Oral History Cover Sheet

Name: Dan Boone
Date of Interview: October 28, 2006
Location of Interview: Maritime National Wildlife Refuge in Homer, AK
Interviewer: John Cornely

Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service: ?

Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held: Seasonal employee at Kodiak (eventually hired on in a permanent position), Sacramento Refuge, Western Oregon, manager at Turnbull in Cheney, Washington, manager at Adak, and then split deputy duties with Gary Montoya in Homer.

Most Important Projects: Moving Aleutian Canadian Geese.

Colleagues and Mentors: Gerry Atwell, Vernon Byrd, Bob Jones, Gary Montoya,

Most Important Issues: Dealing with blue foxes on Aleutian Islands.

Brief Summary of Interview: Dan Boone was born in Des Moines, Iowa in 1942 to Daniel and Leela Boone. When Dan was fairly young, he and his family moved to Belmond, Iowa where his dad opened his own funeral business and brought a furniture store. After the death of his mother, his father remarried and eventually moved to Wisconsin. Dan graduated high school in Gilman and went to Wisconsin State College of River Falls. He ended up leaving college after a quarter and an a half and joined the Air Force. After he got out of military he went back to college at River Falls, under the GI Bill, and then headed out to California to finish his education. He worked for an airline company and while working in Alaska, knew that's where he wanted to be after graduation. He started out as a seasonal employee with the FWS and eventually got a permanent position with them. He talks about his experiences as a seasonal employee working on Kodiak and his experiences at the various stations/refuges that he worked at. He also talks about getting his master's degree, what he did his thesis on and how it took a longer than he thought it would. He talks about being at Adak, the military presence there and how life was living there until eventually moving to Homer, where he shared deputy duties and continued to keep track of Adak and run that.

John: This is John Cornely with the Fish and Wildlife Service Heritage Committee. It's October 28 and we're at the Islands and Oceans Education Center at the Maritime National Wildlife Refuge in Homer, Alaska. In the office here I'm with Dan Boone, retired Fish and Wildlife Service employee who had a long and, and really quite interesting career and we're going to do an oral history interview today. Dan's going to tell us about himself and about his career with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dan: Well I was born in Des Moines, Iowa in January 195—1942. My parents were Daniel Boone and my mother was Leela. My father was a mortician and we moved from Des Moines when I was fairly young to a small town in, in kind of central Iowa, Belmond and he opened his own funeral business and then bought a furniture store. Unfortunately my mother passed away in 1952 and he kind of lost interest in doing that stuff after that and so he remarried and we moved to Wisconsin. And he went to work for another—fellow who owned several mortuaries and he ran one of them for him. And we lived there until I graduated from high school in 1960, a little town called Gilman. I had various jobs when I was growing up there; ran movie projectors in the theater, worked in the grocery store, did, you know, manual labor around when it was availability. And did some hunting and fishing there, not a lot I wouldn't say that I spent a lot of time hunting and fishing but it was, you know, was certainly an outdoor kind of growing up but I was a lot more into chasing women and drinking beer. I did start; I graduated from high school there in 1960. I did go; I did start college a little state college, Wisconsin State College of River Falls in the fall of 1960 and I lasted about a quarter and a half. I wasn't quite ready for college yet I guess so I listed in the Air Force and it probably turned out to be fortuitous because I got out of the Air Force then in 1965 about the time things were really getting interesting in Vietnam and they were sending everybody and their brother so, but I was done. I came back and went back college on the first GI Bill out of the Vietnam era. And I didn't, I went another year at River Falls and then I decided there was a little too much beer there to get an education so I moved to California.

John: Well it was Wisconsin after all.

Dan: It, yeah (laughing). It hadn't change a lot when I get back there, it's still like that. But I moved out to California. I really had started out thinking that I wanted to go into Oceanography and so I thought I'd be better off to be on the coast some place. I enrolled at Long Beach State and after many stops and starts did eventually graduate from there in 1972 but—I also ended working for Western Airlines out there. My military background I was, worked in base operations and with a fighter squadron just passing information back and forth between controllers and pilots and, you know, various kind of administrative kind of stuff; I wasn't a pilot or on a flight crew. But that did kind of open up the door to get a job at Western Airlines in their scheduling department. And so I, I worked there and they had merged with a small company in Alaska. And we never knew what those guys were doing in Alaska and I was always telling them that they needed to have a scheduler in Alaska. Low and behold they called me up one day, on one of my off days, and wanted to know if I was interested in going to Anchorage. So I said sure, you know, and I had; this was in December and Long Beach was a strange school at the time, most schools would break their semester before Christmas but not Long Beach you went back after Christmas and had two weeks. And I tried to talk them into letting me wait until the end of the semester; no they wouldn't do that but they would let me commute. So every week I flew from Anchorage to Long, down to L.A. and went to class for one day. I had a couple of classes that met on one day and I talked to the professors about, you know, what was, what was happening and, and they weren't real pleased with it but I got through that way so I did finish that semester, didn't do very well but I did finish it. And that's, but that was introduction to Alaska so I was, came up here in January of 1971 and I worked there in Anchorage for a little over a year and a half till I think we left there, they closed that base in August or September of '70— no I must have come up in, no I take that, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I came up in January of '69 and stayed a year and a half until August or September of 1970. And then they moved us all back to L.A. But while I was up here then I really got an introduction into, you know, what great fishing and hunting opportunities there were in, in 1969 and '70 I mean it certainly wasn't like it was in the '40's or '50's but it's nothing like it is now I mean there were no where near as many people. And a couple of the pilots up here had their own little airplanes, they were a bunch of single guys and so we could get around and we had a great time, I bought a

canoe system and hauled it up on the airplane from Seattle. And paddled all over the canoe on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge by myself which, you know, today I would not think was very wise to do but, but I did it in those days. Anyway after they, after they closed that base and moved us all back to Los Angles I knew that wasn't where I wanted to live. And I had met my wife or my former—my to be wife, I guess in while I was there she was a flight attendant. And we got married in January of '71 and I took a leave of absence, which I never really went back to Western Airlines after that and had a year left at school so I went back and finished my bachelor's degree at Long Beach State in Zoology. And graduated in January of '72 and left in March to move to Alaska with no job and drove up the highway and poked around and I ended up getting a job that spring with the BLM as a fire dispatcher because of my background with the, with the airlines and the military. But I was still looking for a wildlife kind of job and there were lots of seasonal positions, supposedly. And I had really thought, you know, about going to work for the state; I didn't even really know who the Fish and Wildlife Service was at the time, they were a pretty small organization in Alaska. But I had several applications in with the state but one day I just happen stumble into the Fish and Wildlife Service office and; oh dear I wish I could remember the guys name now but I can't, maybe later.

