

## **Oral History Cover Sheet**

**Name:** Mark Forrest

**Date of Interview:** July 17, 2015

**Location of Interview:** Mashpee, Massachusetts

**Interviewer:** Christine O'Neill

**Brief Summary of Interview:** Mr. Forrest discussed his involvement with Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge, focusing on his time as a member of Congressman Studds and Congressman Delahunt's staff. Along with the both congressmen, Mr. Forrest discusses the roles that George Costa, Carl Melberg, and Tom Fudala held while trying to establish the refuge. Mr. Forrest is also responsible for other projects such as establishing WBNERR, getting funding to clean up the pollution from Otis Air National Guard Base, and establishing the Mashpee Water District.

[Causal talk]

MARK: So do you have like a standard format of questions and things?

CHRISTINE: Not really, I have some questions if you need some prompting but most people just tell their story with their involvement with the refuge. So take it away.

MARK: My involvement with the refuge actually started when I joined the staff of Congressman Studds.

CHRISTINE: Right.

MARK: I joined his staff in the fall of 1995, '85 rather, excuse me. And I had just left the town manager's office of Provincetown, where I was very involved in environmental issues for the town and conservation issues, and heavily involved in the redevelopment of the town's waterfront, fishing pier, and did a lot of work with the Coastal Zone Program at that time.

CHRISTINE: Cool, that's awesome.

MARK: Yeah, so I joined his staff in '85 and right off the bat I became heavily involved in a project called, the establishment of a national estuary and

research reserve. Have you heard of WBNERR?

CHRISTINE: That's the other place I'm interning.

MARK: Good. Well I was involved in getting that established.

CHRISTINE: Awesome!

MARK: Studds, because it was a federally funded initiative, and research reserves were authorized through congress, as the Congressman's sort of district point person on the Cape and the islands, my job was to help make that a reality.

CHRISTINE: So you worked for Congressman Studds, but you kind of took care of Cape Cod in general, that was your—?

MARK: That was my principal responsibility, just to be in charge of the Cape and islands region.

CHRISTINE: Got it.

MARK: I was sort of district representative for the Cape and the islands. So that was my first project, so I begin spending a lot of time in the Falmouth area, Mashpee area. And I

became very acquainted with Trout Unlimited and the Citizens for the Protection of the Waquoit Bay, the Abbott's and Matt Patrick and that community. And at the time, the Cape Cod/Mashpee area was facing some intense development pressure. So the goal for the Congressman was to try to play an active role, not only in WBNERR established and off the ground but to find ways to support efforts in the community to protect land and open space. I would say that's when we started our initial conservations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. So Studds was a fairly, at the time, the mid-80's, was a chairman I believe of Coast Guard Sub-committee. But he was a senior member of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. And that committee had jurisdiction over wildlife refuges. So I figured given the congressman's senior position on the committee, we'd get a fair amount of interest and cooperation. And quite frankly the real estate officials and people within the Fish and Wildlife Service came out, started looking at some of the land and were telling us that at the time that, within a very competitive system, it would be difficult to justify establishing a refuge. And this was in 1985, I'm just telling you this changed; their assessments changed over time.

CHRISTINE: So were you trying to start a refuge?

MARK: Yes. Well the idea was, yeah I would say our efforts to explore the prospect of a refuge began in '85.

CHRISTINE: I see, okay. And when you say our, do you mean—?

MARK: Studds.

CHRISTINE: Studds.

MARK: And again the refuge was seen as a vehicle to protect land and open space. Now the thing to keep in mind is that development pressures in Mashpee had been somewhat suspended because of the land claim. You live in Mashpee, right.

CHRISTINE: I do.

MARK: So you're familiar with the history of the Indians.

CHRISTINE: Yes.

MARK: Because I'm working with the Indians now.

CHRISTINE: On what?

MARK: Helping them get land.

CHRISTINE: Yeah, oh that's cool.

MARK: I'm doing consulting work now with former Congressman Delahunt. And I teach part-time at the college [Cape Cod Community College]. Professionally I've always had an interest in land conservation and coastal policy. So now I'm working with the tribe and we're helping them get their land in trusts because my hope is that the tribe can become a major force in conservation and environmental stewardship on the Cape at some point.

CHRISTINE: You know it's interesting, I heard that the tribe was very involved with the formation of the refuge, but they didn't actually give their land to it

because they didn't want to have federal owned land.

MARK: I think the tribe was very supportive; I'm not sure how involved they were.

CHRISTINE: Yeah, yeah.

MARK: They were very supportive of it; Chuckie Green, I know was around at the time, he was very supportive.

CHRISTINE: He's my Monday interview.

MARK: Okay, good. But the reality was; the reason why we wanted the federal to play an active role is because there didn't seem to be any real driving force for land conservation beyond the efforts of the Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay, a handful of environmental activists. The tribe itself had just sort of lost a land claim not much longer than, just a few years prior to my coming on board with Studds. And so my, once the land claim issue got resolved, the development pressures intensified. So Mashpee was going through a pretty significant building development at that time.

