The Oral History of Richard W. (Dick) Dyer

September 11, 2018

Interview conducted by Libby Herland
Chesterville, Maine

Oral History Cover Sheet

Approximate years worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: 27 (35 years total Federal service)

Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held: Endangered Species biologist, Northeast Regional Office (Boston, Newton Corner, MA); Public Affairs Officer, Northeast Regional Office (Newton Corner, MA); Joint Venture Coordinator, Northeast Regional Office (Newton Corner, Hadley, MA); Refuge Supervisor North, Northeast Regional Office (Hadley, MA)

Most Important Projects: Dick started his career with the Army Corps of Engineers where he worked on the Dickey-Lincoln Dam Project on the St. John River on the Maine/Canada border. There he found an endangered species, the Furbish lousewort, which resulted in increased scrutiny of the project. Dick wrote the environmental impact statement for that and successfully defended the need to comply with the brand new Endangered Species Act. The project ended up being de-authorized. With the Fish and Wildlife Service, Dick became the first piping plover recovery team coordinator, and he worked for many years to re-establish bald eagle populations in the east, in an effort to get the bald eagle off the Endangered Species list. Dick was the first Joint Venture Coordinator for the Atlantic Coast and Great Lake Joint Ventures. In that position he worked with States, other Federal agencies, and private organizations to conserve and restore habitat for waterfowl. These close partnerships resulted in significant funding for the establishment of national wildlife refuges. In Dick's last position, he supervised 21 staff refuges; oversaw the transfer of the Iroquois Job Corps Center to the Department of Labor, resolved beach buggy conflicts at Holgate (part of Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge) and nude bathing at Moonstone Beach (part of the Rhode Island NWR Complex), and strengthened and diversified the co-op program in Region 5 refuges.

Colleagues and Mentors: Marion Stoddart, Paul Nickerson, Bill Ashe, Howard Larson, Bill Whalen, Inez Connor, Harvey Nelson, Ray Whittemore, Don Young, Tom McAndrew, George Gavutis, Ed Moses, Tony Léger, Cathy Short, John Stasko, Sue McMahon

Brief Summary of Interview: Dick describes his childhood growing up in Maine and Massachusetts and the profound interest he had in fishing and hunting since his youth. He enlisted in the Army after college, with his first assignment at Fort Devens being to serve as a liaison to the Nashua River Watershed Association and the Officers Wives Ecology Club. This led to a position, while still an Army officer, with the Army Corps of Engineers in Waltham, MA where he served as a botanist. Dick was on the ground floor of implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act. Dick then joined the Fish and Wildlife Service in Boston and worked on endangered species issues in the northeast under Paul Nickerson, who until Dick's hiring, had been the only endangered species biologist in the northeast. Dick liked to take on new challenges every 8 to 10 years, so he worked as the public

affairs officer while the position was vacant, but due to lack of Washington Office experience, he did not successfully compete for the position on a permanent basis. However, he did get a position working in support of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan as the coordinator of the Atlantic Coast and Great Lakes Joint Ventures. He was very successful in that position. His last tour of duty was as Refuge Supervisor North in the northeast region (legacy Region 5), where he supervised 21 refuge managers. He describes working with Tony Léger, serving as Tony's "hunting and fishing conscience", and he describes some of the special projects and controversial issues he addressed.

The Interview

LIBBY: Good morning, Dick. My name is Libby Herland. I'm the retired Region 5 representative on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Heritage Committee. It is Tuesday, September 11, 2018. I am conducting an oral history today with Dick Dyer. This interview is being conducted at the home of Dick and JoAnne Dyer in Chesterville, Maine. It's a real pleasure to interview you, Dick. We do some have personal history which will probably come up in the interview as you were my supervisor for a number of years in Region 5. I did really enjoy working with you during my career, and it's really nice to see you again.

So, I know you began working for the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1978 and you retired from the Fish and Wildlife Service in 2005, after working 27 years with the Fish and Wildlife Service, and 35 years all together with the Federal government, including your military service. So, even though I know a lot about you, I'm eager to learn more about you and your childhood, your education, your family, your career path, the highlights of your career, and what you've been doing since you retired, which I know is fishing and feeding the fires in your wood stove. (laughter). Anyway, let's get started with your childhood and your early influences.

DICK: Well, good morning, Libby. It's a pleasure to see you again, and you're always welcome here in Maine. Yeah, my early childhood, like a lot of … I was born in Maine, sort of a rural kid, grew up in the country, and just sort of gravitated to the outdoor activities. I mean, I grew up in the days when school bus, used to be 35 kids at the school bus stop, you know. It was a different world back then. But my mother said – born in Maine, but we, most of my early years of education were in Massachusetts. Grew up right on the New Hampshire/Massachusetts border. My mother often said I grew up with hip boots on. (laughter). I had some friends across the street – there were 5 boys that lived across the street, and they were real outdoor kids too. We always had BB guns and bows and arrows and fishing rods in our hands or playing a sandlot baseball game. Always doing something like that. Outside activities constantly, and I just sort of gravitated to fishing and hunting, from the relationship I had with the boys across the street. Just as an example, I used to get up, I don't know how many kids could say they did this, before the bus would come, I'd get up in the dark, put my hip boots on, and go down and stand on the edge of the swamp to wait for the sunrise to hunt. Shoot a duck or a pheasant or something like that. (laughter). I'd get up early, get all my clothes on, have breakfast, and then run down to the edge of the swamp, sit there for 20 minutes or so, and then run to catch the bus.

LIBBY: Who taught you how to hunt?

DICK: No one. I just learned how. I just wanted to do it. It was something we did. We were always exploring. Taking off the day or the afternoon. What's over the hill kind of thing, it was just natural curiosity. But no, all's I ever wanted as a boy was half a dozen arrows. My mother always used give me half a dozen arrow for Christmas. (laughter). There was no closed seasons

back then. I was a real, I was a real killer, I was a, it's a shame, some of the things I did, I'm not too proud of back then. But one day, I realized that, after I shot, I don't know how many little dickey birds I shot with my BB gun, and all of a sudden, I realized, about 10 or 12 years old, I realized "You know, I really shouldn't be doing this." Sort of an internal alarm clock sort of went off and said, boy, and I changed my whole spirit of appreciation for the outdoors. I don't know what struck me about that, but this "I really shouldn't be doing this, you know, shooting all these little birds and blackbirds" and whatever.

LIBBY: Almost like when Aldo Leopold looked in the eyes of the wolf.

DICK: Oh. [John] James Audubon. He did such beautiful paintings 'cause he shot every bird that he painted. He had it right in his hand, you know. But that's sort of a transition you go through, I think is, you really develop an appreciation for the outdoors and that's a step in the process, I think, you know, of how you mature and how you grow up and how you really learn to appreciate and then become an avid defender of conservation and wildlife and wildlife habitat. That's what sort of got me started in the whole game was just this, this appreciation and awe of Mother Nature and what it's all about. So, I sort of gravitated from my early hunting and fishing days to - I was a big-time sports player in high school so I didn't do a lot in the high school years, in terms of outdoor activities. I mean it was football, basketball, baseball, right through, right through the year. So, I often felt that I, those years were, I didn't really, not until I got into college, did I really start to do a lot of outdoor hunting and fishing and outside fly fishing activities, that kind of stuff.

LIBBY: Where did you go to school?

DICK: I went to school at Methuen High School, where I went through high school. And then, went to the University of Massachusetts. 1965, I graduated from Methuen High School. That was, the late 60's were, that was a tumultuous time, in our world. That was - Viet Nam was raging, you know. The, oh for sure, Martin Luther King was assassinated. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy was assassinated and there was the civil rights movement. Viet Nam war was playing out on your living room television screen every day. There were riots in the streets. The Democratic National Convention was a riot.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: You know, in Chicago. There were demonstrations on every campus. I did, I carried candles and protested Viet Nam, but it, it was just a tumultuous time in my [life], and I think everyone's [lives], our generation in particular. It was just a lot going on, a lot of pressure, a lot of things to think about. So, I went, I went from high school. I went to UMass. Graduated in 1969 from the University of Massachusetts.

LIBBY: What did you study?

DICK: Well, I was a – I started as a forestry major and then I found out I had to go to summer school, and my dad said, "That's not going to work" 'cause I - he was a, he needed me to help

with the dry cleaning store that he, that we owned, and he needed my help during the summertime. So, taking off the summer and going to forestry school was not sort of in the plan. So, I switched to botany. Switched my major to botany and that led to a lot of different things. But no, when I, when I was in college, like I say, there was a lot going on in the world, and probably I was 19, it was 1969 when I graduated. I took about a year off after I graduated from college and travelled around the country. Probably the best thing I ever did. By myself. I just loaded up my MG with a little pup tent and some camping gear and just took off. I did a big figure eight. I left Maine and I went up through into Canada and down through Chicago, all the way down to Mexico, all the way up the Pacific Coast of California, up into the northwest. Spent a lot of time in northwest Montana, Oregon, Wyoming, that part of the world. Idaho, Washington. So, I spent a lot of time in the northwest and really enjoyed that. But I did it by myself, and probably one of the - I learned more about myself and about life then probably all the four years I was in college, in terms of really understanding and appreciating our country and what's going on and it made me think about all that stuff. I know I was - I almost became a dog trainer at one point. I worked – what I'd do is I'd travel a bit and have to make my money to buy gas, buy food whatever and I'd work picking apples and cherries and haying and odd jobs here and there. Work for two or three days and then jump in my car and move on. But I got into, out in Oregon Columbia River Valley in Scappoose, Oregon, I worked at a dog kennel there for three or four months. I could have, I could have become a professional dog trainer, very easily, but. So, I was out there, and I called home, talked to my dad one time. This was back in the days of the draft. We all had to contend with the draft. If you weren't in high school, if you graduated from high school and you didn't go on to school, you either got a physical deferment, you went to Canada or you were drafted.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: Or you were married. One of those things had to happen. So, when I was travelling around the country, I notified my draft board. That's required if there's a change of address. So, I'd send my draft board a change of address where I was, where they could contact me, but by the time they did try to contact me, I'd be…

LIBBY: You'd be gone.

