

## **Oral History Cover Sheet**

**Name:** Louis Crucci

**Date of Interview:**

**Location of Interview:**

**Interviewer:** Dorothe Norton

**Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service:** 32 years, 1963-1995

**Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held:** 1963-1965 worked in Minneapolis Regional Office processing easements; 1965-1972 worked in Jamestown, North Dakota; 1972-1974 Washington D.C. in a realty manager position; 1974-1976 worked in Boston, Massachusetts as Assistant Regional Supervisor for Realty; 1976-1993 worked in Fergus Falls, Minnesota as Realty Supervisor; 1993-1995 worked in Regional Office in Minneapolis.

**Most Important Projects:** Land Acquisition Program

**Colleagues and Mentors:** Tom Smith, Harold Benson, Harvey Warner, Walt McAllister, Norman Wallace, Bill Swanson, Harvey Nelson, John Gottschalk, Lynn Greenwalt

**Most Important Issues:** Competition for wetlands in North Dakota.

**Brief Summary of Interview:** Mr. Crucci grew up in northern Michigan, joined the military, and would get his bachelor of science degree in forestry in 1960. He discusses his career and the various offices he worked during his 32 years with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

DOROTHE: Okay, well it's nice to meet you again Lou, after all these years, and I'm here to interview you now that will be sent into the National Conservation Training Center after it's transcribed, they'll put it into the archives.

LOUIS: It's good to see you Dorothe.

DOROTHE: Thank you. And would you like to have a copy of this after it's transcribed?

LOUIS: Sure.

DOROTHE: Okay. Lou, the first thing I want to know is your birth place and date.

LOUIS: I was born in Atlantic Mine, Michigan on November 1, 1932.

DOROTHE: '32.

LOUIS: Yeah, '32.

DOROTHE: Okay, happy birthday in July. And your parent's names?

LOUIS: Alfred and Florence.

DOROTHE: And what were their jobs and education?

LOUIS: My father got up to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and quit school to go to work to help support the family. And he worked in various jobs through his career, mostly in northern Michigan, it was copper mines and lumber mills. And my mother, who was born in Italy and came to this country at age 2 or 3 had to leave school in like the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade because she was the oldest daughter of six

children in the family and she had to help her mother at home.

DOROTHE: Wow. And where did you spend your early years?

LOUIS: Well I grew up in northern Michigan and went to school there, fortunately there was, after high school I had a cousin who was a professor at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan. And he encouraged me to go to college, I didn't intend to at that time, I wanted to get a job and earn some money. And I did that for about a half of year and I thought about what he told and he said if I were to decide to go to college, he'd pay for my first year. So I started at Michigan Tech., or Michigan Technological University as it's known now. And I went for two and half years, I got discouraged, my buddy and I volunteered for the draft and I went into the Service for two years. And when I got I was ready to finish college and I did, and I graduated in 1960.

DOROTHE: With what kind of degree?

LOUIS: BS in degree Forestry.

DOROTHE: Okay. And when you were younger, what did you do? Did you have a lot of hobbies, or books or different events that interested you a lot?

LOUIS: Not really. Growing up and having buddies and going to school, I did like the outdoors, I played a lot; we lived in a small town, so we played a lot in the woods and got to see a lot of wildlife. And I think I started reading, when I started reading books by favorite books were nature related. I remember

reading some of Jack London's books; I remember reading *Trap-Lines North* and *White Fang*, and those kinds of books interested me and pricked my interest in the outdoors.

DOROTHE: That's good. Did you have any jobs as a child?

LOUIS: I worked, between my junior and senior year, I worked in the lumber mill to earn some money and I was able to buy my own suit for graduation and some other things that I wanted, a class ring. And as a youngster, I remember picking potatoes in the fall and helping picking strawberries in the summer to earn some money; those kinds of things.

DOROTHE: Did you ever hunt or fish as a child?

LOUIS: Yes, yes. My dad loved to fish trout on streams and when you got old enough, as boys he would take us out periodically; that's where my interest in fishing started.

