

Oral History Cover Sheet

Name: David Paullin
Date of Interview: January 17, 2007
Location of Interview: NCTC
Interviewer: Dave Smith

Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service: 30
Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held: Student Trainee Program; Mahler NWR; Joint Venture Coordinator; Refuge Supervisor for California; Most Important Projects: Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture; North American Plan Assessment Team.
Colleagues and Mentors: Gary Cramer, Mickey Heightmeyer
Most Important Issues: North American plan; Joint Ventures / partnerships

Brief Summary of Interview: Brief background of career before JV; 1st full time Coordinator for Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture; the culture of the Joint Ventures; what's needed for a successful JV and to be a successful JV Coordinator; being an advocate for other JV partners; how to become a member of the Management Board; differences between the Central Valley JV and other Joint Ventures; who were the partners; logistics; staffing; importance of water in California habitats, the Central Valley JV, wildlife /wetlands areas; California regulations on environment/water/wildlife and funding options/practices of California; importance of duck hunting and rice production to the continued success of supplying water for wildlife habitats in California; the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA); interplay between the wintering grounds for pintails in California and problems on the breeding grounds in Canada and Midwest; manipulating the human dynamic in the Management Board; things that didn't work in the Central Valley JV; best memories of years working with the JV; changes in technology and sophistication.

You get to think about what kind of intro you want.

Dave Smith -- My name is David Smith, and I'm here today to interview Dave Paullin. Dave was the first Joint Venture Coordinator for the Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture, in California; was there for a number of years; got that Joint Venture started up, and running, well established. He then went back to the refuge system with the Fish and Wildlife Service. And is now a retired career ... or retired Fish and Wildlife Service employee, with a full career. And so we want to talk about ... get Dave's views on then early days of the Joint Venture, the establishment, and we'll leap frog ahead now, to your views of the Joint Ventures in the North American Waterfowl Plan these days, 20 years later. The first thing I'd like to ask you Dave, is give us your background. What you were doing with the Fish and Wildlife Service when the Waterfowl Plan came around, when you first heard about it, and how you came to be a Coordinator for that Joint Venture. Okay?

David Paullin -- I started out with the Service in what they call the Student Trainee Program. So I came up through the refuge system in Region 1, out in the West. Moved around quite a bit in the western states on various refuges. And at the time that the Plan was in its early development stages, I was stationed at Mahler National Wildlife Refuge, in southeastern Oregon. So I was hearing a little bit about the Plan then, through various, you know, communications -- flyers and whatnot -- that were coming through the Service. And then I got a phone call, in early 1989 I believe it was, from Assistant Regional Director in Portland, wanting to know if I had an interest in going to Sacramento to head up the ... the Central Valley Joint Venture in California. So, that's kind of how it happened.

DS -- Let me ask you, what did you know about the Plan at that time? You got a phone call 'hey, got a job for you.' What ... what were you thinking?

DP -- I ... I knew a little bit about ... about it, but, you know, I was so focused on my job at that time that, you know, and I wasn't looking to move; I wasn't looking for another

job. But I knew that there was some things afloat that involved sort of large visions for continental waterfowl populations. It involved, you know, a lot of people. And seemed to be a lot of energy going on there. But, I ... it was ... it was somewhat distant from me, because I was ... I was in my little niche of the world, working on the things that I was working on. So I wasn't really thinking too much about it 'till the phone rang that day.

DS -- Okay.

DP -- Yeah.

DS -- So let me get this right. So you're working on the Refuge, working hard. You get a call from the Regional Director, 'hey,'

DP -- Right.

DS -- 'Got this opportunity.' And you say, 'okay, I'm going.' So now, I want to ask you, so now you show up to open a Joint Venture Office, and you weren't sure what one of those was ...

DP -- Right.

DS -- ... and your Regional Director wasn't sure either.

DP -- Right.

DS -- So then what happened?

DP -- Well, my situation was a little bit different, in California, in that, the very first year of the Central Valley Joint Venture, there was an ... there was an interim Acting Joint Venture Coordinator, Gary Cramer, who was a Refuge Manager at that time. And he assumed that responsibility as a collateral duty for the first year. So, in that year, they ...

they got started. So they were developing the Plan, and a Management Board had been put together. And then Gary took on another job, and so ... and that was sort of part of his career plans ... and so I stepped in, as sort of, the first, full time, Joint Venture Coordinator. So I ... I inherited a Management Board and a draft Plan. So, when I got to Sacramento ... so a lot of that early ground work was already laid, before I even got there.

DS -- Okay.

DP -- Yeah.

DS -- What do you remember, when you got there, in your first year, what were one or two of the major challenges you had to face? Given that some of the infrastructure was already in place.

DP -- Right. I think part of it was just getting comfortable with the culture. You know it was just such a different way of doing business. and ... and it was just so out of the character for the ... for folks like myself, that ... that came up through a very ridged bureaucracy, to all of sudden, be thrown out into a different environment, where I was working with private organizations and state organizations, and ... and there was no structure. There was no immediate super... you know my supervisor was 500 miles away. And ... and they had little, or no, understanding of what it was I was doing. And so, you just basically had to go out and figure it out for yourself. You know, sort of like what ... you know, what's working here and what isn't. And sort of doing the trial and the error. And ... and so it was just an entirely different work environment for ... for folks like myself. So it was ... it was sort of just getting comfortable with the culture.