DICK: … I'd be gone from there and somewhere else. So, I was sending them these changes of address every month or so, I'd send them a different address. And so, I called home, I think it was early October, and I talked to my dad, and he said, "You'd better get your butt home," he said. "The draft board has had about enough of you." And I says, "Okay, Pop." (laughter). So, I loaded up, headed home, and sure enough, there was no, I mean, I was going to be drafted, there was no doubt about it. I'm a pretty healthy guy, didn't have any medical deferments or anything like that. It was just no beating it, so I says, "Well", I said to myself, "If I'm going to serve," I says, "I want to do it on my terms." So, I enlisted! And I enlisted to go through Officers Candidate School [OCS].

LIBBY: In the Army?

DICK: In the Army. Became an infantry lieutenant and went through Fort Benning, Georgia. Officers Candidate School at Fort Benning. And that sort of started my, my professional career, I guess, in the sense of service to my country and service to the natural world, so to speak, and fish and wildlife. So, when I finished OCS, I was a lieutenant, and Viet Nam was winding down at that time. Here I was, I was an infantry lieutenant, and I was, I was on my way. No doubt about it, where I'm going. So, I was okay with that. But when I, when I finished OCS, Viet Nam was winding down at that time, and they realized they had more lieutenants than they knew what do to with. So, they were - if I dropped out of the program, they would guarantee me where I wanted to go – duty station – and guarantee your MOS – your Military Occupational Service.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: They would guarantee both those things for you. Wherever you wanted to go and do whatever you wanted to do if you dropped out of the program. And I said, well, I remember going downstairs, and just about ready to knock on my tac officer's door, and say, "I want out" and I recall my high school football coach thinking, what he told me, and the advice he gave me.

LIBBY: Which was?

DICK: He says, "If you can go through high school football and sweating and all that stuff, then you can go through anything in life." So, I almost knocked on the door, 'cause I had had enough of OCS. This was, they're trying to wash you out anyways. They're really putting the pressure on physically and mentally, and all that stuff. I almost knocked on the door, and I remembered, his name was Larry Klimas – he was my, he was my quarterback coach in high school. And he said, "Take pride in yourself and take pride in who you are and what you do." He says, "If you can go through this, you can go through anything." So, I remembered him, just as clear as day, and I turned around and walked up, walked back upstairs and I became a lieutenant after that. They didn't wash me out. But then, I could go anywhere I wanted, but they didn't know what to do with me, at that time. So, they sent me to Fort Devens, Massachusetts, of all places. I was assigned to an Engineering Unit there, of all things. And I got there, and this colonel looked at me, he looked at my background and he's, "What am I going to do with you?" he says. But he looked up all my science background and all that stuff and he said, "Well, we have this Officers Wives Ecology Club." Ecology was the buzzword in the late 60's, early 70's. They wanted someone to be the liaison between the ecology, the Officers Wives Ecology Club. And, they had this other group, this Nashua River Watershed Association, that was part of, they were provided an office there at Fort Devens. I was to be the liaison between the post command and the officers club, wives club and then this Nashua River Watershed Association. So, that's where he put me, and lo and behold, that's where I met Marion Stoddart who turned out to be a major influence on my life. She was a volunteer. That's back in the days of the early, late '60's, early '70', too, was sort of the heyday of our

environmental movement. That's when Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act – all that stuff – was the heyday of the environmental movement. But Marion was the, she was the executive director of this watershed association. So, I was to be the liaison between the group and the post command. And that worked wonderfully. That's where I met some really wonderful people. Marion, of course. So, I worked there for little over a year I guess as a lieutenant and worked with Marion on a number of watershed associations. That's when the Nashua River used to be blue, green, yellow, all depending on what color paper Fitchburg Paper was making that particular day. Like I say, there was a lot of concern about the environment and what was going on. Like I say, a lot of environmental legislation was passed. The Corps of Engineers was going to announce, they were coming to Lowell Tech to have a big public meeting about - they were going to get involved in wastewater management. I call it the greening of the Corps of Engineers, 'cause they were going to turn all their expertise into doing something positive for the environment. Next to TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority], probably the Corps of Engineers had screwed up more wildlife habitat than any other agency in existence, because the Corps had unique abilities. They could plan, design, operate – they could do it all. They just, from the get-go, they could take a project and go all the way through to management of the whole thing. So it was, they had a unique capability. They – the Corps of Engineers was coming to Lowell – Lowell Tech – to have this public meeting to announce I think it was four or five sites around the country, and the Merrimack River in New Hampshire and Massachusetts was one of the most polluted rivers in the country at that time. Big industrial towns – Lowell, Lawrence, Haverhill – dumped all their raw sewage into the river. So, the Corps was coming to town to announce what they were going to do. They were going to do these feasibility studies of tertiary treatment and wastewater management and sort of a regionalization concept of how to go about improving water quality and wastewater management. So, they were coming to town, and we have this meeting, and I had my orders. I was going, I was on my way to Viet Nam. I had my orders. I was leaving within a week. And Marion said, "Dick, I can't go to the meeting coming up. Would you go and represent us, represent the watershed association?" And I says, "Ah, Marion." I said, "I really don't want to do that." I says, "You know, I've got my orders to Viet Nam. I'm leaving within a week." I was all packed and my duffel bag was packed and standing in the corner, and I was gone. And she's "Would you go? Do it for me." And I says, …

LIBBY: Hard to say no to Marion.

DICK: And I says (laughter), "Oh, Marion. I'll do it for you." So, I said, then she said, "Now, I want you to go up after the meeting and introduce yourself to the general." General Morris – a three-star general. "I want you to go up and introduce yourself to him. Just talk to him." And I says, "Sure." So, lo and behold, after the meeting, I went up, introduced myself. I was a lieutenant at that time, of course, and introduced myself to General Morris. Three stars by the way. We were just chatting, and he said, I was telling him about what I did with the watershed association and what my background in science and biology was and that, and he said, "Geez, we're putting a study team together. You sound like you're the kind of guy we might like to

have on our team. Would you like to do that?" And I said, "Geez, General, I'd love to", I said, "but, I've got my orders to Viet Nam. I'm leaving within a week." And he looked at the colonel standing next to him, he looked back at me, and he looked, and he goes, "We can change that, can't we?" to the colonel. He said that to the colonel. Lo and behold, reassigned right then and there. Well, within the week I was reassigned from, from heading for Viet Nam, they assigned me to the Corps of Engineers in Waltham, New England Division of the Corps of Engineers in Waltham, as a lieutenant. Then I was part of a study team that did this wastewater management study. So, there I was as a lieutenant for a couple of years there. That's where I met my wife, JoAnne. She worked in the personnel office. Met her, married three to four years after that, and the rest is history on that front. But it was – you talk about fate, you know, and different things that happen in your lives. Just someone you meet or something that happens, and your whole, your whole career, your whole life changes.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: Just by a chance meeting sometimes. And that's, that's sort of what happened, happened with me. So, that was, I was pretty lucky, quite frankly.

LIBBY: Yeah.

DICK: But I swear to this day that Marion had that all arranged. She had her contacts in the Department of Defense in Washington. I asked her one time, I said, "Marion, did you put something into the works there?" She just sort of twinkled in her eye and she said, "Dick, would I do that?" (laughter). And I said…

LIBBY: Yes, you would! (laughter).

DICK: So anyway. But, so, I went from there

LIBBY: Did you stay in touch with Marion? Were you still working on ….

DICK: We stayed in touch.

LIBBY: … projects that affected her, or you didn't have the (unintelligible).

DICK: Well as long as we were doing the wastewater management study. That was the watershed – the Nashua River – was going to benefit tremendously from that. But we completed the study. Nothing ever really came of it, quite frankly. The Corps really did never jump into the water, so to speak, on that. You know, they did this feasibility study and looked at a number of regionalization, regional treatment plants, but like a lot of stuff, nothing really ever came of it. It was - we found out some interesting things, in terms of tertiary treatment and how to do it, but it was sort of a state-of-the-art study at that time. But there was some regionalization that went on with wastewater management and the upgrade of a number of facilities – certainly, Fitchburg Paper. So, there was a lot of benefit that came from the secondary results of this study that we did, so.

So that carried me through the early years, and then if you remember September of ’65, there was a blackout in New England and we lost power in all of New England, all of the Northeast, went [black]. It was the fall of ’65. I remember, I knew exactly where I was. I was at UMass at the time, a freshman, and everything went black.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: There was a tremendous need for additional power. The New England Power Pool, the power grid, was overrun. There was more of a demand than energy power was available. So, the Corps at that time, there was an authorized project on the books. Dickey-Lincoln. On the St. John River in northern Maine, forms the border between the U.S. and Canada. They had an authorized project. They were authorized years and years before. It wasn’t funded, but it was authorized to do this. Called the Dickey-Lincoln Dam at the time. It was a major hydroelectric project to provide peaking power.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: And that’s what the demand [was for].

