

## Oral History Cover Sheet

**Name: Dick Myren**

**Date of Interview: November 13, 2004**

**Location of Interview: Residence in Juneau, Alaska**

**Interviewer: Jim King**

**Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service:**

**Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held:**

**Most Important Projects:** Macoma studies in Port Valdez, Alaska

**Colleagues and Mentors:**

**Most Important Issues:**

**Brief Summary of Interview:** initial work in Alaska – sailing on the US Teal, a patrol vessel; changing from sail based Alaska work to airplane based Alaska work due to influence of Clarence Rhode; plane crash in 1954 which killed 5 FWS personnel; working in Port Valdez on study of *Macoma* clams and pollution from tanker / ballast facility; differences in traditions of Bureau of Commercial Fisheries and FWS; change of name / movement of agencies; Brotherhood Bridge Park conservation efforts; movement of facilities and studies from Montlake Laboratory near Seattle to Auke Bay Laboratory near Juneau; loss of herring and whales (and general degradation of environment) in area he lives in, due to pollution.

Oral history interview, actually more of a conversation, with Dick Myren on November 13, 2004. Interviewer is Jim King. There are occasional rhythmic, loud cracks/blows heard throughout the tape. Oftentimes this has obscured the voices and made it difficult, if not impossible, to hear the words spoken. Website for info on plane crash mentioned in interview at end of transcript. Image and website for the US Teal FWS patrol vessel at end of transcript

### Start of Tape Side B

JK -- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ... get going here.

DM -- Okay.

JK -- This is the 13<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2004, and Jim King talking with Dick Myren, at Dick's home, in Juneau. And we're looking back quite a ways, at the Fish and Wildlife Service... events. I first met Dick the... I guess, within a few weeks of when I went to work for the Fish and Wildlife, in 1951. And he was... fishery biologist, for Cook Inlet?

DM -- Fishery... no, I was at... fishery patrol for [indecipherable]. We were [indecipherable] biologist [indecipherable].

JK -- You have to speak up really....

DM -- Yeah. Yeah. Fishery... actually a fishery... the title was a fishery agent, at the time. I was actually a biologist, so....

JK -- And... let's see... you were working out of the Anchorage Office, but, why don't you give us a little background on how you got there, and just what the set up was.

DM -- Yeah, I'll do that Jim.

JK -- It was... This was before Bureau of Commercial Fisheries and Fish and Wildlife were separated. Is that right?

DM -- That's right. And I had come from Seattle, on the motor vessel 'Teal', to southeast Alaska. And we... as an aid to George Black, who was the agent in Cook Inlet, Fish and Wildlife Service agent in Cook Inlet. There was, of course, in the fishery... was in Cook Inlet, and I worked under him for the summer. And that's where I met Jim originally. And he established a... he was a stream guard, and I was part of the organization who would furnish Jim and the other stream guards groceries, and so on and so forth. And I guess that was 1951, I think. Wasn't it?

JK -- Yes, that was when I was there.

DM -- Yeah.

JK -- Was that your first year there, then?

DM -- It was my first year in Alaska, yes. And I'd been... let's see... where do we want to go with this thing? What is it [indecipherable].

JK -- Well, what was the Anchorage Office like then? How many of you were there, there?

DM -- Well, there was myself.... And it was run by... [Holby Reicen ?] was the enforcement chief. And then there was myself under George Black, who was part of the fisheries organization. It was under commercial... this was Bureau of Commercial Fisheries that... I know... was the status. And....

JK -- Was it 'Bureau' or 'Division' there, or something...

DM -- The... let's see.... Well, it had changed.... Let's see... it was 'Bureau' then it changed to... very shortly it became Fish and Wildlife Service... an agency... and they took the Bureau of Fisheries... they separated that out, and it became... I don't know why I'm getting hung up in the bureaucracy of this thing...

JK -- Well, that's a matter of record.

[Laughter – obscuring/overlapping voices]

JK -- Can't remember all the things that [indecipherable]. We were one outfit, then the fish people and the wildlife people...

DM -- Yes, I remember...

JK -- Under the Interior Department.

DM -- Under the Interior Department originally, right. And... I remember that ... my first time I met you, I guess it was going to the... in Cook Inlet, and you were a stream guard, and I took groceries over there from the 'US Teal'... we serviced the stream guards... and Cook Inlet... I believe, that was my first contact with you there. Let's see....

JK -- Were you involved, then, with the enforcement of the fisheries?

