



The Oral History of Janet Kennedy

August 28, 2018

Interview conducted by Libby Herland
Fitchburg, Massachusetts



Oral History Cover Sheet

Approximate years worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: 23 years, plus 12 with the National Park Service, for a total of 35 years Federal service.

Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held: Outdoor Recreation Planner (ORP), Parker River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR); ORP, Great Meadows NWR Complex; Deputy Project Leader, Great Meadows NWR Complex; Project Leader, Parker River NWR; Refuge Supervisor, North, Regional Office (Hadley, MA)

Most Important Projects: Running the visitor services program at Great Meadows, which included environmental education and meeting curriculum requirements with local schools; working with Friends groups, and engaging Friends, volunteers and the public through the “Meadows Messenger”. Working as part of a cross-program team on “Outreach: One Day at a Time”. Serving as a Region 5 firearms instructor. Serving as the facilitator of the Gulf of Maine ecosystem team. Learning the value of communication from the Monomoy gull control project. Rebuilding community support at Parker River NWR by re-opening parts of the beach in such a manner that protected nesting piping plovers but allowed some beach access when and where possible during the summer. Working both on the design of the Parker River NWR visitor center as well as working with Friends and local and State partners to securing funding for its construction. Conducting Congressional outreach both for project funding and explaining workforce reductions when budgets were lean.

Colleagues and Mentors: Jack Fillio, Pat Martinkovic, Ed Moses, Roger DiRosa, Ralph Pisapia, Ron Howey, Kathy Zeamer, Marci Caplis, Bud Oliviera, Pam Hess, Harry Sears, Dick Dyer, Sue McMahan, Tony Léger, Frank Drauszewski, Martha Parmenter, Ward Feurt

Brief Summary of Interview: Janet describes being a military kid who ended up in Maine after her father retired from the Marine Corps. Her first federal positions were with the National Park Service, where she gained her law enforcement commission and interacted with visitors at various national parks and sites. She gained permanent status with the National Park Service but returned to New England with a position as the ORP at Parker River NWR, and then at Great Meadows NWR. Janet describes her detail back to Parker River NWR to work on the new visitor center development and construction, her subsequent promotion to Project Leader at Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, and then some highlights from her last position in the Regional Office in Hadley, where she worked collaboratively with Tony Léger and the other members of the Senior Leadership Team to develop policy and guide refuges in New England and New Jersey.

The Interview

LIBBY: Hi, this is Libby Herland. I'm the retired representative from Region 5 on the Fish and Wildlife Service Heritage Committee. I am in Fitchburg, Mass today with Janet Kennedy, who retired from Region 5 in the Fish and Wildlife Service. We are doing an oral history. So, Janet, I worked with you as a peer and then you were my supervisor and we're friends, and I really look forward to hearing your story. I just want to thank you for being willing to actually conduct an oral history with us.

JANET: Thank you, Libby, and I'm very glad you're doing this project. I think this is a, I think this is a big thing for the Fish and Wildlife Service, for the refuge system, and so it's, it's an honor to be interviewed for this, for this project.

LIBBY: Yes, definitely. You know this information will be on-line and people 100 years from now could be reading about you and your experiences in the Fish and Wildlife Service. (laughter). We like to kind of start these interviews with learning a little bit about you and where you were born and when and your early influences. Tell us a little bit about your family, your parents, and that type of thing.

JANET: Okay! Well, we can start at the beginning. I was born on a, near a military base in Virginia in the mid-1950's. My dad was a career Marine Corps officer. So, I was a military kid, and part of being a military kid is moving around a lot. Home was always where the family happened to be at the time. And so, it made for a close family, a close-knit family. I have a brother and two sisters. Dad spent his career, for another dozen years after I was born, until he retired. My mom's job was being the officer's wife which in the military is its own job. There are a lot of responsibilities and so forth for the officers' wives. He retired when, he retired in the late '60's, and we – his last retirement job was in Portsmouth, New Hampshire – which is right on the coast of Maine. Then he moved to mid-coastal Maine. By that time, I was in high school. So, I went to high school in Thomaston, Maine and graduated in 1973, and then went on to University of Maine in Orono and studied recreation and park management. I got a B.S. degree in recreation and parks management and that's, that's as far as my formal college education went. Back in those days, that was enough. I know it isn't anymore.

LIBBY: (laughter). That's right. Were you interested, did you spend time outside, when you were growing up on these military bases, or then when you moved to Maine?

