

INTERVIEW WITH RICK LEMON
BY MARK MADISON JUNE 30, 2004
NCTC, SHEPHERDSTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA

DR. MADISON: Today in June 30, 2004 and we are in Shepherdstown, WV doing an oral history with Rick Lemon, the interview is Mark Madison. The first question for you Rick is; please describe your training background in the Peace Corps and in the FWS, before NCTC.

MR. LEMON: Ever since I was in the Peace Corps in central Africa I've had an affinity for training. I started out designing and running training programs for Peace Corps volunteers once they left the States and came to central Africa. So it was the in-country training; mostly fisheries training for people that came over there. When I came back to the States and started to work for the FWS out in fish hatcheries, I used to continue to go down to the southeast somewhere in the summer, on my own time, and so training for Peace Corps. In this case it was training before they left the country. It was technical fisheries training, usually down at the University of Auburn, or in Stuttgart, Arkansas at our old warm water fish technology center down there. When I moved into the Federal Aide program I went to work and starting to realize just by asking them, that what they needed the most help in was really some training; some capacity building, some things that a lot of different states needed. For instance like in land acquisition; how to do conservation easements. This was twenty-five years ago when they were still fairly new. I would put together, not where I had any expertise in the subject but just developing and bringing in the people. That worked very well. Then, I was in the Department of the Interior's Departmental Development Management Program. It's a one-year training course that I was in, in Washington. While I was in there, the Director of FWS at the time, Frank Dunkle decided that he didn't want the FWS participating in the Department's program anymore. He wanted his own leadership development program for the FWS. So he made a pronouncement that the FWS would no longer participate in the Department program. We would have our own program. I went to his Special Assistant, Marv Duncan whom I knew from having worked out in Denver with him. I asked him what he was going to do about this new leadership program. He said, "I don't know, I don't know anything about training". I said, "I know just enough to be dangerous. Could I take a shot at it?" He told me it was all mine. So I worked with the Fish and Wildlife Foundation, with Whitney Tilt and Abe Messino at the time. We put together what became the upper level Management Development Program for FWS. We ran that. I was in other jobs. It was a collateral duty. I ran that for about five years.

DR. MADISON: What was the state of training in the FWS before NCTC?

MR. LEMON: We didn't have a whole lot of training. I mean, the longstanding training was the Fisheries Academy. The fisheries people had training going back actually to the 1950's if not before. It was very well known. A lot of state people, through the training

would do fish health and fish culture training. There was also fish nutrition training. They have quite a history but with a fairly limited slate of courses. Law Enforcement people have always had training. That was done at FLETC, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glencoe, GA. The Refuge Academy had also been around for quite a while. They had two programs. There was a Refuge Academy and an Advance Refuge Academy. There were other fits and starts. There was a little bit in Ecological Services, but very little. There was a leadership program that they called the "hermdippers". I don't even remember what it stands for any more. They ran that for a few years but it kind of faded away. There was certainly not a comprehensive training program in the FWS. What we had was fairly limited.

DR. MADISON: So how did the NCTC project get started?

MR. LEMON: Well, you'll have to talk to some other people about and get input from people like Bill Maxin and Gary Edwards and Wendell Ogden and folks like that. When I received the phone call. I was actually in doing the Upper Level Management Development Program at the Xerox Center down in Leesburg. I was running that program. I think it was Bob Putz and Dave Olsen who took me aside and said that it looked like the FWS was going to building a training center. But they weren't really sure what it should look like, or who should be involved, or really anything else. They said that there was some appropriations language that Senator Byrd put in the Bill in 1989 that went along the lines that there was some money to start the planning, development and land acquisition for a FWS training center. The FWS should also consider design options that would allow other organizations to use the center on a reimbursable basis. There was also something in there about a fresh water aquarium; all to be built in the Harper Ferry area.

DR. MADISON: What were the other possible sites you guys were considering? You mentioned Harpers Ferry.

MR. LEMON: When I was brought on board, Bill Maxin took me out to an old quarry site in Harpers Ferry. It was the Driggs property. It was quite an interesting site. It really was an old quarry. In a way it was beautiful because there was some nice wooded area up there, but it had this huge, three-eighths to a quarter of a mile quarry; which was essentially a gash in the earth that was fairly deep. It was full of water and looked pretty nice. But there were told mine tailings and railroad ties, buried there and there were some other issues. The more we looked at the site, and brought in specialists to do contaminate surveys what we found out was that there was a lot of industrial waste there. There wasn't much. I think there were some minor amounts of PCPs of something like that, but not a lot. It was fairly contained, but there was still a lot of industrial waste there. It would have taken a lot of clean up at that site to make it usable for a national conservation-training center. Some of us were nervous enough about that site and the contaminants on the site because of some of the history we've had in the FWS with Crab

Orchard and Tennicum and at other places where we got into something and then found out how bad it really was. FWS had to spend a lot of money trying to clean it up. We were nervous and started looking at some other sites. We even brought the Director, or tried to bring the Director at the time, John Turner, out to look at the property. That's a funny story. The day he came out to get in his car, to drive out to Harpers Ferry that morning, his car had been stolen out of his driveway. So John unfortunately didn't make it up. Dick Smith made it up and Mike Brennan and Bruce Blanchard who was my boss at the time made it up. He was one of the two Deputy Directors. They looked at the quarry site and looked around at some other sites as well. I have to say that against my better judgment, a decision was made to move forward with the quarry site. We proceeded with that and signed agreements with the landowner. Essentially, the agreement said that as soon as you clean up this site to this certain level, we will acquire the property. He started cleaning it up and started hauling things off and taking it to a local landfill. The local landfill was shut down, not because of what he was bringing there, but because of some past problems they had had and discovered in the landfill. When that landfill closed down, his price of cleanup skyrocketed, because he would have had to carry a lot of material for great distances. So he backed out of the deal and we were left without a piece of property. We looked another site in Harpers Ferry that looked okay at the time. Luckily it didn't work out beside right now it's in the middle of a housing development and there are housing developments all around it. The fortunate thing was that Bob Putz, who used to work for FWS and is retired right here in Shepherdstown, WV. He worked at Leetown. He was the Director of the Leetown Science Center for a long time. He is very close to Senator Byrd. He became the Assistant Director for Refuges and Wildlife in Washington and then ended his career as Regional Director up in Alaska. That was his last posting before he retired. Bob happened to know Mrs. Hendricks, the owner of this site. They had worked together over at Shepherd College years and years ago. Mrs. Hendricks just mentioned to Bob one time when she saw him that she and her late husband, Charles Hendricks, had always thought that they would love to keep this 538 acres intact and not have it sold off for a housing development. She asked if he know of anyone that might be interested in the property for that kind of purpose. Bob said, "Well, do we have a deal for you!" So we came out and luckily we appraised the property. We included it in our NEPA documentation, but to be honest with you it was kind of a throw away site at that point because we were still looking at having to build some type of visitor attraction that would bring in a million visitors a year. We couldn't bring a million visitors a year down Shepherd Grade Road. This was just too far off of the beaten path. We had it in there to kind of just to add another one in there, and luckily we did. Because when the Driggs property fell down, and Harpers Ferry went down we were still looking for another site. We were looking at the site that is now in the middle of a housing development. Fortunately, I was at a County Commission meeting and the press was there. I was reporting on where we stood on land acquisition and design and everything else. I just mentioned that we were still looking for a site. It was reported in the Shepherdstown Chronicle, the little local newspaper. Mrs. Hendricks was living during the winter down at her daughter's house in Arizona and had

