



Special Topic: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Interviewee: Carl Schwartz
In Cortland, New York

Interviewer: Libby Herland
In Pittsfield, Massachusetts

December 23, 2020 (interview conducted by phone)

Oral History Cover Sheet

Approximate years worked for in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program: 1987 – present (2021 at time of interview transcription)

Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held: New York Field Office, Cortland, New York; Farm Bill/Private Lands/Partners for Wildlife/Partners for Fish and Wildlife State (New York) Coordinator. Title changes reflect changes in the name of the program over time.

Most Important Projects: Working with the Farmers Home Administration/Farm Services Agency to protect wetlands and floodplains through easements and fee title transfers to the Fish and Wildlife Service, implementing Swampbuster, and establishing a habitat restoration program on private lands that has completed nearly 10,000 projects in New York.

Colleagues and Mentors Mentioned in Interview: Bob Misso, Libby Herland, Don Young, Ralph Pisapia, Steve Flanders, Dave Nicely, Hans Stuart, Donna Schwender, Caryn Crook, Gian Dodici, Bill Stewart

Brief Summary of Interview: Carl explains how the Partners program began with the 1985 passage of the Food Security Act (Farm Bill) and the need to protect wetlands and floodplains based on President Carter's Executive Orders. He describes how he, at the time the sole biologist working on the Farm Bill program in New York, identified easements and fee title transfers for management by the National Wildlife Refuge System. He also describes other components of the Farm Bill, including Swampbuster and the Conservation Reserve Program, which are still active today. Carl also describes how New York was one of 9 states in a pilot Wetlands Reserve Program, which was authorized in a later Farm Bill. Carl describes how the program came to be known as the Partners for Fish and Wildlife, that it had authorizing legislation passed by Congress. Carl also describes how the Farm Bill program grew in New York, both in staff and in responsibilities, and how the Fish and Wildlife Service began restoring wetlands in support of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in New York State. He describes the expansion of the habitat restoration on private lands to include nesting cover for waterfowl, early successional habitat restoration, riparian restoration, stream restoration, dam removal and endangered species habitat restoration. Lastly, he discusses how support for the program was high by farmers and other private landowners but sometimes faced its greatest detractors within the Fish and Wildlife Service itself.

The Interview

LIBBY: Hi! This is Libby Herland. It's Wednesday, December 23, 2020. I'm on the Heritage Committee. We are doing an interview today with Carl Schwartz who is with the New York Field Office. This is part of a project that we are doing, a special topic on the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. Carl has been working on the, in the, with the Fish and Wildlife Service on the Partners program for a long time, as we are going to hear. So, we are doing this interview by phone. And I think we will start with that. So, hi Carl! How are you today?

CARL: I'm good today. And you?

LIBBY: Great. I'm great. And I'm thrilled to be talking with you. So, let's just start. We're going to start by asking, tell us a little bit about when you started working for the Partners program and how many you have worked there and what your job title was. I don't know if it's the same title now as it was when you started but...

CARL: Well, I started as the Farm Bill coordinator in 1987. The Farm Bill had been passed in '85. The Food Security Act of 1985, but we, the Partners program didn't really get officially started until 1987. We were, at that time, doing, actually, all Farm Bill activities. I was overwhelmed with Farmers Home Administration easement program, with the Swampbuster program, with commence determinations, with everything that was in the Farm Bill. [It] was a daunting task at that time.

LIBBY: Can you just explain a little bit about the Farmers Home Administration easements and Swampbuster?

CARL: What happened was, in the [President] Jimmy Carter had wetlands and floodplains Executive Orders, that all federal agencies were to protect those.

LIBBY: Oh yeah, I remember that.

CARL: So, what happened was that the Fish and Wildlife Service volunteered to help Farmers Home Administration, now FSA in order to protect those resources by either fee title transfer or a perpetual easement on those properties. Now, it actually first started out as deed restrictions, but it evolved into easements and fee title transfers. So, when property that was reverted from someone not paying became property of the United States, it was the USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) that became the landowner and before they resold, they needed to protect floodplains and wetlands according to the executive orders. So, that's what we got – was all properties after they had been taken into inventory, which is a term that the Farmers Home used. It now was theirs. Before that, it was the lenders. So, what we would have to do is go out and look at them. I know here we had, well we had over 120 that were in either easements or fee title transfers. We looked at many more that we didn't have anything to protect on. So, it was a bustling business for a long time.

LIBBY: So, you had to look at every single property and then you would, you'd go out in person, because, I mean, a lot of this is done before we had ...

CARL: Yes, we'd look at it. We'd go out in the field, in person, looking at it, and then we would flag where the wetland boundary was, and then the FSA would pay for a survey of where the boundary would be, before they resold the property.

LIBBY: I hate to show my ignorance, but I didn't know that Farmers, Farmers Home Administration was now FSA. What does that stand for?

CARL: Farm Security Agency.

LIBBY: Oh, okay.

CARL: I'm sorry, Farm Services Agency.

LIBBY: Farm Services.

CARL: Yeah, Farm Services Agency.

LIBBY: Okay, great. So, I do remember, because I was the regional coordinator at that, starting at the end of 1988, I do remember the easements coming in and I remember you doing, sending in I guess it was, if I remember correctly, a topo map with a piece of mylar over it, and a hand-drawn ...

CARL: Right, right. Exactly. That's what we did back then. We would take the map that was a xerox copy and usually a bad kind of a Rorschach test and we would then lay the mylar over it and mark out where it would be, and then send that back to Farmers Home and then they would have us come out and actually go out physically and put flagging up as to where the survey should be.

LIBBY: And then you said they went and they actually, so they surveyed those properties?

CARL: Yes.

LIBBY: Oh, you know, I don't remember that. So, the folks in Refuges [and Wildlife] ...

CARL: Some of them were not surveyed originally because they were like the boundary of 50 feet beside a stream, that kind of a thing. Those are the ones that Refuges now has to go back and survey. But many of them originally were surveyed by FSA.

LIBBY: Right. So here you are in Ecological Services (ES), and you are mapping out and identifying lands that are now going to have easements on them that are going to be managed by the National Wildlife Refuge System.

CARL: Yes.

LIBBY: And by refuges.

CARL: Right.

LIBBY: So, did you work much with Refuges in those days? How did that work?

