Oral History Cover Sheet

Name: Walter Stieglitz
Date of Interview: May 20, 2004
Location of Interview: Stanley's West Arm Resort, Eagle Lake, Ontario, Canada
Interviewer: John Cornely

Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service: 34 years [June 20, 1960 - August, 1994]

Offices and Field Stations Worked: Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge; South Florida National Wildlife Refuge Complex; Atlanta Regional Office [Region 4]; San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge; Washington D.C.

Positions Held: Assistant Refuge Manager; refuge biologist; refuge district management biologist [for FL, GA, AL];refuge district supervisor [for NC, SC, VA, MD]; Chief of the Branch of Natural Resources in the Division of Refuges; Chief of the Office of Program and Development for Wildlife; Deputy Regional Director Region 4; Deputy Associate Director for the National Wildlife Refuge System; Assistant Director for Wildlife Resources; Coordinator-Bicentennial Land Heritage Program; Regional Director Region 7.

Most Important Projects: Opened the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge; Bicentennial Land Heritage Program; Exxon Valdez oil spill ;Kodiak Island land acquisition additions; hunting regulations for migratory birds; North American Waterfowl Management Plan;

Colleagues and Mentors: Larry Givens; Ken Black; James Pulliam; Pres Lane; Dr. Robert E. Putz; John Rogers; Dick Pospahala; Galen Buterbaugh; Ralph Morgenweck; Mark Plenert; Ron Lambertson; Dr. Willard Klimstra; Mollie Beatty; John Turner; Dick Smith; Dave Olsen; Curtis Wilson;

Most Important Issues: ANILCA [Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act) implementation; Exxon Valdez oil spill disaster; Alaska Native subsistence hunting and fishing; Arctic National Wildlife Refuge [ANWR] 1002 oil drilling; annual migratory bird hunting regulations; Various issues relating to the management of national wildlife refuges.

Key Words (Please highlight or circle those described in the interview):

Refuges	fisheries	law enforcement	ecological serv.	personnel
realty	director	public affairs	game	contaminants
animal damage	river basins	Regions 1-9__	Patuxent	Federal Aid
international	CITES	habitat	ESA	wilderness
fishing	Hunting	birding	boats	aviation
surveys	flyways	Waterfowl	potholes	migration
eagles	condors	cranes	pesticides	pelicans
Olaus Murie	Ding Darling	Ira Gabrielson	J. Clark Salyer	Al Day
Rachel Carson	H. Zahniser	Dan Jantzen	J. Gottschalk	J. Gottschalk
Spencer Smith	L. Greenwalt	Bob Jantzen	Frank Dunkle	John Turner
M. Beattie	Aldo Leopold	Stuart Udall	James Watt	Bruce Babbitt
inventions	research	ecosystems	invasive species	reintroduction
red wolves	gray wolves	Mexican wolf	condors	spotted owl

National Heritage Team of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Oral History Program
Narrator/USFW Retiree: Stieglitz, Walter
Date: May 20, 2004
Interviewed by: John Cornely

John Cornely: This is John Cornely, a member of the Fish and Wildlife Service Heritage Committee. It is May 20, 2004. Our narrator today is Walt Stieglitz, who retired as the regional director in Region 7 in Anchorage, Alaska. We're at Eagle Lake, Ontario at the annual Harvey Nelson Fish Camp at Stanley's West Arm Resort.

Walter Stieglitz: This is Walt Stieglitz, a retired Fish and Wildlife Service person, speaking to you from beautiful Eagle Lake, Ontario.

I might give you a real quick background on my early years. I was born in a very small town named Bunker Hill, which is in central Illinois. I basically grew up in a rural farm-type environment. I was born April 14, 1934. I went through both elementary school and high school in Bunker Hill, and I was a member of the largest graduating class in history in high school, I mean like 44 students graduated.

From there I took a year off. I was only 16 years old when I graduated from high school, so I was a little young to go to college. So I took a year off and did farm work, I worked for the U.S. Forest Service in southern Oregon for the summer, and then I started college in the fall of 1951.

I received my bachelor's in 1955 [at Southern Illinois University], with a major in zoology, specialization in wildlife management and a minor in botany I went to ROTC in college and received my commission in 1955. I went to graduate school for one year, then the Air Force beckoned me, so I went on active duty for three years. I came back and finished my master's in 1960.