CHRISTINE: Right; fastest growing town on the Cape according to Tom Fudala.

MARK: You betcha, so it really took off so that's why Mashpee became a real priority. So in the beginning, the Fish and Wildlife Service didn't really show much interest. I mean they took interest but it clearly; at the beginning we were trying to identify federally threatened species and quite frankly we didn't have really much to work at that time. It

wasn't until Studds became, who became chairman of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee that all of a sudden the pieces started falling into place. I think the other big thing that happened as well is Studds become Chairman of the Merchant Marine Fisheries Committee in 1992. So that's when the effort to establish the refuge really picked up in earnest. And then George Costa was a Selectman at the time in Mashpee. You really can't get too far without at least having support of the local government, and so when George became elected as Selectmen his support, his interest was also very helpful as well. So I would say that the pieces really started falling into place in the early '90's with Studds being chairman, George being on the board of Selectmen. Obviously the activism of the CPWB and some of the other local groups was never waning, it was always strong. WBNERR had been established by then and clearly everybody was sort of chomping at the bit, okay what's the next big project and this sort of fit nicely.

CHRISTINE: What was the name of the citizens to protect the—

MARK: Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay; it was a good group. Matt Patrick was very active with the group. There were other major development projects that were on the drawing boards all within the watershed of the Quashnet River. And for people that are familiar with that area the Quashnet River is an incredibly important, very valuable environmental resource.

CHRISTINE: Absolutely.

MARK: And there were so much work going on to protect the Quashnet. And you had this developer going to put a massive condominium development right in the upper area. And it was great to see this grassroots community come together, sort of get the state to put all this money to protect a lot of that land. And it was very exciting, it worked out well. Studds is the congressman that lend his hand and his support to the effort, but it was really, I have to give all the credit to the CPWB, Matt Patrick, Trout Unlimited and those folks for really helping make it all happen. So the next question was going to be; once Studds become chairman, he made several trips to Mashpee, at some point I can give you the dates.

CHRISTINE: Oh cool, okay.

MARK: And maybe even get you some of the photographs. I have one image, one memory I'll never forget, Chuckie Green remembers this. We all took a big trip, we had this huge entourage; Studds wanted to basically hear from everybody to get them to all confirm their interest in doing this. So I think it was '92, '93 we had this huge meeting in Mashpee, we had the highest level ranking officials from the Fish and Wildlife Service, we had the town officials, we had a lot of the stakeholder groups that really wanted to see this happen. So we had Gerry Studds dressed up in his suit and tie, standing on top of a dune at South Cape Beach looking back over the crowd, saying, "Well what do you think? Do we want a refuge?" And everybody sort of said, "Yeah."

CHRISTINE: Christine Gault told me about that moment and she said that there was, apparently while they're

doing this big tour, right, they found a couple making out behind the dunes or something. It was like super awkward.

MARK: There were a lot of interesting things going on at the time.

CHRISTINE: Okay, so—

MARK: That's right, the first WBNERR manger was a woman named Ilo Howard.

CHRISTINE: How do you spell that?

MARK: Ilo Howard. I don't know if Ilo is still around. She was quite a character. She used to tell me the ghost stories about the Swift estate. So and any event, Studds made it clear we got the buy in and then we went about and did it. And then we had more meetings, more discussions and then eventually; and you'll get a kick out of this. At the time we worked on this, also on Studds' staff in addition to me was a guy named Dan Ashe.

CHRISTINE: Okay, oh I've heard the name before.

MARK: Dan is now the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHRISTINE: Right, right.

MARK: Former Studds staffer. Now you realize that there are usually a handful of people in these stories that end up showing up in interesting places.

CHRISTINE: Right, exactly.

MARK: So Dan was on Studds' legislative staff, he worked on the committee. His dad, you'll get a kick out

of this, his dad at the time happened to be Bill Ashe. Bill Ashe was the Regional Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service; he was an incredible character. One of the most dedicated servants I've ever met, a very powerful voice for conservation. So any event, yeah, so Studds basically got the buy in and he made it very, very clear that he was going to expend whatever energy and effort it would take to make the refuge a reality. Now the thing as you know, as you've learned, this became one of these partnership refuges where the federal government would establish the acquisition boundary and all of the partners would obligate themselves to work collectively to make sure that the land within the boundary could be acquired and protected. The problem that the federal government has always had is that within the acquisition guidelines of the Fish and Wildlife Service, the land, any acquisitions within the refuge just don't necessarily rank as high as some of the other acquisition priorities within the Fish and Wildlife Service. So it's a very competitive process and so to some degree, getting funds has been a bit of political exercise. And that's the other thing you'll learn in your journey, in your career, is how politics play such an important role in any of these successes. I learned that real early one, that's one of the reasons why I left town government and became actively involved in working with the congressman. Studds' background was in marine policy, he wrote the Stripe Bass Conservation Act, he helped write Coastal Zone Management Act. He was very involved in marine sanctuaries, research reserves, all matters coastal. So as you begin studying coastal policy and coastal zone management, many of the policies that you'll be studying were

actually either authored or coauthored or Mr. Studds had his fingerprints all over them. That's one of the reasons why when he asked me to join his staff, I was just was thrilled about the idea because I had my interest in all of these areas.