CARL: In the early days, we didn't work much with them but later on, and we do, now. In fact, Bill Stewart from Montezuma will call me up and say, "Do you remember this refuge, or this easement area?" Usually, I do. We work with them a lot closer now and there are a lot of things now that we would not have been protected by the refuge system. But what the process is now, and there aren't very many coming in now, but the process now is that if it's not something that we would want to take into the refuge system, it would be that we ask that FSA protect it with an easement on their own. So, they do that. I just, I question whether there's any oversight of that but that's our way of not bringing it into the refuge system.

LIBBY: Right. Right. I remember...

CARL: A number of them were fee title transfers so and I know thousands of acres were brought into the refuge system through fee title transfers, especially in Region 4 [Southeast United States] and some in California and other parts of the country. But we did it. We transferred oh half a dozen I think properties here in New York to the refuge system.

LIBBY: Why would some be fee title transfer versus just easements?

CARL: If the whole property had enough wetland or important habitat on it, then it would be much easier to just ask for fee title transfer than it would be to try to survey out a whole bunch of zig zaggy wetlands that are in and out. Some county supervisors from Farmers Home were much more amicable about just having a transfer than others. Some of them were really resistant to transfer. And Farmers Home, early on, was concerned that it was going to devalue their property, and they weren't going to have much money to show for it, but I don't think that actually played out. In fact, some people actually wanted an increase in easement areas so that they could feel more protected.

LIBBY: So really it was based on the characteristics of that particular farm.

CARL: Yes.

LIBBY: Did the location ...

CARL: If there was just a little dab of wetland over in a corner, then we would just, that wouldn't be any big deal. But if it was several, maybe even hundreds of acres of wetlands, then that would warrant asking for the whole thing to be transferred.

LIBBY: Were any of these farms fairly close to some existing refuges in New York or were they ...

CARL: Some were fairly close, yes. Several of them were up in the St. Lawrence Valley but several of them were not too far from a refuge.

LIBBY: You know, maybe we can come back to the St. Lawrence Valley because, I think in large part, because of the Partners program, the Service ended up with a completely different kind of initiative up there which we should talk about, maybe in a little bit later. So, tell us a little bit about Swampbuster and what that was and how much of your time was spent doing Swampbuster.

CARL: Early on, Swampbuster in essence said that the Department of Agriculture would not pay a landowner to drain a wetland, and they would be out of compliance and not get any USDA benefits if they drained wetlands. So, it wasn't that they couldn't drain a wetland, they just couldn't get USDA benefits if they did drain a wetland. So, we had to go out with, usually with the State biologist and the District Conservationist and look at where potential wetlands would be and if a landowner wanted to drain it, and one of the major aspects of that was that they allowed for what they called "minimal effects determination" which, if it was – the recommendation was if it was under an acre and it was not, not a high quality wetland – that we could issue a minimal effects determination, which is still ongoing. I still see requests for minimal effects determinations routinely. We had to develop and are still working on another phase of the issues of what, how many flags, yellow flags and red flags, of what would qualify for a minimal effect and what doesn't qualify for a minimal effect. Early on in Swampbuster, they had a provision for a "commenced determination" which was if a watershed group had already started significantly, spent time and money to drain a wetland, that they could finish the job. Those have gone away, but early on there were a number of those – major watershed drainage projects. So, we would be, in terms of numbers, we would sometimes have 40 or 50 a month to be looking at. It was a significant workload.

LIBBY: At the time, was it just you? (laughter)

CARL: Yes, yes it was, at the time it was just me. (laughter) Now some of these Farmers Home properties and some of the other were scattered around the office for other people to go help me look at, early on, but it soon became mostly me.

LIBBY: And then there was CRP, the Conservation Reserve Program.

CARL: Conservation Reserve Program, right, right, which is ... That's, we have some involvement. That was usually a culmination. It was an FSA program, Farm Services Agency as well as NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) program, so there are, and in some counties we have probably more CRP in some counties than many states have. In some counties were far more active in promoting CRP than others. It was based on a, early on, it was based on a bid basis of what landowners would bid how much they wanted to put into CRP and later it was based on a county map of what value rental property went for and that, based on soil type in that county. So, CRP is still an active program, even under the current Farm Bill.

LIBBY: Yeah. I think maybe for the tape, we'll say that you said the Food Security Act of 1985.

CARL: Farm Services Agency, oh yeah.

LIBBY: So, it's been 35 years and there have been several Farm Bills since, because I think it's only supposed to be for 5-year period.

CARL: Yeah, every five years roughly.

LIBBY: Yeah, it can take longer than five years to get re-authorized but basically every five years. So, I think what's fascinating is that we still have a lot of these conservation provisions in place, although I know that CRP, that was not a permanent thing. That was a for what a 10 year period or a 15 year?

CARL: Ten to fifteen year contracts, yes.

LIBBY: Did you find ...

CARL: Many of them renewed.

LIBBY: Right, that was my question. I was going to ask you if in New York State you found that many of them renewed.

CARL: Many of them did renew and some of them, because there are 30 some different parts of CRP that there could be a wetland, there could be a buffer, a riparian forest buffer. There could be a cool season grass planting, a warm season grass planting, native grass planting. I mean, there's at least 30 some different aspects or were at one time. Mostly now it's riparian forest buffer.

LIBBY: Oh, that's interesting. Okay. So, what is, let's jump ahead to – I didn't mean to do this – but to the Wetland Reserve Program. That came out in a later iteration, a later Farm Bill if I recall correctly?

CARL: Yes, it was. It was the 1990 Farm Bill, but they actually used the Food Security Act as part of the authorization for the Wetland Reserve Program. It was modeled after the Partners program, and initially there were 9 states that were pilots for the program because there were some people, Congressional staffers, that didn't believe that USDA should own easements or have any control over private lands. So, in order to show that it was viable, there were nine states selected as pilot programs, and New York was one of those. Early on, the states were singled out by Bob Misso because he was the one that went over and tried to get the Partners program, I mean the Wetland Reserve Program, started with USDA. They were the ones that he selected around the country that were very active in the Partners program. He knew that they were able to be successful.

LIBBY: Right. That's great. So, let's back up just a minute. You talked about Bob Misso who I remember as, when I think of the Washington staff and the Farm Bill, I always think of Bob Misso. I don't even know, was he, was he the National Coordinator or ...

CARL: He was.

LIBBY: He was.

