

## Oral History Cover Sheet

**Name:** Neill Hartman

**Date of Interview:** May 18, 2005

**Location of Interview:** Littleton, Colorado

**Interviewer:** Dorothe Norton

**Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service:** 33 years (1972-2005)

**Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held:** Statistician in Washington D.C., Public Use Specialist and then Primary Assistant Refuge Manager at Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, Special Agent at Lakewood, Colorado, Cape Girardeau, SRA in Rosemont, Illinois, SRA then ASAC in Denver over Colorado, Utah, and Kansas.

**Most Important Projects:** Had a special operation in an Atlanta Wildlife Exchange, Operation Friendship, Operation Falcon, Operation San Luis Valley, and Operation Lost Hatch.

**Colleagues and Mentors:** Bob Blue, Charles Gish, Bob Delaney, Lynn Greenwalt, Jim Hogue, Ed Nichols, Terry Gross, Jaime Clark, Bob Hodgins, Bob Karges, Bill Zimmerman, Dave McMullen, Monty Halcomb, Chester Hamilton, Rick Thornton and Gary (Name).

**Most Important Issues:** Lack of money and resources, people problems, and the lack of understanding by others about federal wildlife law enforcement.

**Brief Summary of Interview:** Neill Hartman was born in Chicago, Illinois on April 28, 1949 to Kenneth and Loraine Hartman. Neill attended Southern Illinois University where he received both his bachelor and master's degrees in outdoor recreational resource management. Neill talks about the various positions he held throughout his Fish and Wildlife career starting out as a statistician in Washington D.C. to his eventual retirement as an ASAC in 2005. He also discusses the various projects he worked on, issues he faced while working for the Service, mentors he had, high and low points of his career, the most dangerous situation he had to face, and the changes that have occurred within the Service since his employment.

Dorothe: Today is Wednesday, May 18, 2005. This interview is with Neill Hartman in Littleton, Colorado and Dorothe Norton, thank you. Well, Neill, I'm happy that you have the time that you could afford to give to this interview today, and long time no see.

Neill: Yes.

Dorothe: So first thing I want to know is when and where were you born?

Neill: I was born April 28, 1949 in Chicago, Illinois.

Dorothe: Where about (unintelligible)?

Neill: Chicago, Illinois.

Dorothe: Oh Chicago, okay. What year?

Neill: April 28, 1949.

Dorothe: '49, you are a youngster. Your parents' names.

Neill: Kenneth Hartman and Loraine Hartman.

Dorothe: And what were their jobs and their education?

Neill: My father got a master's in hospital administration and he was the superintendent, executive vice president of Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago, which is where I was born at. And my mom was a nursing instructor and that's how mom and dad got hooked up years ago.

Dorothe: So where did you spend your early years then?

Neill: In the Chicago area.

Dorothe: And how did you spend them, what did you do; did you have any hobbies or special interests in any events?

Neill: Like sports, didn't do any hunting or fishing to mount anything back in those days; my parents were not into that. I liked camping and things like that, yeah.

Dorothe: Did you read a lot?

Neill: Oh some. It was more outdoor activities, you know, palling around with kids in the neighborhood and doing things like that.

Dorothe: So did you ever have a job before you graduated from high school, like a paperboy or?

Neill: When I was in high school, I was a life guard instructor and swimming instructor, and so I did that during the year and was part of the, I went to New Trier High School, which is up on the north shore of Chicago area, was in part of that group and then worked on an Angus test production facility in Libertyville, Illinois, which was kind of like a ranch; worked on that for a couple summers and then did that during college also, and also worked for a moving company in the Chicago area.

Dorothe: So what high school did you graduate from?

Neill: New Trier Township High School East, which is in Winnetka, Illinois.

Dorothe: What year did you graduate from high school?

Neill: 1967.

Dorothe: And then did you go onto college from there?

Neill: Yes, I went to Southern Illinois University down in Carbondale, Illinois where I got my bachelor's and my master's.

Dorothe: What were your degrees in?

Neill: Outdoor Recreational Resource Management.

Dorothe: That's the BS, the bachelor's?

Neill: BS and MS, both.

Dorothe: What years did you get those?

Neill: 1971 for my bachelor's, 1972 for my master's.

Dorothe: And so what aspect of your formal education equipped you for the future?