John: Well where was the office in those days? This was in Anchorage?

Dan: Yeah.

John: But I mean its, what's…

Dan: I think it was on Sea Street. It was a rented building but you know there were…

John: Kind of down, was it kind of downtown?

Dan: It was downtown, yeah it was downtown. Almost had his name there for a minute, but. I walked in there at a pretty opportune time, apparently, because they had a seasonal at Kodiak that just didn't show up. And so they needed somebody like yesterday. And I

said "Well." You know I called my wife and I said, we talked about it and decided I'd go, you know, for the summer. She was still flying for the airlines and was home off and on but not all the time and—so they had a couple other people that they needed to check with because of, I don't know, veterans benefits or something, which I had but—anyway. They, they checked with these folks and they were both married and they wouldn't go without their spouses of course this was a, wasn't the kind of thing where you could take your spouse so, anyway. I went down there as a seasonal and it was a, doing a krill census on the Karluk River and we were being paid to check with, with the fishermen, get some scale samples and weights and lengths on king salmon during the king salmon season and then when there wasn't anybody around, we were suppose to be catching them ourselves. So that was, that wasn't too hard to take, some of the, one of the premier fishing sites in Alaska. And, and somebody's giving you room and board and paying you besides. So that was pretty fun, we did that for I think I probably went down there in early June and stayed till just after the 4th of July. And that was sort of interesting in that we were down there at the same time the Coast Guard in, or the Navy was leaving Kodiak and turning their facilities over to the Coast Guard. And low and behold brand new Senator Stevens was down there to do the dedication and part of the thank you for, for his showing up is the Coast Guard took him on a helicopter ride out to do some fishing on the Karluk River and they landed their Coast, their helicopters out there, which they weren't suppose to do. But anyway we ended up escorting Senator Stevens down the river to make sure he didn't get eaten by a bear while he was trying to catch fish, which he didn't catch but; 4th of July's a little late for salmon. So we left shortly after that then and moved our camp back up to Karluk Lake to, kind of permanent field camp for, for the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge and we did some eagle nest surveys the rest of the summer went around and found the nest and marked the trees and tried to figure out how many young they had in there. But it took quite awhile cuz some of those things would back off the lake a hundred yards or so and hacking your way through the bush to get back there was interesting to say the least. So then I, I took the month of September off, I think, and then they had me come back in October and do kind of the same thing down on the Karluk River for steelhead and that was pretty interesting too but—cuz it's pretty good steelhead fishing. And then after the steelhead kind of quieted down towards

the end of October, I spent about I don't know three weeks back up at the main camp helping do some fall radio telemetry work on brown bears. And then I took that, that winter off then I was laid off for the winter. And then the next; and this whole thing was to establish a use pattern along the Karluk River because they knew that ANILCA was in the wind and they needed public right of way to some of these sites based on historical use. And so they wanted to establish some kind of use pattern and that's what this was all about. The next year, Gerry Atwell was the manager there then and Vernon Byrd was the assistant and they had a secretary. And I was the tech and at that time the Aleutian Tern wintered in Kodiak and the skipper on that was George Putney. And they didn't have any, any deckhands he just hired deckhands seasonally from where ever he could find one. So anyway the next spring they started a brown bear study in the higher alpine country to see; they, they had a general understanding that that was fairly important to bears once they came out of hibernation. But they weren't real sure what, what they were utilizing up there and how long they stayed and you know they were going to try and figure out where they went after that. And so the next three summers, well yeah the next three summers, I spent in that alpine area from—early June to mid July at least, just observing bears and you actually do get to where, you know, even without collars or other permanent markers; you can identify individual bears and not all of them because you don't see them all often enough. But, you know, those that are in a particularly area; we followed one for three years. And it was just right, you know, in the, in the (unintelligible) near our cabin and we'd see her all the time; a smallish, young bear. And we determined what they were, what they were feeding on most of the time and just got a lot of observations and sows with cubs seem to be pretty important up there, didn't see very many boar bears; single bears but they general appeared to be immature bears I think or at least juvenile bears.

John: Dan tell a little, just a little bit about the refuge; the size and the terrain and stuff like that.

Dan: Well gee, I don't.

John: You know just.