DM -- No. I was the... I was the... I wasn't... I was with the enforcement people, but I was doing the fishery biology... that was... collecting of the catch data on the Cook Inlet fishery, and primarily it was just the statistical end of the fish and wildlife service over the... keep track of the catch... the catch of the commercial fish, which is primarily salmon in cook inlet. And that's what I did that first year, I believe, with Jim. The... unless... so far back that... we....

Break in taping

JK -- Alright. Okay. It looks like it's recording good so, go ahead.

DM -- Okay. I'm going to tell you a story now, about... while I was in Cook Inlet [indecipherable] which was a stream guard. and Jim was, I believe, on the upper Cook Inlet, as a stream guard, and I was on this boat as an aid servicing the stream guards, and was a [indecipherable] and so forth, from the US... from the 'Teal', which is a 68 foot service... 2 inch... thick hulled vessel, that would come from Seattle to Cook Inlet each year. And that's how I got from... the first two years, which was '49 and '50, I traveled from Seattle, at the anchorage there in Seattle... and we came up through the Inside Passage on the 'Teal', straight on... ran straight on through, night and day. We'd chug along at about 6 knots, and had this immense diesel engine in the middle of it, and we'd just plug on, and took us about 5 days to go from Seattle... from the lake there, which is lake [indecipherable], in Seattle, to Cook Inlet. And, then after we got to Cook Inlet, we would travel up and down the Inlet, seeing that the fisheries people were... the fish and [indecipherable] were in... obeying the fishing regulations. And I would be collecting the fish sale tickets from the catches made, so the part of the Fish and Wildlife Service was to determine the number of fish taken. And that was part of my duties.

JK -- So you go to the fish buyers to get the [indecipherable]

DM -- Yeah. We'd go... we would go to the... we'd pick up the tickets from the buyers. and the story I want to tell you is about [indecipherable] Port Dick which is a ... Port Dick is on the south side of Kenai Peninsula, it faces the ocean, and its between Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound. and my first year that we had a ... I stayed on the 'Teal' and we had a fishing... we had a stream guard in Port Dick and he told me this weird story about a submarine following him up the Inlet, behind... up through Port Dick, and he had this monster story about the Russians being there, and he... they were... and they... suddenly a periscope would come up and it looked at him. And obviously, I don't think you ever heard me [indecipherable]

JK -- No.

DM -- Anyway, you know, I didn't know what to make of it, but ... he did [indecipherable] alright, and we didn't shoot him....

[Laughter – overlapping voices]

DM -- But, Port Dick was stuck in my mind as a... this weird story about this submarine. And this guy, which... anyway, we... I... then... I worked in Cook Inlet for two years under [George Black] and....

JK -- Were you at the University of Washington then, or....

**DM --** I was... I had been there for two quarters... two semesters. and then I dropped out and just took up this job... from I... with the University of Washington, I just got [indecipherable] in Seattle, and came up to Cook Inlet. And the story about the submarine though is... sticks in my mind, because it was... he was so sure that he'd seen it, and it made the... and when he got... when he left the area and got up to Anchorage, he went to newspapers, and there was this... this story is recorded in the newspaper.

**JK --** Oh!

[Laughter]

**DM --** And... it's in there someplace. It's... and it was on... I think it was on the [indecipherable], given a lot of credit... was on the front page or so of the paper and.... I didn't see it though.

**JK --** I think Port Dick has another name... we [indecipherable] an older native name.

**DM --** Oh! Well, that's good. Yeah. But see that's a ... it's a large... a very large bay system, estuary system [indecipherable] and... let's see... [indecipherable] that name I hadn't heard until you mentioned it the other day, Jim. And sort of brings back a lot of memories there, that are sort of fading fast. [indecipherable] I don't know, but, [indecipherable] was the enforcement chief in Anchorage, and he had a staff of enforcement agents. and then... the ... in the ... those who were in the Fish and Wildlife Service, as I recall... and we were in the... originally in the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, which was eventually taken over by the Fish and Wildlife Service, and they [indecipherable] people. So... let's see... what's of interest at....

**JK --** That's [indecipherable], I went out and spent, I think, about four days on the [indecipherable], during the peak of the red run. And they were getting a lot more good fishermen in there. Every year, it had been building. And they had to be a certain distance... keep their nets a certain distance apart. I forgot what that was, but....