DOROTHE: And what high school did you go to?

LOUIS: Well it was called Painesdale High School, in Painesdale Michigan. And while I was in school, just before I graduated, it was changed to Jeffers High School, named after the husband and wife superintendent and principle at the time who had spent many, many years in that school system.

DOROTHE: When did you graduate?

LOUIS: I graduated from high school in 1952.

DOROTHE: And then you talked a little bit already about when you attended the university and your degree. And you didn't go beyond the bachelor's degree?

LOUIS: No, I did not.

DOROTHE: Okay, let's fine. And what aspect of your formal education equipped you for the future?

LOUIS: Well, I started out looking for a degree in engineering. Michigan Tech. was basically, at that time, an engineering school, and I started out with a major in mechanical engineering, and I think that's where I got into a little bit of trouble because math was not my strongest suit. And once I got up into calculus and thermodynamics and some of those courses, I kind of started faltering. And it's at that point when I was finishing my sophomore year that I got discouraged and decided maybe it's time to go in the military and get that out of the way and think about what I wanted to do when I got out of the Army.

DOROTHE: So you were in the Army?

LOUIS: Yes.

DOROTHE: And your duty stations, where were they?

LOUIS: Well I did my basic training in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. And then I was sent to Milwaukee, at that time they were establishing Nike missile bases in various cities around the country and Milwaukee was one of those cities and I spent, I believe, six months in Milwaukee at one of those Nike missile sites. And I decided maybe if I'm ever going to see the world, I should

try to get, do it in the military. So I talked to my sergeant and asked him if I could transfer, if I could get a transfer to Europe. And he arranged that and my last fourteen months in the Service, I spent in Germany.

DOROTHE: Oh, good. Did you get any declarations from the Service?

LOUIS: Well, nothing special; I was Solider of the Month while I was in German but I don't know how special that was.

DOROTHE: I bet it was special to you, wasn't it?

LOUIS: Well I suppose it was.

DOROTHE: So did the military service relate to any way to your employment with Fish and Wildlife Service?

LOUIS: Not directly. I recall, I think, when I applied for a job at the Fish and Wildlife Service, I think if you had military service at that time, I don't know if you got an extra point or two or something.

DOROTHE: I think you did.

LOUIS: But other than that, no.

DOROTHE: Okay. So, can you tell me when, where, and how you met your lovely wife?

LOUIS: Yes, I can. After I graduated from Michigan Tech., my first job in the forestry field was with a company called Vulcan Corporation, and they had a large mill in Duncan, Michigan which was near where I grew up, and I was hired as a forester. And Karen was

working there as a secretary at the time. And we lived within a few miles of each other, so I knew who she was, but we started commuting to work together with another fellow and so I got to spend a little more time with her and eventually we started dating and eventually we got married.

DOROTHE: Where and when did you get married?

LOUIS: Well we got married in South Range, Michigan on I believe it was July, 28 in 1962.

DOROTHE: Very good, okay. And do you have any children?

LOUIS: We have one son and two daughters.

DOROTHE: And their names?

LOUIS: My son is named Jay and he's currently working for the Fish and Wildlife Service as a permanent/part-time at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge.

DOROTHE: Oh, very good.

LOUIS: And he does some firefighting and does other summer controlled burns and other things.

DOROTHE: Oh, that's great.

LOUIS: He's hoping to get on full-time, whenever he can get a full-time position available that he would qualify for.

DOROTHE: Good, and the daughters?

LOUIS: I have a daughter who lives in Vadnais Heights, Minnesota; a suburb of

the Twin Cities. Her husband is a physician, she has a degree in teaching and she's a stay at home now, they have four children; ages three, and the oldest one is eleven. And my other daughter, Lisa, is a social worker; she lives up in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, she works for the county as a social worker and her husband is an accountant that works for Otter Tail Power Company, a Minnesota company.

DOROTHE: Was there any particular reason why you wanted to work for Fish and Wildlife Service?

