



The Oral History of Lenny Corin

04/20/2023

Interview conducted by Cindy Uptegraft Barry

Whidbey Island, Washington

Oral History Cover Sheet

Name: Leonard P. Corin

Date of Interview: 04/20/2023

Location of Interview: Whidbey Island, WA

Interviewer: Cindy Uptegraft Barry

Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service: 30.

Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held: Cortland ES Field Office, Cortland, New York (Biologist); Western Alaska Ecological Services Field Office, Anchorage, AK, (Biologist); Main Interior Building, Departmental Manager Development Program, Washington, D.C., FWS Participant; Cortland ES Field Office, Cortland, N.Y, Field Supervisor; Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage AK, Deputy Assistant Regional Director – ES and Fisheries, Deputy DARD – Refuges and Wildlife, Area Supervisor – ES and Fisheries.

Most Important Projects: Small Hydropower Relicensing, NY; Marcy-Utica- Deerfield (MUD) Transportation Project, NY; Susitna Hydropower Project, AK; Kenai River Management Plan, AK; Establishing New York's TIPP (Turn in Poachers and Polluters) Program; Consolidation of the NY Field Office and construction of a new Cortland Field Office; Iroquois Pipeline Project, NY; Wetland Restoration, NY; Izembek/King Cove Road Proposal, AK; Drafting of the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act; M/V Selendang Ayu Oil Spill Response, AK

Colleagues and Mentors: Paul Hamilton, Ralph Pisapia, Mike Bartlett, Charlie Culp, Dick Smith, Bob Bowker, Jerry Strobele, Glenn Elison, Greg Siekaniec, LaVerne Smith

Brief Summary of Interview: I cover my background, as well as my 30 years with the Service, post-Service activities, and interests.



Interview

Cindy Barry: Hi, good morning. This is Cindy Uptegraft Barry. I have the pleasure today April 20, 2023, of interviewing Lenny Corin. I'm in their lovely home. Lenny and Carla Corin's home in Whidbey Island in the beautiful state of Washington. I'm here visiting them. So, Lenny, I'm happy to be here today with you and conducting your Oral History interview. So, take it away.

Lenny Corin: Yeah, so thank you.

Just from the very beginning. I was born in New York City on March 15, 1950, grew up in Queens. Went to high school in New Hyde Park at Herricks High School. So, we moved just over the border from Queens into Nassau County where I attended high school.

In terms of further education, I went to Cornell University from 1968 to 1972. I went there because I wasn't sure whether I wanted to be a veterinarian or an architect. While there, I took a couple of classes from Professor **McNeil** in natural resource conservation and wildlife. It was, for a kid from New York City, it just totally blew my mind. You know, it was so different from my experience growing up. I ended up specializing and focusing on conservation. So that was the start of it all.

From there, I took a year off and moved to Montana because one of my roommates was from Montana. It's kind of like, wow, that's different, so, I just got in my car and drove to Montana. I was at the Yellow Bay Biological Station there, which is part of the University of Montana.

Cindy: What was your degree in, Lenny?

Lenny: It was conservation, natural resources.

Cindy: Conservation, natural resource. Bachelor of Science degree?

Lenny: Bachelor of Science degree there.

Cindy: Okay.

Lenny: So, in Montana, I was at the Yellow Bay Biological Station. Then from there, I stuck around and headed north a few miles. And ended up as a cook in a bar and grill. From there, I eventually wandered down to California and then back to New York State and decided a little more education would be in order.

I applied to Northern Michigan University in Marquette, Michigan. I was there from 1973-1975. Got a degree, an MA in biology. Because I wasn't quite sick of education at that point, I applied

to and was accepted in the Ph.D. program In Ecology at Penn State University. So, I was there from '75 to '78.

I finished my course work and was doing my research and then I was starting to get tired of education/academia. Just kind of pictured my life from there on out teaching biology in a community college in nowhere, PA. It just kind of shook me up.

So, I had sent out applications to the Fish and Wildlife Service. Got a job at the Cortland, NY Field Office in 1978 as a GS-5 Biologist, so that was the beginning of that.

In terms of hobbies: Books, events, things that interested me. Over time, I enjoyed hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, skijoring, hiking, backpacking, photography, travel, kayaking. So, a lot of outdoor activities. A lot of that kind of went against the grain of my upbringing, but it's things that I learned to enjoy.

In terms of influences: Certainly, *Silent Spring* really hit me in terms of

Cindy: Rachel Carson?

Lenny: Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* really had an impact on me. Also, Jane Goodall in her work with chimpanzees. I mean I thought what she did was amazing given her background which was not scientific. I mean she was I think a secretary at the time that she started. But she was such an observant individual that it just, she did amazing things.

I was not in the military. I'd say the Vietnam War was going on when I was in college. I'd say the impact of the war was, it kept me in college. Yeah, I had a student deferment so, I wasn't willing to give that up until the very end. When they instituted the lottery system you know at that point. I had a high enough number that I basically turned my student deferment in. Then I was free and clear because they never got to my number. So, you know, that certainly was fine.

Cindy: You were lucky.

Lenny: I was lucky, yeah.

So, growing up in Queens, it was kind of a lower middle-class neighborhood. A lot of the kids in the neighborhood didn't go to college. They went to Vietnam and not all of 'em came back. So, it was certainly something that made an impression on me.

My parents: My father was a cop. He ended up as a Police Captain in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, probably about the worst place in New York City. He was kind of an action junky. So, to him hell would have been being a cop in a suburb. He was really into the action. He spent 10 years on a motorcycle. He ended up in the hospital a couple of times during his career. He also worked with the gangs in the south Bronx at the time. Kind of an

intermediary. So, again, danger was something that kind of drew him rather than you know, a sedate career.

My mother was for most of the time a school secretary, so that was my upbringing.

I have two sisters, both older, Marion (Avosso) and Diane (Fisher).

I met **Carla** at Northern Michigan University. We were married in 1974. I've dragged her all over the country. We have two sons: **Eli** who was born in 1979. He's currently an attorney for the Navy, civilian. My other son, **Nathan** was born in 1981. He currently works for Boeing. Both sons are married. I'm very proud of them and I think they have done well for themselves.

In terms of how did my career affect my family: Dragging them all over the country certainly was difficult at times. I appreciate their willingness to come along with me for the most part positively. But not always. But I think they benefitted from seeing other people in other parts of the country and I think it was a benefit for them.

They're both very outgoing and they both accept people for who they are. Neither one has an ounce of prejudice against anybody. So, I think that was all good.

As I have said, I was kind of tired of academia and I got an offer for a job in Cortland, New York. Which is 20 miles from Ithaca where I went to school. So, I was familiar with the area. I was hired in February of 1978. Two weeks after I was hired, Estyn Mead was hired into the same office, a good friend at that time.

I asked my supervisor, **Paul Hamilton**, whether the fact that I was familiar with the area, knew the area and all of that had anything to do with his decision-making. He said "no." (*Laughter*). He was just picking biologists off the list. I was at the top of the list.

Cindy: At the time, was Cortland considered to be an Ecological Services type of an office. Or was it back in the day, I remember we had River Basin offices. I mean what kind of an office was Cortland structurally in the organization?

Lenny: Yeah, no it was an Ecological Services office. So, it was past the river basins.

Cindy: Oh, okay.

Lenny: One might ask why Cortland. Because it's not really convenient to any interstate or anything like that. Washington, D.C., in its ultimate wisdom decided that the best place to put ES offices was in the geographic center of the state.

So, Cortland, if you look at it, it is right dab center in the geographical center of New York State. Concord, New Hampshire basically is in the geographical center of New England. The Pennsylvania Field Office is in State College. Again, the same philosophy and its near impossible to get into or out of, particularly when there's a football game going on.

Cindy: Okay.

Lenny: None of these were really well located in terms of where one would logically put an office. Which would be closer to an airport or interstate, transportation, where the work is, those types of things. But it was what it was.

At that time, the New York Field Office in Cortland covered the entire state. There was a suboffice on Long Island. **Frank DeLuise** was over that suboffice. Because I dealt mostly with southern New York issues, I kind of reported to **Frank**.

Quite often I would go down there. I would stop in the office and grab a handful of Section 404/10 Corps of Engineers permits and then circumnavigate Long Island. Which was to me pretty interesting. My sister lived down there, so I would stay there.

