



The Oral History of Lynn Lewis

December 18, 2020

Interview conducted by T. Worthington
Over the phone/ Eagan, Minnesota

Oral History Cover Sheet

Name: Lynn Lewis

Date of Interview: December 18, 2020

Location of Interview: Over the phone/Eagan, Minnesota

Interviewer: Tom Worthington

Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service: Approximately 38 years (From 1978-2016).

Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held: 1977-1978, biotech GS-5, Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service; USFWS 1978-1982, Division of Ecological Services biotech/biologist, Cortland, NY; 1983-1987, Ecological Services, Division of Environmental Coordination, Washington, DC; 1987, Environmental Contaminants Division, Region 3, Regional Environmental Coordinator, Minnesota. 1991-1998, Project Leader for Refuges. 2002, Program Supervisor, Minnesota. 2008-2016, Region 3, Assistant Regional Director for Ecological Services, Minnesota.

Most Important Projects: Winter navigation on rivers, water development projects, NEPA compliance, environmental contaminants, listings for endangered species.

Colleagues and Mentors: Bill Aultfather, Dan Baumgardner, John Blankenship, Columbus Brown, John Christian, Jerry Decker, Frank Dunkle, Jim Engel, Pete Fasbender, Ki Faulkner, Nita Fuller, Gary Frazer, Jim Gritman, Paul Hamilton, Janice Harold, Scott Hicks, Frank Horvath, Chuck Kjos, Matt Kerschbaum, Ron Kirby, Bob Krska, Sean Marsan, Rick Lemon, Steve Lewis, Gerry Lowry, Suzanne Mayer, TJ Miller, Lloyd Mitchell, Marv Moriarty, Hal O'Connor, Bob Oetting, Mamie Parker, Ron Refsnider, John Rogers, Nick Rowse, Randy Rutan, Larry Smith, Stan Smith, Dan Stinnett, Tony Sullins, Robyn Thorson, Rolf Wallenstrom, Dave Warburton, Wendi Weber, Gary Wege, Steve Wilds, Charlie Wooley.

Brief Summary of Interview: Lynn Lewis talks about her early life growing up in Pittsburgh, PA. She went to Grove City College in PA graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. Her summers away from college included involvement with the Youth Conservation Corps and Student Conservation Association. She attended graduate school at Penn State in PA where she graduated with a Master of Science degree in Ecology in 1977. It was during her graduate studies that she met her husband, Steve who also had a career with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Lynn describes her career, her work assignments, and the various coworkers she collaborated with during her time with the Service.

INTERVIEW

TOM WORTHINGTON: Yep. It's starting to record. Lynn at any time if you want to take a break, we can do that. Usually these in my experience they last about 90 minutes maybe a little bit less.

This is Tom Worthington. I'm the interviewer. And today is December 18th, 2020. It's about 10:30 in the morning. I'm in St. Louis Park, Minnesota and I'm speaking today with Lynn Lewis. Lynn, where is your home?

LYNN LEWIS: I am sitting in my daughter's old bedroom in Eagan, Minnesota.

TOM: Eagan. Okay. Very good. And Lynn you understand that this is being recorded and that any point we can take a break and I can put it on pause.

LYNN: Yep.

TOM: Okay well we'll get launched. We'll get into it. Lynn, where were you born and what year?

LYNN: I was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1952.

TOM: Do you have brothers and sisters?

LYNN: No. No siblings. Just me.

TOM: Did you spend your elementary school days in Pittsburgh?

LYNN: Actually, that's where I grew up. I spent my whole growing up time through college in the same house, same neighborhood in Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh is known for having little discrete communities within the city. And I grew up in the area called Brookline which was in the southern part of the city.

TOM: Okay. So, all through grade school and high school there?

LYNN: Yep. Through elementary school and high school.

TOM: What did your parents do?

LYNN: My dad was a firefighter for the city of Pittsburgh. And that was the main reason we lived in the city. Because as a city employee, he had to live within the confines of the city. He spent 34 years on the fire department. Through all of my life, he was a captain in charge of one fire station in the Oakland area of Pittsburgh which is where all the universities are. And then in the last few years of his career, he was in a fire station closer to where we lived.

And then my mom was a nurse. She graduated from high school in the middle of the depression; she had no idea what she was gonna do. But a friend said, *oh, I'm going to nurses training. They have another opening. Do you want to do it?* And she said, *well, I guess, I've never thought about being a nurse, but what the heck?*

Went to nursing school at Ohio Valley Hospital and loved it. And actually, she met my dad. He was a patient in the hospital where she did most of her nursing.

TOM: Did you have hobbies growing up?

LYNN: In thinking about that question, I remember as a little kid, I collected rocks. And the first thing I ever wanted to be was a geologist. I didn't know what the word was, and I had to ask my mom what's the name of the person that studies rocks. It's a geologist. So, I guess that science thing was planted back in my brain a long time ago. I guess the biggest thing I did as a little kid is I was a voracious reader.

I just loved to read. I was proud of the fact that I got a library card as soon as I could print my name when I was like three years old. And I was so proud of that library card. And amazingly when I was six years old, I was allowed to go to the library by myself, which was about a mile from our house, because there weren't any big streets that I had to cross. They were all little streets, so my parents thought it was safe for me to go to the library.

TOM: When you were in high school, was it always assumed that you'd go on to college?

LYNN: When I was in I guess seventh grade, I was invited to participate in a program in Pittsburgh public schools, which was kind of like college prep on steroids. And I remember before I started that program, my parents said you can do this, but there's no guarantee that there will be college waiting at the end of high school. So, just recognize that you might graduate from high school and not be prepared to get a job.

But I finished high school and was able to go to college.

TOM: In high school, did you take some science classes?

LYNN: I actually was able to take two years of biology in high school and chemistry. And I guess my senior year, I opted not to do any biology or any science. But the two biology teachers that I had were two of my favorite teachers in high school.

TOM: After high school, did apply and go straight to college?

LYNN: Yeah. In fact, I went to what was a really big city high school. There were like 3,000 students. My graduating class was just shy of 800. And the kind of sad thing was that as far college counselors and counseling in general there was one counselor for those 800 students. So, you kind of had to figure it out on your own.

TOM: Yeah.

LYNN: And by the time I had my one appointment with a college counselor, I had already been accepted to college.

I went to Grove City College, which is about an hour north of Pittsburgh. For being a private college, it was very affordable. In fact, it cost less than a state college or university. And kind of like the Hamline, St. Olaf, or Gustavus Adolphus type of small private liberal arts colleges.

TOM: Did you major in biology?

