



Oral History of Jerry C. Grover & Judy M. Grover

Date of Interview: May 18, 2002

Location of Interview: Inside the Restored Fish Car, D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery, Spearfish, South Dakota

Interviewer(s): Craig Springer and Dr. Mark Madison

Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service:

Jerry -- 36 ½

Judy -- 20

Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held:

Jerry - Began Service career as a GS-482-5 at the White Sulphur Springs NFH, WV; worked at various cold & warm water hatcheries before moving west to trout broodstock and anadromous NFH's; attend then Department Manager Development Program 1971-72; Chief of National Fish Hatchery System; Chief of Division of Anadromous Fish; Fishery Supervisor Lower Columbia and later California, Nevada and Western Washington; Deputy Assistant Regional Director in charge of the Service's Ecological Services & Endangered Species Program; Supervisor of the fisheries program operations in California and the Klamath River basin.

Judy - Began Service career as a GS-2 Clerk-Typist at the Carson NFH, WA; Portland, OR Personnel Management; Secretary to Personal Officer Washington, D. C.; Lead Secretary Department's Regional Solicitor in Portland; Administrative Secretary to FWS Regional Director, Portland.

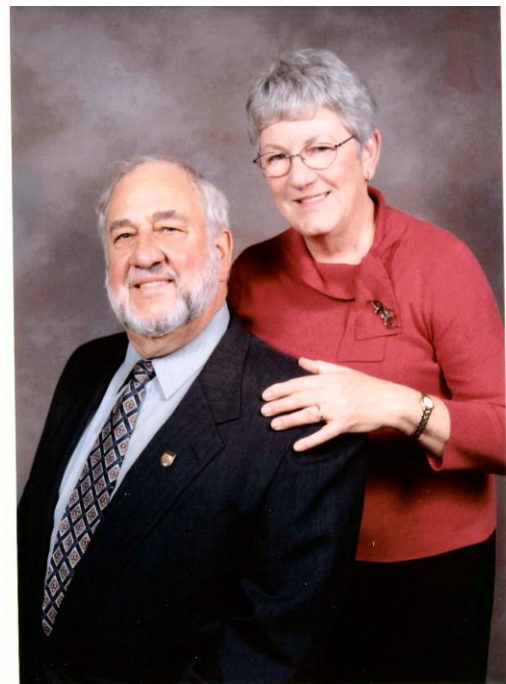
Most Important Projects:

Jerry - Hatchery closures & realignment of the NFH System; Implementation Klamath River F&W Restoration Act; Restoration of Winter-run Chinook, Sacramento River;

Judy - Professionalization & training of Portland R.O. Secretarial staff, guidelines established for controlled correspondence,

Brief Summary of Interview: A snapshot of the segments of a 36+ year career involving the NFH System, Washington Office, & Area Offices of **Mr. Grover**; moving 14 times around and across the country;

Mrs. Grover assisting at various stations as a 'fish wife' and in a Service career leading through the Washington Office & rising to the highest graded Regional Office Admin/Secretary position in the Service.



THE INTERVIEW

Mark Madison – Good Afternoon. Thank you for allowing us to conduct this oral history interview at this historic location.

Jerry Grover – ... Regional Director's secretary, 'cause she went everywhere I went; and she got to know, not only the people in Fisheries, but , you know, the people in Ecological Services, and Refuges, and when in Washington, when she did begin working, she just knew a heck of a lot of folks. And she had an ethic, a knowledge... she knew what the Fish and Wildlife was about.

Craig Springer – You were Chief of National Fish Hatcheries, correct?

Jerry Grover – I was supervisor for the lower Columbia River Fishery Resources Program. I was only there, like, a year and a half after Area Offices closed. It was the spring of 1984 that I applied for and was accepted as the Chief of Fish Hatcheries in Washington, D.C. Chief of National Fish Hatcheries.

Craig Springer – How long did you serve as Chief?