[indecipherable]

**JK --** We wrote a hundred tickets there, that one opening, and....

**DM --** That's right.

**JK --** And it got pretty exciting.

**DM --** Yeah. That's right. That's what ... that's what... no, that was the enforcement part of the Fish and Wildlife Service and ... while they were writing these tickets I was walking streams and flying the streams I was a biolog... a biological part of the operation, so to speak. And we had a little plane that... [L-1 ?] it's called. It's a Fairchild. It was a very slow flying plane that we could fly through the Susitna drainage system, and see the... and assess the numbers of salmon. And because '39 -- 1939 -- was

the year that was... Clarence Rhode was enamored with airplanes. He was a pilot himself. And he brought the planes to Fish and Wildlife Service, so we used planes to fly new spawning grounds. And part of my in '49 and '50... we flew the Susitna waters [indecipherable], which I don't... they were not accessible from the Bay... from Cook Inlet, you know. they had to be flown by plane... you couldn't fly them [indecipherable] by water, but we didn't have the equipment to go up to the rivers in [indecipherable] boats, so, we actually identified new spawning streams in that... in those years that... I did... I... arrived there, we found an immense population of pink salmon in one stream. I can't remember what it was now, albeit in the Susitna [indecipherable] Susitna drainage, which was a... contributing to the [indecipherable] catch of the pinks [indecipherable]. We didn't even know there was such a large population of pink salmon in this [indecipherable] stream, which I can't recall the streams name now.

JK -- Who would have been the pilot that was flying?

DM -- His name was it was almost on the tip of my tongue.

JK -- Was it [Renoldson ?]?

DM -- No. No, it wasn't [Renoldson ?]. It was... maybe it will come to me now but he... and he flew an [L-1 ?], it was a military... large winged, single-engine aircraft that could fly at about 20 miles an hour. It was on the territory [indecipherable] surplus plane that they... Clarence Rhode was able to get ... get ahold of, and was great for surveying pink salmon. And that was really the beginning of really seeing how many fish there were in that system... [indecipherable] those years right [indecipherable].... And, let's see... I... those were my summer... my summer days there, and I went back to Seattle in the fall, on the 'Teal' and did some really... really interesting experiences on the 'Teal'. One storm we got into one year, which one fellow leaving [indecipherable] south... and it took us five days to get to Point [indecipherable], where, as I recall, that's where you turn in to [indecipherable], we got in this gale that I got... we got in, and everybody thought we were going to drown, but we were able to turn off the fires in the boats, and the ship, you didn't call it... it's a ship, it isn't a boat. We got [indecipherable] it was a 68 foot, 2 inch hulled, utility boat... it's a ship... anyway, got through this storm. And everybody... and the cook said that he turned off the... all the appliances had to be turned off, and that the boat was rolling so bad the bilge was slopping up in the back of the stateroom deck and you couldn't... you couldn't eat... you had to hold onto something or you get knocked over. And we made it. [indecipherable -- chuckles] Anyway, that was 1949. and that... let's see, that was the year, you see, that... those were the last years of the vessels were used as, really, patrol vessels, because Clarence Rhode took over all the aircraft, primarily, and I'm doing this 50 / 51, and... we became more aircraft oriented getting around in the... rather than being in the... depending on the wooden... slow moving vessels there were serving [indecipherable]. They were the core of the Fish and Wildlife Service operation for the previous 50 years, so [indecipherable]. So, I saw the last of... well, really the last of... like our first year... your first year, we only had... on the 'Teal' we had a compass and a sextant and the tag line that measures distance... counts the rotations in a little wheel you throw behind the ship. And we traveled from

Seattle to Cook Inlet in this vessel -- no radar, no radio direction finder either. Was all done by... navigation by the stars when they were out, and then the... just measuring the light to light [indecipherable]. And ... there was... and that was the last year that ... and there was no radar, that was... next year there was radar. So, I experienced being on a boat as a... as boats... as ships and boats were prior to... to the advent of radar, which was... is unusual, and an experience which I...

JK -- Not many people have had that experience...

DM -- No. That's right.

JK -- ... anymore...

DM -- That's right... that's....

JK -- ... that are still around.

DM -- Okay.... Okay. Let's see now....

JK -- So, did you work out of the Anchorage Office at all?

DM -- Yes, I... yeah, that was our headquarters and we... they... we would tie the *Teal* down there, there's a harbor there. And '*Teal*' would be... come in there and would live off of that and go up to the headquarters and say hello to the people there. But, we primarily lived in... on the '*Teal*'... and the fisheries people [didn't?].... and... then after that, I spent two years living in Cook... in Bristol Bay with [Bert Johnson?], he was a fisheries agent there. And I think... I did the same thing again, I was... took care of the statistics, which was about catching fish, and so forth. And spent two years taking care of that... business. And... then I left that and went back to school and... for four years... and....

