

# **FWS Directors Forum April 2014**

**Jay Slack:**

Good morning. I hope everybody had a lovely trip out here for those of you who've come out from the Washington area. Welcome back to NCTC.

I wanted to just make sure that everybody knows who's here. We've got a mix of people that are here today-- people from the Arlington office, people from the Washington Main Interior building. We have students who are attending classes here today.

We have people from NCTC-- as far as employees go. We have the Directorate. We have the Deputies here as well. We have our distinguished guests and special guest as well, who we'll hear from in a minute. And obviously, the Director and Deputies. We're glad you all could be here.

I wanted to start by saying this is actually the second of these that have occurred, that we have done one of these in the past. And so it's a continuation, if you will, of NCTC mining the history in a way that we can use for the future.

In 1999, when we opened as an entity, NCTC, we had the former Directors come here at that time under Director Clark. And they were covering basically a 35-year span at that time. And we conducted it as an oral history. And this is going to be that as well.

It's going to be taped. We'll be able to capture this for posterity and hopefully learn from history, be able to take that forward, and give also an opportunity for all of you to interact with the folks that are up here. So it's going to happen basically like your average panel discussion, and you all will have an opportunity to participate.

We're going to start by introductions and then a little bit of background-- a short background of their histories, and then we'll have some questions to get things flowing, set the pace, and then we'd like to open it up to all of you and allow you to take this where you want to go. So think of this as a free-forming, exploratory learning process for us.

Let me start by saying we have one Director who is not here. So at this point you are seeing all the past Directors, including Dale Hall. This is where I'll cue in and say, hey Dale. Can you see us?

**Dale Hall:**

I can. I can't see Lynn though, if you could widen it just a little bit.

**Jay Slack:**

Okay. We'll see if the IT people can do that. And so you can see yourself there, too. You're kind of a digital-looking person. We're certainly glad you're able to attend, and we appreciate that you've made provisions to be here with us. Thank you.

**Dale Hall:**

You're the first person who accused me of being digital?

**Jay Slack:**

See, you know. Looking forward to the future.

We do have one Director, who is not here, former Director Spencer Smith. And he was Director from 1970 to 1973. He is 91 years old right now. He's in California and was not able to attend. Obviously, travel has become difficult for him.

And however he was part of the last oral history that we did with the past Directors. So we'll get word to him that we had talked with him and had a chance to see. And for those of you who are up here, we've got his picture behind you on the screen there. So too bad that Spencer couldn't be here.

And then the other thing that basically I wanted to do is talk about the fact that folks have traveled far and wide to be here, and we definitely appreciate the effort that you have put in. There's no escaping the Fish and Wildlife Service. You can't retire, we will track you down. And so thank you. Thank you for being here-- even if it's digital, Dale. So thank you very much.

Let me do just a couple of short introductions. So we can get an idea of the span, and you can put the face with the name, for those of you who haven't had a chance to meet the former Directors yet.

First here Lynn Greenwalt. He served as the Fish and Wildlife Service Director from 1973 to 1981. He grew up in Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge and became the first Director to serve under both Republican and Democratic administrations. And we've got a fun little factoid with each of these. And I'll start Lynn's off by saying he became Director the year the Endangered Species Act was enacted. We all did the math on that one, but FedEx was founded that year.

Next, John Turner. John was Director from 1989 to 1993. He was born on the family ranch in Moose, Wyoming and was friends with Olaus and Mardy Murie. And he has had a career past his time in Fish and Wildlife Service, where he has worked as the president of the Conservation Fund, Assistant Secretary for the Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. And the factoid on John is the year that he came in as Director, the Exxon Valdez ran aground. So I'm sure you were busy, very busy. And the premiere of a new show called Seinfeld aired.

Next Jamie Rappaport Clark, Director from 1997 to 2001. She had an extensive career in Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services, Endangered Species. Today she's president and CEO of Defenders of Wildlife. Jamie, the year you became Director, Pathfinder landed on Mars and Titanic was the year's biggest grossing film.

Next, Steve Williams, Director from 2002 to 2005. Previously Steve served as Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and Deputy Executive Director for the Pennsylvania Game Commission. And today Steve is the president of Wildlife Management Institute. The year Steve became Director, the euro currency became the currency of Europe, obviously, and the show American Idol premiered.

Dale Hall, digital Dale Hall, down there on the end. Dale was Director of the Wildlife Service from 2005 to 2009, a career employee of the Fish and Wildlife Service since 1978. He was the Service's Director of the Southwest region. Before he was appointed Director of the agency, he'd served in that capacity, obviously.

And Dale is now the CEO of Ducks Unlimited. Thank you, Dale. I think you're probably calling in from Ducks Unlimited. When Dale became Director, Hurricane Katrina hit. And this one was an interesting one. The first YouTube video entitled "Me at the zoo" was uploaded. We've come a long way, haven't we?

And then I'd like to basically introduce, who needs no introduction, Director Dan Ashe, current Director the Fish and Wildlife Service is here also. And then our special guest, Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell. We'll invite her up. I think she'd like to address the group and make some remarks. So welcome.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sally Jewell:**

Thank you, Jay. And thanks to all of you for the incredible work you do. And to Lynn, and John, and Jamie, and Steve, and Dale, and even Spencer, thank you guys for what you've done to really support the great work of this agency through different administrations and all kinds of catastrophes as Jay highlighted for each of you. You've soldiered on, taking care of the constituents of all of us that have no voice in the process, and that's the fish and wildlife that rely on us, really, to make sure that we apply science, we understand their future, and we take care of them, because they don't have the political voice that human beings do.

And sometimes I like to say that human beings really are the ultimate invasive species. Sometimes it feels that way. We seem to be able to adapt to any circumstance. But that's certainly not true of those critters that you are all, out there in the audience, working so hard to understand and to protect for generations to come.

And as an outdoors person and a climber, I've climbed in the Alps. And the Alps have no wildlife. I've seen one ibex, that's about it. Otherwise it's domesticated animals. It's grazing all the way up until you basically hit the snow line. There are no forests in the Western Alps.

There are forests in the Eastern Alps, where I've been as well. But they're new forests, because they were all logged over. And the only reason they have been allowed to grow back really has more to do with the Cold War than human thoughtfulness about how to create habitat. So we have something very, very unique in the United States and throughout North America. And that is many of the species that have made our region unique and very, very special in terms of biodiversity.

And you are foot soldiers, if you will, in a battle to make sure that, in the face of climate change and in the face of the kinds of both human-caused and natural disasters, that we take care of those, again, that have no voice. So I want to thank our colleagues up here for running the Fish and Wildlife Service through all kinds of political circumstances, all kinds of administrations, all kinds of challenges. And you have before you the entire history of the Endangered Species Act and what an amazing difference that law has made in preserving the species that many of us didn't even know existed but, turns out, have been really critical to so many things from clean water to clean air to our nation's heritage. So thank you very much.

I think I'm looking at an image of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge behind me, is that right?

**Dan Ashe:**

Sheenjek Valley. We hiked there.

**Sally Jewell:**

Sheenjek Valley, we were there with Geoff Haskett and Dan and folks from the team up in Alaska. And what an incredible place that is. And I just have to tell you a quick story from about two weeks ago, three weeks ago.

There's some icky things in this job like house hearings and mean-spirited elected officials that are playing to the camera. But, beyond that, there's fun things in this job. And I got invited by the Navy to go on a submarine overnight under the polar ice, which, by the way, is breaking up so much faster than it was even four years ago, when the Navy ran these exercises.

But the more interesting part that I want to tell you about was the flight back, because rarely-- probably no non-stops from Deadhorse, Alaska to Andrews Air Force Base. I'm quite sure of that. Not a big market trip. But flying on the military air flight, we caught the jet stream, and we went overland.

And I flew out from Prudhoe over the wildlife refuge. And it is pristine. It is as it has been with the exception of the climate change impacts. But basically, flying over a few weeks ago, it looked probably the same that the Muries would have seen when they were tromping around there in the '40s and '50s.

When we crossed the border into Canada, there was not a single part of the trip-- and it was clear all the way to the Great Lakes-- where I didn't see human impact. That is extraordinary. From 36,000 feet to fly over a very large country with a big chunk of the Arctic where I couldn't--

where I had no time when I was looking out the window where I didn't see human impact. So I took more pictures of that. Because whether it was these odd, rod-straight lines that I could clearly see that clearly weren't natural. Or it was roads that I could see, both across frozen lakes and across the landscape, to very large mines with communities set up, obviously, to do that mining activity.

Our friends to the north do not have the kinds of protections for their species that we have in the United States. And it is highly visible on the landscape. So we are nearing an important anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, the Wilderness Act, the Land and Water Conservation Fund. And these laws have served us incredibly well.

So it is going to be up to all of us, including my friends on the stage who have done this work for so much longer than I have, to see that our friends in Congress recognize the value of these laws and help us uphold them so that we can have these special places for generations to come. Because we, as human beings, are very, very good at making sure that we are taken care of. But we don't understand unless we all talk and bring our voice to the table about the potential of species collapse if we aren't paying attention to our ecosystems.

And one that I know is not your portfolio, it's more NOAA's portfolio, but ocean acidification, the impact on the plankton. The species that are so dependent on a very careful pH balance, that really are the bottom of the food chain that feed so many more is something that I think we all need to pay attention to.

So in my one-year anniversary, which is tomorrow, I'll be doing a service project with young people out on the National Mall, a symbol of what I think we all need to pay attention to, which is building a new generation of wildlife biologists, of stewards for the outdoors, of young people that have felt connected to nature. Because this situation that we're facing is going to be impacting people for many generations to come. And we need the next generation to be ready for that.

And my travels in this last year have taken me from my first overnight visit, started at Loxahatchee at National Wildlife Refuge. I've been to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I've flown into this Sheenjek Lake area, where Margaret and Olaus Murie spent time in-- was it '50s? I think it was in the mid '50s.

I've been to Cape Romaine, from Cape Romaine to Nisqually. It has just been incredibly gratifying to see the really good work you do on very limited funds. I've dropped my business card in a few mail slots of wildlife refuges that haven't been manned on the weekends. And I've gone to visit them with my husband and say hi, sorry I missed you-- which I'll continue to do.

Because it's really fun to get out to see this part of our ecosystem, of our public lands that actually very few people know about. I think the hunters and fisherman know about them, but the general public, including outdoor enthusiasts like myself, doesn't know about unless it's the one that's on the stage behind us, because of really its political importance. And it's such a lightning rod for so many reasons.

Anyway, I will say that we've got a lot of work to do together. I am your biggest fan and ally. I have an important megaphone that I will use. The President has an even more important megaphone. I don't really control what he says, but every once in a while I get an opportunity.

As I was telling the group a little earlier today, I changed a half a dozen words or so with the support of the White House in the Climate Action Plan speech to remove words like "fortify", "strengthen", "harden", "infrastructure" to "resilience", "learning from mother nature", "natural ecosystems". Because what we all have to do together is help the general population understand the importance of natural systems to their future, especially at a time of changing climate.