LOUIS: Well I, like I said when I grew up I kind enjoyed the outdoors and my degree in forestry generated an additional interest in wildlife related stuff. So when I graduated in 1960, I drove to the Twin Cities, me and one of the other graduates, and we knew the Fish and Wildlife Service had an office in the Buzza Building and we went in and applied for a job with the Fish and Wildlife Service. And I remember talking to Tom Smith, I don't know if you remember Tom Smith.

DOROTHE: I don't remember him.

LOUIS: He worked with Harold Benson.

DORTOHE: Oh, okay.

LOUIS: And that's when, in 1960, was when they were establishing, just getting going on the small wetlands acquisition program. And they didn't have any job openings at the time. But Tom, who was also a graduate of Michigan Tech., my alma mater, remembered me coming in and in 1963 when they started hiring for the small wetlands program, he remember that Lou had been down in

1960 and in fact he came up to Michigan Tech. to interview some students who were graduated then and I was working at the time for Vulcan Corporation as a forester. And he came me a call and said, "If you're interested, come down and we'll visit." So I visited with him and I was offered a position in the Minneapolis Regional Office, and that would have been in 1963.

DOROTHE: Oh, very good. And what did you do in that position?

LOUIS: Well I started out in the Twin Cities Office and the Fish and Wildlife Service had established a number of field offices, at that time there was an office, I believe, in Devil's Lake and in Jamestown, there was one in Fergus Falls, and one in Benson, and there were some in South Dakota. And all of the acquisition work or the agreements that were taking for easements and purchase agreements were sent to Minneapolis, the regional office, to be processed and that's where I started; I helped process some of those cases. We had to go through certain procedures before payment could be made to those land owners, checking titles and that sort of thing. And so I worked in the Regional Office for two years.

DOROTHE: And the where did you go?

LOUIS: And then I went to Jamestown, North Dakota in 1965. We had, at that time, we had a daughter and a son who were little at the time and we rented a house in Jamestown, North Dakota.

DOROTHE: Okay, and from there?

LOUIS: Well we worked in Jamestown for seven years, from '65 to '72, and

then I had the opportunity to go into the Washington office. I was asked if I'd consider applying for a realty management position in the Washington D.C. central office. And I applied and I got the position and we packed up and left Jamestown and went to Washington D.C. in 1972.

DOROTHE: What a difference [chuckling]. And then where did you go from there?

LOUIS: In 1974, there was a position that came open as the Assistant Regional Supervisor for Realty in Boston. Harvey Warner was the realty supervisor at the time, and the assistant position was open. And Walt McAllister, who was the Chief of Division of Realty in Washington encouraged me to apply for that job and I did, and we moved to Boston, Massachusetts.

DOROTHE: And from there?

LOUIS: We were in Boston for two years and a position came open in Fergus Falls, Minnesota as the realty supervisor at the Fergus Falls office as the realty supervisor at the Fergus Falls office. Norman Wallace was the acquisition, no he was the area manager of the office in Fergus Falls at that time. And I applied for that job and got it and we moved to Fergus Falls, Minnesota in 1974 [should be in 1976].

DOROTHE: Very good. And was that your last position?

LOUIS: No it wasn't.

DOROTHE: Oh, okay.

LOUIS: We were there for seventeen years, that's basically where our kids grew up from little to, they graduated from high school and college there. And in 1993, after seventeen years in Fergus Falls, I knew my career was nearing the end and Bill Swanson, who was the Realty Chief in the Regional Office in the Twin Cities, was looking for someone who had wetlands acquisition experience that could kind of be his right hand man and help him do some things in the regional office. So I applied, they created the position and I applied and I was transferred to the regional office in 1993.

DOROTHE: And then when did you retire?

LOUIS: I retired January 3, I believe of 1995, after a year, well fifteen months; I spent about fifteen months in the regional office.

DOROTHE: Did you think; what were the pay and benefits like when you started?