CARL: Yeah, he was the National Coordinator for, at that time, it was the Farm Bill program that morphed into the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program. He had a small staff of people that worked with him, but he was the head of it.

LIBBY: I remember Gene Whittaker.

CARL: Gene. Right.

LIBBY: I know Dave Smith. Now, Dave Smith must have taken over though after Bob. Is that correct?

CARL: He, Dave was in there a short while but then he moved over to be head of the North American Plan.

LIBBY: Oh, that's right. Okay. So, if you think back about the 1985 Farm Bill – that was really major conservation legislation for this country.

CARL: Absolutely, absolutely. It was historic and still remains historic.

LIBBY: Right. Really historic. How did that come to pass?

CARL: Well, it was a combination of factors that made it happen that way. It was not just, oh, let's go do this. It was, and part of it was politics, and part of it was weather. Part of it was crop prices, and in fact, it was, at the time – before '85, there were a lot of drought years, and there was a lot of clearing of bottomland hardwoods in the lower Mississippi Delta, and a lot of filling in the pothole country and the upper mid-West, and growing crops. And what that did was, because it was dry and they could clear millions of acres of bottomland hardwood and plant corn and beans, it lowered the price because there was a volume out there. Then, it started to be a few wet years, and they couldn't plant everything that they had in it. So, what the impetus behind like CRP was, they called it the "T" factor which is tons of erosion per acre and so that was why, it was really to raise the price, because the commodity prices had dropped so badly, so they were finding a way to take land out of production and call it erosion control by having them plant cool season grasses where they had instead of planting corn or beans in order to try to increase the, increase the price of the commodities and reduce erosion. So that was the, that was the start of the Conservation Reserve Program.

LIBBY: Did we have people from Fish and Wildlife Service, say our Legislative Affairs Office or staff people like Bob Misso, working with folks from USDA or on the Hill to try to mold this program?

CARL: There were. Actually, Bob was the leader of what Marvin Moriarty called his "special task force group". So, Bob and Gene Whittaker and those guys were the ones that were over meeting with USDA. There was a strong contingency from environmental groups. A woman named Maureen Hinckel from Audubon Society, the Wilderness Society, the Wildlife Management Institute, and folks like that. There was a strong environmental lobby. That was part of the politics behind it was that the urban

congressman were concerned that the rural congressman were going to suck up a bunch of the budget for the money, or money in the budget, in order to pay for the farmers bailout. So, there was, in Congress, kind of a strife between urban congressman and rural congressman. The environmental groups said, "Okay, we'll support the farm prices and things if there is conservation as a part of it", which is where Swampbuster came from. So, it was really the environmental factor that got into it that had the rural Congresspeople concerned that they were going to lose if they didn't have some support.

LIBBY: Fascinating. Do you know if anybody has written any books about this? Has this ...

CARL: No, not that I know of. A lot of that was going on with meetings. When you talk to Bob, he can tell you about that. That's what was going on. So it was, you had the combination of the politics, the weather, and the environmental movement all kind of compounding at that time in order to create the Food Security Act.

LIBBY: Right. So, what I recall back in those days, too, and I'm not really clear on the years when but I know there was, we were really concerned about duck populations and what we call "production". The breeding pairs, numbers, were dropping and we weren't producing ducks in the prairie potholes, and I guess in Canada too, in part because of drought but also because there had been so much draining of the wetlands for farming.

CARL: Right. And that was the impetus behind the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. It was put in in 1986.

LIBBY: Okay. So, all this stuff is all happening at the same time.

CARL: Yes.

LIBBY: And then we started moving beyond just implementing our part of the Farm Bill to starting to restore habitat, and we started with wetland restoration, but I know it has evolved since then and we can talk about that. We started filling ditch plugs, putting ditch plugs in.

CARL: Yes. In the beginning. Right. And that's what, that was - what happened with Partners was out in Minnesota, actually, they figured out that because of the Conservation Reserve Program, they required planting grass in order to reduce erosion in these areas that had been drained wetlands and were being paid a contract by USDA in order to have it in CRP. The people out there at that time, some of those areas were just drained with a, with a plastic tile pipe. They could just put a flap valve in there and let water go back onto that instead of having grass planted and that would satisfy their erosion practices, and it put water back on the landscape. So that was the first what would have been the Partners protocol of trying to restore wetlands back where they had been drained. It came out of that, out of Minnesota. Then, so that's why everything started with wetlands.

LIBBY: Do you remember who some of those early people were that were involved with that?

CARL: Well, those, that would have been...there were some early people, I'm trying to remember their names in Minnesota that were involved. There was a guy... What happened then, as a result of some of that activity and the Partners program nationally was getting a budget allocation. Well, it was the Farm Bill allocation at that time. Because the bulk of the impact was in the potholes and the lower Mississippi for waterfowl wintering, the bulk of the funds went to Regions 3 [upper Midwest] and 6 [Midwest and Mountain] for potholes and Region 4 for bottomland hardwoods. Other regions were starting to say, "If we don't do something, we're not going to get a piece of this." So, what happened in Region 5 [northeast United States] is that the ARD (Assistant Regional Director) for ES, Ralph Pisapia, and the ARD for Refuges, was Don Young, had a meeting in Great Swamp refuge in New Jersey. They brought in all the state Farm Bill coordinators at that time. Then they brought in a guy from Rice Lake in Wisconsin I think it was – one of the wetland management districts out there – to give a little slide talk on what they were doing for wetland restoration and how things were working out there. At the end of the meeting, Ralph and Don said, "We want to get started doing this. If you make a mistake, we'll forgive you. Here's a little card." They gave a little card like a Monopoly game card as a free get out of jail (laughter). I thought, "This is cool. I could go do some of this. No problem!" Then actually what happened, because the North American Plan was just getting started too, but they hadn't really done any projects on the ground yet, and the focus of what I knew here because of some of the Farm Bill properties that I looked at up in the St. Lawrence Valley, was that was a primary area to start with. It had great potential. It had the same kind of the pothole characteristics that they had out in Region 3. They had tremendous waterfowl production. So, what I did to get started here was I took the manager for the Soil and Water Conservation District in St. Lawrence County, was Nick Carbone at the time, and a guy from New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), was Joe Lamindola. We threw both of them, we took them in the truck and said, "Do you know anybody who would be interested in having us plug some ditches and put some potholes back on the landscape?" They went to this guy named Doug Weldon in, out of Gouverneur. Nick knew him because he was interested in hunting and fishing and that kind of stuff. So, we knocked on his door. He had a dairy at one time, but he just ran a few heifers in a pasture down below his house now. Knocked on the door, and he had slipped and fallen and hurt his back. He was flat on his back in bed. The three of us kind of stomped into his room and said, "Can we plug up some of your ditches?" (laughter). I don't know whether he knew what we were talking about, I kind of doubt it, or if he was in so much pain that he just didn't care (laughter). So, we rented a couple of bulldozers from the local John Deere dealership and got two equipment operators from Refuges. It was Steve Flanders and Dave Nicely. Got them out to get on these dozers. Unbeknownst to me, the North American Plan had an outreach coordinator, Hans Stuart.