DS -- Well, let me ask you, because people, to this day, some of them have difficulty with that ... that less structured, partner-oriented atmosphere. Do you have any advice? I mean, thinking back to when you came into that

DP -- Right.

DS -- Do you have any advice for that transition for managers today?

DP -- Oh, yeah. That ... I actually put together a slide presentation on Joint Ventures that I gave at a Wetlands Symposium, back in Alexandria, Virginia, not too far from here. And it was after I'd been a Joint Venture Coordinator for a number of years. And so, I gave a lot of thought to, sort of, what does it take to be a successful Joint Venture Coordinator and a successful Joint Venture. And I ... and I went on the road, and gave that to a number of different venues. And ... and ... and the people that heard it and participated in it felt that there was some value there. But, I think there's several elements, and one that that comes to my mind ... I haven't thought about this for a long time, but I ... a real critical element is, you have to have a very clear vision of what it is that you want and where you want to go. And so, that was one of my very first slides in that presentation -- was you have to have this really clear vision of what it is you want, and you have to articulate that in very simple terms. You can't be technically complex, because you've got to convey this to ... to congressmen, and ... and farmers, and people on the street, who are not technical people. You know. So you have to have this vision, and you have to be able to articulate that in a very simple way. And so, whatever that vision is, you know, you've got to make it real concise; you know, that sound bite. And so, that was part of it. And ... and ... and I think too, another critical element of Joint Ventures that I found helpful for me was, I was always an advocate for my partners. So, I always felt that my job was ... was not so much a Fish and Wildlife Service job, but my job was to be an advocate for the Nature Conservancy, and the California Department of Fish and Game, and Ducks Unlimited. And I had to have a good understanding of what it was that they wanted to do. So, it was like, what is it in your program that you're trying to accomplish? And my job was to help you get there. Because you're my partner. And so, I got to wear all these different hats. And so, some days I was working ... some days I was the advocate for the Nature Conservancy on some project that they were trying to promote in my Joint Venture. But they're my partner, so it was in my best interests, as a Coordinator, to make sure that that project happened. So I became an advocate for the

Nature Conservancy. And I was singing their song, and pushing their agenda. Because if they're successful, I was successful. So, that was really a lot of fun. I mean, I ... the ability to ... to sort of change those roles all the time. And sometimes I was a defacto NGO guy out there, you know, trying to make a Nature Conservancy project happen, or Ducks Unlimited project. So that was fun.

DS -- Let me ask you a follow-up.

DP -- Sure.

DS -- In that role, did you ever experience any push-back from the Fish and Wildlife Service, maybe thinking you weren't advocating strongly enough for the Fish and Wildlife Service? Or ... was that ... was your feeling of advocacy for the partnerships, was that shared all the way up and down the chain?

DP -- I don't ... I wouldn't say that it was shared. I just don't think that they had a good appreciation, or an understanding, of, sort of, that dynamic. So, I never got any push-back. I was never told that I couldn't do it, or that, you know, you're sort of functioning outside of the bounds of your job, because the Joint Venture Coordinator was so ill-defined you could pretty much make it whatever you wanted to make it. And so, that's kind of where I went. And people thought, well, as long as people, you know, your partners are happy, and they seem to be, you know, you guys are making progress, and getting things done, so that I was ... I was given a lot of latitude. So, I was never given any overt, or covert, signals to throttle back, or slow down, or ... or tone it down. It was like, 'hey, go forward, and, you know, if you do something wrong, we'll let you know.' But, you know, that didn't happen, so

DS -- That's good.

DP -- Yeah.

DS -- Now, how many years were you with the Joint Venture?

DP -- I ... I was a Coordinator for nine years. And then I went back as a Refuge Supervisor for California. But, in that in that role, I also supervised Central Valley Joint Venture Coordinator. So I supervised the Coordinator for seven more years. And then I also supervised all the private lands programs in California, too. So I had my finger in North American Plan stuff for 16 years in California, and then retired. And then, these last two years, I've been involved, now, in this North American Plan Assessment. So, you know, collectively, I've been involved 18 years now in North American stuff.

DS -- That's a lot of time.

DP -- Yeah.

DS -- Well, let me ask you, there are just leads all over the place, so

DP -- Okay.

DS -- You ... you were with the Joint Venture as the Coordinator.

DP -- Correct.

DS -- And you went back to Refuges, supervising all of the refuges in California.

DP -- Right.

DS -- And delivery of the Partners Program for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

DP -- That's correct

DS -- Tell me a little bit about the interplay between the Joint Venture, the refuge system in California -- particularly the Central Valley, and delivery of the Partners Program, in terms of -- were there common objectives? Were there common visions? How did people work together? Or apart? What could we learn from that?

