

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN HUTCHINSON  
NOVEMBER 13, 2002 BY DOROTHE NORTON  
BENSON, MINNESOTA  
Also present Mrs. Sandy Hutchinson

MS. NORTON: What were your birthplace and date?

MR. HUTCHINSON: My birth date was a long time ago; May 15, 1927. I was born in Lakewood, Ohio. I was born and raised in Lakewood and from there I went to many different places.

MS. NORTON: What were your parents' names?

MR. HUTCHINSON: John T., Sr. and Virginia.

MS. NORTON: What were their jobs and education?

MR. HUTCHINSON: My Dad was a jack-of-all-trades. He had a high school education. He was a house builder, a real estate salesman, sporting goods salesman, he worked in a soybean processing/manufacturing plant. He was just... He was quiet a guy. During the First World War he worked on building Liberty Ships out of Pensacola, Florida. During the Second World War he worked in the bomber plant in Cleveland building B-29s.

MS. NORTON: And your mother?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Mother was a stay at home Mom. She went to finishing school and always needed more than she got. She always needed more than she got. She was always one of those "high society" people and didn't have quiet enough to keep up with it.

MS. NORTON: How did you spend your early years?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Outdoors, as much as I could. Even when I was at school I was outdoors most of the time.

MS. NORTON: Now where were you? You said you moved around a lot.

MR. HUTCHINSON: In Lakewood. I was born and raised there until I went in the military.

MS. NORTON: What books, hobbies or events influenced you the most?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Probably history books; American history mostly. As for events; well at a young age I suppose it was cowboy westerns too. That was a pretty good thing there. I was always wanted to fight with and be with the Indians. That probably gave me my interest in firearms.

MS. NORTON: Did you have any jobs when you were a child?

MR. HUTCHINSON: I worked in a hardware store for about four years. I bought my first canoe because of working there. I was fourteen. It was an Oldtown.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever hunt or fish?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Always, as much as I could.

MS. NORTON: What high school did you go to? And when did you graduate?

MR. HUTCHINSON: I went to Lakewood High, and graduated in 1945.

MS. NORTON: Okay. What university did you attend?

MR. HUTCHINSON: One year at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

MS. NORTON: Did you get a degree?

MR. HUTCHINSON: No.

MS. NORTON: Who influenced your career track? Was it your folks, or your teachers or friends?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Wanderlust! I have probably the equivalent of a master's degree in education; but it's so diversified; from welding to Job Corps training. There are lots of different things; heavy equipment operation, gunsmith school. As I say, I moved around quite a bit. After I got out of the military I moved around quite a bit. As I say, I did just about everything. In the military I was on a B-17 crew. Out of the service, why, I had to fly, so I got a pilot's license. I drove motorcycles. I was always so small that I couldn't pick the motorcycle up, but I still rode them anyhow.

MS. NORTON: You were which branch of the military, the Army?

MR. HUTCHINSON: The Air Force. I was in for three years.

MS. NORTON: What were your duty stations?

MR. HUTCHINSON: My duty stations were, well, over all it was Brazil. I went in just as the war was ending and got on to a B-17 outfit, or crew. I spent my career in the military basically in Brazil flying over the jungle and taking pictures for aerial photography. I was an engineer/mechanic on the B-17.

MS. NORTON: Did you get any decorations while you were in the military?

MR. HUTCHINSON: No. They didn't give decorations then. I was too late for that. And I was lucky, actually.

MS. NORTON: Did your military service relate in any way to your employment with FWS?

MR. HUTCHINSON: No.

MS. NORTON: Now, can you tell me when, where and how you met your wife?

MR. HUTCHINSON: My wife and I met through mutual friends. This was back in 1975. She is my second wife. Our first date, I think, was in Willmar.

MS. NORTON: Willmar, Minnesota?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Yeah. It was just a question of a friend of mine who was a muzzle loading enthusiast introduced us. His wife is a good friend of Sandy's and they introduced us. We hit it off pretty fast. I think it was six months later that we were married.

MS. NORTON: Do you have any children?

MR. HUTCHINSON: I have three children from my first marriage, and Sandy has two. So we have five altogether.

