is that everybody else has to see the place through that person's name, and wonder what role

that person had, and how was person better than the person that they were. Why wasn't it named after them? It becomes a personal thing, a competitive thing, a human thing. He said it was much better for people to see the land on the land's terms, and not wonder why it was named something after a person. So that was a very basic concern; to not give a place… at the same time pragmatically, he could see that it was sometimes necessary to honor somebody by naming a place after them for the purposes of getting something established and getting something done. But it wasn't, by far, it was a far cry from a first choice.

MR. KAYE: So, a place naming would be like a symbolic action? Maybe it would be in contrast to the symbolism of the place?

DR. COLLINS: It was in direct contrast with the idea of lands being put in protective status for all of the people and for the land itself. Not in the name of any one person, but in the name of all things good, important and useful, and in the name of virtue. So, why should one person be credited with something that was essentially good, on it's own terms?