But anybody that needs a permit and lives on the water has lots of money and doesn't necessarily take "no," as a final answer. They generally knew their congressmen by their first name so, I mean, it was kind of like, well this is fun, but if I say no to anybody, its all gonna come back to bite me. With **Frank** in charge, that really didn't deter me from doing, making the right decisions.

While I worked there, I worked on permits, Corps projects, a lot of small hydro relicensing, 'cuz a lot of them were 50+ years old. They all needed to be relicensed. Throughout the Adirondacks, in particular there was a lot of projects there that needed to be relicensed. It was kind of a neat place to be. Estyn and I would stand at the in-box and try to grab the relicensing because we both wanted to kind of do that and do that in that area.

It was enjoyable. You got to work with the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and you know other people on those issues. Niagara Mohawk was the licensee for a lot of them. They were not the easiest to work with. They tended not to want to see any change in the license requirements.

As far as FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) was concerned, it was a brand-new ballgame. Protecting Fish and Wildlife resources was important to them. I worked closely with FERC and got to know their biologists quite well. Including **Brad Bortner**, you may have heard of him.

Cindy: Of course, yes.

Lenny: And I got to know, I'm trying to remember the name of the person that I worked with mostly. **Mark Robinson** was his name. This will come up later on because he ended up being the Director for licensing staff at FERC. I dealt with him later on.

So, I dealt with those, also a couple of nuclear power plants. I think one of the first things I did was I reviewed the Greene County Nuclear Power Plant proposal. It was going to be situated in this inlet on the Hudson River. Which happened to be the prime breeding ground for shortnose sturgeon. Shortnose sturgeon at that point was a listed species, highly endangered.

So, I wrote to them, and I wrote to the NRC (Nuclear Regulatory Commission) documenting that. Soon thereafter, the project just went kaput. It ended. After that, I also found out that shortnose sturgeon are under the National Marine Fisheries Service. I really had no business raising that as an issue, but whatever. (*Laughter*). I mean I think it was my ignorance. If that was the final straw that killed that project, then all is well and good.

I did a lot of work on highways and New York state DOT projects. They really didn't want to do anything that they didn't want to do. They didn't want to hear from anybody.

If you go back in the history, **Robert Moses** was their director and was for many, many years. And he was about as autocratic a person as you'd ever find. I think he was kind of like the **Hoover** of you know the Department of Transportation. He'd just rather than to listen to you, he'd squash you. That was his preference. That was basically the New York State DOT's philosophy. We could do what we want and if you'd tell us no, then were gonna beat the hell out of ya.

I ended up doing this one project before I left called the Marcy-Utica-Deerfield, the MUD project. It was in that area. It was gonna be a major road improvement/bypass through that area. To straighten that out, they were going to obliterate a fairly productive wetland of over 100 acres.

I worked on that with **Craig Johnson** who eventually went over to NMFS. I think he became eventually their Chief of Endangered Species in DC. He was a good friend there and he was kind of an intern in the office at that time.

We basically were banging our heads against the wall and commenting on the DEIS. I got to basically threaten them with a CEQ [Council on Environmental Quality] referral to EPA. **Bill Patterson**, who was the Department Environmental Coordinator, attended a couple of meetings with me. He was really, really strong in kind of backing me up at that point.

Now at that point, there had been a total of 7 CEQ referrals from the Service. Four of the 7 came out of New York State. You know, again this kind of illustrates how difficult NYS DOT was

to deal with. I believe they all had to do with transportation projects. Westside Highway and Southern Tier with **Frank DeLuise**. I mean, it was, they were all big deal projects.

Again, you know, “okay, you wanna be that way.” I had EPA behind me. I met with the administrator for Federal Highways Administration. So, they’re providing the money to New York State DOT and basically they were on my side.

At the last moment, State DOT gave it up. They completely surrendered and we were able to work with them on a project that avoided a lot of the wetlands and mitigated for what remaining impacts there were.

Cindy: What was the name of that project again?

Lenny: MUD (Marcy-Utica-Deerfield). We spent a lot of time up there in dealing with that and with the locals. I think that was a major achievement at that point you know certainly for me.

I was in Cortland for 3 years. About a year into it, I started writing letters and applying for jobs in Alaska. Luckily, I didn’t get the two main ones that I applied for. One would have been in Kaktovik as a one-man Field Office. Which is in the northeast corner of Alaska where it’s dark. You know like 4 to 5 months a year. I mean, it would have been abysmal. It would have been a one-person office. They actually pulled that job back because the previous person who was in it that was going to leave, the locals beat him up. So, it wasn’t a safe place to be.

Cindy: Oh dear, oh dear.

Lenny: So, they decided that well we’ll just operate out of Fairbanks rather than having a person there. The other one was out in the Aleutians on a Coast Guard facility. Again, one-person office way out there. It was kind of like, uh, do I really want to subject my family to this, let alone be there. I feel lucky that I got neither job.

I also wrote to the Field Supervisors for WAES, NAES and SEAS: Western Alaska Ecological Services, Northern Alaska Ecological Services and Southeast Alaska Ecological Services.

Wayne Oien was the Field Supervisor at SEAS. **Bob Bowker** was the Field Supervisor in Anchorage at WAES. **Jerry Stroebele** was the Field Supervisor in Fairbanks. I never heard from **Wayne Oien**. I got a letter from **Jerry Stroebele** basically saying, “Alaska isn’t for everyone. Have a nice day.” (*Laughter*). I actually kept that letter, and I presented it to **Jerry** at his retirement party many years later. **Bob Bowker**, I didn’t hear from him until December of 1980. **Bob** said, “can you be up here in a month?” I said, “uh, maybe not.” I kind of negotiated with him to come in February.

Cindy: Of what year?

Lenny: Of '81.

Cindy: '81.

Lenny: February of '81 and I actually left early. **Craig Johnson** was with me. We drove across the country in February of 1981 driving through a white-out blizzard in Minnesota. Also, I didn't know at the time that **Craig** didn't drive standard, so I did all the driving.

Cindy: Oh wow.

Lenny: Well also at that point, **Reagan** had just been elected. There were rumors that he was gonna put a hiring and travel ban in place. I figured, I'm just gonna hit the road and not contact anybody until I get to Anchorage in case that turned out to be what happened and it was. You know, he did put a travel ban in place. I got to Anchorage and **Bob** said "well, I guess I can't send you back." I think if I'd contacted anybody along the way, I waited another week, I wouldn't have gotten the job.

So, we drove across the country, ended up in Seattle. I was gonna ship my vehicle. I'm trying to remember whether I had a car or truck at that point, my vehicle. I shipped it to Anchorage by barge. I was gonna fly up to Anchorage. But low and behold everybody in the northwest had flown up to Anchorage because the Pope was there. So, I delayed my leaving until the Pope left because we can't be in the same place at the same time. (*Laughter*).

Cindy: And why is that Lenny?

Lenny: Well, we're not gonna go into that. (*Laughter*).

Cindy: Okay.

Lenny: So, I flew up to Anchorage. It was a Friday afternoon. **Bob** closed down the office and we headed out to the bars with most of the staff. That was the beginning of my first stint in Anchorage.

Cindy: Now was that in the Regional Office or the Field Office?

Lenny: I was in the Field Office.

Cindy: In the Field Office.

Lenny: Which was on 4th Avenue.

Cindy: Okay.

Lenny: The office started out in the back of the **Dean Witter** Building. When I got there, the first day, we moved, first next Monday, we moved to the front of the **Dean Witter** Building. Then from there, to the Old Federal building. Then when they found asbestos in the Old Federal building, they moved us to the Sunshine Mall. And then back to the Old Federal building. So, you know, same office, but a lot of movement between them.

Cindy: You arrived you said February of '81. How long were you there?

Lenny: February of '81. I was there from February of '81 until July of '87. Then I went into the DMDP [Departmental Management Development Program] at that point.

Cindy: Okay. Still in Anchorage then?

Lenny: Still in Anchorage. Yeah.

In terms of major projects, the first thing I ended up working on was the Susitna Hydro Project. The person working on it when I first got there was **Bruce Apple**. **Bruce** rather than continuing to work on this project resigned. So, **Bob** turned to me, and he said, "well, you have experience working with hydro, you're it."

Now the Susitna Hydro Project was, if licensed, it would have been the largest project ever licensed by FERC. It's a two-dam system with a total power generation of 1820 megawatts, so enormous. It would've impacted the Susitna River which supported millions and millions and millions of salmon. It would've changed everything. I was working on that.