LOUIS: Well I remember our first year, when we moved from Michigan we had our baby, our first child was three months old, we moved July of 1993, July of 1963. We had a three-month old baby and everything we owned, which wasn't much, we put in a small U-Haul trailer that I towed to Minneapolis. And I believe the annual salary, if I recall, was something like \$4200 a year for a GS 5, forty-two or forty-six, somewhere in there. I remember we rented an apartment at Elmo Park Apartments just off Highway 7 in Hopkins and the regional office was in the Buzza building, which was right down Highway 7.

DOROTHE: Yeah, that's where I started too.

LOUIS: And I remember we were living right on the edge, it was an unfurnished apartment so we ended up buying a used stove, a used refrigerator, a used table and chairs, we did have a bed and we had a couch and a TV at the time and a crib. And we moved into that apartment, and I believe my paycheck every two weeks was around \$200 dollars, something like that. And that first year Karen and I got to go out one time that first year we lived there because that's all we could afford. And I also, one of the things I remembered of how poor we were, this apartment we lived in was three levels; you got a basement, ground level, and an upper level where the bedrooms were, and it was made out of brick. And it was so hot in July, August, and September, it was so hot, that building would get so hot and we saved up and saved up to buy a fan to kind of cool things off at the upper level at night when we were sleeping. I don't remember how much that fan cost, but we had to save.

KAREN: I think it was \$17.

DOROTHE: [Chuckling] And then winter came, how was it in the winter?

LOUIS: Well it wasn't too bad in the winter.

KAREN: [Unintelligible].

LOUIS: It did have a furnace.

DOROTHE: And so all these different positions you had then, were there promotions involved with them too?

LOUIS: Yes, at that time the realty series I think was a 5, 7, 9, 11 and I think I got, I was promoted to a GS 7 when I was in the regional office and then when I went to Jamestown, I got my 9 and eventually my 11. And then in 1970, we'd been in Jamestown I believe for like five years, the office supervisor, realty supervisor came open. Ken [unintelligible, last name] was the supervisor, was my supervisor there and he transferred to the Albuquerque office and I got his position, which was a GS 12 at the time.

DOROTHE: Did you socialize with people you worked with?

LOUIS: Yes, we did. It was one of the things I think that was important to the Service because a lot of people were moving around and everyone seemed to come from somewhere else, they weren't local people. So we tended to socialize both the guys, going hunting with some of the guys that I worked with, and socializing in the evenings as couples and families getting together with a number.

DOROTHE: How did your career affect your family?

LOUIS: Gee, how did my career affect my family, well I know Karen didn't like North Dakota. The wind and the dirt, blowing dirt, eventually got to her and when that job became available, or I was asked to consider that job in Washington D.C., I did it more for her than for me. I wasn't excited about going to Washington D.C. but I thought well it'd be an interesting experience for the kids; they were little then. I don't regret having made those moves, especially to

Washington D.C. and Boston. They were only two year deals, as it turned out which was great and we got to expose our kids to a lot of history and things they saw. We took them over to Washington D.C., a lot of the different federal sites. And I remember in Boston going to Concord and going into Boston on a weekend with the kids on the trolley and visiting many of the historical places, so it was a good experience for the family.

DOROTHE: That's good. What kind of training did you receive for your jobs, from when you started?

LOUIS: Well the Division of Realty at the time of the land acquisition program, there was no; I don't think you could go to college and get a degree in real estate at that time. So they hired people who had a lot of forestry backgrounds, natural resource backgrounds, and then we were trained to do land acquisition work. And we were sent to, we had to go to a number of appraisal type schools where we learned land appraisal, how to do it, and realty management work, legal work associated with that. So they had quite a good training program to train us to do land acquisition related work.

DOROTHE: That's good.

LOUIS: Plus we also were sent to, there were a number of in house courses that related to human resources type thing and managing staffs and that kind of thing.

DOROTHE: And what hours did you work?

LOUIS: Well I think, typically we worked between seven and eight to three

and four depending on where you were. It was all day shift kind of stuff.

DOROTHE: Okay. And what were your day to day duties?