LIBBY: For when they really needed it.

DICK: For when they needed it. And that’s where hydropower comes in. It’s a peaking demand kind of thing. When you have an extra demand on the grid, they can open the gates and you get instant power. It’s not like a nuclear facility where you have to build it up over time. So, the idea was to put, to establish a hydroelectric project in northern Maine, on the last free-flowing river in the northeast, which was the St. John River. 86,000-acre reservoir.

LIBBY: Wow. That’s big.

DICK: It was huge. It was huge. So, after that blackout though, they started re-spinning the clock on that project and were going to do additional studies, but now we’ve got something called NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act - to deal with. Nobody knew – what’s an environmental impact statement? We had to, they had to do one, and nobody – “What’s that?” Nobody really knew what they were, and what’s an environmental impact statement? So, so anyway, I transitioned. I wound down from that wastewater management study into this other study on the Dickey-Lincoln project as a biologist. And that’s how I came involved with the Dickey-Lincoln project. I was part of the study team there. I was a biologist, a botanist at the time. Those were the early days of the Endangered Species Act. So, I was, I had to speak at the – Augusta – at the Appalachian Mountain Club annual meeting. They asked me to speak about the Dickey-Lincoln project. I had just completed some surveys with Dr. Richards from the University of Maine. One of the first plants listed under the Endangered Species Act was this snapdragon called the Furbish lousewort. It hadn’t been seen, in I don’t know, thirty, forty years, I guess. It had been presumed extinct. Nobody had seen it, but nobody had really looked for it. So, we did a – Dr. Richards and I - did a number of field surveys on the St. John River looking for rare plants. The Furbish lousewort was last reported there. It was endemic to

the St. John River. The only place where it was known from, but nobody had seen it. So, we looked for it, and sure enough, we found it within the first couple days. We found some very healthy populations. Nobody had really looked for it, but it was listed under the Endangered Species Act. It was thought to have been extinct, but lo and behold, it wasn't. So that, that threw me into the national spotlight, quite frankly. This was a time - early days of the Endangered Species Act. Congress thought they were – the Endangered Species Act was for grizzly bears and bald eagles, and black-footed ferrets and wolves and things like that. "What's this snapdragon?" Well at the same time, there was this snail darter down in Tennessee.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: That was a national debate going on as to, you know, what's going on with this snail darter thing and preventing this Tennessee Valley Authority from completing this project. But see, the Endangered Species Act was very specific. The purpose of the Endangered Species Act was to protect the habitats on which endangered and threatened species depend. That's the purpose. It was right in the first paragraph. A lot of people sited that. It wasn't about the species; it was about protecting the habitat on which those species depend. And Federal agencies – hello, Corps – were prohibited from authorizing funding or carrying out projects that would jeopardize the continued existence of endangered and threatened species. So, it was black and white. There really was no question about it. And there were big cases – the snail darter case was being argued, at the Supreme Court level. And here I was. I announced at this meeting – with the AMC – that we found this endangered species up there that's going to be an issue, a legal issue, on how we vote for it, and how we go forward. So, I was at the time, when I made this announcement, in my talk to them, I was talking about the history of endangered species and what's going on with the project itself – the Dickey-Lincoln project – and I said, well, we're going to have an issue, a legal issue to deal with. Then it just blew up from there. I was getting calls from all, literally all over the country.

LIBBY: Wow.

DICK: I mean, I was what? 22, 23 at the time? I'm already in the middle of this national controversy. The Corps – there was a gentleman – the Chief of the Corps by the name of John William Leslie. He was really a nice man, but he was this gruff, he acted like a gruff old bear. And I remember him coming down and slamming this report that Dr. Richards and I had written on my desk. "What is this crap?" And he throws it on my desk.

LIBBY: Not happy. He was not happy that there was (unintelligible).

DICK: Oh no. His project was now in jeopardy because, you know, we had this legal issue that we're going to deal with, and how're we going to get through it. So, I was right in the middle of the barrel of the gun, so to speak. He was furious. He said, "Well, just transplant that thing. Move it! Take it into an herbarium or something. Just get rid of it!" "But, Mr. Leslie, that's not the law. (laughter). This is the law. This is what it says." So, I was right in the middle of it. I felt pretty overwhelmed at the time. Here I was - I think his name was Neil Sigmond that argued

the case the Supreme Court case for the snail darter – and he called me; he was talking to me. I was called into Washington two or three times to testify, or not testify, it wasn't like a court hearing but, you know, brief them on what was going on, where we were with this Dickey-Lincoln project, what we found, what was … But there were lawyers on all sides, all around us. What am I doing here? I'm just a country bumpkin, you know!

LIBBY: You weren't getting any guidance…

DICK: Oh no.

LIBBY: …from anybody in the Corps? Nobody knew.

DICK: Nobody knew. I mean, first time - an environmental impact statement - what's that? Here we are, dealing with endangered species issues. What's that about, you know? So, it was all precedent setting kind of stuff and very controversial. 'Cause here we are, the last free-flowing river in the State of Maine, 86,000 acres reservoir is going to be created, so…

LIBBY: There must have been opponents to that project?

DICK: Excuse me?

LIBBY: There must have been opponents to that project?

DICK: Oh, for sure.

LIBBY: So, when it was found…

DICK: Every natural resource agency in the state and beyond, and around the country.

LIBBY: … they were thrilled with the find.

DICK: They were thrilled. Oh, now we've got some, some teeth, you know, behind us, it just isn't a debate anymore about the pros and cons. It's a debate about the law itself and what it means. And so, I was right in the middle of all that, and the phone was ringing at all hours, and I really felt, "Oh my word, what have I gotten myself into?" But lo and behold, I was the, you know, I had, it was just myself and another fellow by the name of Bud Barrett, Dr. Bud Barrett. He and I were the two that wrote the environmental impact statement for that project. He was a good man. He knew I was in over my head so in terms of the volume and the controversy, but he helped me tremendously. Stuck by me. He said, "No, you're doing the right thing. Just stick with it." But I was not very popular within the Corps of Engineers, I can tell you that, 'cause they were…

LIBBY: And that project never happened.

DICK: It never happened, 'cause there was, it was forced … there was something in the Endangered Species Act called, I can't remember what it was. We called it the God committee. When it came down to really headbutting, somebody had to decide, you know, what gives here. We - it was Secretary of the Interior, head of EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], a couple

of senators, congressmen, we called it – they were the ones that had to decide the fate of an endangered species. We called them the "God Squad". But they were the ones who ultimately decided about "What gives here? Does the law prevail or does this project prevail?" So, we get those, that level of involvement, from Secretary Cabinet level types, senator types, and they demanded a lot more information about the costs, the benefits, and they really started to scrutinize this project, and that's when it collapsed. It couldn't, it couldn't stand on its own when they really started to put the, you know, really look at it, really intensely, the way they needed to. It just didn't, the cost benefits weren't there. So, the project was eventually deauthorized, but only because some very high level people had forced them to look at this and they demanded a lot more specificity in the studies that were done and the engineering that was done, the power pool analysis and where the future of New England was going in terms of future energy production. When they put it all together, it collapsed of its own weight.

LIBBY: But they wouldn't have looked it if wasn't for this plant.

DICK: That's exactly right. They would not have looked at it, it wouldn't have gone through the scrutiny that it did. But when it went through that scrutiny, you know, that highest level in Washington, it just, it just didn't wash, and the whole project was deauthorized. The Nature Conservancy came in and now that whole St. John River corridor is a, is a natural area. You know, it had a very happy, very wonderful ending. But most people don't know about it, in terms of the whole. They knew about the Allagash River, of course, 'cause that was protected, excuse me, a protected waterway, but now the whole St. John River corridor is in a natural conservation reserve kind of thing, by the, done by The Nature Conservancy.

LIBBY: Did that affect the way you were considered though in the Corps of Engineers, like in your office? Were you seen as a….

DICK: No, some of the old engineers were a little bit rough, you know, to deal with. They couldn't believe that something like this could stop their project. But lo and behold, that's exactly what happened. But most, for the most part, they treated me well. No, they were good people, just trying to do their job, but they couldn't believe that something like this could – a snapdragon of all things - could stop a project like this. But it stopped itself by the sheer level of analysis that had to take place to make the decision.

LIBBY: So, did you continue working for the Corps? I know at some point you…

DICK: Well, here I was. I was the biologist on the Dickey-Lincoln project and doing this environmental impact statement, and 'course the Endangered Species Act was just getting started. Those were the early days of the Endangered Species Act. Paul Nickerson, who was the chief of Endangered Species in the northeast region…

LIBBY: …of the Fish and Wildlife Service…

DICK: …of the Fish and Wildlife Service, called me one day. He says, "Can you come in and talk to us about this plant that you found?"

LIBBY: He must have been young, too.

DICK: He was just out of Viet Nam, quite frankly. I think he was I think he; I mean, he had not been stateside very long. But that was is his first job with the Fish and Wildlife Service, was being the endangered species coordinator in Region 5. So, Paul called me, I went down – this is when they worked in the Post Office. I went down and met with them.

LIBBY: In Boston.

DICK: In Boston, and we talked about it, and what was going on, what I did, what our field studies had determined, what we found, how many populations, number of plants. I mean, we had a pretty good record of what was going on now in terms of the rare plants that were in that St. John Valley. So, we talked and lo and behold, about a month or so later after that, he had, he was the only endangered species biologist at the time in the northeast. He was the head of the whole program, and he was the only one. He said, "Would you like to come and work for me? I need somebody to deal in the botanical end of the world", to deal with endangered species listings and recovery plans and efforts and all that kind of stuff. So, I says, "Sounds like an opportunity to me." So, I says, "Sure enough!" So that was seventy …

LIBBY: '78?

