National Heritage Team of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Oral History Program
Subject/USFW Retiree: Will Troyer
Date: October 31, 2006
Interviewed by: John Cornely

John Cornely:
This is John Cornely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Heritage Committee, it's the 31st of October in 2006, and I'm with Will Troyer at his home near Cooper Landing, Alaska. And I'm here today to have him tell us about his life and his Fish and Wildlife Service career.

Will Troyer:
I was born on a farm in Indiana to actually Amish heritage, and my folks became Mennonite's later, but when I was a young kid we farmed with horses and drove the horse and buggy until I was about 10 years old. Anyways, I've often wandered how did a Amish/Mennonite farm boy end up in Alaska as a biologist! It is kind of an interesting story because I guess what got me interested in wildlife was that when I was in about the second or third grade I had a teacher that got us real interested in birds. In the spring of the year she would ask us who's seen a robin and then she would write the person's name on the blackboard, and the next day it might be a bluebird or something. Anyway, she got my interest really up and I became an avid birder. And then we moved from that particular farm to an area that had 40-acres of woods on it and the house was surrounded by woods. I've got a book here, the old *Birds of North America*, and I'll have to show it to you, it's in the library, but on the inside cover is... My mother saw that, she was interested in birds, in town and it cost $3.95, it's a big, thick book. Anyway, when you look at that my name is written in there, Willard Troyer age 11, and I think it was December, 1936. By the time I was 12, I thought I knew every bird that flew, but obviously I was wrong on a lot of it. But that's where I got interested in wildlife. I never knew that there was such a thing as a profession in wildlife until I was about a senior in high school and one of the instructors asked us one day what we wanted to do, and of course most of the kids wanted to be farmers and whatnot. And I said at the time I was interested in becoming, and I'd read O. C. Johnson and all of that, and I thought I wanted to be a wildlife photographer, that's the only game in that particular field that I knew of. And then he started telling me about, "Oh, if you're interested in wildlife you aught to write to the Department of Interior and these colleges. Well I wasn't really thinking about college at that time.

But anyway, I went into the Army then and when I got out, trying to think what I wanted to do, and I remembered that little conversation and I did write to the Department of Interior and got the name of colleges. And of course I had the GI Bill by then, and so I decided to go to a wildlife school and ended up going to Oregon State and I got my bachelor's degree there in 1952. But in 1951, there was an item on the bulletin board and I had a chance to come to Alaska to work for the commercial fishery research out of Seattle actually, and we went to Ketchikan and marked pink salmon fry for awhile. And then when that project was over with why I got a job as a [fish] wheel watchman at Yakutat there on the Situk River, and of course that was a great job. And that fall I went

back, I had a year to go and I finished and I made some contacts, and then I came up with the Fish and Wildlife the following spring. And I wanted a biologist job but there was only or five biologists in Alaska at that time, and so I took a job with the enforcement.

I went to Sand Point the first summer and was the assistant to a guy by the name of Bob Bain, and than that fall why they offered me a permanent job down in Wrangell, which I took. But after being down there about 2-1/2 years I decided that I was going to go back to school and get a master's, and I contacted John Buckley at the University of Alaska and he offered me a fellowship. And I sent in my resignation and told them why I was leaving, that I wanted to go back and get more biological work rather than enforcement. And about the time I had already resigned, I had not left the job yet but I'd given my notice, and before it came due why Russ Hoffman, the Refuge Manager at Kodiak, quit. And the regional director, Clarence Rhode, and Dan Ralston, the enforcement guy, flew down to Petersburg where I was at and wanted to know if I'd be interested in taking that job. Well I was really interested but I had made a commitment to Buckley, and he said, "Well, I think Buckley will understand." And anyways I called Buckley and he said, "Yeah, you better take the job." He said, "You know how few there are in Alaska."

And so I became the Refuge Manager at Kodiak, having only been on one refuge in my life before and that was Malheur as a student down there at Oregon State, and I ended up there 8 years. And when I got there of course that bear-cattle problem and the bear-salmon was a big controversy you know. And they were doing some studies, more or less, the refuge staff there to refute; Dick Shuman had done a study where he blamed the bear for the reduction in salmon in Karluk Lake and so forth. Well when I got there I felt that we needed to get more positive studies and decided to try do some live history studies, but all that hinged on being able to capture brown bears and nobody had ever done it before. So I kind of let myself in for it, I didn't realize what I was getting into really. But over the period of time that I was there why first we started with culvert traps and that didn't, and we only had ether for anesthesia to knock them out with. And so that first bear we got we stopped up all of the holes in the culvert and then we sprayed ether in there with a fly sprayer, and when he finally went down we had to drag him out and keep a bucket of ether on his head, it was kind of reckless. And then a year or so later we found out some of the guys were using on black bear were using steel traps and snares, and so I figured well we could do that. And so one year there we caught eight bear that way, and then we would lasso them and then try to get a bucket of ether over their head! That got kind of wild anyways. But eventually we worked it out, and then the following year they came out with a better drug and we would, I forget but I think it was called (**sicostran**), it would knock them out, it was a muscular relaxant. And what we did we'd trapped them either in traps or steel snares and then we had a 15-foot aluminum pole and put a syringe on the end of that, somebody would attract their attention and we jabbed them in the rear. And they'd go out but it would only keep them out for about a maximum of four or five minutes, so we had to rush in and hog-tie them down and then give them a phenobarbital sodium and put them to sleep. And we actually used that method and while I was there we ended up doing about 200 bear that way, and we started gathering a lot of good information and so forth and so on. And so that was one of my major efforts there at Kodiak.

Of course when I went to Kodiak it was still territorial days, and so we had to function not only as a refuge manager but we also were responsible for doing elk and deer work on Afognak [Island] and so forth and so on. We met every year, set game regulations and just like the state does now you know, so it was quite different than it is now. When I went there I had one biologist which I had some problems with and eventually he left, but most of the time I was there I only had one assistant and that's all. And there was a year there I remember we only had $8,000.00 to operate only two, I don't think that counted our salary. Here awhile back I ran into one of my old WD Forms, and I think my salary at Kodiak, what was it then... it was $5,000 or $6,000. It was $6,000.00 I think, something like that. But that didn't count the 25% so I might have been making $8,000.00 or something back then. And we didn't get any overtime or anything in those days you know, we just worked it. But I was there eight years, and I also did work on Afognak. And then Dick Hensel became my assistant in 1960, and then he took over it when I left in '63. But we wrote quite a few research papers and so forth on Kodiak bear, the work we'd done while I was there and afterward. We had the go ahead to do a wildlife series on it and somehow or another we never did finish it. But anyways, that always bothered me and about a year ago, after I left Fish and Wildlife Service I also worked with brown bear with the Park Service at Katmai. But I accumulated all of my information there and I wrote a book, *Into Brown Bear Country*. I don't know if you've heard of it or not but it came out last year, it was published by the University of Alaska Press, and it is available in several bookstores in Anchorage and so forth and so on.