I want to applaud all of you for what you do in maintaining these resources, especially during 2013 with a miserable budget. I know that-- and I tease Dan a little bit-- but Fish and Wildlife Service, for whatever reason, is a place that the House Republicans like to really whack. I think you had a 27% proposed budget reduction. I don't think people, if-- really, if they're acknowledging their heart of hearts-- want that to happen at all.

But we have to stay together to make sure that those who don't vote in elections and those who are species have a voice as well. So I'm your ally in that, as are the people onstage. And I just want to thank you so much for the good work you do and end on a-- sad but funny line.

Many of you, I'm sure, did not watch my most recent hearing with the House. You might have watched the clip with Don Young. But you might not have heard the clip from a representative who said, you know, "Secretary, just like in the movie Noah that came out. Noah's ark-- when Noah had animals coming in two by two, there were species that went onto Noah's ark that went extinct, like the dodo bird. And we're still just fine."

And so-- nobody's laughing, because it's really sad. There were others that said, "Well, without regard to Noah's ark and other Biblical management references, Secretary, I really appreciate the fact you're applying science in this job to the work that you do."

We do have a ways to go. We do have to work together. And what you're doing on the ground makes a big difference. And the more you engage that next generation, the more they're going to tell their parents about the importance of your work, these special places called wildlife refuges that do just that. They give animals a breather as they interact with human beings.

And it really is God's work. So thank you so much for everything you do. And I think all of us look forward to taking your questions. Thanks.

[APPLAUSE]

**Jay Slack:**

Thank you, Madam Secretary. We know how busy your schedule is. So we really appreciate the fact that you've taken time to come out here and interact with us. Thank you. I'm going to go ahead and start chronologically, and maybe run through a series of questions, and get things going. Because we're dying to hear from everyone.

Let me start with Lynn Greenwalt and ask you-- and this follows in the theme of Endangered Species Act-- last year, 2013, we saw the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act. When it began, you were there, did you foresee it becoming such an important and continuing piece of legislation that molds what we do?

**Lynn Greenwalt:**

It would be easy for me to say, absolutely. I was prescient, and I envisioned all this, and carefully skirted all the problems. No, I became Director at about the same time this iteration of the Endangered Species Act came into force, and it presented for us a monumental problem. Because we had to provide the basic rules, and the publications that get a piece of legislation started.

We had to convince the other members of government that it was a good thing and that they should join in. And, with some, that was a magnificent climb up the precipice, because they were not too interested. They were, who are you people and what are you doing with this? And it wasn't until small things like the snail darter showed up and caused a major federal agency in the Tennessee Valley Authority to shudder a little bit.

I did know; I did sense that there was something about this act that was not like the others that had come before. It does-- somebody told me once in the early days when I was trembling a little, for a number of reasons, this is a little bit of theology. It is a little bit of moral admonition. It shall be the policy of the United States that no creature shall become extinct as a result of the acts of mankind, or words to that effect.

For a brand new Director up from the ranks, that's kind of a heady business. And the Act was vulnerable from the outset, because it would touch so many people's lives, and a great many people in ways they didn't like. It wasn't a caress, in many cases. So I cannot truthfully say I predicted this. But I knew that we had something in hand that was unlike anything before.

And if there is anything I can say about this, I didn't have half a notion of what it might be. But it has gone very well, in my judgment. And, while I was somewhat startled when I discovered what had been left for me in a little inbox that has no bottom, has no top, it was just a beginning of an extraordinary career for me. But no, there is no way I think any of us could have predicted what it might turn out to be.

**Jay Slack:**

Thank you. Next, John Turner. How did growing up on a ranch in Wyoming affect your perspectives on wildlife sciences and the conservation profession?

**John Turner:**

Well, I was blessed to grow up in an environment where-- with the family we have a dude ranch, Grand Teton, a river company, wilderness, pack trips, hunting. So I grew up in the outdoors with a family that was passionate about the outdoors, passion about wildlife.

Plus I got the opportunity to interact and share that with people-- visitors from all over the world. Probably in violation of federal statutes today, I had wildlife all the time; pet ravens, magpies, hawks, owls, badgers, squirrels.

I went on to do the first bald eagle and osprey research in the Yellowstone Grand Teton region-- ended up as a rehab center for eagles. And people-- federal agents-- would bring me eagles that had been endangered, and so forth. But I think I learned a lot in a ranch environment. Learned hard work as I'm sure many of you had in the West I think you learn-- hopefully you get instilled with integrity. Stick with your work, speak up, stick with your word.

Growing up where I did, and I'm blessed to be back there now, in the outdoors-- in my opinion the Yellowstone Grand Teton region has one of the finest wildlife complexes left anywhere in the world in the number of species. The abundance of the population, the diversity of wildlife, the intactness of the system. So that was a good background.

Plus, the opportunity to serve for 20 years in the Wyoming legislature, motivated me to get into politics by my interest in wildlife and land resource issues. It taught me to, even though you didn't agree with people, to try to work with them. You learn to work with people.

And I think that was a good grounding to come to Washington. Wyoming politics was a good learning arena on how to navigate the lands of the Potomac and the political jungle of Washington. So my growing up on a ranch, growing up in Wyoming, my involvement with state legislature chairing the committees on wildlife for the state of Wyoming for years-- so that was a good prep in coming to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Jay Slack:**

Great, thank you. Next question for Jamie Clark. During your tenure the Safe Harbor Program was begun and the Candidate Conservation program was expanded. What drove those changes to ESA, and were they successful, or did they need to evolve? Do you have insight on that?

**Jamie Rappaport Clark:**

I was Director at a very interesting time for conservation and certainly for the Endangered Species Act. We were 25 years into Lynn launching the law. And it was long past reauthorization time. Every time we had tried to reauthorize the law it failed.

In fact this Director brought me in from the field. I was in Albuquerque. He promised me a two-year assignment in Washington. We were going to reauthorize the Endangered Species Act, and I could go back West. And here I still am working on the Endangered Species Act. So, thank you, Director Turner.

But at that time I think we were becoming more aware, we were certainly aware of the impacts. We were in the middle of one of the most visible debates, Northern Spotted Owl versus jobs, the impact on the economy, the increasing disconnect with nature of the public. And the vast majority of us were not growing up on farms and ranches with this land ethic.



So the Endangered Species Act was becoming much more of a perception of elitism. And we realized that it was very disconnected from the notion of collaboration, from the notion of-- instead of advising conservation. And I served under Secretary Bruce Babbitt.

And we realized that-- and we had just had a major flip in the Congress. And it was quite hostile at the time to the Endangered Species Act. Because we'd had some really bad attempts at reauthorizing the law. So we recognized very quickly that we needed to back up and find out how to collaborate much more openly on the landscape to achieve conservation together.

We weren't going to save it all on the National Wildlife Refuge System. Species weren't going to stay where we wanted them to, where they could be safe. And so we recognized very much upfront that by the time we were listing species under the Endangered Species Act, we were already too late. Listing was a failure. It was not success.

And that's what gave rise to this significant attempt to upstream conservation into the candidate conservation arena. We realized the important role of the states in achieving conservation. These were species under their jurisdiction until they became federally listed. So candidate conservation activities, which is incredibly important, was born to incentivize conservation, upstream solutions, deal with species when they're much more flexible and the systems are more resilient just because of the sheer numbers.

And then Safe Harbor was launched as a program to incentivize conservation on private lands. What was feared so much was the notion of government regulation. That persists today. And so the ability to provide safe haven for species, security and certainty for what could be a regulated environment gave rise on the back of the red-cockaded woodpecker in the Sandhills of North Carolina.

And it's a program that I think it's quite successful and bears some evolution. But incentivizing conservation, providing long-term security and certainty, rewarding conservation success, rewarding responsible risk is so incredibly important to the future of the Endangered Species Act and the future of systems and habitat conservation.

**Jay Slack:**

Very good, thank you. Steve Williams, you had a lot of experience working with state agencies before you came to the Fish and Wildlife Service. How did that transition go for you, and how did you perceive the difference between the state agencies and Fish and Wildlife Service's activities.

**Steve Williams:**

Well, the transition wasn't easy. I'll say that. But I think what I tried to bring to the service with that experience-- I'd worked in three different states. First in Massachusetts, where I spent a lot of time-- to say nicely-- debating with an animal rights movement that was really counterproductive, at least in my mind, to wildlife conservation.

I went to Pennsylvania. It was a very different situation. Then I moved to Kansas, where we were focused on conservation. And there wasn't a heavy regulatory approach.

I saw the abilities and the skills and the knowledge of the state fish and wildlife biologists. And I think working in a state-- I know working in a state verses working nationwide you get an opportunity to spend more time with landowners, with different business interests, and so on. So I think what-- I hope what I brought was an appreciation for the rights, the opinions, the concerns of landowners, particularly the ranching and agricultural community.

But I was concerned, and I guess all of us will always be concerned, that we do the best we can to maximize the cooperation and the coordination between the state fish and wildlife agencies and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Neither party alone is going to accomplish what we want to accomplish. Together we've got a heck of a fighting chance to deal with all those issues-- some that the Secretary mentioned.

So I came to the Service with-- that was one of my priorities-- was to strengthen, to make it even stronger the relationship the Service had with fish and wildlife agencies and sportsmen and women in the country. It came from state agencies, where there's a heavy emphasis on sportsmen and women. For a whole bunch of reasons-- not the least of which is over a billion dollars in excise taxes that go to conservation-- that sportsmen and women ultimately pay the license fees. So that was-- and I don't know actually how many state Directors-- I think there might have been one, prior to me, who came to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

I'll just wrap it up by saying it was tough making that transition. I don't know that I ever successfully did it. But I think we made progress. I know we made progress with state fish and wildlife agencies and sportsmen and women.

I learned a lot from you all. And each one of us has a certain amount of time to sit in that chair. And we've got to focus on what we think we can make an impact on-- the biggest impact we can make. And so for me, it was that 17 or so years' experience. I wanted to bring that in and strengthen those relationships. And that was really priority one for me.

**Jay Slack:**

Thanks, Steve. Dale, can you hear us?

**Dale Hall:**

Well, I can.

**Jay Slack:**

Excellent. Dale Hall, you rose up through the ranks during a long career with the Fish and Wildlife Service. Were there particular experiences that helped get you ready for the job as Director that you'd like to share with us?

**Dale Hall:**

I think all of our experiences shape us and to how we see things and how we approach them. And coming up through the ranks, and working in [INAUDIBLE] wetlands, and then over at Galveston Bay, and spotted owls, and all those different kinds of things mixing around I think helped me in two or three different ways to have the opinions and the approaches that I had.

One was it allowed me to understand what the person on the ground is feeling. And as a leader, that's really important. You have to empathize and understand what decision you make might do to someone on the ground trying to get a job done.

And if you can do that-- and I make my share of bad decisions-- but they were always hopefully trying to do something to help the person on the ground get the job done. Because none of us in a leadership position gets it done. It is always those below us that are out there on the ground and working to get the job done. They're the ones that get it done.