DICK: '78. 1978.

LIBBY: What grade were you? Do you remember what grade you were?

DICK: Honestly, no Libby. Probably a five or a seven, you know. Something, you know, I mean. It was a change but to me, here I am, a chance to go work for the Fish and Wildlife Service. My whole life had been fish and wildlife since I was a little boy. I thought I was this is like a dream come true.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: And it was! I'm now working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There wasn't any question about it. I said, "Yeah, absolutely!"

LIBBY: And you didn't have to move.

DICK: I didn't have to move. I just, I had a different office to commute to, and that, that was it. Started my career with the Service, and with Paul. Paul hired me, selected me. Dan Ashe, or Bill Ashe, [Bill Ashe, not Dan] approved me, and he approved – he was the one who selected me.

LIBBY: Was Bill the deputy regional …?

DICK: Bill was, Bill was the deputy then.

LIBBY: The deputy regional director.

DICK: Yep. So, lo and behold, I started my career with the Fish and Wildlife Service and went on from there. So, my first ten years, about, were the endangered species program. I owe a great deal of gratitude to Paul. Paul pushed me in a lot of ways, in terms of broadening my horizons. He, I was the first, I was a recovery team leader for the piping plover. I was a shorebird neophyte.

LIBBY: Not plants.

DICK: He gave me the latitude to go ahead. "Paul, I don't know anything about shorebirds!" He says, "Yeah, you will. Nobody else knows much either, so go! Do it!" (laughter). So, lo and behold, I was the recovery team leader for the first few years – the piping plover. Probably one of the highlights in my career, what I really look back on, was the work they let me do, and asked me to do for him, on bald eagles. It was supposed to be a ten-year project. For eight years, I went to Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Bras d'Or Lakes area. Brought back young bald eagles to the states here, to release into the Quabbin Reservoir area. It was – the idea of the project – because eagles were pretty much extant here in the northeast. We had a few eagles here in Maine, a few in the Chesapeake Bay area, and Florida had a pretty healthy population, but for the most part, they were, eagles were, well in the '60's, the mid-60's, I would say there were maybe 32, 33 nesting pairs of bald eagles in this entire state of Maine. So, the idea was to build up [the northeast population]. Eagles are something like salmon. Salmon return to the river where they were spawned. Well, eagles will come back to the same general area where they learned to fly. Not the specific site, necessarily, like a salmon would in the very tributary that it was spawned in, but they will come back to the general area where they learned to fly. So, the concept was, for ten years, we would go to Canada. Paul went to, I think he went to Saskatchewan or Manitoba, and I went to Nova Scotia, and we brought back eagles to - first year, I think we did four, then we went to six, then we went to eight - to build up the population of local birds, 'cause they don't get sexually mature until they're five years old.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: So, you've got to build up the population enough. But we wanted to do it for ten years. We figured it'd be ten years trying to build up the sub-population level through a, get them to the point where they were mature enough to hopefully return. The Quabbin Reservoir was the perfect site for west of Boston. That's Boston's water supply.

LIBBY: They all went to Quabbin?

DICK: They all went to the Quabbin, the birds that I brought back from Nova Scotia. And myself, and another fellow by the name of Jack Swedberg, he was the state biologist, he and I went too. But we terminated it after eight years because we built, we could see it was going to be successful. Eagles started to nest on their own, and once they started to nest on their own, we, that was sort of the point where we would say, "Let's back off. We don't need to augment it anymore." They'd built up enough of a sub-population of immature birds. They slowly became mature and started to nest on their own. Now, I don't know what they've got at

Quabbin Reservoir, but there's probably eight or nine nesting pair in the Quabbin alone, now. I know there's over 600 nesting pair in the State of Maine alone.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: So, the idea was to build up that population, get it started and then we would back off, and that's exactly what we did.

LIBBY: Very successful!

DICK: Oh, it was. It was a tremendous success, so.

LIBBY: you know, I…

DICK: And I was part of that, so I mean, hello! (laughter).

LIBBY: That's great. I interviewed Bill Ashe for oral history and one of the highlights of his life was releasing birds at Quabbin. He must have been by your side.

DICK: Oh, he probably was. Think about it, here I am. I've got my, my boys lined up, here they are feeding young eaglets. Before you release them for the final time, each year, we'd put bands on them and put transmitters on them so we could follow them a little bit, help them if they needed help. So, my kids had the opportunity to feed young bald eagles and my parents were there. I mean, when we first started, it was, we had own pilots, our own planes, we would fly out in little Cesnas, and the end of the project Bank of Boston got involved. They'd fly us up on their executive jets and fly us back. They all wanted to be part of the winner, so to speak. Everybody wanted to do something, be part of a winning thing. So, at the end of it, I mean it was, I mean we come back on the return trip. Usually, it took us about a week to collect the eagles that we, that we needed for the year, and we'd bring them back into Hanscom Field, then we'd truck them from there out to, out to the Quabbin. But we'd come in at the end on an executive - we started, we started on a little Cessna and our own Fish and Wildlife Service pilots, doing our own thing so to speak, and terrified that we'd show up with a dead eagle or two, and never lost a one in the whole thing. But at the end, we had bands were playing and flags are flying and it's like, it's like "Give me a break here". It turned into a real circus almost. But it was, you know, everybody wanted to be part of it.

LIBBY: It was, it was a celebration.

DICK: Everybody wanted to be part of something good, and that really was. And, at the end of it, every time I get a chance, I thank the Canadians, because they were, I mean, we'd go up there each summer, it was like long-lost brothers getting together with the provincial biologists They are just special people. And every eagle that flies here is loaded with Canadian genes.

LIBBY: I'll think of that next time I see one.

DICK: Next time you see one, you just raise your glass and toast, toast the Canadians.

LIBBY: I see them frequently in the Berkshires where I live.

DICK: We see them here quite often. But every eagle that flies has got Canadian genes all through it. We owe them a great deal of gratitude.

LIBBY: We sure do.

DICK: But we'd get together every year and it was just long-lost brothers getting together and we, from the same backgrounds, you know, and same sort of upbringing. And then, they would treat us up there like we were, I mean, they were allowed to red carpet like nobody can. I mean, when we left to fly the eagles back for that particular season, the minister, provincial minister would come and greet us. I mean, it was first class all the way.

LIBBY: Know what's interesting, I know, I don't know when we will talk about your next phase of your career, but that also involved Canada.

DICK: For sure.

LIBBY: So, this was a great…

DICK: Oh, it was.

LIBBY: …a great foundation for you.

DICK: But to think about that, here I am, a young, little kid, having an appreciation for the environment and the natural world, and then have this opportunity laid in front of me, and to be part of it, to have your kids part of it. So, at the end, I knew the Canadians treated us like royalty up there. I said, "We should do something on this end." They had not seen what goes on when we're at the hack tower or what we go through on this end before we release the birds. So, we invited them down, the last year we were going to do the project. We invited them down to see what goes on at this end. So, it was quite the thing. We invited them down, the provincial biologist – a fellow by the name of Peter Austin Smith who was the, he was the Nova Scotia endangered species exec on the thing. We flew him, they came down - I think they flew in, they had their own plane. We met them at Logan Airport. We had a State Police escort meet them on Friday afternoon at Logan Airport. Friday afternoon, Logan Airport, into the Statehouse in Boston, with sirens going on and traffic is pulling over. Drove them right up to the Statehouse, right up to meet the Governor, Dukakis was the governor at the time.

LIBBY: Wow. Wow.

DICK: We had a police escort from Logan Airport, all the way into the Statehouse, you know with sirens going. They were overwhelmed. Go upstairs, meet the Governor. We had a whole spread laid out for them. And, the next day, we're going out to the Quabbin to release the birds for the final, the final phase of the project, you know, the final time. And so, I mean all the news stations, all the Channel 5 Boston stations were there. But I mean, it was like a media extravaganza kind of thing. So before, before we opened up the gates to the release hack

tower where we kept the birds for about, usually kept them for about eight weeks before we released them once we brought them back. Before we opened the gates for the final time, we had a Canadian flag that we unfurled. I still cry about it. (laughter/tears). Those guys were crying looking at that. (laughter). It was, it was just one of those things.

LIBBY: Ah, you really did it right.

DICK: Oh, I mean, the bands were playing, the flags were flying. It was like, that's probably one of the most, you can tell (crying).

LIBBY: I know, I'm crying too.

DICK: (laughter mixed with tears). It was one of the most emotional things I've ever been involved with.

LIBBY: That's a wonderful, that's a wonderful story and something I did not know about you. So there. Wow. That's a, I mean, even if your career had ended right there, you would have been…

DICK: I could have died and been very happy right there (laughter/tears).

LIBBY: But I know you went on to do a lot more really good things, so tell us.

DICK: Let's take a break (laughter). And still, you can see how emotional I get. But think about that, and some little country kid growing up, you know. And now, we have - I know there's at least 600 nesting pair of bald eagles here in the State of Maine. And it goes back to Rachel Carson and *Silent Spring* and all that, all that history that's there with the Fish and Wildlife Service and what she went through. She was one of my heroes, no question about it. I never met her, but I feel like I know her very well.

LIBBY: Yeah, very influential (unintelligible), you know. Wow.

DICK: Oh, yeah.

LIBBY: Good. (laughter).