Neill: I did my master's work on Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, and I guess that was probably the biggest part from my education. My major professor individual by the name of Dwight McCurdy took a year sabbatical from Southern Illinois, and he was the special assistant to Lynn Greenwalt when Lynn was the chief of refuges in Washington. And so after I got my master's, Dwight McCurdy, Dr. McCurdy and I went into Washington and I interviewed with Forest Service and Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service and I got a job with Fish and Wildlife Service as a result of my major professor being a special assistant to Lynn McCurdy or Lynn Greenwalt. I, that was kind of my "in," so my master's work is what basically, and I did a, my master's thesis was an outdoor recreational resource inventory on Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, and so it was kind of my "in" with the Service.

Dorothe: What's his name, McLurdy?

Neill: Dwight McCurdy, M c C u r d y.

Dorothe: So did you have any mentors or courses that especially stuck with you?

Neill: I think he was probably by far my biggest mentor in college, and like I said, the outdoor recreational resource courses. I knew nothing about law enforcement or nothing about Fish and Wildlife Service other than it was a, when I was in college, it was a big party refuge to go, you know, that's where everyone went and hung out and so forth, and it wasn't until I got with the service that I realized more what the mission of the refuge system was.

Dorothe: So did you, were you ever in the military service?

Neill: No.

Dorothe: So we'll move right on then and I'll ask you when and where and how you met your wife?

Neill: I was stationed in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

Dorothe: Where?

At same time (Neill and Dorothe): Cape Girardeau.

Neill: ...Missouri, and as a special agent and she was doing her master's work at South East Missouri State University. And we met when we were down in Cape and then got married a year after we met.

Dorothe: When did you get married then?

Neill: 1979, I think.

Dorothe: In Cape Girardeau?

Neill: In Cape Girardeau.

Dorothe: Okay.

Neill: Well, we actually got married in Alton, Illinois; it's where her parents lived, and we got married in their backyard.

Dorothe: So, and you have three children?

Neill: Correct.

Dorothe: And can you tell me what they're doing now?

Neill: Brent is 19 years old, engaged, he's going to Metro State University in downtown Denver; he's finishing up his freshman year. Then we have twin daughters, Chelsea and Jennifer, they're 17 years old. Chelsea is big into basketball, she was; she lettered in varsity and was also the J.V. captain this year. And then she works at a pet shop in the local area. And then Jennifer is big into volunteering with different organizations; she works at a nursing, retirement center in Pegasus, which is a program that teaches disabled kids how to ride horseback and she volunteers with those, and she's applying for jobs now.

Dorothe: And, of course, when they're only 17, who knows what they're deciding they want to be when they get out of college.

Neill: They're looking at colleges, but.

Dorothe: I know my granddaughter is 23 and she went two years and she didn't like it particularly so she's been working now and she's been working with an autistic boy. And then she works at, with demented women in a home. And now she's going to go back to college 'cause she wants to become a social worker. But it takes them some time...

Neill: Sometimes they've got to take time to figure out what they want.

Dorothe: Okay, well now we'll go to your career. So you had already been doing some work then for Fish and Wildlife Service when you were still in college?

Neill: I did my master's work on Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge.

Dorothe: So what was your first professional position then, federal?

Neill: I was a, yes, I was a statistician, which was just kind of a job name, but I worked with the National Wildlife Refuge System branch of operations in Washington D.C. so my first post of duty was Washington.

Dorothe: Now, how can they say you never had any Washington office experience?

Neill: Well, I have a note from Director Lynn Greenwalt and he remembers telling me he says, "Neill, you've punched your ticket in Washington, go out and get a job." And he was the one that nominated me for my next position, which got me into law enforcement.

Dorothe: I see, okay.

Neill: So he recognized I had D.C. time in.

Dorothe: So you started with Fish and Wildlife Service...?

Neill: 1972.

Dorothe: As a special agent?

Neill: No.

Dorothe: No, okay.

Neill: No, I was a statistician in Washington.

Dorothe: And where did you go from there?

Neill: From there I went to Crab Orchard, or Havasu National Wildlife Refuge. Lynn Greenwalt did a special, and that's when he was director and we were still pretty good friends then. And he nominated me for the position of public use specialist at Crab Orchard, or at Havasu National Wildlife Refuge.