LOUIS: Well when I started, my first years in the land acquisition program was actually as a land acquisition specialist. I was assigned several counties, like in North Dakota, and we were responsible for all the land acquisition work in those counties you were assigned. You did the land owner contacts, you knew the land the Service wanted to buy, that was a given. The biologist had gone out and determined those lands and you contacted the land owners. If there was an interest, you did the court house search to determine in fact you were dealing with the owner of that property. And then if there was an interest in an offer to buy, you did the appraisals, you appraised that interest in that land, whatever easement or you're buying it in **fee title**, and then you did the negotiations. And basically we carried our typewriter with us and all the legal forms, so if a landowner was agreeable at a certain price to sell his property, we typed up; we had legal documents prepared, but you had to fill in the blanks kind of thing, put in the owner's name and address and the consideration and any reservations on the land. And then you processed that until he was paid, and you went out and paid him when the check came.

DOROTHE: What kinds of tools and instruments did you ever have to use?

LOUIS: Well typewriter, in those early days we did all our own typing and we had to find; we marked off the boundaries of the property we were



acquiring sometimes that took, put in stakes, even with the land owner to determine what he was interested in selling. And then we had to prepare a legal description for that property. So basically, we had a vehicle—

DOROTHE: A typewriter.

LOUIS: And some basic necessities. You had to do a lot of photo interpretation, in the counties you were assigned you had complete area photo coverage that you use extensively to determine boundaries.

DOROTHE: Did you ever work with any animals?

LOUIS: Not really, not in land acquisition program.

DOROTHE: What support did you receive locally, regionally, federally from people you were dealing with?

LOUIS: Well we had to coordinate all of our efforts with the local state people, DNR or whatever they were called because some of those states had land acquisition programs and we didn't want to be stepping on each other looking at the same piece of land. So they pretty much knew the kind of property we were looking for in buying and we coordinated that with the state people. And we were encouraged to become familiar with the local fish and game clubs. We got a lot of our contacts, we'd often show movies, go out to their meetings, be invited to a local fish and game meeting to show a movie and we'd explain the program and tell them what we were doing and why we were doing it. And we got a lot of contacts that way

from interested landowners who we eventually, we brought land from.

DOROTHE: How do you think the Service was perceived by people outside the agency?

LOUIS: Well in North Dakota, we had some difficult times because the program was just getting going and a lot of the farmers there, it was primarily an agricultural area; the whole state of North Dakota. And a lot of the farmers at that time were developing their land, they were draining wetlands, and our job was to preserve wetlands. And there was a big segment of that agricultural community that didn't like our program. They looked at the Fish and Wildlife Service as competitors and we were out buying wetlands that could not be drained anymore, and sometimes they didn't appreciate that. And I recall being sworn at a number of times.

DOROTHE: Not much you can do about it.

LOUIS: Yeah, not much you can do about it.

DOROTHE: How do you think our agency with the communities, what were those relations?

LOUIS: Well I think we did do some PR work to try to have more community acceptance was difficult, the only place that was really difficult was in North Dakota where I was first stationed. But over time I think people changed, they got to see the value of saving those wetlands and what a valuable resource waterfowl was to the state of North Dakota, even though I know a lot of them viewed it as competition for the

agricultural land that they made their living on. But overall we joined all the Fish and Wildlife Service, we went to our own churches in our community. We got to know people, we joined some of the clubs, local clubs, and we did PR work with the Fish and Game Clubs in many of the counties that we worked in. So I think over time we did pretty well in terms of dealing with the public.

DOROTHE: Good. What projects were involved in?

LOUIS: Well.

DOROTHE: Many, many.

LOUIS: I don't recall any projects other than our Land Acquisition Program, that was our focus we spent all of our time in land acquisition. So I didn't do any special projects for the Fish and Wildlife Service. The other thing that comes to my mind is when the Fish and Wildlife first established the early teal season, they needed observers to determine whether or not people were taking advantage and shooting ducks other than teal. And I volunteered for a couple of weekends during that first experimental teal season to be an observer and see, not with law enforcement authority but only to see if the people were shooting only teal.