But anyways, I was at Kodiak eight years and mainly working with bear and I did some elk and deer work, and we were also responsible for managing the populations there and everything. And then after 8 years my wife was really wanting to leave. Anyways, the Kenai Refuge position came open, and I was really reluctant to take that job because all the oil business and I always thought I didn't want to get involved in that. And Dave Spencer, who was my boss at that time, well actually except for the three years I was an enforcement agent he was my boss my whole career in the Fish and Wildlife, 19 years I think he was my boss. But anyways, he told me, "Well, come on over to Kenai and take a look at it." And he said, "If you don't like it and don't want it, well I'll understand." But he said, "I think you might change your mind." So I did go over there and decided that, anyways accumulating the fact that I decided to take the job, and so I did become the Refuge Manager at Kenai in 1963 it was. I was at Kodiak from 1955 to '63, and I forgot to mention that, but in southeastern I was there '52 permanently to '55, when I went to Kodiak, and that doesn't count the 6 months I spent up here in '51.

John Cornely:
And when you were at Wrangell that was enforcement?

Will Troyer:
That was strictly enforcement, yeah. And I did, the last 6 months I was down there Sandy, I can't think of his last name, was the enforcement agent at Juneau, and he retired and he asked me to come up and temporarily take that until Fred Robards moved down from Cordova and took it, so I was there during that 6 month period. That's where I met

my wife by the way and we eventually got married after I went to Kodiak. She worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service too at that time. And then we went to Kenai, and I should say at Kodiak in the summertime when I was doing that bear research it was pretty... we were in the field every day during that season, and most of the year I moved my family out to Camp Island, we had a little cabin out there that we stayed. And all my kids were born in Kodiak while I was there, but the youngest one was only about a year old when we left.

But at Kenai it was actually a pretty challenging refuge, and I really ended up liking it there. I was there 5 years and we did a lot of moose work, I did a little sheep, but we had a lot of recreational, a lot of campgrounds and stuff like that. The biggest interest and my pet project was putting in that canoe system, which we built there in that time. And when I went there they had talked about doing it some day when they got money and I, as usual I kind of jumped into things you know and I said, "Well, let's just start doing it," and the first winter we started putting portages in. At that time Ave Thayer was my assistant, and let's see I had another assistant, and then later Bob Ritchie I hired him as my recreational guy, and Bob Siemel was my range man there. The staff actually we had seven people when I left there, something like that. Which was big compared to my two staff at Kodiak! But there in addition to putting in the canoe system, and this lasted over several years, it took several years to put that in, but we did a lot of work on moose and surveys, and we did a lot of habitat improvement and things like that. Then we did some sheep surveys, I did a minimum of research on sheep but not a lot. But I also did some Trumpeter Swan work there, and kept that going. And that accumulated into I'm one of the four authors in the *Trumpeter Swans of Alaska* [Wildlife Monograph # 26; 1971] that we put together, and I forgot what year that came, but it was one of those wildlife series and the Professional Wildlife Society and General Wildlife Management.

John Cornely:
It seems to me it was in the '60's, but I don't remember exactly what year.

Will Troyer:
Yeah, yeah; I think it came out about '65, or something, it was after I left the Kenai I believe. And Hank Hansen put it all together, and Pete Shepherd and I was trying to think who the fourth author was, Jim King maybe, I think maybe it was Jim King, yeah. But anyways, we put that together.

I also when I was at Kodiak I did bald eagle work, but most of my work was with big game. And it was interesting because when I was going to Oregon State I always thought I was an upland game biologist! But because I ended up at Kodiak it was natural that you got into and started out with the brown bear work and so forth.

And then I was there at Kenai five years and I wasn't really ready to leave, I liked the job and so forth, it was challenging because of all the different activities we had going on there, the oil and recreational things, plus the wildlife. But it was about that time they decided they were going to fill a job, the wilderness coordinator. When congress passed the Wilderness Act in '64, they directed Fish and Wildlife and Park Services to do

studies, add additional stuff. And I didn't really want to leave the Kenai but I was really interested in that project and felt strongly about wilderness, and I was kind of afraid somebody would take it that wasn't interested in it, and Dave Spencer kind of encouraged me to take it too. So after five years I did take that project and it was very interesting, it got me into a lot of areas in Alaska; the Arctic out in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, and the Aleutians, Izembek, a lot of the island refuges. But it was kind of frustrating in the end, we started holding hearings, and we did get a couple of small islands in the wilderness, but at that time the Alaska Native Land Claims Act came along and everything was put on hold. Eventually it was kind of disbanded and everybody went different directions and so forth.

And I actually became assistant refuge supervisor under Spencer, but then about that time, to be honest with you, I wasn't getting along with our regional director, Watson, and the Park Service offered me a field job and I decided to take it. And one of the things that enticed me to do that was because they wanted me to do additional brown bear work at Kodiak, or at Katmai. And I worked in Katmai, McKinley, and Lake Clark mainly during that career. But that's basically why I left the Fish and Wildlife.

But the wilderness job was a great job, it's just that we did all of that work and then all the sudden everything was brought to a halt. But one thing that did happen is when they finally completely like the Kenai studies they basically followed the recommendations that I had made, and actually they added a couple of places, they added a little more than what I'd recommended and so forth. But that's kind of a nutshell on my career.

John Cornely:
Gordon Watson was the regional director?

Will Troyer:
He was the regional director, yeah.

John Cornely:
Go ahead and talk about your Park Service work, and go ahead and do kind of the same thing, just go through what you did with the Park Service.