I might mention, while I was in the Air Force I went to flight training, I got my pilot's wings and also ammunition officer school. So I spent my Air Force career either in training or as a pilot and a munitions officer.

I started work for the Fish and Wildlife Service about ten days after I received my Masters. Actually, I had a choice of jobs when I graduated. The jobs seemed to be quite plentiful, so I had several offers from the Fish and Wildlife Service as well as from several state and fish game commissions. But I'd always wanted to work for the Fish and Wildlife Service, so it was really an easy decision for me. I started as a GS7 at Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge in Tennessee. I spent about a year there.

Then I moved to Delray Beach, Florida, where I was assistant [refuge] manager what was then called the South Florida National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which all that has changed today, of course. Basically, that took all of the refuges in south Florida,

including the Keys , the west coast, and up the east coast, as far as the old Brevard [National Wildlife] Refuge, which is now part of the Cape Kennedy Complex.

I had a couple of jobs while I was in south Florida. I became a refuge biologist, a little later I became a district biologist for all the refuges in the state of Florida. I did that for a while and then I went to the Departmental Training Program in 1965. Following that, I was made the district management biologist for all the refuges in Florida, Georgia, and Alabama.

From there I moved into the regional office in Atlanta in 1967, where I was a district supervisor for all of the refuges in the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland. At that time, Virginia and Maryland were part of Region 4. Now, of course, they are part of Region 5. I had various jobs while I was in the regional office, all in refuges.

Then, in January of 1973, the director of the Service felt that he needed me at a different location. So I went to the San Francisco Bay area and started the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, which was one of the highlights of my career. Very enjoyable starting a refuge from scratch, basically, and seeing it through its formative years.

Then I moved to Washington in 1975, where I became Chief of the Branch of Natural Resources in the Division of Refuges. Subsequent to that, when the Bicentennial Land Heritage Program came into being in the late 1970s, I was put in charge of that program for approximately two years, more about that later. That was one of the highlights of my career I'd like to talk a little bit more about.

I think I forgot to mention earlier, the school I attended, I did go to Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois.

I also should have mentioned, when I was talking about some of my early career jobs, that one of the people that became very influential in my Service career, one of my mentors, was Larry Givens, who was a longtime refuge supervisor in Region 4. So I owe part of my success in the Fish and Wildlife Service to the tutelage I received from Larry.

Okay, going back to Washington again, then in 1979, I became Chief of the Office of Program Development for Wildlife. I did that for a year, and then moved back to Atlanta as Deputy Regional Director, where I worked for a couple of regional directors; Ken Black was my immediate supervisor when I went to Atlanta, and subsequently Jim Pulliam became the regional director.

While I was in that particular job, I completed the training program for the Senior Executive Service, and was called back to Washington in late 1984 to be the Deputy Associate Director for National Wildlife Refuges. I was in that job for a couple of years,

and then became Assistant Director for Wildlife Resources. I was in that position until 1987, when the director asked me to go to Alaska as a regional director, which I very happily did, and stayed in that job until I retired in August of 1994.

I need to go back one more time and mention another person that was pretty influential in my career, and that was my very first boss in the Fish and Wildlife Service, his name was Pres Lane. Pres was manager of the Reelfoot Refuge. It was rather interesting, I was the first assistant manager he had ever had, let alone have a smart-aleck college kid on his staff. So it was kind of an interesting experience for all of us, but it worked out very well. Even though he didn't have a college degree, Pres was extremely street-wise and was very, very helpful, I think, in getting my career off to a good start.

John Cornely: Walt, you said that you directed the BLH Program, the Bicentennial Land Heritage Program, for a couple of years. That program had started just before I came into the Fish and Wildlife Service. I believe it was very important to the Service at that time and, you know, for some time to come. I'd like you to tell us a little about your experience in directing that program.

Walter Stieglitz: Well, probably, as others have said, the Bicentennial Land Heritage Program was a real blessing for the Refuge System back in the late 70s. It had been many, many years since there had a been substantial program available under which a significant amount of construction and rehabilitation of refuge facilities could take place. The Bicentennial Land Heritage Program certainly met a lot of the needs, certainly not all of them at that point in time, but many, many of the needs on refuges.

It was kind of interesting the way it got started. The story was is that President Ford, who was going to be running for re-election in the fall, needed and was reminded by staff that he didn't have a wonderful environmental record and needed to do something to make his mark in the environmental field. So, someone came up with the idea of a very significant program to improve national parks. During the discussions, the very early discussions regarding the program, the story goes that someone from the Park Service said, "Well, how about National Wildlife refuges? They have a lot of problems similar to ours, and they certainly have a lot of needs similar to ours." So, it was decided to throw the Refuge System into the mix for BLHP.

