

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Oral History Project

Interview – Roger Banks

Field Supervisor (1977 – 2003)

Charleston ,S.C. ES office

Interviewed by Jennifer Koches (Charleston ES Field Office)

- Birth Place and Date:
Sussex, New Jersey, March 29, 1941
- Information on Parents:

Father:

Clifford Banks. Born in Franklin New Jersey, August 1916 and was raised in a sawmill and lumbering family (9 children). He attended Franklin High School, and quit in his 9th year. As a young man, he spent much of his time cutting and hauling logs for the family sawmill. In later years and until his retirement, he worked as a foreman for a construction company. He enjoyed hunting and fishing, and did much to encourage my early interest in the field. When I was 8 - 9 years old, I would walk behind him on rabbit hunts, and was proud to carry all the rabbits and squirrels that he would shoot. My main job was to jump on the brush piles and try to kick out any rabbits that were hiding there. When I was 10 years old, he purchased a "junior Hunting License" for \$1:00 that allowed me to hunt with my own gun when accompanied by an adult. I recall the first time that I was allowed to fire a shotgun. It was an old , single barrel 12 gauge that my father named "Old Bertha". I was a little skeptical about shooting it because it was shaky, and actually held together by a nail and painters putty. I wish that I started with a .410 that wouldn't have kicked nearly as much.

Mother:

Frieda Aumick Banks. Born in Hamburg New Jersey, March 7, 1918 as one of 14 children. Amazingly, she was raised by a mother that had a limited education, and a father that never

learned to read or write. My Grandmother always had a large garden and prided herself in maintaining it by herself. Since my Grandfather (Dutch) wasn't allowed near the garden, he spent much of his time fishing. I don't know if, or how, he ever caught enough fish to feed 14 kids. However, he did have a fishing technique that he disclosed to me and has stuck with me all of these years. He would put a big glob of night crawlers on his hook, hold them up, and cover them with a good layer of tobacco juice. My Mother attended Hamburg High School, and quit in the 11th. grade. She is now 98 years old and living in a nursing home in Rock Hill, S.C. She is still quite alert and prides herself in being the oldest patron in the home. She is a woman who has done a lot of things in her life, but she never did learn to drive. She was also a great cook and baker. Her chocolate chip cookies were so good that she was called the CC Grandma. I attribute much of my love of the outdoors to the fact that she did not keep a tight rein on me, and allowed me to explore and be exposed to much of what our rural surroundings consisted of. Fortunately, I had her blessings to allow me to hunt and fish to my heart's content. She always put to good use, the critters that I shot, or caught. We still reminisce about those days, how the wild game supply sort of dried up when I left home.

- How did you spend your early years?

I grew up in Hamburg, New Jersey, a small town in the northern part of the State that, at that time, was still lightly populated and dotted with a large number of small family owned, dairy farms. Probably a third of the kids in our school, either lived, or worked on a farm. In my earliest years I probably did what all country kids do. We played in the woods, built forts, and played cowboys and Indians. When I was 10, I had a Junior Hunting license and began hunting with my father, and other adults. It's also the time that I began to enjoy fishing. Actually, my first exposure to fishing came when I was in the 2nd. Grade. My grandfather Banks cut a slender stick, put some string on it, and presented it to me as my first fishing rod. I remember the rod, but I don't remember if I ever caught anything on it. After age 12 I spent most of my non-school days, fishing at the Gingerbread Castle. This was a small

amusement park that was built on the Mother Goose theme. The stream I fished in was the Wallkill River, only one of two streams in the country that flows north. Ironically, one of the FWS's newest Refuges (Wallkill Valley Refuge) was recently established about 5 miles north of where I spent most of my youth, fishing. The segment of stream that I fished, flowed adjacent to the Gingerbread Castle. It had a series of 3 dams of varying heights that provided habitat for everything from trout to carp. This place was located less than a mile from our house, so, as you can imagine, this is the place where I spent much of my time. After 50 years, I'm afraid to go back and look at the place because it's probably changed so much, that it might not be recognizable.

From 12 years old to 17 years old, when I joined the Marine Corp, most of my activities still revolved around hunting and fishing. Between age 12 and 15, however, I did play a lot of baseball. My grandfather was in his 70's, and even though he had to walk, he never missed any of my games. We only had 193 students total in our high school, so we were limited in the number of sports we could have. We were large enough though, to have both, basketball and baseball. We didn't have enough tall kids to do well in basketball, but we could hold our own in baseball. I was a fairly good baseball player, and was even scouted by one of the major league teams. I was such a slow runner however, that I was never seriously considered. In fact, my coach always accused me of running with a piano on my back.

Deer hunting was probably the sport I enjoyed the most. At that time, there wasn't an abundance of deer in our area. Though I hunted deer pretty aggressively, I never did shoot one legally. The gun season for deer in New Jersey was, and still is, only 6 days long. With such a short season, we would take advantage of any opportunity we had to go. When I was a sophomore, several of us wanted to deer hunt one day, but we all had a history exam that we couldn't miss. Knowing that we would all get detention if we left school, we still made arrangements to go. The morning of the exam we all brought our shotguns on the bus (in cases) to school, put them in our wall lockers, took the test, and left the school grounds to go hunting. If we did this today, we would be on Fox

News all over the Country, and probably being accused of being terrorists. Times have definitely changed.