I was on the Susitna Hydro Steering Committee. It was state and federal agencies that kind of provided an oversight to this. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) had received I don't know \$40-45 million dollars to do a lot of environmental studies. I think that was a real benefit as a result having that much money going into ecological studies. Overall the project I think they did well in terms of figuring out appropriate mitigation.

When I started looking at it and looking at the economics of it, the only way to make it viable would've been to have an aluminum plant constructed because they use enormous amounts of power. Otherwise, there wasn't a real market for that much power being generated.

Cindy: Whereabouts in Alaska was this project?

Lenny: It would've been central, south of Fairbanks, north of Anchorage. The Susitna River goes east to west, and then bends to the south through South Central Alaska.

Cindy: Okay.

Lenny: Big project. This is kind of where eventually my contact with FERC paid off. Because **Mark Robinson**, who I knew as a biologist was now in charge of the agency licensing staff there. I had conversations with him I wouldn't say frequently. But infrequently I would talk to him about what was going on. That kind of paid off when we got to the EIS stage.

I mentioned before **Robert Moses** and how he operated in New York State. He was the ultimate dictator. I go into the office of the deputy director for the Alaska Power Authority. There is a picture of **Robert Moses** on the wall, (*Laughter*) okay?

Cindy: Okay.

Lenny: That kind of gave me a clue as to how this was going to go.

They contracted with a couple of national labs. Oak Ridge National Lab and also the National Lab in Chicago to do the EIS. A lot of the Fisheries work was done at Oak Ridge. I have a cousin who worked in Fisheries at Oak Ridge. I kind of had an "in" in terms of what was going there.

In the end, I'd say the two national labs put together an EIS that was highly deficient in a lot of respects. I mean, it just wasn't the quality product I would've expected to come out of a national lab. But you know, there you have it.

I put together over 120 pages of comments on the EIS. It did have an impact 'cuz they had to respond to each and every one of those things. At the end of all that, I called up **Mark Robinson** and I said, "what are you guys gonna do about this?" They were going to reject the EIS.

Eventually, for a variety of reasons, the project just kind of imploded. When I looked at the cost, direct payments, long-term and short-term loans, this project would've cost \$26-27 billion dollars. From an economic standpoint, I don't think it was ever viable.

Alaska has always been a land of boomers, dreamers. You have people that want to build big and then you know whatever happens, happens. So, that was kind of the mindset at that point.

Cindy: Fish passage just wasn't? What were they proposing for mitigation?

Lenny: There would've been fish passage, but a lot of the fish were basically spawning below. But the problem was you then have temperature issues. A 1-degree change in temperature could result in pinks coming out of the system one month earlier than they should've. And there would be no food available. I mean, there were still tremendous fishery issues in that respect that they couldn't quite resolve.

Cindy: Sounds like there were a lot of fishery impacts they couldn't compensate for, the losses of those characteristics.

Lenny: Yeah, right, right. Yeah and the character of the area. The fact that it was important for the Nelchina caribou herd. Which was the most important caribou herd in Alaska in terms of usage. You know, hunters harvesting caribou from that herd. So, I mean they would've been impacted. There would've been a giant reservoir in the way of their normal migration route. So it wasn't just fish.

Cindy: Alaska is different, isn't it? Caribou. Who'd thought you know for a first issue having to deal with caribou? (*Laughter*).

Lenny: Yeah. Yeah. I'm gonna get back to them later. But yeah, no, under its own weight, I mean, eventually it just kind of imploded.

Even though Alaska Power was giving tens of millions of dollars to ADF&G to do all kinds of studies. They were constantly checking on them to see how they were spending the money. To the point where they were essentially counting pencils. You know, it was basically to create problems for them rather than to be supportive.

The head of the Steering Committee that I mentioned, I was on it. Al Carson, the chair of the Committee was the representative from ADEC (Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation), Department of Governmental Coordination (DGC) I and the Alaska Power Authority wasn't liking what we were saying. They couldn't fire him directly, but they could zero out his program. The legislature zeroed out his program, who's primary job was coordinating State comments, just to remove him. I mean it was pretty difficult to deal with the Power Authority. They were pretty cutthroat about how they dealt with other agencies. It was not fun.

After that, I worked on the Kenai River Management Plan. The Kenai River is probably the most important river in Alaska for fishing, for commercial production and for recreation, and everything else. Its just extremely important to the life of the Kenai Peninsula and Anchorage. Everybody from Anchorage goes down there to fish and many have cabins along the river.

The river was being abused, or rather loved to death. The state wanted to come up with a plan of how to save the river. What could we do about this and how can we protect the river and the system.

About the upper third of the river was in the Chugach National Forest, so they were represented. The middle part was in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Then the lower part was all private or local from there on out. The official representative for the Service, all interests was **Bob Bowker**. He sat on the panel overseeing the studies and everything else.

I served on most of the subcommittees. I found it extremely interesting and frustrating dealing with these subcommittees that were mostly members of the public and local organizations and

communities. I wanted to go fast, but I learned you need to bring people along with you. I could've written a plan for the entire river in two months rather than 3 years. (*Laughter*).

Cindy: But it probably wouldn't have lasted very long unless you brought those people along with you.

Lenny: Yeah. I had to go back and then go slow and explain everything, provide support and everything else.

But I mean in the end it kind of worked. One of the major issues, problems on the river was the number of commercial river guides, many with way too many powerful boats zooming up and down the river and creating a lot of erosion. The number of guides and the horsepower on their boats needed to be regulated.

You know a lot of the fish basically Chinook quite often would be breeding along the riparian area there. But even the other species like sockeye, which spawn in the lakes. But they would migrate down into the river below the lakes to rear, Kenai and Skilak lakes. The riparian areas was essential for their survival. I mean it was very important to protect that habitat, if we wanted to sustain those fisheries.

We did lower the motors to no more than 35 horsepower which certainly helped. It wasn't the only potential solution. We created a protective area where no build would be permitted along there. And were able to establish a protection area and then a conservation area, so like 50 feet and then 200 feet. I think that helped quite a bit.

Cindy: What year would that have been?

Lenny: Oh, probably about '84, somewhere mid '80s in there.

Cindy: Yeah, so the sign off on that plan had to be Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, conservation groups I assume. Were there any tribes involved?

Lenny: State. No, there were no tribes involved in it for better or worse. The Forest Service was kind of hard-headed. We don't sign anything type approach. The Fish and Wildlife Service was willing to sign off on it. But Forest Service said, "we agree to participate, but don't tell us what to do or how to do it." It was kind of like okay, you know whatever. They did agree to manage the Forest consistent with the plan.

There weren't a lot of things going on in the Chugach that really had an adverse impact. Chugach unlike the Tongass was very recreationally focused. The Tongass is the land of the timber beast. That is where all the cutting was going on was in the Tongass. There's a history related to that too in terms of Fish and Wildlife Service and Chugach.

Kind of going back a little bit before I got there, December 2, 1980, was when Carter signed ANILCA. That divided Alaska into Refuges and Parks and Forest Service. Federal lands, instead of all being BLM, they became designated as Refuges and Parks etc. That was an enormous event. For that alone, I mean, President Carter was a star in terms of conservation.

I arrived two months later and the level of distrust of Alaskans was really, really high.

Cindy: Distrust against federal government?

Lenny: Yeah. Fish and Wildlife Service beefed up a lot at that point to do a lot of the planning. Some of the conflict between Fish and Wildlife Service and the Chugach was the Copper River Valley, which is an enormous wetland complex. Fish and Wildlife Service went after that and wanted it to be designated a Refuge. Forest Service, which had controlled it didn't want anything to do with that. But had agreed that it would manage it for Fish and Wildlife values. That was their compromise. It won't be a Refuge, but we'll manage it as if it is.

I mean, again there had frequently been friction between the Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service. Also, down in southeast Alaska with the Tongass in protecting old growth forest and the species dependent upon that was a big issue, and a point of conflict between the Service and the Forest Service.

Other than those two major projects, I worked on DOT projects as I've said. Another hydro project, which was very large compared to anything in the lower 48; Chakachamna Hydro which didn't go anywhere.

I also worked on evaluation of log dump facilities in southeast Alaska quite a bit as a scuba diver. I dove for the Service. A lot of the action happened in southeast, so I would go down there to do that.

I also was involved in the seismic monitoring on the north slope. I think part of the agreement that came out of ANILCA as well that we would allow for a seismic study within the Arctic Refuge. I was there as an environmental monitor for a few weeks. Really interesting. Cold, but interesting.