Dorothe: Havasu, yeah okay.

Neill: And then I was there for a couple years and then they changed job titles and wanted to get me into the Refuge Manager Series, so I stayed at Havasu Refuge for another couple of years as a primary assistant refuge manager. I still had, when I was a public youth specialist, I was in charge of law enforcement, and I kept that under my belt but I did the assistant manager work at Havasu also. And that's where I got to know Bob Kinghorn and Bob Wright real well and they kind of introduced me to what special agents do. And I had a manager at Havasu who got very upset when I would leave the refuge boundaries because the state was asking for assistance with dove work or duck work or whatever and I said I've got to get outside this refuge boundary, (unintelligible) and that's when I got on as an agent.

Dorothe: So then you started as a Fish and Wildlife Service at which station?

Neill: As a special agent I was here in Lakewood, Colorado. One of the individuals that I worked with back when I was in Washington was Harry Stiles.

Dorothe: Oh, okay.

Neill: And Harry Stiles was a special agent in charge in Denver.

Dorothe: Right.

Neill: And I think I was the last special agent to apply for and get a position where I applied for a specific duty station as opposed to a centralized hiring.

Dorothe: Okay.

Neill: 'Cause after my, after my getting that job here in Lakewood, everything became centralized hiring.

Dorothe: And so after you left Lakewood, where did you go next?

Neill: Then I went to South East Missouri.

Dorothe: Cape Girardeau.

Neill: At Cape Girardeau. And then from Cape Girardeau I went to Chicago, Rosemont, Illinois as the SRA, and then from Rosemont I came to Denver where I was the SRA over Colorado, Utah and Kansas. And I learned then what distance was; I had a thousand miles from one end of my district to the other, as a SRA. And then in 1990, I became the ASAC.

Dorothe: And you stayed until you were eligible for retirement?

Neill: Well, way past eligible, I was one year from mandatory.

Dorothe: Okay.

Neill: When I retired in March 2 of '05. So I had a year to go until I was mandatory.

Dorothe: Did your career affect your family at all?

Neill: Oh, I think it had a major impact on them, some positive, some negative. I mean I was gone a lot and left Mindy with a lot of things to take care of. I know when I moved out here in '88, we came out with a 1½ year old and the girls were 2 months old and I immediately got into one of the big, you know, bigger cases right off the bat, Operation San Luis Valley, and that took a lot of time and there were many, many times I was on trips; so a lot of time away from home. But then at the same time, I think it also taught the family a lot more about what the Fish and Wildlife Service was but more importantly how, you know, working for the federal government wasn't all that bad and, you know, it's got job stability and, you know, something you can enjoy.

Dorothe: So when you came on with us, how did you feel the pay and the benefits were?

Neill: When I first started in 1972, I think I made, it was either seven or nine thousand dollars a year, and right out of college, I thought that was great.

Dorothe: That was good.

Neill: And every time I turned around, I feel very fortunate; I was always getting some kind of step increase, promotion or whatever that I thought was timely. I didn't think I was very often overlooked, and as we went up through the grades and salaries increased and now I look at what my salary is now I feel very, very fortunate 'cause...

Dorothe: What grade did you start as when you came on?

Neill: A GS 7.

Dorothe: A 7, okay, and you retired as a 13?

Neill: 14.

Dorothe: 14, that's very good. So what kind of training did you receive for your job when you came into enforcement?

Neill: With Havasu National Wildlife Refuge there was no training program of any kind. I went out and they basically said, "Here's your badge, here's your gun, go get them." My first qualification was shooting six beer cans off a post and they said if I qualify, if I shoot the six beer cans off the post without having to reload from about fifteen yards, I re-qualify or I qualified and I'm eligible to carry a gun. And I think that's probably one of the things that got me very, very actively involved in teaching is because I realized back then there was no training; there was, I mean, Bob Kinghorn and Bob Wright were my on-the-job training instructors and so we had some interesting times with that. I did go to FLETC once I became a special agent, but as a refuge officer in law enforcement there is no training. It was who I could ride away with and get OJT work.

Dorothe: So your day-to-day duties then on the refuge were just working on a refuge?

Neill: Correct.

Dorothe: And so did you work with animals then too, ever?