LYNN: I did, but when I applied to college, I applied as a French major.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: And the one thing I knew I always didn't wanna do is I didn't wanna be an English major. As much as I liked to read, having to read books and analyze them, I just liked to read them for the stories. And I realized my senior year in high school, if you're a French major, you're gonna be reading books and analyzing them just like an English major, but you're gonna have to do it in French. So, I kind of canned that idea.

And was lucky enough I had won a prize that gave me career counseling and testing. So, I took advantage of it. And I was thinking about engineering and these tests kind of said, nah, you could do that, but it'd be a lot of hard work. And it kind of came out like oh, you might want to think about biology, psychology something like that.

And because I had two years of biology and I really liked it, I changed my major to biology.

TOM: Did you spend all four years at Grove City College?

LYNN: I did.

TOM: Okay. And what kinds of biology classes did they offer?

LYNN: At that time especially like Grove City College was kind of like the pre-professional that I'd say a large number of biology majors went to medical school, dental school kind of those more things in the medical arena. So, it was things like genetics and cell biology, physiology and anatomy. I did take ecology. And I took plant morphology.

I mean it was a basic foundation which has made me a real believer in the value of liberal arts education in kind of getting that broad foundation not only in the biological arena but in humanities and everything.

TOM: Did you keep up with your French?

LYNN: I was able when Steve was in graduate school. And he found a couple papers that were in French, and I was able to translate them for him. But today, no.

There again Pittsburgh public schools were very progressive for the time. I started French in like fifth grade and so by the time I graduated from high school I was fairly fluent. And I guess that's why I was like, oh, why not major in French. This is something I can do.

And I took German for a year in high school and three semesters in college, too. And the third language comes a lot easier than the second language. But today maybe I could read some stuff. I know when I hear it I don't have very good comprehension.

TOM: Sure, sure.

TOM: As a biology major then towards your junior/senior year, did you think about medical school or dental school or the medical profession. Or what were you thinking career wise?

LYNN: Well, because my mom was a nurse, that medical thing was always in the back of my mind. And she was always like, people would say, *oh, are you gonna be a nurse like your mother?* And she'd go, *no, she's gonna be a doctor.*

But a statistic, my understanding is the year I graduated from college, 1974 had the most applicants to medical school of any year previous or since. Maybe this year, there's gonna be more. But classmates who were double legacies from medical school were not getting in. So, I was glad I didn't go that direction.

I thought about it but after my sophomore year in college, I was a park assistant for the Student Conservation Association at Acadia National Park. And that made me realize - you can do natural resource things for a career, and you can get paid for it. And that kind of led me down that path. And it was always kind of the thing I was interested in.

Earth Day in 1970 kind of interested me in that area.

And what I did was I saved those more ecological natural resource classes to take my junior and senior years. It's kind of like my reward for sticking out the embryology and the anatomy.

TOM: So, you were interested in the environmental aspects even in high school a little bit?

LYNN: Yeah.

TOM: And that was prompted by the Earth Day activities or did you...

LYNN: Yeah, leading up to Earth Day, everybody was concerned about the environment and just kind of the natural way for you to think. And I think even in biology classes that was the part of those classes that interested me. More than the mitochondria and cell walls, that kind of stuff.

TOM: Did you have more than one summer with the Student Conservation Association?

LYNN: No, I just...I did the one summer after my sophomore year. And then I did do two summers as a YCC [Youth Conservation Corps] person. I was like the environmental director at a camp in the Allegheny National Forest, a residential camp. And then I was camp director of a non-residential YCC camp in the Green Mountain National Forest.

TOM: Okay. Well exciting. I was the environmental education coordinator for a residential YCC camp right out of grad school so. Yeah, that was fun. So, a couple of summers working with the YCC with the Forest Service it sounds like. As a senior then did you know you wanted to have a career in the natural resource field?

LYNN: You know, I started looking at grad school and applied a number of places. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the only place I got in was at Penn State. They had an Interdisciplinary Ecology Program. I think they still have it, but it was brand new back then. But it was kind of interesting because you took I think it was three core courses in different areas of ecology. And then you could focus in...there were some students that were like in quantitative ecology and did all kinds of mathematical stuff. And then there were a lot of us that were actually doing our focuses/foci in natural resources...like a number of wildlife people, I was in forest resources. There was the fish co-op unit. There were students that were majoring in ecology but were students in the co-op unit in fisheries and wildlife. So, it was kind of a different program, but it let you design your own program. And it's the same program that Steve was in that that was where we met - in the ecology program.

TOM: Were you in the same year or was he a year behind you, a year ahead?

LYNN: No, we were together. And I actually graduated before he did because I had my act together.

TOM: Yeah, naturally!

LYNN: And we met in this horrible...of one of the core courses called ecosystems dynamics that was like all this hypothetical mathematical stuff. Taught by this guy who like was shocked that we couldn't integrate something. Like didn't you guys take calculus? And it was awful. And I got absolutely nothing out of the class except Steve. That everybody just kind of sat there with their eyes glazed over because it...I can only remember one person in the class who was actually going into kind of the mathematical ecology stuff who got anything out of it and seemed to understand it.

TOM: But you met Steve?

LYNN: But I met Steve. And the other two classes were actually pretty good. But that one was just an area that I had no interest in.

TOM: Yeah. Were you there for two years or four years. How many years did you spend?

LYNN: I started in the fall of 74 and I graduated in the spring of 77. So, two and a half years.

TOM: Yeah. Okay. And was that a Master of Science that you left with?

LYNN: Yeah.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: In ecology.

TOM: In ecology. You must have had some great professors that influenced you going through grad school. Do any one or two of them...

LYNN: Yeah, I'm trying to think. Actually, I remember one guy. He was actually the head of the school of forestry, and I don't think...I took his advanced silviculture class. And I don't think he'd ever had a woman in his class.

TOM: Oh, okay.

LYNN: And it was really interesting because we had to do like a paper and a presentation on some topic. And he kind of had his little pet topics that he liked people to take. And of course, I didn't. I took...did something about like managing forests for songbirds. Which he just didn't like that I took that subject. And it was always kind of like does he like me. Does he not like me because I'm a woman or is it because I challenge him?

TOM: Yeah.

LYNN: Then I had another professor who I can't remember his name now, but he taught...He was a forest hydrologist and taught forest microclimatology, which a subject that I never really thought about. But took the class and it was really fascinating. And he really made a subject that could've been pretty dry and pretty uninteresting, very interesting.

TOM: Huh. Was there much field work involved in your grad program?

LYNN: Yeah. I looked at...after clear cutting and regeneration in some test plots like what the nutrient content of the plants were. And so there...had to go out and clip vegetation, but then there was a lot of lab analysis too.