Jerry Grover – I was in Washington for three years. But, here again, we went through re-organization. And we had a Director by the name of Dunkle, Frank Dunkle. When he came in he said 'Washington folks - there's too many of them. And we got to re-organize. There's too many bureaucrats.' Everybody had to shrink down. I was Chief of Hatcheries for two years, the third year I was there I was Chief of Division of Anadromous Fish. That was the one and only time the Service ever had a Division Chief for anadromous fishes.

Craig Springer – Did you see any developments, any advancements, during your tenure in Washington?

Jerry Grover – I guess... I don't know. What do you mean by advancements?

Craig Springer – Well, were there any new stations to come on board, any new advancement in fish health, any advancements in production?

Jerry Grover – During my tenure in Washington, I arrived at the time we were trying to close fish hatcheries. We had like 104 fish hatcheries in the system. It was budgets, times were tough. They wanted to look at 'what is the proper role of the federal government in fisheries management in the United States?' Now [that] included what our role was in our fisheries services activity at that time, what we provided... this extension to the Indian tribes, to the states, to other entities, but what role was our fish hatcheries to have. Where should we be stocking fish? Rather than just willie-nillie scattering fish around the countryside, we began a very close and detailed examination of what was the

proper federal role, to be spending federal dollars, to benefit the federal public, for fisheries. The result of that was that there was as number of federal hatcheries whose roles simply did not fit, as the proper for the federal government. It also meant that our fish health services activity, which we had developed, were providing extension to the commercial people, to the states, to the tribes. That, too, was not a proper federal role. But if they wanted to pay us, we would be glad to do it. And so we had a downsizing at that time

Craig Springer – How did you feel about that?

Jerry Grover – Well, you know, I'm a tax payer, too. How did I feel about the downsizing? It's simply that there was a proper federal role and our federal role should be focused on federal lands. And we had four main roles & responsibilities that was... that should be what the federal fisheries program should focus on. So that was sort of tumultuous times. And given the chance in the Division of Fish Hatcheries... I, I'm a firm believer of it. But the organization was kind of top heavy down there. We had a... what they called Program Operations of Fisheries. This was supposed to be a person who overlooked the various activities - Fish Health, the NFH System, and Fisheries Services, plus the administrative and reporting section. And that was a layer that wasn't necessary. But when they reorganized and did away with that POF job, that guy just moved down to Chief of Fish Hatcheries. And they created a new Division of Anadromous Fish for me. Which made no sense. I probably worked for a year to get rid of that job. And when I did, I got rid of myself. So I went back to Portland. That was 19... that was fall of 1987.

Craig Springer – Uh huh. Did you retire from there?

Jerry Grover – No! Then from Portland, in 1987, I worked for... until 1997 in Portland Office until I retired; I went back to fisheries program. I was the supervisor for California... the fisheries program in California, Nevada, and Puget Sound.

Craig Springer – Feel like you've had a successful career

Jerry Grover – Yes, I'm very much happy. I think I couldn't have been more fortunate. I think it's been great, and it kind of continues over into what I'm doing today, with the retirees association, you know, bringing them together with a information database. I guess you could say I'm still an extended Fish and Wildlife employee – just the pay scale has changed.

Craig Springer – Chuckles

Jerry Grover – But during re-organizations and all... I mean, I felt I was really probably more Fish and Wildlife Service, in my career, until right to the very end, that the... again, another re-organization. This is when the Service went into the geographic ARDs [Assistant Regional Director] and the programmatic ARDs. So, at that time, I was Deputy Assistant Regional Director in charge of the Service's Ecological Service Program that included the Endangered Species Program, Habitat Conservation, Environmental Contaminants and the Wetlands Inventory Programs, and with my other hat on, I was Supervisor

of the fisheries operations in California and the Klamath River Basin, in Oregon-California. But being the Deputy to that arrangement also provided a role in the supervision of the refuges in California. So I was feeling very much Fish and Wildlife Service. That was a very large Ecological Services Program in the Portland Office. I had a staff of 74 people in Portland, with most in endangered species. The field operations this organization oversaw was 35 field stations with 536 people.

Craig Springer – I'm going to let Mark ask some questions.