Neill: Not very much, I mean it was more enforcement; it was, as a public use specialist, it's working with the people. And along the Colorado River in Needles, California, we

had a lot of individuals come over from Los Angeles and a lot of boating and skiing and fishing and camping along the river, and so it was an outdoor recreational enforcement.

Dorothe: How do you think the service was perceived by people outside of the agency?

Neill: When I started with refuges or when I was an agent or when?

Dorothe: (Unintelligible) as you became...

Neill: I think as far as a...

Dorothe: ...as a special agent.

Neill: ...as a refuge officer, they had no idea what a national wildlife refuge was, especially where I was at because it was just a big recreational area to go to; they didn't understand the refuge. But in other parts of the country we had a lot of hunting and fishing and things like that. I think they realized it was land set aside for that specific thing, but they didn't understand the mission of the service. Endangered species were not even an issue back then; it was more than just setting aside lands for recreational hunting and fishing. As I became a special agent I think people looked at the service, from my view, a lot more, depending on which side of the fence you're on; either if you're a hunter some people look at the agents and the service as being a positive enforcement wing, other people thought we were over controlling, very regulatory orientated, especially when you got things like the baiting issues and things like that. So it depends, if you were an environmentalist, they were very supportive of what we were doing and appreciative of what we were doing. So it depends on who you talked to, the general public I don't even think understood what we were about; it was a very small segment of the public that understood.

Dorothe: They still probably called you game warden.

Neill: Yeah, federal game warden.

Dorothe: They probably thought you worked for the state.

Neill: In many cases.

Dorothe: Yeah, I know it's just amazing how people didn't understand the difference between federal and state. So what projects were you involved in?

Neill: Oh, just a multitude of projects. One of the first projects I really remember getting actively involved in and I think it really helped shape my career, there was a supervisor out of Springfield, Rick Leach, and he asked me and John Keeler and Ernie Mayer to go to Atlanta to help him out with special operations in an Atlanta Wildlife Exchange. And that was my first exposure to putting together a bunch of search warrants, a bunch of arrest warrants and then taking control over a section of the country and putting together large teams of people; that's something, I think, I got known as through my career as being able to put together those large take downs, raids or whatever. And then, so, Atlanta Wildlife Exchange was one and then one that you were involved with, Operation Friendship, was another one where Andy and Larry, Andy Pierce and Larry (Name) had a, we went in and they had a lot of individuals who were selling eagle feathers and parts at the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Mountain Rendezvous in Friendship, Indiana. I will never forget being that, you know, being at the head of the line and we had about a hundred law enforcement officers going in to bust all these people in the teepees area.

Dorothe: I was our mom there, remember that?

Neill: I remember, I remember walking around and you were mom and we bought a bunch of stuff undercover.

Dorothe: And I still have that, I still have that bull.

Neill: You do?

Dorothe: Yes.

Neill: Okay, we had some fun in that. Operation Falcon did that one, you know, did (unintelligible) section, worked a lot with special ops on different things. And so a lot of big take downs, Operation San Luis Valley, Operation Lost Hatch, Operation Friendship, just lots of major take downs; I'd either be a team leader or coordinating, or organizing or have some kind of major role. Then I, other things I really remember project wise was I worked a lot with Secret Service. I was the national coordinator for Interior and Fish and Wildlife Service at the Olympics, and was stationed in the Secret Service Olympic command center and just had lots of good opportunities to work with lots of different federal agencies on that one; several other things. One of the things that I'll show you later is a plaque that I got from the Director of the Secret Service for retirement with some of the things I'd done with them. Working probably project-wise, I don't know if this is what you're talking about, but very, very actively involved in teaching at FLETC, regional, national, international, you know. I went to Nepal and Mexico and Canada several times and you know those are some pretty big projects.

Dorothe: Well, what were the major issues that you had to deal with?

Neill: Probably the biggest issue was people problems. And no matter what you did, if you had the resources and the ability and time to get the job done but there were always lots of people issues, you know, trying to make the job easier for them or dealing with problems that people were having or whatever. I think as far as issues from internal, that was probably it. External issues, just dealing with a lot of these different projects and getting people to understand what federal wildlife law enforcement's all about and how it is a tool of wildlife management, one of the five tools, and just basically understanding what our job was and getting the support from other individuals. And obviously you always get into lack of money, lack of resources to do what you know you can do but you don't have enough to do it with.