TOM: At some point during the end of your grad program, you must have been thinking about career opportunities.

LYNN: Yeah. You're probably of the age that you remember registers that you had to get on to get a federal job?

TOM: Yes.

LYNN: And I was kind of the queen of the registers. I was really good at searching out like all these really obscure...I mean, there were the ones that everybody knew about like for wildlife biology and general biology. But I found all these little ones like for a plant biotech kind of thing.

And it was getting on one of those registers for plant biotechs in Pittsburgh. And I only scored like an 85 because as a biotech you should really probably only have an associate degree. And you got downgraded the more education you had.

On the Penn State campus, there was Agricultural Research Service had a lab that did pasture research. And I got a call from one of their scientists and he was looking for a biotech. I had just graduated from grad school. And actually, had just gotten married. And was thinking what the heck am I gonna do? And he called and said, *I have this biotech job, are you interested in it?* And I took it. So that was how I got into the federal government.

TOM: Okay. So that was with the...it wasn't the Forest Service, it was the Soil Conservation Service?

LYNN: Agricultural Research Service.

TOM: Agriculture Research, part of Department of Agriculture?

LYNN: Agriculture. They're the ones who I think do like a lot of quarantining. They have the facility up in Plum Island or whatever. And they do Agricultural Research Services. This lab, it smelled like silage because people analyze silage for its nutrient content. The guy that I worked for was looking at apomixis in warm season grasses. He had gotten a big grant to do that. And I was basically his lab technician goes in the lab and out in the field.

TOM: So, that must have been a GS-4 or 5.

LYNN: 5, it was a 5.

TOM: Wow, wow. Was it 404 or what was the series do you recall?

LYNN: Oh, boy. I think probably a 404.

TOM: But a GS-5. That's a permanent full time or a...

LYNN: Permanent full time GS-5 had no promotion potential not even like to a 6. And they were very adamant that they wanted their biotechs to stay as GS-5s because they had promoted one guy I think to

a 9. Because he promised he was gonna do all this other super-duper stuff and he didn't...like he was gonna do data analysis and he just didn't know how to do it.

And so that kind of soured a lot of the researchers on trying to promote their techs. And my boss who was great. There again, he's one of the people who really influenced me, the nicest guy in the world. He was really upfront like this is a GS-5. If you want to progress in Agricultural Research Service, you need to go back to school, get a PhD in plant physiology or plant pathology or something.

TOM: So, what did you do. How long did you work in that job?

LYNN: I started like in May of 77 and I quit like in March of 78.

In September of that year, Steve finished his master's degree and started looking for jobs. And also, then started looking at continuing in grad school. And he was accepted with funding to a grad program at Cornell. So, decided to do that.

And it just happened that like the parent lab of the lab that I was working at in State College happened to be on the Cornell campus. And so there again my supervisor, he was such a nice guy. He said I will let your position go back to the lab at Cornell so you can keep a job.

TOM: Wow.

LYNN: And I said okay, I'll go up and talk to them, and I did. I talked to the lab director and the guy that I'd be working for. But I just got this really bad vibe. Didn't like the lab director. I don't know, it just didn't...I just felt really uncomfortable, so I decided to quit.

But USDA kept me on leave without pay for...They said, do at least 30 days and we'd talk about it. And that let me keep health insurance. And it also kept my status so that if I happened upon another federal job, it would be real easy to pick me up in that other federal job.

So, as I was hunting for jobs in the Ithaca area, I had a friend from grad school who had gotten a job with Fish and Wildlife Service in Cortland, New York which is about 20-25 miles from Ithaca. So, I was out looking for jobs. I was over in Cortland. There was a regional office of Department of Environmental Conservation with New York State. And I was talking to them there looking for a job, and I said, oh where's the Fish and Wildlife Service office here in Cortland? And he told me where it was.

So I went with the idea that I was gonna go visit my friend. And I walked into the building, and it said Division of Ecological Services. And I thought, hmm, I have a degree in ecology. Maybe I could work here.

TOM: Yeah.

LYNN: So, I went up, talked to the project leader, Paul Hamilton. And because I had all my application materials, I had a 171 with me, I had a resume. So, I dropped them off with him before I went to see my friend. And we visited and went home.

And a day or two later, I got a phone call asking me if I wanted a job. And the office at that time was...this is when Ecological Services was really expanding.

And that office had a tremendous amount of transfer dollars from Corps of Engineers projects. And they really needed people. And back then just like our whole careers, hiring people always took a while.

TOM: Yeah.

LYNN: And I think they saw me and probably at least one problem solved. But here we have somebody that we just have to do some paperwork. And we can bring her on board. So, within a month or so I was working at the ES office in Cortland.

TOM: Wow. Wow.

LYNN: So, the Lewis family tradition is Steve going back to graduate school was my best career move.

TOM: Okay, well, that's a story I'm sure Steve likes to hear. So what position was that that you had. It couldn't have been a technician job or was it?

LYNN: Well actually in order to just pick me up without doing anything but some very easy paperwork, I had to be hired as a biotech.

TOM: Okay. Sure.

LYNN: And so, what they did was brought me on as biotech. And then probably over the next year, they advertised a position...

That was a biologist. And I think it was like a 5, 7, 9, 11.

TOM: Sure.

LYNN: And I applied for that, was selected. And then that got me into the career Fish and Wildlife biologist 401 series. And got me in the same progression as there were several other biologists that had been hired about the same time as I was. And we were all in that 5, 7, 9, 11 series.

TOM: Yeah. Yeah. That's great. So that was 1978 then you kind of walked into that opportunity. Wonderful. And Steve's grad program, did it last four years then at Cornell?

LYNN: Yeah. He finished up in...I think he graduated in like May of 82.

He started looking for jobs. And actually, in like...right around Christmas in 82, he was offered an internship with the Institute of Ecology in Washington, DC with Ron Kirby. I don't know if you knew him.

TOM: I know the name.

LYNN: He was the refuge research person. And he hired Steve to be his assistant.

And interesting, another piece of trivia, Gary Frazer came on the same day as Steve did as Institute of Ecology interns..

TOM: That is funny. Coincidental. So, in 82 then Steve is taking a position in DC. Then do you transfer down to Washington as well?

LYNN: Well, what we realized was that chances are even when that internship finished, which was only for a year. He would have a better chance of getting a job in the DC area than he would in the Cortland-Ithaca area.

So, I started looking for jobs on the good old green sheet to see what might be available in DC. And a couple months in the early spring, one showed up in the Division of Environmental Coordination which was the part of Ecological Services that did NEPA compliance.