Dan: I think at the time, I think they've changed the boundaries on it some in recent years. But at the time I think it was a million eight hundred thousand acres. Most of it was pretty mountainous with river valleys in between, a lot of salmon runs in the valleys, you know, consequently pretty good bear habitat. They, you know, den in the mountains and what have you and, and feed a lot on salmon through the summer. In the early part of the season then they'd feed on these alpine areas on (name?), which is a grass, and they liked it just as it was coming up; once it, once it got grown up and headed out they didn't care much for it but, but as it was just breaking through the snow and the nice, fresh green sheets why they could eat that by the hour. And they did. Then as soon as that grass kind of matured was about the same time that salmon started to show up in the river and they'd move to the rivers. And, and the alpine areas would be just devoid of bears practically. They have several introduced species on Kodiak, Sitka black tail deer which were not terrible abundant when I was down there, they were pretty much on the north end of the island around the city or just a little bit south of the city but not around Karluk Lake until the last year I was there a few of them showed up around Karluk Lake and I understand now there's deer everywhere down there and they really have gotten to be quite a nuisance. They also had an introduced reindeer herd, which was feral, and that probably was—gee I don't know, you know, three to five hundred animals or something like that. And it was pretty steady, it didn't seem to increase or decrease much and it wasn't harvested very much, you know, if the bear hunter happen to see one, why they might take it and just eat it while they were in camp but, cuz there wasn't; cuz I don't think there was a season or bag limit on them because they were feral. But there just wasn't much interest in them at all. The deer hunting in recent years has become pretty popular; people come from, from quite a ways to hunt deer down there now. People from Homer here go over there all the time. I, the; when I went back to work that second—summer, the first summer on the bear study then I was still just a seasonal but by that fall they had managed to scrounge around find me a 39 hour a week position, which meant that I was less than full-time and wasn't counted as a FTE. And I worked in that, I don't

remember how long now but it, I didn't really; I still worked the 40-hour week I just worked like everybody else did. And…

John: You got, so then were you; that would have been like a career seasonal position at that point or did it…(Dan starts talking).

Dan: No it was; it was a funny position. It was, it was year round but it was just 39 hours a week and because…

John: But you had, you had; you got some benefits at that point or not?

Dan: I don't remember you know it wasn't a huge deal to me because my wife had them and so I wasn't very interested in; and I certainly wasn't thinking about retirement at that point. But I don't even remember how long that lasted, maybe a year or so and then they just, then I; they had a permanent position for me and so actually we I went back to work that second spring, I never was off after that I worked all the way. And, and we worked on that for three years and then I was there—through that next fall and right after the first of the year I had an opportunity to go out to Adak and onto Amchitka to help with the Aleutian Canada goose program. They were establishing a rearing program on Amchitka thinking that if they raise geese in the area they'd be more likely to survive and migrate and do all the things that Aleutians were suppose to do. So they were starting this propagation program on Amchitka and moving it from Jamestown. What they needed was big pens out there with wire mesh over the top to keep the birds from leaving before they were suppose to and mainly to keep the eagles out and so there were several of us that were out there for and normally the Aleutian winters are mild enough that you can continue to work outside, well this wasn't one of those winters. We did get some work done out there before we got weathered out but the snow got about knee deep and it's pretty hard to dig holes in the snow and set poles and build fence when you're knee keep in snow so we, we got some of it done and then when we got weathered out, why we started working on living facilities and what have you—kind of modifying some of the structures that were still around so they could, they'd have indoor facilities as well and

places for the people that were going to live there. And I was out there for a couple months for that, most of January and February. And I left then just as they were bringing the geese out and Bob Shulmister and Sue were hired to be the first caretakers of the geese out there and that was where I first met them. And Vernon Byrd was the—Bob Jones' assistant at Adak and he was kind of running the facility at Adak and Jones was in the Cold Bay and so that's where I first met Vern as well. So I went back to Kodiak then and I don't think I applied for this job before I left, there was a job; anyway I was, you know, kind of thinking that maybe I'd been at Kodiak long enough for a first assignment and Gary Atwell had kind of encouraged me to go back to school and get a masters degree and so I was looking at places in the lower 48 that, where I might be able to do that. And Sacramento Refuge had an opening and I applied for it and was selected and I thought maybe I'd go to U.C. Davis but it turned out that didn't work out very well. Anyway I got down there (unintelligible), I drove in there and it was the end of May and it was hot. I thought I'd died and gone to hell (laughing), it was so hot I couldn't believe it. I, you know, I like Jack Helvie and we're still good friends but man that was hot; I just could not deal with that. It was *so* different then, then what I was, you know my first exposure to refuges was really a wilderness situation and then to be dropped off in the Central Valley, California, which is probably as far away from that as you get. You know here's this big managed farm and—I, I, it just didn't sit well with me and I, I didn't care much for the Sacramento Refuge there were lots of bugs, it was hot. They did have waterfowl, boy in the fall, when they show up they are there in huge numbers; that's pretty impressive (unintelligible) little diversion. They were having trouble with the spring waterfowl hunting with, with native peoples in Alaska; that, that's always been a tradition and—but when waterfowl, waterfowl populations were kind of declining and they were trying to, you know, curb that and Fish and Wildlife Service is—they've always tried to play both sides against the middle on it, they've always, you know, tried to be on the native side but also try to preserve the stuff and they, I don't, they don't process (unintelligible). They never did prosecute very many people for spring waterfowl although they talked a lot about it being illegal. They thought well they take the, some of the native leaders down and show them where the waterfowl spent their winter. Well they took them someplace like Sacramento, they've never so many

waterfowl in one place in all their life, they couldn't imagine why you thought there was a shortage, so that kind of backfired on them a little bit. Cuz they do, they just pack them in there in those rice fields, I mean it's just wall-to-wall ducks sometimes. So that part of it was pretty spectacular. But then there was the BLHP program that came along and they were adding a lot of new positions at a lot of Refuges and there was an opening at Western Oregon, which was in Corvallis and that would of, you know, was a good place for me to try and fit work and school together. So I applied for that.

John: And what, what year was that again?