Will Troyer:
Well, I was with the Park Service 7 years and 23 years when I left the Fish and Wildlife Service. And I really hated to leave because all of my friends were in Fish and Wildlife, and I put a lot of effort into it, but on the other hand the field work the Park Service offered me was really good. So I was really the only biologist at that time out of the regional office, and I was really scattered too thin. But I also got my flying license when I was at Kodiak, and so I started flying for the Fish and Wildlife Service and then I did the same thing for the Park Service. And so I was doing brown bear, mainly brown work at Katmai and I had a caribou study at McKinley. And I collared some of the first caribou and followed that heard because the population was way down and we were trying to figure just what was wrong, why the reduction in the population. Well, they used me to do a lot of preliminary work, like I did a lot of moose, sheep, caribou

population surveys to get ideas of the numbers and so forth. And as a flying biologist, why that kind of fitted right into it. So I did a lot of that stuff, the same way at Katmai I did winter moose surveys and things like that. And I worked until let's see, I retired I think the first of January of '82, so I put 7 years in with the Park Service on that and so forth.

John Cornely:
Where was their regional office?

Will Troyer:
Their regional office was in Anchorage; I worked out of Anchorage all of the time. But I was gone a lot, sometimes I'd go out to Katmai for a month, I flew my little Cub, I had a little Cub out there. And I was really stretched too thin; in the spring of the year I spent most of my time working on caribou during the calving and stuff. And then in the summer, July and August, when the bears were on the stream I spent a lot of time Katmai. And in the fall, again, they wanted some information and we decided to collar a few bear out there, and I did that the hard way too, we strictly did it, by then we had good dart guns. And we managed to collar a few bears by following them around and shooting them with darts, and then got pretty exciting too you know at times.

John Cornely:
Were these just regular collars?

Will Troyer:
We had radio collars by then. See, that's one thing I didn't mention, when we were at Kodiak we didn't have radio collars, we used colored collars. They started, I think Dick Hensel and some of his cohorts started some of the first radio work there after I left, but that was relatively new. Yeah when I went, see I hadn't done any bear work from the time I left Kodiak in '63 until I went with the Park Service in '74, and during that 11 year period it was like going from the horse and buggy days to modern technology because by then they had worked out good methods of drugs and deliveries, and they did a lot of work by choppers, flying around. But because of the public awareness there at Katmai they didn't want a lot of disturbance, so that's why we opted to strictly sneak around and put a few collars by following them and darting them and so forth. But caribou in McKinley we collared them basically when they were outside the park on the end, but we only kept about 10 or 12 and then I followed the herd from that on there and so forth. And I did a little few extra things with the Park Service too where I get sent different places.

John Cornely:
Did you ever get any insight into why the numbers were declining or why they were low in the caribou?

Will Troyer:
Well not for sure but indicated that the population had dropped, and there's no doubt about it that once it was depressed that low predators kept it low for quite a few years.

And it's gradually built up a little bit after but it was a very slow process and so forth. Yeah, I used to think I never wanted to study caribou because they are, its fascinating work but you can't ever figure them out because they're constantly changing. They're moving different and everything, it's really kind of difficult but it was pretty interesting. But bear on the other hand were pretty difficult to work with too because it's hard to get a population figure number and things like that because they are not out in the wintertime in the snow where you can count them and things like that. But it was interesting, years later when the Fish and Wildlife did lots and lots of collaring on Kodiak; when Dick Hensel and I were there we sat down there one year and based on our work down at Karluk, and I did a lot of population surveys, stream surveys down there. If you do it long enough you kind of get an idea of what's there, and we came up with a figure of almost 2,500 bears on Kodiak on the refuge there. And when they did all of their work they came in at a couple of hundred bears of what we had, so we weren't too far off, and we did it based on habitat types. We figured number one, top priority habitat like Karluk Lake and how much of that we had on the refuge, and then number two in acreage, and we came up within 100 or 50 bears of what they did with all their...

John Cornely:
Yep, all their expensive techniques.

Will Troyer:
Yeah, right, right. But we had no proof, we just kind of estimated it but it came out pretty good.

But I really enjoyed my career; I did mostly field work, I managed to stay in the field all the time. And I know I was offered a couple of jobs to go back to Washington and turned it down. And one time right after I went back and got a masters degree at Montana State at Missoula when I was working with the brown bear at Kodiak, it was the same time that John Craighead was starting his grizzly work in Yellowstone. So I went back there for that reason, and I did it in two different hitches; I went back in January of 1960, and I took two semesters and then I came back to Kodiak for a year, and then I went again in the fall and I finished up in March of '62, I think it was, and I did get a masters while I was there.

John Cornely:
You worked through their coop unit there with Craighead?

Will Troyer:
Yeah, but I had to do it on my own, at that time Fish and Wildlife wouldn't pay for that, it was something I wanted to do. They wanted me to come back for a doctorates but I decided against it, it was getting pretty hard, I had a family of three kids by then and financially it was pretty tough to do, and I wanted field work so it worked out all right and I'm pretty happy with the career I had.

John Cornely:
I'd like you to talk about what it was like living at Kodiak, maybe family life and just what kind of housing you had and what other issues were going on.

Will Troyer:
When we moved to Kodiak I was single yet, I got married soon after that. But the Fish and Wildlife built a refuge house there in about 1940; I think it might have been built as an enforcement something. And we lived in that house the 8 years I was there, and that has been torn down now to the end of where they put that bridge to Near Island over there, so it's not there anymore. But that was a pretty nice spot to live, you set up on a hill, although you were subject to high winds several times in the winter time I thought the windows were going to come in on me, I mean it can blow in Kodiak. And we didn't have very good radio communications, and when I went there we just had a little boat, and there one year I didn't even have a boat just a skiff and I'd run around in that. But you know we were pretty limited with the funds we had and so forth, and we could only do so much. But my summers were pretty much spent out at Kodiak, and I had a half-time secretary and every week or two I'd fly in for a day and then I'd go out again. When I went there the bear-cattle problem was a big publicity issue and all the business men, and not all of them but a lot of them, and the ranchers were really pushing to either eliminate bears or reduce them to great numbers. So we were kind of on the end of the totem pole there, in other words we weren't too popular with a certain amount of people. And that's one of the reasons I started the bear research, trying to start getting information I would hope that would build a better, more interest to the public on it, which eventually it ended up doing that.

John Cornely:
So how much of the island was refuge? And tell a little about those ranches and the...