MS. NORTON: What are they all doing now?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Oh gosh; there's everything from a history specialist, computer specialist, a graphic artist, a secretary and a homemaker I guess. No, that wouldn't be right. You've got me confused! I've got to figure out how many I've got, and what they do!

MS. NORTON: Why did you want to for FWS?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Because I wanted to help the resource, like many foolish people back then.

MS. NORTON: What was your first professional position with FWS?

MR. HUTCHINSON: I was a work leader with the Job Corps Program in 1965. It was a good program.

MS. NORTON: What did you do?

MR. HUTCHINSON: I was Tree Crew Foreman, teaching them how to work in the woods. Working in the woods was one of my jobs. Prior to the Job Corps I worked as a Maintenance Man with the FWS for a year. Prior to that I had been in all kinds of forestry activities; everything from taking it down to being a tree topper.

MS. NORTON: Where did you go from there?

MR. HUTCHINSON: From the Job Corps I went right to the Small Wetlands program in Benson. Now it's in Morris.

MS. NORTON: What attracted you to the FWS? Was it just that it was protecting the resources?

MR. HUTCHINSON: No, I think that the FWS presented the possibility of getting out of where I was. Ohio was all right, but it wasn't what I wanted. I wanted to get into the North Country. I had the opportunity to go to Minnesota. Actually, I was hired for a job in the same capacity for a job in Ohio. I talked to "Goodie" Larsen and I told him, "You don't want me here. I've only got forty acres of trees. Put me up north where I've got some trees!" So he did. He put me up at Tamarac. That was good duty. It was probably the most trying and pressing time in my life. I was working with underprivileged kids. That takes an awful lot out of you. I know that you are familiar with the Job Corps program.

MS. NORTON: Was the Job Corps program at Tamarac?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Yeah, it was one of the satellite Job Corps stations. But you're taking kids out of the inner city, and I was working black kids, and Mexican Americans from Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. I was taking them up to Minnesota in the middle of winter, working at thirty degrees below zero and in three feet of snow. Surprisingly, I guess you could say, I had a rapport with the boys. I was successful as far as I was concerned. I taught a lot of them a lot about the woods; how to cut. I actually had eight chainsaw teams working at one time. They were wonderful kids but they lacked education. They were from all walks. There were drug addicts, homosexuals, you name it, and it was there in that program. The problem that caused the program folded was that they could not get enough staff to accept what they were doing. To take and meet these

people, or these boys, on their on ground and know them. You had to know each and every one of them by name and by background, by girlfriend, by likes and dislikes. If you did this, you were successful. And if you gave them something to belong to, you were successful. We had a unit of what they called the Tamarac Ticks; Wood Ticks. They were part of my unit. They had to work with me for so long before they got their axe. They became something that they had not been before. They were part of a family, really. It was a family group and everybody stuck up for everybody. I had one Job Corps boy in particular, his name was Randy Johnson. In fact, I've got all of the records of the daily activities of those boys downstairs.

MS. NORTON: You still have them?

MR. HUTCHINSON: I still have them. Randy Johnson was a big black, I think from Chicago. He was gruff and his language was something terrible. He was mean. Randy Johnson called me a "scumhead". That was my name. You get some nicknames, and that was mine name! One day a new kid came in and called me that. Randy Johnson took him aside and just beat the heck out of him. He said, "You don't call Mr. Hutchinson that! I'm the only one that calls him scumhead. You call him Mr. Hutchinson!" That boy called me Mr. Hutchinson from then on! Job Corps was probably the highlight of my FWS career really, in that it was a program that should have worked but didn't. It was such a needed program, and it could have worked. But they could not...I think they were able to staff the work end of the program, but on the education end of it, they couldn't hire enough teachers to stay. It was two weeks on and two weeks off. There were two weeks of work, and two weeks of education. The teachers, I don't think, would ever accept what they were doing, and the type of child; with a third grade education. You could teach them something practically, as far as working, but to teach them education that they had never been exposed to was tough.

MS. NORTON: So, you concern that you be the highlight of your career; working with them?