On another occasion we had to make arrangements to get to our stands on time. One member of our deer hunting group lived on a dairy farm and just couldn't get away very early. The rest of us agreed to help him with his chores so he could leave early. We decided that it would best if we all slept in the barn with the cows so we could be there in time. If you have never slept with a bunch of cows, you can't imagine how many different sounds they make, and believe me, hay creates a lot of gas. In our haste to get out of there, the cows were probably milked about 2 hours earlier than normal.

- What jobs did you have as a child ?

Unlike most young kids, I didn't have that many formal chores that I was responsible for. The most consistent responsibility I had was feeding the dogs, most of which were usually beagles. Other things that I did when asked was to shovel snow and coal and split firewood. The most regular job I had was as a golf caddy at the Lake Mohawk Country Club in Sparta, N.J. I began when I was 14 and continued until I joined the Marine Corp at 17. It was a good job, although I didn't make, or save, that much money (1955). The flat rate for carrying 2 golf bags for 18 holes was \$5.50. Despite the low pay, working with other caddy's and associating with golfers from all walks of life, created experiences that will always stick with me. The caddy's that I worked with were a mixed bag. There were a few white kids, but most were Mexican and Hungarian. Political correctness was not an issue back then. For example, one of the caddies (Louey Ramaris) was an extremely dark skin Mexican who all the caddy's, and many of the golfers, called "snow ball". That wouldn't go over well today. Although I worked most of the summer, I wasn't able to save much money. Granted, the pay was low but that was not the only reason. We all lived about 7 miles from the golf course, and usually got home by hitch hiking. (something you don't see much of today) On the way home we would always stop at the "Jug" for a hamburger and an ice cream soda, and then at the bakery for

cream doughnuts and other pastries. All totaled, we probably spent \$3.00 or more, before we even got home.

- Did I hunt or fish?

As I mentioned earlier, I hunted and fished whenever I had the chance. I even tried trapping muskrats, but to this day, I've yet to catch the first one. I probably spent more money on traps than I could have ever earned from the pelts. Back then, you had a lot of turnover in traps because of other trappers that would steal them. One time, however, I did encounter a trap thief that was partially honest. For every one of my new traps he stole, he replaced it with one of his older, rusty ones. Clearly, hunting and fishing in my earlier years had a tremendous influence on where my career would take me. My grandmother Banks, for some reason, had more insight as to what my career would be, than anyone else in my family.

- Education:

I completed most of my schooling in my hometown of Hamburg, N.J. My twin sister and I were in the 3rd. grade when we first attended this school. My two younger brothers, Daryl and Dale came along later and also attended the same school. Two of the three schools we attended prior to this were two room school houses. I emphasize this just to give you some idea of just how rural the area was that I grew up in. Looking back, I think it was pretty cool to have attended such small schools. The individual classes were quite small, but, unlike today, it did allow students to stay with the same classmates, at least through the 8th. Grade.

I attended High School in my home town of Hamburg , N.J. At the time I had no intention of attending college, but I did choose to take the College Prep courses that were offered. Actually, I went this route because some of my best friends did. I was a fairly good student, but I clearly didn't give it my all. I'll admit, if it wasn't for my twin sister Sandy, I probably would have had a much harder time. Although I did a certain amount of studying, most of my interest was in baseball, golf, hunting and fishing. Overall, I

enjoyed high school, but I don't think that I ever realized how important it would have been for me to graduate. Since no one in my family had gone to college there was no emphasis placed on preparing for it. The primary aspirations of my parents was to have me complete high school. Unfortunately, several of my closest friends quit high school to join the Service. Therefore, at the end of my junior year I decided to follow suit and enlist in the Marine Corp. I enlisted on the "buddy plan" with one of my friends from our caddying days. Now our class of 34 was whittled down to 33.

Within 30 days of completing my 3 year enlistment, I met a southern bell named Gail at Carolina Beach that would later become my wife. I was discharged in 1961, and we were married in 1962. We must have hit it off, pretty well since we've been married for nearly 55 years. It wasn't until I moved to North Carolina and began looking for a job in Charlotte, that I realized how important it was to have a high school degree. After beating the pavement for weeks, I did land a job as a warehouseman for a major steel company. It would be another 6 months before we got married so I stayed at a boarding house within walking distance of where I worked. I couldn't have found a more affordable place to stay. It cost \$12.00 a week for a room and 3 meals per day. Today, anyone of those meals would cost \$12.00, or more. Gail and her family lived about 30 miles away in China Grove and she commuted to Charlotte to work each day.