Then I applied for the DMDP.

Cindy: Departmental Manager Development Program.

Lenny: Yes, in DC. I was interviewed in Denver for that and then I was selected. I went to DC in July of 1987. Having come out of Alaska, my suit was wool. (*Laughter*). I sweated up a storm when I first got there. I was there in an office in the DOI building. In the Main Interior Building

downtown with **Gerry Jackson, Katherine King, and Rick Lemon**. **Rick Lemon** had come out of I think Portland, at that point. No. Is that right?

Cindy: I don't remember. I know he worked in Portland.

Lenny: Yeah, I think he came out of the Portland office. **Gerry Jackson** was in the Corpus Christi Field Office. I remember while I'm sweating my brains out, **Gerry** would be sitting there in the office wearing a sweater going "ooh, it's a little chilly in here, isn't it." (*Laughter*). I was gonna strangle him, but I didn't. **Katherine King** came out of DC. She was an attorney in Law Enforcement. So, that was the fab 4 at that point.

I did several assignments there, one with the Budget Office. Also, I did a stint with the World Bank in which I put on for them a seminar/conference on Integrative Pest Management. We had hundreds of people there. I had experts from all over the world give presentations. I was just lucky because they were all planning on being at DC at the time I needed them to be there. That worked out really well.

There at the World Bank was a bit odd. It's closed to outsiders, but once you get in, all doors are open. I could go to any meeting I wanted too about anything whether it was touchy or not. They just let you roam around.

Cindy: What was your connection in with the World Bank. How did you land that sweet deal?

Lenny: Somebody I knew worked for the State Department and he was able to get me an interview with the World Bank. That led to, they then accepting me as an observer/intern whatever you want to call it, a short-term assignment. I was in the environmental section there which had very little impact on anything that the World Bank did. Wonderful people. The head of the section, **John Sears**, was the son-in-law of **John McNamara**.

The whole controversy over building enormous projects in Brazil in the Amazon Rain Forest came up. That kind of blew up on them at that time. They weren't showing any environmental concerns. They had the locals down there were very upset with what was going on. I think that did change how the World Bank approached projects in the future. 'Cuz they were also at that time looking at moving millions of people forcibly off of the island of Java in Indonesia to less populated areas. Kind of like you can't do that. But the funding was gonna come from the World Bank to do just that to Indonesia and to Brazil and to other places. Interesting place.

I also worked for **Silvio O. Conte** on the Republican side for the House Appropriations Committee. He was the ranking member on Appropriations. I worked for him, or more directly for his Chief of Staff, **Tim Shea** at the time. I got to sit in on a lot of interesting meetings. I got to

make up questions for various Interior agencies. Including Fish and Wildlife Service and the Park Service. Luckily, I survived that.

We would sit behind the members, and kind of guess who's going to speak next. It was really heady stuff to be there. Being with Appropriations, that got you into everywhere. You know, you were the cream of the crop at that point.

The person that got me connected was **Walt McAllister**. I was living at his house in Annandale, Virginia. **Walt** was the head of Realty for Refuges at that point. In that position, he had a close working relationship with **Silvio O. Conte**. That kind of helped quite a bit.

Cindy: Back at that time, it was required that all the DMDP'ers had a Hill assignment, so you certainly had a plum job with Appropriations, that's for sure.

Lenny: I did, and I was told, well nobody gets that. Yeah, but I think I broke it for you. Yeah, I did.

Cindy: We're trying to figure out whether you were first in the class before me or after me and I'm still trying to figure that out.

Lenny: I was there '87-88.

Cindy: Yeah, and I was right either there before or after you, so I'm trying to remember. Yeah. Anyway.

Lenny: I think you may have been there just after me.

Cindy: Just after.

Lenny: Yeah, I think so. Yeah. 'Cuz the group ahead of me was **Ken Stansell**, **Kris LaMontagne**, and **Bob Delaney** and I forget who else. That's my DMDP.

Cindy: Yes, it's well known, that those are just Details and wasn't considered to be a permanent move to Headquarters. You were on Detail the whole time. Did Carla, did your family come with you?

Lenny: Carla followed not immediately but several months later.

As I said, I was living in **Walt McAllister's** house. But actually, **Bob Delaney** who proceeded me and he was the Kenai Refuge Manager. He had a lot to do with me deciding that this was the way to go. He was living in the main part of the house, upstairs. He was waiting for his house in the area to close. For several months, I was living in the basement of the house with **Bob**

Delaney and family upstairs from me. The basement is where **Walt McAllister** stayed when he came to town because he otherwise rented out the upstairs area.

It was kind of a little touchy. He didn't want to take any money from me. But I kind of insisted, "look I'm living there." Yeah, it all worked out. It was good. **Bob Delaney** stayed in DC for I don't know several years at that point. Then moved on to become the director of a research facility in Wisconsin.

Moving on.

Cindy: Yeah.

Lenny: Yeah.

So, I don't know if I mentioned, **Dick Smith** was my advisor. He was the Deputy Director then. He was really wonderful. You know getting him to accept me as his person, as he's rather gruff and wasn't that easy to deal with. Because the guy you know, because he's a big guy and he essentially tries to intimidate you, but he's just a big teddy bear, I mean he really is. But yeah, no, he did everything he could to kind of discourage me from forcing this on him. (*Laughter*) But he was good. I learned a lot.

I didn't always go along with what he thought I should be doing. He let me get away with that. He saw zero value in me spending time with the World Bank. He said basically "you're coming back to the Fish and Wildlife Service? He said, "that's where you should be doing your assignments." In the end, he may have been right you know.

I did an assignment with Migratory Bird Management at that point also. I was working on the North American Waterfowl Management Plan at that time, which was pretty significant.

Cindy: Did your DMDP entire class with all the Interior agency reps in your class, did you have a culminating project that you had to do?

Lenny: No.

Cindy: No? Well, we did, but anyway. We'll pass by that then.

Lenny: Unless I blanked it out. It's just kind of like something I don't wanna remember. We didn't. I'd say as a group, we got along really well. You know, we had 4 from the Fish and Wildlife Service, 4 from the Park Service, I think a couple from USGS, a couple from BIA and BLM. I mean, we had a good group.

Cindy: But then it was time to move on. What did you do then?

Lenny: It was time to move on.

Paul Hamilton had retired from the New York Field Office. I applied for that position and was selected. I moved back to Cortland. I guess that kind of gets back too you know, never insult anybody working for you because they may come back.

Cindy: Don't burn any bridges.

Lenny: Yeah. *(Laughter)*. "I'm here." *(Laughter)*.

Cindy: Well, so in a DMDP, I think you had to be a GS-13. So did you go for a 13, was it in Cortland. Or was it the Field Supervisor?

Lenny: Cortland, that position was a 13. But within a year or so it was upgraded to a 14. One of the supervisors challenged the Service on the grade level. It may have been **Glenn Kinser** in Annapolis challenged the rating for the positions. Once the one went through, then we all automatically became 14s. That was nice. That was good.

I made it back to New York State. At that point, the office no longer covered all of New York State. Somehow in the interim, the office no longer covered New York City, Long Island, Rockland, Westchester counties, the two counties immediately above New York City, were given to the New Jersey Field Office. Part of that was when I was there originally, **Charlie Culp**, the Field Supervisor for Pennsylvania covered Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and New Jersey. When they broke West Virginia and New Jersey away from Pennsylvania, the decision was to give New Jersey part of the New York metropolitan area to kind of make it more whole, I guess. I don't know.

Cliff Day was the New Jersey Field Supervisor. He had been the Deputy for New Jersey and became the Field Supervisor. Again, when I came back, that part of New York State was no longer under the New York Field Office. I met with **Ralph Pisapia**, my ARD, and said "I want to make New York whole again." At that point I would meet with the head of NYDEC and other NY state agencies. And they're saying, "who is this guy, **Cliff Day**?" I said well, I tried to explain the situation. But, when I met with **Ralph**, I said "I want to make it whole again." **Ralph** said "well, if you could find the money to reestablish," meanwhile the Long Island Suboffice disappeared, "if you could find money to reestablish a Field Office down there, then we could have this conversation. "

I worked with **Tom Stewart** who was the Refuge Manager down there for Seatuck. and a lot of small satellite refuges down there that compose the Long Island refuge system. He got me in touch with the congressman down there, **Bob Mrazek** and his staff. He inserted money in the budget specifically for reestablishing of the suboffice down there.