Dorothe: Did that resolve the problems then?

Neill: I can't say it resolved, we never did have enough money or people or whatever, but I think we became better at prioritizing.

Dorothe: The next question is, what was your most pressing issue?

Neill: During my career, you mean?

Dorothe: Um hmm.

Neill: I can't think of anything that's really the most pressing.

Dorothe: So what was the major impediment to your job and to your career?

Neill: Lack of understanding by others about what federal law enforcement, federal wildlife law enforcement's all about and how it can be effectively used as a management tool.

Dorothe: So do you remember enough who all of your supervisors were from when you started?

Neill: Yes.

Dorothe: Okay.

Neill: I'll start out in Washington D.C.; I had two of them, Bob Blue and Charles Gish. And then I went to Havasu, it was Bob Delaney and Bob Karges. Then from there I went to Denver and it was Jim Hogue. And then from Denver I went to southeast Missouri where it was Ed Nichols. And then I went to Rosemount, Illinois and Bob Hodgins was

the SAC, Bill Zimmerman, Dave McMullen and Terry Gross were the ASAC's. And then I came to Denver, Monty Halcomb was the ASAC, Terry Gross the SAC; when I was the SRA then I became the ASAC, was Terry Gross, Chester Hamilton, Rick Thornton and Gary (Name).

Dorothe: Okay, you do have a good memory. Still want to tell me which one was your favorite, do you?

Neill: I think Terry Gross, by far.

Dorothe: Well, that's very good. Who were some of the individuals who helped to shape your career?

Neill: I think starting out probably Jim Hogue as a special agent because I was the only, there was myself and another agent in Colorado, Jack Randall; Jack was very, very close to retirement. And Jim Hogue was in Salt Lake City 500 miles away and he said basically, you know, "Go out and have a program." And gave me a lot of latitude but at the same time support and direction, so he was the first, from a supervisory standpoint. I think as far as being a supervisor, Bob Hodgins had a lot of, gave me a lot of support in Chicago; I came into a situation that was kind of a bad situation; the prior supervisor, John Robertson, had left with a major cloud over his head and a lot of problems at the port of Chicago. I got a lot of support from Bob and you and Bill Zimmerman and everybody else about the job I was doing there, so I think that the support I got helped a lot. And then coming here to Denver, Terry Gross by far, was I think the biggest supporter overall because he put me out in front and gave me lots of opportunities back in Washington on different details; 3 month details, 2 month details, to accomplish some pretty major things; it gave me a lot of exposure to different people and has shaped my career.

Dorothe: Who were some of the people you knew outside of the Fish and Wildlife Service and did you think they would've been able to work for the service?

Neill: Ahhhh....

Dorothe: You dealt with state people or just...

Neill: I knew a tremendous number of state officers who should have become special agents but because of our hiring restrictions they were not able to. And that was probably one of my bigger disappointments, and I understand the diversity issue, I understand hiring freezes that were put on and also the different constraints you have of hiring employees, but we missed an awful lot of good ones.

Dorothe: It's probably true. So do you remember who was President or Secretary of the Interior or Director of Fish and Wildlife while you were working?

Neill: Well, Lynn Greenwalt by far was the first director that I really know, Smith was the first director when I came on and Lynn took over and Lynn was my second line supervisor when I was at the refuges. Bob Blue was the head of operations and then Lynn Greenwalt was the Chief of Refuges and he became the Director real quick. And I can probably name a majority of the directors between then and Presidents. I know it was Reagan 'cause I went over to the White House when I was in D.C. for some ceremonies or whatever. And I remember, not Reagan, Nixon, I mean, was in when I was in D.C. in '72, '73, you know, (unintelligible) whole gambit.

Dorothe: How do you think changes in administration affected the work that we were expected to do?

Neill: Very cyclic; we had a tremendous amount of type A overachievers that were able to get the jobs done regardless and many times we didn't have the resources to do it but we found a way. I think sometimes a stronger administration made our jobs a lot easier, a lot more accomplishments were done. Other administrations were not as supportive and I think even, you know, as we go today, the way the service is run by different directors

would affect how law enforcement was and now it's even Secretaries of Interior. You know this administration is being run by the department not by the service; I think it's having a major impact on the service.