Within a few months of working in the warehouse I was promoted to an inside sales position. It's interesting to think about how one's life can be influenced by a single event. At the time I had an interest in mechanical drafting and had enrolled in a correspondence course that provided me a small drawing board, a T square, and a small manual. When I announced what I had purchased, one of my office mates suggested that I attend Charlotte College and take drafting courses that would be recognized by any future employer. Charlotte College was a small school that had just become an accredited 4 year college. I met with the College President, who was also the college registrar, was accepted, and began taking drafting courses at night. It wasn't

long before I realized that I could handle college level work, and made application to pursue a bachelor's degree. Again, I was accepted, with the stipulation that I make up courses in math, science, and English that I missed by quitting high school. After 3 years of night school, I began taking classes on a full time basis.

Again, as fate would have it, I was having coffee with a classmate who was aware knew that I had leanings toward a career in Conservation. He told me about the Wildlife Program that was offered at NC State in Raleigh. I looked into it, applied, and was accepted. This was a life changing decision for Gail and me. Our first son, Devan, had been born in September, 1964, while we lived in Kannapolis, N.C. We had to sell our house, buy a mobile home, and move to Raleigh. We were at NC State from 1965 to 1968, when I received my BS in Zoology. Quitting high school in a small N.J. town and then attending a major University in N.C. was quite an adjustment. As it turned out, we survived, and had so much fun, that we applied for Graduate School in New Mexico. My degree at NC State was in Zoology, with emphasis on Wildlife. My head professor, Dr. Fred Barkalow gave me a lot of insight into the wildlife profession, and what to expect when I actually begin working in the field. My favorite course was Wildlife Science and the text we used was Aldo Leopold's "Wildlife Management". One of the required readings was "A Sand County Almanac". Over the years, I have probably read it a dozen times. I didn't realize it in 1966 just how much influence it would have the landscape philosophy I acquired and what a roll it played during the height of my career. It's interesting to look back and recall some of the people you worked or studied with. For example, Gail was the secretary for the Fisheries Coop Unit NCSU and worked for Dr. Eugene Hester, who later became the Director of the FWS. John Rogers, who at the time, was a Ph.D student under Dr. Barkalow, wrote a recommendation in support of me to attend NMSU. John received his degree from NMSU before coming to NCSU. He worked for the FWS, and later became the assistant Director, under Jamie Clark. Nearly 25 years after John and I met, I worked with him on the committee to initiate the FWS's Ecosystem Approach.

In August of 1968 we sold our mobile home, loaded all of our belongings in a 14 ft. U-haul, and headed to New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico. We were headed to a part of the Country that we had never seen, and accepted an assistantship to work on a quail species that I didn't know existed. NMSU offered a broader Wildlife Ecological curriculum than NCSU, but the two combined provided a good education for anyone working as field biologist. The head of the Wildlife Department was Dr. John Wood, who in earlier years had worked in the field with Dr. Barkalow. So many lives criss-cross in the wildlife field. My research was to study Scaled Quail and determine how they would be impacted by a massive mesquite, eradication program. Unfortunately, before the study was to begin, the herbicide that was to be used was banned, and the proposed spraying cancelled. The objective of my research was redirected to simply conduct an ecological study of the Scaled Quail. My study area was located on the Bureau Of Land Management lands about 50 miles south of Carlsbad, N.M., and 250 miles from Las Cruces. The experience I gained setting up my study area, and then gathering 2 years of data to support my thesis, has been useful to me on numerous occasions. At the time I was conducting this research there were no computers, no aerial photos, and no cell phones. My data, for example, was tabulated on a Monroe adding machine. My cover mapping was accomplished by using a compass and a pedometer. To give a feel for the vastness of the study area, the single fenced in pasture in which most of my work was conducted, was 15,000 acres, and contained only 1 Nettleleaf Hackberry tree. All other vegetation was mesquite, and a thin scattering of other desert plants. My home away from home was a 20 ft. BLM trailer that was set up in the middle of my study area. With the exception of oil pumping rigs there wasn't much else to see. About once a week I would run into the Oil Co. employee who was responsible for keeping the oil pumps gassed up. You don't know what "quiet" is until you've spent a night, laying on the hood of a hood a pickup truck, and starrng at the stars. Gail and Devan spent most of their time in Las Cruces, but at times would come to visit at the study area. At the end of 2 years, I finalized all of my data collecting and set out to write my thesis. Looking back, Gail and I survived the writing

and typing of the thesis. She did most of the typing on our miniature Singer Electric typewriter. Knowing Gail, I'm sure that she made a change or two. A rule of thumb is that if a husband and wife can survive the writing and typing of a thesis, that their marriage should last forever. While at NMSU Gail worked for the Campus Police Dept. as an aid and secretary.

After completing my Masters, I was accepted at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. I was given an assistantship to study the reproduction of coyotes. I was told that if I could come up with a way to control coyote populations in Texas, that the school would probably name a building after me. We were a little skeptical about moving to Lubbock because just two weeks after I was accepted, a tornado struck and destroyed much of the downtown area. Again, I want to show how a single event can influence the rest of your life. I was in the process of loading our U-haul to move to Lubbock, and Gail was shopping with Devan. While she was gone, I received a call from the NC Wildlife Commission Personnel Office, offering me a District Biologist position near Winston Salem, NC. I turned down the offer because we had already committed to Texas Tech. When Gail returned and I told her about the job offer, she immediately had me call them back and accept the position. I did, and she was crushed to learn that the job had been given to the next person the list. She thought for an instance that she was going back home to North Carolina. We still have friends from NMSU that we keep in touch with and a lot of good memories.