It just happened over night, practically. People were throwing numbers together and trying to come up with projects in a very short timeframe. I missed out on the first 24 hours of that effort because I went home early, I didn't get caught by the director to help him put together something overnight.

As it turned out though, it was a real godsend for the Refuge System.

One of the problems that we faced is that, at that point in time, there were very, very few current master plans, as we called them back then. We hadn't had any significant

funding for a number of years for rehab or new construction and so, frankly, we were sort of caught with our pants down. We weren't ready for this kind of program, nowhere near ready for it. But we knew we had to come up with some credible program, we had to be able to answer to the Congress and to the Congressional staff who were going to be monitoring the program.

We came up with the idea, not my idea, but actually it came out of Region 3, as I recall, the idea of one sheet master plans. The director gave us practically free reign to do whatever we needed to do to get the program organized. He even offered to give me the conference room, to turn it into a war room, but we didn't really think that was necessary.

We went through a crash program, I would call it; each region appointed a BLHP coordinator to help pull things together. Every refuge of significance had a one sheet master plan thrown together, I guess would be a good way to put it and by taking those one sheet master plans, we were able to develop a composite needs list. We came up with ranking criteria that we needed to rank these and using this process we were able to put together descriptive projects that were needed, both new construction and rehabilitation. We also received something like 500 additional positions in the BLH program, and I've forgotten the O&M amount, I want to say it was around 5 million, which, of course, was a one shot effort.

One of the problems with the program is that Congress had to appropriate funds for each year. So for the first couple of years, we were highly successful in getting a substantial amount of money. It was supposed to be a five year program, as I recall, and it sort of petered out as we reached the end of that five year period. Frankly, I don't recall the total amount that was appropriated under BLHP for refuge work, but my recollection tells me it was in the range of 200 million.

But it was a wonderful program, we got a lot done. Regions did a wonderful job, really. All in all, I think it was a huge success and it's the kind of program that the Refuge System needs right about now.

I would like to talk a little about the early beginnings of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Starting that refuge, I guess I would say, was one of the highlights of my career. It's always fun to take something from zero and develop a program around it.

The background of the refuge is kind of interesting, I think, and that is it was one of the early urban refuges that were added to the National Wildlife Refuge System. My recollection is that the Service wasn't particularly enthralled with developing a refuge in south San Francisco Bay because it was urban and everyone knew there was going to be a lot of public use associated with the refuge. Back in those days, we were more of a duck refuge system than we were interested in public use.

My assignment to it was kind of interesting. I was actually sitting in Atlanta at the time,

being offered a job in Washington. An individual by the name of Arch Mehrhoff was actually selected to be the first refuge manager. The story goes that Arch was at the time living in government housing on the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in southern Illinois, and went out on a house hunting trip after he'd been selected. He took a look at the environment [there were about 5 million people at that time surrounding the refuge] and Arch decided it really wasn't his bag, he really didn't want to do that, so he went back to Crab Orchard. Then the Service was in a real bind, trying to find a refuge manager for this refuge on short notice. Well, to shorten the story, I ended up being the individual tapped to start the refuge off.

It was a lot of fun, really, for two and a half years. One of the good things about it was that the refuge really came to pass because of the efforts of a local citizens group who just banded together to seek legislative approval for the refuge, and they worked for several years to do that. An individual by the name of Art Ogilvie, who was employed by Santa Clara County, as I recall, was the ring leader of this group.

They worked very hard and finally got the legislation passed through the leadership of Congressman Don Edwards, who continued, even after the legislation was passed, to be a real champion for the refuge. Mainly through his efforts, even though it was very new, we almost immediately received funding to do master planning for the refuge. As a matter of fact, within less than five years actually, we were building facilities. I say we, by that time I had migrated back to Washington and someone else took over the job.

But it was a unique experience, a very enjoyable one, and I met a lot of wonderful people when I was out there. Actually, my job was more of a realty specialist/PR [public relations] type than it was anything else, because actually we only had about 40 acres that were donated to the refuge to manage when I first went out there. So it was basically working with the Leslie Salt Company, who owned a significant amount of acreage within the exterior refuge boundaries, and working with other local interests, and there were a lot of them to deal with, to try and get the refuge started off on the right track.