CHRISTINE: Right, mutual interests.

MARK: So the refuge became a commitment on the part of the refuge partners, so it's a fairly unique creature. And Chuckie can tell you about all the interesting things that are going on and some of the exciting work that's happening. I mean you've got all the details, you know how many acres, you have a pretty good idea about the parcels, who owns what, how much the state owns, how much the feds own. But there's still an enormous amount of work that has to be done, and that's one of the reason's I'm working with the tribe right now. I left congress in 2011, so I worked with Gerry Studds from '85 to '96 and then joined the staff of Congressman Bill Delahunt.

CHRISTINE: I'm sorry, what is his last name?

MARK: Bill Delahunt, DELAHUNT; he was the congressman who succeeded Studds. And he too was very active in protecting the Cape's environment; he was a strong support of the refuge as well. So what you're getting is a perspective of a former Studds staffer and a former Delahunt staffer; Delahunt very committed to the refuge system. For me, I think one of the, if I look back in terms of my career, two projects that I worked on I'm very proud of is, is obviously WBNERR and the refuge. So very proud, but it's still, these efforts, I think that there's one thing that we can

learn from the creation of the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge is the critical importance of local support, community involvement, dedicated citizens that support such initiatives, having also, support from local Selectmen, local officials. And then to sustain these things requires an enormous amount of corporation involving organizations like the partners, partners that have come together to support this enterprise. So it was sort of like an incredibly timely confluence of things. I don't think if Studds, if Studds did not become chairman, it would not have happened because he had the political juice as they say to see to it that the support was there at every level of the bureaucracy.

CHRISTINE: So what do you remember about the acquisition of the Bufflehead Bay property because that was the big first land purchase.

MARK: What do I remember about it, I remember just it was an incredibly important acquisition.

CHRISTINE: Were you involved with it at all?

MARK: In terms of the details, no, I was not that involved. No, I mean you have to say also, having the involvement of the state, when you look at the amount of property that the state has acquired in Mashpee, it's quite significant. State and federal government have major acquisitions, and quite frankly the state has done a great job in stepping up.

CHRISTINE: So a couple of other people that I interviewed, maybe you can talk about your relationship with them at all; Carl Melberg.

MARK: Yeah.

CHRISTINE: He was Fish and Wildlife.

MARK: Yeah. He's had a lot to do with the refuge and he can probably explain to you the work he's doing, but I've known Carl for quite a while.

CHRISTINE: And Tom Fudala.

MARK: Tom is an incredibly valuable resource for the town of Mashpee. It's amazing that he's been there for as long as he has, because when I joined Studds' staff he was there.

CHRISTINE: Right, and he's like on a zillion committees and everything.

MARK: He's on everything. Yeah, he's got multiple hats, you know, he needs to be cloned. In fact I think he has been cloned. I'm always wondering which Tom Fudala I'm; but you know his heart's in the right place. He was an important person in town hall, it's great to have the support of Selectmen, but you need someone who's got the grasp of all the facts that understands the properties, understands the part, sort of, on the ground, understands the details in terms of what's going on, the properties that are the most threatened and need to be protected. And Tom has played a very critical role, I think, in this whole effort from the very beginning up until today. And he's definitely an MVP in all of this.

CHRISTINE: So you would say that the town hall level, it was Tom. At the Selectmen level, it was George. You were at the regional level and then Studds was at the state level, right.

MARK: Studds was a congressman.

CHRISTINE: Oh, okay, so Congress.

MARK: Yeah, he's the federal level.

CHRISTINE: And the Fish and Wildlife was Carl.

MARK: Yeah. Yeah, what happens is that the Fish and Wildlife Service as a service. The Director of the Service has the authority to establish a refuge boundary, but the establishment of the boundary, even though it's required administratively, gets scrutinized by the Congress. I mean, so to have the chairman of the full committee of Merchant Marines basically say, "Yes, I support this and bless this." Is a huge—

CHRISTINE: Right, and that was kind of Carl's project I think was to; I mean I know Tom put together the perspectives but Carl did all the research.

MARK: Well his job was sort to put together the package at the staff level within the Service so that everybody can buy in on it. For someone like yourself who's studying coastal policy, what's helpful for you is understand the complexity of it all.

CHRISTINE: Oh my gosh, yeah.

MARK: And how greatly important it is to have all these organizations sort of working together to make it happen.

CHRISTINE: Right. Yeah, this is such a fascinating story; I love this. And it's the perfect intersection of my interest in writing and making a narrative out of this.