Dan: That would of been '76. And let's see—I applied for that but I also applied for the assistant manager out at Adak, that was another BLHP position I think that was just opening up and I was certainly interested in going back out there; I thought I found that pretty interesting. And I was actually selected for that. And, but I really did want to go to graduate school so I called Larry Debates at the time and told him the situation, you know, either, you know, I could have the job at Western Oregon or William Finley or I guess it was at that time, and I, you know, pursue going to school on my own some how. Or if I couldn't do that than I was going to go out to Adak and Larry thought about it for a day or so and called me back and said "Well…" you know "…you can go to Western Oregon." Which I did. And, but it took a lot longer to get through my masters program than I ever anticipated. I would've probably gone to Adak, career wise that probably would have been a better move. But I did go to, go to William Finley and Corvallis and the manager, Dick Rogers, had just moved into the regional office so the manager's position was kind of open and was about a couple months and Palmer Sekora was selected to be the refuge manager there. And Palmer was a difficult person to get along with, at best I guess, but I will give him credit he was pretty supportive of people going to school at Oregon State and working. There were a couple of us there doing that, Don Clark was another one; he was working on his bachelor's degree, which he eventually got. And, and then I, I started just taking classes cuz I hadn't gotten into any graduate program and it took a fair amount of time to do that. But I'd take, you know, a class every term and, and usually try and schedule it so it was late in the day and that I just take

an hour annual leave or something like that and go. And Palmer was pretty understanding about that, I, you know, I'm sure at times he found it frustrating but cuz he'd have something he wanted you to do or there'd be a meeting or something and if it was three o'clock why, you know, I had class so I leave. But I did eventually get into a program and I probably could have gotten into one earlier except that I was pretty adamant that I wanted to do it on marine birds and, and there weren't very many people at Oregon State that were interested in marine birds or thought they were even worth the time of day I guess. But eventually I found a fellow who was a fish pairs zoologist, Bob Olson, who; and had an interest in birds as well and he said well he'd take me on as a graduate student. So we just kind of developed a—a proposal to study early life history of tufted puffins and it turned out Gold Island was about the only accessible island where they had enough puffins to do that, which is down off Brookings, Oregon just north of the California border, which is about a—I don't know three or four hour drive from Corvallis; a long ways. At today's gas prices, I couldn't afford it. But anyway I did that for, well I—at the time it really, there were several of us working on tufted puffins; there were a couple guys that were out in front of me a little ways and better funded. Dave (name?), I'm trying to think who one of the other guys was, Dave's not with the Service anymore but—I can't think of the name of the other fellow that, that was doing similar kind of work with puffins, but. I mean they didn't know what the incubation period was; they didn't know, you know, much about nest site fidelity, they didn't know anything about, you know, even how many—chicks or how many eggs hey lay, they usually knew about chicks that they raised but they didn't know eggs. And so, you know, it was just some of that basic stuff that I began to collect but probably one of the more interesting things that came out of my study was in the past they just dug up burrows and put plugs in the holes or something so they could get at them and you end up destroying a lot of burrows that way and, and—there was a lot of damage done. I tried a little different approach and, and—with some artificial nest boxes and digging them in and, and they actually worked they, I don't, you know, I didn't have any where near 100% occupancy but birds would come back and use them year after year. And I think, you know, with more funding and, and I think they're still doing it in some places but, you know, they've gotten a lot more sophisticated with the kinds of boxes and, and they build them out of

plastic so that once you get them in, they're there, you know, permanently forever. And, and you can let the vegetation re-grow over the top and—but that, that part of it I think was; and I, you know, it's, shouldn't be any real innovation because there lots of critters, lots of birds that use nest boxes but nobody had tried it with, with marine birds before.

John: Did you, did you actually located natural burrows and then try to…?

Dan: Yeah, that's what I did.

John: Made boxes that were kind of…

Dan: I would, I would find a natural burrow and then dig it up and then replace it with the box and cover it back up again and—and in a lot of cases the birds didn't like it. You know they would dig under them, dig out the back—or just abandon the thing altogether but had enough that without digging my thesis out and looking at it again I can't tell you now what, how many of them there were that were used. And it had, of course the colony is relatively small and it's hundreds of birds at the most. And so the opportunities are not like going to some of these big colonies where there's hundreds of thousands. And—but I did that for three years and eventually even finished my thesis and got a masters degree. And shortly after that then and believe me they were tired of me hanging around there from the regional office (laughing) they thought was long, I should have moved on long ago. I, I took the mangers job up at Turnbull in Cheney, Washington just out of Spokane. Which was fun, that I was first shot at being the project leader and I enjoyed and it was a pretty good staff and it was a relatively small refuge with not a lot of controversy and unfortunately it didn't have a lot of water either, which made it sort of non-productive, but. I stayed there for two and a half years in the manger job, actually shortly after I had gotten there, the mangers job opened up at Adak and I really wanted to go. And I talked to my wife about it and she didn't want to go so I didn't put in for it, then I found out afterwards that they gave it to an outdoor recreation planner and I was really upset then (unintelligible); Mike Boylan. And—Mike's fine, I, I but he didn't have a biological background at that point. And so then Mike didn't stay there very long, he

was only there a year and a half or so, well here's this thing is on the green sheet the next time and so (unintelligible). I just put in for it; I didn't say anything about at home (laughing). So I got it and then I, when I told my wife she wasn't very happy cuz we'd just built a new house and; but I went up then in January of '91 to—to Adak and my family stayed and the kids finished that year in school and sold the house and they eventually showed up in Adak in time for school to start the next fall. But actually, you know, our time at Adak; you look at it I guess out in front of you and all you see is the bad weather and the isolation and what have you but in retrospect I think everybody that was out there enjoyed it. And certainly, you know, you talk to, to other people in the Fish and Wildlife Service that have been out there and it's a unique community here in Homer cuz so many have spent time at Adak, I mean Vern's here and he spent time out there and Shulmister and Tom Early, John Martin; we have other friend, school teachers, that were out there when we were out there and, and one of the local contractors was one of the big contractors out there so there's a lot of people here in Homer that have connections to Adak, a lot of fishermen from here get out that way. But it's, when we were there, when I first moved out there Adak was the fifth or sixth largest community in the state; 5500 people, big as Homer is now, bigger. Almost all Navy or Navy related I guess I should say because you couldn't just move out there as a civilian to live in Adak. You, you had to have some connection with the Navy; schoolteacher, contractor or in the military or a spouse or something like that. And, and it was, it was an interesting place cuz the Fish and Wildlife Service was in a kind of unique position because we really managed the island jointly with the Navy. The Navy kind of moved out there during World War II, even though it was a refuge and set up shop without ever asking or even thinking about asking anybody, you know, it was—a national emergency I guess and those kinds of things didn't even come up. But sometime after the war they worked out an agreement where they would manage the island jointly with, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service being responsible for fisheries and wildlife resources and the Navy being responsible for defense and that kind of stuff. So we, you know, we had a lot of interactions with the Navy and they were, for the most part, pretty good. They had become in recent times, more recent times, a lot more sensitive to wildlife issues and environmental issues and you know they were very concerned about fuel spills and people doing things illegally