JANET: I had a couple of influential people when I was in Maine. I had a junior high teacher who was up from, she was from the area of Mt. Katahdin, and she would take some of us camping up there and hiking the mountain and so forth. That was a really big influence. It really made me interested in the outdoors. The story of Baxter State Park in Maine is very interesting. Turns out Thoreau was up there and all that. So that was, I was into the camping and hiking, and I also, I also was kind of a social person, and I liked people a lot. I'm thinking, "What kind of a career can I do where I can do this outdoors, natural area kind of thing and also

work with people?” In high school, I had another schoolteacher whose husband was in the military. It was in the late ‘60’s, early ‘70’s, so it was Viet Nam war time, and he was in the Coast Guard, taking a hiatus from a National Park Service career. I was very interested in learning from him, what kind of a job that was, and of course I saw the leaflet that has the park ranger on the horse in the Rocky Mountains - the recruitment leaflet. So those people, the couple of people there were very influential in realizing, helping me realize that I could make a career out of the outdoors, out of land management and people management, in those areas.

LIBBY: So, you went to college, you got your degree.

JANET: Yes.

LIBBY: Did you have a job – summer jobs – that had anything to do with being outdoors or did you come home and work in a grocery store?

JANET: Well, who isn’t a camp counselor? So, I did camp counseling just one summer. But then I did an internship as part of college where I spent a semester working in Yosemite National Park. That schoolteacher and her husband were back in the Park Service by then, and so she helped me get a, an unpaid college credit internship from the University of Maine in Yosemite, California. And that was pivotal, because the nice thing about an internship is you can try on the organization and the work, and the organization can check you out too. I was subsequently hired that summer, there, to be an entrance station fee collector. And that was a lot of fun. I got a lot of experience there.

LIBBY: What was your GS level? Do you remember?

JANET: I was a GS-3.

LIBBY: Three. Yeah. (laughter)

JANET: Yes. \$7,000 a year, if I had worked the whole year. That was the pay rate at the time. (laughter). Then I was, I knew I wanted to pursue that career, so I pursued it, but it was a kind of a long, a long row. I went from – so I pursued the National Park Service. I became a one-year temporary, then I got a subject-to-furlough position. They now call it a career seasonal, but then it was called subject-to-furlough, before I got a permanent job. So, it was several years of, of being furloughed or being temporary before I got a permanent job.

LIBBY: Were you at different parks all over the country?

JANET: Yes, over the course of my career – my 12 years with the Park Service, my Park Service career – I worked in Yosemite National Park in California. I worked in, at Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial which is in southern Indiana. It’s where Abraham Lincoln spent his, his youth. I worked at Hopewell Village National Historic Site which is in Pennsylvania, and I worked in Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area which is outside of Atlanta, Georgia. Most of those were historic sites which was ironic because I never really studied history in college. I was doing more of the science and recreation and that sort of thing.

LIBBY: Did you say you went to the University of Maine?

JANET: Yeah.

LIBBY: In Orono?

JANET: Yep.

LIBBY: So, you became a permanent employee in the Park Service. What year was that? Do you remember?

JANET: It was probably around 19..., it was probably around 1980.

LIBBY: And does your time in service start then in terms of your, your civil service – you're civil service, right?

JANET: I was able to buy back my seasonal and less than permanent fulltime time, which I did do that around 1980 so it didn't cost a lot.

LIBBY: Yeah. Smart move.

JANET: Yeah, it was!

LIBBY: Yeah. So, your first permanent job in the Park Service was at which site?

JANET: The first permanent job was at – well, now I'm thinking that maybe that was, maybe that was, it was subject-to-furlough, at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial. And I was a, I was a, I was called a park technician at the time. It was sort of junior to a park ranger but the same 025 series.

LIBBY: Oh yeah?

JANET: And I was mostly doing interpretation, which was basically visitor services, and I also did some law enforcement, although there wasn't much law enforcement to do. I maintained my commission. I had gotten a law enforcement commission when I was a one-year temporary. They sent me off to FLETC [Federal Law Enforcement Training Center] and, so that was in 19...at the end, the very end of 1977, was when I completed FLETC.

LIBBY: What was that like for you?

JANET: There were (laughing), there were two girls in our class of 30. It was good, and actually it was kind of relatively easy for me because I was right out of college, so the book stuff, I was sort of primed to do the book learning. I was not, I hadn't had much experience in, in, you know, firearms or that sort of thing, so I like to think that I didn't have any bad habits. And so, it was, it went fine. It was a positive experience. I also thought this is a great ticket to have in a career.

LIBBY: Absolutely. Yeah.

JANET: So, it worked out well. And then I maintained that, just jumping ahead, right up until about 2001 with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

LIBBY: So, for 20 years or more than that...

JANET: Oh yeah.

LIBBY: ... you had law enforcement. Yeah! That, did you ever think you'd be a law enforcement officer (laughter)?