I had that in hand. I forget \$400,000-500,000, something like that. I was able to tell **Ralph**, "I got the money, it's in the budget." He said, "well come on up." I went to the Regional Office and **Cliff** came up to the Regional Office. We sat across the table. **Ralph** heard us both out, why it should stay with New Jersey and why it should become part of the New York Field Office. After the meeting, he sent the memo out and said basically I get it back.

I was doing that and then hired staffing, it was mission impossible. Nobody wanted to work there. Eventually I got somebody from EPA to go there and become the Field Supervisor for that office. It was pretty bumpy. It didn't work out very well.

Cindy: Was it on Long Island?

Lenny: Yeah.

Cindy: Nobody wanted to go to Long Island. Was it cost of living or what was it. Or issues?

Lenny: I think the reputation. It was just not a primo place to be apparently. I moved the office. The office previously had been on the campus of the Brookhaven National Lab. I moved it to Seatuck Refuge. An old mansion that the land had been donated to Fish and Wildlife Service. It needed a lot of work. But that also was basically the doing of **Tom Stewart**. We had been working together really well. He was very helpful to me achieving that as a goal.

Cindy: Did you eventually get it staffed up?

Lenny: I did eventually get it staffed up. Yeah, I did. A lot of bumps along the way. But you know eventually, we had a functional office down there, which was good.

Another thing was the office when I first got there and when I was there previously was in the Grange Building. New York State Grange Office, 100 Grange Place. It was just not big enough for my expanding staff. I had an office built across town on Luker Road. It was a rental, but the builder was building it to my specifications. We had it built. It was 3 times the size of the Grange place office. A year or two years later, added a second building for Contaminants. A really big lab and a really nice facility. Consider that to be a fairly major accomplishment.

Something else, in Alaska, there had been a hotline called TIP (Turn in Poachers). You could call an 800 number if you see somebody doing something they shouldn't be doing. You could call that number and they'd be right on it.

I got to New York State, and I was thinking, well do they have something similar? And they didn't. I worked with the NYDEC. We established a program which was called TIPP (Turn in Poachers and Polluters). The Alaska program was just focused on Poachers, because that was all that ADF&G could address.

Cindy: I was gonna say polluters. Yeah.

Lenny: Yes, so I figured what's missing?

Cindy: Yeah.

Lenny: We did that and that's become a successful program as far as I know from 3000 miles away. Yeah, it did take, and it was established. I think that was a pretty major thing.

Cindy: So, when you called in the 800 number, who answered the phone. I mean what agency answered the phone?

Lenny: DEC. And DEC covered everything.

Cindy: New York State's Department of

Lenny: Environmental Conservation.

Cindy: So that covered: Fish, Wildlife

Lenny: Fish and Wildlife, Pollution and you know, like EPA and Fish and Wildlife Service.

Cindy: Oh wow, big agency.

Lenny: Yeah, major agency, yeah. They were the ones, appropriate ones to kind of deal with both issues. That was good.

I did have Great Lakes responsibility, 'cuz New York borders on Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. There was a Great Lakes Commission. I had responsibilities, but I didn't feel as if it was doing an adequate job of restoring of fish and wildlife habitat.

I got hold of **Bob Pacific**, who was the Field Supervisor in Ann Arbor, Michigan. We talked about it quite a bit and then decided well we could deal with this. We wrote/drafted the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act. Then we saw through authorization in Congress and made it all the way through. It was signed into law, but it didn't have appropriations assigned to it. In authorization, we basically set dollar amounts as you do that this could be authorized up to this level. But there was no appropriations that came with the authorization.

It did eventually get money and it was established. EPA supported it through I think the Estuary Program. We did have a Coordinator, which was **Carolyn**

Cindy: **Carolyn Bohan**.

Lenny: **Bohan**. Yeah, who took the position. It was not in Traverse City, which we established as the place for the position when we wrote the authorization bill. Basically, we wanted an office

independent of any Fish and Wildlife Service Division. We thought it shouldn't be co-located with ES or Refuges or anybody else or Fisheries. But would kind of oversee all those Fish and Wildlife responsibilities and restoration efforts.

We basically designated Traverse City, Michigan as the location for this Coordinator position. But because it never received adequate funding, that position was co-located with the Ann Arbor Field Office. My understanding is that after **Carolyn** left, it became other duties as assigned for the Field Supervisor in Ann Arbor. Yeah, that's my understanding. Whether that's entirely accurate or not, I don't know.

We did have some EC (environmental contaminants) issues. One was Hudson River PCBs. The problem started with; well, the problem was due to GE dumping PCBs in the upper Hudson River. It was all backed up against two dams, Fort Edwards, and Hudson Falls. That was all good. I mean cleanup would have been pretty easy. Just dredge out behind the dams and you get 99% of the PCBs. But Niagara Mohawk determined that the two dams were not safe. They were unstable and pulled both dams.

What happened was the PCB sediments slowly but surely drifted down the river with the flows. Again, if you dealt with it immediately, even if the dams were pulled, you could have gotten 90% of it by dredging the upper Hudson. But GE apparently felt it was better to spend money on lawyers than on a cleanup. They fought every single attempt to get them to take responsibility and clean up the PCBs.

Slowly, but surely it drifted further and further down the river polluting more and more of the Hudson until there was finally a settlement with GE footing the bill. Again, it would have been a lot cheaper if they did it on day one rather than day 582. Yeah, it just kind of like, you know. Oh well. But that was kind of part of it.

We had Estuary Programs. New York City Harbor was an Estuary Program. Peconic Bays on Long Island was another one. I sat on the board for the Peconic Bays. Part of that was **Billy Joel** and **Christy Brinkley** were now a part of that. I figured; I really want to meet **Christy Brinkley**. But she never showed up.

Cindy: Aww, shucks. (*Laughter*).

Lenny: Damn it. Oh well. Life is tough. Yep.

People talk about getting a call in the middle of the night at home. I got that call from a Conservation Officer for New York DEC. The officer said, "we have a big problem here and I can't do anything about it within DEC because of the politics." I said, "why don't we meet on site." This was a Clean Water Act violation and "you could show me what the problem is."

I grabbed a biologist in my office, **Dave Bryson** and we met this CO officer. The problem was Iroquois Pipeline which had a proposal to pipe natural gas from Canada all the way to Long Island. The politics behind it was the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant had just been completed. We're talking about a \$5 billion dollar plant. There was no viable escape route in case there was a leak or any kind of problem. It never received its operating license. This as you might imagine was a tremendously political football. I mean it was just bad news.

The governor, Mario Cuomo basically said in his election promise for reelection that he would provide cheap power to Long Island. He bought the power plant, or the state did for \$1. The rate payers on Long Island had to pay off the debt. His solution was to pipe natural gas from Canada to Long Island.

Iroquois Pipeline was delayed, delayed, delayed due to the permit process. Once they had their permits, it was pretty much balls to the wall. They totally ignored their permit stipulations from the Corps of Engineers. They were just barreling through wetlands and sensitive habitats and whatever. This is what the CO officer showed me. It was just kind of like woah. I basically told him, "thanks, I'll protect your. I won't talk about you to anybody."

And I set up a meeting with the US District Attorney in Syracuse. We go in there, sit down with the US attorney and tell him what we found. He went out with us, and he saw what we saw. He said, "we're going to take action on this." Well, at some point in the process, Iroquois Pipeline found out. Their consultant manager met with the Regional Director. Can I use names?

Cindy: Sure.

Lenny: **Ron Lamberston**. **Ron Lamberston** told **Ralph Pisapia**, my ARD "to take care of it." I got a call from **Ralph** saying, "you have more important things to do than looking at this project."

I got back to my office. I'd say at that point, budget-wise, I had a lot of independence from the Regional Office. I hired two temporaries to help **Dave Bryson** document everything that was going on.

So, that was going on. The US attorney in Syracuse got the New York District and the Buffalo District Corps of Engineers involved. As well as 4 different US attorney's offices and the FBI. The FBI raided the consultant and confiscated every dam document and filing cabinet in there. And these people were just going nuts about this.

The end result was the US attorneys and I, EPA and the Corps met with the president of Iroquois Pipeline in Albany with the governor not there. Basically, telling the president of the pipeline that "we're pursuing this criminally and you're going to jail."

I figured there was going to be big fines. I met with and then dragged the US attorney in Syracuse down to DC and we met with **Amos Eno** with the Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Yeah, I think he was the Director then or

Cindy: Yeah, I think so.