Dorothe: In your opinion, who were some of the individuals who shaped the service to become what it is today?

Neill: I think Lynn Greenwalt was a big one. I think Jamie, I'm going to talk more about law enforcement, but I think Jamie Clark had a major impact on law enforcement 'cause...

Dorothe: Who's that?

Neill: Jamie Clark.

Dorothe: Okay.

Neill: She was, she and I kind of grew up through the service together and we knew each other very well. In fact we were going through some upper management classes together and she was sitting next to me and we took some of these tests and what your abilities are and if you weren't doing what you're currently doing what should you be doing. And I remember getting an elbow in the side and Jamie said, "Hey, I ought to be a cop according to this." She had a love for law enforcement and it was she that elevated law enforcement to be in the directorate position, you know (unintelligible) up into an assistant director; I think that was a major change for us for the positive. Oh, there's lots of people out there; I think they were some of the big ones for law enforcement from that standpoint. I think there are some of the SAC's that had a bigger impact on law enforcement than others have, Terry Gross, I think, had a very big impact, Dave McMullen did.

Dorothe: (Unintelligible).

Neill: Yeah.

Dorothe: See it doesn't take as long...

Neill: Yeah.

Dorothe: ...**(unintelligible)**. So now I want to know what was the high point of your career? You probably had more than one.

Neill: I have. I think probably the high point in my career was when Terry had me go back to Washington for 3 months to work with Department of Interior, the solicitor's office, all the agencies, to try to get some legislation passed, at which in some cases I was very successful, in other cases, politics intervened. But the bottom line is, it was, I think, probably going back and making some real positive national impacts and developing some very close relationships on the Hill, Department of Justice with main Interior, and developing a level of respect they would have for me, as far as my abilities and people recognized it at that time.

Dorothe: How about the low point in your career, what was that?

Neill: Probably my last year on the job because changes in the people and personalities and being told that I don't, I was not to use any of my abilities or expertise to do the job; I was to sit back and do very minimal type work and just let the new administration take over.

Dorothe: What do you wish you had done differently in dealing with that?

Neill: In dealing with that?

Dorothe: Um hmm.

Neill: Nothing.

Dorothe: What was your most dangerous....

Neill: Deciding to retire was...

Dorothe: ...(unintelligible), okay. What was the most dangerous or frightening experience you had during your career?

Neill: Probably execution of search warrants. The one night I specially remember was executing a search warrant in Green Bay, Wisconsin upon this big ole burly guy who was supposedly on drugs and firearms and we had to kick in the door and break it in, and the guy came screaming down and we didn't know if he had a gun or whatever. And I remember (Name) Mayer and I on each side of the door ready to take him out if we had to, fortunately we didn't, and that was probably the...

Dorothe: Most...

Neill: ...most, yeah most dangerous; potentially.

Dorothe: The next one, probably you'll have more than one, the most humorous experience?

Neill: Humorous.

Dorothe: Yeah, humorous, something that just kind of kept a smile.

Neill: Oh, there are so many but I can't really think of them right now. I think probably one of them was, just turned special agent basic school and some of the pranks that the agents were pretty young and adventurous and pulling on each or instructors or just some

of the things that we were doing that if, having been an instructor, I would never want my guys to do; that's probably some of them, I don't know.

Dorothe: So, what do you like to tell others about your career and about the Fish and Wildlife Service, like when you move into a new neighborhood and they want to know what you did or people that you meet and always wonder...?

Neill: I think a lot of it is just telling them what the difference between state and federal is and the type of things we're trying to do and the types of law that we enforce, the people that we get to work with, the things that you get to do outside of traditional Fish and Wildlife Service. I think after 9/11 and the big emphasis on homeland security we've taken on new roles and how that drug [sic] into that under different types of things. I think just kind of explaining what we're about and how we differ from traditional state conservation officers.

Dorothe: So what were some of the changes that you've observed in the service, like in the personnel through the years?