DP -- Well, first I'll say that the ... my Joint Venture was ... was unique ... [tape side A ends, flip to side B – loss of continuity??] ... the early ones, in that I was the smallest Joint Venture in the country, and so also, I was the simplest one. In the terms, I only had one state, and actually had a small part of one state. So, all my colleagues had multiple states; some of them had multiple regions. Carey Smith had two countries. So that level of complexity, I never had to deal with. So I only ... I only had one state, so my world was much, much smaller. And so, the scale at which I worked was ... was a notch below most of my colleagues. So they were dealing with multiple states; I was doing multiple counties. So I was working on a county scale, and they were working at a state scale. And ... and others, you know, maybe even a country scale. And so, we were able to focus down, very quickly and ... and ... and get down and doing things, I think, much faster than some of my colleagues. So they were trying to get organized, and ... and how do you figure out relationships between Arkansas, and ... and Louisiana, and Mississippi? And I never had to deal with that. So we got down, right here, real quick. So the Central Valley Joint Venture, in many respects, moved faster, earlier on. We got our plan done, and I think we were the first plan done, or I'm pretty sure we were. And so, we were able to do a lot of 'on the ground projects' very quickly. But that was also because there were a lot of people in California that were looking at wetlands and waterfowl issues long before the North American Plan was signed. So a lot of our objectives had been defined, and people had a pretty clear vision of what needed to be done to take care of waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway, before the North American Plan was ... was, basically, signed.

DS -- When you came to the Joint Venture, how ... was there any staff, in addition to you?

DP -- No. I was ... I was it.

DS -- And when you left, what was the staff size?

DP -- Um ... three. I think it's now four, but, you know, I had a secretary and a communications person -- Ruth [indecipherable] who's now ... now an Assistant Joint Venture Coordinator. So, we were always pretty small.

DS -- Then let me ask you about the ... the ... you mentioned other partners / agencies / organizations

DP -- Right.

DS -- A history of planning and objectives. Can ... can you, at the risk of leaving some out, kind of list the elements of the network that was in place to ... to provide that ... that capacity.

DP -- Sure.

DS -- It would have been difficult for one person,

DP -- Right.

DS -- ... in the beginning.

DP -- Right. And I'd say also that I had the luxury of geography, in the sense that everybody that I needed to deal with was right there in Sacramento. So I had the state Fish and Game headquarters; Ducks Unlimited had their Western Regional Office there. California Waterfowl Association had their state office there. The Nature Conservancy was there. And so, all the folks that do conservation of wetlands and waterfowl ... essentially were in one town. And so it was ... a ... and ... esc... Western Regional

Office of the Audubon Society was there. So all the players were in Sacramento. So I didn't have to get on a plane and fly, you know, halfway up the western seaboard to have a meeting. It was all in one town. So that ... that was very helpful. And so, when you have that close connection with people, and ... and ... and you can call a meeting, and ... and, you know, be in their office in half an hour, communication was much facilitated. But we were pretty much always singing off the same sheet of music. So it was that communication, and early coordination, for us was much, much easier in my Joint Venture, than I'm sure in others, just because of the logistics involved.

DS -- Well, the good ... that's a very, very good point.

DP -- Yup.

DS -- What ... you've already told us some things about the Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture, in terms of its size and ... and proximity ... are there other factors that made it unique among Joint Ventures, in addition to size. Jurisdictional problems, on the one hand, may not have been as large, but you're dealing with serious jurisdictional issues -- with water in particular.

DP -- Right. Right.

DS -- Tell us a little about

DP -- I can certainly paint that picture for you. The ... sort of the mantra that we used early on in the Joint Venture is that California has lost 95% of its wetlands at that point. So, I think there was only one state in the country that had beat and that was Iowa. And I think Iowa's lost 98. So ... so we only had 5% left. So that was ... that was a fairly compelling message that we could convey. So there was some sense of urgency. But in California you had the largest population of any state. So you had 35 million people. And ... so, California also was the most heavily regulated state in the country, in terms of environmental regulations -- air quality, water quality -- so it's a very highly, highly

regulated state. So, there's state counterparts to every federal regulation. So there's a very strict Endangered Species Act in California that ... that's a counterpart to the federal. There's ... there's a Water Quality Act that ... that ... that's comparable to the federal Clean Water Act; and you go down the line. So ... so California's a highly, highly regulated state, and -- with environmental regulation, lots of people, so a lot of problems, a lot of challenges. But, on the other hand, California has lots and lots of money. And lots of tools to solve those problems. So, you know, I was hearing today, a lot of my colleagues were saying, you know, that ... that their early struggles with the Joint Venture was there was no money. I never had that problem. I, you know, I always had a lot of money. It was always California money, but dollars for match would come from propositions on the ballot. So the ... the California voters were always generating, what they call 'ballot initiatives' or 'propositions' and they would levy, you know, now, I mean, they just passed one in November -- 9 billion dollars for parks and wildlife. And that's all for acquisition of ... of parks, and beaches, and jogging trails, and open space. And so, there was always a constant source of money in California to solve problems that we were working on. So ... I ... that ... that was a good thing.

DS -- And that is distinct from many [other] areas.

DP -- Yeah.

DS -- Well, in those days what ... what was the limiting factor, or factors, in terms of progress of the Joint Venture, in the ... say the first five to eight years -- lots of people; lots of interest; lots of capacity; lots of funding.