And literally this is when you remember the green sheet came by mail. Like we got it on a Thursday and this job, the applications had to be in by Monday. So, I quickly put together an application, sent it overnight mail so it got there by Monday. Because I was going to DC occasionally to see Steve, while I was down there, within the next few weeks, I made an appointment and visited with the selecting official. Which I don't know if that was kosher or not, but I did it.

And I was offered the job. So, I moved to DC in like April of 83.

TOM: Okay, interesting. So, but Lynn, back up a little bit. I should've asked you...when you were in Cortland then, you made it to the professional series, what were some of the projects you worked on there in Cortland in those early years for you?

LYNN: Probably the biggest thing that and the reason that Cortland had so much transfer money, that was at the height of the Corps of Engineers trying to expand winter navigation on the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence River.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: And so, we literally got at least \$1 million in transfer funding over the time that I was there. A lot of it went to contracts but a lot of it also funded those of us who were looking at what the impacts of extending the navigation season...

TOM; Okay.

LYNN: Could be on fish and wildlife resources particularly in the St. Lawrence River. So that was the big project. And that thing continued. It still would occasionally rear its head pretty late in my career when I

was in Region 3. TJ Miller worked on it. We knew each other from the Region 3, Region 5 perspectives back then.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: And Region 5 was always upset with Region 3.

TOM: Well, it's the other way around these days, isn't it?

LYNN: Yeah. And then the other thing the Corps also was looking at how could they regulate water levels on Lake Ontario. Crazy idea...Like to build another dam on the St. Lawrence River for water level regulation. So, I worked on that.

And then kind of coolest thing that we did, it was kind of the beginnings of like using remote sensing and distance evaluation. There was a really big storm on the St. Lawrence River, which precipitated tons of section 404 permits. And we and the Corps were just slammed with all this work. And the Corps flew the St. Lawrence River by helicopter and got video of the whole shoreline of the river, which they gave us that videotape. And then we went out and actually looked at each segment along the river. And so, we had all that information in our office. So, if a permit came in, we could get the video to actually see where the permit was. We had data sheets, the totals, what the area was like, and we could act on the permit just from our desk. We didn't have to do a lot of field work.

TOM: Okay. Those were the early years of the Endangered Species Act. Were you involved in any of those activities at that point?

LYNN: Nope. It was really interesting that we kind of had a canned sentence that we put in all of our letters. No, Endangered Species activity was handled by regional offices at that point.

TOM: Okay. Okay. So were you the state office then for New York. Or were there many...

LYNN: Yeah.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: Yeah. Like interestingly, at one time, the New York office also covered a chunk of New England. They always covered like Vermont and New Hampshire I think, maybe even Massachusetts. But then in the early 70s, New York got split off and it was its own field office.

TOM: Okay. So, it was mostly water project work for your office?

LYNN: Yeah.

TOM: That may be true, probably most of the ES offices at that time.

LYNN: Yeah. Because it was an offshoot of River Basins.

TOM: Yeah.

LYNN: And so, then with the Clean Water Act it got more into permits, water development projects that the Corps did with NEPA reviewing the NEPA documents of different federal agencies.

TOM: Sure. Sure. So now you've accepted a position in Washington, DC in the Division of Environmental Coordination in 1982.

LYNN: 1983.

TOM: 1983. Okay. So, what were those jobs. What were those duties?

LYNN: Basically, what that office did was two parts. One was providing advice and counsel to other Service entities in preparing their NEPA documents. When I was there, we rewrote the NEPA Handbook...

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: For other parts of the Fish and Wildlife Service to use. Gave them advice if they needed help on doing a FONSI or doing an Environmental Assessment. And had regional people who did the same thing but in the Regional Office.

And then one of the biggest parts of what we did was putting together comment letters on EISs for other federal agencies that had to be signed off at the departmental level in DC. So, we would get the comment letters and they were primarily from the Fish and Wildlife Service. But occasionally you'd have comments from the Park Service or Bureau of Indian Affairs. And we would have to collate those letters and put them together and send them up the food chain to eventually get signed off in the Department.

TOM: So, the NEPA Handbook, was that the first of the NEPA Handbooks to get...

LYNN: There was a version of it, and it was...I don't think very user friendly. So, the folks that were there at the time including me kind of made it into a more like chapter/section, filled out some of the details.

And actually, that version of the NEPA Handbook was still...I mean there were a few revisions to it through time. But the revisions that we made in the 80s were kind of the ones that stood for a long time.

TOM: Who was your supervisor in that division?

LYNN: Columbus Brown.

TOM: Okay. And was the Ecological Services Program its own assistant directorship or was it a part of a...

LYNN: No. That's when Hal O'Connor was the AD and who knows what name we were going by then. I think it was habitat conservation. We were habitat conservation, or habitat preservation. And Rolf Wallenstrom was the Deputy. And actually, Marv Moriarty was the Chief of the Division of Ecological Services at the time.

TOM: Okay. And where was your office?

LYNN: It was in the Hamilton Building in DC, 14th, and K streets. It was an old hotel. My office had been a bathroom at one time. That's how tiny it was.

TOM: Did it still have the facilities?

LYNN: No, actually it's a hotel again.

TOM: Oh, gosh. Okay.

LYNN: It was when everybody moved to Virginia, the building was converted back to a hotel.

TOM: Okay, okay. And where was Steve working. Was he at Main Interior?

LYNN: Actually, when he started, he was at Main Interior.

And I think as long as he was an intern and then he became a secretary, that was how he got into the federal government. He was in Main Interior. And he was there until he went to work for Mig Birds. And then they were in the Matomic building.

TOM: Did you guys live in the District, or did you live out in one of the suburbs?

LYNN: We lived in suburban Maryland in Prince George's County. Because to be honest, Steve had always figured he would end up in a job at Patuxent because it was Patuxent that had funded his research.

So, most of the people we knew at the time in the DC area lived in PG County. And they were able to tell us about places to live there. And also figuring if he ended up at Patuxent that would be an easier commute for him than from downtown DC. Actually, he did live in the district for a short amount of time when he was down there by himself.

TOM: Okay. Okay. So, your position was it a GS-11 or a GS-12?

LYNN: It was a 12.

TOM: Wow. You rose fast.

LYNN: Yep. And I stayed in that job for probably a couple years. And I felt like I wanted to do more. And I don't know if you ever remember Suzanne Mayer.

TOM: Yes.

LYNN: She had become the Deputy AD. And I had a little chat with her because I had actually started looking for jobs with other agencies. And what she facilitated was moving me into the Environmental Contaminants Division. It was just getting started at that point. They needed people because my reaction when she said that, *was well I don't know anything about contaminants. I never was very fond of chemistry.*

And she said well, we're not looking for people that know the hard science. We tried that approach, and we had some people who are still there who just can't relate to field offices. We want people who can communicate and understand field offices and bring them into the program. And also, that's why we think this would be a good fit if you moved over there.