So I think having some understanding of what a decision means. An example, I remember when I was sitting in Portland, Oregon, and Mike Spear was the Assistant-- I don't know if he was Assistant Director or Associate Director at the time, what the title was-- but the equivalent Assistant Director. And he settled the Fund for Animals lawsuit without ever talking to us. And there were 414 species that would have to be placed on the endangered species list in three years; 314 of them were ours. And he didn't talk to us about that. And so what it ended up doing is churning-- turning, rather-- the Pacific Northwest and the Pacific region, Region 1, into an endangered species assembly line.

And I really am not comfortable with a lot of the species that made it. But because of that jam, we did what we could. Everyone did what they could. So those kinds of things really helped.

But also, another thing and working out on the ground-- and I did my share of working in regulations. From 404 and wetlands, where I started off, to Endangered Species, to Contaminants, all the different kinds of things that are there to regulate. It became imminently clear to me that as the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, with all of the laws that we have to work with and all of the authorities that I didn't have the authority to require a landowner-- be they federal, state, tribal, municipal, private anywhere in this country-- to improve one acre of habitat for fish and wildlife.

And it helped me to understand that regulation is a very, very important tool for those people that simply will not work with you. But if you're going to improve the conditions out there, we need to understand that 70% of the habitat, 60% to 70%, is in private hands. And if we want it improved, and we want to recover species, we have to find ways to get it done voluntarily, because the rules are not there to force improvement only to stave off degradation, and extinction, or the loss of the wetland altogether.

Those things are the kinds of things that helped really bring me to the approach that I had when I was the Director of trying to help nurture younger biologists coming up to understand that it's about partnerships. Aldo Leopold had it right that the citizen conservationist is the one that's

going to make the difference in this country. And the more we recognize that, I think the better off we are.

**Jay Slack:**

Thank you, Dale. I promised that we'd look towards the future. So, with the current Director Ashe, I'd like to ask, basically one of the challenges that's emerged is the fact that attracting youth to refuges and outdoors in general has been problematic. Do you see successes that the Fish and Wildlife Service is enjoying? And what's your forecast for the future as we move forward?

**Dan Ashe:**

Well I think the issue of young people and wildlife conservation is one that this whole community recognizes. That if we're going to be relevant, if wildlife conservation is going to be relevant in a changing America, then we have to do better, much better, at reaching not just young people but specific subsets of young people. That we have to work-- that we have to reach into the great urban centers of the country, and we have to reach young people, who aren't like us. They're living-- they're growing up differently than we grew up.

I mean I grew up in the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia. My father was an employee of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service but had this kind of free-roaming childhood that is described in the book Last Child in the Woods. But children are not growing up that way anymore. And the country is increasingly urban, and so we have to do better. We have to find a way to bring wildlife conservation to them.

But I'm optimistic about that. I think we see leaders in our profession talking more and more about that and not just talking but doing that. And we see a Secretary of the Interior coming in and having that right at the top of her agenda of connecting young people to the outdoors.

We see the vision document for the National Wildlife Refuge System that we developed coming out of the 2011 conference in Madison, Wisconsin talking about the concept of urban refuge. And now we see that important new concept being put into practice in great urban areas across the country-- Los Angeles, Albuquerque, Providence, Boston, Baltimore.

And so I think we see that vision coming to life. So I'm optimistic that we'll be able to do that. We'll be able to do it in conjunction with our state partners, with our federal partners, like the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management. So I see not just words. I see action happening, and I'm optimistic about that.

**Jay Slack:**

Thank you, Dan. Madam Secretary, I know you're time's limited. And we don't want to steal too much of your morning. So maybe I can ask a two-part question?

Coming from the private sector, I think that's very interesting to all of us in the room, who perhaps have spent long federal careers. Do you have any insights about-- two issues. One is the budget and the way the federal government works from sort of an entrepreneurial or not entrepreneurial standpoint.

And then the other one is completely different, which is work-life balance. Do you see differences in the federal workforce and the private sector when it comes to work-life balance? That's some of the things that we've been talking about in our Directorate meeting. And we're really trying to figure out how we can make sure that people don't burn out, as we have such a daunting task in the Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Sally Jewell:**

Thanks, Jay. And I can stay a little longer. I don't have a hard stop, but you probably will get all off-schedule if we say too long.

First question, it's really fascinating coming from the private sector. I will say this, that there are good, caring people all over this country-- private sector, public sector-- that really want to make a difference. Make a difference in their communities, as Dale referenced. Make a difference in conservation. And many of them just want a path forward.

When I was at REI we were very committed to engaging the next generation in environmental stewardship and connecting to nature and the outdoors. And there's a very obvious reason for that. I did not want to see, as the CEO of REI, REI's future business model being selling virtual reality video games that got kids involved in mountain climbing from their couch.

You need to have customers in order to have a thriving business. And I didn't want that business to change to where the customers were. I wanted the customers to have exposure to these things that are so important to what we think about when we think of America. When we think of America, we think about this picture behind me. We don't think about TV screens. So there's a very obvious business reason for that.

But I will say that one fundamental difference between the private sector and public sector is how risk is rewarded or punished. You oftentimes find yourself in a situation where if you step out to do something new, people will shoot arrows in it very quickly. In the private sector you step out to do something new, and if you fail, it's rewarded, because you stepped out to try something new. And then you learn from that mistake, and you adjust.

That is a fundamental difference between the public sector and the private sector. And I'm not sure I can fix that overnight except, as I said to some of my colleagues in the Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska, I've got your back on hard decisions that we have to make. And I think that when you have leadership-- and you are leaders in this room-- when you have your people's back as they step out to try something new, that will give them the courage to do it. Where you will not allow political politicians, or community members, or people that have an opposing point of view to really come down hard on that person, you've got their back. And I think that is

fundamentally something that translates from the private sector to the public sector that we all need to think about.

As we are involved in a very difficult situation with the BLM right now in Nevada rounding up trespass cattle. For those people on the ground, who are in very stressful circumstances, to know that their leadership has their back is really, really important. So I'd say that that's one thing that translates that will help us in this circumstance that's very different from the private sector.

The other thing that I say often. And there's this Huffington Post article out this morning on my one-year anniversary, and it talks about this. We are in "the forever business". As Lynn mentioned, the purpose of the Endangered Species Act to prevent species from going extinct due to human actions-- that is about as much as forever business as you can get. And yet we are lurching from year to year, or even sometimes month to month, with a very uncertain budget climate.

We have regular order on the budget in 2014. That's very, very helpful. But what will happen in 2015? Will we be back to the dysfunction that we have had? Or will we get to a budget going forward?

And I think there was optimism that the Murray-Ryan budget package would give us two years' likelihood of a budget. I think some people are maybe a little less optimistic right now. That is a fundamental difference.

People accuse businesses of going from quarter to quarter on their profits. The reality is, and I've been mostly with public companies-- only 13 years with REI, which is a co-op-- but even in the public companies, you do strategic planning. You think about what are the changes going on that I have to pay attention to. And then you craft your plan and your budget around that.

Example, you know, at REI moving from paper, which has an impact on the environment, to electronic media in terms of sharing catalogs. Right? So it's now-- it was rei.com as opposed to the catalog you might have had in your mail.

It's a different skill set that you need for catalog layout than it might be for website design. So you say thank you very much to the people that were doing the catalog layout. But we really need people with a different skill set. Maybe you can train them, and maybe you can't. And then you part ways.

That is very, very difficult for us to do in the federal government. Because our budget doesn't allow us to make the kinds of decisions that say, let's take care of the people whose skills may no longer be needed so that they can find something new. And let's bring in the folks that we need.

And I've talked to both the President and the head of OMB and the head of the Office of Personnel Management about this disconnect. So I think that there are things that we can learn from business that maybe we can apply, so that when we are in the forever business, we can have some tools in the toolbox that enable us to manage on that basis.

But I will also say that, from many examples of being out in your refuges, what I have seen is tremendous creativity. And if necessity is the mother of invention, 2013 was the year of necessity. And you did invent some new ways to do things. And you did find ways to be creative. But you also said to me, we are now at a point where we can't do more with less, we're doing less with less.

So to your second question, Jay, around work-life balance-- the last thing that we can have are people with the kind of skill sets that you and your colleagues have burning out and saying, I'm just too frustrated. I can't do this anymore. We did see some of that in 2013.

And I think your jobs as leaders-- and I met with a smaller group earlier on today, so apologies for the repetition-- but it's our job, all of our jobs, to prioritize. To say, this is the most important thing. Or to ask them, what do you think is the most important thing you can work on. And take the other things off their plate. And they may not get done.

And if there's one thing that I would say-- Dan may disagree with me. But the first thing I take off the plate is what I'll call administrivia, which is the things that we, at the top of the organization, may be trickling down to you that prevent you from doing your mission. We need you to do your mission. And if a few reports are late, or they're not done, that's better than not being able to carry out your mission. And people being frustrated.

And I asked this question everywhere I go. What percent of your time would you say is completely wasted by things that add no value to the mission of your organization? And then what might Dan, or I, or your Regional Director be able to do about that? How much of that emanates with us?

It does get to the risk aversion, and, you know, anything goes wrong. And all of a sudden Congress enacts something new that requires us to do some of these things by law. And if we don't, we get in trouble. I know that. But still our job as leaders is to find paths forward that enable us to carry out our mission. And that means taking some things off of the plates of the people that work for you so that they can have a reasonable balance.

Because a burned out workforce or a family situation where your spouse is frustrated because they don't see. You're feeling terrible, because you're not spending enough time with your kids, your parents are aging. All these things happen to everybody through the course of their life. We obviously want to create a great place to work. And the mission is very reinforcing. But if you feel like you can't do your mission, that's very frustrating.

And I will also say that to Dan and I and other folks in this room are your advocates. So we've got your back. We're working hard on budgets that make sense.

We had a little discussion in the group today about science and the challenge with the lack of scientists. And I'll be following up with Dan and the USGS, and so on, to see what we can do about those points of pressure that make it very difficult to carry out your mission. But as leaders, make sure that you are listening, that you are structuring, helping your team structure

their workload such that they don't kill themselves. Because the worst thing we can do is have them burn out and quit. We really need their skill sets to carry forward.

So that's a few thoughts, Jay. Thank you.

**Jay Slack:**

Very good. So we have a microphone or two that's going to float around. And perhaps we can ask a couple of questions from the group before we take a break. Maybe we'll go about another 15, 20 minutes with those questions and then take a break.

And so as they're passing the microphone, I'll throw this out. Anybody can answer it, not answer it. What was the hardest decision you made as Director? Feel free to just jump right in. No pressure.

**Lynn Greenwalt:**

I'm tempted to say getting up and going to work in the morning.

[LAUGHTER]

That would be quite untrue because I never had a problem in that regard. I enjoyed the job even though the anticipation of the unknown was sometimes a little hard to get breakfast down past. But I had to do some things with real respect to personnel occasionally. That was always pretty hard, because in the organization as it was then, and as it is now, you know each other. And if you occasionally have to bring somebody in and explain once again why it is you don't do that, it sometimes gets to be a little disheartening. And I had to separate some people, unfortunately in my circumstance, just to illustrate the quandary.