and hunting and what have you. So yeah, and the social life out there was, was fine, you know, there was always things to do and people that were there—in earlier years said that, you know, before they got real television out there, which was only; we had television but I wouldn't call it real television when I was there even or when we were there but before television it was a lot more social cuz people were forced to do things to entertain themselves; once TV showed up then they were entertained by the TV, but. They still did a lot of social, a lot of formal Navy balls and what have you and of course the Fish and Wildlife Service always got invited to those; it was kind of fun. The women liked that part of it, you know, they could get their formal dresses and, and go. And they even had Bob Jones come one time and he was the guest speaker. Well he droned on and on and on, he drove everybody crazy. Maybe that's on tape someplace John, I don't know.

John: Well I know that they've got some, some things, you know, and his boat at NCTC.

Dan: One of them, yeah, one of them is here.

John: And so on but—and it was basically, the school was for the Navy but that's where your, that's where Fish and Wildlife Service families…

Dan: Oh yeah everybody…

John: …went to school.

Dan: All the people that had kids out there, their kids all went to the same school. And, you know, school teachers some of them had kids and Fish and Wildlife Service people, you know, their kids went to school there. And in the past, they had had kids from Atka, which was a village a hundred miles away. They came over there and went to school but that was not going on when, when we were there. But the Martins, I think, actually had somebody living with, a kid from Atka living with them and going to school at Adak.

And I don't know whether that was because the didn't have a high school at the time at Atka—there was a thing they call a Molly Hootch decision that force all the little rural communities to have high schools or forced the state to put high schools in all the little rural communities and so a lot of those kids that would have to go other places to board and go to high school didn't, no longer had to do that.

John: Talk about the operations, you know, and kind of what your; the office at Adak, kind of what the zone of influence in the oceans…

Dan: Okay.

John: …and a little bit maybe at the time kind of how the refuges in this part of the world and out in the Aleutian chains were organized kind of administratively.

Dan: Okay well the—the Adak office was a sub-office for Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. The Aleutian Islands had been a refuge before and actually went back pretty early, I don't remember exactly when they were made a refuge but probably in the teens if I remember correctly. And, so they had been a refuge for a long time. They were managed out of Cold Bay for most of that time, not, not having anybody on sight and then Vern Byrd went out there in the mid-70's, and he'd been out there in the Navy and liked it and then he gotten a job with the Service at Cold Bay and eventually had moved back on out to Adak and was kind of their on sight person. And then it, with the—ANILCA I think, it had; well no before—yeah with ANILCA it had become a full blown refuge with staff and John Martin was out there for several years. And then it was being incorporated into Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge and John came into Homer to run that whole thing leaving the one at Adak open and Fred Zeillemaker went through there—who else was there, Mike Boylan; I'm trying to think who the other managers, maybe that was, maybe I was the next one after that. But, you know, it's along ways I mean it's 1500 miles from Anchorage to Adak, that's like going to Seattle practically. It's just a long string of islands out there and the—the two big things that we were working on when I was out there I guess were, and they're related, were Aleutian Canada

geese and fox removal. And then of course sea bird monitoring, I guess is the other one. But I'll talk a little bit about the fox program first I guess cuz it kind of gets them in order. Artic foxes had been introduced on a number of those islands, pre World War II for fox farming. And the Interior, I guess, just leased them out to folks and they would take blue foxes or artic foxes out there and just drop them off on this islands, wait a couple of years so they, well they multiplied and then go back and trap them. And I guess they did fairly well, you know, they'd make several thousands of dollars anyway in a trapping and for folks that were living on a near subsistence lifestyle why that was a lot of money. And, and they would feed on the nesting sea birds or whatever birds there happen to be there, ptarmigan and geese and whatever well that's what it nearly wiped out, the Aleutian Canada geese; they just, you know, eventually they got them all. If they didn't get the adults, they got the eggs and there was no reproduction and—and that had driven the Aleutian's practically to extinction and Buldir, which was a difficult island to get onto, seemed to be the last (unintelligible) for them and, and that's where they found them. But we had started a removal program and Ed Bailey was, well Bob Jones had actually started it and he'd gotten the foxes off Amchitka, which is a big island. But he'd done it with traps and 1080 and things that we can't use any longer today. And so by the time I'd gotten out there, we were pretty much down to just, you know, shooting them or using leg hole traps and snares and what have you to get them. And Ed Bailey was the, kind of the next generation after Bob Jones to, to—to do that and his technique was, you know, just, you went out in the spring and you just trap the foxes until you got them all. We kind of changed that, probably not while I was at Adak I think that was after I moved in here, but when Ed retired we, we'd gotten another, another trapper on and he wanted to try it earlier in the year and late winter when the idea is that you trap the foxes in the summertime—you got pups to deal with. And so, you know, probably, a third to half the foxes you trap in August are pups of the year, aren't going to survive the winter anyway. So if you trap in March and April, before they're on territories, before they set up their territories again for, for breeding. And they're forced to the beach by snow, you're only dealing with the foxes that's going to make it through the winter and breed anyway; those are the important ones. And so they started that system of trapping and it seemed to work a lot better. Foxes just patrol the beach because that's where their food is, it washes in or

they actually will eat; there's little—they look like little shrimp on the beach and they're just little maybe half an inch long or so. But there be just a scum line of those in places and those foxes will just walk down licking them up and it's probably pretty high protein, you know, you get a lot of sand with it but hey it works its way through.