DP -- Water was huge in California. We'd always say ... at least on a wetlands, you know, you don't get any wetlands in California, unless somebody, you know, opens a spigot and writes a check. So, the water in California was very, very regulated. And there's over 10 thousand reservoirs in the state. So, you're in a western environment, where it's largely water limited, fairly dry, environment. So all that water gets captured behind somebody's dam. And so, you want water for your refuge, or your duck club, and

you basically are on somebody's water delivery system. You have to make a phone call, and write a check, and they'll bring you 100 acre feet of water, or whatever it is you need. So, it isn't like other parts of the world, where water just comes and it's free. In California, it's a commodity, and it's just like, you know, kilowatts of electricity, you know, it's all metered, and ... and it's so much per kilowatt hour. California is so much per acre foot. And so water was a huge thing. And ... and the late 1980s was a real dry period. And so, there wasn't a lot of water. And agriculture in California is huge. So farmers, and urban pressures, are huge in that state. And so, they're the first ones to get their water. And so wildlife and open space was always third in that triangle. So it was urban, and agriculture, and then there was wildlife and open space. So, that ... that ... that tug of war, that tension, was always 'how can we get a fair share of water for ... for wildlife?' So, a really significant thing in California happened in 1992, which was the passage of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act. It was a federal legislation and ... and it laid out, I think there was 87 tenets in that Act, and one of them was to ... to provide water for the 13 state and federal waterfowl refuges in California. And provide what was called a 'firm water supply.' So, that was huge. Because, prior to 1992, those waterfowl refuges in California got water on an 'if and when' basis -- if and when available basis. Which essentially means, after agriculture got everything that they wanted, and after the cities got everything, you'd get the dregs of what leftover. So, if it was a wet year - you'd get some. If it was a dry year - you wouldn't get any. So, that was huge.

DS -- And that ... to what extent has water supply been institutionalized within the Joint Venture, to guarantee, in the future, that water will be available for the protection and restoration projects that have been put in place?

DP -- Water ... water was one of our five objectives, so it was quantified right down to the acre foot, and was allocated and pro-rated to our 13 different sub-units within the Joint Venture. And then, when CVPIA was ... was ... became law, in 1992, it spoke to the Central Valley Joint Venture and North American Waterfowl Management Plan. So that was translated into a new piece of federal legislation. So it became a purpose of the

Act. Bureau of Reclamation, who was the purveyor of water in California, and the Central Valley Project, was required now, by law, to go out and provide water to those 13 state and federal refuges.

DS -- So the North American

DP -- A la the North American Plan and the Central Valley Joint Venture, and it's right there in federal law.

DS -- And it's in legislation?

DP -- Yup. Absolutely. Yup.

DS -- Very ... that's insti... institutionalized.

DP -- Yup. Absolutely.

DS -- Let me shift gears a little bit.

DP -- Sure.

DS -- Thanks a lot. That's a tremendous opening. How did you go about selecting Joint Venture partners?

DP -- Sure. That ... that was it was an interesting process, and I'll tell you how that worked. Like I said, I inherited a Management Board -- and there were six. They were all NGOs. No agency people. So from the very get-go, there were only two public agencies that were involved in the Joint Venture -- it was Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game. And we were ex-officio members. So we never go to vote. Even though Fish and Wildlife Service was the leader, and it was my job to sort of make this thing happen, Fish and Wildlife Service never had a vote in

anything that we did in California -- and never has, for 20 years. So, the Board was always NGO driven. And so, when I started there were eight -- there were six on the Board and two ex-officio member -- eight. And when I left, there were 13. So, we were able to grow it from eight to 13. Now, it's up to 20. And ... and the process was that there was a minimum requirement. And that was that, if you brought time, talent, or money, then you were welcome. You had to have a sphere of influence as great as the central valley -- so if you were just a county, and your sphere of influence or authority was limited to a county, that disqualified you ... you couldn't participate in our Joint Venture. Because we wanted people whose sphere was as big as our Joint Venture -- at a minimum. And so, it was time, talent, or money, and then the sphere of influence was ... was a requirement. And then, also, if you wanted to join the Joint Venture, you had to come and make a presentation to the Management Board to tell us what you were going to bring to the table, and how were you going to help us. And that presentation had to be made by the Director of the organization. So, it couldn't be, you know, a Division Chief or a Branch Chief or ... or other persons, down lower in the organization. It had to be the number one guy in the organization from the state. And he had to come and make a presentation. And we used to call it 'doing the dance.' And so the Director would have to come and 'do the dance' and And, it was not a given. There were a couple that ... that for various reasons, were not accepted as a ... on the Management Board. And the other criteria was that you had to accept, and be an advocate for, all five of our objectives. So, you couldn't pick and say 'well, I want ... I'll advocate for four out of the five' or 'three out of the five.' You had to advocate for all five. And so, there was a couple of them that said 'well, you know, I can do this one, and this one, but, because of my agency' or, you know, 'the governor' or whatever 'political pressures I have to deal with, you know, I can't, you know, in good conscience, really support your water objective.' And we go, 'well, sorry.' And 'you ... you can't be part of the Management Board.'

DS -- Well ... well, given 'the dance' and the requirements to ...

DP -- Right.

DS -- ... sign in blood, ...

DP -- Yeah.