My father was a refuge manager who was in the organization so early that the 29 people who were the Fish and Wildlife Service or whatever at the time-- no there were more than that-- but he knew them all. And some of them I inherited as Director. And I once had to deeply remonstrate with one of those people who was a champion of my father. And still I did it knowing that this was not something that this man expected from his friend's son.

And that sounds like a soap opera. Being the Director is a soap opera in itself in many cases, involving employees and others and the impossible situations that come up. Who knew about the fire at Seney I learned about it the hard way, and so on.

Be that as it may, I know these decisions come up and are difficult. And in retrospect there are a great many I regretted. But one of them was not to say, yes, I will be your Director.

**Jay Slack:**



So keep that question in mind as we're passing the mic. Anybody who wants to jump in and answer that as a filler, please do. First question, Glenn Gravatt. Tell us who you are and what you do.

**Glenn Gravatt:**

Glenn Gravatt. Yes and I work here at the National Conservation Training Center. I worked throughout my career underneath of all of you all. But I just wanted to ask if there's a person missing, actually there are a few chairs missing, but I'm wondering Jamie if you would like to speak to the legacy of Mollie Beattie.

**Jaime Rappaport Clark:**

Wow. Sure. Mollie came to us from the private sector as well. She was a forester out of Vermont. And she was an amazing woman, first woman Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. And she came in full of energy and passion and spirit, promoted me to the first female senior executive service person. Because I was at that point in Washington, and I haven't gotten out. I sound bitter don't I?

But Dan and I, I include him in this conversation, worked very closely with Mollie. She was not tainted by the federal way, much like our Secretary. And she was very big-thinking, very visionary, very passionate about conservation, loved to travel. I remember her trip to the Arctic. I remember some of that knock-down drag-outs over endangered species. She loved the people of the agency.

I was with Mollie that afternoon before the seizure that gave rise to her eventual passing less than a year later. And I learned that year from Mollie's original diagnosis until her death what courage really was. Or what courage really is. She never missed a beat. She was not going; she didn't feel sorry for herself.

She died at 47 or 48, quite young. And what kept her going was her love of our mission, her love of conservation, and her frustration with a job unfinished. One of her greatest-- tears in her eyes when she came back from Yellowstone with Bruce Babbitt after putting wolves back into Yellowstone. And she felt like she was righting a wrong. She had Aldo Leopold on her shoulders. She took everything; she was very New Englandy.

[LAUGHTER]

Sorry, Wendy, and others. Very, very introspective. Very controlled. But she got passionate. She was famous for the hearing with Don Young when he-- from Alaska-- he came at her swinging an oosik-- a walrus penis bone is actually what is it. And she just fired back at him. And she just took nothing. I mean, as a woman in the Fish and Wildlife Service at the time and for all of us, she just rocked. She was fabulous, she was gutsy.

But she was there for the resource. She gave Bruce Babbitt a run for his money. She was not an apologist. I miss her all the time; I think about her a lot. And we should aspire to carry on in Mollie Beattie's tradition.

**Dan Ashe:**

Jay, I would just add quickly, I think Mollie's biggest legacy for the Fish and Wildlife Service, Glenn, was the freedom to think big. And that was what she did best. She thought big. And I think she came to the agency at a very important time, and she gave the agency that freedom to think big.

And then I would just say Mollie had very enduring characteristics. You would walk with her on the street of Washington, DC, she would never pass a panhandler without giving them money. And so when I think of Mollie, I think of that. She carried change in her pocketbook, because she knew she would encounter homeless people and panhandlers. And she would always give them money.

And so that was just the emergence of email, and so we would talk mostly in the office by phone. And she would call you-- she would dial you on your internal phone. You'd pick up the phone, and she would say things like, pilot to bombardier. She just had very endearing characteristics that made you want to work with her and made you want to make her successful.

**Jaime Rappaport Clark:**

Great sense of humor.

**Steve Williams:**

Okay. I think we're missing Sam. And I will just say, I'm not going to steal your thunder, because you guys spent more time. He was a tremendous leader, and I have one really fond story. But I don't want to steal the thunder of Dale and Dan and Jamie, who worked with Sam, but he was a tremendous guy. So I don't know if you want add to that, Dale?

**Dale Hall:**

It's kind of hard to summarize Sam because he was most simplistic and complex. But the one thing that was always there is his love for the resource and his love for using it. Don't ever forget that Sam never passed up an opportunity to go fishing or hunting. Much like the guy that just spoke.

[LAUGHTER]

But, you know Sam, I think the service, I think the world of conservation was cheated when Sam's life was cut short. I think that Sam would have done more for the Fish and Wildlife Service than I could have ever done. Because he was more intellectual and more savvy and better

able to work with other people and make deals. And frankly, that's really important to get people to want to work with you.

But Sam enjoyed life. And, just much like when we talk about Mollie, it's a celebration of life. We don't need to be thinking about it on the negative side. Here are two people. And Sam and Molly just epitomized why we do what we do.

We do it because we love it. We do it because it's in our heart. And no matter what we did for a living and got paid for, we probably would have been doing it anyway as a volunteer in some capacity. And I think that Sam Hamilton was just a really, really special person.

**Anna Fisher:**

All right. Hi, I'm Anna Fisher and I'm with the Division of Refuge Law Enforcement in Arlington. And actually, first of all, thank you to the forum for coming out today and imparting some of your wisdom with us. I actually have two questions for you.

So my first question is with all the different issues that we're facing with climate change, pollution, lack of biodiversity, and a disengaged youth, what would you consider to be the most pressing conservation threat today? And my second question is as someone starting out their career with the Fish and Wildlife Service, what would your advice be to them? And also if someone had told you that you were going to be the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service at the beginning of your career, would you be surprised? I know that's a lot of questions.

[LAUGHTER]

I really wanted to ask them.

**Jay Slack:**

Anybody want to go?

**Steve Williams:**

I just want to get back to Jamie. I am a New Englander.

[LAUGHTER]

**Jaime Rappaport Clark:**

It's obvious.

**Steve Williams:**

And I'll answer that as a New Englander. The biggest threat is population growth and everything that comes with it. I'd say the number one thing that comes with it is the need for energy

development. I forgot your second question. The answer to your third question is, nope, no way. Never imagined. So happy I had the opportunity, but I would have never imagined it.

**Sally Jewell:**

Advice for young people.

**Steve Williams:**

Advice for young people just starting with the Service, listen, learn, ask lots of questions of your co-workers. Because your colleagues are some of the sharpest, brightest people and most committed people-- conservationists in the country.

**Dan Ashe:**

I'll say the greatest threat, I'll chime in with Steve. I think I'm inclined to say climate change, but I think climate change is a result of the fact that we have 7 billion people on the planet. And we're going to 9 billion people. And more affluent people. And so we're using a lot of energy. We're going to use more energy.

And so climate change is a symptom of that. And so we have to realize, there's not anything we can do about that, but we have to realize that we have to prepare to deal with the effects of changing climate. And so I would put it in that context.

Advice to young people coming up, I would say be engaged in the entire Fish and Wildlife Service and the entire conservation community. We all work on some specific facet of this whole endeavor, but be engaged in the larger conversation. Be involved in a professional organization outside of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

And did I, or would I ever have thought I would be a Director? I would say again, absolutely not. I have had the privilege of knowing every Service Director since John Gottschalk. And I would have never seen myself in this place.

**Jay Slack:**

Others would like to try that? But also, Dale, I don't know how easy it is for you to chime in. Did you want an opportunity here?

**Dale Hall:**

I think I would like to add just one thing. I completely agree with what's been said. I agree with the points that Steve has made. But I think that what we're seeing out here and the perspective at Ducks Unlimited, as an example, I'm trying to look at wetlands and waterfowl. I see a very, very serious threat to conservation coming from the lack of a pipeline of new conservation scientists.

We see degrees being shifted from wildlife or fisheries or fish and wildlife to general environmental degrees. And I worry about the pipeline of future conservationists in both the professional ranks and in also our kids getting detached and thinking everything is virtual reality. That worries me. If there's one thing that keeps me up at night, it's that. Worrying about the future and having kids, young people, that both want to be in the field and also just getting connected with nature.

I don't care if they're a truck driver. They will be a conservationist if we can get them connected with nature. And that's what we have to keep trying to do. And then hopefully get the universities to understand that those biological chairs are important enough to keep and not substitute them away and lose the expertise and wildlife management and fisheries management that we see going away today. The number of universities that have those programs are dwindling.

**Jaime Rappaport Clark:**

If I could just add. To younger folks starting in your career, keep your head up, and just do it. Experience. Volunteer. Learn new things. Don't get pigeonholed in a program. I would agree with Dan.

It's amazing as you gain tenure in your career how you fall back on experience that's come before you. Learn from your peers. Don't be afraid to fail. Take risks. You're learning, learning, learning, learning, learning. And have fun.

And there is so much opportunity that's out there. Whatever you're doing is so important. And you shouldn't feel a sense of urgency to make a commitment in one career area. Just get exposed to different things and it will come naturally to you. Because the field of conservation is so broad and so in need of energy, enthusiasm, and passion that I would just urge you to keep at.

Did I ever think I'd become Director? Absolutely not. In fact, I'm still in shock that I was Director.

I started at my federal career as a wage-grade laborer. And if I ever had a goal, I just really hoped one day I could get to be a GS9. And I am a very admitted introvert. I don't feel comfortable on stage, even at this stage in my career. I want to be out there in the field. It was a sad day when I gave up my hip boots, though I still have them.

When I was offered the first time I testified on Capitol Hill by myself was at my Senate confirmation hearing on C-SPAN. But it is such a privilege. And even, I love what I do today. I feel very connected to the Service in what I do today. But I think you'll probably feel a common theme. I've never met anybody that aspired, but that doesn't negate the wonderful privilege and opportunity that was granted to me to be Director. But it is certainly a high point in my career.

**Jay Slack:**

John.

**John Turner:**

Well, I like what Jamie said about have fun. I think that's important. I agree with, I like what Dan said, to get engaged in the Service. [INAUDIBLE] conversation within [INAUDIBLE]. I think it's important to do ourselves a great service, the agency a service, the mission a service if we get involved in the communities in which we're with. And by that I mean, I think we do a disservice to ourselves if we hide behind our uniform, behind the boundary of a tract of land.

I think we do a better job, that's more gratifying, if we get involved in the community. Whether it's the Scouts, it's the school systems, it's volunteer programs belonging to Rotary, understand the concerns of business. I think that awareness, because that's where the politics are going to come from that you're going to encounter. Learn to deal with the community in which you serve.

I think the most serious natural resource challenge we face is the loss of biodiversity in the lifeforms throughout the world. Its importance not only to your fabric of life, the system we all depend on, but if you look at where medicine's going to come from, new products and services [INAUDIBLE]. I think the loss of biodiversity around the world. And I think as has in the past, they're going to look to this country, to this agency for the kinds of tools the world's going to need.