MARK: It's perfect. So you've got a lot to write about. And as know that WBNERR, I mean so when we were bring people to sort of build support for this, bringing them to WBNERR, bringing them to the boat house, bringing them to South Cape Beach; there's so many sort of magnificent scenic vistas to capture it all. I mean Studds was just sort of taken by the Swift Estate and just being there. There's so many times, in fact one of the things that Studds did when he was leaving, Studds retired or decided not to run for re-election in 1996. And I remembered he and Delahunt, so Studds and Delahunt on the campaign trail in 1996 together. We sort of had one of these very special moments, the three of us there in Falmouth at the Swift Estate, sort of standing on the bluff overlooking Waquoit Bay. And Studds sort of teaching Delahunt, this young kid from Quincy how to pronounce Waquoit. It's a tongue twister right, for anybody who doesn't know anything about the Cape or knows very little; the good thing about Bill was as a kid he spent a lot of time in Falmouth, but Waquoit is everyone's tongue twister. So we always used to enjoy people when we'd bring them there and then they talk about how great it is, the magnitude. I could keep going on, but why don't we go through some of your other questions. What else do you have?

CHRISTINE: I mean, they're mostly just prompting questions. Let's see, how did you get involved in the refuge? Most proud? What was the biggest challenge to getting the refuge started?

MARK: I think we covered that. I think the biggest challenge in getting the



refuge off the ground was making sure that we had all the support at all the key levels. The state legislatures were supportive, the Selectman were supportive because of George's work. You know you had the right support within town hall, with Tom Fudala making sure that it was there along with George. And at the federal level, Studds' support was key, because if he, as chairman of the committee, was behind it then he would bring all of the political support at the federal level. The state legislatures, quite frankly, weren't that involved in it.

CHRISTINE: Okay, interesting.

MARK: I mean they were supportive, they were helpful, I'm trying to think who the state rep was at the time. In the early '90's, the state rep, it might have been, like I said, I'm not sure. It might have been Eric Turkington. On something like this, back then, that's right Bill Weld was the Governor. Back then, you couldn't be green for the state legislatures, I mean at the time you had to be in favor of land conservation; just politically it was the right place to be. And if Studds wanted it, and Studds wanted it to happen, then generally that meant a lot.

CHRISTINE: Now when you say the whole idea of the refuge started in '85, was that in Mashpee or were you looking at other places as well?

MARK: No, Mashpee was it. No, our concern was that Mashpee was, because of the land claim, the development pressure had been lagging there, and with the land claim over, real estate, the pace of real estate activity and development was pretty intense. So I

was involved in multiple things going on in Mashpee at the time. So I helped set up the Mashpee Water District. So what else was Mark Forrest doing in Mashpee? The refuge wasn't the only thing that I was dealing with. The other major project that I was heavily involved in was helping establish the Mashpee Water District, because we were finding pollution emanating from the military base.

CHRISTINE: Oh right, the plumes.

MARK: So I was Studds' point person on cleaning up the military base.

CHRISTINE: Oh, very cool, okay.

MARK: So while I'd be on the base working on with officials there to help figure out where the pollution was coming from and how to stop it and how to deal with it, and getting the money for it. We're also scrambling to make sure that we had funds for the Water District and a water system so people could drink clean water, and then I'm helping work on the refuge. So for me as a staffer on Congressman Studds' staff, I was very busy in that field, on a multitude of things. So we had just go WBNERR off the ground and it was dealing with the bays getting the pollution. Now guess how much the cleanup out of the bays cost?

CHRISTINE: I couldn't even imagine.

MARK: We've spent over 700 million dollars I think now.

CHRISTINE: Oh my God!

MARK: We're going to get close to a billion.

CHRISTINE: Since when?

MARK: Since 1985, when I started. So, yeah, when I got on the job my first two projects were, you'll get a kick out of this, was to help get WBNERR off the ground and then help deal with the pollution problems out of the bay. So we had to help Falmouth get water supplies, and we had to help Mashpee get water supplies. And so my job was to help get a lot of money to deal with those issues.

CHRISTINE: And how did you do that, did you write grants or purposes, or how does that work?

MARK: What I would do is I would guide Congressman Studds in identifying where the funds might be and giving him recommendations on how to get the funding and how to get the federal support for it. And to some degree that's the job of staff of the refuge too. And so I had made it clear to Studds that it was going to be a challenge to create a refuge in Mashpee, that we didn't have all the stars lined up. But back then, in the mid-80's, the Selectman weren't overly supportive of the idea. The stars didn't get lined up until the early '90's.

CHRISTINE: Yeah, do you remember Nancy Kaplan at all?

MARK: Yeah.

CHRISTINE: She, from what I read over the newspaper articles, was not very supportive of it at all. Does that sound right?

MARK: Right, we did not have the kind; the Selectman, at the time were not conservation orientated.

CHRISTINE: Right, okay.

MARK: I think that's the most diplomatic way to put it. So we knew that if we could figure out a way to create a refuge in Mashpee, it was going to a bit of an uphill battle because the Selectmen would probably not be in favor of it. And then all of a sudden George Costa comes along and then they start to realize that, "Hey, wait a second." But people were becoming increasingly environmentally conscience because of the pollution problems out of the base and the need to protect water supplies, because that's where the refuge fits. If you're going to find, you know where the water comes from, it comes from ground water and watersheds, so you've got to protect all that.