the local Shepherdstown paper mailed to her out there. She read the quote that we were still looking for a property. She called the FWS and said, "I didn't know you still needed a site. Make me an offer." At that point, the visitor attraction had fallen through. We said that we could offer her fair market value, but she had been offered a lot more money than that in the past. She said, "If I was worried about the money, I would have sold it long ago. Make me an offer." Within thirty days, the FWS was in possession of this property after having spent a good fourteen to sixteen months fooling around with land acquisition down in Harpers Ferry. It was almost like it was meant to be. This is an ideal site. Down there, any site we would have gotten, you would have heard highway 340, because it's a major highway. You could not get away from the road noise down there. Plus, there were three working quarries down there. Here, we are so far off of the beaten path that you don't hear any traffic or any noise, just the birds. This is really an ideal site.

DR. MADISON: Were there any other local sensibilities that you had to take into account?

MR. LEMON: The thing that happened is that we had talking for so long about moving into Harpers Ferry, everyone was aware of what we were doing down there. No one really even knew that we were even looking at anything up here in Shepherdstown. It's not that we were hiding anything. It was just that we didn't think we were going to be here. So when we moved into this area, and moved in quickly, yeah, we were kind of taking people by surprise. One of the best things I think we did was that we sat down and gave it some thought and put together some strategy of how we were going to enter the Shepherdstown community. I can still remember sitting down with Tom Davis and Mary Lamien who is our neighbor across the street and also at that time, owned the Shepherdstown Chronicle. We sat down with Mary and had breakfast down at the Bavarian Inn and we talked about what was going on. We talked about the neighbors, the community. And we talked about sensitivities in the community. We talked about who we should working with and who we needed to reach out to. We asked Mary if we could put an article in her paper, which she graciously approved. We helped to put that article together, and it came out. I think that just to give a sense of where we were coming from the headline of the article was *We Want to be Good Neighbors*, and it was all about how we were building a training center. That was the approach we took from day one, even when we were looking down in Harpers Ferry. We would always to the County Commission meetings. The County Commission members I can remember saying, "You all ought to be writing a book about how to enter a community because you are doing everything right". But to me and the others, it was just common sense; to Steve and Tom and others. It was just common sense. You act like a neighbor. And especially with local politicians, you don't surprise them. You make sure that they know everything that's going on before their constituents get wind of what's going on. When they get a phone call from a constituent, they can say, "I know exactly what's going on and this is what is happening". They can reassure them; and if nothing else they don't look bad because

they are reading about things in the press. So we did that from day one. And I really think it helped a lot. When we started construction out here, we tore Shepherd Grade Road up! That road was never meant to handle the construction traffic that we brought out on that road. There were literally ruts that were two feet deep. And there were part of the road that had just crumbled and fallen off. But again, because we had worked so hard with the neighbors, and we told them that the road would be improved and expanded even; but not too much, because that's what they wanted. We were not going to turn it into a superhighway. But because exactly where we were and exactly when we would be done and exactly when the road would be repaired and upgraded, they were willing to put up with that for a while. I can remember having sessions down in Ann and Denny Small's basement. They are people who live down along the grade and are now part of our Friends group. They were gracious enough to open up their home to us. We would go in there with our flip charts and poster board, showing the center. We would just meet with the neighbors and drink coffee and say that "this is what we're going to do, and this is what the buildings will look like, here's where we're going to put the entry road; we could move it a little bit one way or the other if you'd like us to". We even had Tom Davis go over to Fort Detrick one day at lunch because one of our neighbors, the ones that live right across from the entryway, he works at Fort Detrick. Tom drove over there one day at lunch time just to lay out the plans with him and ask he was comfortable with things like where the driveway was coming in. It was little things like that that I think made a big difference with the neighbors. Sensitivities, yes, Shepherdstown is a very sophisticated area. There are a lot of federal retirees out here and a lot of current federal employees. There are a lot of professionals out in this area. Shepherd College also. These people would have expected to be kept involved. And that's what we did and that's the way we treated them. I think it's been a very, very strong relationship ever since.

DR. MADISON: So your cultural sensitivity training from the Peace Corps paid off?

MR. LEMON: Yeah! Maybe that was it! I don't know! But like I said, it was common sense to us. I have to admit too, and this is kind of a funny story, what may have helped us a little bit too was that about the same time we were moving into this area, they were talking about the CIA building a facility out around Charlestown. Of course, the CIA can't say, or confirm anything! So here we are laying out exactly what we're doing and what each building is going to look like and here's where the road is coming in. The CIA is saying, "No comment." Compared to the CIA we looked really good! I think we did the right thing and we did it for the right reason and it went very well.

DR. MADISON: You mentioned that Harpers Ferry was desirable because it was accessible to traffic and so on. Do you want to talk a little about the National Habitat Center plan?

MR. LEMON: Okay, I'm going to be brutally honest here. And this tape will not be used against me. Senator Byrd had an interest in it obviously. And the Senator Byrd, besides building the training center, which he was going to do to help the FWS. He was also looking, as politicians do, to help the local community, his constituents. One of the things was that the Harpers Ferry historical site is there. That brings people in for a three or four hour stay, and they didn't stay over night. They were looking for another anchor; something else that would bring people to the area. They could go to the historical site and then come to the aquarium or whatever else it was going to be. They'd spend the day and it would get late and they would get hungry and decide to spend the night. It would fill the hotels and restaurants and things like that. He asked us to look at the idea of an aquarium. We did some feasibility studies. We went and visited aquaria around the country; down in New Orleans, out at Monterey, and in Baltimore and up in Massachusetts. When we came back we told the Senator that there were a lot of private aquaria around the country and we weren't sure that it made a lot of sense for the FWS to be building one. As a matter of fact, we had a National Aquarium in the bottom of the Commerce Building. So at that time, it didn't make a lot of sense. But we went back to him and said that if he'd consider something like a habitat center, we might be able to draw the same number of people but the story we would be telling would be the story about fish and wildlife habitat and why that's important and how wildlife depends on that. He said, "Okay, study that for a while and come back and we'll talk about it some more". We studied that and worked with a firm to look at the feasibility of that. We laid out some designs. We worked internally in the FWS with some of our environmental educators. We came up with some plans and took them to the Director, John Turner. We laid it out for John. We showed him what we'd do and how much it would cost. John said, "That's a lot of money!" We said, "We agree, sir, and if we had to choose we would chose the training center." That's what the FWS really needed. John made arrangement and we went up and visited with Senator Byrd with John Turner and Bruce Blanchard. We kind of laid things out for the Senator and it was a lot of money, even to Senator Byrd! He asked which of the two was most important to us and we told him that the training center was really what we needed. He said that if this was our priority, that is what would happen; to his credit. Then we went over and met with Mr. Yeates on the House side of the House Appropriations Committee and went over the same things. This is when it was decided to proceed just with the training center. At that point the Shepherdstown site looked a lot better. Then we were able to start looking at this property.