So, I did. And at the time when I moved over Ki Faulkner was the Division Chief.

TOM: What was his name?

LYNN: Ki Faulkner. He was actually in Region 3 for a while like before he went to DC. And I don't know if he had any background in contaminants or chemistry, but he retired probably six to nine months after I got there.

And John Rogers became the Division Chief which was outstanding. He did a lot for the Division, and he was great to work for. It was a really fun time to be in that division because it was growing and getting established. And we were figuring things out and doing protocols. It was a great group of people. ES had a training program at that time. And so, a lot of those trainees went through the Contaminants Division. So, it was a bunch of go getters and really excited...

TOM: So, Contaminants hadn't really been a part of the Ecological Services field station's mission.

LYNN: No.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: No, right about the time that I was leaving Cortland, there was this talk about a Contaminants Program, but nobody ever took it seriously.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: And there really, I don't think there was any like regional or there wasn't much regional or Washington presence. So there again in the mid-80s there was a push I guess we probably got more money but established a bigger presence in DC. And then the regions all got Contaminant Coordinators.

TOM: I wonder what prompted that. Was that Superfund Act that...

LYNN: Part of it was Superfund because when I was in DC, that's when people got detailed to write the NRDA regulations.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: But the other thing was, and I can't remember the congressman's name. But I think he was from Illinois and his wife died of cancer. And he really pushed the funding for the Contaminants Program.

The name escapes me.

TOM: Okay. Okay. So interesting. So, you're there in DC as this program is starting to ramp up nationwide.

LYNN: Yep. And of course, the other thing that I think really gave it a push was all the Agriculture drain water in Kesterson. That was probably the biggest thing that I was involved with. I was on the DOI AG Drain Water Committee and did a lot of work with Kesterson, worked with Refuges.

Remember the blue book and the salmon book that summarized like contaminant issues on Refuges throughout the country?

TOM: Yep.

LYNN: Worked on that.

TOM: Okay. What was the work atmosphere like in your office? Was there a lot of collaboration with other divisions or were you pretty focused on your task at hand?

LYNN: Well, I think with Contaminants at that time there was a lot of collaboration with Refuges.

Because refuges had this major issue primarily well Kesterson was the big one. But there were a number of other refuges that had contaminant issues.

And so, I don't know if you knew Janice Harold? She was in refuges back then. And we worked a lot on the contaminant issue.

At that time Endangered Species was a separate Division from Ecological Services. It was part of Federal Aid actually. And the other thing that was kind of bearing its ugly head and continued to do so. And I don't think still has been resolved is the whole issue of consultations with pesticides. Like EPA never did a very good job of evaluating what the impacts of all these pesticides were on listed species.

So, at that point we worked a lot with Endangered Species trying to figure out for about the second time how to analyze and look at the impacts of pesticides on listed species.

TOM: Interesting. How long then did you work in that position?

LYNN: I was there until the spring of 87. So probably like a year and a half or two years.

TOM: What prompted the change?

LYNN: Well, at that point we had been in DC for about four years and knew that we did not want to get tagged as lifers in DC. And it also happened that Frank Dunkle was the Director at that time. Who as you recall was really pushing for people to get out to field offices and regional offices wanting to get them out of DC.

And we had been looking like what would be the logical places to go that would offer a lot of opportunities in Refuges and Mig Birds and Ecological Services. So, we had kind of honed in on either the Twin Cities or Albuquerque or Portland as places that would give us a lot of career flexibility.

And it just happened that Dick Uptegraft who was the Regional Environmental Coordinator, did all the NEPA stuff was retiring. And at that point I was pretty good friends with TJ Miller working on contaminant things. So, he kind of put two and two together and said *oh here's a job that you might be interested in*. So, talked with Gerry Lowry who was the ARD at the time and was offered Dick Uptegraft's old job as Regional Environmental Coordinator.

TOM: Oh yeah.

LYNN: And also, at that time Mig Birds was expanding which Mig Birds was part of Refuges at that time.

TOM: Yep.

LYNN: And the Mig Bird guy was gonna hire an assistant. So, he hired Steve and we moved to Region 3.

TOM: Was that Steve Wilds or was that Bob Oetting?

LYNN: It was Bob Oetting.

TOM: Bob Oetting. Okay.

LYNN: Yeah.

TOM: So, you moved to the Twin Cities in 198__.

LYNN: Spring of 87.

TOM: 87, okay, okay. Over at the Federal Whipple Building?

LYNN: Yep. Yep.

TOM: Alright. I think I was just starting to transition into the Regional Office at that point in time. So, I think I remember when Steve came over in Mig Birds. Interesting. Okay. So, you were the NEPA Coordinator.

LYNN: Right.

TOM: For Region 3. And you worked...it was Gerry Lowry.

LYNN: Well, he was the ARD, yep.

TOM: He was the ARD, I remember that. Okay.

LYNN: And Bill Aultfather was the Deputy.

TOM: Oh, yeah. I'd forgotten about him.

LYNN: Yep.

TOM: What kinds of duties did you have as the NEPA Coordinator?

LYNN: There again, it was a lot like being in the Division of Environmental Coordination in DC. There were comments on NEPA documents that were signed off at the departmental and regional level with the Regional and Environmental Officer. So, we put those letters together coordinating from field offices. And then pretty soon I mean the job expanded beyond that.

Because I had a contaminant background and had been working in Natural Resource Damage Assessment a little bit, I started getting some responsibilities there. We hired well Bob Krska is the Hydro Coordinator. And when Bill Aultfather left, I became Bob's Supervisor and sort of became a Division or Branch Chief. Then we hired Mamie Parker to kind of replace me as the NEPA person. So, we just kind of became a little group that did all the habitat conservation type work.

TOM: Okay, okay. If I remember, your office had to sign off on all the Environmental Assessments that were generated. Does that sound familiar?

LYNN: Yeah. We did. Yeah, on that cover sheet, there was a place for the Regional Environmental Coordinator sign off.

TOM: I'm sure there was a lot of bad Environmental Assessments that came across your desk. Poorly written ones I would guess probably from Refuges.

LYNN: Well, they weren't that bad. And one thing that I always wished that we had done a better job of was enlarging and strengthening our categorical exclusions because we just seemed to do EA after EA for the same thing.

TOM: Yeah.

LYNN: And we always found there were no significant impacts. But nobody ever wanted to at the national level take that step to write up okay here we're always doing EAs and FONSI's for this particular activity. Let's get a CATEX.