Will Troyer:
Well the ranching area was actually immediately out of Kodiak within 20- or 30-miles, but they had ambitions to do better. But when the refuge was created they eliminated a mile strip around the island and they stated it was for the purpose of fish canneries and stuff like that. Well BLM (Bureau of Land Management) took it upon themselves to start issuing grazing leases on that mile strip, and they did issue one in Uganik Bay to a guy by the name of Daniel Boone in fact, and he had a mile strip and he put sheep on that, and of course the bears really eliminated that. And they were going to issue on a whole bunch of things. And I think it was 1958, soon after I got there, '57 or '58, anyways the Secretary of the Interior directed us to get together with the BLM and come to some kind of compromise. So Dave Spencer and I, and I think there was a guy by name of Gene Wunderlich who represented BLM, who was really a ranching fan. Anyway the short of it was that we got control of the mile strip and we gave up the two nearest peninsulas, I think its Kupreanof and was it Shearwater Peninsula, I forgot the name of that peninsula, Shearwater, those two in peninsulas, and then we got the rest of the refuge. And we felt it was a reasonable compromise. Of course after that, when the Native Land Claims was settled, why they got a lot of the land there, and some of it of course Fish and Wildlife had got back but some of it they haven't.

But Kodiak was about 3,000 people when I went there; it was a lot smaller than that. And I just left when the earthquake happened, after that.

But we had a little boat, we acquired one while I was there, a little 23-foot boat and I used that to run around the island, and that was pretty small Shelikof Straits and so forth. And then finally they authorized us to fly airplanes, I think I got my float rating in 1960 there, and we chartered a plane there, an ex-Fish and Wildlife plane, and so we finally had the use of a Super Cub rather than charter out there.

John Cornely:
Did you take your lessons right there at Kodiak?

Will Troyer:
When I went to college the first year I got a private license but I didn't have a float rating and so when Dick Hensel came in we decided, we always wanted a plane and I said it's not going to happen because Fish and Wildlife had a policy at that time that they weren't going to... In other words, along the seacoast they basically didn't use single engine planes, they used twin engines, and they felt safety factor. But they gradually got away from that. So Dick Hensel and I formed a flying club, and I got my float rating there and after I got that I was using or little T-craft, we bought a little T-craft to do some surveys, and I called Clarence Smith, aircraft supervisor, up and I said, "I wonder if there is anyway I can get compensated for using?" And he said, "Well, come on down and we'll see if we can get you rated Fish and Wildlife pilot." And so I did, I went to Anchorage and I got checked out. And then one of the guys at Kodiak bought one of the ex-Fish and Wildlife planes and then chartered it to us, and that's how I got started flying for Fish and Wildlife. And then when I went to Kenai of course we had various planes and so forth. And Dick Hensel eventually got checked out too.

John Cornely:
So Kenai had some service planes?

Will Troyer:
Yeah, Kenai had several service planes, yeah they already had them there and they'd had them there for years. Of course Dave Spencer was a Navy instructor pilot for many years. When he used to come out and see me, at that time refuges had a Widgeon and he flew that for quite a few years, they finally lost that, they did away with that. But they had the Goose's for quite a few years out there in different places. But our policy in the Fish and Wildlife they really encouraged flying at that time, and so I was always kind of, not having had a private license many years ago, I was always kind of jealous of the Interior guys because they all got to fly and we didn't. And that's when Dick Hensel and I, he came there and said, "Well the only way we're going to get one is if we get a pilot's license and petition them to do that." Which I did, and eventually we got a plane out there and so forth. But it certainly helps when you can do your own flying you know because it was cheaper that way too, and it gives you more control and everything. I tried

to when I went with the Park Service I tried to just be a back seat biologist but it didn't last very long, I soon got checked out and flew for them too.

John Cornely:
Did the Park Service have their own planes?

Will Troyer:
Well when I was at McKinley I had a plane that I chartered off of another guy, but they finally got one and signed it to me pretty much exclusively in the summertime, and I used it almost all of the time at Katmai and McKinley. I took it with me wherever I went, and so that worked out pretty good.

And see were a territory at that time, and in the whole Fish and Wildlife I don't think we had a hundred people, including the office secretaries and everything at the time. And there was only about 4 wildlife biologists; Sig Olson was the deer biologist; a guy by the name of Ed Chatelain did moose work; and Bob Scott was doing sheep work mostly; and then later Ron (**Schouten**) caribou work. And that didn't include the refuges, now Dave Spencer had an assistant there, and Dave always encouraged a lot of wildlife work amongst his refuge managers, research work. And we had one, Bob Jones was stationed at Cold Bay and then the refuge manager was at Kodiak, and he usually had one assistant. And then let's see, I think they had 2 or 3 people at Kenai, something like that.

John Cornely:
When Bob Jones was out there, who was his supervisor?

Will Troyer:
Well, when he first was out there he was there by himself, but there were several people that several people that served under him; Vern Byrd was his assistant for awhile; Palmer Sekora was his assistant for awhile; and I can't remember who all. But I do remember there was a, it must have been about '57 or '58, when refuges just didn't have any money at all. I think the whole refuge program had $60,000.00; and I got $8,000.00 in Kodiak; Bob Jones got $4,000.00 in Cold Bay; and Dave Spencer had the rest you know, and of course he had to fund the salaries and so forth. That's when I, I think I have my old W-D Forms where with my 25% I think I made $8,000.00 a year on that, but we just didn't have much at that time. And he also at one time had a temporary guy, Dave Spencer did, out on the Yukon-Kuskokwim there, and I don't remember if he was full-time, I'm not sure and I can't remember his name either. But of course the year I went to Kodiak was the year there was, Dave was supervisor then at Kenai, and there was a guy by the name of Peterson and his assistant was Watson, and they were both drowned up the mouth of Skilak Lake that same fall I went out there, and that really put a big dent into our operation. And so Dave had to function as a refuge manager and so forth and supervisor for quite a few years, and it was a gradual expansion. Ave Thayer, my assistant at Kenai, he used to... Dave sent him up the Arctic, you know the Arctic was created in what was it 1959 or something like that, but was never funded you know. S he'd send Ave Thayer up there to do some work in the summertime, who was my assistant, and eventually he got

that job and became the refuge manager at Arctic. I did get to spend some time in the Arctic several summers during the wilderness studies, I went up there.

John Cornely:
Why don't you talk a little more about what you did in those wilderness studies and what all you were...