DR. MADISON: Just in a nutshell, what would the habitat center have looking like? Would it have been like a biosphere?

MR. LEMON: You have it exactly right? It would have been biospheres. You would walk into a desert habitat and see what kind of plant life and what kind of wildlife lives in that habitat with the scarcity of water and things like that. You would walk into a wetland area, or a prairie pothole, or a Pacific Northwest rainforest. It would be people

learning about the habitats of the United States and the wildlife that depends on that and why habitat is important. That was the idea. If we were going to do something, that at least was in keeping with the mission of the FWS, we thought, more than just an aquarium.

DR. MADISON: We'll let Disney build it in Animal Kingdom.

MR. LEMON: That's right, we didn't need to build it. Let somebody else build it!

DR. MADISON: What about the early design process for what became the training center? How did that work?

MR. LEMON: It was a very interesting process, especially for us biologists, which most of us were. We had some engineers on the job too. Essentially, what we did, and again, I think this was one of the smart moves that we made, the Division of Engineering in Denver with Sam Winnington and others, including Paul Camp and Marshall Wright helped us find a firm of architects and architectural engineers to help us design this project. As soon as that firm was selected, we sat down and started talking about what we thought we were going to build and what it might look and what we were trying to do with it. It was really a kind of scopeing and visioning process. One of the smartest things we did was to go around and visit a lot of training and conference centers around the country; public and private. We went to Pacific Gas and Electric out in California. We went to the Postal Service facility out in Potomac, Maryland. We went to the top of the line IBM training facility up in Palisades, New York. We went to some more commercial conference centers in Denver and other places. We just went around and looked at the classrooms, lodging accommodations, the dining halls, the gyms. We asked if there was a swimming pool. Essentially, we asked what was working and what wasn't working for each of these places. The bottom line question was if they could do it all over again, what would they have done differently in building these places. That really gave us the best intelligence, or benchmarking, we call it today; about we should and shouldn't do. We learned from what other people had done and the mistakes they had made and things that had been successful. The other thing that it did, because again, most of us were biologists; we found out that the architects and the biologists were talking right by each other. We'd say something and they'd say something and we'd both nod in agreement like we thought we knew what each other was talking about and agreeing. Then we'd see something written, or a sketch put together and say, "That's not what we were talking about at all!" So by going out and looking at these facilities, it was sort of like going out looking at homes. If you go and look at enough homes, you can say that you like the combination of the back yard from that one, basement from that one and the kitchen from that one. That's what we were able to do. We wanted the classroom design "...sort of like this one here, with the large windows and the rear screen projection, but we really like the lodging over here. And woe be to you if you ever design something like what we say over here!" So it really helped us get on the same plane. And it worked out very well.

DR. MADISON: Did the architects get any information on the FWS to help them in the process?

MR. LEMON: Absolutely. They did their history research. We sent them out to refuges and hatcheries. They read about. They did a lot to learn about who they were designing this facility for; FWS and other conservation professionals. So yeah, they were very sensitive to that. But the great thing about the team that we had, by having the architects who obviously knew their business, by having FWS engineers who knew their business, and could translate between the architects and the biologists and by having the biologists and the customers all involved and working very, very closely together for just about a year and a half or more designing this place, then we'd get a set of plans back. The first set of plans we got were for the Harpers Ferry site. We were that far along in looking at things over there. We looked at the plans and said, "This isn't it at all! These buildings are all wrong!" Luckily they hadn't gone too far with it. We went back and rolled up our sleeves and sat down and said things like, "...the façade needs to look like this." Another excellent example is materials. We were talking about building materials and we had a beautiful sketch of a beautiful building and it looked really nice. It had the fieldstone like we wanted and had this other material up top. We asked what that was and they said, "That would be wood." We asked what kind of wood and the answer was, "Pacific Red Cedar". We came back with, "No, we don't think so!" Here comes the Spotted Owl! I could just see the picture and the article in the New York Times and the Portland Oregonian about the FWS wiping out the remaining old growth forest in the north west in order to building their training center! So there were sensitivities like that. But again, the important thing was to be working very closely with them. We used recycled steel for that and it worked out very well. It was a fascinating process for me, as a biologist and I think it was a very good process for everyone all around. We all learned from one another.

DR. MADISON: How did they settle on this aesthetic? You mentioned fieldstone and steel roofs and those things.

MR. LEMON: There were a couple of things. We told them who our customer is. The customers that would be coming here will be coming from national parks, national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries, the Forest Service; these are field folks who are coming here for training. They are out of doors people, so build a place that speaks to them where they will feel comfortable and they will feel at home here, 'This is my home, I feel comfortable here'. We took the designers over to Mrs. Hendricks' house. We took them around and walked through the house. We focused especially on the outside because the point we were making there was that this house was at the time about two hundred and forty years old. We felt that if this place can be this beautiful and this serviceable and be two hundred and forty years old; if they do this that long ago, why is it that everything we build today is falling down within forty years and looks terrible and is an embarrassment

to the organization? We're never going to have the chance to do this over again. We need to do it right the first time. We said that we wanted to do it right not for the people who will come here today, but for the people who will be coming one hundred and fifty years from now. Build it accordingly. We also told them to think about the Grand Lodges out at Yellowstone and Yosemite. Think about that feel and the sense that you get it those places because that's where our people feel at home, and feel comfortable. So that was a large part of the design. We wanted something that fit into this part of West Virginia; a kind of rural landscape and vernacular with farm buildings, fieldstone, metal roofs, and that type of things. I remember talking to them and saying that a word or two to describe what I was looking for they would be "understated quality". I wanted it to be quality materials. I wanted it to last forever with little or no maintenance. But I didn't want it to be screaming in your face quality. I wanted it to be understated. So the use of the wood, the fieldstone, the metal roofs all of those materials are very, very durable but they fit well together. The architects did a fantastic job for us. That's what we hear from our customers. That's what people tell us.

DR. MADISON: What were some of the training needs that had to be accommodated for the design?