If you just think back to 1872, Americans were the first people in world history to set aside and protect natural resources for their own intrinsic value. And that started with Yellowstone. [INAUDIBLE] national park system, the refuge system, wilderness areas, the Endangered Species Act. To protect, but not only we were the first people to protect them, but we did what was a reflection essentially of a new democracy, what America was all about. We said they're going to be for the benefit of all our citizens.

So I think the United States has a real opportunity to challenge, as part our tradition. I traveled the world with the State Department and I became aware of how much we can give to the world with tools, techniques, processes, education, and appreciation. So I think the loss of biodiversity is something that's a big challenge of our times.

**Lynn Greenwalt:**

I wanted to say something briefly for a change. I agree that population as a problem is a problem of such a dimension that it's almost obvious. We are our own greatest enemy. But the question, and the question will have to be answered by people like you, and your children, and their children, is what do you do about it?

It's one thing to say 9 billion people, a number you cannot comprehend. But how do you keep that from happening? And how do you do that in a moral, appropriate, civilized way?

Good question. I don't have any answers. I worry a little about that.

I think it's been so long since I was a youth. I think I was a youth, briefly, once, a long time ago. But I've talked to a lot of people who are youths, their younger than I am. All of you are younger than I am. God help me. All of you are younger than I am.

But I think to my youth, and I would recommend this approach in a simple sort of way. You're working for one of the finest organizations in the world. And there are all kinds of opportunities. And do not, without reflection, say no to any opportunity.

Think about it before you ever say no. It will come to you as new opportunities arise and manifest themselves. And you'll get your chance. And you can even think about, what if I became really, really competent? Would they let me be the guy who runs such and such a place? Will I ever get to be a GS-9? I have to tell you that I, if asked to be, whether I might be Director, I was asked to be Director and didn't believe it.

I was so convinced this was an impossibility that I refused to believe it. The aged gentleman who preceded me, Spencer Smith, was told to let me know that I was being considered after a long period of time when he was about to be replaced, because he had a serious health problem and wanted to leave. And I was a party to chasing around, looking at names, and so on.

And so we were walking down the corridor one night in the interior building to the place where we both had a chance to park our cars. Spencer Smith who was a man, kind of an enigma, but he had the most-- what should I say-- he had an almost wry sense of humor. He was from the deep South and a delightful kind of a man.

And we were walking down the hall, and I kept calling him Mr. Smith, I had done out of habit. Because I was told under penalty of death that you always are good, you're courteous to your superiors. And he was certainly my superior.

And we were walking down the hall, and he says, "By the way, these people are thinking about asking you to be Director." And I said, "Mr. Smith." He says, "You've got to call me Spencer!" And I said, "Spencer, you're kidding me."

"No, they're serious." And he started giggling. And we giggled like a couple of school girls clear down to the elevator and down in the basement.

He said "No, no, they're going to ask you." And I said, "You're kidding me. Please don't do this to me. They're not going to do this." And he said "Okay" and got in his car and drove away.

The next morning they asked. And then I believed it. But it might be wise if they say, somebody says would you like to be Director, believe it at least for the moment. But I absolutely refused to believe the offer was real.

[LAUGHTER]

**Jay Slack:**

Great questions. Let's see. Where's the microphone? Who's wanting to go next? All right.

**Jimmy Fox:**

This on? Good morning. My name's Jimmy Fox. I work for the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Fairbanks in the Fisheries and Ecological Services field office. It's really humbling to be here with you all this morning.

So my question is Harvard leadership experts describe leadership not as a noun but as an activity. It's not a title. It's not a team. But it's an activity that's often risky. And often you're dancing on the edge of your authority for something that you care passionately about.

And so I'd like to ask you if you could share some examples of where you actually danced on the edge of your authority about something that you felt was right and you were passionate about. Thank you.

**Jay Slack:**

Okay great, and I'm going to repeat the question. Believe it or not, it's relatively hard to hear even with the mics when you're up here on the podium. But to paraphrase, and hopefully I'll get this right, can you talk about, as a leader when you were leading, when were you dancing on the edge of your authority as a leader in making decisions that needed to be made. Is that good Jimmy? All right. Anybody want to take a shot at that or give us your wisdom?

**Steve Williams:**

I'll take a shot at it. And it's a different perspective, because it's before I worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service. And I hinted at it I think earlier.

When I went to Kansas, we, the state agency, was in diversion of federal funds. And there was no question about that. So we worked with Federal Aid staff over the course. And it was 2 million and some odd dollars. We tried to work with Federal Aid staff to right that wrong.

And it was obvious to me, as the Secretary of the agency, that I had to get involved in it because it was one of the earlier diversion issues from the state agency perspective.

Now I'm getting to the dancing on the head of a pin or whatever it was. So I went to Denver and worked with those folks. And we made some progress, but it was always it seemed like two steps forward, one step back; legal issues, and accounting issues, and so on.

So I came to Washington and met with folks there. And I had two or three of my staff there. And we couldn't get to the finish line.

And at the meeting, after an hour or two, I said to our guys, "Well, Mike and Rob," I said, "We're out of here. We're not making any progress. And I guess Kansas will be the first state in the country that doesn't receive Federal Aid funds."



I shut my briefcase, I got up, I walked toward the door. Every step going, oh please, call me back. Please call me back. I got to the door, and the Fish and Wildlife Service staff said, "Wait a minute, Steve, come back here. Let's see how we get this done." Saved me from myself.

[LAUGHTER]

And then my two guys from Kansas were like, "Are you out of your mind?" So I can't imagine having to go back to Kansas and going to the governor and saying, hey, guess what? We're the first state not getting federal funds. And oh, by the way, it has an impact on all the federal funds that come back to the state of Kansas. Or a lot of them.

But that's just one maybe silly example where you just have to make a stand at some risk to yourself. Actually I've got a lot of silly stories. That's one.

**Jaime Rappaport Clark:**

I'll tell a story. I told this to some folks last night. It still burns in my brain to this day.

I was a new Director. And one of the most challenging decisions this Service has every year, rolls up into the Director's offices-- the setting of waterfall hunting frameworks, the hunting season. Great staff at the Migratory Bird Office. The Mississippi Flyway is unusually contentious every year. And we were under a lot of pressure to extend the tail end of the season in the lower part of the flyway.

I was hearing from the migratory bird biologists there was really not scientific or biological justification; the Southern flyway just wanted it. And so there was no compelling reason in my mind. And so we were following what was coming out of Migratory Birds.

I got summonsed up to the Hill to meet with then Majority Leader Trent Lott. I dragged Dan with me, he's taller. And we go into the majority's office, and we're waiting. That kind of power, they make you wait. And so the longer you wait, the more you think.

And I was incredibly nervous and in comes Senator Lott. And I'd never actually seen him in person. I'd seen him a lot, of course, on TV and C-SPAN. And he was quite a large guy. And he got right in my face, right in front of me.

And he started by, I can't really recall. He either called me "missy" or "hon". And that set me up. And then he says, he says to me, "I don't"-- because I'm not a hunter. And so he says, "I don't think you understand the importance of the decision that you're making." He said "You need to understand that you owe it to the wives of those Mississippi duck hunters to extend that season." About that time my colleague here—

**Dan Ashe:**

I cleared out.

**Jaime Rappaport Clark:**

--he backed away.

**Dan Ashe:**

There's going to be a fight here.

**Jaime Rappaport Clark:**

So, then Dan, my good close friend, Dan Ashe, visibly, biblically, legitimately backed away. And I stood there for a minute thinking, Okay, this is one of those leadership moments. And I was kind of stuck. And I looked at him, and I said, "Well Senator Lott," I said, "I get that. And with all due respect to the wives of those Mississippi duck hunters, my job is to conserve the ducks."

And that was one of the first times in my leadership moments that I really learned what the sound of silence was. And so it didn't go well, the rest of the conversations, but by that point I was dug in. And Dan and I got out of there.

And the trip from the Capital back to the Interior Department is not really all that long. But there was lots of people looking for us by the time we got back. Because the White House had been called, the Secretary's office had been called, and the Secretary, Babbitt, calls me. "What in the world did you just do on Capitol Hill?"

And by then I had gotten a little bit of steam going. And I was feeling righteously indignant. I think it was still over the "missy" thing. Anyway, I knew in that moment that I was probably in real trouble. But I didn't regret it for a minute.

And thankfully I served with a White House and a Secretary that give me an awful lot of air cover. But I regretted for a moment that I didn't offer the office that Trent Lott held the respect that he should've had. But darn it, he just really ticked me off. At any rate, so we fought a long battle over the Mississippi Flyaway. And it was worth every minute of it.

**John Turner:**

Wow. I enjoy these discussions. Jamie reminds me my encounter with Trent Lott was when I embargoed several million dollars' worth of Brazilian mahogany. And his furniture manufacturers badly needed that mahogany. And I also remember the Kansas issue on distribution of Federal Aid.

I think my bordering in what I do legally and not involved molding the plan for the wolf reintroduction in Yellowstone. I remember Mollie Beattie calling me and said, "You've got to come up and help me release these wolves. Because you're the guy who could put it all together, put the program together." And I knew it was going to be a controversial issue because serving in

environment legislature I'd seen grown men stand up and break into tears over two issues-- abortion and wolves, the issue with wolves.

Also when I started working I walked in the office and my wonderful Deputy, Dick Smith, said, "John did you watch the Nightly News last night?" I said "No, should I be?" And he said I should. I said "Why, what was on there?" He said, "Your brother was on national television condemning your plan to reintroduce wolves into Yellowstone." I come from a tough family. We do our own thinking.

[LAUGHTER]

The decision we had to make was in the reintroduction losing what we felt was a legitimate tool, the reintroduction of a nonessential experimental population. And where maybe I'd bent things a little bit was my determination on any wolves that might be there naturally. And in fact there had been some critters wandering from [INAUDIBLE] some places in Yellowstone even. Were those? And I said, no that's not a sustainable population.

But I did that because politically you had to understand the passion about wolves in the West. And the fact, Jamie's very close to it now. The Western Congressional delegations have put a stop to it for 20 or 30 years.

I was naive enough to say I'm from the West. I grew up in the cattle ranching business. I can put a plan together according to the West. We'll be partners. We'll set a cap, a biologically justifiable cap on the number of wolves. We will put tools in place when wolves do what wolves do and impact livestock, big gamers. And the part that the states are doing, we put our steering committee together-- cattlemen, wool-growers, nonprofit state wildlife agencies.

I was on the Hill all the time and trying to keep the Western delegation tolerating what we were doing; not wild about it. And wonderful meetings I had with the Al Simpson, and Malcolm Wallops, and Senator Craig, and Conrad Burns; week after week putting this plan together.

We had more hearings than any time in the history of the Department of the Interior. I remember we did 200 plus hearings. And they called Ed Bangs, who was heading up the Wolf Recovery Act. And he said, "Mr. Turner, please do not send us back out for more public hearings. We've been jostled, our tires have been cut, we've been abused at every high school parking lot in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, haven't seen our family in months. Don't send us out again on the road."