LIBBY: Oh, yeah, right. Hans Stuart.

CARL: Hans actually sent a press release to the Watertown Daily Times and to the television station there in Watertown about we were putting wetlands back on the landscape which is, in that neck of the woods, a man bites dog story for sure. So, what happened as a result of that, was a couple of days later I got a call from the pretty young woman, noon news television station, who said, "Could you come up and do an interview about this stuff?" "Yeah, no problem." So, I put on my uniform and showed up at the television station and this great big guy, station manager, comes out. "Well, she's busy right now. I'm going to do the interview and we're going to do it live, and we're going to tape it for the 6 o'clock too." (laughter)

LIBBY: No pressure there, Carl. No pressure!

CARL: We sit down on the couch, and he first comes out with “Well, the North American Plan was passed in 1986. What’s taken so long?” (laughter). So, what I did is just what every classic politician did. I didn’t answer any of his questions, I just gave sound bites of what I wanted him to hear of what we were doing. Hans later actually got a copy of that tape, and he gave me an award as an Oscar for the performance. What happened was, as a result of that, hundreds of people called in and wanted to have us come look at their property. Quite literally, hundreds! That’s when we got overwhelmed and we started detailing people from Refuges and ES to come up and start helping out with that. That was the beginning of that.

LIBBY: Right. Right. Now at those, at those early days, did you have, I’d like to know – did you have agreements, what kind of agreements did you have with landowners? Did you have agreements, or did you just go in and do it?

CARL: When we first started, we just went in and did it. Then we had the 1-page agreement, and we started with that. But the first couple of projects that we did, we didn’t have much. Then we, it eventually got more sophisticated.

LIBBY: And more bureaucratic, right, over time? (laughter)

CARL: Much, much more bureaucratic. (laughter)

LIBBY: I think by the time I left in 1995, the beginning of 1995, it was starting to become almost a hassle sometimes to do these projects.

CARL: In a way, yeah. We all knew that there was a window that we could get away with some stuff and then that we were going to have to grow up and fit into the rest of the stuff later on. But we tried to get away with as much as we could, early on. We don’t, we don’t do that anymore.

LIBBY: No. In the early days, we were using refuge staff. I’m sure you did some of the work yourself. You probably plugged some ditches yourself.

CARL: Yep, yep.

LIBBY: We rented ...

CARL: We rented machines.

LIBBY: And then we ended up buying machines as well?

CARL: Yes, we did, and we still have some now. And we used some Refuge equipment. They would bring up some from refuges in New Jersey, Brigantine, and from Chincoteague and details of equipment

operators would come in and some of the refuge biologists and some of the ES biologists would go around and do the knocking on the doors to the landowners who had called in, then doing the site plan and giving that to the operators. Some of those people, Jan Taylor and Graham Taylor and some of those people, were part of that. Most of the refuge people from Chincoteague have all retired now. But we got a combination of a lot of different people from both Refuges and ES to do the site visits.

LIBBY: Coming up to New York to do this?

CARL: Yes. They were detailed for at least two weeks at a time.

LIBBY: Did they want to do this?

CARL: Some did, and some didn't. (laughter) But Don Young kind of told them that they were supposed to. Some enjoyed it and some did not.

LIBBY: Well, that's really interesting. I don't remember some of that. So, that's really interesting. I guess one of the questions is, when Region 5, which is, which was at the time the northeast region of the Fish and Wildlife Service, we, the Farm Bill, and then became the Partners program, was managed out of Ecological Services. That wasn't the case, even though we worked very closely with Refuges, it still was managed out of ES. That wasn't the case in a lot of other parts of the country. Regions 3, 4 and 6, the lead was out of Refuges. Do you know why, in Region 5, ES ended up having the lead on this?

CARL: I think it was primarily because of the funding thing. I don't think Refuges wanted, wanted it at that time. There was actually a strong anti-Partners movement by some people in Refuges in Region 5. They were, there was a large contingency of a few outspoken refuge managers that saw it as taking refuge money and people and equipment and working off the refuge. There was a big issue about that, even nationally, of trying to ensure that it was benefitting the refuge system. So that was part of the issue, that they wanted - Refuges wanted the money, but they didn't want to work on private lands. They wanted to keep it on refuges. So that, and that was nationally, it was the Director, it was Frank Dunkle at that time, who wanted it to be sure to work on private lands and not be just be another component of working on a refuge.

LIBBY: Right. I remember, I remember Frank Dunkle ...

CARL: That's how it stayed as 1121 [the budget code]. That's why the program, even in Refuges today, and nationally it's in Refuges at Headquarters, but regionally it stayed in (unintelligible) to how it's divvied up, but the funding allocation is coming out of ES's 1121, even for the offices that are in Refuges.

LIBBY: That's right. So, I remember that what you call the Blue Goose – people that didn't want it to go beyond the Blue Goose sign.

CARL: That's right.

LIBBY: But then, you had a whole other group of folks in the Fish and Wildlife Service who realized that working on private lands was really important because refuges could only do so much. Refuges are obviously really important, but they can only do so much – that there was a lot of wildlife habitat on private land.

CARL: That's absolutely true. There were some people who were very supportive in Refuges. They saw how it could benefit. In fact, some of the thinking was that they actually wanted Partners to be in Refuges and they wanted Partners people stationed at their refuge because it was so helpful to work in the neighborhood and help with what the refuge did. Early on, it was 180 degrees from that.