TOM: Yeah, that's an onerous project that certainly would help a lot of people down the road.

LYNN: The Department gets involved and it just...It was like I was involved I think in one rewrite of CATEX's, and I never wanted to go through it again.

TOM: Yeah. Understood. Understood.

LYNN: I would greatly encourage anybody else to do it.

TOM: Yeah. Yeah. No, they're very helpful. And Gerry Lowry retired not too long after that I presume.

LYNN: Right. He retired...actually, Bill Aultfather retired first I think. And it seems like for a while we were without a Deputy and an ARD because everybody was acting, and we had acting's come in. Ron Kirby was an acting and I don't know who else. But then John Blankenship became the next ARD. And Rick Lemon was the next Deputy I think.

TOM: Okay, okay. And you worked throughout this time then as John Blankenship came in...Okay. And Rick Lemon. Dan Baumgardner, was he fisheries then? I'm trying to remember.

LYNN: Yeah, he was fisheries.

TOM: Okay. Okay. Yeah.

LYNN: I don't know, I can't remember if Rick came like maybe a little bit under Gerry Lowry. But I know that...I mean we were really short on leadership for a while. And then John came in and he was actually there until the late 90s. He was there for almost not quite ten years. But shortly after he arrived, he and Jim Gritman thought it would be a good idea if I went to the Twin Cities field office as the Project Leader.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: And then all this time, I had a baby. I just remember being a new mother and having all this personnel change. That it was really stressful.

TOM: Yeah. Yeah. But did you decide then that the Twin Cities ES, the field office would have been, is a good job for you to take?

LYNN: Well, I didn't really have a choice.

TOM: Oh, okay. Alright.

LYNN: But it had always been on my list of career goals.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: But it wasn't like I had never thought about doing it when I had a not quite two-year-old.

TOM: Yeah.

LYNN: And I was still in my 30s and I always figured that was like a little further on. But I did it and it was great.

TOM: Yeah. Was that office over in St. Paul or had it moved over to the Refuge?

LYNN: It had moved over to the Refuge at that point.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: And it turned out to be I mean a really good job with a young family. Most of the people I needed to coordinate with were in the Twin Cities so I could really plan travel. And I had people that worked for me then who I could make travel.

And there was interesting stuff going on. I guess the biggest thing that happened when I was there is that was when Endangered Species started moving to field offices.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: I got the first Endangered Species Field Biologist in Region 3 at TCFO (Twin Cities Field Office)

TOM: Oh, who was that? Was that Nick or.

LYNN: Chuck Kjos

TOM: Chuck. Sure. Okay.

LYNN: And that was great, and it was a really good opportunity for me because I really knew nothing about Endangered Species. And he knew a lot. So, he was able to educate me. And we kind of developed the program together.

TOM: Okay. So, do you remember the other staff that you had at that time?

LYNN: Well, Nick Rowse was there, Larry Smith was the Deputy and he retired after about I was there for maybe two years. Jerry Decker was there. He retired...like I came in the spring, he retired in the fall. Stan Smith was the contaminants person.

TOM: Was he located at the ES field station?

LYNN: Yep.

TOM: He was, okay. I remember him in the regional office or was when my...

LYNN: Well, he was in the field office.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: And then oh after a couple of years, he went to the regional office and Dave Warburton went to the field office.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: Gary Wege.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: Lloyd Mitchel, I hired him.

TOM: Okay, okay.

LYNN: I'm trying to think that was.. Oh, and we had Randy Rutan He was actually Regional Office person, but he was an artifact of the Frank Dunkle years. Even though he worked regionally, he was placed in the field office doing...I can't remember exactly what he did. He worked regionally some kind of contaminant thing.

TOM: Okay. Okay. So, you had the Endangered Species just getting started at a field station or field office. You still probably doing a lot of coordination with the Corps of Engineers on the Mississippi River?

LYNN: Yep. In fact, they had kind of backed off from Upper Miss activities. And one of the things that I was directed to do when I went back to the field office was to get the office more engaged in the river again.

TOM: Okay. Okay. And contaminants program.

LYNN: Yep.

TOM: What years were you over there?

LYNN: I was there from like the spring of 91 until the end of 98.

TOM: 98. Was this during the time of the Ecosystem Management and the GARD/ PARD?

LYNN: Yeah. The GARD PARD thing.

TOM: The GARD PARD. Yeah.

LYNN: For most of the time that I was there, John Blankenship was the ES ARD. But then we did the GARD PARD thing and Nita Fuller actually became the GARD who supervised the Twin Cities field office. [Geographic ARD = GARD; Programmatic ARD = PARD]

TOM: Okay. Yeah.

LYNN: And that I loved working for Nita and really appreciated her.

TOM: Yeah. Interesting times. Okay. But John would continue to be your program ARD. Interesting.

LYNN: Right. But then at the...I guess when the GARD PARD change started, John became a GARD. And that was when Charlie Wooley became the PARD for ES.

TOM: Oh.

LYNN: And that was also when ES started adding Program Supervisors. It had always been the ARD that supervised the field offices. But then the decision was made to have Program Supervisors under the GARDs to supervise the field offices. So, when that happened, I became John Blankenship's Program Supervisor for his geographic area.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: But Charlie Wooley was the PARD.

TOM: PARD. Did you have to move back into the Regional Office building?

LYNN: So, I moved back to the Regional Office. And we had kind of...in a set up to try to make coordination easier, even though John Blankenship was my Supervisor and Matt Kerschbaum was the Deputy GARD at the time. I sat with the ES staff with Charlie in the ES section of the Whipple Building. But John was over on the other side of the building. It was...but it worked. Whatever.

TOM: Sure.

LYNN: And for however long that lasted.

And it was not too long after that, probably in the early aughts that then John left to become the Deputy RD out in Region 6. And things kind of went back to...Charlie Wooley became the ES ARD. Nita became the Refuge Chief or whatever they were called back then. So, we kind of went back to the way...I think that's when Baumgardner retired, and the fisheries position was open. And John Christian was in there as what the Migratory Bird ARD.

TOM: And were you the Deputy ARD then? Did you...

LYNN: Well, I was the...Bob Krska and I were the two Program Supervisors under Charlie Wooley. And then like I want to say around 2002, Charlie became the Deputy RD. And Wendi Weber was hired as the ARD for ES. And she was there for maybe a year when she decided that she was gonna kind of rearrange the deck chairs. And that's when I ended up becoming the Deputy ARD and supervised all the field offices with that position. Bob Krska became the Division Chief for all the Habitat Conservation, and Contaminant activities. TJ Miller became the Endangered Species Chief. And I guess Frank Horvath was kind of contaminants person because Bob didn't have contaminants at that point.