DICK: I mean, think about that, I mean, it's just.

LIBBY: I do.

DICK: It's something that hard to believe that what happened to some country kid that grew up with hip boots on.

LIBBY: I think that's one of the most amazing things about working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that, so many of us have something we have done in our career, and sometimes more than one really great thing, that. It's really just amazing when you think about it, when you look at it in hindsight, and you can be really proud…

DICK: For the opportunity.

LIBBY: … and grateful for the opportunity to do what you did. And you worked really hard. I mean, that was a lot of work, but.

DICK: Well, it was long days, but it was a labor of love. There's no doubt about it.

LIBBY: Well, is there any….

DICK: Paul gave me that opportunity, Paul Nickerson gave me that opportunity, and I'll…

LIBBY: Is there anything else. Do you want to talk about your North American days then?

DICK: That's, well.

LIBBY: Or is there anything else from the endangered species world that you can, that can top the bald eagle?

DICK: No, that's probably enough right [there]. I mean, here I am, doing things like that with the bald eagle and then being in the middle of a national controversy, totally under-overwhelmed by that. Boy, what is happening to me, you know? Are they going to shoot me or fire me? What are they going to do? (laughter). I mean, I was about 22, 23 years old.

LIBBY: But now, now you're, now by the time you finished with the bald eagle, you must be in your thirties by then?

DICK: Oh, I am. Yeah, probably eight or nine years I worked the endangered species program.

LIBBY: And then you?

DICK: I wanted, I loved the public interaction, the public component of it, you know, of the work that we did and I, I love people anyway, you know, I just enjoy people. And I was the public affairs officer for a short time. Howard Larson was the Regional Director at the time, and I wanted to get more into the public relations aspect of the Fish and Wildlife Service, but I didn't have Washington experience. (Some background noise). But he, he said I'll give you a chance at that, 'cause Bill Whalen, I don't know if you remember Bill Whalen. He was the public affairs officer at the time. He retired and they needed someone to come in. So, I did that job for about a year, and I really wanted to be the public affairs officer for Region 5 of the Fish and Wildlife Service. I did the job for about a year. Did a lot of interesting things, but I didn't have the Washington experience, and that was sort of (dogs barking), that was sort of a requirement.

LIBBY: That was.

DICK: A requirement at that time. So, I didn't get that job. That's when they selected Inez Conner.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: She became our public affairs officer for...

LIBBY: For a long time.

DICK: For a long time, in Region 5. Yeah, then, so then something called the North American Plan comes, comes along. What's the North American Waterfowl Management Plan? What is that? Well, that was an international agreement, signed by Mexico, and Canada, and the United States, to - it was a blueprint for waterfowl conservation. Back in the early '80's, waterfowl populations for a number of species were at all-time lows, and so, we had this plan, international plan put together, of how we're gonna restore waterfowl populations across the continent. And they were looking for someone to head up the, something called joint ventures. Nobody even knew what a joint venture was but, it was, I remember, Harvey Nelson was the Regional Director from Region 3. He and a couple of his boys came and put on a presentation at the, at the Newton office where I was working and said that we needed the northeast because of population decline of black ducks. Black ducks were a major concern. So, we were identified as one of five, five or six major study areas. The North American plan was a continental plan, but it was broken down into the major concentration areas for waterfowl. One was the Atlantic Coast, Lower Mississippi, California, the Dakotas of course, California Central Valley. Certain areas were keyed in on as to be subject to this joint venture. So, well, what's a joint venture? It's really, we finally realized that we, the Fish and Wildlife Service, or any one agency can't do it all. You have to, you have to all pull together.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: So, that was sort of the concept behind the North American plan, is that new partnerships together, State, Federal, private. Ducks Unlimited was a major component of that, and they needed to hire someone to coordinate all this stuff. So, we advertised the position, and talked about who, you know, what kind of personal characteristics you needed to have, qualities, and I'm thinking, "Geez, I'd like to do something like that." So, lo and behold, I applied for the position that they advertised. It was in, the position was in, within the Division of Refuges. And that's how I came from endangered species over to refuges. But I had to, like I say, for about a year I was in public affairs office. So here I was, and I had…

LIBBY: Before you start talking about that, though, didn't you, weren't you working on the Partners for Wildlife program?

DICK: I did that a little bit also.

LIBBY: When you were in Ecological Services.

DICK: When I was in ES, yes.

LIBBY: You were doing endangered species, but you were also doing the Partners for Wildlife? At the time, it was just called Partners for Wildlife.

DICK: Private lands, we called it.

LIBBY: Private lands.

DICK: I was there for about a year, maybe. That was another sharp turn. I did, I went from endangered species to public relations/public affairs job to this private lands job.

LIBBY: Okay.

DICK: That's right.

LIBBY: Right. Because…

DICK: For about less than a year, I think it was.

LIBBY: Because the reason why I was hired into the Fish and Wildlife Service is because you left the private lands job and went to the North American.

DICK: I went to the North American, yeah. Exactly.

LIBBY: So, now it's 1988, because that's the year I joined the Fish and Wildlife Service.

DICK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LIBBY: Right?

DICK: So, now that started my North American plan, and that was about another nine or ten years I was in that position. And that was probably one of the most enjoyable, I mean my whole career was nothing but an enjoyable ride, all the way through. But here I am with, trying to pull together a number of conservation organizations, state, federal, private, collectively, say what do we need to do in a certain area to boost waterfowl populations.

LIBBY: Were you working just in the Atlantic flyway, and you had counterparts in other…

DICK: I had two joint ventures I was responsible for. One was the Great Lakes, and one was the Atlantic Coast.

LIBBY: Okay.

DICK: I had like 27 states that I needed to cover.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: So, one of the first things we did, we hired an assistant, Ray Whittemore. Ray worked with me for a number of years. He went on to Ducks Unlimited. That was, I was on the road a lot at that time. That was, I missed a lot of my kids soccer games and baseball games, 'cause when you're working with private organizations, volunteers for the most part, you know they have full-time jobs, and you have to – their free time is on the weekend, so a lot of weekends I devoted to meetings and pulling together different organizations. But we had tremendous success the first few years, 'cause we had a number of conservation groups. A number of our states had, there was a big effort in land conservation back then. Lands for Maine's Future Board, Green Acres Program in…

LIBBY: New Jersey.

DICK: New Jersey. A lot of states had private bond acts. They put money into land conservation and wetlands. Waterfowl conservation was a major component. So, we just did a number of, I look back and there is a number of tremendous projects. I mean, we expanded the national wildlife refuge system in our region, we doubled it in a ten-year time.

LIBBY: Wow.

DICK: We established a number of new refuges. Wallkill was one, Lake Umbagog was another. Expanded Moosehorn tremendously under the North American banner. I mean, there were several refuges that were established under the North American Waterfowl Plan that I can look back on and feel strongly that I played some small role in making them happen. As well as a number of state projects. I mean, there was a number of, in the Great Lakes in particular, a lot of those wetlands along the Great Lakes and Ohio in particular were, had been degraded over the years. We went in and made major efforts to restore those marshes; restore a lot of the salt marshes along the Atlantic Coast. Montezuma was one of the first projects. I wrote the Montezuma wetlands project, my first project. Just sat at my desk one day. Took about two, two days to write the thing, submitted a project, got, I don't know, two million dollars I think (laughter).

LIBBY: That's a pretty good couple of days' worth of work!

DICK: Holy moly! It was like, that's all I have to do. Well, they, since [then,] the process became overwhelming at the end, but the first few years. I remember Bill Ashe coming to me, he says, "Dick," he says, after he hired me. He hired me for the North American. He says, "Go as hard as you can, go as fast as you can, before they catch up with you!" (laughter). And I swear, I mean I had more, oh I had I think about half-a-million dollars in my pocket, jingling. I could just go in at a table of, see you had a half-a-dozen organizations around a table talking about "What do we do, how do we do it?" You'd throw a few thousand dollars on the table, and something happens pretty quickly. "We need to hire someone to write this grant." "Well, here! Who do you got in mind?" I could just do it. I could get on a plane and fly anywhere I wanted, and nobody would even question it. I never, I was within the Division of Refuges but I never, my primary audience and my bosses were the state directors from the various states. We had what we called the management board. That was comprised of all the state directors and other foundations and Audubon, and some other major groups were part of that management board. But I essentially worked for the management board. I was like their secretary, their administrative officer. I was housed within the Division of Refuges, but we, my audience and my bosses were outside the Fish and Wildlife Service, so to speak.

LIBBY: Who was your, who was your actual supervisor, though? Was it?

DICK: Don Young.

LIBBY: Don Young.

DICK: He was Chief of Refuge [Regional] at the time.

LIBBY: So, if a state director was unhappy, Don would know about it.

DICK: He would know about it.

LIBBY: But I bet they were always happy with you.

DICK: They were - I don't think – as far as I know (laughter). No, it was a wonderful relationship. We just, I can look back on that now and… We expanded the Joint Venture tremendously. What we did, is we realized we couldn't do everything everywhere, so in each state, we said, we worked with the state biologists and the state directors and private non-profit groups, the land trusts, whoever the natural resources agencies or volunteers, like Audubon or Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Wherever it was, who was the appropriate one to play a role in land conservation, land protection, or restoration and management. And there were, in each state, there was one or two areas that we selected. We can't do everything everywhere. "Where are we going to focus?" They were called focus areas. "Where're we going to concentrate our efforts?" And so that's what was happening. That's where we started. Each state established two or three focus areas. It was expanded greatly because it became a flyway thing within a very... We expanded the joint venture area tremendously and that didn't sit well with North American groups themselves. The North American Wetlands – oh, what was it called – the Council. But it was, we went well beyond the original scope of the plan because other states wanted to become involved. I remember South Carolina coming to us, "Dick, we can do wonderful things for waterfowl under the name of the North American Plan, but we can't do it for black ducks. You know, we just don't have [them]."