I said, "Ed, we're going to do another round of public hearings." And he saluted. That team went back on the road. And I salute them to this day for that kind of dedication, the abuse they-- well, anyway.

So we reintroduced the wolves. I probably bent a lot on how we used-- maybe, maybe not-- on a non-experimental population. I'm pleased that we got that done. I wanted to hear all the wolves howling in the Yellowstone system before my old bones went over the [INAUDIBLE].

What I regret to this day certainly in the West, and elsewhere, you keep your word. We made a promise to the West and we haven't kept it. And when a good friend of mine, Al Simpson, my friend for 40 years, said, John, you lied to us. You haven't kept the promise.

And it's not to fault of this agency because the agency has tried with certain groups. The courts have moved the goal posts. We haven't kept our word. And I regret that.

When we reintroduced the wolf everybody cheered us on and all that.

So we got it done. We probably used the Endangered Species Act in a way it probably hadn't been done before. The only regret I had is we didn't keep our word and hopefully we can do that as we look at it.

**Lynn Greenwalt:**

Well, maybe I'll make an observation about the feeling one has when he discovers that he has inherited an organization that is transgressing the law with diligent inattention for some time. And I became Director and was getting briefed on the lesser things that the organization does. And then somebody said, oh by the way, you really ought to know that we haven't paid our contribution, made the transfer of funds for the FICA tax for over three years.

And I'm thinking to myself, what is this FICA? Oh, you mean, you mean social security. And then they said yes. Not too many people were under FICA in those days, but a whole bunch were. And it'd been about three years since the transfer had been made. And my first inclination was to say, how many people know about this? But the cruel answer was that there now were two at least, myself and this conveyor of the information.

So we sought to it that it got transferred. I'm not sure how, or from where, or how it was done. And I also made some remark that led to a major vacancy in the organization and the pivot point where that sort of thing is supposed to be done. But I was inadvertently a felon I guess, I don't know. And that sort of thing scared me.

But let me tell you, friends, every Director that's ever come down the pike since 1916, I guess, has had his rounds with the Mississippi Flyway.

[LAUGHTER]

And I had been Director about two weeks, and I was visited by the governor. These kinds of memories, you'll find, mercifully get clouded and obscured slightly as time goes on. So the stark details are not always there.

I think it was the governor of South Carolina. No it had to be Mississippi, actually Mississippi. The governor came to see me. And I couldn't imagine what in the world I had at my disposal that was of interest to the governor of Mississippi.

Same old plea, wanted an extension of the duck season.

**Jaime Rappaport Clark:**

Did he call you missy?

**Lynn Greenwalt:**

He didn't call me missy. I've had some of them call me things that I won't repeat that had somewhat the same effect on me. But we'd go through this every year. There'd be this petition for the Mississippi Flyway; got to have a little more season.

And there's the old joke about the sheriff in Mississippi who was approached by the hunters and say, sheriff, we want another month of duck season. And he says, what? Yeah, we need another month of duck season. What do you want to call it? What do you mean you want to call it? He says, do you shoot them 12 months a year? No. What are you going to call that other month?

[LAUGHTER]

I kept that, because it was refreshingly reassuring. But there is a lot of that tension of doing what you hope is right. But you can't let the end justify the means. And I can remember dealing with petitions under the Endangered Species Act in ways that were probably questionable in the extreme.

**Steve Williams:**

I've never done that.

**Lynn Greenwalt:**

No one's ever done that. But I was the originator along with one of my co-conspirators, one of the keenest conservationists in the world, Keith Shriner. And we'd get these petitions to do something to stop an airport, which was calculated, let us say, to stop this particular project. And they'd find something that they could declare as an endangered species, and away we'd go.

And the petition would come in. And they were usually about so thick by the time Shriner got through with them. And he'd say, I want you to review this. And we'll see if we can sign it, and whatever. I also had to face the prospect of going upstairs a long ways to deal with these things.

And so I'd hold it on my desk for weeks and weeks and weeks, and then give it back to Shriner. And he'd re-review pretty soon, saying maybe he kind of got over it. But we held them in abeyance as long as necessary to keep somebody from using that particular vulnerability as the pivot point to put the lever on to pry that out of the act. As they were willing--

Trent Lott, I remember his umbrage in a hearing once where he was just terribly upset. Because he couldn't understand how it was that the red-cockaded woodpecker was going to let the Russians invade the country, because they were stopping tank maneuvers. And he said, you know—

**Dan Ashe:**

They were.

**Lynn Greenwalt:**

They were stopping tank maneuvers. Then he said, "If I had known that, I wouldn't have voted for that act." Oh my goodness. If you could get a Congressman to admit to that kind of shortcoming these days, we'd be a whole lot better off.

But there you are. It's just one of those things that goes with the trade and makes it very interesting in retrospect. I recommend it in retrospect. Do not do it to make prospect, because prospect might become retrospect you don't want to hear about.

I think, and the question I would say, my experience is that legal authority is one thing. And I think there are times when you are always kind of operating on the edge of your legal authority, and that's why you have lots of lawyers surrounding you in this job.

**Dan Ashe:**

I think that maybe another dimension of that question is when you're acting on the edge of your authority as a leader in the organization. And because, I mean, you always have the authority of the position to sign documents and to approve the activities of the organization. But I think maybe the real most difficult times are when you're acting on the edge of your authority as a leader in the organization, and that you have to make judgments about the nature of the organization and the direction of the organization. And to me, those are the most difficult. And those are the ones where self-doubt creeps into your mind. Like, do I know what the heck I'm doing here?

And for me, those are the most difficult, because lawyers can't help you with that. And try as she might, my wife can't help me with that like she does with so many other things in life. And you rely on the strength of your experience. And you rely on good friends, who you can call and get counsel on.

But those are, to me, the most difficult decisions and the most weighty moments of being a leader-- or the leader-- of a great organization like this. Because you realize that, as I'd realized, you know I and we are standing on the shoulders of these great people, who made great decisions that the people who will come behind us are standing on our shoulders such as they are. And so those decisions to me are the most challenging to make.

**Steve Williams:**

I want to tell a quick leadership story. And it's leadership story about Sam Hamilton. There were a number of hurricanes-- I think Jay, you were down at Vero Beach-- that hit Florida. And it was just an absolute mess. And Sam calls me and says, "We'd like to take tractor trailers with ice, and

water, and tires, and chainsaws, and all this stuff.” He said, “That's what we want to do to help folks out down there.”

So I'm thinking, okay, we've got to go to the solicitors, and then probably go to the budget office. And all this stuff is churning around in my mind. And I finally thought, well you know what? If I make a mistake here, it's going to help people. So I said, “You know what Sam?” Go ahead and do it. Sam said, “That's good, because the trucks are already rolling south.”

[LAUGHTER]

That's true.

**Jay Slack:**

Dale, I see you're down there. Do you want to answer some of that question? (Lost connection with Dale.)

Okay, next question.

**Christina Kravitz:**

I'm Christina Kravitz. I'm in the Arlington office. I work for Ecological Services.

And the question I have is that myself, and I've heard many other people express this same sentiment, that if the Endangered Species Act came up as a bill in today's times, it most likely would not be passed. And a lot of our environmental and conservation legislations are pretty old in terms of when they were created and passed. And so I was wondering if you guys had insight on what changed over time.

Why was it seemingly easier then to pass these kind of major significant environmental legislations versus today where we really don't think that would happen? Is it something that happened in Congress or the public or a combined thing? And a follow-up to that is what do you think it would take to get to a point where we could pass some more laws or make some significant changes to our lives? Because there's certainly a need.

**Jay Slack:**

Okay, and again for sake of just hearing this and getting it recorded, I'm going to try to paraphrase. Correct me if I'm wrong. In the past, and we're talking like early '70s, there was a lot of environmental legislation passed. Obviously there were a suite of public sentiment and inertia on the Hill that allowed all of that to happen at that time. But even though things are fairly forefront in our discussions about climate change and everything, probably that climate doesn't exist now. Why? And perhaps what could change that to see another round of that sort of legislation? Did I do that justice?

**Dan Ashe:**

Okay, I'll start out. I think that, first of all, I would say that none of that suite of great environmental laws that passed in the late '60s and early '70s-- National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Endangered Species Act-- none of those laws would be able to be passed today by today's Congress. Someone not too long ago said, if you brought the Ten Commandments up for a vote in the United States Congress, they would not pass.

And so I think the reason for that is the loss of the middle. And that is a challenge for us, because conservation has always happened in the middle. And I would say the best illustration that I've seen of that was Chris Cillizza, who does the politics column in the Washington Post. If you go online and Google it, he did a graph showing the overlap in voting in the United States Congress, comparing the most liberal Republican to the most conservative Democrat.

And back in the early 1980s, when I was a staffer on Capitol Hill, most of the members were in the middle there between the most liberal Republican and most conservative Democrat-- the overlap between them. And now that histogram--

[MOVES HANDS DOWNWARD INTO A V-SHAPE]

--went like this. And today out of 435 members-- 535 members-- of Congress, there were four people in the middle. And so what we've seen is we've seen the spectrum go right and go left. And there is no middle.

And I think for our organization, our profession, the key to the future is reclaiming the middle. And the US Fish and Wildlife Service has always been a place that makes that happen, that brings different voices in our community together. And I think we have a burden to be a big part of the reclamation of that political middle.

### **Jamie Rappaport Clark:**

I would add to that that in the late '60s, early '70s, it was on the heels of Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, the Cuyahoga River had been on fire, and there was just this huge-- you know, Earth Day-- there was this huge upwelling of environmental consciousness. And there was no partisanship in the conservation of our natural resources legacy, like we see today. And it became, and it was very much an American value at that time.

Forty years later it is becoming increasingly partisan. I hadn't seen that histogram, but I would believe it. There is no radical middle. So I think we are at a conservation crossroads now. We spend our time hoping none of these laws come up on Capitol Hill.

And the big fear that we have is, it's not whole scale re-authorization. I think that's kind of been conceded for now. But you don't want the death by a thousand cuts, the piece-mealing away. You know, budget writers, this little slicing and dicing of the integrity of the fabric of these laws.

And I think we need more advanced recapturing of the crossroads that we're at. And it needs to come outside of Washington and back to the grassroots. We need that upwelling of



environmental consciousness. The Secretary talked about it, I think others have talked about the need to activate and reclaim a conservation majority. It is not a partisan issue. It's not even a political issue. It's a values issue. And the value of conservation, the values of a natural resources legacy, the urgency and importance of conserving biological diversity in today's world needs to radiate out and come back at Washington in a way that it never has before.

**John Turner:**

Well, yeah, longer term I agree with all that. On the shorter term, I think in some ways on the Hill we had some of the same anti feelings toward the Act. One thing we did, and I hope we're doing it today, we really ground-truthed what I would call the horror stories.

Because every time I went up on the Hill, I'd hear these horror stories of what we were doing out in the field. And 93.7% of those were simply hogwash. It was malarkey. And if I got a call about we were doing some terrible thing in a community somewhere, I'd admit it to the ground truth, occasionally maybe we'd over driven our headlights. The majority of those though the act was being blamed for stuff that wasn't true.