CHRISTINE: Right, the nitrogen loading and stuff.

MARK: Exactly. So if we're going to have any chance of helping save the town in its long term future, land is vitally important in all of these, because the land is critical not only to protecting the costal resources and preventing nutrients from overwhelming the quality of our water, but our drinking water supply is incredibly reliant on healthy and well protected watersheds. So one way to help acquire the land that's critical from a water supply point of view was to create a refuge. And you'd be amazed at this, is that is still not that well understood here on Cape Cod.

CHRISTINE: Yeah.

MARK: Yeah.

CHRISTINE: Well that's WBNERR's dream.

MARK: We still have a lot of work to do; there's an enormous amount of work to do. So in terms, this has pretty much been my life, is focused on protecting the environment of the Cape. So WBNERR and the Land Bank and the cleanup up of the base and turning the northern part of the insulation into conservation lands. We turned the northern part of the base into a major refuge, or reserve as we call it; 15,000 acres.

CHRISTINE: Okay. How did that come about?

MARK: Because we demanded it. We fought like hell for it. Yeah that's another project that I was heavily involved.

CHRISTINE: When did that happen?

MARK: We turned the northern 15,000 acres of the insulation into what we call a water supply reserve, we did that in 2001 I think.

CHRISTINE: And the water there was clean enough to use as water supply?

MARK: We were cleaning it up.

CHRISTINE: Oh, that was, okay I see what you're saying.

MARK: We were cleaning up, so the idea was once you get it cleaned, once you get it remediated, let's not repeat the mistakes of the past.

CHRISTINE: Exactly.

MARK: So we're going to clean it up and then we're going to stop bombing it.

CHRISTINE: Right, yes. Yeah, it's so funny Nancy Church was telling me that the reason it got so polluted is because they literally practiced dumping fuel, they practiced evacuating their fuel.

MARK: We did not, back when they were doing this, remember now this was World War II, we're fighting, we're mobilizing troops from Camp Edwards to fight the Nazi's in Europe. I mean the fate of the world is in the balance, alright. And we thought at the time if that if you just dump stuff in the ground, it would just stay there. So yeah, you dump old fuels and chemicals, light them on fire, put it by a structure of an old jet and then you practice your firefighting. Who would have thought that all that stuff, the residue, the residual chemicals would eventually find their way through the ground and then get into the ground water and then sort of migrate off base.

CHRISTINE: I just think that it's so like, today with the price of oil and is so expensive and everything, that they would practice dumping fuel; it seems wasteful on so many levels.

MARK: It's a completely different mindset.

CHRISTINE: Yeah, it's true, that's true.

MARK: It's a completely different mindset. Back when I was a kid we used to change, when I was in high school, changing oil what people would normally do is go in their back yard, take out their oil and drop the oil onto the

ground, put the screw back on, and then put oil in it. Now today, that's unheard of.

CHRISTINE: Yeah, absolutely.

MARK: We'd never do that, right, because we all know now that what happened—

CHRISTINE: Well it's, yes thanks to things like this.

MARK: Well exactly, so we've learned a lot. I remember in 1985 when we first started doing the initial studies, looking at the pollution on the base, we had no clue to how bad it was. We were looking for needles in haystacks back then.

CHRISTINE: I think you guys installed a bunch of little wells, right?

MARK: Extraction wells.

CHRISTINE: Yeah, like those little like cylindrical things.

MARK: Yeah. Have you seen some of the monitoring wells lining the bays?

CHRISTINE: Sure, yeah.

MARK: Thousands of them.

CHRISTINE: Yeah. Right.

MARK: Well when I started in 1985 there weren't that many.

CHRISTINE: Right, okay, that was part of your effort to research the pollution.

MARK: To find out where it was going, exactly. We were finding chemicals that we didn't even understand.

CHRISTINE: Aren't they called extraction wells?

MARK: Extraction wells. Well they're monitoring wells and extraction wells. So like if you were driving in Mashpee and then Falmouth on the road to the base, you were driving around there and would were looking at all these wells all clustered together. The USGS, do you know anything about the U.S. Geological Society, or Survey?

CHRISTINE: Not a ton.

MARK: Fascinating organization when it comes to the environment. U.S.G.S., the U.S. Geological Survey, they're within the Department of the Interior and they're been incredibly helpful in assisting us understanding the pollution and where it's going. So as a student studying this stuff, you'll eventually come to learn as to how resourceful they are in helping us understand our water issues and water problems. We used them a lot to study the water problems out at the base; they have thousands of monitoring wells everywhere, they and the military. So I think the refuge, you know, turned out to be initially almost an impossibility; initially the idea of a refuge in the mid-80's was an impossibility. That within the Fish and Wildlife Service bureaucracy there wasn't much support. There was a real certain degree of timidity within the agency itself.