Will Troyer:
It was an interesting field assignment because when I first went on there I was by myself, later I hired Palmer Sekora to do the Aleutians. First I did the little islands ones and I got out on Semidi, Simeonof Island, and there was I want to say Chirikof, that's not right, there's a little island refuge off of **Kotabu** there, and I went up there and spent some time on there. But we tried to get, and we did manage to get one or two of those little island refuges in the wilderness system. And then I spent some time on Izembek and the Arctic, and of course I already knew Kenai but I spent some additional time there. It was several years later that they wanted to increase the amount of personnel, and so all the sudden I ended up I had Dick Hensel came in from Kodiak as one of my assistants, I had Palmer Sekora, and gee I'm trying to think of his name, he became regional supervisor in Portland later on, anyways I had a staff of 4 or 5 and plus 3 or 4 women. And we did, we went so far as to do the studies and hold hearings on quite a few of them and the brochures and all of that, and then everything was brought to a halt. We actually held hearings on the Kenai, and I was... on the Arctic we had the brochures all made up and ready to go to hearings when everything was brought to a halt. It was kind of discouraging, but nevertheless that's the way it went. Then the wilderness program was dismantled after that, so I was on that about 5 years I think something like that.

John Cornely:
I know because I worked in the Copper River Delta the impacts there of the 1964 earthquake. Was there anything at Kenai or Kodiak or some of the places that you were familiar with that really changed a lot?

Will Troyer:
I had left Kodiak but yeah, as I recall they lost their boat and their building that they had right down there on (unclear). See I left Kodiak in September I think it was, August or September of 1963, and that was in March I think was the earthquake. And at Kenai I don't remember much damage there. It's interesting that when the earthquake was I was down in a Fish and Wildlife meeting in Denver Training Center with Ray Tremblay and Chuck Evans. And we were on our way back and we got the word just before we landed in Portland, and we got into Seattle and couldn't go any further. And we were up all night and all kinds of bad rumors came through, the story was that Kenai oil field had caught fire and the whole Kenai was... Anyways, we managed to get on the first flight, and all it was was us three guys and the rest of them were reporters, and they were dressed in battle gear; they had canteens hanging on them. And we were pretty discouraged, we hadn't slept all night and we decided we'd hang together if we got to Anchorage. And when we got to... we didn't even know whether we could land when we

got to Anchorage, and we flew over Whittier and it was black, and I thought, "My word if that's that way it is in Whittier, what's it like in Anchorage?" But what happened was those oil tanks got tipped over and caught fire there and everything. We got over Anchorage I couldn't see anything wrong and then the pilot swung out over that area that slid off into the ocean then and we could see houses down there and everything. So we landed and then we rushed out to Ray Tremblay's place, Rays was all excited and here his wife had left a note, "I'm over at so-and-so's place." And then I couldn't get down to Kenai, the road had went out, so I jumped in the Fish and Wildlife plane and flew down, and I flew over my house and my wife came out and waved. But the lake, I lived right on Sport's Lake there, and the ice had broken up so I couldn't land on that. She and the kids and everything were okay. I did lose my well there due to the earthquake banging around, it cracked the case and got stuck and I had to pull it, and that's the only damage we had personally out of the deal. But that night I didn't know if I had a family left the way they made it sound, and I don't know where all those rumors got going but they made it sound terrible and it wasn't all that bad. But some places around the harbors and so forth it did, like at Kodiak those people lost their lives there, boats ended way up town. The same thing in Seward you know, and those tsunamis that came in afterward and so forth, so I missed all of that.

John Cornely:
Well talk a little about, I'm not familiar with the oil field and the issues at Kenai; were there rights and leases that were right on the refuge and that's the issue?

Will Troyer:
Yeah, that was one of the things that I was always reluctant to go to Kenai because at one time they had leases all over. But John Hakala was the refuge manager before that, and they built that gas line to Anchorage on that, and frankly I got along with the oil people pretty good but it was because John had went through the process of setting them right, and he had some real battles with them. But by the time I got there, why they'd got the word they better do things right and so things were a little bit easier for me when I went there. But one of the reasons that I put in that canoe system was they had leases all over, and I felt that if we got some other use in that area that maybe we stood a chance of holding some of that, which actually that happened that way. So it did pay off because we got some recreational use and everything, the canoe system and so forth. But they're still delivering oil on there and it will continue to be there for some time. But actually Ave Thayer did most of my oil work when I first came there but like I said, John Hakala had pretty well worked out all the things. He at one time when they were building that gas line jumped up on a Cat and pulled a guy off of it and he tied up all the equipment, he sealed it!

John Cornely:
It got their attention.

Will Troyer:
It got there attention, but I forgot who was in charge of the Fish and Wildlife in Juneau at that time; we still had a regional office there, but anyways, they were wondering what

John was up to. But anyways, these things were going pretty smoothly by the time I went there so it wasn't too bad, yeah.

John Cornely:
Talk about what you actually physically had to do to do the canoe trails, what did that entail?

Will Troyer:
Well, they had talked about doing a canoe system before but they always said, "Well, if we get a bunch of money we'll do it." And I said, "Let's just start." And Ave Thayer was all for it, Ave was one of the big backers, Dave was all for it too. But that winter Ave and I, and I've forgotten, I think Spencer was in on it too, oh Bob Waide was the other assistant I had at that time. Anyway, a couple of times a week I would just grab one of my assistants, and I also had a maintenance man, **Rex William**, and we would go out and cut portage from one lake to another.

John Cornely:
Just clearing the trails and so on?

Will Troyer:
Yeah, and by June we had one in, you know, basic. And we later had to go back, there were a couple of little waterways between some of the lakes and we thought we could get a canoe through there. Well we didn't know enough about canoeing, it was too rocky and we ended up having to put it in. But in June Dave Spencer and his family and I and Ave Thayer went through it. And frankly working on it in the wintertime, and I flew over it a lot of times and it seemed so small, and I really had a doubt in my mind whether it would amount to anything, whether it was big enough. But once I got in the canoe and saw what we had done, I was convinced we had accomplished something pretty good. And then young Sig Olson; Sig Olson's dead you know, he wrote a lot of books about canoeing. Well young Sig Olson was with the Forest Service by then I think it was, and anyways I asked him to come up and take a look at it, and he went over it with me and he was pretty enthused about it too you know. And then we added a little section or two to it the next winter, and then about 2 years later, before I left, why I put that northern unit in. I cut a lot of those portages on the first one myself and a few on the second one, but I hired a couple of guys that did most of the Swanson River System, and I supplied them with everything and we laid it out. But before we did that, when I got together with the state Fish and Game, I hired a guy and they had a fishery biologist and they went out and sampled these lakes. So we tried to route the canoe system through as many lakes as we could that had fish in you know, which added to it, but some of the lakes don't have fish in it and so forth. But I've forgotten how many lakes we got hooked up together, I had ideas about expanding it further, but I left then and it didn't get expanded too far.