MR. LEMON: As far as training needs, everything in the FWS. Everything we did, we needed training for. But as far as the design, we needed classrooms, well-designed classrooms. We had all done enough training in hotel conference rooms and things like that where you were afraid to tack something from the flip chart up on the wall, or tape something on the wall. So we needed something that was a classroom. There is material in these classrooms where you tack things up all around the room. But that it sound absorbing and it also part of the sound system. That was part of the design. There are little things like when we visited the Xerox Training Center; you would be in a classroom and the backdoor of the classroom would open for somebody to go out to the restroom or something, and there would be fifty people out in the hall taking a coffee break. Every time that door would open this rush of sound would be coming in. It was very disruptive to the instructor and to the students. All of our classrooms have a little vestibule; it's two doors. A lot of people other than trainers, people who are in the business will walk in and say, "What's with the two doors?" It makes a lot of sense, but it's a small thing. The rear screen projection systems are very important. I can remember going up to the IBM facility in Palisades, New York. They took us in and showed us their classroom and their AB system. This was high tech! It was so high tech that they had three IBM engineers in there in the classrooms with us to demonstrate the AB system. And between the three of them, they couldn't get it to work. I can remember leaning across to our subcontractor who at the time was helping us to design our AB system and saying, "Remember, cutting edge not bleeding edge". Our instructors were going to be coming from the field and they will come in for two days or so and teach. They need a system that is very intuitive and very easy to use. Do away with some of the bells and whistles and make sure it works. Make sure its quality, but cutting edge, not bleeding edge.

DR. MADISON: Some people may not understand why you felt that rear screen projection was preferable.

MR. LEMON: Rear screen just made more sense to us because it's in the back and it's out of the way. It's just as good in quality, but you don't have projectors and things hanging down in front of you in the classroom, getting in the way. They made sense to us because we went around and looked at different formats. We asked what worked and what didn't work. The ones who were complaining about having to move projectors and other things around said that they wished they had rear screen. Then, the question would then be what type of rear screen. They would say, "Well not this kind! We tried that!" Again, one of the best things we asked was what they would do if they had to design it all over again. That's where we heard about the lodge rooms. One time we were talking about putting at least two people in every room. We had a Director, John Turner, whose family runs a dude ranch out in Wyoming. John wanted bunk beds. He wanted six to eight people in a room because people paid extra out at the dude ranch for that. But we went around it. We asked what they would do differently and more than anything else, the answer was, "Don't force people to share a room. And for God's sake, don't force them to share a bathroom!" There were a lot of old, converted women's colleges or naval facilities or something like that, which were dormitories and the bathroom was down the hall. They had a heck of a time filling those facilities up because people didn't want to stay there. Times have changed, and we are dealing with adults. We designed almost all smaller, single rooms but they are adequate and certainly comfortable. The other thing we knew was that in the FWS, most of our people are introverts. We're putting them in an environment where they are forced, from the time they get up in the morning and go to breakfast, to interact with people all day long; even in the evening. They are encouraged to have dinner together and go work out or play volleyball together, drink a beer together. At the end of the day, an introvert needs some down time by themselves. So if they are forced to go back to a double room, and share a room with somebody else, that would really disrupt their learning! There was a lot of thought that went into all of this.

DR. MADISON: Had the training center always been conceived as a residential training center?

MR. LEMON: In my mind! I remember at one point; I don't remember who it was, but at one point we were looking at costs. Somebody said, 'why don't we just build the classrooms and use hotels in town?' I can remember saying, "No, if we're not going to have a residential training center, let's not waste our money". Because as much of the learning takes place after hours. Again, the vision for NCTC was not just to train FWS people, but to bring people from the FWS and other federal agencies, state agencies, the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, the Cattlemen's Association together, to learn from one another, and more importantly or just as importantly, to build relationships. We wanted to break down some of those communication barriers that kept us from finding

common ground, and common sense solutions to things like endangered species issues out on private lands. We needed to build relationships here. That's what people are coming here to do. They may not know it. They think they are coming here for training, and they are, but it's part of the total experience to build relationships and networks with the others they are interacting with. That has to happen at a residential facility. You don't do that between the hours of eight and five and then send them off somewhere else in the evening where they all split and go hang out with their own like-minded people. It would have been a colossal waste of money if we had built a non-residential training facility.

DR. MADISON: Three of the more unique things out here are the gym, the bar and the daycare center. Were they all in the original design?

MR. LEMON: Yeah! In the old days for a training center, you needed classrooms, and a bar. We found out from our visits that you need a classroom, a bar, and a gym because more and more today, people want to try and stay in shape. It's a good thing. Organizations pay good money to try to keep people in shape because it cuts down on healthcare costs, absenteeism and everything like that. We knew we needed a gym. The good thing is that we were able to justify it very easily because we do Law Enforcement training here. One of the things we were able to say is, "Here is the gymnasium and this is here because law enforcement people need to pass certain tests." It was never even questioned. And Law Enforcement does use it for that, and the good thing is that all of our staff as well as our guests use the work out facilities as well. At one point we talked about putting a pool in. We could justify that and we were looking at it at one time. It would be designed specifically for boating safety; simple things like entered and exiting a boat and that type of thing. But as we went around and visited other training facilities; the ones that had pools, the common theme was that they wished they didn't have them. They are very expensive to build, and very expensive to maintain. It doesn't get used very much. We were much happier to have treadmills and weights. That's what we built. The daycare center really came from discussions with our employees. We asked what people really needed. And what we found out was that we have a lot of ...and it makes sense. Today, it's a no brainer. It's not like it took a lot of brains back then, but it took a little thought. There are a lot of single parents who work for the FWS and others. For some of them, if they can't bring an infant or a toddler in with them, when they go to training, they don't go. They don't have the nuclear families around them where they can just leave the baby with grand mom and grand pop or something like that. We wanted to build a place that would be family friendly, also for our employees, but especially for the guests that would be coming who would not get training otherwise. One of the most surprising things when we did that, and we started talking to people about what we were doing; one of the most positive remarks we got on that came from Senator Byrd. Now here's an eighty year old gentleman, who had long since raised his children and grand children, but he thought that this was a very good thing to do to help families stay in tact and take care of really important priorities as they are training to better serve the nation.

I was very impressed that he thought this was a good idea and he really kind of singled it out as one of the things he really liked about what we were doing out here.

DR. MADISON: Still talking about design; we talked about training needs, what conservation needs went into the design?

MR. LEMON: Do you mean conservation of the natural resources and things like that?

DR. MADISON: Yeah, environmentally sensitive materials and things like that.