CHRISTINE: Not a priority.

MARK: It was not a priority, no. And then from '85 to '90, it just was not a

priority. I would certainly prod them from time to time to give us an update on what the prospects would be. But like I said, the turning point in all this is Studds became chairman because when you're chairman of the whole committee, it's amazing the power that you hold and what you can get done. So Studds used the power of his office to give this idea the political support it needed to take hold. And the good thing for me was, my role was to sort of facilitate the congressman's involvement into helping shepherd this whole proposal through the bureaucracy and helping solidify the local support for it. Yeah, it was an incredible time. I consider myself one of the luckiest guys around to be involved, to be so passionate about protecting the environment and then working with two congressmen who could make a lot of things happen. I mean think about it.

CHRISTINE: Yeah, and I think Tom told me that Mashpee, I think besides the Cape Cod National Seashore, has the most, or the largest amount of open space on the whole Cape.

MARK: Right, now you'd be surprised at this, but there's some people that don't necessarily see that as a good thing.

CHRISTINE: Right, yeah. I think it's a fabulous; and I think it's surprising because Mashpee seems like such a little town in comparison to I don't, well I mean Barnstable is obviously very developed. But you think like the lower Cape where there's so much land and like only like Turo, P- town [Provincetown] and seems more scarce.

MARK: Well if you were to look at a map of the area right now, the thing that I'm very excited about is having that major role in helping protecting a lot of the upper Cape. Because if you look at the reserve, the water supply reserve, which is the northern part of the military base; let me pull it up here. So if you look at the military base, that's the military base right there.

CHRISTINE: Right.

MARK: That's the industrialized area. See all that land that's north of it?

CHRISTINE: Uh-huh, that's the reserve.

MARK: That's the reserve.

CHRISTINE: Wow, that's awesome.

MARK: That was a military training area, and when I joined Studds' staff, the Army was bombing it on a regular basis.

CHRISTINE: And so was it in really bad, did you have tons of restoration work to do?

MARK: Yeah, it's not even close yet. So all of this green space, yeah it's now been turned into conservation land. The refuge boundary comes up and touches the base,

CHRISTINE: Sure.

MARK: But the idea was to have it come up right up to the base so wildlife could benefit from that connection.

CHRISTINE: But you know what's interesting, I found, from looking at old articles and stuff, but an overwhelming support of its citizens, even if they didn't

necessarily get involved with these efforts. But just the like at the town meetings; they had a referendum I think or something that was like, they had some stipulation on the town warrant about that. And I'm like butchering this, but...

MARK: There was a town meeting vote to support it, right?

CHRISTINE: Right and it was 93% supported it, it was crazy; it was approved 279 to 18.

MARK: Yeah, by the time it ultimately came to the voters to sort of weigh in, so much work had been done to sort of package it to put it together, to get the federal support.

CHRISTINE: Yeah, and I think Turkington is right. I have in June of '96, "Representative Edward Turkington of Falmouth who proposed a land bank to get support from Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard."

MARK: Eric, Eric Turkington.

CHRISTINE: Oh, thank you.

MARK: And that's the campaign that Delahunt and I worked on.

CHRISTINE: Oh okay.

MARK: We were the ones that sort of lead the political campaign. We led the political campaign to get the people to support that we helped raised the money. And actually the people on the Cape turned it down the first time.

CHRISTINE: Really?

MARK: Oh yeah, the land bank, that's a story in and of itself.

CHRISTINE: Yeah.

MARK: See that's your next story.

CHRISTINE: Yeah, and there's so many, I meant I feel like it's almost an overwhelming project because there's the story of the refuge and then there's the story of the dozen partners.

MARK: And their own stories.

CHRISTINE: Right, exactly.

MARK: Because you've got to Orenda there; Orenda and the work that they've done; they've helped fill in the land trust gap. And lately I've been involved in helping create the Native Land Conservancy, that's the newest land trust on Cape Cod. And it's been launched by a number of members of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe.

CHRISTINE: And so was the land trust and the land bank right, did one replace the other? How did that work?

MARK: Well no. We worked with Eric to actually help get the bill through the legislature and then when it came to the Cape, it required the support of a referendum on the Cape; people had to vote for it. The first time on the ballot it lost, it lost the first ballot question; I think it was in January of maybe '98. So then, because the original land bank proposal called for a levy a real estate transfer. So if you were selling your house and you went to the registry, you would have to pay a surcharge on the sale of the property. And if you're in the business of real estate, that's something

that you just don't want to do. So the realtors fought us and they won. And you know what the slogan of their campaign was?

CHRISTINE: What?

MARK: It was they supported a better plan, they had a better plan. This plan wasn't the one, we need a better plan. So at the end of the campaign, Delahunt challenged them to step forward with their better plan; called their bluff. And I organized for him this huge meeting at the Chatham Bars Inn where we had everybody fighting us come, sit down, sit at the table, we could break bread and they could share with us their thoughts about what a better plan would be, because Delahunt didn't want to let anybody off the hook. So we challenged them, we went there and the realtors put on the table this plan for 2 ½ % surtax on everyone's property tax bill.