Break in taping?

Mark Madison – Did the Endangered Species Act affect your fisheries work at all?

Jerry Grover – Not immediately, at the time. The Endangered Species Act, when it came out, did not affect me directly, at the time it was passed. It was long afterwards that I became involved. I became involved greatly when I was in Florida and at the Area Offices with that organization. At that time, the listing, and the things that were going on in Florida... everything seemed threatened or endangered. It was threats by the Miami jet port or the cross state barge canal. We'd just gone through the... oh heck... the snail darter thing, up in Tennessee, and it was – again – tumultuous. And we weren't really sure on how and what the responsibilities were for the information needed to do a proper listing. We never got into recovery plans, hardly, much less, you know, identifying critical habitats. But at that... at that... when the Act very first came in and now fully implemented it was much later than that, that had an impact with what I was doing.

Mark Madison – What are you proudest of in your career?

Jerry Grover – What am I most proud of in my career? I think I'm probably most proud of the issues that I've been involved in and the people I've been associated with. I've hired... I had influence or was able to hire some really good people, that have gone on from there to have successful careers. There have been people that have gone on into the Washington Office, that have been our managers. And, I'm thinking... and I feel then, that my impact with them, kind of carries through. And I think that these people... you know, I get compliments from them, too, and saying things... it makes you feel good. And I think it has a role for the Service

Mark Madison – I would like if Judy would talk a little about the....

Break in taping?

Craig Springer – Okay, were rolling.

Mark Madison – Jerry, one thing I forgot to ask you is how you became interested in fisheries.

Jerry Grover – How did I become interested in fisheries? I can't tell you the number of times I've been asked that question.

I grew up in a farming area, an orange grove. I've always liked the out-of-doors. I wanted to grow up to be a forest ranger. I didn't know, you know, when you're ten, 12 years old, forest ranger was an outdoor job. And as I went through high school I kind of loaded up on the biology / botany kind of things, where I had the opportunity. And it wasn't until I started into college that I began to see where some of these career paths went: that there were such finite things such as dendrology, or forestry, or fish and wildlife management, or fisheries management, range management, those kinds of things. And I'd always been interested in that, and I thought... you know my mother was always a big encourager for me to go on to college to make a success of myself, there was never any doubt to that. She wanted me to be a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, an Indian Chief. And when I told her that I really wanted to go in to be a Fisheries Biologists, you'd thought I was... told her I was going to be a piano player in a whorehouse or something.

General chuckles

Mark Madison – Were you a fisherman?

Jerry Grover – I am a fisherman, but mostly in my younger days. I am not a diehard fisherman. I guess I'm more of a... I like to add to my life list, you know, I'd like to catch something I've never caught before, like get an opportunity to go bone fish fishing, marlin, or something of that nature.

Mark Madison – Wonder if you and Judy would talk about the life style, being a fisheries worker for the service.

Jerry Grover – Well, the life style of a fisheries worker. I took her out of a rental house in California... we moved across the country to West, by God, Virginia, into hatchery housing. The hatchery housing was adequate. It was on-station. They got free work out of you at night, when the alarms went off, and the leaves plugged up the water supply. But the hatchery housing was always adequate. You always had a range, had a good stove and refrigerator. And when you moved you didn't have the worry of trying to find a place to live that you could afford. And so, it was a number of years....

Judy Grover – It was adequate. I mean, it was really historic for a while. The house we had in White Sulphur Springs was, turn of the century, and it was by the Spring, and it was very pretty. And then in Maine, it was the old manager's house. It was huge! Here we were with one little boy, and a baby that was born there, and I don't know how many bedrooms it had... it had six or seven, and each one had a fireplace. I mean... but it was... there were difficult times, too. I mean, like, how do you clean a great big house when you don't really use it.

General laughter

Judy Grover – But it was it was a different life.

Jerry Grover – Well, it was reasonable, too. When I first went out... the very first paycheck that I got in White Sulphur Springs,

West Virginia was \$104 after rent. I think I started out on the payroll at like \$4,040 dollars a year.