MR. LEMON: We are the FWS. We spend a lot of time telling other people what they should do. So we figured we had better walk the talk. It would sort of be like the western Red Cedar. We may be crucified, or held up as being pretty hypocritical if we didn't try to walk the talk. However, even there the guidance that I gave was, "proven technology". Because we've had some other examples in the FWS, and I won't name where, where we got a little bit ahead of ourselves and put up these wonderful sounding solar heating systems, and things like that, which weren't quite there. It was kind of bleeding edge instead of cutting edge and then we had to come in and either rip them out, or add the real heating system afterwards and retrofit it in. We wanted proven technology, and that's what we did. The heaters and chillers here are very, very high efficiency. There is super insulation throughout. There is use of passive solar so that we can have these large windows that allow our outdoor professionals to always be in visual contact with the out of doors, which is important to them and their ability to concentrate. But they way they are designed is that we are gaining more energy than we are losing. The way we use the shed roofs and things like that; you can talk to the engineers who know a lot more about this, but the way we designed the shed roofs is during the winter when the sun is low in the sky, we are getting a lot of heat gain because it's coming right in those windows. During the summer when it's up higher, with the shed roofs, you're not getting the sun coming in those windows. So passive solar is a big part of what we did out here. Recycled steel; all of the siding material is recycled steel. It's recycled cars essentially. Your 1974 Ford Pinto may be on our NCTC siding at this point. There is recycled rubber in the gym. We used proven technology and recycled materials wherever we could. As far as the master planning, we have 538 acres. We have probably less than a 100 acre footprint here. We worked very carefully to save as many trees as we possibly could. I can remember designing the bridge that goes from the instructional east, essentially, over to commons and working very hard. There is one huge sycamore tree over by the commons. That tree got a lot of attention and a lot of care to keep that alive. It worked. One of the best testaments to that is that shortly after we opened, within six months to a year from when we opened, people would come out who were unfamiliar with the facility and ask how long we had been in existence. We would say, "six months", or "we opened a year ago", and they were stunned. They said that they assumed the place had been here for twenty or thirty years. So the master planning was very important too, to tread lightly on the land, and to blend with the landscape and not overpower it. That was all

very important to us. I can remember coming out with the architects and roping off where all of the buildings would be. We were putting up these huge red helium balloons up to where the rooflines would be and then going off and visiting with neighbors. We'd tell them, "If you look back through the trees you'll see a roofline back where that balloon is. Are you comfortable with that?" We went across the river to our partners at the C&O Canal with the National Park Service and road up and down the canal [tow path] across from the training center and looked over to see where those balloons were and say, "This is what you'll be looking at. Are you comfortable with that?" They were, and very appreciative to be asked. There was a lot of thought and a lot of care that went into that process.

DR. MADISON: We had some partners when it came to the creation of NCTC. Do you want to talk about those a little bit?

MR. LEMON: We had almost too many partners to...I'll start with probably the most prominent ones. That was the Conservation Fund. That was Bob Putz. Bob knew Senator Byrd very well. He was a long term FWS employee. Bob always had a vision of developing people. The thing I always respected about Bob was the way he treated his people and how much he got out of his people. He probably got more out of his people than anyone else. Not because he had a whip and kept them chained to their desks; but because he cared about them. He gave them direction. And he asked what they needed to get the job done. Then he got the hell out of the way and let them get the job done. For a low level employee, who was kind of watching, I said, 'so that's how you do that leadership stuff!' Bob was over at Leetown. We had the Fisheries Academy over at Leetown. Bob always thought much bigger than that. He knew there was a much greater need than just the fisheries program, and just the hatchery program, within fisheries. Bob was very, very influential. Pat Noonan, at the time was the President and CEO of the Conservation Fund, was a brilliant visionary, I think. He will go down as one of the visionaries of the later part of the twentieth century in conservation for the way he went about land acquisition and building partnerships. He was very much involved in helping us with the Senator's office and also in the Department of Interior. Again, not for attribution at this point, there were a couple of attempts to take over NCTC after it was being built and after it was clear what a special place this was going to be. There were some people up in the Department, and some people in another bureau which will go nameless that thought it would be a great idea if we just kind of shared this facility a little bit more; which we do, obviously. We do share it. Fifty percent of the use is non-FWS. But they thought that they should probably take it over and run it and people like Bob Putz and Pat Noonan could do things that I couldn't do, unless I wanted to be fired, as far as going behind the scenes and making sure that this didn't happen.

Then Pat Noonan, Bob Putz, Larry Selzer were going out and helping us reach out to all of these...we said that conservation is a collective effort. We said that this place should be built with other people in mind as well. We could go out to the other

government agencies, that's who we are. We could go to EPA, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Park Service, the Forest Service and others and say, "What are your training needs, and would you like to come and utilize this facility? Would you train with us if we built this facility? If so, how big do we need to make it? What does it need to look like? What kind of facilities do we need? What kind of training would we do there?" But it was the Conservation Fund that really reached out to the not for profits. They were the ones that went to the Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, the Nature Conservancy, the National Wildlife Federation, and all of those conservation through environmental, not for profits. They also reached out to industry. That's a neat thing about the Conservation Fund. They can move, and they are equally comfortable and equally respected on the conservation side, the government side and the industry side. They put together a team that was actually headed by Bill Ruckelshaus, the former administrator of EPA, and Ann McLaughlin to go out and work with and pull together corporate VPs and say, "What kind of training needs do you have? Are there common needs with the government people in conservation and natural resource management need? So we got that input as well, and we would never have gotten that without the Conservation Fund. They were probably the biggest partner that we had early on. Then as we progressed, others came on board. We had people here on the staff from the Park Service, the BLM and the Forest Service. We work with a lot of partners.

DR. MADISON: Moving off of the design; you broke ground for construction in 1994?

MR. LEMON: Correct.

DR. MADISON: Who was involved in the early construction process?

MR. LEMON: Now we put on the hardhats and the really hard work began. I can remember the groundbreaking ceremony like it was yesterday. I can remember...I'll tell a funny story, but keep it short. It's about Senator Byrd coming up and giving his speech. And the Reverend Randy Tremble was here. He came up and gave the invocation, which you always do when you have a ceremony, especially with Senator Byrd. Senator Byrd got up and gave his speech and it was kind of a fiery speech; a very spirited speech, shall we say. One of the things he was talking about was how much money he had been able to bring to this project and make this possible for the people of West Virginia, as well as for the FWS and the nation. The more he talked, the more he got caught up in it. He started talking about how even though he was bringing this money out here, there were these "peckerwoods" in Congress down closer to the beltway who were complaining and critical of him about bringing money to West Virginia for projects like this. He went on to say, "Did I criticize Congressman Wolfe when he was pouring all of that money into the Metro on Washington, D.C. in his District? No, I didn't criticize him. That was needed infrastructure. But he is criticizing me for bring money out to West Virginia!" He kind of went on and on and at the end, when he was done and we were all done, Reverend Tremble got up to do the benediction and he says, "It says in the good book that 'the