MR. HUTCHINSON: That, and one other thing that I never got any credit for and I've always been sad about that. That was when I was with the Small Wetlands Program out of Morris and Benson. Basically at both places I devised a method of introducing young people to environment. I had a program that was "What it Was, What is it Today, and What Will it be Tomorrow?" The gimmick of my program was an eighteen-foot Cheyenne lodge, tepee. I would have up to about thirty-five kids in the lodge at one time. I would give them program on what it was like back when and what it is today and what it's going to be tomorrow if you don't take care of it. I had over 5,000 kids in my tepee. I was sponsored by Al Radtke, basically, out of FWS. He allowed me to take my own van, with pay, and go around to different schools throughout the state. I am still doing that. I don't do it as much, but I still have one, two or three sessions of the "Old Grouch". That's how I was known throughout the FWS! People who were looking for

this program knew me by “the Old Grouch” and that’s who they’d ask for when they called. That became my nickname and it still is.

MS. NORTON: You don’t appear that way to me! I haven’t asked you the right questions yet?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Actually, “the Old Grouch” came about because simply because I had been talking to these kids... These kids ranged in age from first grade through high school. I had been talking to these kids’ parents and grandparents all of my career trying to get them to listen to me, and trying to get them to save the environment. They never listened. And for all of these years, I said it was a waste of time. I would say, “Now I’m trying to talk to you children, and I don’t know if it’s going to do any good or not!” It did! And in 5,000 kids, I had one kid stand out. He made smart remarks to me and just downed the whole thing. He was a 4-H leader, by the way. He was just a smart-alecky kid. I told him, “I don’t need you here. You get lost! Go back and report to your leader!” That kind of put him down. He didn’t think I was going to do that. He came kind of sheepishly to me and asked if he could come in. I said, “You can come in, but keep quiet, I don’t want to hear a thing out of you!” I went through my spiel. I took them on a trip. If it was cool enough, I had a fire in the tepee. They would all sit in a circle and I made them close their eyes. I would introduce them to what it was like back in the old country by taking them on a trip. I would start out by telling them that it was just after the Civil War and we were going to take a trip in a Conestoga wagon. We did and I described the land as we passed and went through it. As I got to one spot, I was describing the same area that we were in; the different trees, and the water and describing out pristine it was in those days. Then I’d make them open their eyes, wake them up and open their eyes and bring them back to the present. Then we’d start talking about what it is today, and what’s been done to it since then. I’d ask them where we were when we ended our journey. [Speakers voice halting, hesitating with emotion.] There would always be one or two that would say, “Right here”!

MS. NORTON: Are you okay? [Short pause]

MS. NORTON: When you started with FWS what were the pay and benefits like?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Better than with the state of Ohio! I was working with the state as a Park Manager at the time. There was a spoils system down there, as it is in a lot of state government agencies. If you said the wrong thing to the wrong person.... I was transferred all of a sudden to the Stone Lake State Park, which was out on the boondocks. They gave me a thirty-dollar raise and charged me forty dollars more for my house! I was really desperate when I joined the FWS. Actually I went from the State of Ohio to the FWS. It was quite a step upwards at the time. I went in as GS-7. That was pretty good back in those days.

MS. NORTON: Did you have promotion opportunities?

MR. HUTCHINSON: No. I didn't have a degree. Without a degree, it's tough. I never chose the maintenance field. I should have, because that's what I was doing most of the time. I was a surveyor. I did all of the topographical surveys. I drove a bulldozer for seventeen years. I did a lot of the field surveys and inventories of all of the units that we bought. With the Small Wetlands program, the units were anywhere from five or six acres up to two and three hundred acres. I would go out to those units and inventory everything that was on them; how many marshes, how many and what type of trees. Just about anything and everything that was done in FWS, plus law enforcement. In law enforcement, I was more of an aide, rather than actually making arrests. I could have, but most of what I did was helping out other law enforcement people. In fact, old "Old Tricky Dick Toltzman, that was one of my bad areas or memories of the FWS. You had to have known him.

MS. NORTON: Yes, I knew him.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Dick Toltzman was probably the worst people person in the FWS. I don't know that there was hardly anybody that respected him for his attitude towards the hired help. I must give Dick credit because he was probably the most dedicated person to the resource of anyone that I knew in the FWS! I was scheduled to go to Glencoe [?]. Dick said that he didn't need a Biotech in law enforcement so he took my badge away. I was real proud of that badge! You know Rick Schultz, I imagine?

MS. NORTON: Oh yeah.