JK -- So, they do say the [indecipherable] boats in Bristol Bay [indecipherable – overlapping voices]

DM -- [Indecipherable -- overlapping voices] boats. The first year we were there, which was May of 1949, I think, and it was... sail boats were there. And the next year the... they had all been converted to a diesel... put a diesel engine in. And so... they... and so, just lots of that... fisheries... and the sails... the sail boats were just... they put them in... and an end to things. And so, that was that, for the sails. Let's see [indecipherable] what did I do after that?

JK -- Well, you kept up... kept up your studies, for a few more years [indecipherable]

DM -- Yeah. I kept up my studies with the University of Washington. Then I went back to Cornell and [indecipherable] PhD, and came back in 19... 1965 66, and then got a position at the Bureau of Commercial Fishery and Laboratory at... originally it was

downtown Juneau and then moved it to [indecipherable], which is where it is now. And [indecipherable]... now it's the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries - then it was it was... same thing, it was the federal government fisheries [indecipherable – overlapping voices]...

JK -- Somewhere in there it switched to the Department of Commerce.

DM -- Yeah, it switched from Fish and Wildlife Service to Department of Commerce. And, then, after that I worked on clam biology at... in... at the... at Port of Valdez. We had... by that time I'd earned a PhD and we knew something about biometrics and ... and we assessed the clam population with a little... a little [indecipherable]... a clam... a *Macoma*, that's a generic name of... and it's a small clam that feeds on the surface of the mud, it has a siphon that sweeps particles off the mud for food, and then it also feeds directly on plankton. And we would index these quantitatively, so we'd abundancies, and then we could set up a program of monitoring the pollution in the... in Port of Valdez, coming from the tanker facility, the ballasting facility. And we had a system of identifying the abundance of *Macomas* on the mud flat in a certain area, and was quantitatively, and we could determine the abundant... the annual rate... the actual... the seasonal abundance of the *Macoma* clams on this... in this area we were sampling. and then we... we did that for three years... two years, before the terminal operation started, and then they built the Valdez oil tanker terminal facility, and we sampled the *Macomas* during that period. And we got abundancies of that [indecipherable] we would compare the abundance of *Macomas* before the facility was put in, and then during the facility... when the facility put in. then when the... ballast system came on to it... and this was a system [that] would remove the oil... when tankers... well, they have to filled with ballast to keep... to hold them down in the water. And that ballast picks up a toxic elements of the crude oil that it was carrying. and then [indecipherable]... when they refill the tanker, they have to pump that ballast water out into the inlet, and of course, that... it has a potential toxins in it, and that was why we were concerned that the ballast... fluid would be placing the fish and wildlife in Port Valdez... and so our *Macoma* sampling was one way of determining if the population of *Macoma* was changing after the de-ballast facility pumping operation. And we found that, apparently it... it... there was a decline in the abundance of the *Macoma* after the developed... that was in operation, but we couldn't... we couldn't distinguish it from the... it could have been natural fluctuation. But... so we couldn't just... isolate it as being due to the affluent from the tanker facility, but it could have been. And... they... our project was terminated before we could... just... establish a more... investigation, we were... the funding was cut off, so we couldn't do a... complete everything we wanted to. We... although there is one... one major publication on [indecipherable] in the literature... of that project. And then, after that, we... What did I do after that? I...

JK -- But, going back to [indecipherable], were you here when the Grumman Goose...  
\*\*see end of transcript for website reporting crash – names, date, location, details, etc.

DM – Yes.

JK -- ... crashed, and...

DM -- Yes, I was in the... that's when I was spending some time in Bristol Bay, and...

JK -- ... you knew all those people.

DM -- Knew them all. Dick Schuman, who was my boss and...

JK -- Well, you know, there's not much recorded of those people, and if you could talk about them for a minute, I think that would be useful, because right there in the Shepherdstown... they have a memorial a wall there, with the names of people... Fish and Wildlife people, that have died in the line of duty and...

DM -- Oh, yeah.

JK -- ... those guys names are there, but there isn't very much...

DM -- Alright.

JK -- ... specific information on them.