Lion laid down with the Lamb'. But I can hear from Senator Byrd's remark that the Byrd will not be lying down with the wolf!" That was a funny story. I can remember the late Molly Beatty there. She was the Director of the FWS at the time. Molly unfortunately passed away from brain cancer unfortunately, before the facility opened. But Molly was there. Senator Byrd and the local politicians; the Mayor was there. We had the Corps of Engineers there. One of the Colonels was there because the Corps did construction management for us. They did a very good job. That was another great partnership that worked very well. We had Syntac Simpson, a representative from the construction; the general contractor was there. So we broke ground. We had actually started already; not in major ways, but we had already started clearing the site. This was kind of the official thing where you have the gold shovels and take the pictures and things like that. Then, things really got under way in earnest. That was October of 1994 and we had our dedication ceremony and officially opened the doors in October of 1997. Really it was three years but at the time it seemed like forever. You look back at the facility now and see 400,000 square feet under roof, and sixteen different buildings at the time, and all of the rock that had to be blasted for the utility lines and all of that stuff; it was a huge job! You tore your hair out. You thought it would never be done. But it got done and it worked well. Again, it was a great partnership with the Corps of Engineers. We did the design with our own engineering folks and with the contracted architects. Then we started thinking, "Okay, now we've got to build this sucker!" The FWS had never done construction management on a facility of this size; not anywhere close to this. Besides, it didn't make sense to hire a whole bunch of people to do construction management and then have to turn around and lay them off when it was done. We went out for bids from other federal agencies and also from private contractors. We also went to the Bureau of Reclamation. We talked to them and the Corps of Engineers. The Corps of Engineers came back with the best package. They looked like they had the best capability of the ones that were interested. So they did construction management for us and did a very good job. A smart thing that we did was that we put FWS employees on the team with the Corps of Engineers so that as we were building this place, we had people like Bob Robertson; he worked for us and he was on the team with the Corps when everything was being put in and everything was being laid out, things were being buried and systems were being put in. He was there to see where they were going and where the valves were and how things were designed to work. Then he stayed on when we opened the doors. That worked out very well for us too.

DR. MADISON: What were some of the biggest challenges during the three years of construction?

MR. LEMON: The rock, and blasting rock. You're never quite sure what's down there until you get down there. So there was a lot of blasting. I told earlier about how we tore the road up. You wouldn't have been able to identify the road when we were done with it. The other thing that happened was that we thought we could use a lot of the local, you know, dig the dirt out of the holes where we were putting the buildings and take it and use

it for roads and things like that. Well, it turned out the dirt wouldn't work for that. For whatever reason, it was not the proper type. To me as a biologist, dirt is dirt. But to other people I guess, there are differences. But anyway, it wasn't going to compact properly for the foundations and it wasn't going to work for the roads. We buried that stuff pretty much on site, but we had to haul in dirt from other places. We had huge dump trucks coming down that road. I don't know how many of them on a daily basis. Thank god we had built up a good reservoir of good will with the neighbors because they got real tired of those trucks going up and down the road, and going too fast. I can remember constantly, Steve Chase and others yelling at the contractors and at the Corps, "Get your people to slow down!" They were subcontractors. And they were getting paid by the load. And they were going to get here and dump as quickly as they could and get out of here again. It was little things like that. There were delays. There were some cost overruns. There were some but not much. It was so good to have the Corps because they knew how, even though it was very much a partnership between us and the Corps and the general contractor and the 'sub's, the Corps were very meticulous and very good at keeping track of things and keeping records of things. When the contractor would come back and say, "well you know, we're losing money on this part so we're going to have to charge you more and it because of this..." The Corps was very good as saying something like, "On such and such a day at 10:30 in the morning, the sun was shining and you weren't working. Now, on this date it was snowing and you were delayed and we're going to have to give you a half a day or two days leeway on that one." I don't know that we would have figured that all out. That worked well. During the three years, it seemed like an eternity. And it seemed like everything that could go wrong was. But it wasn't. And when you look at what we've built here and that it only took three years to get it done. When people ask me about the relationship, I say that the proof is in the pudding. Look at what's here! Look at how well it's holding up. Look at the reaction we get from customers across the board; from FWS, maintenance people, biologists and Presidents of the United States that come out here and are just blown away with the facility. It worked!

DR. MADISON: Now the other thing you were doing during those three years was starting the training program. How did that evolve?

MR. LEMON: That was another 'minor' detail too! We needed a lot of training in the FWS, and we realized that. One of the first, good things we did was to go out with a survey to every FWS employee and asked them to tell us what they were what they were dealing with and where they were comfortable and where they weren't comfortable. We also asked them, "What kind of training do you need?" They came back with answers like, "We need training in new technology". Computers were fairly new back then. At least a lot of the uses of them were. They needed training in that. We should have known that, but we needed to hear it from them. Another thing we heard, and this was not surprising, but reaffirming I think, our biologists were saying, "We're coming out of school with a degree in biology and we know we're going to have to keep up with the

changes in technology and biology, and we are fairly confident there. But when we get thrown into a job where we're dealing with the public or other agencies that aren't necessarily happy with what we're telling them to do, our communication skills aren't very good to deal with." They wanted training in communications skills and conflict resolution and those types of things. We went out and asked people pretty much told us what they needed. Then we set about hired people and building those training programs. There was some discussion. We didn't have a lot of time for a whole lot of in depth discussion about hardly anything because we were moving so quickly with the design, construction and hiring people to build programs so that when we opened the doors we'd have a suite of programs to offer. But we talked about whether or not we should be hiring subject matter experts, people from the FWS who know the organization, should there be instructional systems designs and curriculum specialists? The answer was yes. Then the question became, "What's the mix of those"? Do we put the curriculum designers over here separate from these other people? No, we put those in the branches with the subject matter experts so they can be working together to build programs that are going to work for our people. They are properly designed. They use proper adult learning techniques, proper instructional systems design, but they are going to make sense. And they are going to be credible with our employees. We were going through all of those thought processes at the same time. We had tremendous help from the Deputy Regional Directors group. They went through iterations. They started out as sponsors in the Upper Level Management Development Program and then they became the Employee Development Committee for FWS. At the time, those people were Deputy Regional Directors, Deputy Assistant Directors; people like Marvin Moriarty, and Dave Allen and Dale Hall and Wally Stukey and others. They helped us design the facility too. I can remember Dave Allen working with us the question of how big this place needed to be. How many people were we going to run through this place? How often is a FWS employee going to be coming to this place? After we got that kind of figured out as best we could, then we had to say, "We're building this place for all of these other people and they are saying that they will use it but they're not giving us any quantification." It's sort of like "Yeah, yeah, when we see it, we'll believe it. Then we'll let you know how we're going to use it!" There were a lot of best guesses in there as well. But again, it came together well. We had a lot of training to do. We moved our training folks, and our administrative folks that we were also starting to hire, to start looking at putting together the contracts for how we were going to run Guest Services and how we were going to provide Security, Maintenance and all of those things had to be figured out. That was another whole trip; going out to other conference and training facilities after we had done the original design. Now we went back out to them and asked how they had set up their contracts. Is it cost, plus? Is it performance based? How do you do these things? What works, and what hasn't worked? So again, benchmarking was very important for us. Then we hired people and put them in trailers and buildings and homes. Over at the Leetown Science Center people over there were great to work with and very accommodating. We hired our first approximately sixty people over there. Then we started moving them over in the summer of 1997. We opened in October, so it was about