MR. HUTCHINSON: He is a very good friend of mine. He comes up here and hunts. I taught Rick just about everything he knows. I guess there's one or two things that he learned on his own, but I taught him most everything. Rick and I were pretty close. I can't remember how he got into the conversation here. But Dick hurt me pretty bad on that law enforcement stuff. Oh, I know, Rick Schultz is a pretty high "mucky-muck" in FWS now. You can't get much higher than he is now. He is the Refuge Manager at Minnesota Valley. I have memorabilia downstairs that I'll show you later. One thing I don't have, that "Tricky Dick Toltzman" took away from me was my badge. On the QT, I asked Rick, since he was pretty high up, and knew the people in law enforcement, to see what he could do for me. Pretty soon, a couple weeks later comes a package in the mail. I opened it up and on top was a Junior Refuge Manager badge. You've seen them? Those plastic badges? On the bottom was my gold badge. So I got my old badge back!

MS. NORTON: How did your career affect your family?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Bad in ways. When I was with the Job Corps, it was pretty tough. That was four years of sixteen-hour days. That's another thing about FWS. The

first fifteen or sixteen years with FWS were good. The last ten years were terrible. For the first fifteen years we didn't have any schedule. We worked eight, ten, fourteen or sixteen hour days, and that was just part of it. We were getting a salary and heck, you did it because you were dedicated to the FWS. Now, too many of them are dedicated to the money. It's good pay. When it wasn't such good pay, we had dedicated people. It's not as good as it used to be in that respect.

MS. NORTON: Why did you leave the FWS, because you retired?

MR. HUTCHINSON: No, it was because of me and my big mouth. I disagreed with their policies on the trapping program. They decided that a duck was much more valuable than a fox or a coon. They were trapping them at the wrong time of the year and euthanizing them, digging a whole and burying them. Of course, there was a lot of disagreement on that when it first came out. I was going in to a meeting, and the second boss, the Assistant Manager, who you've met, told me, "Hutch, you keep your mouth shut today! We don't want any discussion on that." They knew how I felt about it, and of course, a lot of people felt about it as I did. The next day, I put in for retirement. So that was the crux of it. By that time, I was coming home with a headache every day. Every other week, I had a good migraine. It was all-just because of the things that they were doing to please and pacify Duck Unlimited and Pheasants Forever, etc. They were doing things that FWS shouldn't be proud of. They were doing and trying things that we had done thirty-five years ago down in Ohio and had proved that they wouldn't work. They just had to have something to do. These nesting boxes that they put out; they are still not doing anything that they are supposed to. So you see, I have things against the FWS. I have a lot of good memories, but everybody had the bad ones too.

MS. NORTON: That's right. What date did you resign then?

MR. HUTCHINSON: I retired, but it was just lucky that I was able to. It was in the spring of 1987.

MS. NORTON: What projects were you involved in?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Basically, inventorying all of the units in the Wetlands Program. It was the physical walking and inventorying, typing marshes, tree stands and croplands. I put all of this on a RIP card. A Resource Inventory Planning card. I think after I left, they probably pretty much threw those out. That was where the majority of my hours were spent; on resource inventory planning. I also did the graphic art and map work with the program.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever work with any animals during your jobs?



MR. HUTCHINSON: No, not with the FWS. One of the reasons I was hired by FWS was because I had experience handling injured and crippled waterfowl. I had a salvage permit when I was Park Manager down in Ohio. I salvaged an awful lot of birds. I was one of the people who was responsible for the lead shot being thrown out, and going to steel. I had a paper in 1963 at the Wetlands Conference. I think it was in Georgia. I estimated at the time that we were losing over three million waterfowl a year. I was kind of laughed at, except by some of the people who realized what was going on. I corresponded with a guy who was out at Jamestown at the time. He was the only one who really knew too much about it. Since I had my salvage permit, I felt that I had learned a lot and was able to pass it on.

MS. NORTON: How did you feel about the support you received from the local, regional and federal levels when you were in your different jobs?

MR. HUTCHINSON: There again, with my status as a GS-7, I was more concerned with the local people, my immediate bosses. That was an up and down situation. With Dick Toltzman, I probably worked harder and accomplished more than with any other Manager. Yet, Dick and I were not what you would call real compatible. But again, I give him credit for it.