We already had some other refuges in the system when I went out there. The Farallon Islands [Farallon National Wildlife Refuge] of course had been a refuge for a long, long time. The San Pablo Bay [National Wildlife] Refuge was established earlier. Dick Bauer was the manager at San Pablo when I went out to the Bay area. Dick subsequently transferred into the Portland regional office and San Pablo was added to the San Francisco Bay Complex. We also had a refuge for the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander in existence at that point, that was part of the complex. While I was there, we started work to add the Salinas Lagoon area to the refuge complex.

Anyway, that was a lot of fun. We had a lot of good times there, but after two and a half years it was time to move on, back to Washington, and get involved with some other things.

John Cornely: Walt, when you were the regional director in Alaska, if I remember correctly, why there were several very significant things that occurred in your tenure. The Alaska Native ANILCA [Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act] Settlements, Exxon Valdez oil spill disaster and a lot of, I think, related to ANILCA, a lot of subsistence, native subsistence harvest issues. I would like you to fill us in on some of the details of those significant events during your time in Alaska.

Walter Stieglitz: I may not get the sequence in order in all of these but yes, a number of pretty significant things happened while we were in Alaska that made life a little more interesting.

I might talk about Exxon Valdez first. A lot of people may not know what that was, but a huge oil tanker struck a reef out of Valdez [Alaska] and spilled about 11 million gallons of crude oil. This became one of the largest natural disasters of all time. It created untold problems for the Fish and Wildlife Service as well as a lot of other state and federal agencies in the state.

It happened in 1989, after I had been in Alaska for a couple of years, and unfortunately, no one was really prepared for a spill of that magnitude. The Coast Guard and others thought they were, but when it actually happened, it was impossible to cope with it.

We, the Fish and Wildlife Service, became involved because a number of the natural resources under our responsibility were harmed significantly by the spill. In order to deal with it, it was recognized early on by several agencies that we needed to immediately begin to put together a research program, if you will, to try and determine the total impacts of the spill on wildlife resources. Everyone knew somewhere down the road there would be an attempt made to recover damages from Exxon for the damages that were incurred by wildlife resources. So, this became a huge effort.

A trustee council was established, made up of federal and state agencies with lots of lawyers involved, of course. We did put together a program involving research, both by the federal agencies and by the state, which eventually gathered some excellent information that was used and is still being used, for that matter.

The upshot of the whole thing was that eventually Exxon did settle, and paid a very substantial restoration payment. Of course they were also charged with criminal charges, they were sued by a number of other interests like commercial fisherman and, Alaska natives whose subsistence resources were damaged in some cases.

One of the real good things that did come out of the spill, relates to Kodiak Island. When the Alaska natives were allowed to select lands under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, on Kodiak [which is famous, of course, for its brown bear populations and other wildlife] the natives selected most of the choice, very best bear habitat along the numerous streams that course through the refuge. But, by using Exxon Valdez

funds, most of those very, very critical lands on Kodiak were eventually acquired, many years after the spill of course, and added to the refuge.

So while there were some major damages to wildlife resources, many of those resources have recovered at this point in time, and we were able to protect some very, very important wildlife areas as a result of funds that were derived from the spill settlement.

That is maybe an over-simplification in retrospect. The Service and Service employees in Alaska did a fantastic job of responding to the spill, collecting the information, helping staff otter and bird recovery centers, etc.

I should mention that the response to the Service in general was very, very strong because we brought up quite a few people from the lower 48 to help out with the effort. We simply didn't have enough staff on site within the state to handle the workload.

So it was a wonderful effort by a lot of people in response to a terrible disaster. I'm very, very hopeful that the world doesn't have to experience another incident like that particular one.

Another really important program that came up when I was serving as regional director in Alaska was the whole issue of subsistence hunting and fishing by the Alaska natives. Under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act the natives were given, the right to subsistence hunt and fish. That doesn't necessarily mean unrestricted rights, but they were guaranteed to be able to continue their subsistence lifestyle.

The State Fish and Game Commission managed subsistence hunting and fishing for many, many years under an agreement with the department. I've forgotten the exact year, but it was in the late 80s, that a court order basically determined that the Alaska Game and Fish Commission could not continue to manage the subsistence program. This thing was dropped on us virtually overnight and we were ill-prepared to take it on. It is a very, very complicated, unbelievably complicated program I might say.