And I really enjoyed that job supervising all the field offices.

TOM: Right. You must have learned budgeting at some point along the way. I presume a good portion of your job as Deputy was the budget allocation and FTE management.

LYNN: Well, the blessing that we had...Right after Wendi arrived, she hired Sean Marsan who was Mr. Budget. And that was primarily what he did. There was the first time we had a budget person who hadn't just come through the...I don't know what the right word is but...

TOM: Administrative.

LYNN: Just the administrative arena that actually did more budget formulation than budget execution. I remember those words. So, Sean was really good at budget formulation.

And we worked through how many FTEs and how much money field office should get. So, it was kind of a task that all the management team and ES worked through to figure out who got what. And trying to be fair about it and tried to look at what workloads were. But just like I'm sure in Refuges there was never enough money to do everything that you wanted to do or that you should be doing.

TOM: Yeah, yeah. And of course, ES you had many different funding sources I presume and some no-year money, some yeah transfer funds.

LYNN: And as we added Endangered Species in I mean there again there were like at least five sub activities for Endangered Species money. And we always tried to stay true to those accounts but end of the year, you just charged stuff where you had money.

TOM: Right. What were the biggest program activities or projects that you remember having/getting accomplished during your tenure as the Deputy?

LYNN: Probably doing...transitioning to the stronger Endangered Species program. That was when the program really kind of came full circle into all the field offices. And we really...part of that was Wendi's influence because her background was Endangered Species. But I think it was just in general where the ES program was going.

And it was getting offices to focus in that direction while also recognizing that we still need to worry about contaminants, we still need to worry about hydro relicensing. We still need to worry about highway projects, Great Lakes issues.

TOM: Were you there for the first wolf or did the wolf listing happen...Must have been in the late 70s. Were you there for the first round of delisting?

LYNN: Yeah. I was just thinking about that this morning. It's like we've had multiple people make long careers on listing and delisting the wolf. I mean Ron Refsnider worked on that all through the aughts and we finally got it delisted. And it was 2011 or somewhere back then. And I thought we had finally succeeded because it was actually delisted for a couple of years, and we hadn't been litigated. Because the environmental groups had finally recognized that they might not agree with the decision, but we had a really good package. And so, they left it go.

But then in I think it was 2014 when Wisconsin started their wolf hunt that kind of pushed Humane Society and CBD [Center for Biological Diversity] and some other groups over the edge. And they sued us.

And it was actually this time of the year in 2014, it was the end of the day about just several days before Christmas. I was the only one left in the office along with Connie in the RDs office when we got the ruling from Judge Beryl Howell in the DC circuit. 114 pages telling us how stupid we were. And how could we possibly have been so dumb as to had made all these mistakes. And so, this was like late afternoon, Connie and I had to stay and get the word out to all the state directors [DNR] like to stop anything having to do with wolves. It was now listed again so you had no authority. It's back with us.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: And so now I honestly haven't been following it but attempting to delist again, but I'm sure they'll be litigation.

TOM: Yeah, yeah, well, I think they broke it down to a smaller geographic area this time. I'm like, I don't remember.

LYNN: No, actually they went big.

TOM: Oh, they went, oh that's right, that's right. That's why we lost the first time. Because it was first listed nationwide, and we delisted it for a geographic area.

LYNN: And a lot of the problems associated with the wolf was just the fact of when it was delisted, it was one of the first listings and we didn't have our act together. And didn't have all the rules that we have today. Or the way it was listed, it would never be listed that way today. But because of those artifacts, we can't do a smooth delisting.

TOM: Interesting. Well, that's a subject for its own oral history, I think getting all those players together.

LYNN: Yeah.

TOM: After your tenure as Deputy when Wendi leaves, did you know you wanted to become the ARD or were you talked into applying for that job?

LYNN: As a group, those of us who were like in ES management, we knew that like between Charlie and Wendi, we had a whole bunch of acting's come in and it was exhausting. And so, we made an appeal to say could you just like make one person acting and bring people into the Acting Deputy or some other acting. And Robyn and Charlie obliged and made me acting. And we brought a number of people in to be Acting Deputy which worked I thought really well. And the people who were Acting Deputy said, well, this is a really good experience. Glad you did it this way.

So, I hadn't heard that there were too many people interested in the job. And the few names that I heard, I'm like, oh, I don't know about that person. And my feeling is that you can't complain if you don't put yourself out there as a candidate. They can turn you down but at least you put your name in the hat, and you just go from there. So, it turned out there were only two applicants me and Frank Horvath so.

For better or worse, Charlie and Robyn selected me.

TOM: Okay. What year was that?

LYNN: That was 2008.

TOM: 2008. Okay. Become the Assistant Regional Director for Ecological Services. And were we still over at the Whipple Building at that point?

LYNN: Yeah, we were. Yep. That was 2008 and we left the Whipple Building in 2011.

TOM: Okay. Okay. So, talk about those years as ARD.

LYNN: Well, the thing that I absolutely loved about being a Deputy and ARD was the ability to influence and make personnel decisions. Like I personally feel that's the most important thing that a Supervisor Manager does is hire good people. And create an environment where people want to apply for jobs because they want to work in that environment.

I just really appreciated the opportunity to be able to advertise Project Leader positions and try to talk people into applying and getting what I thought were really good people for those positions.

One of the last things that I did, we decided we were gonna bring on some Pathways students. I guess that's what they were called then. And so, we advertised and really put the pressure on to some professors at the U to get them to encourage their best students to apply. And we got some outstanding candidates. In fact, we were gonna hire two and we just couldn't make up our decision with the top three. So, we hired three of them. And they've become outstanding employees.

And that's just the thing in retiring that I hated to give up the most. And fortunate to have such high-quality people to choose from.

TOM: Yeah. Who were some of the Project Leader(s) that you remember hiring or making selections of?

LYNN: Well, Dan Stinnett and then Tony Sullins and then Pete Fasbender at Twin Cities. Scott Hicks in East Lansing.

TOM: Sure. Rock Island?

LYNN: I can't remember his name.

TOM: Came over from Indiana maybe or?

LYNN: No, well actually he started out as the partners person in Rock Island.

TOM: Oh, yeah.

LYNN: And he was the head of the partners program in Ohio.

TOM: I'm drawing a blank on his name too, but I've heard good things about him.

LYNN: Yeah. And then he was promoted to Project Leader. Yeah, I'm drawing blanks now on people.

TOM: Yeah.

LYNN: We were just really fortunate to have a good...and I think the people who've been hired since I left have been really good too so. And then the flip side of that is, I think if you make a mistake in hiring, it's your job to fix it too.