Lenny: Yeah. So, we met with **Amos** and talked about the fines that we'll be seeing. And how do you protect it so it's not going to pay off the national debt or something that I just felt was so meaningless.

Amos said he would set it up and basically, he could handle this. It wasn't a problem to deal with this.

I think fines for the pipeline was over \$20 million, maybe \$22 million dollars to them. There were criminal charges. There was \$2 ½ million dollars and they had to mitigate. They had to restore all the way along the way, that was at their cost. They had to make right what they screwed up. Part of the settlement, there would be \$2 ½ million dollars set aside for restoration activities.

Basically, my office in Cortland, **Carl Schwartz** was my restoration person got to play with \$2 ½ million dollars over several years for restoration in the Adirondack/upstate New York area. I thought that was a pretty big win. I never heard again from **Ralph** or from **Ron** or anybody about me kind of violating their suggestion that I had better things to do.

Cindy: All's well that ends well.

Lenny: Yeah. Exactly.

Meanwhile when I first got to Cortland, I had a list of things I wanted to accomplish. I said, "you have me for 5 years and then I'm going back to Alaska."

I applied for the position of Deputy ARD for ES and Fisheries. **Janet Hahn** selected me to that position. It was pretty much 5 years to the dot. I kept my word to myself, dragged my family across the country again. Ended up in Anchorage in the Regional Office.

Janet Hahn was my supervisor when I first got there. One thing that she allowed me to do was I went to Moscow on behalf of the Service, representing the Migratory Birds and Marine Mammals programs. It was the middle of winter. It was 35 below. It was early '90s so Russia had just opened up with the fall of Communism and all that. It was pretty exciting time to be there.

I met with the Migratory Bird folks there in Moscow. Their office had previously been a Russian Orthodox cathedral. Now they were in a little condo paid for by French DU (Ducks Unlimited).

They didn't have any computers. If they sent emails, this one guy would send it from his home computer and then receive responses there and then bring 'em back to the office. They had a room, probably, well bigger than this, totally filled with boxes of 3" x 5" index cards.

The Communists were great at keeping records. But there they were from the 1920s on, were all these bird records. Fish and Wildlife Service had been providing funds to digitize their records. We were kind of helping there. French DU provided them with computers eventually and paid for the condo. They were getting outside support for everything.

They hadn't been paid in months and still they showed up every day. It's kind of like, I probably wouldn't, but they did. I mean, amazingly dedicated people there and amazingly friendly. I was very impressed by them. It's really unfortunate what's happened recently. But I have a lot of respect for the biologists there. That was pretty neat.

It wasn't long after that, I'd say my situation with **Janet Hahn** became untenable. **Glenn Ellison** was recently selected as the ARD for Refuges and Wildlife. He had been the Refuge Manager at Arctic Wildlife Refuge before that. He needed a Deputy. He tried and tried to convince **Robin West** to come up from the Kenai Wildlife Refuge to be his Deputy. I walked into his office and said, "help, save me." (*Laughter*). He said, "well, let me speak to **Dave Allen**."

Cindy: The Regional Director?

Lenny: Yeah, the Regional Director. **Dave Allen** had agreed to let me lateral from ES to Refuges and Wildlife.

Janet Hahn didn't take it well. I said, "go talk to **Dave**." That was kind of it. I was allowed to lateral over there. It was good. I really appreciate what **Glenn** did for me. I thought he was an amazing boss. It would take me a full paragraph to express myself about whatever. **Glenn** would kind of do it in one to two sentences. I mean he was able to process and then succinctly state what the issue was to a pretty amazing degree. He was my savior, but he was also a good leader I think at that point.

At some point, we had I'm not sure whether it was then, we had the PARDS and the GARDS and all that. **Jamie Clark** basically instituted that. **Glenn** really didn't take well to that and essentially, he refused to participate in that. **Dave** had an issue on his hands. He basically found **Glenn** a safe place to land at The Conservation Fund where he did amazing things. He was really, really good. I was the Acting ARD for Refuges and Wildlife at that point.

I'm trying to remember the sequence. But soon after I got over there to Refuges and Wildlife, we got a letter in from the Aleutians East Borough and King Cove. They wanted to build a road

from King Cove to Cold Bay. Now this is something, I mean it happened periodically, every 20 years or so they would unearth this proposal.

So, **Glenn** knowing my background, he basically said, “you deal with this. It’s really nothing. Not to worry. We’ll just let **Sharon Janis** in Realty write a letter explaining the process that we can’t just allow you to build a road through a Refuge, through a wilderness area. Through the most valuable part of the Izembek Refuge because you want to.”

So, that was the beginning of the King Cove saga. Of course, **Ted Stevens** and **Don Young** and **Frank Murkowski**, they were all strongly in favor of doing it. We ended up with a fight on our hands.

I think I went through like six Refuge Managers at Izembek, one and done. I mean there was quite a bit of resistance to that. **Greg Siekaniec** at one point was the Refuge Manager when this really got hot and heavy. **Greg** and I took off for DC and then pounded the halls of Congress mostly briefing staff. But also, Congressmen on what this would mean.

John Rogers, who was the Deputy at that point accompanied us on some of it just to make sure we didn’t go outside the lines, and he was really good. I really appreciated his involvement. But you know we were doing that there. And of course, at the same time the people from King Cove and Aleutians East Borough were also hitting the pavement and briefing everybody on how horrible we were. That we cared more for animals than people. We didn’t care if people died. I mean, it got a little bit nasty.

But you know probably the most influential person in that whole debate was this young lady from Bethel representing the AVCP, (Association of Village Council Presidents) headquartered in Bethel.

The waterfowl that stopped in Izembek eventually made it to the Yukon Delta. The Yup’ik people there, the Yup’ik’s depended upon the birds getting there. It was very important to them, particularly in the spring.

They totally opposed the road because it would adversely impact this resource. It kind of cut into the argument of the people from King Cove that we were anti-native. Because here’s a native person/native representative, a very articulate young lady basically saying, “I’m native and this is adversely impacting me, and my people and we oppose the road.” I think that cut a lot deeper than a couple of white, Fish and Wildlife Service bureaucrats coming around here saying, “yeah, they don’t need this road.” But things got hot and heavy.

There was money in the budget for the road from **Ted Stevens**, and **Clinton** and **Babbitt** said, “this budget, I’m not gonna sign it if you have money in the budget for King Cove Road.” We’re

on the phone in **Dave Allen's** office with **Babbitt** and the Director of Fish and Wildlife Service. It's kind of like, well. But that was the position that they were willing to take.

There was one other item holding up the budget. I don't recall what it was, but one of the two was King Cove/Izembek. It was kind of like, yeah, okay, good. That was good to see.

Senator **Ted** on the phone said "okay, if I can't have the road, what can I have?" We basically checked off some alternatives: "you could have a new airport, you could have a new medical facility, top of the line in King Cove, you could have a ferry." So, **Ted** said "I want it all." So, it was kind of "okay, you don't get the road, but you could have a new airport, a new medical facility, a ferry, a hovercraft." It's kind of like, "whatever." It's okay.

Cindy: As long as all those other things did not impact the Refuge.

Lenny: Yes, right, yeah.

So, that's what we thought was the end of it, but of course not. There was money in the budget for all those things. Actually, the EIS was done by a private consulting firm unfortunately selected by the Aleutians East Borough. And the Corps oversaw the EIS. I sat in on the room which we're going through it.

They decided that they would go with a hovercraft, and they would build the road as far as they could take it on native lands. So, they were halfway up Cold Bay to a point where they would take the hovercraft. And what they wanted to do was build the road as far as they can get it. Because they figured eventually, we'll get what we want and they may eventually, I don't know.

They had the hovercraft and that went zooming back and forth. Never had a problem. They decided it was too expensive to operate. They sold it to the City of Akutan located out on the Aleutian chain and I don't know if it's still operating. It was operating between a couple of communities there. Here again, "we no longer have a hovercraft. We want our road." We're back to kind of square one.

The state jumped in and the native community there jumped in and proposed pretty large expanses of land in trade for a narrower strip. A 208-acre narrow strip through the Refuge to the Cold Bay airport. That is what they were doing.

They again wanted to negotiate with us. I think at that point, **Dale Hall** was the Director. I wondered what compromises **Dale** had made to get the Director position. I don't know. But I think facilitating this trade. And he was in favor of the land trade was part of it to kind of make that happen. He did. Negotiations went around for quite a while with Fish and Wildlife Service. **Gary Edwards** was our Deputy at that point.