But the Service had been tapped years before, when there was an earlier threat, that we would have to take over the program, i.e.,the Fish and Wildlife Service was identified as the lead Interior agency to manage the program should we ever have to take it over. So, when it became evident that the feds were, in fact, going to have to take over the program, the Fish and Wildlife Service had already been dubbed to be the lead agency.

So what we did was establish a subsistence group made up of basically the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, ourselves, and the U.S. Forest Service. We organized this group, got some staff onboard, and by working with the state, using some of the information that they had gathered through the years, we began to gather our own. We met regularly and eventually established subsistence hunting regulations for the natives.

Now that may not sound like all that complicated a program, but it was extremely complicated and very, very sensitive because the natives felt very, very strongly about their rights. There were some rough spots along the way but eventually we developed a pretty sound program based on good information and good research. Of course, that program is going on today.

I'd like to talk just a little bit about what we popularly call ANILCA, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which was passed in 1980. One of the major things that the act did was to create a number of new refuges in Alaska and add substantial acreage to some of the existing refuges. As I recall, it added to the refuge system approximately 55,000 acres which, at that time, pushed the total acreage in Alaska up to around 78 million which, at that time, was roughly 85% of all of the acreage in the National Wildlife Refuge System. A fact which Congressman Ted Stevens liked to constantly remind his colleagues of in the Senate when it came to appropriations and so forth; like, "I've got 85% of the Refuge System, but I'm only getting 10% or 15% of the funding," whatever it happened to be.

But ANILCA was important in a lot of other respects in addition just to adding refuge lands, because various provisions of that act do, in a large part, establish management parameters for Alaska refuges. There are a lot of provisions in ANILCA that make management of Alaska refuges rather unique and possibly a little more complicated than in some other cases.

The other related thing is that when the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was passed it did a couple of things, one is that it allowed the natives to select 44 million acres for their own use. Local and regional native corporations were established. In some cases, as I mentioned earlier in the interview, the lands that they selected, like at Kodiak and some other refuges, were some of the best wildlife habitat, because the natives had used these historically for hunting and fishing purposes. So it was only natural that when they had an opportunity to select, they would select some of the most productive lands and waters located within Alaska refuges. So ANILCA was obviously a very major piece of legislation.

One other thing that it did, that continues to be a controversial item today, relates to Section 1002, which refers to about a million and a half acres on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I suspect almost everyone has heard about the 1002 area. Although they might not know it by that name, but they know it by the controversy that surrounds drilling on ANWR [Arctic National Wildlife Refuge]. When you hear that, they're talking about the 1002 area and the desire of the energy developers to drill for oil within that particular million and a half acres and the equal high concern of environmental interests to prevent this drilling.

A lot of people don't know, but there was substantial effort prior to the time I got to

Alaska to do seismic testing throughout the 1002 area. Bob Putz was the regional director at that time and I was assistant director in Washington. A lot of people don't realize that "Cat trains" moved throughout the 1002 area during the wintertime, doing the seismic exploration work and, of course, the estimated oil reserves that are being used today resulted from that particular seismic testing.

It's an extremely controversial issue. It was controversial at the time that I went to Alaska, it was controversial for the whole time I was in Alaska, and I was regional director for about seven years, and, of course, it remains controversial today. I'm sure it's going to remain controversial perhaps forever. Who knows whether or not it will ever be developed.

One of the disturbing things about the 1002 area is that all too often it is described as a desolate snow and ice covered piece of terrain, which virtually you can't hurt it if you want to do a little drilling up there. Actually, that's a far cry from what it really is because if you've seen it in the summertime, when a lot of the plants are in bloom, it's green, the Porcupine Caribou Herd which move freely over it, they calve on it most of the time. It's also been described as the 'Serengeti of the North,' which, again, that might be a little bit of a stretch in the other direction, but it is, in its own right, a beautiful place. It's not covered by ice and snow throughout the year and it is certainly an area that should not be sacrificed, in my view, for the benefit of what has roughly been estimated as a six month supply of oil for United States.

Of course, history will only tell us what happens with this, but I'm very, very hopeful that it remains forever just like it is today.

John Cornely: Walt, as a regional director, you served as all regional directors take a turn or more at [serving] on the Service Regulations Committee, which makes recommendations to the director on the annual migratory bird hunting regulations. This is an aspect of the Service that very few people know much about, even most people within the Fish and Wildlife Service. There's a few of us migratory bird folks that are actively involved in it, but the rest of the Service doesn't know too much about it. Would you tell us a little bit about your experience as a member of the Service Regulations Committee.