DOROTHE: What were some major issues you had to deal with?

LOUIS: Well the major issue while I was in North Dakota was competition with the farmers for wetlands. They were, at that time, the Department of Agriculture was paying farmers to drain wetlands, and Duck Stamp dollars were being used by the Fish and Wildlife

Service to preserve wetlands. So that was a major issue. And when we got into the latter part of my career working in Minnesota, we had to have all our tracts approved by local county commissioners. And whenever we couldn't get them approved at the local county level, we had the option of taking those tracts to the Land Exchange Board. And we got into some interesting situations with the Land Exchange Board, which is the Governor, the auditor, and the attorney general in Minnesota on what we called non-certified tracts; those tracts that the counties would not approve the purchase of.

DOROTHE: What was the major impediment to your job or your career?

LOUIS: Well that's kind of hard to say. I would say in Minnesota near the end when we had to get our tracts approved, the major impediment was the counties complaint that the federal government did not pay taxes. That whenever we acquired a piece of property, it went off the tax rolls and the counties were losing money because of that. And we had to overcome that and of course there's the Refuge Revenue Sharing Law does reimburse counties in lieu of taxes. But because those revenue sharing payments verified and they never knew how much they were going to get and they usually go less than what the real estate taxes were, that was the biggest challenge we had, at least in Minnesota is trying to overcome the fact that we were taking land off the tax rolls and the counties were losing money.

DOROTHE: Okay. Now who were your supervisors, can you remember all of them?

LOUIS: I think so. My first supervisor when I started in 1963 in Minneapolis was Harold Benson.

DOROTHE: Okay.

LOUIS: For the two years I was in Minneapolis. And then in North Dakota it was Ken (unintelligible, last name), who was the realty chief in Jamestown where I worked. And when I took his job in 1970, and Clyde Oden who was the manager of the whole office in Jamestown became my supervisor. When I went Washington D.C., Dick (unintelligible, last name), who was the chief of realty management in the Washington office was my boss. For two years I spent in Boston, Harvey Warner was the realty chief for Region 5 in Boston, he was my supervisor. When I transferred to Fergus Falls, Norman Wallace was the office supervisor, and when he left, when he transferred to Crab Orchard, Rollin got his job and Rollin Siegfried was my supervisor. And finally from '93 till I retired when I transferred to the regional office in Minneapolis, Bill Swanson was my boss.

DOROTHE: Okay, well you have a good memory. Who do you think the individuals were that helped shape your career?

LOUIS: That's a tough one, I never thought about that.

KAREN: Tom Smith.

DOROTHE: Maybe your supervisor.

LOUIS: Well Tom Smith hired me, he had the confidence in me to hire me, and Tom and Harold, Harold Benson and

Tom, I think got me started on the right foot. They were very dedicated to their work and they were hard working and they expected the people who worked for them to work hard; they got me off to a good start.

DOROTHE: Well that's good. What President, Secretary of Interior, or Directors of Fish and Wildlife did you serve under? You have a good memory.

LOUIS: (Chuckling). Well I don't remember them all, but I remember John Gottschalk I think was one of the early ones, and let's see, John Gottschalk, Lynn Greenwalt. I remember when I was in Washington, the Assistant Secretary for Interior, I'm trying to remember his name, Bill; I can't remember his name. But when we'd go to Migratory Bird Commission Meetings, he always impressed me. Harvey Warner, the regional supervisor in Boston was a neat guy, very sharp and I always admired him as supervisor.

DOROTHE: How did changes in administration affect your work?

LOUIS: Well I think, I remember a big change, one that I remember the most is when, was it when Ronald Regan was President and Jim Watt was Secretary of Interior; things came down I think that didn't help the Service. I recall as an employee being at a regional conference, I think it was in Minneapolis. And some folks from the department came in and we were often referred to as bureaucrats and I didn't appreciate that because I consider myself a professional employee of the Service and someone who worked hard and was dedicated to his work and I didn't appreciate being referred to as a bureaucrat, and that perception from the

department at that time in that administration bothered me because of that and I'll not forget that.