The second thing I think we need to continue to do, something we tried to start. And Jamie talked about how they mistake the parts of the act which really have flexibility. You can work with partners collaboratively. I think we need to continue those. I think the American people they still value wildlife. It is a bipartisan issue.

I was blessed as Director to have our operating budget doubled. The four years I was there, that support came right from the White House. I remember OMB coming over and say this is the damndest thing we've ever seen, Mr. President. We're taking on your Secretary in defense of your budget, and the Endangered Species budget. We created more refuges than any time in service history-- 52 new wildlife refuges.

I don't know if it helps any. I sometimes caution people. I said, the Endangered Species Act is pretty tough. It's got some tough tools. If you've ever read the Migratory Bird Act-- [INAUDIBLE] worse. So what do you mean Migratory Bird Act? Read the [INAUDIBLE] into that [INAUDIBLE]. So it'll be a long process. It's important we continue that work. I'm a passionate believer in the Act and the good it does for the country. It's asked to do too much, quite frankly. We asked the act to do more than I think it was intended to. But it works. [INAUDIBLE] saying [INAUDIBLE] does a good job administrating. You need to get that story out, and successfully.

**Jay Slack:**

Hey, Dale, we lost you for a minute or two. You're back on.

**Dale Hall:**

I am back on. Thank you. Yeah, and this is a very interesting topic. First of all, let me just say that I think it ties in to the last discussion when I got cut off. We lost the signal and it came back.

And it has to do with authority and leadership. And you know, this may not be a comfortable answer, but I think too often we all take the easy route and blame someone else. Congress is in disarray. There's no question about that. The court has been giving us decisions that we don't like or that have been ambiguous. And we don't like that. So we blame those. When, in reality, there's a third part of the constitutional government that we have. And that's the administration. And I'm not convinced that we need more laws. I am convinced that we need to clean up and clarify the ones that we do have-- make them more functional, make them more positive and try and help us get the job done.

An example about the timidity of the Executive Branch using that authority is, when I was the Director, and I pulled in a lot of people that knew the Endangered Species Act. Many of them are in that room. And I believe the best minds on how to improve and make the act work. They revamped the regulations.

The administration can revamp regulations on all these laws. And we wrote a draft set of regulations that I was very proud of that the career employees put together. And I couldn't get the Bush administration to move them because they didn't trust. That if this was done by the current employees, it must not be too good. Or it must not be where we want it to go. And yet, on the other hand, I don't see the Obama administration doing anything in that arena either.

So I think what really needs to happen here is not constantly blaming Congress, who God knows deserves it. But there are also other parts of this government that have responsibilities to do things. And I believe the Executive Branch Administration, regardless of who it is, has a responsibility to go back into the regulations on these laws and bring them up to date, learn from our experiences on how to do this better, and have the courage to do that in the face of criticism from within their own party, whichever one it is, which you're going to get either way.

But it's time for courage. And we're not getting any out of Congress. The courts are going to continue to do whatever they can. And looking to today, it's time for courage out of administrations. And I'm not blaming this one, because the last one that I worked with didn't do much better at getting things fixed either. And I think all of us, and I still consider myself [INAUDIBLE]. All of us have the responsibility to go to work every day as career executives, as career people that know what the right thing to do is and to keep pushing to get the changes that we need to take place in order to make these laws work the way that they should.

**Jay Slack:**

Thanks, Dale. Others on that question?

**Steve Williams:**

I'm probably the only one here that was too young to remember the '70s.

[LAUGHTER]

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

No, I think that's been covered well.

**Jay Slack:**

Okay, who has a microphone? All right.

**Larry Shanks:**

My name is Larry Shanks, and I'm a retired US Fish and Wildlife Service employee. I had the privilege of working with each and every one of you as Directors. One of the things that Secretary Jewell hit on quite nicely was that the employees, when she goes around to different stations-- and not only Fish and Wildlife but Park Service, et cetera-- and she asks the employees how much of your day is spent on extraneous, miscellaneous—

**Dan Ashe:**

Administrivia.

**Larry Shanks:**

--junk. And we and you all each individually pointed out that, you know, go join the Lions Club. Go to the Rotary Club. Become involved locally. And those are the things that we gave up to do this Mickey Mouse stuff. And is there any way that the Directorate can focus in on let's have people looking at where we can get rid of the Mickey Mouse stuff. And then focus back on the basics of the natural resources in the community involvement that would be most helpful.

**Jay Slack:**

Okay I get to paraphrase this. And this is the highlight of my morning, I assure you. So when is it, again paraphrasing, when is it that we stop doing that Mickey Mouse administrivia and focus on communities, partnership, and on-the-ground conservation. How'd I do, Larry? Good?

**Steve Williams:**

Just, on a lighter note, one way to deal with this is to-- I don't think Matt Hogan's in here. All right. He is here?

Well, anyway. He was my Deputy. And we constantly got memos from the sixth floor. Data calls. How many white trucks do you have with bald tires on the left-hand side? Just insane, in my mind, insane questions that just came to my office all the time.

And we had a group, we put together a group that dealt with this administrivia. I don't know that we made a whole lot of progress. But I made progress.

Hogan would come in with a memo. And he'd go, "What we are we going to do about this?" And I said, "We're going to ignore it." He said, "Well, you can't ignore this. This comes from the

sixth floor.” So I said, “Just trust me on this. I’ve been doing it for-- I’ve made a career out of this.”

So I said “If we get a second memo, we’ll think about it.” Well, many times I never even got a second memo. And it was, again, inane questions, things they want.

If you got a second memo, I would normally-- I didn’t do this for everything-- but I’d ignore that. And his head’s about to explode. You can’t do that. And I said, trust me.

If you get a third one, then we’d act on it. And we’d send it out to the field. And I never said-- I’m not looking for thank-yous from the field-- but you have no idea how much baloney you didn’t have to respond to. Because we just ignored it.

And that works in different levels of government, the state and federal government. And it weeds out a lot of the waste of time that you have to do. That’s my light-hearted answer. Dan will give you a better and more serious one. Do you ignore things from the Secretary’s Office?

**Dan Ashe:**

Never. That’s the [INAUDIBLE] at his peril. Yeah, I think, I’ll be interested to hear what Lynn and even John say. Because I think this notion, my sense, my hope is that this thing that we call nowadays administrivia is not a new thing. That is not something that is innate to the nature of the beast today. But it is something that we can and need to do something about. And so I’ll say two things.

Like Steve, one of the first things I did when I came in as Director was we had this thing called ABC. Everybody had that when you do your timesheet. You have to split your time into half, or into hour segments, and you put a code. And we had like 500 codes that people had to sift through.

And the problem with that was we weren’t using the data. I don’t have any problem with collecting data if we were actually using it for something. We weren’t using it. So okay, let’s get rid of that.

We would joke. Hopefully it’s a joke amongst our Directorate. I have this, I’m sure, annoying habit of reading Harvard Business Review. And so last summer, when I was on my lawn-mower, which is when I do most of my pondering, Lynn. It takes me about an hour and 40 minutes to mow my grass.

And I was listening to a Harvard Business Review podcast. And they were talking about the characteristics of effective organizations. And one of them was that an organization that doesn’t just extract value from its employees but that adds value to its employees, which always makes me think about this place. But another characteristic was every organization has stupid rules and stupid practices. But effective organizations have fewer stupid rules and stupid practices.

So I put our Service Directorate onto the task of searching out stupid rules within the Fish and Wildlife Service. Not things that are beyond our ability to control, and there are many. But within the control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, do we have stupid rules? We found a few.

Like, if you are a heavy equipment operator and you're coming from the National Park Service to the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service makes you take Fish and Wildlife Service heavy equipment training, even though you have been working as a heavy equipment operator for the National Park Service for a good number of years. So we can do away with that.

But I guess I'll put my colleagues on the spot. And I'll look at all of you and say, if there are stupid rules that are within the control of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, then you should put it in an email, and you should put it under the title "Stupid Rule". And you should send it to your Regional Director. Or you should send it to your Assistant Director.

Because I'm not getting anything from anybody. So I'm assuming that we have no stupid rules. And I don't think that's true. but I'm not getting anything. So I would suggest that you all due vigor. And use that subject line "Stupid Rule".

**John Turner:**

We didn't have any stupid rules.

[LAUGHTER]

I say that. I don't remember that being a huge problem. And some of you here can correct me. I felt, on the other hand, that when I came in there might have been a little bit of too much independence and fiefdoms in some of the regions. So maybe I contributed to it. I wanted accountability for my RDs and the different programs.

But one way, kind of in the Steve Williams mode, when I got requests that I felt were unreasonable for the agency, I wouldn't let the Assistant Secretary's office in my corridor. I said, "You're not to come into my corridor and talk to my people or demand anything until you've gone through me."

And I told people at the Fish and Wildlife Service if a Deputy Assistant Secretary calls you, tell them you can't speak to them, they're to call the Director. And handle it through that way. So I think that helped a little bit with the nonsense that sometimes came from Main Interior on the agency. And I had Dick Smith to help me back it up and keep them out of the corridor. So I'll leave it to Dan and the challenges today. But speak up and inform your RDs. And bring it up through the Directorate.

**Lynn Greenwalt:**

Well I enjoyed a period of antediluvian bliss as Director because there were no cell phones. No one had ever heard of email. Faxing was a kind of-- what was a rumor that you could send a message from one place to another over a wire and get a piece of paper.

We used carbon paper for a long time. Do you know what carbon paper is? Anybody ever seen carbon paper? Have you ever tried to erase mistakes on carbon paper?

So life was primitive and cruel. But it was free of these kinds of things that create exactly what you people are talking about. No email. In order to get a message to the Director in travel, you had to call where he might be in an airport and get him paged.

Now a thing I hated worse than almost any other of the day's trivial torments was to think I heard my name on the damn annunciator in an airport someplace. "Will Mr. Greenwalt please go to a white paging phone and call his office?" You've got to be kidding me. Because I am not getting up out of this seat and go find a white paging telephone.

I remember one time I did it. And it made me think twice, really. I got the number. And I called the number. And this person answered the phone and just in a state of tremor, saying "Please, please, don't believe what you've heard I did, because I didn't do it."

[LAUGHTER]

It was one of the senior staff there. And it broke me of being terribly interested in that sort of thing. Once in a great while, the Assistant Secretary, for whom I worked most of the time, who was a man of prodigious energy and limitless adrenalin and imagination beyond belief, would find a way to chase me down by telephone, if I was in travel. But there was no emails.

And that's why we had to resort to these little blue things called memoranda. And by nature it is a blank until somebody puts something on it. And usually that requires a certain amount of thought, which helps filter out some of the junk that comes along. Not always, not always.

But I made a mark in my career along the way, I think, by developing a technique wherein I enjoyed a position. No, I shouldn't. I got a position that was dual in nature. I was at once Chief of the Division of Refuges and at the same time a Special Assistant to the Director.

Now being Special Assistant is the thing you want to avoid if you could get another tag put on it, because Special Assistant will eat your lunch. There's nothing that I had to deal-- the Director asked me to look at these things and do things for him. We should take care of Animal Damage Control.