LIBBY: Right, right. Another thing that is really different, I think, that started a lot with this program was the reliance on partners, partnerships, and partners. Now, I think sometimes it's easy to forget about the work that came before, but if you think about it, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan – that's all about partnerships. The Partners – even the name of the Farm Bill changed the program. You weren't the Farm Bill Coordinator, anymore. I think you became the Private Lands Coordinator but then it became the Partners for Wildlife program, which is what it was initially. It was just called Partners for Wildlife. But again, we are focusing on partners, recognizing that we can't restore habitat all by [ourselves], or we can't manage and protect all by ourselves. Tell us a little bit about, so just kind of describe how your program changed over time. We started about, you talked about you were basically the only person doing a lot of this work, you had to detail people in. You did start getting staff. The program got a little bit more sophisticated. Can you just kind of talk about how things changed over time? [You hear three beeps on the audio file here. The call dropped so this is the end of digital audio file part 1 of 2. The interview picked up again in a separate digital audio file, part 2 of 2, here.]

LIBBY: Hi, this is Libby Herland interviewing Carl Schwartz. We lost the call, so this is actually going to be part two of the interview. I think when we dropped the call we were talking about refuges and working beyond their Blue Goose signs, and we were talking about partnerships. I think we can just, I had asked – I was moving into how the program developed over time, for you, where originally you were the only person working on this program in New York State. Refuges were getting involved. They were bringing people up on details to help with some of this immense workload that you had, initially. But you did end up, you know things got more sophisticated over time and more programmatic I guess, and you ended up getting some staff as well. So why don't you just tell us a little bit about how the Partners program grew in New York State.

CARL: As a result of all the details and interest in the program, I was allowed to hire, actually it was Donna Schwender was the first person I hired. She was helping out doing surveys and design as a permanent person out of here [Cortland]. Then we hired a seasonal tech, Caryn Crook, who eventually we got on permanent. And then Donna got Lyme disease and had to retire. So, then we started being able to get a few seasonals on for the summer, and currently I have two full time biologists. Then I had a seasonal or a term for, as a heavy equipment operator, because we still have equipment to run and use as well as what we are doing just working with landowners and contractors.

LIBBY: So, you do some of the work is contracted out, but some of the work is also done by Fish and Wildlife Service staff. This is the habitat restoration work.

CARL: Yes. We have a dump truck and a trailer and a skid loader and post pounder. We're doing fencing and riparian area for a while and so we do like early successional habitat we do with our skid loader here. We do some small excavations. We have a small excavator, and we do some of that work ourselves. The bigger projects we contract out with the people who know what they are doing.

LIBBY: Do you require landowners now to contribute financially to the projects?

CARL: We don't require it. We recommend that they do, one way or another. But we usually are using somebody else's money for the most part. Well, a lot of our work now is with somebody else's grant, it's with The Nature Conservancy or land trust or using Trout Unlimited or somebody else's money. Early on, Partners used a lot of Ducks Unlimited and then they kind of went their own way with mitigation money and so we work with land trusts and a wetland trust and groups like that, as well. So, we put some of our money into it. But usually, the landowners all end up contributing one way or another. We don't have a set percentage of what they have to contribute but most of our stuff is, we actually use a lot more of other people's money than we do our own. We don't really have that much in 1121 to do the work that we are doing.

LIBBY: So, most of that money is paying for staff, but it's not paying for projects.

CARL: Yes. Our annual budget for projects is like \$25,000 which is, that's like a small project. That's it.

LIBBY: So, you spend a lot of time now just trying to put together the projects and trying to secure the funding for that.

CARL: Right. Always. And a lot of what we are doing now is far more sophisticated with the stream work and far more expensive and working with Trout Unlimited and doing surveys and a lot of sophisticated surveys. There's a lot of technical issues when doing stream projects. It makes the wetlands stuff look much easier.

LIBBY: So why is that? Why are you doing these more difficult ones when you could be doing simpler ones?

CARL: I like a challenge (laughter). We still do some wetland projects but the bulk of the issue, of what people are demanding as far as other partners go, are the expertise that goes into the more sophisticated and complex wetland projects. A lot of other people now - with the Wetland Reserve Program and with the Ducks Unlimited - are kind of doing their own thing and filling that wetland niche that we started.

LIBBY: Okay.

CARL: So, there's still a lot of wetlands being done but they aren't being done by us. But the stream stuff is much more challenging and time consuming and expensive and they haven't gotten into that kind of work yet.

LIBBY: So, I noticed – I went to your website last night and I saw you have, I don't know if you call them "focus areas", but they are basically areas where you are concentrating your efforts.

CARL: Focus areas, yeah.

LIBBY: Can you tell me a little bit about how that came about, because before you just had people calling you and they could be calling you from anywhere in the state. And you did limited resources. You had to make some decisions.

CARL: Yep. That was part of, that was actually a national push from the Office of Management and Budget that was trying to get us to do focused projects. There was some criticism of the program. They claimed that we were just being random about where our selections were. But, if you look at our map of where our projects are, they are around the original focus areas that were developed by the North American plan. There are concentrated areas that are around those areas, for wetlands in particular. Our focus areas now, because we are into our second five-year strategic plan for that, and it will expand other areas now that we are doing especially for Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture and things like that have come in the last few years. It will also develop into places where money comes from because of the Delaware funding issue and the Great Lakes restoration initiative. Both of those things we are getting money for. So, the money directs where somewhat of our priorities are.

LIBBY: Right. So, you told me that, I think your first wetland restoration project you did was up in the St. Lawrence in Gouverneur. Tell me a little bit about what happened up in the St. Lawrence. We ended up having a – I don't remember – it's not a wetland management area, is it?

CARL: It was a wetland/grassland management unit, is what they called it.

LIBBY: Right. I know it was a little controversial, but we ended up having a big presence up there. It's probably not nearly so controversial now as it was when it was initially proposed.

CARL: It's been down... it's really not functional anymore. They pulled it back into just people at Montezuma now, although they still own the land up there. It was originally one of the Farmers Home fee title transfers. Then we had people stationed there and working out of that unit, 'cause it was a lot closer to a lot of the sites we worked on. There were plans for a larger wetland, wetland acquisition, that would be a national wildlife refuge up there but there was a lot of Farm Bureau animosity, and it was not politically palatable.

LIBBY: But there still is, so there still is ...

CARL: Yes, there still is, the land is still up there, the projects are still up there, we've done several projects this year in the St. Lawrence Valley.