DM -- Well, there's Dick Schuman. He was my boss. He was a fish biologist. And there was... let's see... there was... he was chief of... boy, I got to get these... I've been remembering those people.... Was Dick Schuman... was my boss; there was George Kelez, who was the... he was the Seattle... George Kelez was in the Fish and Wildlife Service office in Seattle, and he was in charge of the Bristol Bay... in those days we... Fish and Wildlife was all over Alaska, and we had an operation in Bristol Bay. And we operated... counting salmon... count... salmon counting, we was in Bristol Bay. And George... well, let's see... George... George... there was Kelez, and Dick Schuman, and George... he was the chief of... George... there was... and there was a herring biologist there <sup>[Larry Kolleon - according to newspaper report]</sup>. There were five of them in that plane that crashed. One lived. Gus Hilsinger was the one next to the pilot, who survived. And the pilot, whose name was Meek, he... he... perished with the other people. Plus, a gal, unfortunately who was riding in the plane... I just had her name... a local girl from Juneau that... <sup>[Cara ? (Patty Bidwell Davis according to newspaper report)]</sup> Davis... younger <sup>[indecipherable]</sup> Davis girl was in the plane with... just as a ride... and, unfortunately happened to be in the pane when it crashed, on the north end of Admiralty Island. And, apparently had ran out of gas. But, Meek's was the pilot of the plane. And he was supposed to... he was a hot shot, really excellent pilot. And, for some reason, he ran out of gas. and that's... you know, that's all it takes, is to run out of gas in a plane like a Grumman Goose, which, one of the engines stopped, it drops out of the air. There isn't a gliding... everything just stops. And <sup>[indecipherable]</sup> ... there was a....

JK -- There was a - what -- co-pilot, two girls...?

**DM** -- There was one girl, and there was Kelez, my boss - Dick Schuman, Meek - the pilot, [indecipherable], the herring biologist was... oh, god, he was in there. And that's what happened there... terrible.... And then, of course, a few years later, Clarence Rhodes disappeared in the early [indecipherable], and that was the end of [indecipherable].

**JK** -- Had you had any dealings with Rhodes [indecipherable]?

**DM** -- No. Well, I knew him and...

### Start of Tape Side A

**JK** -- 4 5 6 7 8 9 ... continuing talking with Dick Myren about the Fish and Wildlife in the 50s. So, you were going to mention the... Clarence Rhode, who was the Regional Director then for...

**DM** -- [indecipherable]

**JK** -- Both Fisheries and...

**DM** -- Yes, he was over everybody. And the Bureau of Commercial Fishery was traditional, went way back for 50 years.

[Question to interviewer about parking and answer / break in taping]

**JK** -- Yeah, Clarence Rhode was... he was kind of the big boss then.

**DM** -- He was the big boss, and the Fisheries people who had been fighting with the... Bureau of Commercial Fisheries had been around for 50 years and had this great tradition of doing its own thing with fisheries. And when this guy in an airplane, Clarence Rhode, came around and became in charge of everything, there was a lot of sparks. And there was two factions inside the Fish and Wildlife Service -- the Fishes people, and the big guys in didn't like Clarence Rhode, and then there was the other side, the game people that did. And it wasn't... it was simply that the old Bureau of Commercial Fisheries had been phased... more or less, phased out, because... why, you know, jealousy... and just the natural function of an agency... [indecipherable] this old reputation was being... I believe, was being supplied by the airplane. And actually the airplane didn't supplant it, because... the tradition in... Bureau of Commercial Fisheries... had this fleet of vessels, which were big ones and little ones. And they had an immense... it was a very large budget to operate that... to maintain those... all those vessels. and of course, when you could speed up the whole operation by a plane... you could survail a whole area inside of an hour, where a vessel would take days to get from one end of a point to another, it just pushed the... the old... the old Fish and Wildlife... the old Bureau of Commercial Fisheries... they changed the name to Fish and Wildlife Service anyway, and then... they

just pushed them out. And of course, the boats were [indecipherable] stock, and the operation was run by airplanes from... about that time, which was when Rhodes became... it was a natural evolution. So, it wasn't... you know, it was just a natural... efficiency thing. boats are terribly inefficient and....

**JK** – Well, the Fisheries had been managed out of Washington until about then.

**DM** – Yes.

**JK** -- Wasn't that part of the problem? And then, those people that lived down there didn't really want to move to....