MS. NORTON: How do you feel that FWS was perceived outside of the agency?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Very badly, because of some of the things that FWS personnel did. I think one of the things, as far as the Wetlands Program, was that prior Real Estate people were not definitive on what they told people who were going to give easements or sell land to the government. This is one of the things that hurt us. We became "big brother". Actually, living in Benson, I have never been accepted in this locality. I've been accepted by young people and people who I've taught since I've been here. I've been in the Hunter Safety program in Minnesota for thirty-two years. I just quit, because the program is going to pot. We've had the program here at my place for twenty-nine of those years. All of the kids have been out here shooting. It's a wonderful place to do that. But as far as acceptance, the people still don't. [To them] the FWS is the same as the DNR. The DNR is not accepted by local people. We can't, and never have been able to do anything right. Of course, a lot of times, people had good reason to dislike it.

MS. NORTON: Where there every any major issues that you had to deal with?

MR. HUTCHINSON: I don't recall any...well, in law enforcement, there were some that were pretty tough. You know that. Some of the jobs we got trying to prove stuff. I think one of the major issues was the acceptance that we did not have with the local communities; and that, we had to fight. I tried to set an example. I don't think everybody did. In other words, I was responsible for giving all of the incoming college students their driver's tests and kind of breaking them in with FWS. In doing so, I would

try to instill in them that when you drive a government vehicle you don't break the law. When you are in a local community, driving through town, you do everything in your power to be noticed in a proper method. I think it worked. I'd take the guys in to town and let them drive through and then tell them what they did wrong. I'd ask them what they say as the drove down the street. They didn't always understand that. I'd stop and tell them what they should have seen; like balls, bicycles, wagons, children playing. You have to notice what you are going through and what could be there. If you saw a child even close to the curb, it wouldn't hurt you to drive on the other side of the road to get away from them; and let people see this! I think that the guys got it. I gave a lot of driver's tests! We didn't have any real, as I recall, in the Morris and Benson offices any vehicle violations for the whole time I was there! I don't think we had any speeding tickets. Maybe I had something to do with it. I hope I did. We figured out that we had driven over three million miles! One of the things about our job was that the units were so scattered. We had some that were a hundred miles away. Driving back and forth, we covered a lot of ground. I don't recall any vehicle accidents or violations. And that's really something to say!

MS. NORTON: What do you feel was a major impediment to your job, or your career?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Book work. When I started, we were spending eighty-five percent of our time in the field. By the time I finished it was reversed. Fifteen percent of the time we were in the field and the rest on book work. And it was so much unnecessary stuff, so much gobbledygook that ham strung a lot of us. Another thing was the fact that because of the wage scale and the increase in wages the people stopped being aggressive about what they were doing and became "yes people". 'Yes, we'll do that because you said so', not because it was right.

MS. NORTON: Who were your supervisors?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Oh gosh! That was a long time ago. My first supervisor was Al Manke at Ottawa NWR in Ohio. Then it was Carl... I can't remember his last name. He was with the Job Corps program. There was Radtke, Toltzman, Huppert, and Carl Brashear. I kind of liked him. Tamarac was kind of nasty place when it came to law enforcement because they stole so much stuff up there. More than a few times, I was called in to the Regional Office to testify on what I had down with the chain saw! I told them that I had put it right back from where I had gotten it from. Outboard motors were stolen. A lot of things just disappeared. I would also say that in my capacity as a GS-7 in maintenance, I probably had more to do with the Assistant Managers. Some were good, some weren't. Gaylord Bober was my supervisor all of the time. He was under Radtke. And Gaylord was probably one of the smartest men I ever knew in the FWS. He was capable of doing anything he was asked to do. But Gaylord was adamant about things, and he also would speak his peace. FWS missed a good bet with Gaylord. He could have gone a long way if they had accepted him for what he was and let him go. He

was good, and still his. He ran it through Radtke, and with Toltzman, he was the manager. He ran the whole shebang. Some people didn't like his methods either, but he was the crux of the whole unit. Excuse me for saying it, but I had very little respect for Al Radtke because it always seemed like he didn't have an answer. I was doing more talking in meetings than he was, and I've never gotten any credit for my lodge/tepee and Old Grouch presentations from him. Never a commendation or anything; and I was doing most of the public relations for the unit! I found out afterwards that....one day I said, "Well, the Old Grouch is dead now, I've done this long enough, without any recognition." He told me he thought I had gone over his head because I talked to Norrell Wallace. He said, "Norrell came to me one day and suggested that I give you a commendation on that Old Grouch thing." Radtke wouldn't even ask me about it. He would never give me anything because he thought I went over his head. I never did that. Al was wishy-washy. He took the easy way. You find out a lot of these things? Don'tcha or do you? Maybe I talk too much.