LIBBY: Okay, great. That's good. So, I know that there was a time when we were looking at, right I remember establishing a new national wildlife refuge or a, something along the lines of what they have

in Region 3 with their wetland management district. So maybe that didn't happen from an organizational point of view, but the fact is that the Fish and Wildlife Service still has a presence up there and still restored a lot of land and is still restoring land up there.

CARL: Yes.

LIBBY: Right, okay. Great. I don't know, I did want to talk to you about the Partners, when the Partners for Wildlife program became the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program. Maybe you can tell me a little bit about that.

CARL: That was ... what had happened was that there were some in the Washington headquarters office - what was being noticed - was that there was new money being brought into the agency through the Partners program. There was Partners for Wildlife program at that time, and it was, it was noticed by Hannibal Bolton who was over in the Fisheries program. So, he wanted to develop a Partners for Fish program. In Region 3, they didn't do, they were mostly wetlands, and they didn't have separate instream stuff and fish stuff that we did in most of the rest of the country. So, Benjamin [Tuggle] changed the name to Partners for Fish and Wildlife in order to try to keep Hannibal from getting his fingers on any new money that might otherwise be coming to the Partners program.

LIBBY: (laughter) So, what was Ben Tuggle's position at the time? Was he Assistant Director?

CARL: He was the Assistant Director for Habitat Conservation, they called it at the time, and Hannibal was the Assistant Director for Fisheries at the time. About six months later, they actually transferred the program over to Fisheries and called it Fisheries and Habitat Conservation and so Hannibal eventually did get it (laughter). He got the whole thing.

LIBBY: Well, all right. I think that's an important piece of history to kind of nail down, so I really appreciate that information. All right. So why don't we just finish up with talking a little bit more about what you did in New York State. Tell me how, a little bit about how the program evolved. We talked about it getting more sophisticated, but I remember at one, we just went out and you just filled the [drained] wetland, put a ditch plug in there.

CARL: Right.

LIBBY: Then I remember some concerns about cultural resources and then there was wetland permitting and NEPA compliance. Can you tell me kind of what happened with all that stuff and where it is now?

CARL: Well, all that stuff now is well, the national headquarters office did very well at - our NEPA compliance s mostly CatEx [Categorical Exclusion] now. So, we've done that. The Corps of Engineers has done a wonderful job with Nationwide [Permit] 27 so that we just do what's called a reporting form that goes to the Corps that we are going to restore wetlands and not change wetland types. So that is consistent with Nationwide 27. So, we just have been able to use that. And the only, the cultural resources now are on a website that we just type into the CRIS (Cultural Resources Information System)

it's called, the website, and say, "Here's what we are going to do and where" and we can get a fairly quick response as to if there has to be a Phase 1 [archeological survey] done.

LIBBY: Okay.

CARL: We've done a few Phase 1's. We've never done a Phase 2. I'll drop the project before I do a Phase 2. Then, the only other permit issue is really the State wetland. If you are in a State wetland, and every region of the State varies as far as how hard it is to get a permit to do a project there. Some regions work very well, some regions are a challenge. We actually have a general permit up in Region 5 [northeast New York State] from DEC to do wetlands and stream work, so that's, we do a lot more projects there than we do any other part of the state.

LIBBY: Right. Well, I think, the thing is you can tell me all this in, over the course of a couple of minutes, but this was a tremendous amount of work to get all these into place. Tremendous amount of work. You probably had a lot to do with that.

CARL: I had something to do with it, yes. We used to have, when the program started, there were a lot of meetings in the headquarters office where somebody was brought in from each region and typically it was either the regional coordinator and a state coordinator or a state coordinator, so I was usually the one that was going in for one way or another for the meetings where we trying to develop all the policies and the programs and that kind of thing. Then there was some turnover after you left. There were a few other people who didn't stay very long as the regional coordinator. Even some of the ones that came later would rather have me go in and represent the region and do it.

LIBBY: Well, I could, I can say that there really is, there is a reason why you would be the one that people would want to go in because you knew the program from the beginning and have been involved with every single aspect of it. You're on the ground experience was really kind of "par non". Nobody had the experience that you did, and you were also able to put things together. You understood what needed to be done to help facilitate things. I can understand that. So, your projects started, you did wetland projects, restoration, and then I think you moved into streambank fencing, and you were doing riparian restoration work.

CARL: Yes. The next phase out of the wetlands was that, even from a waterfowl standpoint, was that they needed suitable nesting cover around it. So, we started planting and having buffer zones and planting native grasses around the wetlands we were doing. Then we spread out from that to doing riparian restoration which primarily was streambank fencing. If cattle was the problem, a fence was the solution. So, we started doing some of that. And then, many of those programs got taken up by USDA as either a CRP component or an EQUIP component -Environmental Quality Incentive Program. They, the landowners, could actually get a payment in order for them to participate in that. And Partners doesn't make any payments to landowners, so there's a big incentive for landowners to work with USDA instead of us for some of those projects because they're getting a payment to do that.

LIBBY: Right. So now you moved into, you were talking about the aquatic, in-stream habitat restoration. Can you talk about that a little bit?

CARL: Right. Well, that's part of why we are doing that is because many of the projects that we had done originally was now, are now being carried out by other players like USDA. So, there is no reason for us to try to duplicate what they could do because they have oodles of money more than we will ever have. For a while, when the Wetland Reserve Program first came out, there were three different aspects to it. There was a 10-year contract, which is essentially what Partners did. That didn't pay 100 per cent, but we could cost share on that, so we did a number of those. Then there was a 30-year easement and there was a perpetual easement. The 30-year easement still had a 25 per cent cost share that we could still cost share with. The permanent, the USDA has lots of money to pay for that so we never really cost-shared on any permanent easements, although people in other regions do and other states do. What we worked with the USDA, in order to develop a, and still do, develop a, the Wetland Reserve Plan, WRPO, Plan of Operations, but we don't usually spend our money in order to implement it.

LIBBY: Carl, are you moving around a lot?

CARL: Yes (laughter). I'm sorry!

LIBBY: 'cause I can hear all that. I don't know if you can sit a little stiller. That would be ...

CARL: I'm on a chair with wheels on it.

LIBBY: Well, we'll only talk a few more minutes. Tell me a little bit about, I notice now that you are also doing projects that really are benefitting endangered species.