DS -- ... And why would any agency or ... well ... or organization want to go through all that and be a What did they get out of being a member of the

DP -- Well, because we ... over time, it didn't take a while ... it took a while, but not a long time, but over time, the Central Valley Joint Venture gained a credible reputation -- that we were the biggest thing in town, in terms of getting work done on the ground. And if you were going to do something for waterfowl and wetlands in the state of California, then we were it. And so, they ... you know ... and there was a lot of people that wanted to hook their caboose to our train. And ... and, you know, the ones that came later were the Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and people like that. And they said, for various reasons, you know, they wanted to wear a green hat, and it looked good in the eyes of the public, and they said [indecipherable] these Joint Venture guys seem to be the guys in town that get stuff done. And so they would come to us and say 'what do we have to do to get, you know, involved with this Joint Venture?'

DS -- So, did they become ex-officio ...

DP -- Yep.

DS -- ... members?

DP -- Yep. Yep.

DS -- So they're ...

DP -- Yep. So they would come to us. So, we ... we typically wouldn't seek them out; they came [indecipherable] and sought us out. That's how it happened.

DS -- Very interesting.

DP -- Yeah.

DS -- A little bit ... I think your Management Board meets on a different frequency from most other Management Boards. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

DP -- When ... when I ... when I started, our Management Board met once a month. So, again, it was because of proximity; we were all in the same town. And so, I know other Management Boards would meet twice a year, maybe four times a year, and we were meeting monthly. And then, when we went to meeting every other month, that was really a huge thing, because, you know, my workload just got cut in half, in terms of setting up those meetings, and doing the minutes, and all that stuff. And for a while, it seemed pretty uneasy, because it was like 'gee, we have a lot of stuff to do on ... in, you know, we're not meeting except every 60 days.' And ... and that seemed like a really, long time, because we had so much going on. So it ... you know, in the early days we met every month ... every month.

DS -- That's ... that's ... that's regular.

DP -- Yeah.

DS -- Well, that's one change. Let me ask you, how is the Joint Venture changed from those beginning four or five years? Of course, you were there for nine.

DP -- Right.

DS -- Um ... three periods of time -- when you arrived, when you left, and today. Because you've had oversight over all of those periods.

DP -- Right.

DS -- What are some of the changes? You mentioned there are more Management Board members. What are some other things that have changed, in terms of the focus, or the activities, or the work that's being done? Is it just like it was in the late 80s?

DP -- No, no. It's ... it's quite a bit different. I ... I ... I would say one of the big changes, and this happened while I was in the refuge system as a Supervisor, was moving from waterfowl to all birds. So, that didn't happen on my direct watch, but I ... I ... I was sort of on the outside watching it develop. So that ... that was a huge shift. And ... and ... and there were people who resisted that, because they thought, you know, if we go from waterfowl to all birds then that's just going to be a dilution factor; there's going to be competition; there's no new money coming from these other initiatives, and you're just going to take this existing pie and start slicing it up into smaller pieces. But, what I'm hearing from ... from the Central Valley Joint Venture is that ... that that was a non-problem, that they were able to sort of overcome that ... that anxiety, let's say, that chaos that comes with change. And ... and ... and so, now they look at ... at projects in a ... in a much broader scope and say, you know, 'are we ... are we thinking clearly here about shore birds, and water birds, and land birds, as we acquire, enhance, and restore this property.' And so, it's a little broader thinking. And ... and ... and just making sure that we're, maybe, being a little more diverse in how we look at a ... at a piece of property, and how we plan to work it through. But, I think most Joint Ventures, you know, kind of view that as a good thing, you know, that moving to all birds.

DS -- Are ... are the waterfowl centered organizations, California Waterfowl Association, DU, and other of the waterfowl constituency in Central Valley, satisfied that the Joint Venture is attending to priorities of the North American Plan?

DP -- Yes.

DS -- Okay.

DP -- Yeah. Yeah, I ... I think the frustration that is coming to the forefront now, I mean, you know, sort of the benchmark bird for us in California was always the pintail. And so, when I was, you know, learning waterfowl hunting, you know, as a young person, it was just a standard that you could shoot seven pintails a day. I mean, that was sort of the standard bag limit. And it had been that way for years and years. And then, when the bottom fell out of the ... of the pintail populations, and it went from seven to one, you know, everything in California was like, 'what do we have to do to get back to that days ... those days when we could shoot seven pintails again?' And ... and I think the frustration is that ... that we did a good job in California of changing the landscape. And so, I can say, with great certainty and confidence, that there are more wetlands today, in California, than there ever was when ... when we started. So we ... we have a huge net gain in California, in terms of wetlands in the Central Valley, and that ... that, without question. And it comes with that a major increase in capacity to feed birds, so we've got more groceries on the landscape, more secure habitat, more sanctuaries. So, the wintering habitat in California is hugely improved over the last 20 years, but yet, we're not shooting seven pintails in California. So people are a little bit frustrated and go 'well, what happened here? We invested a lot of money, and effort, in this Joint Venture, and North American Plan, and I'm not seeing any change in the pintail populations.'

DS -- So what can you tell them?