three or four months early. We were all like kids! We were looking around saying things like, "My god, look at this!" It really happened! I can still remember sitting down with people and having people just sitting there with these big grins on their faces. It was sort of like, 'we really didn't believe it was going to happen. But somehow, through all of this, it happened and look at what we've done! Look at what the FWS now has!' There was a lot of pride that went into it. The thing that I most worried about during construction and design was not the construction delays, or the cement work not being done properly; it was none of those things. It was, how are FWS employees going to react to this place? Is it going to be too nice? That's what kept me awake at night. One of the most gratifying things to me was that when we opened the doors and when FWS people started coming here for training, the first reaction was that they were walking around with their mouths hanging open! Just like a kid! It was interesting. It was almost like...no, not almost like, they said this; "This is too nice for FWS! We don't deserve something this nice!" The next thing they would say was, "Somebody is going to take this away from us." It was like we had an inferiority complex. But then the next thing they said was how proud they were to be part of FWS. We did something first class. We did something that is the envy of other organizations now. And we did something that we can use to lead. We've done something that other people can utilize as well. We've done something that can be a home, not just for the FWS but also for natural resource and fish and wildlife conservation for the nation. There was a lot of pride. And I had a lot of people come up to me and say how they had been one of our worst critics when this was nothing but a line item in the budget. They were the ones who thought how we could use that "x" million dollars somewhere else like out in the field, or buying more land or do something else. Then, after they came here, they would say, "Now I see this place and see what it does for FWS and for the people of FWS. I can see the long-term impact that this is going to have on the service and on conservation. This is the best thing we ever could have done with that money!" So that was a real concern up front and probably the most gratifying thing about completing this and getting the doors open and bringing people in here. And again, we all knew too, that this money was going to be spent in West Virginia. We knew that this was the way the appropriations process was working and it was money that was going to be spent here. So it was going to here, or somewhere else; a road or a bridge or some other infrastructure. We had a need for it and the nation had a need for it. We built it and people have come. They have liked what they've seen. They continue to come back and utilize the place. The most gratifying thing to me is that long, long, long after I'm gone and all of us who were originally involved in putting this together are gone; a hundred years after we're gone, people are still going to be coming here. They are still going to be in these classrooms. They are still going to be over in Commons taking meals together and talking about the conservation issues of the day. They are going to be coming up with solutions, and it's going to be because somebody a long time ago; a group of people a long time ago had the foresight to realize that the nation needed something like this.

DR. MADISON: You mentioned earlier that you went to other training centers and asked folks what worked and what didn't work. Now that it's ten years after groundbreaking, what worked and what didn't work here?

MR. LEMON: Oh no! You can't turn that question around on me! Nothing! I wouldn't do anything differently! There's not a whole lot that didn't work well. Classrooms; if I had it to do all over again we would probably have a couple fewer classrooms and we would have used that square footage in making larger classrooms. We looked at kind of a standard classroom. We went out and visited those other facilities and looked at their standard classrooms. We saw how they had their furniture set up. We said, "Okay, the standard classroom for twenty-five people needs to be such a size." That's kind of what we built. People like a little bit more room to spread out. They don't necessarily like to set the table up in the conventional way. That's not an efficient use of space, but damnit, that's the way they want it! They are the customers! So we could have used some bigger classrooms. As a matter of fact now we are actually going to be retrofitting up on the second floor of Instructional East where we have three conference rooms together. We're going to turn that into a large classroom because we really need it. We get more requests for that than we can accommodate. So that would be one thing. Another thing I think I may have done differently, and here are these little things; the nice looking rock that's out there, that you walk on in places, that was a bad idea. Concrete would have been fine. We couldn't use slate everywhere. The slate looks nice and that's holding up okay, but the rock is really hard to get snow off of. It's not a real stable walking surface. That's another small thing that we would have done differently. In the heating and cooling system, we probably would have given more control to the customers. We were thinking that for conservation purposes. We do have windows that open. We insisted on that. But for conservation purposes we figured that at least the first lodges that we built, there wouldn't be a control in the rooms. It would be controlled from somewhere else, so we can do it. People are adults, so we would have designed that a little bit differently.

DR. MADISON: Are there things that have worked better than you would have guessed?

MR. LEMON: Yeah, everything! I don't know if it's things that have worked better than I would have guessed. They worked as I had hoped they would. I guess maybe one thing that has worked better than even I guess I could have hoped for is just the whole ambiance of the place. We wanted to have an exceptional learning environment. We have that. We wanted a very relaxed environment, because again, when you are bring people together from the Cattlemen's Association and the FWS for the first time, you want a relaxed environment. The tensions are already high enough. So just the use of the alcoves where you have the couches and people can sit when they are outside of class. I think that was a good thing. The Commons, and just to see how the Commons is used and how it becomes a gathering place for people. And to see how people kind of relax and to see

how everybody is kind of on the same footing. The bowling shirts go on and the uniforms go off. That's worked exceptionally well, I think. And what I hear, and this was shortly after we opened, about a year after, some people came through from the military. I remember one woman came up to me and she said, "I've been involved in training with the military for 34 years. And I have been to training centers all over the country and all over the world. I have not seen a better designed learning environment than what I see here; just the total package!" That meant a lot. I am sure they are out there. But that meant a lot to us. And then, just yesterday we learned that in a couple of months the facility will be used by the Department of the Navy to train their Flag Officers. It's a two-week leadership development program that their newly minted Admirals go through before their first posted as an Admiral. The US Navy's senior executive service, the civilian employees will be there too. So there's about eighty of these people coming up. They'll go through their two weeks of leadership training here. Their training team was here yesterday to go through the facility again and do a walk through. I ran into them at the bridge and told them that I was really looking forward to working with them, and that we want to make this a good learning experience for their people. One of them said, "We couldn't imagine a better learning environment, a more relaxed environment, that what you all have developed here!" So, I mean, coming from people who have a lot of resources and do a lot of training in a lot of places; that means a lot.

DR. MADISON: What was the best part of the process for you?