CARL: We have done some of those. We have done some gating of bat habitat. We've done some work using early successional stuff with Karner blue butterflies over at the Albany Pine Bush and so, it is a priority now. When Partners first came out, it was of course all related to waterfowl but it's generally, it's Federal trust resources. So, the biggie currently in Federal trust resources are endangered species. So, we always will work on a project that involves endangered species. We also are working on aquatic habitat too. Streams - Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture. We're working on one with the, up in the St. Lawrence, there is another program called the FERMF. That's the Fish Enhancement Research and Mitigation Fund that came from the settlement of the dam on the St. Lawrence. So, they have money in order to do fisheries and dam removal and that kind of stuff in the St. Lawrence that affects that.

LIBBY: Wow.

CARL: So, they are helping us and working with us on some of those projects, and we help them in doing some wetland work and some fisheries work including things like spawning beds for walleye and that kind of stuff.

LIBBY: Wow. Just think about how the program has changed. Can you imagine 35 years ago or well, almost 35 years ago.

CARL: Yeah, not at all. In fact, my goal to be honest with you when I was first driving up for that television interview back in 1990, I was thinking, "You know, if I can get 5 wetland projects done in my career, I would be satisfied." (laughter). We're pushing 10,000 now.

LIBBY: Wow. Congratulations. You really have, you have done so much for, you've done so much for wildlife. Tell me what you think some of the projects are that you are, really the most proud of or you think are the most important projects that you have done.

CARL: That's, that's a tough one because there are always new ones and ones that are really challenging and come out just like you thought they would and then there's some others that weren't. Some of the most challenging ones are challenging more because of trying to put the people together than it is just the resources. We have one that was, it was 150-acre wetland site that was partly owned as a nature center by the Town, partly owned by a farmer who wanted to drain it, partly owned by a duck hunter who wanted to hunt it and have deep water on it, and partly owned by a guy who ran a fishing business that wanted to use the earth to sell with his worms. So, to try to get that project put together was a challenge. We ended up putting a water control structure in the ditch that had been dug to drain it in order to get the water back where it was naturally, to get everybody to agree that ok, it's not going to be as deep as the duck hunter wanted, it's not going to be as dry as the farmer wanted, but it's going to be back to where its natural level was. Those kind of, those are the challenging ones. We also, we've done some very large and complicated stream projects that I'm glad are still holding up, so what we are working on the Ausable River up in the Adirondacks, we're working on the Battenkill. We've been working on the Battenkill for a number of years now and it's interesting. We did a project there - what happened was years ago, the State put in what was the single wing deflectors and the structures to try to keep the banks from eroding. But what happened was, they actually caused the banks to erode because the high water washed across those and into the bank and scoured the bank out, over-widened the channel, and made it shallow and wide, rather than narrower and deep. So, we went in with some logs and turned all their structures around to narrow it up and deepen it, and it's interesting. I had a conversation with a guy who was starting to say that he was, he didn't believe all the fish that this guy was catching in a certain reach. I told him where the reach was, and his face got all kind of white. "Oh, right there! Yeah, I know right where it was because we just finished that job!"

LIBBY: (laughter) Oh boy. Speaking of landowners and there you had multiple landowners with multiple objectives. Just tell me how working with landowners has changed since the beginning, since 1985. You know, Fish and Wildlife Service, maybe in the northeast were not as, seen as suspiciously as we are in some other parts of the country. But still, we are the Federal government. "We're here to help", ha ha, right?

CARL: It does, but I think they are a lot more used to us now, and I think the way most projects come about are from word of mouth from other people. So, when somebody, when one of their neighbors says, "Well you can call this guy. He'll work with you. He'll be good about that." Then those kind of people, you get a call from. So, we don't do any cold calls where we'll just walk out and say, "Hey, you've got a good enough site to do that" 'cause we have enough to keep us busy with the landowners that we are working with that want the work done there. We get a lot of referrals from local conservation groups. The Trout Unlimited folks and the land trust folks and work with the landowners

that have really already been contacted and are aware of what we going to, of what we are working to help them do. A lot of the people really are interested in improving waterfowl habitat. It kind of runs in spurts of – they have little meetings apparently, I guess because we will get a group that's – they're into training water dogs or something so we'll get a bunch of calls from them. Then we'll get a bunch of calls from guys who are prison guards or something, you know they all talk to each other someplace. Some guys that are like into deer hunting for food or for whatever reasons. So, all these groups will talk to each other and then spread the word from there.

LIBBY: Yeah. That's great. Well, we know this is a white hat program, right? It's, I'm thrilled that it is still going so strong after 35 years.

CARL: It is. Now, we have morphed for sure. We started out with just straightforward wetland work and trying to reflood areas that had been drained and now there's some pretty sophisticated dam projects on big rivers. I mean, Gian Dodici who works for me here now just finished two of them on, one of them is on the Genesee River where it is 400 feet wide, 5,000 cubic feet per second discharge though there, and another one on the Ausable that is two W weirs that go across the river. A lot of that work was a result of some of the Hurricane Irene that put a 15 feet of water on places. So, what we did was we actually came in and worked with municipalities in order to help them get things back the way they should be rather than just channelize and push the rocks up to the side.

LIBBY: Right. Wow. I'm really blown away by all this, by the change. I think it is incredible. So, I think we can wrap up by, unless there is something you want to add, just tell me what you think about, what you think about this program and its long-term benefits.

CARL: Well, I'm still working because the program has always got some new challenges and there's always some new issues and some, it's a new challenge and a new technique and something new to learn and new projects to look at. And to look at some of the older ones that have been around for 25 or 30 years and see that there is a lot to do. There is still a lot to do. So, what we are trying to do is as much as we can with the resources that we have available.

LIBBY: I'm thrilled that the Fish and Wildlife Service kept the program going. Is it institutionalized now in some way?

CARL: It is now. As you know, there was a time, back about 15 or 20 years ago, when somebody in the Fish and Wildlife Service thought it would be a good idea to cut budgets, and we'll start by cutting any program that does not have specific legislative authority. Partners was at the top of the list of things to be cut. That's when people realized well, some of the Directorate realized that there's a lot of people out here who didn't want that to happen. So, what happened, as a result of that, is that we now have a Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act, and we have, and it was just re-authorized, so we have specific legislative authority now.

LIBBY: Are you still there, Carl?

CARL: Yeah, I'm still here.

LIBBY: Okay. Well, I did not realize that. So, when did that Act pass? Do you remember?

CARL: The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act?

LIBBY: Yeah.