DOROTHE: In your opinion, who do think the individuals were that shaped the Service?

LOUIS: Well it's hard to say during my time, I wouldn't know before, but I know Lynn Greenwalt was a very dedicated man to the resource. And, you know, I didn't see much of what happened at the Washington level, but at the regional level, I think Harvey Nelson and some of those fellows who really were, had the background in waterfowl and the area I worked in was primarily waterfowl. I realized that Migratory Birds are much broader part of the Service, that waterfowl was our focus. And it seemed like whenever we had someone in charge who supported waterfowl, we always knew we were going to get support for the Land Acquisition Program.

DOROTHE: What was the high point of your career?

LOUIS: High point of my career, it's really hard to say. I think dealing with the Minnesota Land Exchange Board was a big challenge for me when I came in to help Bill Swanson. One of the responsibilities he gave me was to, we needed an extension of the Wetlands Program in Minnesota and I had to prepare the briefing information when we briefed the Land Exchange Board individually and I remember sitting with Skip Humphrey, the attorney general at the time and going over that information and sitting in Mark **Benton**'s office going over that information with, then auditor, state auditor Mark **Benton**. And

then going to the Land Exchange Board with Ernie Carlson, who sometimes could be kind of tough on us and getting that extension I think, which meant we continued the Land Acquisition work in the state of Minnesota was probably; I felt pretty good about that because of the effort it took and the convincing it took and the final result was positive for us.

DOROTHE: That's good. What was the low point of your career?

LOUIS: The low point of my career, I think the low point in my career was when the Fish and Wildlife decided to go through the Area Office concept and I was in Fergus Falls at the time. And we had previously dealt with, all our land acquisition work came through the regional office realty, Tom [unintelligible, last name] and his staff, and all a sudden it was coming out of St. Paul, George [unintelligible, last name] and his staff. And they didn't treat us very well, in my opinion, and it was not an effective approach as related to land acquisition. I felt the resource suffered over that period of time until they dropped that concept and went back to the way we were doing business.

DOROTHE: Okay. What was your most dangerous or frightening experience?

LOUIS: Well I remember when I was working in Boston to go to Philadelphia and close a case, we were acquiring a piece of property for. I believe it was for [unintelligible] National Wildlife Refuge. And I had to carry a check with me for, I think 1.4 million dollars, and spend the night in Philadelphia until I could close that case the next day. I don't call it frightening, but it was, I still remember "Where do I put this check?"

If I go out to dinner, do I carry it with me or do I leave it in my motel room?" Or things like that. Other than that, I think in North Dakota, back in the days when we had people who didn't like us very much and we used to get some nasty letters. You often wondered when you out working alone and getting kicked off of properties, going knocking on landowner's door and who you were and getting cursed at and run off the property. There were times when you wonder, were you going to meet that person who would go off the deep end and you didn't make it off the property; nothing specific but you always had that in the back of your mind when I was working there.

DOROTHE: What was the most humorous experience you ever had?

LOUIS: The most humorous experience I ever had, well I remember contacting a landowner in, I think it was McIntosh County, North Dakota. And I explained the program, told him that he had some wetlands that qualified for easements, and would he be interested. He said, "Well how much would it pay?" I said, "Well let me go out and take a look." So I went out and double checked them and pulled out my aerial photos and checked it on the ground and we had a chart we could use to determine the value of the easement. I came back and I forget what the amount was, but he thought that was pretty good, that he'd except that. And so I noticed when I, I think I had checked the title before I came and I noticed that eighty that he was considering was in a woman's name and he said well that's his wife. So I was sitting in house and typing up this easement agreement, and the car pulls up and this lady comes in the door, pretty