CHRISTINE: That doesn't sound like it would be very popular.

MARK: Correct. So a lot of people groaned at the idea, but we were able to sell it. So on every property tax bill on Cape Cod right now, there's a 2 ½ % levy. And when the land bank, the land bank on Cape Cod morphed into what we call the Community Preservation Act.

CHRISTINE: Oh, that's right.

MARK: So every town had their Community Preservation Committee. And we've used enough money to protect 4,000 acres on Cape Cod.

CHRISTINE: Wow.

MARK: So for me, my career's been kind of a blast because I've been involved in creating a refuge, creating WBNERR.

CHRISTINE: When you said Otis, you said 1500 acres right?

MARK: 15,000.

CHRISTINE: Oh, 15,000. How is it that you've only, you're saying just through this community preservation?

MARK: Well the Community Preservation Act Cape wide has protected 4,000 acres.

CHRISTINE: Okay, so that's separate.

MARK: Cape wide, yeah.

CHRISTINE: I see, okay.

MARK: That's the entire Cape.

CHRISTINE: And so Otis?

MARK: Otis is 15,000 acres, it's a 22,000 acre military base. We've turned 15,000 acres on that military base into conservation land.

CHRISTINE: But I don't understand how you can have 15,000 on this base and then Cape wide only 4,000; they're two totally different efforts?

MARK: Yeah, I mean the Cape is much larger than that.

CHRISTINE: Right, but I'm just wondering, because the base is within the Cape, so how is that, that has a bigger number than the Cape wide number? Do you know what I'm saying?

MARK: Yeah, well you have to add up the entire acreage of the Cape.

CHRISTINE: I'm so confused. Okay, let me get this straight—

MARK: The refuge is 6,000 acreages right, total, but not all that land has been acquired. Right?

CHRISTINE: Yeah, I think, yeah.

MARK: The land bank has acquired and protected 4,000 acres, roughly, it might be close to 5,000 now.

CHRISTINE: And so which organization took the 15,000 acres of Otis.

MARK: That was an intuitive that was led by Congressman Delahunt; I worked with him on that.

CHRISTINE: So it's a federal—?

MARK: It's now a state, it's all state conservation land.

CHRISTINE: Okay.

MARK: I know there's a lot of conservation stuff going on.

CHRISTIN: Oh my God, it's so confusing.

MARK: One of the things you should think about is that we go through these periods in history where there's this incredible, intense level of activity; there's that burst of intense activity. So we have gone through on Cape Cod, if you look back over the past 25 years, probably one of the most intense periods of conservation activity in our history.

A land bank/Community Preservation Act, alright, that's acquired between 4 and 5 thousand acres of land. You know the Mashpee Refuge, WBNERR, you know the state acquisition's in and around Mashpee that helped comprise the refuge. And then you've got the reserve on the base, which is converting land, which was military training, into conservation land. So I think that the backdrop on this is that if you would've stepped back, Christine, you're writing the story, is that the refuge was created at a time when the Cap was undergoing and enormous amount of development pressure. And leaders throughout the Cape, came together to respond to that and to find unique and creative ways to protect a considerable amount of land on Cape Cod. So we used a variety of tools. Now some would say that the refuge, the refuge is one tool, one tool, one approach.

CHRISTINE: Did you know David Palmer well?

MARK: Yeah, David Palmer, he was from what FACES, I think Falmouth, he had his own group in Falmouth.

CHRISTINE: Oh okay. But he was also the first president of Friends, right?

MARK: Yes. He was a great guy, he was very active in speaking on behalf of the refuge.

CHRISTINE: And did you ever work with Selectmen Carol Jacobson, does that name sound familiar at all?

MARK: A little bit, yeah. By then the refuge had been pretty much set up. Why? Is she—?



CHRISTINE: Well it says that “she had worked hard on the initial planning stages of the refuge.”

MARK: After it had been established I think.

CHRISTINE: Oh, okay.

MARK: What time do you have her?

CHRISTINE: '95, she's in this odd time.

MARK: Yeah, in '95, by then we had pretty much; see by '95 it was established. Alright. So we had already gone through the, “are we going to do this? Yes.”

CHRISTINE: Right but that was the date of the newspaper article, I think it's saying in the past she had been involved.

MARK: She had been involved but I wouldn't; George Costa deserves an enormous amount of credit as the leading Selectmen. I think he kind of brought her along.

CHRISTINE: It's so unfortunate that he passed away.

MARK: I know.

CHRISTINE: The perfect person to interview for this.

MARK: Yeah, no, he would have been a great guy because when you're a Selectmen, you're really there on the ground on the front lines and sometimes sustaining that power can be difficult. So yeah, Carol was one of the; once we got it established, she was one of the first Selectmen because then you have to go

through the process of acquiring land, protecting it, getting our partner agreement implemented and all kind of stuff. But to me, I mean Falmouth Selectmen, and these [people] are all interesting.