John: But they're a small crustacean?

Dan: Small crustacean, um-huh, um-huh. And I mean, of course too, they're, they're opportunistic they'll eat anything that washes up too; fish, you know, dead marine mammals and you know it's a tough living for them because—there's a lot of the juveniles that don't make it through and that's why they, you know, I said there was a lot of those foxes that you trap in August you wouldn't have to trap at all because they're not going to make it anyway. But that seemed to work pretty well and we started to really get the islands cleaned up out there. And I think today, you know, they're down to; they've pretty well got it done, they've moved on from other things to, to rats and other things foxes are pretty well out of the way. And at the same time then, as we cleaned these islands off, we would move Aleutian Canada geese in the late summer while they were molting and you could catch the juveniles before they learned to fly and some of the adults when they were molting and move them to these fox free islands. And what they found is that bird's home on the island where they learned to fly, so if you got those juveniles over there before they learn to fly and then they all kind of got their flight feathers at the same time, the adults knew where to go for the winter and when they came back they went back to their natal island.

(Stop on side one of tape, pick up on side two)

Dan: …but the other birds would come back to this island because that's where they learned to fly and that's what got plugged into their computer as their home base. And so that really worked pretty well. Well the, you know, it's now I think the Aleutian goose is totally off the endangered species list and, and almost to the point of being a nuisance.

John: We're actually having depredation related hunts in California.

Dan: Yeah, that's unbelievable, that's unbelievable. But it was all, you know, well primarily based on the removal of foxes. And then, I think you know, given time they would've repopulated those islands themselves but they do it a lot quicker with a little help. And, yeah, I don't what the populations up to 80,000 now. (Unintelligible) it's close to it.

John: It's, it's not quite that high but I mean there, there's more Aleutians then there are Duskies, by far.

Dan: Yeah, yeah the Duskies have just kind of sputtered along at about the same level since when, I don't know. So…

John: Talk about the, the marine bird…

Dan: Okay. Okay, Vernon Byrd had developed a—a program for monitoring marine birds at different locations and using that has a kind of a thermometer to see how well ecosystems were doing. And I forgotten exactly how many monitoring sites we had in the Aleutians but—well on Maritime as a whole, there are probably eight or ten if they're all staffed during a season, which I don't know that they've every had season when they all got staffed. But what you, what it involves is putting a couple seasonal employees out there for several months; usually they get dropped off the end of May and get picked up the end of August. And at the time we were doing it we were sitting up weather ports in most places there were some cabins in a few places that had either been left over from something else or maybe Fish and Wildlife Service had built them but I think most of those weather ports now have been replaced with cabins, it was just, it was cheaper because the, the cabins are much more permanent and the weather ports, you know, they're expensive and they last for three or four years and then you have to replace them. So it just got to be cheaper to put up a permanent cabin even though we weren't real excited about permanent sites but—and it depended on which camp you were at, what

you were monitoring, some places they, Kittiwakes were a big one at Buldir. They had a big camp at Buldir because there were people that were working on Aleutian Canada geese and there were people that were working on, on seabirds—Kittiwakes, they worked on (unintelligible) there, Ian Jones has done a lot of research out there on various species. He's a kid that grew in Iowa and ended in Canada somehow (chuckling). But we would take those people out with the Tecla and drop them off every spring and, and they got a zodiac raft usually with a couple outboards and all their food and their weather port we'd help them set up. And we had radio contact with them on regular basis for safety reasons and.

John: So when, in conjunction with your time in Adak was that Tecla built…?

Dan: No it was already…

John: …(unintelligible) came out.

Dan: Before.

John: Yeah.

Dan: Before. Yeah it had been in operation—several years, not a lot. Al Bear was the captain when I first went out on it and Kevin Bell is now but yeah I spent a lot of time on it the first summer I was gone almost all summer on it. I don't do real well on—I found out; I was surprised because I had spent time on the Aleutian Tern when I was in Kodiak and that was a notoriously not a good boat. And the Tecla, which was must bigger, was supposedly pretty good and I never had any trouble on the Aleutian Tern and I got back on the, on the Tecla and just never felt, felt very good. And even spending a lot of time on there, you know, I mean I never got throwing up sick but I just…

John: Never (unintelligible) feel comfortable.

Dan: No I just didn't feel right. And, and the food was great and you know I had my own room and there was no reason to not feel well but I didn't. I think it's just age, I think you just, you know as you get older you're equilibrium gets; you don't equilibrate as quickly as you'd like and, so. But I did, I spent a lot of time on it, you know, moving geese and setting up camps and fox camps and just getting around. And John wanted me, John Martin, wanted me to get really get familiar with the islands the first summer and so I spent practically the whole summer riding around on the boat. And it was very interesting; I mean you get to places that people just don't get to very often. You know there's almost no way to get there commercially without, you know, great expense I mean I guess you could charter a fishing boat or something and go but yeah, so. And there's a lot of World War II—signs of World War II activity out there. I remember in high school having a gentlemen come and talk to us about his experiences in World War II and he'd been stationed in the Aleutians and I don't remember; he probably told us the island he was on but he was basically going to be sacrificed out there cuz they were fully expecting the Japanese to come through there. And it was, the Japanese never had any intention of doing it, it was strictly a diversion, which worked pretty well cuz we had hundreds of thousands of people occupied there for three or four years. But he was, anyway, stuck on some little island with a radio out there and his whole job was to radio the rest of the fleet, probably back at Adak when the Japanese were coming. Well they never came so he survived but then, I mean, they had put him out there as a sacrifice; he and a couple other guys I guess and their job was just to look. And there, so there's a lot of that kind of stuff out there, Kiska was very interesting; I mean there's still a Japanese shrine out there. And it was interesting that, you know, when the, when the U.S. and the Canadian forces retook Kiska they thought they were going to have this big battle but the Japanese had already sneaked out of there…

John: (Unintelligible, speaking at same time.)