**DM** – That's right. That's right. And then there was a problem of the Fisheries people lived in the... in Seattle. And they would come north on the... north and work in Alaska, and then go back south in winter. when the statehood got in, the... when statehood became real you see, they changed the... the organization was centered in Juneau and one day we were no longer an agency run out of a... so to speak... Seattle. So, everything was transferred to Alaska. And the Seattle office just maintained its control over the... mainly what they did down there [indecipherable], but, there was some interplay between the two I guess... still... anyway. Let's see... um... where do we go from here? Um... when I went to Cornell and I got my... I got a degree, and I worked for Jay [Klost ?]. and then when I returned, I worked for Jay Klost, and in the North Pacific Coast being... opened up to fishing, and the rock fish were being taken, and we... my duties then became working with some of the statistics that... the rock fish information. And... and then the *Macoma* operation in the Port of Valdez. And... how did... let's see, how did all this end, as far as Fish and Wildlife Service went? Let's see now... the last....

**JK** -- Well, there was... at some point... I think, Bureau of Commercial Fish had been Department of Commerce...

**DM** – Yes. Yes.

**JK** -- And then around 1940 it was joined with the Bureau of Biological Survey...

Yeah, that's right.

**JK** -- ... in the Department of Interior.

**DM** – Yeah, right.

**JK** -- And then... I think, in part, for reasons you described, there was a strong conflict between the traditions of the two agencies. And they were split again. And it was at some point statehood I think, that it was actually split. And Fisheries went back to Commerce. Although, a lot of the people by then that had gotten use to working with Fish and Wildlife, and some rapport had developed under people like Harry Reeves, and....

**DM** – Yeah. I believe Harry Reeves was real motivating. And he was one Director that managed to keep everybody pretty well... pretty happy, and [indecipherable] everybody respected him. And... we... I'm having some mental blanks, you know, from what went on there.

**JK** -- Well, you know, we were always interested in Harry Reeves, because when the Rampart Dam studies came along....

**DM** – Oh, yeah. Yeah.

**JK** -- I was doing duck studies then, and [Howard Sears], and other people from Auke Bay, perhaps yourself, were doing the fish studies. And, the biologists wrote a report recommending against building a dam. And the Fish and Wildlife Regional Director wouldn't sign it. He had some Acting underling sign it. And Harry Reeves, he just signed it with a big flourish. And we figured, if it hadn't been for Harry, that report might have been buried, so....

**DM** – It was interesting. I remember that the... let's see... Jay Hammond had something to do with all that business, too, didn't he? Jay Hammond was in the... he was in the... he was in... he was in the Fish and Game... he was in the Game....

**JK** -- He was Fish and Wildlife Service.

**DM** – Fish and Wildlife Service, and Hammond was in the Fish and Wildlife Service.

**JK** -- But, let's see, by then maybe, he was getting into politics.

**DM** – Yeah.

**JK** -- For the... as a representative from [indecipherable]

**DM** – Yeah. Yeah.

**JK** -- When I first moved to Juneau, in 1964, we used to attend Christmas parties together with the fish people. And we all sort of still had this relationship, even though the two agencies had been split by then.

**DM** – Right. Yeah. We had the support. We'd have a Christmas party there. And... yeah. Yeah, you know, my last years on... were... we maintained this monitoring of the *Macomas* [*Macoma balthica*] in the... which was a quantitative sample. It was really a major sort of operations for us -- gathering data, and we maintained it for many years. and the data was never really... then I left and the... the whole... all the data was never really totally analyzed... of that project. And... it should have been... a change occurred after the ballast plant went in, but it didn't... we couldn't prove it was due to the ballast plant. It could have been a natural fluctuation. But that was... probably the... I mean, to try to

assess my value to society, I guess, is what I'm trying to get at. but the... any... the contribution that I would have made, would have been attempting to identify the effects of the ballast plant on the *Macomas*, which would, in turn lead... if there was effects, it would mean that the ballast plant was effecting the fisheries... health of the fisheries. And that was really what the purpose of that whole operation was about. and we used the... this little *Macoma*, which sweeps... it has two siphons and it sweeps the particles off the surface of the mud, and it gets its food that way. And it also feeds directly... like siphoning directly from the water as well, besides sweeping around its burrow. And that was an excellent way of determining if hydrocarbons were going from the... from the... from the ballast plant into the mud, and then into the *Macomas*, and then effecting the... potentially effecting the fisheries, the fish that would eat the *Macomas* in the.... So, that was really how I spent my last years... a justification from my last years in the Fish and Wildlife Service is connected with that kind of operation.