John Cornely:
There's not been much expansion/

Will Troyer:
Yeah, well I was a little ambitious because a portage or two would have been a mile and a half long or so. But as I recall it is 50 or 60 lakes that are hooked up out there. But it's been very popular. And when I got through with the first section, and after I went through there with Dave's family and Ave Thayer, I invited the local news editor to go with me and he gave us a real good write up, and from there it just took off and became quite popular.

John Cornely:
And what was happening with moose in Kenai while you were there?

Willy Troyer:
I used to come over when I was at Kodiak and help do the moose surveys, and we had that '47 burn and in the '50's and even early '60s, we had tremendous populations of moose. And we used to do our moose surveys, try to do a total count and that time we figured we had 8,000 to 10,000 moose. And later as that habitat grew up and it didn't become such a good moose range, why it dropped off. But then there was another fire in '60, it was after I left, I think '69, and it temporarily increased the population again. But yeah, well you go back and look at the history of the Kenai, it's always been ups and downs because they've had series of fires on there, and moose populations have went up and down with it, they're dependent on that new vegetation.

John Cornely:
And was there any real active management?

Will Troyer:
Yeah, we were also doing habitat work. We had some rollers and there was a burn, I think it was called the 26 burn, out just beyond where the headquarters are now. Our headquarters were in Kenai at the time, and we had Quonset hut for our office, but we always talked about but we never got the money to build a headquarters over where they're at now in Soldotna. But just beyond that there's a big area, and every winter we would roll down a lot of that spruce, and we were getting quite a bit of habitat work in there.

John Cornely:
What were those rollers?

Will Troyer:
Well these were just rollers that we pulled with Cats. And then after that '67 burn they got those great big machines, and they really went big all out on that. But I didn't have that when I was there.

John Cornely:
Do they have feet on the rollers or were they just basically big heavy rollers?

Will Troyer:
The stuff I had was just big heavy rollers with cleats on them. But what they got later after that '67 burn they had huge machines.

John Cornely:
Just shredded everything.

Will Troyer:
Yeah, I don't know what happened.

John Cornely:
I saw pictures of some of those one time and they were huge machines.

Will Troyer:
Yeah, yeah, that was after I left there, I didn't see that. But we did quite a bit of "**slycock**" area, that's what we called it where did most of that improvement, and then they did some out on the gas line road too in there. Where our rollers paid off the best on that was where we originally had a hardwood forest, and then it came up and the spruce came in and so what we did was roll down the spruce and the hardwoods came back immediately. And we got some quick results on that in a few years, got quite a bit of stuff done. And I tried to do a little control burn but never could get a fire going, the year after I left the whole place burned down! But they've done quite a bit since then.

Well when I was of course live trapping brown bear it was a pioneering study, and we got into all kinds of scrapes and so forth and so on, and some of that has been recorded. I did write a book on it, *Into Brown Bear Country*, which has got a lot of photographs in it too. And after I retired I worked 7 summers as a bear photography guide along the Katmai coast, and I obtained a lot of pictures at that time. But *Into Brown Bear Country* is based on my work and experiences on Kodiak and at Katmai, and that was published by the University of Alaska Press. I'm in the process of writing another book, which is going to be an autobiography of my career as a wildlife biologist in Alaska, and it will start from the time I first came here when I first went to work until I retired in January of 1982. And I haven't really named it for sure but I'm temporarily calling it *Pioneer Biologist*, and it includes my work as an enforcement agent in southeastern as well as my refuge manager and my wilderness work and my National Park Service work and so forth, so it covers quite a few years.

John Cornely:
And you wrote a book about growing...

Will Troyer:
Yeah, this will be my third book, my first book I published a couple of years ago; I grew up, as I mentioned early in this report, as an Amish/Mennonite farm boy, my folks were Amish until I was about 9 or 10 years old, and we farmed with horses. And I wrote a book about that life several years, just trying to think the name publisher, can't think of it,

but it's called *From Dawn o Dusk, Members of an Amish/Mennonite Farm Boy*; Llumina Press put that out in Florida. So somebody can look it up on the internet if they're interested in it. I never really advertise in Alaska, it's mainly sold pretty good back in Indiana and places like that. And this one, the one I'm writing now, I'm not sure who will publish it and when it will be out. But what I tried to do is kind of tell the whole story of my life and experiences I had as a career biologist and enforcement agent, and a lot about how it was in historical times compared to now, and I consider it historical times now. But it will have a few pictures of the old time, my life at Yakutat and so forth in there.

John Cornely:
Do you got interesting bear stories you can tell for us?

Will Troyer:
Yeah, well a couple of them I related in my *Into Brown Bear County*, but I had a lot more in there and the editors at the University of Alaska Press really didn't want too much of that in there, they thought I was using too much so I said, "Okay, I'm going to write another book and I'll just add it and put them in that," which I did. But yeah, when we started that we were completely dumb, we didn't know what we were doing. After we left the culvert traps and started catching them by steel traps, and I remember one of the first real wild times we had was when we were still trying to knock them out with ether and only got 7 or 8 bears that first year. But first we only got the little sub-adults, 200- or 300-pounds, and we could handle them. And then one day we got a huge sow caught and we got ropes over her and she just snapped them in two, and I mean she was mad. And we were really sweating because we had this bear caught in the trap and didn't know how to release it or anything, and couldn't keep a hold of it. And this went on for some time and finally I told my 2 assistants, I said, "There's no way we're going to be able handle that bear." He said, "Well how are you going to release it?" So I had this bright idea; it was steel trap that she was caught in, they've got a bolt that holds the whole thing together and I said, "You guys attract her attention, I'm going to slip up behind and see if I can hit that bolt with a 30-06 and maybe it will break." And I couldn't believe the first shot I hit it exactly where I aimed, and that trap fell right off of her foot and she took off! But another dumb experience we had was when we first started we didn't how to... we caught the little cubs and the female would barely greet us. And the first time that happened we didn't know what to do, we were whispering, we saw we had this female... and a cub caught in the trap, and the female, it was a yearling, was nearby. And so we were whispering to each other what are we going to do now, and about then she saw us and came just full forward, and the other 2 guys headed up a tree. Where there was a little creek about 50- or 60-feet in front of me, and I shot in the water in front of her. I don't know if I'd have the nerve to do that today, shooting or not. Anyway, there was a big spray and then I jumped, got up and tried to climb a cottonwood tree. Well I never made it. Finally, and I was expecting to get bit anytime, and I finally looked around. Well, she was running back to her cub, and apparently when that spray and the noise hit, why she went back. But we finally found out that we had to make lots of noise, and when we'd hear a cub bawling, we carried these shell crackers and we would lob one of those out. Female brown bears under stress are something, and I think we had out of 88 cubs and yearlings we caught there was about 12 adult sows that gave us a real bad time.