We moved to Lubbock, bought a house about 2 miles from the University, and commenced to settle in. I was working on my research, taking classes and teaching a course in Wildlife Ecology. This was a tough year for both of us. Gail was pregnant, but suffered a miscarriage after a few months. I was beginning to realize that I was really not Ph. D material and was ready to leave academia and begin working a real job. This sat well with Gail because I had been in college for the full 8 years of our marriage. I had filled out the Federal Application for employment with the FWS. I had almost forgotten that I had submitted the application, when Gail called me at my office and told me that I had just been

selected for a position with River Basin Studies in Raleigh, NC. She was really excited about going home. She told me how apologetic the personnel officer was because Raleigh was the only remaining position he had left to fill. Within 1 week we advertised our house, sold it, and had our U-haul loaded to head east. Although we were both ready to get back east, we realized that Lubbock was a good place, and that we had met a number of good people. One of our friends that I worked with was Max Lennon, who later became President of Clemson. We went to Church together and Ruth and Gail baby sat each others children. Max had actually been working on his Ph.D at NCSU when we were there, but we didn't meet until Lubbock.

- What and Who most influenced my future affiliation with the FWS?

Looking back on what specific school, or experience I had that most influenced my career track, I would have to say NMSU. The program there gave me a good balance of technical training and field oriented exposure that helped me significantly as I advanced with the FWS. I hesitate to point out any one individual that greatly influenced me on my career track, because there were several that, when combined, all had a very positive influence. All in all, I feel like most of my acquaintances and experiences have had a favorable influence on my career. There were, however, a few individuals that I still have great respect for. Specifically: Sam Hamilton, ex Director; Jim Young and Bob Thoesen in Salt Lake city; and Dr. Gene Hester, FWS; and Joie Carter, WBFA Chairman. I also want to express appreciation to my Charleston ES staff for the influence they had on me during our time together. I can't express enough, my appreciation for the support from Cookie, my Admin. Assistant of 25 years, and Karen, my Secretary of 20 plus years. They helped bail me out on more than one occasion. My appreciation also for the rest of my staff for their support and for their dedication to the Service. In the end, I hope that, in some way, I have had a positive influence on them for the remainder of their careers.

- Military Service:

As I mentioned earlier, I quit high school in 1958 and joined the Marine Corp. I'm not sure why I joined at this particular time, other than the fact, a few of my friends had done the same thing. As with all new Marine Recruits, I took my basic training in Parris Island, S.C. Basic training was interesting, and if nothing else, it taught me discipline and how to walk long distances. Looking back, one of the most unique experiences I had occurred one night while on guard duty. Being from inland, N.J. I had never been exposed to tidal saltwater marshes. On this particular evening my duty was to guard the Parris Island marina. During my 6 hours of watch, the tide fell from full to low. Since it was dark, and I had never seen a falling tide, it was a little spooky. The tidal amplitude in this area is from 7 – 8 feet. As you can imagine, not many recruits were willing to try an escape through this barrier.

During my 3 month stay at Parris Island, I never suspected that some 20 years later I would supervise an office that played a major role in protecting the Islands' marshes and other wildlife habitat. Additionally, our office would play a major role in assisting with their wildlife management program, including endangered species. I even had the opportunity recently to play golf on the Island with some of the Base Commanders. In 1958, I would never have thought that all of these things would happen.

During my 3 years in the Service, I served on only 2 major bases, Camp Lajeune, N.C. and Quantonimo Bay, Cuba. At Camp Lajeune, my barracks was located just a short distance from the base helicopter facility. Again, while still serving on active duty at Camp Lajeune, I would never have considered requesting a meeting with the Base Commander. However, almost 15 years later I was working out of the Raleigh N.C. River Basins Office, and took the opportunity to do just that. At this particular time, the River Basins Program was getting heavily involved in Coastal Wetlands protection. Part of my job was to identify illegal wetlands filling and dredging projects along the coast. Flying the coast vs. driving, was much faster and effective, so I set up a meeting with the Base Commander of the Marine helicopter group to see if they would assist. He was more than eager to help. His group was actively involved with training pilots to locate North

Vietnamese gunnery emplacements along the coast. They had no problem taking 2 FWS biologists with them on these missions. The helicopter that was assigned to us had a pilot, a navigator, and a photographer. As you might suspect, we observed a lot of illegal activity that we were able to document via the Marine photographer. This relationship worked fine for months until my Field Supervisor felt the need to formalize the relationship through the Marine Corp in Washington. As you might guess, that ended that source of assistance.