Judy Grover – Yeah.

Jerry Grover – And I think the rent at that time was, like, 13 dollars a pay period. And there it was pretty good housing. We had to pay the gas and electricity and your phone bill, but it was adequate. And it wasn't until later that the cost of the housing became more comparable to what you'd find in town. But that house that we lived in in Craig Brook, Maine, was one of the... it dated from the 1870s, and it was commensurate with the status of the person that was there; bigger the house... or the more status, the bigger the house. We had, like, 13 rooms. Had bats in the attic, on the fourth floor. The guys from the University of Maine would come down there and tag bats.

General laughter

Judy Grover – I didn't go up in the attic. I didn't go down in the basement either.

And in the old days, at the turn of the century, in Craig Brook, they had what they called the 'fly house.' They imported the European bottle fly, because it really was prolific, would produce a lot of maggots. And they would gather up the old farm carcasses and put them in this screened house, on a rack, and the lowest man on the totem poles job was to go out there and shake that carcasses and knock all the maggots loose so they could feed the fish.

General chuckling

Jerry Grover – Well, that worked for a while. But all these damn flies got loose, and they ended up in our house.

General laughter throughout/under conversation

Jerry Grover – Every spring, I don't know where they came from, but we had a room we called the blue fly bedroom. I mean, those suckers... I mean, Judy would go vacuum the floor, and suck them all up, and you'd go back, you know, an hour later, and god, there were these European bottle flies all over the place.

Judy Grover – Dying flies, everywhere. Buzzing on the floor. God, it was horrible. They finally tore that house down, too. It's no longer there. And historically, I think they decided the flies won.

Mark Madison – How did you guys cope with moving all across the continent

Judy Grover – It was almost easier than spring cleaning. You just packed up and moved again, clear across the country. We saw the country. We'd come through Spearfish twice before on moves. And our kids were really good about it. You know, when they were little it was just throw their toys and diapers in the back of the car and off we'd go.

Jerry Grover – With a cat.

Judy Grover – And a cat. Yeah, always had a cat. We had one cat that crossed the country six times. He was very well traveled.

Jerry Grover – But, back in those days, when moving you were ... they gave you an allowance and you had to move on that allowance. And it was not adequate to pay to have packers come in and anything. What it did basically, though, was pay for the truck to move from point A to point B. And you had to do your own packing and unpacking. They did the loading and unloading, but you had to do the packing and unpacking. And we began collecting boxes from the moving companies that we picked. We even had to do the negotiating with the moving companies on our own. We'd go to the moving company and say, 'if you can get us some boxes, I'll move with you guys. And invariably they'd say, 'well, we can't just give away these new boxes.' 'Well,' I said, 'I need boxes.' Suddenly, on my doorstep would appear some boxes; I'd sign the contract and have that guy move me. But then I began storing them overhead in my garage, it was always a storage area for our boxes for the next move. And some of the moves were only six months apart. Fourteen times we did this.

Mark Madison – Judy, did you end up helping a lot?

Judy Grover – Oh, yeah.

Overlapping voices

Judy Grover – Yeah, I had... I can remember at White Sulphur Springs. On the weekends if Jerry was working, I'd go down and pick eggs, when the eggs would be up in the baskets. And I... I mean, I might just as well sit there and pick eggs and be with him as be home by myself. I mean, he and I were basically our friends. We didn't have a whole lot of friends, and we did a lot together. So I did that. I picked eggs there. Later on in the career, when he needed people to mark fish, cutting the fins off, I did that too. So....

Jerry Grover – That was a paying job though.

Judy Grover – Yeah, a dollar an hour.

General laughter

Judy Grover – And I'd come home for lunch and Jerry'd say 'how many of my fish did you maim?' And... I didn't maim any, that I could remember. I hope not.

General laughter

Judy Grover – He wasn't a firm believer, I think, in cutting off fins. And I could see the... the detriment to the little fish. But you couldn't study any other way, unless you could mark these fish. You do it better now.

Mark Madison – Thank you, guys, were done.