Animal Damage Control is the result of the 1931 act by the same name that caused a whole lot of your early-day colleagues to be called gopher chokers.

[LAUGHTER]

And coyote killers. And that sort of thing. And it was a bizarre and remarkably complex source of agony that I was asked to look into. And I looked into it and found a soapy bowling ball. You couldn't pick that sucker up, it had no holes in it. You couldn't get your hands on that.

We finally gave it away many years later to the Department of Agriculture. And I think they're doing very well with it. because I hear nothing about it.

But anyhow, one of the things I learned to do was take these instructions from on high. And the Director would say, "I'd like you to frame a reply for me for this." And here's this how many elephants can dance on a pickup truck-- or whatever the hell it is-- that would require the whole organization to shut the machinery down and put it in another gear for a while and do this thing. And I think to myself, now wait a minute, I know a guy who knows about this stuff. And so we'd give it to him.

And a whole raft of people in the Service never even heard about it, but they got a message about how many elephants could stand in the back of a pickup truck; if they cared at all. Sometimes we ignored them. You can ignore a memo. There are wastebaskets that will take memos.

**Steve Williams:**

Delete keys. They're delete keys now.

**Lynn Greenwalt:**

Delete keys now. But the problem existed, even in those times, where there were bodies of people who felt it necessary to create questioning. And I have no problem with people who question authority, question the prime number, or anything else they want to question. Just don't make my life miserable trying to find the answer. And we resolved that.

But I will tell you another anecdote that is important for history. And that is that I'm the guy who developed Dick Smith.

[LAUGHTER]

Dick Smith became a person on the corridor fairly late in my career, but he was a kind of a dream come true in many ways.

[LAUGHTER]

To me he was exactly what I thought he was. And that is, he was a great big bear. Just a fabulous guy. Five daughters and a wife. And people wondered why he was kind of a misogynist. But he had a softball team that could beat everybody under the sun. All of them were his daughters.

And I went canoeing with him many times, my wife and I. And he can handle an 80-pound canoe, practically under his arm, like somebody carrying his lunch. And it was great with him. And he came into my life as this person, who was questioning authority.

And he was able to represent the desires of the leader in unmistakable ways. And he'd come into my office. You will never believe this-- those of you, particularly who were on the other side of his personality. He'd come into my office and after a memorable moment in a staff meeting or something, where somebody, some grown man burst into tears, because Dick Smith said something to him.

But he'd say, "Did I do wrong, boss?" And I said, "No Dick, you did very well. You did very good. You were doing just what we talked about, which was, you know, get a little rigor around this place."

And I guess he kept that up, more or less. He didn't have the polar bear in the hall in my time. He was the polar bear in the hall in my time.

Now one last thing. On a very serious note, there is a lot of administrative stuff I see when I go around. And your companions in the business, in the trade are sometimes vocal.

My spouse and I travel to refuges and hatcheries and many other refuges Fish and Wildlife Service places that will stand still and won't run me off. And we visit. We come unannounced, and they're just delighted by and large. And I like that. And I say, "I'm not here to spy. I don't represent any Director. I just represent the old guy who loves what you do."

I went to a place once, Judy and I, a big, fabulous, wonderful place. And the Refuge Manager stopped what he was doing and came to see us, took us in his office. And he's sitting in this beautiful setting. I didn't know what his desk looked like, because I could not see it. It was covered with stuff. And I thought well, yeah, I've got him right in the middle of budget or something. I don't know. I said "This is a big place. Do you get around? Do you get to see it?"

"I have been here three years, and I've been all the way around it twice." And I said "Tell me about this." "I cannot in good conscience leave to go and see it." Fortunately he had other people to go and see it. "Because all this stuff is coming. And I get emails. And I get this stuff. And I've got to do it. And I can't find the time. There isn't enough time."

And I go among my colleagues in the Directorate on occasion. They let me come to these things because I'm beyond being potent about things anymore. Grossly impotent administrator. And I've watched you as you go on point. You quiver. There is this, something coming to you and you whip out the telephone. I don't care where you are. You do that, and that means somebody on the other end is calling you and leaving you with something. He is giving you something he no longer wants. He wants you to do something.

And I watched the imperturbable Dale Hall go on point like a bird-dog--

[LAUGHTER]

--at the merest shiver of that damn telephone in his pocket. And the guys are going around saying, was yours a 202 call? Was it a 301? And I don't like that. Because I find that, somehow or other that is predisposing that somebody is thinking so highly of him- or herself that they



cannot wait to give it to you. They cannot wait to say don't believe what you just heard on the radio, because I didn't. And I don't like that.

I spent a little time was Dale in Albuquerque. Two of my favorite places-- one in the presence of Dale Hall, and the other Albuquerque, New Mexico. And we went into his office early one morning. He flipped on his TV screen. And I have one of those, too, in my home. And his computer screen-- not the TV screen, the computer screen. And wall-to-wall email. I think he said he got in those days about 200 a day.

Now I get emails for things like cheap insurance, or did you know that you can get free money from the government? And you can get various kinds of enhancements that I no longer need, and a lot of other things that you can get by email. And they come in such profusion.

But nothing like these business emails that you people are getting. And it seems to me there ought to be some way that you can communicate to one another in such a way that-- don't tell me what I don't need to know. Do not ask me what I do not need to be asked. Ask your boss or do it yourself.

But don't hit the All button just for the hell of it. Because sooner or later, the answer will be to hit the Delete All button. And you've just sent, the building is on fire. Help me. And nobody's there to listen.

And I say this with some levity, because I'm delightfully inured from this kind of thing. But it bothers me that these kinds of trivias arise to the surface. And I get this universal, wherever we go, where everybody has internet. Too much stuff. I don't know what to do with it. And I'm scared not to do something. Okay, you've got the message.

### **Jay Slack:**

So I know we have had several questions from the audience. It would be nice to continue going on, but we are going to have to bring this to an end, obviously. But I would like to ask one more question, because we did talk about how to lead this into the future.

So perhaps I'll ask it this way. In a sentence or two, because we have limited time, this would be a great opportunity for each of you perhaps to leave a message to future Directors about the advice that you would give them as they may be leading the Fish and Wildlife Service. So I won't go in any order.

### **Lynn Greenwalt:**

Let me begin, because I'm guilty, as I always am, of saying too much too often. To future Directors-- and there are some seated before me, I'm sure-- go and be in charge with the knowledge that you got there simply because people believe in you and expect the best from you, because you have displayed it somewhere in the past.

Look at the people around you and rely upon them, because they are like you were once upon a time. Go forth, and do good works. And, good friends, have a good time. And take pride in the fact that you will, those of you who are likely to be Directors, are honored beyond any ability to describe. Just do what people have done before, and you will do the right thing.

**John Turner:**

Well I think that's pretty good advice. I guess I would urge people in this agency, as we should in our own lives, is to listen. Develop the ability to listen to one another. We all hear a lot of stuff, but do we really listen? I think that's a great message to all of us to really listen to those around us, those we serve.

I think this agency's always done well in caring about one another as a family. Look after those that depend on you and answer to you. And lastly I would just say I hope Directors in the future and Secretaries embrace what this place in Shepherdstown is all about.

It was meant to, yes, be a home for the Fish and Wildlife Service family. It was meant to be a message for a young person coming in here and working in this agency, working in wildlife stewardship, fishery stewardship. It was a message to them when they walked in here. Gosh, what I do must be pretty important if the country built this center to help me with my skill set, to help me be a better employee of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

And also I think what this place does-- it was intended to do-- is teach us all skills of collaborative leadership and collaborative problem-solving. I think that's really an answer for those of us that work in the vineyards of stewardship. How do we work with other stakeholders-- federal agencies, state agencies, nonprofit?

And especially I urge you, I'm glad the Secretary mentioned it, is to work with the private sector. Corporations, business, landowners-- they're a great resource that we just begin to tap. Good will, good resources-- but that's what this center was meant to be-- a watering hole where multiple stakeholders could come and learn, embrace one another, build trust between one another. So I hope that this place will endure.

And Jay, thank you for hosting us, for your leadership, those that work here at the Center, those of you that embrace it.

I think this particular entity, more than buildings, is important to your success, the long-term success of the agency, and the long-term success of resource stewardship.

**Jaime Rappaport Clark:**

I would certainly echo what Lynn and John said. Respect the seriousness and importance of the position as Director. And know that you're the temporary occupant. So use that power wisely.

I would also say that do your best. Don't be afraid to take risks. That there are a lot of people, a lot of critters counting on you. Surround yourself with those that are better and more able to do the job with you, because it's a rising tide lifting all boats.

So be that voice for those that are voiceless-- the wildlife, the plants, the special places that are entrusted to the Fish and Wildlife Service's care. Don't take yourself too seriously, it gets you into trouble every time. Have fun. Keep a sense of humor. Stay focused.

And most importantly, don't ever lose the passion that is so important. And know that future generations are counting on you.

**Steve Williams:**

I can't, I really can't improve upon what the three previous people said. So I'm going to take my short time to thank the Deputies-- I mean everybody in the Fish and Wildlife Service-- but particularly the Deputy Directors and those that served as Acting Director.

The six of us have had the opportunity to fly and see places. Somebody once told me, as the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, you get to see places only God and Teddy Roosevelt get to see. There's a lot of truth to that.

But the Deputy Directors are, for the most part, back in DC, keeping the trains running, and oiling them, and doing all that stuff. So I would just like to shout out to-- and I'm sure I speak for everybody in this panel, how much we appreciate it.

So I guess my advice is pick good Deputy Directors. But I think it's important that we recognize them. And those folks that have served like Rowan for a long time as an Acting Director, Marshall Jones-- I shouldn't. Okay I've stopped. I'm not going to mention more names. But they're key. And we thank you all for all the hard work you've done.

**Jay Slack:**

Dale, how about you?

**Dale Hall:**

I would just have really three pieces of advice to add. One is fiercely protect and stand behind your ethics-- not an administration or a party. Second is to follow the science and not the emotion. And the third one is to love the people who are getting the job done. Because your job is to take care of the people so the people can take care of the resource. And if you can do that, you will earn the title of leader, because they're the only ones that can give it to you.

**Dan Ashe:**

I would say Dale hit it right on the head. If I had to put it in one sentence, I would say love the people that work for you. They will go to the ends of the earth to make you a success.

**Jay Slack:**

All right? Thank you. And again I'm sorry we were cutting things a little short at the end here. But this was a very important piece in moving forward.

Let me start this, as we wrap things up, by saying thanks. Thanks very much, Director Greenwalt, Turner, Clark, Williams, Hall, Ashe for being here. This is a historic event. We appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedules to come here and impart this wisdom on future generations in the service. So, thank you. And let's give them a round of applause.

[APPLAUSE]

And then I'll say thanks to everyone who's come here today. We've got people from the Washington office. We've got the employees from NCTC and others who joined us here today, including the retirees, spouses of retired or former Directors and retirees. Thank you for being here. This has been a wonderful event.