- Spouse:

The support of my spouse (Gail) throughout my career probably had more influence on what I was able to accomplish than anything else I can think of. Gail and I met on Carolina Beach in 1961, just 7 weeks before I retired from the Marine Corps. After a relatively short engagement, we were married in June of 1962. At the time we did not have a lot going for us. I had quit high school in 1958 to join the Marine Corps and really had not given much consideration to what career I wanted to pursue. On the other hand, Gail had graduated from high school and had the foresight to attend, and graduate, from business college. Shortly after we were married, we both agreed that it would be invaluable for our future that I pursue a college education. Although it was a strain on our budding married life, we did survive the first 3 years of night school. During that time, our son Devan was born. With night school behind us, we sold our house and moved everything we had to Raleigh where I received my BS Degree in Zoology. That was so much fun that we picked up again and moved to Las Cruces New Mexico where I received my MS Degree in wildlife ecology. For the last leg of our academic journey, we moved to Texas Tech University in Lubbock Texas where I began work on my Ph.D. I think it was the happiest day of Gail's life when, after just one year, I decided that it was time to get a real job. In July of 1970 I was able to join the FWS River Basins Field Office in Raleigh, N.C. This is where it all started with the Service.

Beginning with our college years (1962 – 1970) until my retirement in 2001, Gail was fully engaged and supportive of my

desire to work in the Wildlife field. She was willing to make sacrifices in her life each time we moved, just so I could advance the career she knew I was pursuing. She became fully engaged in the Fish and Wildlife Service family. She was always interested in issues that I was involved with, and basically everything going on in the office and the Service as a whole. In the Charleston Office she befriended all the employees and would always participate in office functions and basically fit in as part of the of the Service family. Looking back, we feel like my retirement reflects a career that we both pursued together.

During our career path we had 3 sons, (Devan, 1964; Dacun, 1972; and Damon, 1977). Devan, being the oldest of our sons has more memories of our moves etc. than the other boys. Between college and the FWS, we placed him in 11 different schools. I'm sure that this was a strain on him, but he did extremely well and never seemed to complain. Dacun was 5 years old when we moved to Charleston, while Damon was born in Atlanta 1 month before Gail was able to move to Charleston with all the boys. Other than Devan, the other boys had never known anything but the FWS. During the years that the boys were at home we did all the out of doors things such as hiking, boating, camping, fishing etc. Although none of them pursued careers in the Conservation field, they still have that passion for protecting wildlife and the environment as a whole. All in all, Gail and I agree that the FWS was a great career for our family, and we hope that whatever contributions we made will live on.

Employees Career:

I feel fortunate to have been able work for the FWS. However, in the beginning of my working career, the FWS wasn't the highest employer on my list. As I got further along in my college coursework, and associated research, I felt that I wanted a job where I could have hands-on dealings with wildlife. This is probably true of most graduate students that have hands-on experiences working with the species they study. To me, a State District Biologist position would have been the ideal job. They get

to drive fancy 4-wheel drive vehicles, handle and tag wildlife they trap, conduct deer surveys, and make management suggestions to farmers and other landowners. In other words, actually performing much of the wildlife management activities that are covered in most of our college course work. I blew my opportunity, however, to actually obtain a district wildlife biologist position when I turned down the offer from the N.C. Wildlife Commission.

Early in my relatively short tenure at Texas Tech I realized that I probably wasn't Ph.D material, and also, after 8 years of college, I really needed to get a real job (this was seconded by Gail). This all became crystal clear to me when I attended my first Biochemistry Class. To jumpstart the process of getting a job, I filled out the standard Federal Employment Application Form, not knowing which Federal Agency I might hear from. Having spent the last few years in western states, I thought that I would probably work for the BLM, or the Forest Service. Fortunately, that's not how it worked out. I talked earlier about the job offer I got from Region 4, to work in the Raleigh, River Basins office. Gail still favorably recalls the conversation that she had with Vernon Brown with Personnel in Atlanta. She felt like she had died and gone to heaven when she realized that she was going back home. I was to show up in the Raleigh on July 1st, 1971. It didn't give us much time, but within 1 week we sold our house, packed the U-haul and headed for North Carolina.

I showed up in the Raleigh Office on July 1st, along with another 5 biologists that were hired at the same time. The Service was about to get heavily involved nationwide in Environmental issues including protecting resources under the new Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA). Nat Reed, the Secretary of The Interior, authorized the FWS to hire 135 biologists nationwide, to gear up for this priority effort. Within 6 months, another 60 biologists were hired for same reason. The addition of several new biologists in many of the smaller field offices nearly doubled the number of existing staff. It took some time for the Field Supervisors to sort things out and come up with a productive way to put these new bodies to work. This was an exciting time for

River Basins because, for the first time, the FWCA gave them an authority to work under that had some teeth. Prior to this, the FWS would comment on projects, expound on the negative aspects of the project, and then, simply ask the lead agency to consider our recommendations. Naturally, in most cases they did not. Initially, the Services procedures for handling this new authority were somewhat cumbersome. For example, all recommendations for wetlands permit denial, or modification had to be sent to the Regional Office and then signed off on by someone in the office of the Assistant Secretary. Initially, field supervisors had very little sign-off authority on any meaningful recommendations. This was the primary reason for such low morale in River Basins offices.