MS. NORTON: Oh no, that's okay. I'm listening. And I don't repeat anything. Someone might say, "Oh, what did he had to say?" I tell them that I don't remember, and "When you do four or five of these a day, you just don't remember". And that's true! And I really don't want to reveal anything.

MR. HUTCHINSON: But there again, getting someone to speak freely to you is good. It's nice to get to say these things. You get a better feel for what all of the units go through from maintenance man on up.

MS. NORTON: There have been one or two who have retired, and they were glad to have worked with FWS, but there were just certain things....

MR. HUTCHINSON: Well, that's like with me; as I say, when I started it was a completely different organization. Even when you started, it was different. It's changed a lot and not always for the better.

MS. NORTON: Do you remember which Presidents, Secretaries of the Interior or Directors of FWS that you served under?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Oh gosh! I would remember the names if I saw them, but I can't tell you now. The last one I remember was a smart-ass Marine who thought he knew everything. I can't remember his name.

MS. NORTON: Are you talking about the Regional Director we had?

MR. HUTCHINSON: Yeah!

MS. NORTON: Mr. Jim Gritman.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Yeah! That's it! [Laughing]

MS. NORTON: You don't have to remember that! You told me about your high point. Did you ever have a low point in your career?

MR. HUTCHINSON: I think one of the low points was when they broke up the Job Corps Program. I think I had probably burned out about that time. But to see the whole program be thrown out. I had enough contact with these young people who needed help and who would accept and want the help, but we couldn't give it to them because the program just wouldn't function. As I said before, I had blacks whites and Mexicans on my crews in the wintertime. Actually, the Mexicans were the best as far as working and getting along with what I was teaching. The blacks were next and the whites were the worst. The whites thought, I suppose, that they were better maybe. These were the things you realized and that you saw. I had a fellow named Tommy Tucker. It's surprising how some of the names will come back to you after all of these years. It's been a long time. It was 1969 when I got out of that. Tommy Tucker was...each of us had six corpsmen that we were supervising. We would be more social to these six. We were assigned so many. And it didn't matter if they were with our group or working with somebody else. We were their mentors so to speak. Tommy Tucker was a little black from an inner city area; either Chicago or New York. He had survived by becoming a female impersonator/prostitute. He was used in that respect. Even in the Job Corps, he was, still. But this is the kind of thing, along with the drugs, that the teachers couldn't overcome. Many of them were able to get better, and many of them still work for us too. When I had Tommy Tucker, at the time I had a very infant son who was born in 1966. He was premature and very colicky and hard to settle. He cried a lot. Tommy Tucker would come and hum for him and pick him up and rock him. The baby would just calm right down!

MS. NORTON: Did you ever have a dangerous or frightening experience? There was never anyone pointing a shotgun at you, wanting to shoot you was there?

MR. HUTCHINSON: No, I didn't have that problem. I had dangerous experience with a corpsman. One of them came at me with a brush hook one time. I kind of saw my past pretty quick! However, I was able to talk myself out of it. It was my fault. I had accused him of something that he didn't do. I apologized to him, and we became friends. Eventually, I gave him a recommendation to a tree service. As far as close calls, that's probably it. I did a lot of flying with the FWS. Of course, I was a pilot, but I didn't fly as a pilot for FWS. My plane that I owned was a Lockwell UPF-7 open cockpit biplane. When that left me, it was too expensive to fly. I got a lot of stick time with John Winship. He was the best pilot we ever had.

MS. NORTON: I know John. He's a very nice man.

MR. HUTCHINSON: He'd come up and we'd go out counting ducks or whatever. Usually when I went out with him it was checking easements for encroachment and things like that. When we'd go out, I'd take over the stick and go wherever I wanted to go and come back. He'd take a snooze and then wake up. He was a fine man to work with.