Dan: …yeah and under the fog. But the, the GI's wanted to tear that, that shrine down and the Canadian commander wouldn't let them do it and it's still there. I, I; it may, the arch may have fallen down by down on it's own but, but there were little steps carved in

the rocks and, and a little Japanese shrine up there with one of those (unintelligible) type arches over it. And it was, it had been there in the, in the 90's anyway. But lots and lots of buildings and stuff that were—had all fallen down but, you know, stuff was laying around there. Then of course the (unintelligible) ordinance got to be a kind of a big deal. And—you know, it certainly was there. I mean there was no doubt about that and, and you know, I guess people that know about small artillery will tell you it's dangerous. We never had any problem with it and people walked all over those places, I guess they didn't use land mines out there for some reason, which is fortunate cuz it would be a real mess if they had. And Agattu was similar to that, now Agattu, of course, they did have a big battle on Agattu and, you know, the end of the, the Japanese all committed suicide at the end; virtually all of them committed suicide at the end. And I think, you know, they took a lot hits on the ally side too, U.S. Forces. And well you can see, I've seen, you know, (unintelligible) go on shore and there was still snow on the ground and it was cold and nasty, that would have been a horrible place to have, have to…

John: Yeah.

Dan: …fight a battle.

John: I understand they weren't necessarily equipped for…

Dan: No that was…

John: …kind of conditions.

Dan: …that, that was, I mean—the military has a reputation for not being very efficient with their logistics; people in the tropics get parkas and the people in the artic get shorts. I think there was some of that, I don't think they had the best of equipment but you think about the, I mean what equipment was even available.

John: Right.

Dan: And even if you had the best equipment, it still wasn't very good.

John: Yeah.

Dan: But those are, certainly, interesting places to, to visit and then Amchitka, of course is another one; I mean Amchitka, a big run way on it. And that, after, you know when they were doing the atomic testing in Nevada and places and they got to size that they thought was a little too big to do in Nevada, why they "Well gees, what about Amchitka." You know, there's this big island out there, it has a big runway and easy to get to; nobody lives there, nobody would ever want to live there. And so they went out there in the early '60's and they did the three tests out there. And (unintelligible)—Bob Jones, of course, was just the firecracker boys, that's his term for them but he was just livid that they would think to do that on a national wildlife refuge, and then of course they wouldn't now, but. Hopefully they wouldn't do it at all but—they sure had a lot of facilities out there. And when I came up here in '91 they were in the process of building a over the, they had one, over the horizon radar on Amchitka; they'd come back again. And, and they had one over the horizon radar and they were planning another one, pointing in another direction. Well, I first came up; I'd been selected and before I moved up in January of '91 I came up for a meeting in November of '90. And we also met then with the military and that's when they were talking about this other, this additional radar. By the time I got up here in, and then I had another meeting in June of '91 in Anchorage and well this radar was on hold. And it was, I think, within another year, year and a half they were closing down the first one because satellites had taken over from this over the horizon radar stuff and, you know, the logistics of, of trying to maintain something that far out—in Adak, wasn't far behind. We didn't know that at the time but, you know, then with the collapse of the Soviet Union and, and you just; I mean Adak really was a spy base, that's what it was. I mean they had listen devices out there for…

John: Well with, you know, one of; when I was in Air Force Security Service why Shemya was…

Dan: Yeah.

John: …our big listening.

Dan: Yeah, yeah and Shemya was, Shemya was one, Adak was one; Adak had a—a sub listening site…

John: So that was probably…

Dan: …the big, big…

John: …Naval intelligence.

Dan: There were two out there, I don't know what (unintelligible) did, they must have listened to air waves or something but…

John: So that, so it was the decline of the Soviet Union that lead to shutting, ultimately shutting down schools and reducing the presence out there and why you folks had to move?

Dan: Yep, yep, that's exactly right. Yep when the, when the Soviet Union collapsed and before that, you know, Ted Stevens could always manage to, to justify it and, and, you know, I guess now that we look at the Soviet Union and realize that they were mostly a paper tiger, you know maybe it wasn't justified but we didn't know that at time. And, you know, so they, they had quite an infrastructure out there. I mean, they'd build a 20 some million-dollar high school and used it for one or two years. And it's now the administrative office for the, for the Native organization that's taken it over and we've actually, we had an office out there that, that cost a million dollars out of BLHP money that we just walked away from. And another bunk house that was, when I first moved up there they wanted to know if I wanted to live in the bunk house. And I was thinking bunk

house like, like I lived in, in Kodiak and I thought "Well I'm not to excited about that." "Well this is pretty nice." Well I guess it was, gees, there was carpet they had the men's and women's showers, two of them and, and two person rooms, you know and a big kitchen with two refrigerators and two stoves and T.V. and stereo. It was like living—and I think they built that in—probably '89 or '90 for $600,000 I think, which was a lot of money in those days, you know.

John: So is there any Navy out there at all or maybe just a small contingent or something?

Dan: Well, you know, now this—both Shemya and Adak are sort of involved in this—missile defense thing. And, so there may be some military people associated with that, although I think most of that is done by contractors. But they, my understanding is that they've got this big floating—thing just off Adak and the, the whole idea is that you can move this around and so it may not always be at Adak but it's a huge platform like a, like a, like (unintelligible) almost.

John: Okay. So you mentioned that some of this infrastructure that was there is now a part of a Native corporation something?