Neill: It used to be that we would hire the best, the cream of the crop. And it was very, very competitive and boy, if you got on as a special agent it was, it was really, something really big. I think we have evolved, and then when you had people in management, the people in management had come up through the ranks and had been there and done it throughout. And now, I think that we are hiring people who have no idea what Fish and Wildlife Service is about, they have no idea what federal law enforcement is about. It just looks like, you know, hey, this be a neat time to go out hunting and fishing or whatever; I've seen too many of those kind of and I can't, I'm not going to do it with a broad brush. The quality control of the people that we're hiring and the people that are getting into management is nowhere near where it used to be.

Dorothe: So what are your thoughts on the future; like where do you see the service heading in the next decade?

Neill: I think it depends upon the administration, all the way from the Secretary of Interior, Assistant Secretaries and I see right now it's going to have, I won't say it's in a nose dive but I think it's going downhill because right now the service is being run more on political issues by people at a very high level. And the people on the ground are not allowed to do what they know should be done where in the past they used to be able to get it done one way or the other and it's not happening now.

Dorothe: You belong to the FWOA where you get the quarterly?

Neill: Yeah.

Dorothe: And have you seen the ones that the refuges are sending out now?

Neill: No.

Dorothe: Theirs is printed out on very nice paper and it's about four to six, and I've thought about that and that why can't law enforcement, instead of having to have their own association to do this, Federal Wildlife Officer Association. Why can't we have it done with federal funds like the refuges do and fisheries now have too?

Neill: Through their friends group and special interests, I don't know. I don't think there's the interest and support.

Dorothe: But that's one thing that has kind of come to my mind; I think, okay, theirs are very nicely printed. They have color photos in them and very, very nice.

Neill: Right.

Dorothe: But that's not, I guess, my concern although I know in talking with Doug (Name), they're thinking about putting out a magazine, aren't they?

Neill: Yes.

Dorothe: Um hmm.

Neill: Yeah.

Dorothe: And I think that that's fine but I think that it should, part of the government expense should be through Fish and Wildlife Service.

Neill: Well, I don't see the service paying for it because law enforcement's always been the bastard child within the agency and everything else.

Dorothe: Yes, I know, I always felt like we were kind of the leper colony.

Neill: There's a guy, I don't know if you remember, Don Hastings...

Dorothe: Yeah.

Neill: ...from Illinois, you know he had *International Game Warden Magazine* he put out and that kind of evolved and someone else took it over, and you've got Federal Wildlife Officers Association newsletters; I don't know if you get those or not?

Dorothe: No, I don't.

Neill: There's a lot of good information in there but it's basically talking to just ourselves.

Dorothe: Right.

Neill: It's not outside.

Dorothe: Well, they send these; you'll be getting them now that you're retired, these refuge ones and possibly the fishery one, too.

Neill: Okay.

Dorothe: Well, see we're just about done; I just want to know if you have any photographs or documents you'd like to donate or share to go into the archives with your tape?

Neill: I'd have to do some looking on that one.

Dorothe: Well, if you find something you think would be something that you could be remembered for or about or whatever...

Neill: Okay.

Dorothe: ...can just send them to me.

Neill: I'll send it to you, okay.

Dorothe: So who else do you think we should interview, anybody that we...

Neill: John Grist in Grand Junction, Jim Hogue, Montrose; those are the two within the law enforcement arena in Colorado that I think would be.

Dorothe: Well, we're going to do as many as we can do.

Neill: Okay, good.

Dorothe: I want to thank you, Neill, for this time...

Neill: Glad to do it.

Dorothe: ...it was just good to see you again...

Neill: Same here.

Dorothe: ...'cause it's been so long.

Neill: Yeah, same here.

Dorothe: I always enjoyed working with you 'cause if I needed figures you would give them to me without any hassle like some of the others.

Neill: Well, I think that, you know, working in Chicago was a major, major transition. And you can talk to my wife. I always said I never wanted to go much above a special agent, you know, and so forth. One of the things that really got me to going to the career path that I did is 'cause I saw opportunities to make changes happen. And you just don't sit back and whatever and I had a tremendous amount of support from you folks in Chicago when I was there and, you know, I enjoyed working with you as an AO and you know Bob Hodgins and you know the rest of the group; it was good, that was a very good memorable experience with just working back there and I think that probably there, more than anywhere, I saw positive things happen while I was there.

Dorothe: That's good. Okay, Neill, well this is the end of the interview.

Neill: Okay.

Dorothe: I want to thank you very much for your time.

Neill: Very good.