MS. NORTON: He is retired now, at Albuquerque.

MR. HUTCHINSON: He has a check of mine. One day I borrowed a dollar from him for something to drink. We landed at one of the airports, and I borrowed a dollar from him. I told him I had my checkbook with me, but no cash. He said it was okay. I wrote him a check for a dollar. I signed the check like this. [Demonstrating] That's my registered mark with the bank. I can sign a check like that. He never cashed it. As far as I know, he's still got that check.

MS. NORTON: He may. I'll probably see him when we have our law enforcement meeting in April.

MR. HUTCHINSON: You mention the name John Hutchinson and see if he's still got it. This came from my trademark. It's a long story, but it's a tool that I make for flintlock and muzzle loading hunters. It's a tool to clean out the vent, nipple and touchhole. It's a tool that's made out of a raccoon bone. I make these and mount it with sterling silver. I've given these to sixty-two people in my career. That's my hobby I guess you'd say. But it's quite a nice tool.

MS. NORTON: What do you think about the future? Where do you think the FWS is heading in the next decades?

MR. HUTCHINSON: In the next decades, I really can't tell you. I am outdated. I know what works, and what should have worked. I know what they have gotten. I don't know if I could give an honest description of what it might be. It's difficult. It's so political. I think this is probably the biggest problem. If we get rid of some of the politics, I think we'd be all right. I think the resource is going to suffer. I don't know as I disagree with Bush's idea of utilizing some of the natural resources that we have. I think that some outfits like the Sierra Club are too adamant as far as 'don't do this and don't do that'. But as I say, it's pretty much a political ballpark. You always hope for the best, but you just go with the flow. I do wish that we had the dedication that we used to have. I don't think that's there, and I don't know how to get it back. It's just like with our country, we're losing some of the most important things that we've always had. The desecration of the flag is one thing. Our judicial system, I think, stinks. We've got a lot of things that we're going to be sorry for. I just don't know what the answer to those is going to be.

MS. NORTON: Who else do you think we should be interviewing?

MR. HUTCHINSON: For a good time, interview Roger Nelson out of Oregon. He was a maintenance man on a refuge out in Oregon. Roger retired two years ago. He is somebody if you have them around for any length of time, and if you're with him for more than fifteen minutes, you're going to have a good laugh. Roger and I just about drove "Tricky" Dick Toltzman up a wall. He couldn't see how we'd be so happy going to work every day. Roger and I had a good relationship. There was a restaurant about twenty miles or so away where we'd always stop and drop off our brochures for the refuge. Roger and I went in there one morning after doing something, I don't know what. There was a buxom lass there and she was really...she had quite a bit. There were a few people sitting around the U shaped counter. We had been talking and she comes around again, and out of the blue he comes up with, "Oh, by the way, how are your brassieres today?" It was just dead silence. Her face dropped, you know! I was sitting there, and I couldn't help it. I had to bust out laughing! Roger turned about ten shades of red! I sent this story to the secretary of the refuge when I heard Roger was going to retire. It was mentioned to me later that they did mention it at his retirement party. But he was quiet a guy. He always had a joke or a story. He was a Norwegian guy. He was a local boy. He was raised here in Benson.

MS. NORTON: I am hoping some day maybe to get out to Portland because Larry DeBates is out there. I am sure you know him.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Yeah, the name is familiar, but there again....

MS. NORTON: He was in the Regional office here for a while and then he became the Assistant RD for Refuges in Region 1. Of course there are law enforcement types out there and some other people. Whether or not I get that, I don't know, but I am for sure going to try to do as many as we can do.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Well good. I think it's a good program. You'll get a good overview of everything.

MS. NORTON: Well, that's what we're trying to do. I want to thank you for this time that you have allowed me this afternoon. It was nice to meet you.

MR. HUTCHINSON: You brought back a lot of memories, which is good. These things tend to get to the back of your mind. But it's not hard to get people to talk once they get started. People remember things. And I am sure there are probably things that I missed that probably would have been more apropos than some of the things I talked about.

MS. NORTON: Oh, that's okay. Thank you very much John.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Oh, it's quite all right!