Walter Stieglitz: I would be happy to. This was always one of the more enjoyable activities, as far as I was concerned, and I must confess I've been a waterfowl hunter since I was a kid. As a matter of fact, early in my career I was sorely tempted to become a waterfowl biologist because I just had a lot of interest working with waterfowl on refuges. But my time on the Service Regulations Committee was one of the more enjoyable assignments that I've had. As a matter of a fact, I always hated, when it came my turn to go off, because it was something that I really felt was important and it actually gave us a good opportunity to get exposed to some of the state personnel that served as advisors to the committee.

I should always say that I was equally impressed by the knowledge and the quality of the data that Fish and Wildlife Service staff had, that is the staff of the Migratory Bird Office, because it seemed like no matter how big the question, within a matter of minutes or maybe an hour or so, people would come up with information that would help us make the right decisions.

As John said, it's not very well known, and I don't think people really appreciate how important the function of the committee is or the importance of the staff effort that goes into developing the regulations. As I said earlier, the states play an important role here too because they have a voice, they have an opportunity to convince the regulations committee whether they feel that the committee is making the right decision, the wrong decision, or whatever.

It's a very important function and I, for one, maybe because of my interest in waterfowl, was always real pleased to serve on it.

John Cornely: Walt, do you remember some of the folks that you served with on the regulation committee and maybe the directors at the time and some of the other folks involved with you at the time?

Walter Stieglitz: Well, I'm sure I won't remember all of them John. Some of the staff that I remember from the Migratory Bird Office of course range from John Rogers to Dick Pospahala. Yes, I'm blanking out on some of the names! But, there were a number of biologists who worked with Migratory Bird Office of course that developed the information that we needed. Of course, then the Regional Migratory Bird Coordinators also played a very, very important role because they had a regional perspective. I don't know about all of the regional directors, but I relied pretty heavily on my Regional Migratory Bird Coordinator to provide information and guidance to me to hopefully help me make better decisions. I'm sure all of the regional directors did that.

I'm trying to remember. Of course I served with a lot of different people during my time on the committee. People like Jim Pulliam, Galen Buterbaugh, Ralph Morgenweck, Marv Plenert , Ron Lambertson and others. I don't remember all of the people involved.

Those were always good meetings, good times, and I think that collectively we kept things on an even keel and most of the time made good, solid decisions about hunting regulations for migratory birds.

A little bit about my family. My wife and I married while we were still in college, and so I drug her around the country quite a bit while I was in the Air Force as well as with the Fish and Wildlife Service. I have three children. My oldest son, Jeffrey, is a medical doctor and lives in Idaho Falls, Idaho, and he is a good hunting and fishing

companion of mine to this day. I have a daughter, Kimberly, who has a PhD and is on the nursing staff at the University of Missouri at St. Louis. My youngest son, Barry, works for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He has been an assistant refuge manager, refuge manager, and he is currently assigned to the Division of Policy and Planning, I believe it is, in the Washington office.

Of course, when you are working with the Fish and Wildlife Service and you move around the country quite a bit, as I did, you always wonder what kind of impact that actually has on your family, whether this a good thing or a bad thing?

It's possibly good from the standpoint that your children are exposed to different environments, they get to meet a lot more people, they're just exposed to society on a broader scale than they would be if for instance if you stayed in one place for their entire childhood.

I've asked my kids this question and they don't really have a good answer for it. They're not sure whether they benefited or if somehow it was detrimental to their development. But all three of them turned out to be pretty good solid citizens, so I guess it couldn't have hurt them too much. But it is hard on families, I think, moving around, kids having to change schools, etc. Probably it's particularly hard on the wives because they are constantly having to make new friends, get established in a community, the whole gambit, finding doctors, dentists, whatever it might be. But I think, all in all, my family didn't suffer from the experience. While some of the moves were certainly less desirable than others, I tried to make the best choice, considering family needs as well as careers. Sometimes it becomes quite a difficult balancing act.

I might talk just a little about my training and how I got into the wildlife field. I must confess that when I entered Southern Illinois University in the fall of 1951, I had no idea that there was a career in wildlife management. I never heard of such a thing. When I started to college, my goal was to get a degree in agriculture and be able to teach vocational agriculture back in my little hometown.