Cindy: Deputy Regional Director?

Lenny: Deputy Regional Director. He had been the AD for Fisheries before that.

Now, I'll backtrack to that in a minute, how that all happened.

Gary asked me in his office, and he said, "I want you to work on this" and I said, "no." I said, "I don't want anything to do with this." I turned around and left and I figured okay, whatever, but, yeah, that was going on.

The Fish and Wildlife Service was sued. Basically, for a land trade to be made, you have to have a finding that it's in the best interest of the Service. What is being added was greater than what was being lost. The Service couldn't justify a land trade because what was being lost was of enormous value. It just kind of backfired. Of course, Audubon and the Wilderness Society and everybody else was opposing it. There was a lot of pressure to do the right thing or not do the wrong thing.

During that period once I retired, the Wilderness Society said, "we want you to testify in DC on the EIS on Izembek." So, I went to DC and testified on their behalf. They didn't tell me what to say or what to do, they just said, "have at it, so "I had at it." I testified there on that.

A couple of other things I worked on. I did a 30-day Detail in DC at Refuge Headquarters. **Rob Shallenberger** was the Chief at that point and **Steve Thompson** was his Deputy. **Tony Leger** from Region 5 was there too doing one of his 30-day Details to get his Washington experience.

What was bubbling at that time was the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act which kind of established all the rules. I mean, it was a big, big thing. I worked with a staffer for **Don Young's** office on it. 'Cuz they would have been the sponsor for the bill in the House.

What I did, particularly working with **Young's** staffer, was incorporate a lot of the things in ANILCA into the national bill. The need for plans for each Refuge Management, plans and things like that. If you look at them in parallel, you'll see a lot of the good things from ANILCA inserted into the Refuge Improvement Act. I was familiar with ANILCA and so was the **Young** staffer. We worked together fairly well, and we were able to achieve that. That was pretty good. I thought that was a big deal.

Also, your coffee cup from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. I was the Fish and Wildlife Service representative on the Council, or rather the RD is and I was his representative. That was set up by the Magnuson-Stevens Act. It basically set up I think 13 Councils to work on Fisheries for all the different Fishery regions. Alaska was one region and around here, it's the Pacific Fishery. I think it may be the Pacific Fisheries Management Council. They're the ones

you're reading in the paper about for California, Oregon, Washington and what's happening to the allowable take of salmon right now. That they're in trouble.

I was a nonvoting member. The Federal agencies were represented, but not voting. Frequently, there'd be a State Department representative because of treaty obligations, then me, and then quite often on the other side of the table, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), which staffed the Council, and we were kind of exposed to the public. The rear admiral for the Coast Guard was generally there too, next to me. Then the Commissioner for Fish and Game, but the majority of the members represented the various fishing industry segments, bottom fish trawlers, crabbers, long-liners, etc. They basically had a lot of sway, maybe too much sway. I think that's how all the Councils are set up. You know, the producers, the trawlers, etc..

The Council basically is responsible for Fisheries management outside the three-mile state limit, out to 200 hundred to 300 miles, in what is the economic development zone. Management of that zone is through the Councils and the 13 Councils are staffed by NMFS. There is a Council Chair and then essentially the NMFS has to adopt what the Council proposes. Which they do like 99.99% of the time.

Throughout the process, NMFS and the person who is the NMFS assistant administrator for Commercial Fisheries, **Sue Salvesson**, who now actually lives here on Whidbey as her family came from Whidbey. She is living in her mother's old home. **Sue Salvesson** would be sitting there presiding over it. Then next to her was an attorney for NMFS and they would kind of push the Council to, "well you really can't do that" or you know they would be providing advice. I'm not saying that the 99.99% wasn't consistent with what NMFS wanted to see for the most part. Generally, they were able to kind of push the argument and assert direction so that it was to their liking.

I mean generally it worked. Fish and Wildlife Service concerns consisted of seabird bycatch, Short-tailed Albatross was a listed species, as endangered. Catching albatross with baited hooks, generally led to their death. You see a large commercial fishing vessel and it's surrounded by seabirds. I mean that's common and for longlining, you'd have a baited hook, and it would go down off the end of the boat. Albatross and other birds would grab the bait on the hook and then that would be the end of them.

Yeah. It was significant problem. The solution for the most part was what's called tori-lines. You have the baited hooks going in behind the boat and then you have the two tori-lines on either side of that. The tori-line is a line going way out beyond the baited hook with flagging, just like surveyor flags. They [NMFS] will give it away to the fishermen for free. It cut down on not only albatross, but over 90% of other seabirds that were being taken. That was a big issue at the time.

Another big issue was bycatch of salmon. A lot of Chinook salmon were being taken by the trawlers with their big nets. They catch everything and it would include a certain number of salmon as well. There were observers on the boats doing the counts. But there were a significant number of salmon being taken as a result.

While I was there, harvest of Chinook and then Chum in the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers was stopped. because there was too much bycatch going on, as well as other things, I mean changing conditions in the Bering Sea. There was a whole bunch of different reasons. But the bycatch didn't help and that was quite a problem.

Even today, you cannot catch Chinook, or I believe Chum in the Yukon. You cannot catch Chinook, Chum and I think this year they closed down the harvest of Coho salmon, in the Kuskokwim.

Fish and Wildlife Service had responsibility for subsistence management. Fisheries subsistence management originally and then after we were forced by the courts to take over wildlife subsistence management too; we did that, subsistence harvest on federal lands.

That was a responsibility of the Service in dealing with the Council and dealing with the people doing the harvesting. There are other things going on like protection of coral reefs. There are actually coral beds out in the Aleutians and the Council made them off limits to commercial fishing. Also protecting areas from fishing just to protect their ecological viability. I mean there was a lot of pretty big issues.

Now, **Gary Edwards** was as I said the Assistant Director for Fisheries in Washington. We had a couple of vacancies in the office, and one was

Cindy: In the Regional Office in Anchorage?

Lenny: In the Regional Office in Anchorage. One was the Deputy RD in the Regional Office. The other was the ARD for ES, just ES at that point. **Steve Rideout** had become, was there for maybe a year or so, the ARD for Fisheries. They broke Fisheries away from ES.

LaVerne Smith was selected as the Deputy RD, and I was selected as the ARD for ES. The paperwork went into Washington. **Jamie** put a hold on it and stopped that action. Basically, **Gary Edwards** became our Deputy RD. **LaVerne** was offered the ARD for ES position. As a result, I was bumped down to the Supervisory position over Field Offices. It was kind of a bummer, yeah, but you know, **LaVerne** agreed to take that. **Gary** stepped into the Deputy RD position and that was that.

I missed out on the Exxon Valdez oil spill, luckily. I was invited back to help. I said "no, I don't want to see that."

But we did have a major oil spill out in the Aleutians, the Selendang Ayu oil spill. **LaVerne** jumped in with both feet and dealt with it. It was a pretty big deal. It was quite a bit of oil spilled. It wasn't an oil tanker. It was a freighter between Japan and the US doing a great circle route. It lost power and ran aground. They fumbled and bumbled until it was too late. A lot of the oil had been spilled before they contacted the Coast Guard.

LaVerne basically dealt with that from the perspective of the Fish and Wildlife Service entirely. I became the head of, I don't know, logistics. I trained people and I shipped 'em out there. I found them a place to stay, I shipped 'em back. I found more volunteers to go out there. It was quite a big job.

At that point, **Greg Siekaniec** was very much involved because he was at that point, the Refuge Manager for the Maritime Refuge. He was again very supportive. I really love the guy. He's always been a good friend and a good partner and very sensible. We dealt with it. That was that.

Cindy: Did the Service get a big settlement out of that case?

Lenny: Yeah, they did. Yeah. There was a big settlement. I don't remember how much. Yeah, or what the mitigation was, but it was a big deal. Yeah.

Another project was the Tulsequah Chief Mine project in British Columbia. I worked with the state and the native communities on both sides of the border. The BC Provincial and the Canadian Federal Fish and Wildlife or whatever they're called up there. Pretty interesting.

We had several meetings. They were all on the Canadian side because they couldn't travel to the US, but we could travel to Canada. We had meetings on Vancouver Island and Vancouver, and Atlin in BC.

It was going to entail reopening of a mine that had been shut down for I don't know 40 plus years that was leaching orange ooze out of the mine. It was, I think, the Tulsequah River, a tributary of the Taku River, which empties out just south of Juneau. It supports millions and millions of salmon, as any big system there would.