**JK --** And you've been active in the conservation things in Juneau. I was thinking about the... working with you in the 60s... about the Brotherhood Bridge...

**DM --** Oh, yes.

**JK --** ...Park, which...

**DM --** Oh, yeah. Okay.

**JK --** That's... that's a crop of fireweed now, that's the most popular picture in Alaska I think, after Mount McKinley.

**DM --** Yeah. Yeah. Well, I... I'll have to say that I did the... I was so in... everybody that saw that meadow loved it, because it had those... it had... had the Alaska cotton in it. And in the early days the fireweed wasn't as strong, as it had been grazed down... it had been used. In the early days it was grazing, and there were cotton... Alaska cotton fields there, and.... So, the highway department put in a parking spot there, right in front of the Brotherhood Bridge meadow, and the borough, through... what my efforts and others, we got them to buy... there was 40 acres for sale, originally, of the land around there. And we got the borough to buy the 20 acres closest to the river... and... as a sanctuary / borough park. And where it is today. And I guess I can claim some responsibility for that happening. And it took a lot more people than me. and one of the... the way these things work is you have to snag... you have do all kinds of things, and I was totally helpless, but we had a lawyer there, who was able to get things fouled up so they couldn't make a move. And in the meantime, we sort of got ourselves organized and we were able to finally get enough people behind our efforts so that the... so that the borough was convinced that the... it was worth saving and spending the money on, rather than turning it into a subdivision. Which would have been... it was aimed as being a site for a subdivision. And, that was a natural thing to do -- a place for homes for people. That was the highest thing, there were bad people thinking, that weren't thinking otherwise.

**JK** -- Must have been hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of film used on that spot now, 'cause the it's the most scenic view of the Mendenhall Glacier.

**DM** -- Yeah. Yeah. It's certainly worth it. And the... it was slated for a subdivision and...

**JK** -- Nobody would have wanted a picture there, with houses in the foreground.

**DM** -- No! Right. Right. So, yeah, that's... but it took a lot of... Mike Miller's wife - she was very active in that organization. And we got organized. We organized a group to save the [indecipherable] that's what happened there. Yeah.

**JK** -- Well, I think you guys collected quite a bit of money too, to have a little earnest money.

**DM** -- Yeah. We collected some. We were going to attempt to buy it. And we had an option on it at one point. And finally, we made so much noise about it that borough became convinced that maybe it was worth saving. And then after that happened we were all right. 'Cause they could commit the money to it. But, [for] quite a while it was touch and go. And we were cast as people that were trying to stop progress, of course. It's just... the story of my life. It's still the story of my life. Still trying to do it, but I can't... find a big enough monkey wrench to do it -- screw things up.

**JK** -- Well, that's... that's a good move. I don't think anybody [indecipherable] that that wasn't an important purchase [indecipherable]

**DM** -- And it took a lot of people. I was just one clog in it. I wasn't the... I wasn't... I was just part of that movement. We didn't... we had the service of Sandy [indecipherable], a lawyer who had... [indecipherable]... we just had an organization with... still developing and in that process stalling... we eventually... we gathered enough people, and finally people said 'we don't want to see it wasted' so then we went with [indecipherable]. Okay, so much for Brotherhood Bridge Park. What else is there?

**JK** -- Well, who were some of the other personalities, back there in the 50s, that had... were important?

**DM** -- Yeah. Let's see....

**JK** -- Getting the Auke Bay Lab built, at Auke Bay was... pretty exciting thing at the time, I think. Wasn't it?

**DM** -- Yeah. We... originally, we were out... we were in the old [mine ?] buildings... the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, was in the [mine ?] building, on the south side of town there. and then... the... then when statehood occurred, they moved... statehood occurred, and let's see... they moved the operation from... the Fish and Wildlife Service operation from Montlake to Juneau, which started this whole thing going with turning the

rest of the ... moving the scientific staff from Seattle to Juneau. And eventually, the Auke Bay Lab was built. And we became an independent station from the Seattle laboratory... Montlake Laboratory. [indecipherable]

JK -- I remember at the time that it was open to the... there was a good deal of agency pride. This was the most scenic station the Bureau had. Was that right?

DM -- Yeah, that's right. It was. right on the point, with... the whales would come in Auke Bay.... The whales were... in those days, they would be common in the Bay, and you'd see them surfacing. And, we don't have that any more, nowadays. I think the Bay's too polluted. But, in those days, the [indecipherable] marine life was in Auke Bay -- regularly. And that's gone now. I notice that maybe we'll see a whale here, maybe once a year... occasionally, but, that's about it. And....