TOM: I would guess, like me you encountered a number of human resource issues, personnel conduct issues that had to be dealt with. Were any particularly difficult ones you recall or without naming names?

LYNN: Yeah. We dealt with one of the first porn issues.

TOM: Okay.

LYNN: And the advice we got from DC was just tell everybody that that's a bad thing to do. And the Project Leader and I were like, no, we are gonna see that this person has a consequence.

And had a person who was double dipping as a consultant and as a Fish and Wildlife Service employee. Getting paid double for the same work. But things like that were really few and far between. But they were really all consuming when you had to deal with them.

TOM: Right. Right. What was the atmosphere like as part of the Regional Directorate. What was your experience like working with the other ARDs and with the Regional Director?

LYNN: I have to say this because I was always frustrated that I was the only woman. And I was always disappointed that because I was on a selection group for fisheries ARD and for the Refuge Chief. I think that was it. And really trying to get women to apply and to make it through the selection process.

I found I like working one-on-one with ARDs and I liked Charlie as Deputy RD. And then on another level, the other ES ARDs, we had a really good group with Gary Frazer as the AD. He took a lot of bullets for us.

And that, it was really...I think it'd be really interesting now to see if that group has changed at all, because there have been a lot of ES ARDs that left and retired in the last three or four years. To see if the dynamic of that group has changed. But there again we're always fortunate to get good people in that group.

TOM: Yeah. Yeah. Looking back as ARD what would be some of the highlights of your tenure there?

LYNN: Getting the Northern Long-eared Bat listed. Probably doing a lot of the listings.

I think improving the science that we used to do things. And I think that's been something that has happened over a lot of years.

In fact, just the other day, I was looking at the Species Status Assessment for the Monarch. And it's like 128 pages or something. And we just...our science has so improved, become so much more quantitative in my time with Fish and Wildlife Service. When I think about how we did reports and analyses back in the 70s compared to the expectation that we have to meet today. It's just a whole different world. And a lot of that has been I think in ES because of all the litigation. That we just can't say well we think this is how it is. We have to document and show our work.

TOM: It seemed to me the collaboration with the state agencies especially with the Northern Long-eared Bat was done a little bit differently than other listings. Was my perception right on that?

LYNN: Well, I think all of our listings at least in Region 3 and going back to Jim Engel I think because of his background with Federal Aid. I think Region 3 always had a better relationship with the states. And has there again...and for 35-40 years has had that annual coordination meeting with the state Endangered Species folks. And I think any listings that we did I always felt were reasonably coordinated with the States. I think that if the system fell apart anywhere it was because we thought we were coordinating but we couldn't always depend on the other side doing their coordination. And that maybe things weren't as well advertised as we thought they were. But I think for most of our listings anyway I think they were pretty well coordinated.

Probably more issues with trying to figure out like in a section 7 consultation how would you engage the state. But like any permits that we would issue, like for people to work with Endangered Species we would coordinate with the states so. And always trying to get better.

TOM: Right, right. You probably had a couple of mentors as you grew up in the Service and then you probably mentored some younger people as they progressed in their careers. Do you want to talk about that mentorship relationship at all?

LYNN: Probably despite the fact that we often butted heads, Paul Hamilton was my first Project Leader. And he was actually I think had started in River Basins. So, went back to the origins of Ecological Services. And there were a lot of times that we disagreed with things. And I think he saw me as his problem child a lot of times. But one thing I realized that the older I got and the further away from him I got, the smarter he got.

TOM: Interesting.

LYNN: Like a lot of things, I really disagreed with. And there's still some things that he did that I continue to disagree with. But he had some wise things that he had learned in his career.

I think he was almost to retirement. In fact, he did retire from that office and had come to that office to retire. And thought it was going to be this quiet, little sleepy place and never thought he'd get involved in winter navigation and all the controversies with that. But there were a lot of very young starting-out biologists. And he had like seven kids, and I think he just kind of thought of us as an extension of more kids.

TOM: More kids to feed.

LYNN: And I really liked John Rogers and appreciated working for him. And that I always felt like he was this person who was in the background kind of looking out for me.

And I also really appreciated Robyn Thorson. I really appreciated her, how hard she worked to really understand things. And really wanted to make sure that she had all the facts and all the details. And that she really understood what it was that you were asking her to defend or support or whatever.

TOM: Right.

LYNN: And I have to say I appreciated Jim Gritman as well. That there again, we often had our disagreements, but I had to admit that he would always listen at least to me. And I assume he listened to everybody whether they agreed with him or not. And gave thought to what you were saying. And there again, whether he ended up agreeing with you or disagreeing with you, you knew where you stood with him.

TOM: Yeah, that's for sure.

LYNN: And I appreciated knowing that. Sometimes you don't always know.

TOM: No, that's right, that's right. Well, he was a straight shooter. Oh, good. Well, is there anything we haven't touched on Lynn that you wrote down and thought this would be important to talk about?

LYNN: Let me just glance through here. No, I think you did a pretty good job of covering everything.

TOM: Was it a hard decision to retire?

LYNN: Yes it was. Because I have this bad characteristic that I always want to know what's around the next corner. And I'm really nosy like I don't want to have to give it up. And it was just really hard to like have to say, well, I'm not gonna know what's around that next corner.

And the main reason I retired when I did was we were wrapping up a number of things. And we were just going to begin some other things.

And like the monarch, the decision whether the monarch should be listed. And I felt like I didn't think these new things would be things that I would want to see to the end. Because they never go as fast as they're supposed to.

And I figured I'd be pushing 70 by the time the monarch would be resolved. And I knew I didn't want to stay that long.

So, I felt like at the point when I decided to retire, things had been wrapped up on the Northern Long-eared Bat. And some other things we were working on. And it was a place that I could make a break and not fowl up too many things in doing that.

But I think if I had known the way the election was gonna go, I probably would have stayed a little while. just to be some continuity.

TOM: Oh yeah. Well. Yeah.

LYNN: But there again I was pretty sure I didn't want to stay another four years.

TOM: Right. Right. Well, well, it was a wonderful career. I really appreciate you taking the time to step us through it. And you're finding that you're filling the days with activity. Maybe not with COVID, but otherwise.

LYNN: Yeah up until COVID. It was, I mean as busy as you wanna be. I think the thing that I miss most is after I retired, I learned to swim. And I became kind of an OCD swimmer. And so, I haven't done that since last March. So, not only getting COVID concerns me, but the fact that it's so hard to get physical activity.

TOM: Yeah, yeah, for sure. Well, Lynn I'm gonna stop recording now.