CARL: It was, it was about 10 years ago, and it was re-authorized this year as part of that reauthorization for some other, I forget which act, but it was in that. So, it was reauthorized. And reauthorized for about \$55 million.

LIBBY: Wow!

CARL: Which is quite a bit different than the first \$100,000 that we started out with.

LIBBY: Yeah, right! I remember when I started in October of '88 so I wasn't the first regional coordinator, Dick Dyer had been doing it for a little bit before me, and then George Haas I think was probably technically the first coordinator for Region 5, but I think our budget was \$250,000 altogether. That included all the money that went to the states, to the field offices. When I left, it was about, it was well over a couple of million dollars.

CARL: Yeah, it's like \$3.5 million now in Region 5.

LIBBY: Yeah. It still isn't much compared to the whole program but is the Farm Bill, I mean the Partners program, still really big in the other parts of the country as well?

CARL: It is. We developed a training course, the Partners course, Partners 101, which first started in 1990, and we would have had a course this year had it not been for the COVID thing. We're still planning on having one in the fall. There have been a number of new hires, especially in Region 4 and Region 2 [Southwest United States], that those people benefit quite a bit from the course that was - it's an NCTC course - that was developed.

LIBBY: Is that for anybody so Refuges or Fisheries people or ES people?

CARL: It's for, it's primarily for new folks in the Partners program but other people have been taking in after we have all the spaces filled for new people in the program.

LIBBY: That's amazing. So, you have a training course just for this program. That's pretty amazing. That's great.

CARL: It's probably one of the longest running NCTC courses there is. I've actually been an instructor for that since the beginning.

LIBBY: I can think of nobody better. That's great, that's great. Well, is there anything else you wanted to add? Any things we didn't cover that you want to make sure we talked about?

CARL: No, not really. We covered it.

LIBBY: Well, I think this has really been tremendous. You gave me not only a lot of information about the beginning of the program which we really wanted to capture. How did the program get off the ground? That's really important. That's the type of history that we can lose as people retire and then, you know, pass on. We wanted to ...

CARL: There is some controversy in there too. There are a lot of people who think "Oh, it's a feel good program" kind of stuff, and "It's easy to do." Well, it might be a very rewarding program - I'll give you that - but it's not easy. It's challenging to get a project actually constructed. It's a whole lot easier to review some public notice than it is to actually write a public notice and put a project together with the funding and with all the details of what it takes in order to get a project started. It's not, it's not easy by any stretch. Now making it look easy is what we do. But that's because we leave a lot of the details out of what we tell the landowner, that they don't have to worry about all the permit requirements and stuff that we have to do, and we don't tell the landowner what all they have to do. So, it's, there's a lot of challenges in order to get a project completed now.

LIBBY: Right, right. I think there always were but ...

CARL: There were, there were. And there still are in a lot of respects. I mean, every project is a little bit different but there have always been people who were against the program, mostly within the Fish and Wildlife Service. We have been liked by the Republicans like us, the Democrats like us, the Cattlemen's Association likes us, the Farm Bureau likes us. But within the Fish and Wildlife Service, there are groups that saw us as, as competition and taking money that they would rather have themselves.

LIBBY: Right.

CARL: So, if we ever had a problem with the Partners program, it was within the Fish and Wildlife Service, not from outside. And as far as supporters, they've been outside. In fact, Dave Smith from the North American Plan, I ran into him when I was working on a stream project or doing (unintelligible) with the (unintelligible) class at NCTC, and he lives down there now, and he came out after he was retired and we were talking a little bit about it, and he said, "You know, the biggest problem with the Partners program is that it's within the Fish and Wildlife Service. The thing about it with the North American Program, I could always go to one of the State Directors and say, "Hey, I need some help with this" and it was outside the Fish and Wildlife Service." And he's right. It's actually been the Fish and Wildlife Service has been an impediment at times to the program.

LIBBY: You still feel that way? You don't think it's changed now? It's been accepted?

CARL: Region to region. Well, in some ways it is, because now some of the Regional Directors want us to do at-risk species stuff and forget about wetlands. And that's NO, NO. It's not that we can't do it, it's

that we shouldn't forget what landowners want. It's run by what people on the landscape want. It's not run by headquarters, as far as "You have to do it like this." We have to fill the demand. It's not, and it's why people don't seem to understand - we're in a partnership. You have to start with finding a landowner that is willing to work with you. You just can't say, "Hey, you're the crummiest farmer in the valley and we need to fix that stream over there." You have to get them on board and get them to help you do a project. It's not a top down kind of thing. I think there are people in the agency that don't appreciate that.

LIBBY: Well, maybe [in]the new administration, things will be a little bit better.

CARL: I think it will be helpful.

LIBBY: (laughter) Well, I think the last question I had is, is there anybody else that you think we should talk to in particular? Are there some folks that you would highly recommend that I talk to, to get, as we build a national sense of how this program rolled out and has been implemented nationally?

CARL: Are you still, what did I do? Did I just hang up?

LIBBY: No, you're still there. (laughter)

CARL: Okay. The people you had on your list I think are good. I think talking to Bob Misso is tremendously important, and in Region 2 – I saw you had a lot of Region 3 people and not so many Region 2 people. Mike McCollum would be a good one to get ahold of for early on in Region 2 in Texas. There, they are actually doing pretty well now. Don Wilhelm is the regional coordinator now. He was the state Partners coordinator. Region 4 – I've heard they're a little frustrated now in Region 4 because of all things, Leo [Miranda] who started out in the Partners program is now the Regional Director, and he's not as supportive of it as I would hope that he would have been. He's now, he's trying to get them to do "at risk" species and not do wetlands stuff.

LIBBY: I can see with private landowners that might be, unless it's a land trust, that might be kind of hard because, unless you've got a, some kind of Safe Harbor clause or something.

CARL: Right, right. And that's a delicate situation if you've got to start going to have to do a Safe Harbor for every project that you do. Region 2 is doing a bunch of those now, and Region 4 has been doing a bunch, but that's – you talk about a bureaucratic process – that'll keep people wrapped up for a long time.

LIBBY: Well, Carl, I can't thank you enough for this interview. I want you to hold on – I'm just going to stop the interview, and I will say goodbye to you offline. Okay, so hold on.

END OF INTERVIEW

Key words: endangered species, Farm Bill, farms and farming, habitat restoration, North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, partnerships, riparian environments, rivers and streams, waterfowl, wetland restoration, wildlife refuges