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: "We can do it for other waterfowl." So, we expanded the scope. We sort of, "Okay, if you want to play, we can make it happen." So, it was, we went well beyond the scope, and since it has expanded even more and sort of become all things, all places, all the time. But at the bottom side, the first few years, I think we had maybe 15, 12, 15 million in grant money available, and now I don't know it is. It's probably in excess of 40 million. I don't know what it is now, but each year that grant pot has grown, and become very, very…

LIBBY: And you think it's still a very effective model?

DICK: Oh, it is. Senator Mitchell from Maine was the sponsor of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, which is… He was the author of the bill and to this day, we owe him a great deal of gratitude. But no, that was – the North American was – I really felt good about that 'cause I could see that we were making a difference on the ground, you know. It wasn't… I was just a catalyst for pulling the people together. But there were certain things that happened under the North American. Ducks Unlimited, as an example. They had their own program called the MARSH program – Matching Aid to Restore State Habitat.

LIBBY: I remember that, yep.

DICK: And they were using state money to match part of the DU money that was available, that DU raised at their fundraisers and stuff like that, and their banquets. But the states were having difficulty providing the match. And I remember being at a North American conference right here in Portland one year, and sitting down with Ralph Bitely who was the flyway director from Ducks Unlimited and Matt Connolly, and we're sitting there having dinner and they were lamenting the fact that they couldn't get enough on the ground projects with the states, 'cause the states couldn't provide the money, provide the match that was needed. I said, "Why does it have to be the states? You know, we have a need on national wildlife refuges for, and rather than put your plaque on, bronze plaque on a nice boulder somewhere in the middle of some obscure state management area, we could put it on, put such a flag and a sign right on a national wildlife refuge on our auto tour route, and then they will see the DU logo and we'll put 5,000 cars a month by your logo. We can match your money with state money and then our money." So, we did a number of projects that way. That's how we got involved with DU at the early, early stages in a big way. National wildlife – we had a tremendous need on national wildlife refuges for improved water management, habitat management things. That's how we got that started.

LIBBY: Yes, they did… I remember they came to Wallkill River Refuge, and they designed a whole project for us there, which was incredibly helpful because…

DICK: We used their engineering expertise.

LIBBY: We used their engineers. They had great expertise and then we could just use that, their plans for the bid documents which was very helpful.

DICK: Oh, we had a great partnership with DU, and to this day, still, it's still going on. I'm a member of DU of course and I get, I get their magazine and I see, you know, they're still talking about the North American Plan and projects at Montezuma or Wallkill. I think Wallkill's in the most recent issue.

LIBBY: I'll have to read it!

DICK: I've got it somewhere. I'll take a peak for you. So, that was, that was one of the highlights of my career, too.

LIBBY: The whole program.

DICK: Yeah, the whole program, 'cause we really, we doubled the size of the refuge. Tens of thousands of acres we protected, and that's what the group wanted to do. We did about 10 years – this is back in the late '80's. We got about 10 years to protect some of this or it's, we're going to lose the opportunity – it's going to be gone. So, we made a real concerted effort to protect waterfowl.

LIBBY: You know what I think about that is that people had the vision, and they had the presence of mind to know that this is the time for us to do this. If we don't do it now, it's going to be too late.

DICK: It's going to be gone. The opportunity, things are happening so quickly that...

LIBBY: And that you could, somebody could see that, a group of people could see that, and they could make it happen, is remarkable.

DICK: Yeah, yeah. We made a real concerted effort to…

LIBBY: I do know that, that the Heritage Committee and the Retirees Association has worked together to do an entire, a lot of video interviews of people who were involved across the country with the North American Program, and you were interviewed at Great Meadows Refuge.

DICK: It was a few years ago.

LIBBY: After you retired. And Ray Whittemore came down for that, so. Just for any of our readers or listeners, if you wanted to know more about the North American Program on a national level, and listen to the, more stories about that, that information is available from the National Conservation Training Center, so...

DICK: And it's still to this day, I think it's one of the models, and probably one of the most effective pieces of – it wasn't just the plan, but the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. The plan was the blueprint, but the North American Wetlands Conservation Act was the delivery mechanism. That's where the money, that was the driving engine. And when that was passed, we had the grant money and then it was like, stand back, 'cause most states got on board. If, and I was so damned busy that if a state didn't want to participate, …

LIBBY: Fine.

DICK: …That's okay. Sit there for a while, 'cause I've got half a dozen others that are wanting, chomping at the bit here. So, we went wherever, I mean, I was running crazy there for a while.

LIBBY: You were.

DICK: It was, it was madness (laughter). But, enjoyable, I mean. I can remember going to Rockefeller Center, up to the umpty-umpth floor of Rockefeller Center, to meet the head of National Audubon. Bill Ashe wanted me to go introduce myself to this Donal O'Brien. Head of National Audubon.

LIBBY: Oh, Donal.

DICK: D-O-N-A-L.

LIBBY: I know. I know who he is, I know him. [Turns out, Libby is thinking about his son, who is also Donal O'Brien.]

DICK: He passed away a number of years ago.

LIBBY: He lived in Connecticut. [Correct, both father and son lived in Connecticut.]

DICK: Yeah. He was well known in the conservation circles. And here I am, going on the umpty-umpth floor of the Rockefeller Center, and meeting this – I mean an icon in the conservation world and big time lawyer. "Bill, why do you want me to talk to him?" "Just go talk to him!"

LIBBY: He actually was a very approachable person. He was very down to earth. [Referring mistakenly to the younger son.]

DICK: No question. I go into his office. It was one of those things, "Well Mr. O'Brien can meet with you at 11:15." And sure enough, at 11:15, you're called on and, "He can't meet with you until 12:00." Forty-five minutes or less, I think it was 45 minutes. And I walked into his office and here was salmon are everywhere and antique carvings of shorebirds and waterfowl. And we talked and talked about salmon fishing more than anything. Yeah, you go visit those people. They know why you're there, for the most part, they know why you're there. I never asked him for money or anything. He says, "What do you want from me?" I says, "I just want your support, that's all. When you hear about the North American Plan, you can say some good things about it. That's all we want." (popping sound) "You've got it!" So (laughter), after we talked salmon fishing for a half an hour, you know. But it was, that was, I mean, experiences like that, you know, I just...

LIBBY: He went on the board of the National Wildlife Refuge Association, which is where I met him at one of the events that they hosted at the refuge. [Libby is again referring, mistakenly, to his son, Donal.]

DICK: Oh, he was a special man, no doubt about it.

LIBBY: But you didn't stay with the North American for your whole career. You moved over to refuges. So, tell us about that.

DICK: All right. Take a break?

LIBBY: We can take a break. (Break taken). Okay, we're back from our little break.

DICK: Yep.

LIBBY: So, you're going to tell us now about your, the third part of your career.

DICK: The final, the final years.

LIBBY: Yes, the final years.

DICK: Well. I often subscribe to people that I worked with and that I mentored, after about eight or ten years in any one thing, you're ready to do something different, you know? You're just, things become a little routine too much and you're looking for just to spice your life up a little bit. I say, "Change is good." So, I sort of subscribe to that myself. I went through eight or

ten years in endangered species and another eight or ten years in North American and now, my final stage, I said, time to - after I had done the North American plan for eight or nine years, I said, "You know, it's time to do something different again." Not that I didn't enjoy it, by any means.

LIBBY: I understand completely.

DICK: So, I said, well, then something within the Division of Refuges struck my interest, and that was becoming a refuge, refuge supervisor. I applied for that position [when] it went out. Never worked a day on a refuge, quite frankly. I worked to establish a number of refuges and I would challenge any refuge manager that ever came after me that I had no experience in refuge management. So, but, and I could, I could feel that a little bit from some of the long-term refuge managers. Here I was, supervising them and never managed a refuge myself or been on a refuge. But, like I said, I had a long history of establishing national wildlife refuges, working to improve management on them, and all that kind of stuff. But because I didn't come up through the refuge ranks, I was looked on a little bit differently.

LIBBY: Yeah, yeah. I know exactly what you mean.

DICK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. (laughter). You would. Something somewhat similar to you.

LIBBY: Yep.

DICK: But anyway, I said, yeah, I think it's time to get involved in the, try to shape the future of the organization a little bit, and try to influence that in any way you can. Being a supervisor, getting involved in personnel management end of things.

LIBBY: Do you remember what year that was, that you went into refuges? It must have been about nineteen ninety -

DICK: 19-

LIBBY: 95 or 6 or something?

DICK: Early 1990's I would say. I'd have to, I would have to double check on somethings. I would say early.

LIBBY: Well, you went into the North American in 1988.

DICK: '88. And I was there so, late 19, yeah, last about seven or eight years. So '96, '97 I'm going to say, something like that, is when I actually started and became a refuge supervisor. You know?

LIBBY: Who had been the supervisor before you, do you remember? Who had vacated that position? Was it…?

DICK: Well, we went - we had three – there were three refuge supervisors back in the day. Tom McAndrews, George Gavutis, and Ed Moses. There were three of them back in the day, in

the early. And that's when we had what, maybe 15, 20 national wildlife refuges – staffed stations. I mean, each supervisor had seven refuges that they were responsible for. It was divided into three – northeast was divided into three.