From the beginning, many of the new biologists were disgruntled with the fact that reviewing wetlands permit applications was primarily nothing more than doing windshield surveys. As I discussed earlier, most wildlife biologist graduates are looking for positions where they can have more of a hands-on experience. It wasn't long before the new biologists were looking for jobs elsewhere. River Basins type work was not what they were looking for. I'll have to admit that I felt the same way, and why I applied for a position in the Salt Lake city, Utah field office. I'll admit, the Raleigh experience was good for me and gave me good exposure to how the Service works. Also, I made friends with several of the biologists in the office, some of which I still maintain. For example, Bob Dodd and I have worked for, or with each other for years. For nearly 25 years we have maintained an annual tradition of deer hunting on Bob's farm in Indiana. I was initially hired at the GS 7 grade. However, the biggest and best experience we had in Raleigh was the birth of our second son, Dacun on June 4th, 1972.

In January, 1973 we (Gail, me, Devan, and Dacun) loaded another U-haul truck and set out for Salt Lake City. We made this trek in January, and encountered snow most of the way. It took us 15 days to make a trip that should have taken only about 5. Keep in mind, this was before the advent of computers and cell phones. Other than trying to keep in sight of each other, there was no way to get reunited when we got separated. One snowy night in

Henrietta Oklahoma, there was no room in the Holiday Inn, so we were invited by one of the staff to stay the night with them. During this entire ordeal, you have to remember that Gail is from the South, and was not used to driving in snow. A couple of days later we were snow bound in a small town in Wyoming and were forced to spend the night in the Virginian Hotel (of TV fame). I remember it well because that's the night I got to sleep in the bath tub. We finally made it, unloaded the truck and checked into the Lunz Motel for about 3 months, while our house was being built.

I transferred to Salt Lake as a GS 9 Grade. It was not until I got settled into the office that I realized the routine, day to day work involved even much less field work and hands on experiences than Raleigh. At this time, there was considerable emphasis placed on getting cross regional experience. The Utah move was good from this stand point because it gave me experience and credit for being in 3 regions without having to move but 2 times. I was working in Region 4, was hired through Albuquerque RO that was in Region 2, and assigned to Salt Lake city that was in Region 6. This all happened when Region 6 was established to be the experimental Region for the new Area Office concept. I began working in Salt Lake at a good time because the Region was encouraging cross Program experience. I expressed an interest in working at a fish hatchery. They honored my request and assigned me to work for a month at the Jones Hole trout hatchery in Vernal, Utah. The main thing I did was feed fish, but it was fun. I enjoyed great trout fishing in the creek just below the hatchery.

Someone was looking out for me because I was given the job of working on the Green River in Wyoming. I was to come up with a stream flow regime that would allow water to be drawn from the river for electrical power production, without destroying the trout fishery in the river. I was the envy of the office because this gave me the opportunity to spend at least half of my time in the field. Working cooperatively with Wyoming Fishery biologists, we designed, and carried out, a study to determine minimal stream flow levels to maintain the trout fishery. Not only was the work enjoyable, but the food was good also. The Wyoming folks

couldn't furnish additional equipment, but they could provide food. You haven't eaten until you've had a steak grilled on a 5 gallon can on the banks of the Green River, along with Lumpfish caviar and a beer. It was tough duty, because at the end of the day, there was nothing to do but trout fish. This was a put and grow trout fishery. Trout were stocked at 4-5 inches, and allowed to grow naturally. Any trout weighing more than 1 lb. would have all the fighting qualities of a wild fish.

An interesting component of this stream study was the way we contracted with the Nebraska Air National Guard to provide aerial photographic coverage for the entire 70 miles of stream. This data was used to estimate how many acres of useable trout habitat there was at 3 different flow levels. The photos were taken by cameras mounted on F4 Fighter jets flying at 1500 feet. When the jets flew over the river, they were so loud and intimidating that many of the fisherman thought that they were under attack.

Much of the study was conducted on the newly established Seedskadee Refuge. The Refuge was only recently established and didn't have a formal Refuge Headquarters on site.. The original ranch house and barns served as the temporary headquarters. It is rumored that the ranchers daughter married someone in the Chicago Mob and it was a real spectacle whenever the daughter would come home with her husband in their shiny limousine.

After 2 years in Salt Lake, Gail and I were ready to head back East where we would be closer to family and the good ole southern culture. Actually, I might have jumped too soon when I chose the Atlanta Regional Office. Traditionally, if you're not ready to leave the field, you shouldn't move to the regional level. Too often, it's hard to get back to where the real work gets done. Fortunately, I was able to make it back. During my tour in Atlanta I got involved with a number of issues that later helped me in Charleston. Mainly, however, I made contacts in the Region as well as D.C. that made it easier for me when I did return to the field. Also, while in Atlanta I held positions in ES, Refuges, and Wildlife Services.