big, hefty German woman, it was his wife. And she looked at her husband, I was sitting at the table, he was sitting next to me, and she, "Who is this?" And he said, "Oh it's a guy from the Fish and Wildlife Service." And she said, "Well what is he doing here?" And he said, "Well you know that eighty we have over there, there's some wetlands down there that they're pay us money for to sign this easement." And I forget what the amount was, he told her what the amount was and he said, "Well he's typing up this agreement now, when we sign this we'll get this money." She looked at him and said, "That's my eighty, and I'm not going to sign any agreement. By the way when I came up the drive I see one of the cows got out, I want you to get out there and get that cow back in the pasture." So he left and there I was sitting at the table with my typewriter, and how do you sneak out of that situation other than close your typewriter, pack up, and walk out of the house and leave. At the time it was kind of humorous but anyway, it was interesting.

DOROTHE: What would you like to tell other people about your career and about Fish and Wildlife Service?

LOUIS: Well when I look back on my career of 32 years with the Service, I've mostly fond memories; it was interesting work, met a lot of people, had a lot of good people that worked for the Service in those days, and enjoyed it. And as I look now, when I drive up into the Fergus Falls area and see a lot of those wetlands that I was involved acquiring, and they're still there, it's kind of a rewarding feeling to know that I had a part in saving a lot of the wetland

resource that we have in the prairie pothole region.

DOROTHE: Well that's good. What were some of the changes that you've observed in the Service, like in the personnel or the environment?

LOUIS: Nothing comes specifically to mind. Overtime the changes were the different administrations and the different focuses on things. It seems like, I didn't like the politics involved. We'd get a new administration come in Washington and they were for more people using the parks or the refuges, more refuge use, hunting and this kind of thing. Another administration would come in and they'd de-empathize that. So there was a number of inconsistencies on how we should be, and I'm sure there's just no right answer but there ought to be a law that sets it up so that we're more consistent on the land use policies with the Service.

DOROTHE: Well we're getting close to the end here, but you're doing a good job. What are your thoughts on the future, like where do you see the Service heading in the next decade?

LOUIS: You know I don't think I have an idea. I think with this administration, and now I think we're going to see a swing to more land use. Like now they're opening up, or talking about more snow mobiles for example on even Yellowstone National Park. And I think those policies are probably going to apply to Service in some ways too with exploration, I'm sure there's oil under some of our refuges, Arctic National Wildlife being an example. And I think we're going to see more pressure on the resources we've preserved over the

years, whether they be national wildlife refuges or parks or waterfowl production areas, or a more multiple use approach. While I can't say one is better than the other, I'm generally opposed to do anything to damage those resources. We don't have much of those natural resources that are preserved to risk some of the land use changes that could impact on them negatively.

DOROTHE: Do you have any photographs or documents or anything that you'd like to donate or share copies for the Training Center? It would go into your file, is what it would do.

LOUIS: I might have a few things, they have them, I don't know, but I know I have a couple of old Fish and Wildlife News from back in the '60's.

DOROTHE: Oh really.

LOUIS: I think I have one, somewhere if I can find it.

DOROTHE: Okay, well if you have it and you'd like it to go in, you can just give me a call and I'll pick it up someday or somehow get it.

LOUIS: Okay.

DOROTHE: Who else do you think we should be interviewing?

LOUIS: Well I don't know of any retirees; I know Art Hawkins lives down the road here.

DOROTHE: I just did him last week.

LOUIS: You did him. I don't know how many of the old land acquisition people that were initially involved in the startup

of the program, how many might be around, I don't know. It'd be interesting I often thought to talk to some of the old, the people that set up these offices, the first supervisor like Grady Mann, I don't even know if he's still around.

DOROTHE: Yes, he is.

LOUIS: You can get a lot of historical stuff from those guys, I know there was Milt Reeves, Clyde Oden. Clyde I know lives down in Arizona somewhere, but I don't know if he's still—

DORTOHE: [Unintelligible] list of law enforcement retirees. Okay, well thank you so much Lou for having the time available, and thank you Karen, this was very interesting, thank you.