DP -- And ... and so ... what we're telling them is that there is another side to that. And ... and ... and this ... the breeding grounds, and the prairies of Canada and the US, and there are ... there are problems up there, on broad landscapes, that have yet to be addressed. And so, a lot of it has to do with agricultural practices. And there's people that ... that are working on that as diligently as we worked on the wintering grounds in California, and they're trying to figure it out. But it's a large, complex problem, that ...

that ... that spans tens of millions of acres of prairie provinces and states, and so, it's not a small problem. But ... it ... it would be ... it would be hugely helpful, so if we can get on top of that one [general laughter] and ... and ... and start moving that in a ... in a positive direction.

DS -- But, you're saying the waterfowl constituency is beginning to be aware of that.

DP -- Oh, yes.

DS -- That the breeding ...

DP -- Yes, the connections ...

DS -- [indecipherable]

DP -- ... the connections, yeah, the connections between the breeding grounds and the wintering grounds, and that you can solve some problems in California, but not all of them. And ... and pintail recruitment is certainly one, you know.

DS -- Well, on that point Dave, let me ask you, looking at the habitat objectives that were established in the beginning of the Joint Venture, and even now, I mean, you've even stated that there ... there are more wetland acres now than there were when the Joint Venture started ...

DP -- Right.

DS -- ... in California. Some people would say ... want to ask you the question 'well, have ... are you done?' And, if not that question, 'when will you be done?' How would ... how would you respond to that, if someone were to pose the hypothetical question?

DP -- Right. The answer is we're not done yet. And there's a couple of weak links in the chain. And I'll tell you what they are. The whole habitat protection strategy in California is built around the notion that we're going to have hunting in perpetuity. And because we have tens of thousands of acres of private duck clubs under state / federal / and private easements, and those lands are managed as wetlands for only one purpose -- and that is to flood them up so they can shoot ducks. And if we ever loose duck hunting, we're going to loose tens of thousands of acres of wetlands. Because people are not going to write those checks to flood those lands if they can't hunt ducks. So that's one weak link in the chain.

DS -- Just to understand -- so the easements protect the wetlands but do not provide water.

DP -- Correct.

DS -- Okay. That's ... that's beyond the scope of the easements.

DP -- Yeah. So ... so it's a land use easement, where the land owner cannot convert that well into a grape vineyard, or a walnut orchard, or a housing development. So it's a wetland, that he has the option to flood it. And his incentive to flood it is so he can hunt ducks. So as long as we continue to hunt ducks, we're going to have a lot of habitat in California. But if we ever loose hunting ... then that's one weak link in the chain. The other ... the other weak link is the rice industry. And so, we have a lot of land - private land - in California in rice, that gets flooded -- for hunting purposes, and also for rice decomposition. And that just sets the table for all these birds to come in and ... and ... and feed on those rice fields. So, if we were ever to loose rice in California, if the market falls out, and ... and it's no longer economically feasible to grow rice in California, we will loose a huge capacity to feed waterfowl in the Pacific Fly[way and it] will just go away. And it can go away overnight. So those are tow real weak links in the chain that ... so I would say that we need to be ever vigilant about that, because there is never any certainty that we'll always have those two things in perpetuity. The hunting and the rice.

DS -- Thanks. That's ... that's valuable perspective. Um ... can you tell me what has worked for you, and what didn't work so well, as a Joint Venture Coordinator, to turn into advice, so we ... might pass on to the next generation of ... of coordinators and managers.

DP -- Sure. I ... I ... what ... what worked. Um ... I had a mentor in the Joint Venture, you know, who told me that, you know, there's sort of two ways of doing business -- there's the carrot and the stick. And ... and I can tell you the carrot works a heck of a lot better than the stick. So, creating incentives for people to do things was, sort of, always one of our tools that we, you know, we ... we used. And it was like, 'what incentive can I get out there to make you, as a land owner, move in my direction,' And ... and ... and step forward and become engaged in what we wanted to do? So, we're always looking for those incentive based kinds of approaches. But, I ... I would say that the thing that worked for me as a Joint Venture Coordinator was, you know, I would always think about where are we right now, and where do we need to be, and so, you know, we ... the Joint Venture may be here, and I'd think, well, you know, we need to be over here, and in ... probably in a year or so, and I would ... I would think through - what do I have to do, as a Coordinator, to move the Management Board to this point. And I would sort of think that through in my mind. And then, I was always looking at the Management Board, and those six guys that got to vote, and I was always poking and prodding to see where they were, and their thought processes, and see if they were ready to move. And if they weren't, I ... I was always going and seeing what I needed to do to, sort of, get them to change their thinking, and get their vote, and that ... the initiative to move to this other spot. So that ... the human dynamic, to me, was always very, very interesting. So, the working with people, and ... and, you know, behind the scenes, to get the Management Board to a point where we would have a vote and I could move that group to this other spot, was ... was something that I found a lot of satisfaction in doing. And ... and I also told people, when I was doing the Joint Ventures, I never asked a question -- never asked the question -- unless I knew what the answer was before I asked it. So, I always ... if there was ever uncertainty in my mind, I would go have one-on-one meetings with every

one of those ... those -- the voting block of the Management Board, and just say, you know, if I was to throw this question at you, and how would you vote? And they'd tell me, and I go 'okay, well, I know I got one vote.' And I'd go to the next person, and I would ask them. And if he would say 'no,' I would start to try to tease it out, okay, what is it about this proposal I'm going to give you that you don't like, and what would I have to do to change it to get your vote. So I was always sort of working that group. And then, when I got ... when I was ready to ask the question, I already knew what the answer was going to be, 'cause I'd already talked to every one of them individually, and I knew I had the votes. So, I'd raise it, put it on the agenda, ask for the vote, and it'd be a 6-0 vote. And we'd move from here to there. So, that was a lot of fun. I like that. That worked for me.