MR. LEMON: The involvement of the people, the ideas, and the creativity. I shouldn't but I'll say it anyway... we used to have a joke in the FWS, or at least people I knew in FWS had it. That joke was, "If you think at all, think small!" We couldn't have developed what we did here, if we had lived by that motto. But that was our natural tendency. We always had to save money. And we do need to save money. But when you have an opportunity and that opportunity is never going to come again, and if the money isn't used on this, it's going somewhere else, not where you might like to see it go, but for something else, and when there is a national need for a place that can serve the needs of the nation for generations to come, dammit, you take advantage of it! With big opportunities come big responsibilities to step up and thing big. And to think as far ahead as you can. Dream and dream big about what is really needed. To be able to sit down with people and dream big; the creativity that came out of people was very gratifying. The support that we have gotten is very gratifying. One of the best things; if people ask me, when they do ask me about the experience and what I learned from it, it was really reinforcing something that I knew all along. That was that especially in training, if this place was going to work, building it would be the easy part. It would be getting the resources to continue to operate and getting the support of the leadership of FWS to send people here for training when we offer training courses and to put resources here even when times get tight. To have that kind of support, we needed to have leadership own this facility. This couldn't be the design team's facility. It couldn't be

what we used to call the Office of Education and Training before we became NCTC. It certainly Rick Lemon's training facility. It had to be the service's training facility and it had to be owned by the service. We spent a lot of time in reaching out and going out to the Deputies and saying, "This is our facility, what do we need? What are we trying to do with our people? What do they need to know? What do they need to know about the history and the heritage of the FWS?" And it was designing that into this place. It's another form of learning. It's not just what they learn in the classroom. It's the feel of the place as they walk down the hallway and they see a picture of somebody how worked doing conservation 93 years ago, and what that person's name was and what contribution did they make and how did they use their creativity and their guts to get something done during difficult times? That's all part of learning. But being able to sit down with people and ask what all that needs to look like was just fascinating and gratifying to have people; when given the opportunity to dream, come up with what we've put together here. And we have learned along the way. We made mistakes and adjusted and moved forward. It all seems to fit.

DR. MADISON: That's an interesting design thing we didn't talk about. The interior design motif is largely historical in the public areas. Why did you guys choose that?

MR. LEMON: Well it's historical because the heritage component is extremely important. Again, I think that's one of the neat things we did. That was part of the design and part of the learning and part of the experience we wanted people to have when they came to NCTC. If we could build a facility that was an exceptional training facility but it wouldn't speak to conservation if it was a sterile training facility. So this place needed to speak to you while you were here, not by someone saying it to you, but by you experiencing it every time you turned around. You turn around and you see a display case and you see equipment that some innovative biologist developed in the 1950's to solve a problem they were facing and didn't have the resources to go out and buy something so they made something. It's the same thing we're doing today. People need to see that. That's a part of who we are. That's a part of our culture. That's a part of our core values. That's a part of what is expected of us as professionals in the FWS. They need to see that. They need to see the face of the person that developed that thing, and they need to see their name. It's all a part of who we are. It's a sense of pride and motivation for people to realize what people did and the contributions that were made by the people that came before us. There are some famous people like Rachel Carson, but the vast majority of them are common folks that nobody had ever heard of and probably no one, except for us will ever hear of again. But they were like us, common people who shared an uncommon passion for conservation. They were going to find a way to get it done. They were going to do it for the resource. They were going to do it for the critters and they were going to save the dirt. And they would find a way. It's the same thing we have to do today. All of that is part of the experience that we want people to leave NCTC with. In a lot of ways, that experience is more important than the knowledge, the policies that we are putting in their heads, but it all fits together.

DR. MADISON: You mention OTE before, one quick question is; how did we end up with the name, National Conservation Training Center?

MR. LEMON: I don't remember. It was originally NETC, the National Education and Training Center. The idea being that the "education" was the education outreach; the public education that we do here; the Division of Education Outreach, and then training. I'm not sure who came up with that name. It could have been me, or somebody else, but it was NETC for a long time. We decided, some of us decided, that maybe we should have the word conservation in there someplace, or wildlife. So we started talking, and throwing other names about. Conservation was the common theme. The great thing about everything so far is that this was started in the first Bush administration and had strong support. It went through the Clinton administration and had strong support. We are in the second Bush's administration with strong support. We hope that with the next administration whoever that may be when they come in that we'll have strong support. We didn't want it to be the National Environmental Training Center, because that has too much baggage. Conservation is something that pretty much across the board, people can buy into. We wanted 'conservation' in the name. We didn't have to change the signs because they weren't already done but they were already in the drawings. It was NETC. We went back and changed the name and came up with National Conservation Training Center. We talked about 'National Conservation Learning Center, but we thought that that was just maybe a little bit too soft. We do training. Learning takes place in a lot of different ways, but we do training. And we called it 'training center' so people would understand that.

DR. MADISON: Last question. What would you recommend to somebody who was setting out to build a training center, from your experience?

MR. LEMON: To somebody setting out to build a training center? Run! Think big. Start with the end in mind. You need to be able to see what people are going to be doing there. I'll give you an example. When this facility opened, we walking out onto the patio outside of Instructional West. It's the patio that looks out at the long view down the fields. As far as you can see it's all NCTC property. It's trees and it's farm fields. I can remember standing on that exact same spot before we started to build but we were designing and just walking around the facility grounds. I said, "Okay, stand right here and look this way. This is going to a patio, and FWS employees and other conservation professionals are going to be in the building behind us in a classroom. They are going to come out and grab a cup of coffee, and as quickly as they can they are going to go outdoors. They are outdoor people. They are going to come out here and they are going to stand on this patio. So we have to have a nice big patio here. They are going to look down this long view and see these farm fields and trees, and stand under this sycamore tree and they are going to hear the birds. They are going to say that this feels like home". So you need to see what it's going to be. You need to be able to envision what it's going

to be for a lot of reasons. One is so that you can design it, but two, so that you can sell it to other people. So you can sell the vision to other people. So...think big, dream, envision what it's going to be and bring the partners to the table that you are going to need. Not to get it built, but to operate it because that's going to be the biggest struggle of all. When times get tight having the support to keep this training center operating and to keep the organization investing in putting people in airplanes and sending them here. You need to get the people that will be making those decisions involved, up front, as you are designing the place. Benchmark; go out and learn from other people's mistakes and successes. Don't think that you have all of the answers. Go out and see what other people did and learn from them. Ask a lot of questions. Have a good design team that is interdisciplinary so that you have all views represented on the team. Listen to one another but argue. We did a lot of arguing! Sometimes, the architects would just want to "do it this way". We'd say, "No!" and we'd argue, but we'd come to a better product. At times we'd have to back off and say, "Okay, we may want it this way, but now that we better understand what you're saying we understand that we can't do that; we can't get there from here. But, you need to understand who our customers are and we need to make some changes." It was an iterative process. It was not linear. But it worked very well. I think that's kind of what we would pass along to other folks.

DR. MADISON: Thank you very much Rick. This was a great interview!