As happens with a lot students, I was a little short of cash, so I needed a job. It happened that one of the individuals that was living in the rooming house where I lived had a student laborers job at the Cooperative Wildlife Laboratory there at the university. I found out they were looking for some additional help, so I talked to Dr. Willard Klimstra, who was the leader of the lab, and was hired.

I remember my first job was making snake traps. I'm not sure if they ever worked or not!

But through this part-time job, I became aware of what the opportunities were in careers in Fish and Wildlife Management. So, in view of my childhood and the fact that I hunted and fished all of my life and I liked the outdoors, it didn't take me long to change

my major over to zoology. They didn't have a separate degree in wildlife management at that time, as a matter of fact, I don't believe they do to this day. But they offered a wide spectrum of courses in wildlife management and fisheries management as well, so you ended up majoring in zoology with specialization in wildlife management.

I might talk about "Doc" Klimstra, as we called him, who also was pretty influential in my early development. He was a very strong individual, extremely intelligent and hundreds of graduate students earned their degrees under his leadership. But the program was pretty small when I was in it in the 1950s, and I got to know everyone in the graduate program eventually because there weren't all that many of them. I did a lot of work with bobwhite quail while I still a student because Klimstra had a working arrangement with the State of Illinois to collect nesting data and other population dynamics information about quail in southern Illinois. So I got to spend quite a bit of time working with quail and really very little with waterfowl, which is what I really enjoyed, as I mentioned earlier.

I did my master's work actually in two separate sessions. When I got my bachelor's degree in 1955, as I mentioned earlier, I also got my commission. The master's degree program took two years to complete at SIU. The Air Force said, "We can only give you a one year deferment." Basically, what I did was take all of my course work, not all of it, most of it, that first year. I went on active duty for three years, came back and finished the degree in another year. During that time I worked for the research lab part-time and also was a teaching assistant in beginning zoology part-time.

I did my master's on food habits of the opossum, which was the kind of research I could actually do in one years' time as opposed to some kind of field project, which would have taken an additional year. At that point in time I was married, I had two little kids, and I was really ready to get out in the field and get a meaningful job. Even though I was encouraged to go on for a PhD, I really, at that point in time, didn't want to devote another 3+ years to college. I was ready to get out in the world and get a real job and get on with a career. It worked out fine as it turned out.

John Cornely: Walt, as a Washington office staffer, and I know certainly as a regional director, I know you get involved in a lot of committee's and different assignments, details and so on, could you think about maybe one or two of the important committee assignments you might have had in your career?

Walter Stieglitz: One of the more important ones that comes to mind would be related to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. When the U.S. and Canada signed that plan, of course it was very obvious this could well be one of the most important things that's ever happened regarding North American waterfowl populations. Shortly after it was signed the director appointed me to be the U.S. co-chair of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee. The name of the Canadian coach escapes me at the moment, Jim somebody [Jim Patterson], who was with the Canadian

Wildlife Service.

We had a couple of meetings, sort of organizational meetings, but it became obvious very quickly to me that I did not have the time to devote to seeing that the management plan got off the ground properly and received the attention that it richly deserved. So after, I believe I was involved for two meetings, I remember we had the first one at Remington Farms in Maryland and I believe we had one in Canada, things seemed to be moving rather slowly, in my opinion, at that point in time. Obviously I had more than I could handle with the other issues that had to be addressed and so I finally made a recommendation to the director that, at least from the U.S. side, that we needed some permanent staff onboard whose sole responsibility was implementation of the plan.

Eventually the director followed through with that suggestion and ultimately the North American Plan Committee Office came into being. Thankfully, the plan was launched in good style and has, up to this point time, I think, been very, very beneficial to improving conditions for North American waterfowl populations.

That is one example of the kinds of things that I got involved with. I wish all of them were as much fun as that particular one. Some were not nearly as much fun.

John has asked me to talk about some of the awards that I have received as a result of my career with the Fish and Wildlife Service. Actually I'm rather proud of these. I did receive the [Department of the Interior's] Meritorious Service Award from the Department and also the Distinguished Service Award from the Department [of the Interior]. I'm particularly proud of the fact that I was awarded the Presidential Rank Award as a member of the Senior Executive Service.

Of course a lot of people deserve awards just as much as I did, sometimes it is people who are fully deserving don't receive these awards. So I'm particularly happy that whatever my contributions were to the Service, that I received that kind of recognition.

[END]