DS -- Any things that didn't work?

DP -- Um ... ahhh ... just top down, command and control, didn't work. There were some times when I would get a, you know, an edict from the Regional Office, my supervisor would say 'well, you go down and tell those Joint Venture guys that Fish and Wildlife Service is, you know, we want something to happen this way, and so, just go tell them that that's going to be it, you know, and make it happen.' And ... and I go 'geez, I, you know, I know these guys, and this is not going to go over well, and this is just, you know, this is not the way the Joint Venture culture works.' And so, being the good soldier that I was, I'd, you know, I'd put it on the agenda, and ... and I'd go up, and I'd do my best to sell it. And they'd sit there, and listen to what I was going say, and when it was all done they'd say 'gee, Dave, that kind of sounds like a Fish and Wildlife Service thing. Um, why don't you just tell us how that turns out when it's all done.' Basically, they were saying 'we're not engaged, we're not going to do this.' So the top down, sort of, command and control, in my Joint Venture, just didn't work. And there was a couple times when, you know, I was told to go sell something, and I didn't have any buyers.

[General laughter] That's the way it was.

DS -- Almost sounds like some of ... some of you Joint Venture Coordinators, maybe Coordinator wasn't quite the right term. It's more like Joint Venture Orchestration ...

DP -- Yeah.

DS -- ... Joint Venture Management.

DP -- Yeah. There was a lot of skill ...

DS -- It's a skill.

DP -- There's a lot of work.

DS -- It's a skill.

DP -- Yeah. It was a lot of people finesse ...

DS -- Finesse.

DP -- ... that went with that job.

DS -- What are some of your best memories of your years as a Joint Venture Coordinator?

DP -- Boy, I had a lot of them. And ... and I it ... it ... it was ... it was one of the best jobs, if not the best job, I ever had. Just being able to participate with a bunch of very dedicated people and ... and to sort of see their energy and their enthusiasm and their passion and ... and, just to be part of that, was ... was ... was ... was a ... was a sheer pleasure. We had a lot of fun, you know, and ... and this ... it's part of the Joint Venture culture that I ... I haven't heard this mentioned today or yesterday, we had a lot a parties, you know. So ... we ... we called them 'dedication ceremonies' or whatever, but, you

know, anytime we'd get something, we had to have a party. So we were dedicating things all the time. And that that was like a, you know, it was a barbeque, or, you know, it was some kind of a fun event. We're always handing out hats, and tee shirts, and, you know, little trinkets. And so, we had a lot of fun doing that. And ... and ... and I think that that was part of, you know, my job, as a coordinator, which was ... you were always trying to pat people on the back, and encourage them, and ... and give them a lot of recognition, and making them look good -- even if they didn't have a whole lot to do with the project, you know. [DS chuckles] And you were always trying to be the cheerleader, and ... and just keep those people pumped up all the time. And so, that ... that was ... that was fun. So ... I ... those are some good memories. I There's one thing that a lot of people don't know, but in the very beginning of the [NAWCA?] Council, the very first [NAWCA?] Council meeting there ever was, I was there for that meeting, and I wrote the grant for the [indecipherable [Onasako?]] Project, and ... 'cause I knew it backwards and forwards, but we were also kind of trying to figure out sort of how this Council was going work, and they'd never met before. So ... so we ... it was always a guessing game, you know, it was kind of like -- what's going to go, and what's not going to go? And how are we going to get this thing funded? So I wrote ... I wrote the ... the [NAWCA?] grant for the [indecipherable [Onasako?]] Project which was up in the northern Sacramento Valley, and I handed it off to the Nature Conservancy. And I said 'here it is. It's already done. All you got to do is put your name on it. If you guys send it in ... 'cause I think it would probably be funded if it came from the Nature Conservancy; probably isn't going to get funded if it comes from the Fish and Wildlife Service.' And we were just trying to read the tea leaves before the, you know, the tea leaves ever got laid out on the table. And so, as it turned out, that project was the largest [NAWCA?] grant ever funded, in the history of the [NAWCA?]. It was three million dollars. And so, after that first meeting, the [NAWCA?] Council says 'I think we need to have a cap on ... on the [NAWCA?] grants.' So, at that ... after that first meeting, they put a cap of a million dollars, but, if you go back and look at the history of the [NAWCA?] grants, there was one grant for three million dollars -- and I wrote it. So, that was fun.

DS -- I'll have to go back and talk to the grant coordination office about that. Before we run out of time, ...

DP -- Right.

DS -- ... you ... bring us up to speed now, since you ... you were virtually in the beginning of one of the first Joint Ventures. The last 18 to 20 months ...

DP -- Right.