LIBBY: Pretty easy.

DICK: I had 21 at the end (laughter). Staffed stations that I was responsible for. But, you know, I've thought about this a lot. As your career develops, your forced to become something other than what you started out to be, you know, because that's where the opportunities are and that's where…

LIBBY: The pay grade.

DICK: Yeah, that's where the grade and the responsibilities come, you know, a little bit higher. So, I, but I, I didn't think about that much until I actually got into it, and I enjoyed being a refuge supervisor. I enjoyed it tremendously. But my, my whole concept was just hire the best people you can and then just get out of their way. Where I spent most of my time was in situations where there wasn't the best of – I don't know how to say this…

LIBBY: You were solving a lot of problems.

DICK: I went where the problems were, quite frankly. And there were some. And that was part of the stuff I got involved with was personnel management, and selection of individuals, and hiring of refuge managers and… But I, so I was more in a supervisory management role as opposed to being a bio – my biological days were gone, you know.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: But I was more in this personnel management, personnel direction kind of stuff. And, I enjoyed that, but at the end, when I got involved with some nasty situations, you know, that were – I didn't enjoy, I didn't enjoy handling those. I remember sitting in front of the fire one night with JoAnne, and I said, "You know, this isn't fun anymore." I said, "I don't enjoy doing some of this stuff." You know, stuff that should have been dealt with long ago, but was just sort of swept under the rug, never dealt with properly.

LIBBY: We kick the problem, we always are kicking the can down the road, and every once in a while, somebody comes along, and they actually take care of something that should have been addressed.

DICK: That's what I was asked to do, you know. Address some situations. And I did, and we solved them, but it wasn't, I didn't enjoy it.

LIBBY: Well, tell us about some of the things that you did enjoy, or maybe some of the – I know you worked with eventually Tony. Well, Tony Léger must have hired you to be refuge supervisor?

DICK: Tony. Tony hired me.

LIBBY: And I know he had a different way of managing with the Senior Leadership Team that he put together. If you want to talk about any of that.

DICK: Well, Tony's a special person in the Fish and Wildlife Service. There's no doubt in my mind about that. He and I are to this day are good friends. We still talk two or three times a year. I would see him – my puppy – we got our dogs together so we could have a litter of puppies, and I've got… So, Tony and I will be forever connected. He's a big-time gardener and… But Tony, Tony didn't have the background that – he was a refuge manager through and through – but he didn't come up through the ranks that I did in the sense that I was always his conscience. He'd call me "his conscience." His "hunting and fishing conscience", because... I feel very strongly about that, 'cause there is no doubt in my mind, the last 75 years, the hunter and the fishermen have paid the conservation price in this country. Paid the dues for conservation, period. That's something I think that most hunters and fishermen can be very proud of. They stepped up. Migratory Bird Treaty Act, all the funds that come from the Duck Stamps, go into acquiring national wildlife refuges. So hunting is an integral part of the history of the national wildlife refuge system, no doubt about that. So, I was a strong advocate for the hunting and fishing component of the sportsmen world. I said, I tell Tony time and time again, anybody that challenged him, I said, "The national wildlife refuge system was built on the back of America's sportsmen. Don't you ever forget it." (laughter). So, I challenged him all the time on things, you know.

LIBBY: Well, he's not a hunter.

DICK: No, he wasn't. He wasn't the consumptive user that I was or didn't have quite the understanding and deep love – not that he didn't – but he didn't, he didn't put his boots on as a little kid and go stand on the edge of the swamp before the bus, the bus came.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: There's a difference. But he was true and true a conservationist and natural resource guy, there was no doubt about it. Our upbringings were a little different, that's all. But I was his conscience, as he'd, as he'd call me. No more than one meeting I would challenge him on things that they wanted to do, or that, not do that I knew we should do. Opening up additional refuges to hunting was one of them, you know. Your refuge was one of them. Great Meadows – we opened up waterfowl hunting, and because the political landscape changed then too. There was a stronger directorship in Interior that wanted to open up additional opportunities for hunting and fishing on national wildlife refuges. But that was a different component of my, my career. I enjoyed it, I enjoyed working with people. I wanted to – one of the things I'm most proud of is, we expanded, through Tony's leadership primarily, but expanded the coop education student program. We used to have that back years ago, selected a few students, but then it went away for a number of years, but my last few years we made a real concerted effort to bring on - I don't know, seven or eight or ten - even if we didn't, we didn't have the money for it. But you know, we just, this is what we've got to do, we've got to build our, build the

future and build our heritage and get the right people to carry on, so to speak, you know. Who's going to inherit, you know, and what kind of people do we want in the positions that we have that we know are going to be in responsible leadership positions. What kind of people do we want? Is it just…? So, you know what kind of character we're looking for in the Fish and Wildlife Service. And I, I did a number of interviews, a number of selections, and I can read resumés all day long. I don't want to read resumés, I just want to, tell me who you are as a person, tell me who you are, what are your values, what motivates you? I can read a resumé and you'd go – most of that stuff is made up, anyway – that people put together. But tell me, what makes you click? Tell me what you think? What your values are. How would you - I present a hypothetical situation to someone. How would deal with that, you know? You want to know not what's on a resumé but what's, who are they as a person, what kind of character do they have. And that's the kind of thing I liked to do, is get the right kind of people in. Hopefully, we made a difference. And the future carries on with some….

LIBBY: Oh, there's some very bright young people, very dedicated, working in the Service.

DICK: 'Cause the Fish and Wildlife Service people are special people.

LIBBY: They are.

DICK: There's no doubt about that. I know it's a trite thing to say but it's true. It's not a job. And I told many people that, especially the young people. I said, "If you're just looking for a job, there's the door, you know." The co-op students, I'd tell them that. "See, you happy you have a job, you just want a job? Bye." I said, "This is a way of life. This is something that's in you internally, that speaks to your values, speaks to your – who you are, what you think about the world, and what kind of character do you have." So that's what I enjoyed doing, is sorting through that and selecting people that would hopefully carry on the banner, and for the most part, I think we did.

LIBBY: I think you did. When I think about my mentors in the Fish and Wildlife Service, it's you and Tony. I mean you were my supervisor for, for many years at Wallkill. I went through a tumultuous period where I had four supervisors in about a year and a half at Wallkill, then you became the supervisor. I think there maybe it was some reorganization, and we went from three zones to two zones and maybe at some point you got New Jersey. You were the supervisor for all of New England and New Jersey.

DICK: New England, New York and New Jersey.

LIBBY: And New York also?

DICK: Yeah, New York and New Jersey, and six New England states.

LIBBY: And it's not that way now. Now New York is with the southern zone, but …

DICK: Well, when I think back on it, too, I mean, we expanded the refuge system tremendously, and went from like I say 21 staffed stations to 40 or so? I mean, I mean, Wallkill, Umbagog, I mean I could if I thought about it...

LIBBY: Shawangunk Grasslands, although that wasn't staffed, that was a satellite for Wallkill, but you were there when we did that.

DICK: But there's a number of new stations that came on board. New refuges that were, you know, 15, 20 years ago they weren't there.

LIBBY: Canaan Valley.

DICK: Canaan Valley. Cape May. Gosh.

LIBBY: Cherry Valley? Were you there for Cherry Valley or was that after you?

DICK: Cherry Valley was after, after I left. I think that was the next one to come on. Canaan Valley was the last one that I was involved in, and that put us over 500,000 acres.

LIBBY: And that was the 500th refuge.

DICK: Yes. Vermont – Nulhegan. I mean that was... So, I mean, not only as a refuge supervisor did, we have, we just had more stations, more people, and more responsibility. Sometimes I felt badly because I didn't have enough, I had 21 staffed stations that I supervised. 21 refuge managers, and I just didn't have enough time to deal with them. I felt bad about that. I often times I thought, "Geez, I'm not", but lot of time, you know, I just needed to get out of their way. I didn't need to get in their way.

LIBBY: You know, I tried to live my life as a supervisor with the philosophy that I, I felt was your style. I was there, you were there, when I needed you, and you weren't there when I didn't need you.

DICK: Oh that's, that was one of my operating rules. You don't need me. You know how to do the job. And when you need some help, let me know. And I think most people that seemed to work out quite well. But we had the right kind of people, and where we had problems is because, like I say, those problems hadn't been dealt with in a long time.

LIBBY: Yeah.

DICK: And I got involved in, I mean, for a number of years there as a refuge manager, I was refuge supervisor, I was North American coordinator, I was… I had about three hats I was wearing at one time. It was just Tony and I for a number of years. Three or four years, we were the only ones there. And I just! But we had the right people in the field that we could trust and rely upon, and we expanded the refuge system considerably and did a lot of pretty good stuff. I can look back on. Had a real role in establishing a number of refuges that I know wouldn't have happened if we hadn't spent the time doing it. But there was still some, some resistance from some of the managers. I think they got over it over time.

LIBBY: I think when sometimes when new refuges were established, the existing managers didn't like it because they knew that resources were going to be taken away. The pot wasn't necessarily growing bigger and now, although it did grow bigger at times, but then it shrank.

DICK: Well, I got very involved in some controversial issues. I'm on a particular refuge, met with a number, got to know some senators and Congressmen very well, dealing with them on issues. A lot of it was piping plovers, down in Jersey. There were some really contentious, dealing with the New Jersey Beach Buggy Association, closing refuges to access to protect piping plovers.

LIBBY: Holgate.

DICK: Holgate. Oh, Holgate was a mess. That was a controversial one.