But you know, the thing, it was like 200 miles by road from Atlin. If you look at a map of proposed mine projects, it was like connect the dots. I mean, it would've resulted not just in Tulsequah being open, but all these others would then become viable. We were hoping the cumulative impacts evaluation would identify those and make it clear that these are indirect adverse impacts resulting from the opening of Tulsequah Chief Mine.

Like a lot of big projects that eventually went away to be resurrected in who knows when. I mean it would have been disastrous if it happened, not just for the direct impacts, but indirect.

I think that was a lot of my career.

Other things I've been doing

Cindy: You retired from the Anchorage Regional Office in what year?

Lenny: I retired, well, let me

Cindy: We're not there yet.

Lenny: Okay, I was in the Anchorage Regional Office from I think '93 till I retired in 2008. Yeah. I retired in March of 2008. I put in 30 years and 1 pay period. (*Laughter*). That was just the right time to retire, it was the beginning of March. I stuck around a couple more weeks. I was trying to close up so many things and get my files in shape and everything else.

About every 5 minutes, somebody would bang on the door or walk into my office and wanna say goodbye. I was working. I could've taken the last month off with accumulated leave. I had a year and a half of accumulated leave that I added to my retirement. But it was done in like 30-day segments, you add on. I had like 25 days. Another 5 days and I'd have another month to add on. Instead of adding on, I could've just said, eh, I'll take the next 25 days off. And would've gotten the same retirement and the same retirement date, but I just had so much stuff I needed to deal with and put to bed. It wasn't gonna happen.

I retired in March. We bought this house in January of 2005 and rented it out until we got to move down here.

Cindy: Say where this is, so you moved from Anchorage to

Lenny: Here, 2127 Barque Road.

Cindy: Whidbey Island.

Lenny: Whidbey Island. Oak Harbor, is the town.

Cindy: Washington state.

Lenny: Yes.

Cindy: Driving down.

Lenny: Yeah, we left by car in the beginning of July, probably mid-June actually and then got down here in about 3 weeks. It's so beautiful on the road between here and there. If you've never done it, it was just awesome. I've done it, for better or worse, several times with my

various comings and goings. It just gets more and more spectacular the further north you go. It's a beautiful trip.

I loved Alaska, I really did. I've probably been back about 8 times since I retired. I go up there periodically. A lot of good friends. Yeah. Lot of good memories.

Cindy: But you decided to move to Washington state rather than stay in Alaska?

Lenny: I was told that since the government moved me up to Alaska, the government would move me back. But I had to make a decision within it seems, (it was like a moving target), within two years or one year. I was told that I would lose the benefit unless I left within that time-period.

Carla was kind of sick of the winter and she was ready to move. I always loved Alaska and what we did there. But it was time for me to you know, follow rather than lead. It was the right thing to do, and it's a pretty neat place to be. I mean, I don't regret being here. I do miss Alaska, but this is a neat place.

I found this place from an aunt and uncle that live just north of the Deception Pass Bridge there at Biz Point. Every Thanksgiving we would come down and have Thanksgiving with them. I was familiar with the area. I felt this was where I wanted to end up.

I can't deal with heat. 80 degrees, I go through a meltdown and Carla had enough of winter. I like the mountains and I like the ocean. We did kind of tootle around in Oregon and Washington and looked around. But I always felt this is where I would end up. And here I am.

Cindy: Tell me your association with your dogs. Your dogs, haven't you had several labs and you currently have a lab?

Lenny: Yeah, we've had six labs and normally we'd have two or three at a time. I've never hunted with them. But in the winter, I would skijor with them, which is, you attach yourself to your dog with a bungee cord. I used short skate skis. You go like the wind, particularly if you have two dogs. Until they see a moose and then you have an issue. (*Laughter*).

But yeah, my first lab, Shannon, I got from my brother-in-law. It was a returnee. He had sold it to this family and the dog wasn't getting the attention it deserved. It became highly destructive to the point of ripping through the floor, throwing the couch down the stairs...

Cindy: Oh dear.

Lenny: They hired a trainer. The dog picked up a shovel in the garage. He [the trainer] was bending over, hit him in the head, knocked him out. (*Laughter*). She was a beast. My brother-in-law said "look, I know you want a lab and she's available. But she's gonna take some attention."

I took Shannon and she was a strong, smart dog. Because I was with her 24-7, she basically latched onto me. We became a team. Carla came along later. Carla never understood the pecking order. (*Laughter*). But that was Shannon. Yeah.

Cindy: So, you've had several labs. Currently, you have a lab. It's a member of your family.

Lenny: Yeah. Kai, short for Kaikani. You know, she is our baby. The kids are gone.

Cindy: The kids are all out of the house.

Lenny: Anything else. What did I miss?

Cindy: Well, I'm always pleased to hear about your doings and your community here on Whidbey. Are you involved with environmental or other hobbies here in your community?

Lenny: Yeah, I think I kind of overdid it when I first got here. I went to a restoration meeting in Port Townsend, Fish and Wildlife Service. I was looking for a dog sitter. We travel a lot. And the person there, **Heidi Eisenhower**, the Executive Director of the Jefferson County Land Trust, referred me to **Pat Powell**, the Executive Director for the Whidbey Camano Land Trust.

I go there. She has Corgis. I said, "would you be willing to watch my dog?" And she said "no." (*Laughter*). Then she kind of asked me about my background and, did I recently arrive on the island, and I said "yeah, I came down from Alaska." And "I'm a biologist and I worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service." She gave me a certain look, (*Laughter*).and before I knew it, I was on the board of directors for the Whidbey Camano Land Trust, even before I was a paying member of the Whidbey Camano Land Trust. (*Laughter*). It was kind of like, "uh-okay." And also, around that same time, there is a program here in Washington around Puget Sound called the Northwest Straits Initiative. It's basically into environmental education and restoration. They do a lot of work related to finding and removing crab traps and derelict nets and restoring bulkheaded areas with more natural protection.

There was an ad in the paper, the one and only local paper I ever bought, for a position on the Island County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) which is kind of a subset of the Northwest Straits Initiative. I applied and they accepted me, and I became a member of the Marine Resources Committee. Then the MRC has a representative on the Northwest Straits Commission and the Northwest Straits Foundation. Pretty soon, I was the Marine Resources Committee representative on both of those.

Now I'm retired, working more hours than when I worked for no pay for you know 1, 2, 3, 4 different groups. I ended up being the President of the Land Trust for a couple of years. Then was the Vice Chair for the Northwest Straits Committee and then Foundation. The Chair for the

Commission timed out. I was told the Deputy Chair is expected to step up to the Chair position. I said, "uh-uh." (*Laughter*).

Cindy: Gonna break that mold, huh?

Lenny: Yeah, "we're breaking that rule." So, I did. I stayed as the Deputy. I figured well the role of a Deputy is just to sit around waiting for Chair to die. (*Laughter*). I mean and maybe if there's an absence to kind of step into the role. But generally, like Vice President, I mean, what are your responsibilities?

Pretty soon I was doing way too much. I stepped away from the Foundation and my time on the MRC had timed out. Then I timed out on the Land Trust. I'm still a site steward for one of their properties. I still do a little bit of volunteer work for them. I'm still active, but not the way I was. I mean that was just kind of a bit much.

Cindy: Allowing you more time to do your worldwide travels to

Lenny: Well, that was yeah.

Cindy: Photography, travel, and birding.

Lenny: Yep.

At the Northwest Straits Foundation, there was supposed to be a 6-year limit and then you time-out. I was in year 7 of my 6-year stint and I said, "look with my travel, I've missed 6 of the last 8 meetings. I think I just need to resign. If I can't give it the attention it deserves, then I need to step away." I did with that excuse.

Yeah, a lot of traveling. We've been to all 7 continents. I've been to all 50 states. I've been to probably 50 plus countries. I mean, yeah, I like to travel and I traveled before I left the Service, but generally, 3 weeks was all I could get away with the Service.

I started extending the time that I'd be gone after I retired. Australia was 5 weeks. I think southern Africa was also about 5 weeks. Yeah. It's good to be able to do that so. You need time and you need money. The money has been fine, I mean we've been okay.

Cindy: Yes, yes. So, you're very active in your retirement with lots, lots, lots more to look forward to. So, thank you for sharing your life, your career, your time after retirement. Thank you, Lenny.

Lenny: Yeah. Thank you, yeah, I appreciate it.