When the Charleston Field Office position came available, I threw my name in the hat. The position was actually for a Senior Biologist and not a field supervisor. The office was essentially an arm of the Raleigh NC field office. Dredge and fill permits were all that was worked on in Charleston at the time. Corps Projects etc. were handled out of Raleigh. As it got closer to the time for the Personnel Office to make a decision, the more apprehensive I became. When I found out that I was one of two people being considered, I got cold feet and withdrew my name. When I told Gail that I took my name out of the hat, she was not happy. In so many words she said that I better put it back in. As usual, I did as I was told and put it back in. As things turned out, it was clearly the best decision I ever made.

After all was said and done, I accepted the job and reported to work on January 1, 1977. Our actual move, however, was complicated by the fact that Gail was pregnant with our 3rd. child (Damon) and she didn't want to move and change doctors. Additionally, our house had not yet sold, and we weren't excited about taking Devan out of school in the middle of the year. However, when all was said and done, Gail had Damon on March 7th, and we did move Devan to a middle school on James Island. Our family was together again. We rented a house on Folly Beach where we stayed until our new house was built on James Island.

I reported to work in Charleston on January 1, 1977. At that time the office consisted of 2 biologists, 1 senior biologist, and 1 secretary. Over time, it expanded to @ 15 employees. Our office was in the basement of the Marshlands House, a @ 300 year old plantation house that was moved to the site via barge. The offices were rustic, but the location was great. Our only major catastrophe was hurricane Hugo in 1989. Our office was totally inundated and we had to spend several months in a NMFS Lab just down the street. We remained in the Marshlands House until 1995 when we had to move to larger quarters. The new office location was in the Piggly Wiggly Corporate Office, just a stones throw from downtown Charleston. This was definitely a step up

because we now had walls, doors, real restrooms, and a fancy conference room.

The sole responsibility for the office when I first arrived was to review and comment on dredge and fill permits in SC, Ga, and NC. All permit denials, or modifications were approved in the Regional Office. It wasn't long before new programs came on the scene. Some of the new programs included Corps Projects in SC and Ga., endangered species, private lands, highways, FERC, etc. As the workload increased the Senior Biologist position was upgraded to a GS 13 and was called "Field Supervisor". For several years Chas. Worked closely with EPA,. DNR, NMFS. Collectively , we came down hard on permit applicants, and waterfowl impoundments. Our primary emphasis tended to be on Marine resources, such as Shrimp, blue crabs, and spot tailed bass.

On NOVEMBER 1, 1980, I suffered a setback when I was shot by a young deer hunter, and suffered a severe spinal cord injury. I was in the hospital nearly 9 months, and out of work for a year. As a result I had little use of my right leg, and virtually no use of the right arm. All of my staff was helpful in getting me back to work. I also had great support from most of the agencies we worked with. Most of all, however, was how Gail and the boys chipped in and got me back up and running.

Shortly after coming to Chas., I served on the Board of Directors for the SC Wildlife Foundation for 10 years. This became a family affair as the boys assisted with the Annual Meetings and Gail collected Thousands of dollars worth of prizes for the annual auction. In 1982, our office was selected as the Organization of the year by the SCWF. With the assistance of my oldest son Devan, who pushed my chair where I was presented the award by Governor Riley.

During my first 11 years in the Chas. Office, I feel like we accomplished a lot of good things for the resources. We had a good rapport with most of the Agencies we worked with, and were able to work together on carrying out most of our project reviews.

Wetlands protection money began dropping off over time and we began getting more funding for End. Species and Farm Bill projects. These were enjoyable because they were less controversial, and results were positive and longer lasting.

During these earlier years I think we did a good job, but we weren't doing anything much differently then we had done historically. We were continuing to do much of the same things, and in the same way, that the other ES offices in the Region were doing.

In 1988, things relating to resource planning , and permitting began to change. The ACE Basin partnership was initiated. It was a partnership made up of Private landowners, developers, State and Federal resource agencies, and conservation organizations. The purpose was to find ways to protect as many acres of the important resources in the ACE Basin as possible, by proactive, and non regulatory ways. The initial goal was to protect 120,000 acres in the first two years. They exceeded that amount in the first year, and upped the goal to 200,000 acres. Because of my background in traditional wetlands permitting, I saw this as just another way to get permits for creating waterfowl impoundments. So initially, I did not buy into the concept.

For years, the Chas. F.O. was totally unbending relative to re-impounding, or new construction of waterfowl impoundments. During these years we had built some real barriers between our Office, and proponents of managing waterfowl habitat. Joe Carter, a developer in Myrtle Beach was pushing hard for a permit to re-impound a rice field impoundment he owned. I had never met Mr. Carter personally, or even talked to him on the phone. All of our correspondence was through letters, many of which weren't pleasant. Needless to say, Mr. Carter became a household name in our office as a developer and a Permit applicant to watch out for.