JK -- You don't see any herring like they used to.

DM -- And the herring... yes, they... the herring population has disappeared. the herring... we used to have... where we lived... right... right where I'm sitting, right behind me, the whales would come in there, and we'd hear them. At night time they'd keep us awake -- blowing. And... they'd come in, in the spring time, and there'd be herring spawning right on the beach - right here. Now, they haven't spawned here for what, maybe 10 years. So, that... the bay is just probably ['polluted' or 'occluded' ?] by pollution, I imagine it's always such a large mosquito fleet here that whales, I don't think, have a very comfortable time listening to all that noise. So, I think that's probably why they're not here [indecipherable]. They [indecipherable]

JK -- You don't think there's much chance for them to come back, at some future point?

DM -- Well, I... you know, I don't know anything about whales, but I know that they've disappeared from here, and...

JK -- No, I was thinking about the herring.

DM -- Well, the... yeah. Well, the herring.... Yeah, the herring are gone. And I think that the herring are... I think Auke Bay is polluted so bad that... that population, apparently, has moved up into [indecipherable]... apparently north of... I mean north of Burners Bay. Apparently, the... the herring population was here. I guess that's the story in life, to get from [Bruce Wing ?], I think, is... I think that the population is up there. So, that's the reason for that change. And let's see... everything is... everything is downward, as far as the environment goes.

JK -- Well, who else was here in that... was it [George Harry ?] or...

DM -- [George Harry ?] was a...

JK -- Was he the first lab director?

**DM** – Yeah, he was the first laboratory director. And he stayed there [the] first four or so years. And Bill Smoker took over, and remained there until, I believe, until the... after Smoker was... I believe was [Snyder?]. [Snyder ?] was there for a short time, and then the present person... I don't know his name. [Indecipherable] I just forget... forget. But, the Auke Bay Lab was supposed to move out to Point... I don't know where. I think they were going to stay... still stay partly in their present facilities, but much of the lab would be moved to... to [Indecipherable]... to the [Indecipherable]. Let's see.... What is there [Indecipherable] to talk about here, besides things going to hell.

**JK** -- Well, let's... good coverage of the modern times, we covered the modern times.

**DM** – Modern times is it. Mankind's eating up the world, and its eating it up faster and faster. And it's going to come to an end – soon. And that's the way mad humankind is. And, by that time I suppose, there'll be all kinds of highways going north, and the whole thing. But, I enjoy living here for... have some nice memories living in this area, as it was. And it still is. It still is pretty nice. Although, I don't dare either clam off of my beach anymore. And I don't hear the whales anymore. And... let's see.....

**JK** -- You're writing a book now.

**DM** – I'm writing a book. And I'm trying to put some of this together, as biology of Hawaii and.... And I'm trying to write about the fisheries aspect of conservation, and the problems it's had with succeeding in conservation, being a successful... on... in the Tongass National Forest. And it's turned out that we lost... really lost the battle. They've... they've... they've logged all the prime [Indecipherable] riparians along in the stream systems of southeast Alaska. So, what we have now [Indecipherable] is a second growth forest. So the major timbers been removed, and we weren't really going to stop... stop any... stop it until they'd got them all. They've taken all the old growth out of the riparian zones. And... so, that's about it there. [Indecipherable]

**JK** -- Well, I see Cynthia coming with the tea, so maybe we should stop for a little while. But, I think that's interesting, to talk about that period in the 50s. And I'm glad that you had time to do that Dick.

**DM** – Sorry I can't be more collected with this situation.

**JK** -- Well....

**DM** – It's just terrible.

**JK** -- If you think of some more things you want to say, we can have another session.

**DM** – Alright. Well, I'll work on it. [Indecipherable] as things are, everyday I loose a little bit more, so.... I... it's all downhill now, boy. You got here just in time.

JK -- It comes and goes. Does with me.

End of Tape Side A

Newspaper report of plane crash found on line – Ellensburg Daily Record, September 3, 1954, pages 1 and 4, at website

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=860&dat=19540903&id=yWsKAAAIBAJ&sjid=LUsDAAAIBAJ&pg=3543,3772899>.



**Fish and Wildlife Service Patrol Vessel TEAL.**

**Image ID:** ship0456, NOAA's Fleet Then and Now - Sailing for Science Collection

**Location:** Alaska

<http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/htmls/ship0456.htm>.