DS -- ... you had a chance to help with this Continental Assessment.

DP -- Right.

DS -- You have sat in on interviews with every Joint Venture.

DP -- That's right.

DS -- You've done staff work with the Continental Assessment Team that was appointed by the Plan Committee.

DP -- Right.

DS -- You've helped that group put together a report, and edit it. And you've helped the Plan Committee review it.

DP -- Right.

DS -- So, I would like to ask you some of your personal observations; having been there in the beginning with one Joint Venture, spent some time supervising that Joint Venture,

and now, having had a chance to look at all of the Joint Ventures, all of the Waterfowl Plan, all of the science, trying to assess progress in 20 years ...

DP -- Right.

DS -- ... do you have any observations you'd like to share, in what you've seen?

DP -- Oh, yeah. I sure do.

DS -- What are some of those?

DP -- I'll ... I'll ... several. Like you said, I've been involved now, in 22 Joint Venture interviews over the last 21 months. And ... and ... and one thing that struck me, when we were writing the Central Valley Joint Venture Plan, in 1989, we had some very brilliant people that were working on it. Mickey Heightmeyer [in] particular was ... was working for the California Waterfowl Association at that time, later on went to work for Ducks Unlimited, and ... and Mickey, in my mind, is just, absolutely, a brilliant person. Mike Miller, working for Fish and Wildlife Service Research at that time We had a lot of very, very ... bright, brilliant people in California, that were wrestling with ... with all these huge issues of flyway populations, and carrying capacity of ... of wetlands to feed birds. And so, we thought we had a pretty sophisticated Plan, you know, in 1989. It was pretty cutting edge stuff, at that time. And so, the Plan that we wrote in '89 -- it stood for the whole nine years that I was there. I mean, it ... it was solid biologically; and the numbers made sense. And so, there was no changes in the nine years. And then I stepped out of the Joint Venture and got into Refuges, and now I came back, and these last two months and ... and ... and I'll ... and I'll say this: that ... that the level of sophistication that we used when we developed that Plan was, you know, we had a road map from the gas station and a red pencil. And we would just sit there and draw circles. And ... and that's how focus areas were defined. And ... and ... and so, so much of that was just [the] experience and knowledge of the people in the room. They ... they knew the Central Valley. They knew where the birds were. They knew how they moved, and

where ... where the groceries were. And then, for me to come back in the last two years / 18 months, and see the level of sophistication and science that we're now operating on, was just ... it's just like, you know, a quantum leap from where we were in 1989. Because now I see GIS ... you know, we didn't have GIS, and didn't know what it was in 1989. And so, you know, the science the ... that our Joint Ventures are now operating off of, in terms of GIS data layers, and computer models, and ... and ... and biological assumptions, and ... it ... that ... that's very gratifying to me to see ... I guess, you know, at the time, we thought we were pretty sophisticated and really knew what we were doing, but now I ... I think back, and it seemed pretty crude -- compared to what were doing now. I mean, it's ... it's ... it's really amazing. And what satellite imagery ... and all this technology that we have, and people are out there on laptop computers, doing downloads off of satellite computers ... and, shoot, you know, we were lucky if we had a clipboard and a pencil. So, you know, I ... I think that was ... that was a real insight. The growth of the ... of the Joint Venture family is another thing that's real impressive. You know, when we had our Coordinators meetings there were six of us, and ... [DS laughs] plus the Washington Office staff, so, you know, we had six Joint Venture Coordinators It was a pretty small meeting, you know. But, you know, what ... I always enjoyed that dynamic, because, like, I would ... we go 'round the table and I could listen to the other Joint Venture Coordinators, and I'd learn so much, 'cause I'd see what they were doing in Lower Mississippi Valley, or up in the Great Lakes, or out on the Prairies, and I'd go 'gosh, I never thought of that.' So I was always taking that stuff back, and sort of massaging it, in my mind, and trying to figure out how I could take some of the things I learned from those meetings back to California. But now I understand, they just had a meeting in Austin, Texas, a month ago, I think you were there, and ... you know, the ... the Joint Venture family ... there was 72 people there. And, you know, so you have GIS technicians, and you've got communications specialists, and Assistant Coordinators, and science advisors, and so ... there's this growth of the Joint Venture family, from six ... there's now 22 Joint Ventures. But, you know, there was six coordinators, is when we had a meeting, and now there's 72 people as, sort of, the ... the family. So it's ... it's a real eye opening perspective to see the level

of sophistication now that we ... that we function from. And also, just the number of people, and the resources that are brought to bear.

DS -- I appreciate that.

DP -- Yeah.

DS -- Yeah. You've ... you've had a unique, birds eye view of ... of all this lately. That's neat. Is there anything else you'd like to add? We are

DP -- No. I think it ... it's just, you know, it's been a wonderful run. I ... I ... it's just the ... you know, I guess it was a fortuitous thing that I got that phone call, and ... and ... you know, I'm ... you know, in retrospect I'm glad I said yes, because it's ... it's been ... one of the best things I ever did was to get involved in the North American Plan.

DS -- I ... I'm glad you did, too.

DP -- Thank you.

DS -- I've enjoyed working with you. Thanks a lot.

DP -- Thank you. Take care.