Based on the success of the ACE Basin Project, the decision was made to establish 4 more Focus Areas along the SC coast. Although I had become peripherally involved with the ACE Basin

project, I was still not comfortable with the concept. You can imagine my surprise when Joe Carter called me and asked if I would represent the FWS on the Winyah Bay Focus Area that was being organized in the Georgetown area. He had been selected to Chair this new Focus Area effort. I was somewhat suspicious, and afraid that, in some way, I was being set-up. Despite my suspicion, I said that I would. To make a long story short, I worked closely with the Focus Area group and began to realize that these guys were serious about wanting to protect Fish and Wildlife habitat. I began to question my existing philosophy on how best to protect the resources that were the responsibility of the FWS. It dawned on me that, for years, our office had primarily been fighting to protect Marine fishery resources. I had to remind myself that our Office represented the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and that our responsibility was to protect all forms of wildlife and not just marine fish. Up to this point, when reviewing impoundment related proposals, we had been giving little to no value to habitats for waterfowl, wading birds, freshwater fish, etc.

The goal of the WBFA was to protect as much fish and wildlife habitat as possible in the Georgetown, Myrtle Beach area, through proactive means. Initially, the goal was to protect 85,000 acres. This was to be done through Conservation Easements, creation of a FWS Refuge, land acquisition, and project mitigation. Conservation oriented private landowners would not consider giving easements to the State or Federal resource agencies. Therefore, my primary contribution to the Task Force was to be through the State and Federal permitting process. Also, I proposed that the Task Force seek approval to establish a new Wildlife Refuge. The initial task of the Task Force was to identify important habitats in the Focus Area that needed to be protected. These properties were mapped and put a shelf until funds were available for their acquisition. In our particular case, Sandy Island was considered the crown jewel property that needed to be protected

An example of how the Focus Area players could work together involved a wetland fill violation on the Weymouth Plantation,

owned by Mr. David Dwyer. Mr. Dwyer was required to restore his wetland and, normally would have been made to pay a fine. However, since his property was within the Focus Area boundary, I encouraged the Corps to forgive the fine, if Mr. Dwyer would put a conservation easement on much of his property. He did, and in doing so protected a large portion of his riverfront property from future development. A biologist on my staff made the pitch to the Agencies involved, and got full support. This was our first land protection success and it just whet our appetite to keep pushing the concept.

Mr. Carter, with approval by the total Focus Area Team, picked up on the suggestion to create a new FWS Refuge and sent a letter to the Regional Director and asked that a preliminary study be done. As a result of the over-all efforts of the Task Force the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge was established (50,000 acres).

The effort to purchase Sandy Island was lengthy and convoluted. It was one of those efforts that could not have been choreographed by any one agency or any one group. It was an example of "where the right people were there at the right time". There were actually 2 key components. (1), funding and (2), permit to build a bridge that would have impacted the red cockaded woodpecker.

Initially, funds came from mitigation funds for wetland impacts on the Conway Bypass Project. The decision was made to put \$5 million dollars in escrow for the wetlands that would be impacted. I pushed for \$10 million, but Federal Highways wouldn't budge. The money would be spent when viable properties were identified for protection thru acquisition. Fortunately, the WBFA had already identified important properties that needed to be protected. The 2 properties identified were purchased with a total of \$3 million dollars. The remaining \$2 million dollars was eventually added to \$10 million dollars that was provided by the SCDOT and spent to purchase Sandy Island. Sandy Island is now protected through agreement with the SCDOT that the Island will never be developed. Currently, TNC holds the easement on the property. I, and some others, think that eventually, Sandy Island

will be deeded to the FWS. This was, without question, the largest highway mitigation project in the Country.

Sandy Island came available for purchase when the 2 owners lost their bid for a permit to build a bridge to the island. The Chas. Field Office carried through with their decision to recommend denial of a Coastal Council permit to allow a bridge to be built. Our decision was based on the amount of RCW habitat that would be impacted by the project. Under Coastal Council guidelines, they cannot issue a permit over a recommendation of denial by the FWS.

The work we had been doing through the Focus Areas fits, almost perfectly, with the Services' concept of an Ecosystem Approach to Conservation. Working with partners to protect habitat on an ecosystem level and in a proactive way, is what we were already doing.

I am totally appreciative of the two Dept. Of Interior awards I received for the Partnering efforts we were involved in. In 1998 I was awarded a Special achievement award from Mr. Sam Hamilton, then the Atlanta Regional Director. In 2005 I received the Department of Interior Distinguished Achievement award for the land protection work that we had done in the Charleston Field Office.

I like to think that the opportunities that I've been given to participate in the partnering and resource protection efforts in SC, have been more than just fate. There has to be some reason why I was able to survive my hunting accident, and I was given the opportunities to work with individuals and groups that have allowed me to be a part of something that will be lasting. If I had it to do again, I wouldn't change a thing.

My feelings about what's currently going on in the FWS, and what does the future hold.

The Service seems to be placing a great deal of emphasis on endangered species and non-game species. This is fine, but I hope we don't lose site of the need to take a landscape scale approach to wildlife management so as to protect as many species as possible. The need to follow Leopold's emphasis on taking a landscape scale look at wildlife management is as pertinent today as it was in the 1930's. In essence, the Service needs to continue placing emphasis on "having boots on the ground".