LIBBY: That had wilderness in it, too. That was because of the wilderness.

DICK: Yep. Spent a lot of time down in Jersey on Holgate, but in the end, I think it came out, came out well. I got special assignments too, sometimes. Cathy Short liked me for some reason.

LIBBY: She was the deputy Regional Director.

DICK: She was the deputy Regional Director and for years, we had a situation there at the Iroquois Job Corps Center at the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, there was a Job Corps Center there, and it really should not have been a Fish and Wildlife Service responsibility, but it was. We owned the land underneath the Job Corps Center, but the Job Corps Center was essentially a – when the court had a delinquent of some sort, rather than go to jail, they'd say, "You're going to go to the Iroquois Job Corps Center."

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: That's underprivileged kids of some sort that were, rather than go to the jail, they went to this place to learn a trade. It had a noble mission but never should have been part, it should have been Department of …

LIBBY: Labor.

DICK: Labor or something, absolutely. So, we turned it over to the Department of Labor, is what we did.

LIBBY: Right.

DICK: We got out from underneath the whole thing. But Cathy Short asked me to do that.

LIBBY: That was a big project. That was a lot of work.

DICK: That involved terminating 43 people. Terminating them, and that was, that was not fun. But it was again, a number of situations, the staff that was there were the teachers, so to speak,

but they were federal employees. But they said, "You can't fire us, you can't do [that], you can't…." I said, "Well, hold on boys. "I mean, students, the kids, were being molested. There were all kinds of things going on. Assaults and fights and just stuff going. I mean, it never should have been allowed to get to where it was, it was sort of a sad situation. But I was asked to clean it up and lo and behold, we did. We turned it all over to the Department of Labor, which it should have been. But that took a lot of time, that was about almost two years of effort to turn that whole thing around and turn the whole responsibility over to the Department of Labor.

LIBBY: It's still there.

DICK: It's still there.

LIBBY: And it's still on the refuge.

DICK: It's still on the refuge, but it's under the Department of Labor now, which it should have been all along.

LIBBY: Yeah, when I did the oral history for Sue McMahon, and she actually ended up working there, so I learned a little bit about the beginning of the Jobs Corps Center and now I'm hearing from you about the end of it. Interesting.

DICK: Oh yeah. Well, it was probably 120 students, maybe, something like that, and staff of 43. But stuff was being stolen all the time. Tools would disappear and students were not getting the instruction and the training they deserved because the instructor would, the teacher would show up drunk in the morning and you know. I mean, it just went on and on and on.

LIBBY: Well, I'm glad. That was a major success for that. Any other?

DICK: I'm glad we... It should never had been in the Fish and Wildlife Service, and we finally cleared that up.

LIBBY: Any other big projects that you worked on that you can think of that?

DICK: That was certainly one of them.

LIBBY: I know, just your general day to day, being a supervisor, takes up a lot of time. Then you were involved with the management of the budgets, and then every – Tony, Tony had a management style where you all got together – the Senior Leadership Team – so you had a lot of meetings, but you really talked about things as a group.

DICK: Well, Senator Chafee from Rhode Island. I spent a long day with him one time, dealing with, well, it was Rhode Island refuges and the nudists there.

LIBBY: Oh, yeah, Moonstone Beach.

DICK: Moonstone Beach, and the naturists they were called at the time.

LIBBY: Oh yeah. That's another big one.

DICK: I met Senator Chafee on many occasions. Spent a day with him one time. He said, I remember him, and I remember this clearly. He asked me, Lincoln Chafee loved the Fish and Wildlife Service. He owned land right on the other side of Moonstone Beach, so he wasn't happy with the situation there, but he said, "What's your, what's your most difficult problem? Your toughest issue?", he asked me one time. I said, "Can I think about that for a minute?" And I thought for a little while, and I says, "I got an answer for you. Deciding which hungry mouth to feed. That's the most difficult part of my job." I says, "'Cause we don't have enough to go around. Trying to decide who gets what, when." Because we had the crumbs at the end of it. It's probably worst now, I mean, we were eating crumbs off the table, what was, what was left. How do you decide how to allocate that resource, and that, as tough as, and we, the Fish and Wildlife Service was famous for doing the best with what we had, you know, making the best of a bad situation in a lot of times. 'Cause we were… A lot of our equipment was in poor shape if it worked at all. I mean, our, a lot of our maintenance activities were way behind schedule or buildings in neglect, and equipment in neglect. And trying to upgrade all that, I mean, you know. So, it was challenging times. But again, I had, pulled in a lot of different directions but I often, what brought me back, what made it simple for me was like, okay, where can we get the biggest bang for the buck? From biological point of view, what makes the most sense? Who needs it? Where's the biological, wildlife need? And that helped me sort through that quite a bit, you know. But Tony and I often would sit and discuss and lament the fact that we just don't have enough. How are we going to spread it around? And that's what we did, most of the time, was talk about what was maintenance money, or projects that were submitted each year. How do we decide who gets what and that took a lot of time and effort, I think.

LIBBY: Who was your counterpart, Refuge Supervisor South?

DICK: John Stasko. John Stasko was my [counterpart]. And I didn't know John until he came on board. So, we became good friends too as you would, could imagine.

LIBBY: I bet that he argued pretty strongly for his refuges!

DICK: Oh, he did. He was a champion for his refuges as you would want him to be. As you would want him to be. And here I was, without refuge experience. So, but he'd snap at me, and I'd snap at him once in a while. (laughter). I can remember John at times, though. He'd get wound up, he'd get excited about something, and I'd just, "John", I says. He was going to go up and take on the Regional Director for something. I can't remember (laughter) what it was, but I said, "John, I wouldn't go right now. I'd sit and think about this a little bit." (laughter).

LIBBY: Well, I'm just going to take a quick look at the questions and see if there's anything else we really want to, 'cause we really talked about just about everything.

DICK: Did we get most of it?

LIBBY: We did.

DICK: I was a little uncomfortable there at the beginning for some reason. I don't know why. But I, did that come through?

LIBBY: No, you – we're still on tape. We - you did a great job. I think this has been a great interview. I've done several now and this is, this is perfect, it's a perfect interview. So, you decided to retire. You had enough, especially with all the kind of the harder parts of it. So, you retired in 2005 and you moved to Maine.

DICK: I retired back to Maine. Came back to Maine. I retired to fish (lots of laughter).

LIBBY: Yep, yep.

DICK: I retired to fly fish and every year since, now, I take two or three nice trips a year. JoAnne goes with me sometimes, sometimes not. We're going back to Belize. I've been to Belize a couple of times. She's going, we're going again. Bone fishing. I've been to Chile. I go to Newfoundland each year. I try to take two or three nice trips a year. But my, as I mentioned before, I think my mission really now is focused on my grandkids. We spend a lot of time there, teaching them how to tie flies and how to fly fish. So, grandkids are wonderful. So, someday, they're going to inherit all this stuff. I've got, I mean what am I going to do with all this stuff? Here's all my fly tying materials, and threads and feathers and tinsels and chicken necks and you know, it just, it's all kinds of stuff that I use in fly tying. So, here's where I spend a lot of winter nights, right here. When it's 20 below and three feet of snow on the ground, I sit right here, tying flies and think about what trips I take and where I've been. Oh, Libby, I'm telling you, life has been good to me. Well, one of my friends I've lost, I've lost some good friends over the years. Here's my mentor right here, to the world of Atlantic salmon fishing.

LIBBY: Oh, who is that?

DICK: His name was Ralph Keef. He got the Lee Wolf award from the Atlantic Salmon Foundation. He passed away a couple of years ago and I miss him terribly. But he was such a fine man. But he put these together, each trip we took, he'd…. I go to Newfoundland, I go to the Serpentine River each year, and that's the last time he was with us. I've got a picture here I'll show you.

LIBBY: I'm going to, I going to, I think we'll end the interview now and we can look at these separately. But…

DICK: No, that's what I do.

LIBBY: Any last words you want to say?

DICK: No, no, other than I'm very, very fortunate. I mean, I can't imagine a career… John McCain said he was the happiest man in the world and Lou Gehrig said the same, and honestly, you think when I grew up with hip boots and hunting pheasant in my back yard, and chasing

ducks with a bow and arrow, and wound up to have the career that I have and the wife that I have, my loving wife and loving family, it's just…

LIBBY: And you have a lot of friends from the Fish and Wildlife Service. I don't know how many people are friends with their bosses, you know, and have stayed in touch 13 years after they have retired, so.

DICK: Well, that's the main thing about Fish and Wildlife Service, too. It's a labor of love.

LIBBY: It is.

DICK: And that's the bond that keeps us together and keeps us going. Libby, you'll always be welcome here. Like I say, I don't know where the keys are to the house, the keys to my truck are in the truck.

LIBBY: We're not going to put the address on the interview so that everybody knows that the house…

DICK: …the door is never locked (lots of laughter). I don't want people breaking into my house. Just open the door.

LIBBY: Well, I want to thank you for taking the time to do the oral history, to be willing to do that. I want to thank you for your career, and I want to thank you for all the guidance and support that you gave me in my life. You've made a big difference in my life.

DICK: Well, it was a pleasure, Libby.

LIBBY: So, thanks so much.

DICK: It always was.

KEY WORDS:

Birds, collaboration, conservation, employees, endangered species, fishing, habitat conservation, habitat restoration, hunting, migratory birds, partnerships, plants, relocation, outreach, shorebirds, threatened species, water pollution, waterfowl, wetlands, wildlife refuges