And when I say a bad time, it took us a couple of hours to get them to back off away from the cubs and so forth.

So we learned as went along, but it was... Another experience I remember one time we caught one, I thought she was caught in a trap where we had it set, and I went over there, and Dick Hensel was with me and I forget who the other guy was, and the bear was asleep. And I said, "Don't disturb her" because they get real wild, and I said, "I'll slip up behind her and give her the drug and then we'll jump away." Well I slipped up behind her and I jabbed her, and the bear wasn't caught in the trap at all, she walked off! Dumb bear, we followed her into the woods, that's the only free-roaming bear we got! I jabbed her with that dart and she just jumped up and walked away, she wasn't caught in the trap at all!

John Cornely:
When you used steel traps, and I did some coyote research and I used steel traps, were they padded or offset jaws?

Will Troyer:
Yeah, what they did, we got them and when we first got the original ones they had teeth on them and we ground those off and then smoothed it down and then we wrapped it with tape. And they had offset jaws, but they generally step in them, and we did a couple of times we lost a toe or something and they'd get away. But we had a drag on it with a prong.

John Cornely:
A big drag hook.

Will Troyer:
And then we would follow the drag, and generally they would get tangled up in an alder and it would give some, so it has some give to it so they wouldn't just...

John Cornely:
That's what we did with the coyotes because otherwise if you staked them out they'd chew their paws off.

Will Troyer:
Yeah, right, so we did the same thing with bears and then we'd just have to follow the drag trail.

John Cornely:
Since you retired and besides writing some of these books and so on, have you been doing other kind of wildlife work?

Will Troyer:
Well as I mentioned, I worked on the oil spill two summers and that was at Katmai...

John Cornely:
After you retired?

Will Troyer:
Yeah, that was in '89, and in '90 I worked on that oil spill. And then from there I met some people out there who wanted to start a bear photography viewing area, and they asked me to go out and help them get started because I'd worked along the Katmai coast. Well I ended up working 7 summers with them out there, and I did that during that time, and I enjoyed that very much, it was a lot of fun. But I finally I got tired of it after so many years, it got a little bit old you know, you go to the same places and all of that. But actually I learned, in many ways I learned more about bears doing that than I do the biologist because we sit there for hours at a time eyeball to eyeball with these brown bear, watching them. And these guys wanted to look for unusual behavior for photo shots, so we'd sit there for hours at a time day after day looking at these bears. So I learned quite a bit about bears in that time.

John Cornely:
Was it an area that you could watch them fishing and stuff?

Will Troyer:
Yeah, well we did both yeah, I did some right there at Brooks Falls, of course we had a lot of fishing going on there and we did some photography. Bu most of my photography was along the coast in those sedge flats and so forth, but there were several places that had streams where they also fished. But a lot of our bear photography that I guided on it was in the sedge flats where they're out in the open fields and so forth and we did that, and so that was pretty interesting.

I only did one kayak trip in the Arctic and what we did, Ave Thayer dropped us off and my son went with me and he was only about ten years old, we got dropped off right on the Canadian border and then we sneaked along the shore, the northern shore there. I forgot how far we got; I think it was a little past Beaufort we got blocked by ice eventually. But then I floated quite a few rivers on there. But the kayak trip along the Arctic coast was I remember we were out there it was the 4th of July and we got snowed on at that time, it was pretty chilly, but the ice was just right in. But those Leeward Islands kind of, there's open water between the Leeward Islands and the mainland. We did have to pull our kayak over the ice there for several miles in one place.

John Cornely:
What did you see? Did you see bears?

Will Troyer:
We just saw a couple of bears along the coast, but during that time after we got dropped off we got right in the middle of a herd of about 40,000 caribou, and that's the most memorable thing that sticks in my mind because I told my son, "Let's walk out there." And we walked out and they started split open and we right in the middle of this migrate. And I don't know for sure how many there were but near as I could estimate I figured

there were at least 40,000, it was a post-calving deal. And that was the most impressive thing I've ever been in, and I've been into Africa three times photographing wildlife, I've been on the Serengeti Plains, but being in the middle of those caribou was really, I'll never forget that time you know because of the constant clicking of hooves and just caribou always feeding, running, grazing, and it's pretty impressive.

John Cornely:
Did you see any nesting waterfowl?

Will Troyer:
Yeah, there was a lot of waterfowl nesting along the coast there and so forth, and a lot of shorebirds and things like that. Yeah, I was pretty impressed with the amount of birdlife there was along there. And of course that is a very important area you know, they migrate along there and so forth. And then I floated **Shane Jack** and I floated Colleen (Lake) one time, and then I got dropped off several places and I'd just hike around different spots, and I was in the Schrader Lake area several times. But we did the same thing then in other areas too, I got out. And like I say, I spent quite a bit of time in the Izembek and on some of those remote islands.

The Semidi's, we went out there... we acquired a boat to do the Aleutian studies, a surplus boat that Palmer Sekora then basically did that. And on the way out there one year we did around the Semidi Islands. But that's really impressive to get around those big seabird rookeries, yeah. Yeah I love seabirds anyway.

John Cornely:
Do you care to make any comments on Arctic Refuge and all the proposed drilling and so on?

Will Troyer:
I did the wilderness studies, and I proposed the whole thing be put in the wilderness. And of course it didn't happen at that time, and then they deleted it as part of it. When you look at the coast of Alaska and see how little bit that the Arctic contains, and especially that's a pretty narrow part, I mean I don't see any reason why we shouldn't retain that as a wilderness because it's the only thing we've got left on that coast, and I feel pretty strongly about that. But whether politically you know we've come so close to loosing it several times, whether eventually we'll loose it I don't know but I'd like to see it retained as is. And that's not very popular amongst a lot of Alaskans, but it seemed to me like maybe we've swung it a little bit the other way around the population now with the people you know than it was at that time. But every year I'm always afraid that it might happen.