CHRISTINE: Yeah, I got this from, MaryKay Fox gave me this great binder of newspaper clippings from I guess '94 to '96 or '97. So that's where I got most of this info.

MARK: Yeah the Bufflehead Bay, that was a key development and I'd like to say that took a lot of heavy lifting but yeah I think the most exciting times were leading up to 1995. This window of time in the early '90's up to '95. And like I said I would say the critical period was like from '92, '93 to '95 because those were the formative years. There's an enormous amount of work that has to happen after though. But like I said, this period from '85 to '93 was sort of the early years trying; it was an attempt where we were trying to get the Fish and Wildlife Service to step up because they were the only federal agency, we were not going to make national park here, that was not going to happen. The only federal agency that we could really get to play a role in protecting this land was the Fish and Wildlife Service. Because one of the things we did in the mid-80's with Congressman Studds, was to look at what are the federal agencies that could really play a role in helping the Cape, particular Mashpee, deal with all this development pressure, and the only one was the Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHRISTINE: So you kind of did that research to figure out who to—?

MARK: Yeah. Who do we have to rope in here? Can we get the Park Service to do more here?

CHRISTINE: Yeah. I hope you don't mind if I send you emails with follow up questions.

MARK: No, no, no, by all means.

CHRISTINE: Because that's going to be the most useful to me.

MARK: The challenge for you is going to be putting all the pieces together, trying to figure out how all this ties together.

CHRISTINE: I know.

MARK: For me at least, for me I think me and Tom Fudala are probably the two people who have the continuity from the early, the very beginning, the early years up until now.

CHRISTINE: Tom's an encyclopedia.

MARK: Isn't he incredible.

CHRISTINE: He's a fantastic guy.

MARK: He's a great guy, and so he's got that perspective, I've got my perspective, MaryKay, and then there's a bunch of other folks that gets chunks of time.

CHRISTINE: Yeah. Christine, Carl, and Chuckie are the others that I'm interviewing. And then I'm trying to get a hold, I think Carl is trying to get a hold of Ed Moses for me.

MARK: Ed Moses, yeah, he was the, I think the very first refuge manager. He was quite a guy.

CHRISTINE: I think he lives in New Hampshire now.

MARK: He may.

CHRISTINE: So maybe—

MARK: He was not really, there are people that make the decisions that make it happen and then there are people who sort of—

CHRISTINE: Run it.

MARK: Yeah, their job is to, okay—

CHRISTINE: Keep it going.

MARK: Now that we've been told what to do, okay we got to figure out how to make this thing work. There was a lot going on at that period of time.

CHRISTINE: Absolutely.

MARK: Like I said, this was an exciting venture, it came together at just the right time. See my hope going forward is that the tribe, in the not too distant future will get federal approval to start putting land in trusts. The story for Mashpee from today and looking ahead, in looking ahead, who are going to be the major players for conservation in Mashpee down the road. Because right now the federal government is retrenching and holding back, funds are being cut for conservation and for the environment. So where might the resources be? I would argue that looking ahead, the tribe is going to be a partner that has the potential to take on a much greater role,

should they choose to do that. Now the lands that they would acquire, this is one of things we're going to have to wrestle with is that the tribe will probably, to the extent that they are making acquisitions within the boundary of the refuge, those most likely will be tribal lands. They'll be their lands, Indian lands, they won't necessarily be refuge lands; they'll be owned by the federal government but when they're tribal lands, they're managed by the tribe.

CHRISTINE: Okay, got it.

MARK: What we're wrestling with right now is the partners don't necessarily all agree on how to manage the land on the refuge. You'll hear that from Chuckie.

CHRISTINE: Well I know Carl actually said that he was amazed at how much everyone shared a vision on this and how they really were able to work together and pretty much have the same management styles. But yeah, Tom also mentioned that the tribe's role in this was contentious maybe, I don't know. That there's John Peters and Chuckie Green really worked hard to get the support of the tribe because it wasn't there at first.

MARK: Yeah, I think, I'm not sure how to characterize, Chuckie can. But here's where we were coming from, again from me and Congressman Studds, it's like here's this town, this little community, it's under intense development; there's bulldozers and subdivisions, this thing's going like crazy. What's left? If we don't step up now and find ways to protect this land, so we're supporting CPWB and Matt Patrick; we're lending a hand to this group. Studds was very

involved in the creation of the Cape Cod Commission, so we're all supporting a variety of initiatives to protect the Cape from being just totally destroyed. And so what's the game plan in Mashpee? And I can tell you that in the mid-80's it was very frustrating not to be able to get the Fish and Wildlife Service to take a more active interest and role here. Because not only were we having pressures of conservation, pressures of development, we also have a military base that's polluting the ground water and we need to scramble quickly to protect what open space we can that might serve as the town's water supply. So we're like working our tails off trying to figure out how we are going to make this thing work.

CHRISTINE: Awesome.

MARK: So there you go, you've got a lot to digest.

CHRISTINE: I do. I have a lot to digest.