Dan: Yeah, they…

(Speaking at same time, unintelligible)

Dan: When we—we negotiated a long time with them because we didn't really want, the Fish and Wildlife Service didn't want Adak. When the Navy was going to leave, they were going to turn it all over back to us and we didn't want it. What are we going to do with all these buildings and runways and, and what have you and, and you know there was a lot of clean up potential, a lot of hazmat there and unexploded ordinance. So the Navy really wanted out of it badly, they didn't want to have to maintain it or be responsible indefinitely for all this stuff. So they actually went through a huge expansive

clean up and, and looking for exploded ordinance and what have you and Fish and Wildlife Service ended up negotiating with the—Native Corporation from—Atka and the Aleutians anyway. I'm trying to think of the name of it now but—and it took a long time, they, they wanted to drag their feet forever. They wanted Adak but—you know, they wanted money to run it too.

John: Yeah.

Dan: And Senator Stevens has, has provided that, he said a number of times "This was it, no more." But there always seems to be a little bit more if they need it. And then, of course, now the big thing is they want to keep that runway there and they want to keep it operational. And if they, if they don't maintain the pumps, the sea, the water comes; cuz what that is, is a drain lagoon.

John: Okay.

Dan: And that was the only place flat enough is if they pump the water out and so if they don't continue to pump, the water comes up and I don't know that it goes over the runway but it would soften the ground enough that you wouldn't want to use it. And, and if it sat that way very long, the runway would, would—be into breakup and what have you. So they wanted to keep that runway and that's part of what, what Stevens has been involved with was giving them money to do that. And now that they've go this—national missile defensive, they're associated with that, why that gives it more justification for, for putting money into that, which they continue to do but, have done.

John: Okay take, take us, you know, to Homer from guys when they, all that stuff started to close down that you ended up from moving.

Dan: Yeah, you know, I had, I had return rights to Region 1 and they poked around down there and of course the Fish and Wildlife Service is always, didn't have any money. And it's expensive to move to Adak, cost more to move me out there then I made the first

year. Anyway, there really wasn't anything in Region 1 and you know we were getting closer and closer to the time when I really did need to move and, and eventually—the decision was made in the Regional office just go to, go to Homer and we're work on it later from there. And at the time they already had a deputy here, Gary Montoya, and so I kind of came in here and Gary and I kind of split the, the duties and I continued to, to kind of keep track of Adak and run that. Adak had run pretty (spelling?) when I was out there, we kind of had our own budget and it, it came out of here but, of Homer, but it was much more (spelling?) than most satellite refuges, I guess, one because of distance and, and program.

John: (Unintelligible) enough infrastructure there so when the Tecla's operating out in that part of the world, do you still stop in there…(Dan starts speaking)?

Dan: Well yeah, well they still have people that go there seasonally.

John: Okay.

Dan: And, and run it seasonally but they've walked away from the office, they had some earthquake damage to it and they just couldn't justify repair, you know, cuz there were other buildings available. And the Navy had all kinds of very nice housing that they were just walking away from and the Fish and Wildlife Service got some of it and they're using that now as their office.

John: (Unintelligible).

Dan: And, and, you know, it's; you really don't need a big office cuz you're not, not a lot of people are coming to visit. At one time Adak had the biggest ANHA, Alaska National History Association, sales office in the state. Because all these people would come out to Adak, civilians from the Navy and what have you; anybody that happened to be going through there and, and they wanted survivors, that's where they got them. Yeah I never could learn to run a cash register, I sold a couple hundred dollars worth of stuff

one day without ever running it through the cash register, drove the ANHA crazy (John laughing). They forbid me from sales after that (both laughing). I mean I just took out the cash register and made change but I didn't know what I had sold and kind of messed up the…

John: The inventory.

Dan: …messed up the inventory control was a little shaky, yes it was. But, yeah so they just moved us in here and then Gary and I were in here together for a year and then his wife's sister got ill in Texas and so they left, rather abruptly and, and that worked out fine here because they just didn't refill the position. And then I just finished my career here, you know, I continued to go out to the Aleutians practically every year on the Tecla and—dealt with a lot of stuff here for, well I was here from '94 to 2000 when I retired, so six years.

John: Your, both your kids graduated from high school here?

Dan: Both our, both the kids graduated from high school here, yeah. My son was, was a senior when he came in here, he's done his other three years at Adak but and then my daughter did three years here and graduated. Yeah, I don't know, you know, the school here is okay. It was; and Adak was, you know, it was a small school. The opportunities to interact with kids from other schools was really pretty limited cuz it was so expensive, you know, the swim team would swim out there and then they'd come in for; and do a couple of—schools and then if they had anybody that qualified for state why they'd go. But they, they didn't have very good, very good programs. But the one thing that the Adak school did in '93 they, the school already knew that they were kind of winding down but when they started the school year they didn't have any, they didn't have a basketball coach or anything. So there was a kid that had actually graduated from Adak and gone to college and he had applied to medical school but he hadn't heard so he was back living with his folks for a while. And he took the coaching job and then there was a gal that was in the Navy, an officer, who's husband was tagging along and he was a

sports person; probably had a degree too in something. So they, the two of them, took on the basketball team and they won the state, small school championship that year. They had a couple of black kids that, that had come out of some—bigger environment, cuz they could play. And nobody up here had seen anything like that before, I mean it was kind of like what's the movie that's going around now?

John: Oh yeah, *The—Road to Glory*…

Dan: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

John: …or whatever it is.

Dan: That was kind of like that cuz they had two or three of these guys could dunk that ball well, you know, nobody; these native kids in Alaska can't dunk the basketball. They're lucky to touch the net.

John: So they started out with no coach…

Dan: No coach.

John: …this school was…

Dan: Closing.

John: …going to be closed and they win the state tournament.

Dan: Won the state championship for their division. That's the only one that Adak ever won.

John: Wow.

Dan: They had a team the next year and a few of the kids were back but they didn't, they didn't do as well as they the year before. It was, that was pretty cool. Well the unfortunate thing is not very many of the kids from the school got to see it because they don't go to the games.

John: That's right, no.

Dan: (Laughing) You know.

John: I think we're going to pause for…

Dan: Okay.

(End of tape)