John Cornely:
Well I thought it cleared here, well in the last year I thought that we lost it all.

Will Troyer:
Yeah I did too. We've come so close, yeah, especially with the Republican administration controlling everything. Yeah, I can't believe that we didn't loose it you know, but it came so close. Well you know they drilled temporary wells out there, what is it 25-years ago now? And it seems to me like if they really hit big prospects there they would have been leaking that information or something. I've never heard of it being leaked you know so I don't know, but of course they're pretty tight lipped.

John Cornely:
Especially in the last few years, and even within our own agency. We've always had one of the best kind of grapevines going, but in the last few years, you just don't hear anything until something actually happens.

Will Troyer:
Well you know when I was doing the wilderness studies the two areas that I felt the strongest about was the Kenai and the Arctic; the Arctic because of the very large ecosystem we had up there remote, and the Kenai because it was so close to so many people that I felt it was very important to set aside large tracts of wilderness. And I'm glad they managed to do that because, and I do a lot hunting and fishing and canoeing and hiking yet, and I spend a lot of my time in the Kenai Refuge you know, but just because it allowed to use track vehicles and stuff like that. And that's one of the reasons I retired here at Cooper Landing because I'm right at the edge of that, and also the Chugach National Forest. So it's very important to me personally too. But you know, boy there's a lot of pressure on Alaska's conservation lands, and sometimes I wonder how long we'll be able to hold them. It used to frustrate me when I was a... you know I've been up here since '51, actually I drove the Alcan Highway in 1948 when I got out of the Army, but I've seen a lot of changes up here. And I remember when I was the refuge manager at Kenai I'd have some people from Washington come here, flying around and I'd talk about how fast Alaska is changing and they'd say, "What you mean, it's all wilderness." Well you know, to their perspective back in Washington it was, but I've seen a lot of changes in the population. When I came here it was like 150,000, and now its 600,000, and then you've got to divide everything you do up with that. And you kind of wonder where it's all going to stop unless the population stabilizes or something, which is unlikely right now.

John Cornely:
You hear the same thing even today, most people in the country think its still all wilderness and it's pristine and there's no impact.

Will Troyer:
And there are lots of changes that are happening all the time you know. When I went to southeastern, they were starting to build the mill down there at Ketchikan. All of that, there's a few small operators doing some logging, but all of that was wilderness, Prince of Wales Island now has got roads all over it, and that used to be all... I talk a little bit about that stuff in my last chapter in the Bear book. What did I call that, I forgot what I called the last chapter, but I talk about where I think that we can maintain large bear populations

if we really want to. And some of the areas that I mention are of course Kodiak, Katmai, and the Alaska Peninsula Refuges and Admiralty Island in southeastern. But I think we've lost it in some places, and we're going to loose more. When they put roads in, log it off and put roads in, why the impact eventually is going to at least reduce the population. And when we loose brown bears and grizzly bear populations, why then that's our key wilderness animal in a lot of those places you know, and we loose that we've lost a lot. That's the way I look at it. Room to roam, that's what I call the last chapter I talked about, yeah. And you know it's not only a lot of people blaming hunters, they don't want them in there, but also we have... Everybody wants to go to all these places, I feel there aught to be some areas, particularly on bear, that maybe we don't allow people in at all you know, give them some space. And even when I was working over there, when I first started working over there on the Katmai coast photography, we were the only ones and now it's built up more and more, and they're being harassed quite a bit even though maybe people don't try not to. I think the different places people, the managers of the particular lands aught to set aside some areas where people aren't allowed to go to, yeah I feel strongly about that.

Unverified: Bob Bain (pg 2); Bob Siemel (pg 4); Ron Schouten (pg 10); Rex William (pg 13);

Key Words: Will Troyer, John Cornely, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Heritage Committee, Cooper Landing, Alaska, Department of Interior, Ketchikan, pink salmon fry, Yakutat, Situk River, enforcement agent, Sand Point, John Buckley, University of Alaska, Wrangell, Russell Hoffman, refuge manager, Kodiak, Clarence Rhode regional director, Dan Ralston, enforcement, Petersburg, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, bear-cattle study, bear-salmon study, Richard Shuman, salmon reduction, Karluk Lake, live history bear studies, culvert traps, Afognak, Richard (Dick) Hensel, brown bear study, Katmai National Park and Preserve, Into Brown Bear Country, University of Alaska Press, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, David Spencer, Fred Robards, Cordova, moose studies, sheep studies, canoe system, Ave Thayer, Trumpeter Swan studies, Trumpeter Swans of Alaska, Professional Wildlife Society, General Wildlife Management, Hank Hansen, Peter Shepherd, Jim King, bald eagle studies, wilderness coordinator, 1964 Wilderness Act, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Aleutians, Izembek, Native Land Claims Act, Mount McKinley National Park, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Gordon Watson, regional director, U.S. Park Service, collared caribou studies, moose, sheep, caribou population surveys, flying biologist, pilot biologist, winter moose surveys, collaring bears, radio collars, colored collars, John Craighead, Yellowstone grizzly bear studies, Near Island, BLM (Bureau of Land Management), grazing lease, Uganik Bay, Daniel Boone, Gene Wunderlich, grazing management, Kupreanof Peninsula, Shearwater Peninsula, Shelikof Strait, Clarence Smith, aircraft supervisor, Widgeon plane, Sigurd Olson, deer biologist, Ed Chatelain moose studies, Bob Scott sheep studies, Ron (**Schouten**) caribou studies, Cold Bay, Vernon Byrd, Palmer Sekora, Harold Peterson, Clarence Watson, Skilak Lake, wilderness studies, Semidi Island, Simeonof Island, Chirikof Island, Copper River Delta, 1964 Alaska earthquake, Ray Tremblay, Chuck Evans, oil fields, John Hakala refuge manager, Robert Waide, Swanson River System

canoe portage, Soldotna, Pioneer Biologist, From Dawn To Dusk, Members of an Amish/Mennonite Farm Boy, Brooks Falls, sedge flats, Colleen Lake, Schrader Lake, Chugach National Forest, Alcan Highway, Prince of Wales Island, Admiralty Island