JANET: Well, I knew that I knew that back in Park Service days, I knew that that was part of the deal for some of the rangers. Some of them were interpreters, some of them were resource managers, that sort of thing, so I knew it was a possibility and I thought it was a good credential to have, just like if you had your EMT [Emergency Medical Technician] credential or your firefighter's credential or any of those other things would be positive things. And at the time, it was, it was less specialized. You could be sort of a generalist and have any of those responsibilities or all of them.

LIBBY: And the focus was really on resource protection and visitor safety, right?

JANET: Yes.

LIBBY: Now of course it's really different. We're dealing with a lot of urban issues on our refuges and our parks.

JANET: It's much more, it's much more specialized now than it used to be. It used to be more generalized, and it's become far more specialized.

LIBBY: Yeah, yeah. So, you are a permanent Park Service employee. Did you think your career was going to be with the Park Service for the rest of your life, or did you...

JANET: I suppose at the time I did. But one of the things that – it took a long time – one of the things that was difficult was it took a long time to advance. There was a lot of competition and I worked in several parks, and I did just fine, but after 12 years I had, I had gotten to be a GS-7, and I had just landed a GS-9 job in the Park Service and realized that I could be plateaued at the GS-9 level for a long time, and I wanted, I wanted my career to advance. I had a, I met a fellow from Fish and Wildlife Service through friends at FLETC, who was a law enforcement officer at Parker River Refuge named Ross Lane. Ross has since moved on to law enforcement with another agency. But Ross was talking with me about his work at Parker River Refuge, and I thought, "Wow, Fish and Wildlife Service. I know there's upward mobility. He said there's a job open right now for an ORP – outdoor recreation planner – GS-9/11." And I thought, "Hmmm." There was also one at Great Meadows Refuge open at the same time, GS-9/11. And so, I thought, you know, "This might be just the thing. It gives me the opportunity to move back to New England" because I had moved all those places that I mentioned earlier. I could move back to New England. I could be with an organization that has more of a resource focus. I mean, I

should say a natural resource focus, because I was at historical resources, recreational resources and so forth. And so, I applied for those, for both of those jobs.

LIBBY: Oh, both of them.

JANET: And I was interviewed, so that was great! I got, I got interviewed by Jack Fillio and was hired as the outdoor recreation planner 9/11 at Parker River and that happened in 1989. Early in 1989.

LIBBY: Okay.

JANET: Pat Martinkovic was my supervisor. So, I have to thank Jack and Pat for bringing me into the Fish and Wildlife Service, where I spent the whole rest of my career.

LIBBY: I didn't realize that you went to Parker River.

JANET: Yeah, I was there for just one year. The focus was the entrance station fee collection and the visitor services program. I did that for the year, and the opportunity at Parker – I mean Great Meadows – was still there. Great Meadows being a much bigger complex, had a whole lot more going on than the focus there [Parker River] on what was the big fee program. And so, I only stayed a year and went to Great Meadows, in 1990, continuing with that GS-9/11. Ed Moses was the project leader and Roger DiRosa was my supervisor. After Roger left, Dave Frisque was my supervisor.

LIBBY: He just retired.

JANET: He did. (laughter). I'm very happy for them. They've headed back to the mid-west which I'm glad for them. They wanted to do that.

LIBBY: I bet you were happy to come back to the northeast, though.

JANET: Oh yes.

LIBBY: And your family must have been happy.

JANET: Oh, indeed. It was, it was nice. I had met my partner, Flo, when we were both working in parks in Pennsylvania. I was working at a national historic site, and she was working at a county park. Also, my family, my - both of my sisters and my - well both of my sisters were in Connecticut and Massachusetts and my brother in New York City - so it was really nice to be able to get back up into the northeast.

LIBBY: Yes, 'cause I know you were very close. You are close to your family.

JANET: As I mentioned, military family kind of sticks together.

LIBBY: Right.

JANET: So that was nice.

LIBBY: Yeah. And, did you have any, what was it like to transition from the National Park Service to the Fish and Wildlife Service?

JANET: It was, it was very interesting for me. The Park Service, in my experience, it was somewhat insulated, and it was all – I think sometimes it's the Marine Corps of the, of the conservation group because they are so all about the green and gray, as they say. Coming to Fish and Wildlife, to the refuge system was, in some ways, a bigger picture because, because it didn't seem as insulated. It seemed more outward, which I thought was delightful. It was so much lesser known. That was, came as a surprise to me, that, that so many fewer people knew about the national wildlife refuge system compared to the national parks, or the Fish and Wildlife Service in general.

LIBBY: That's right.

JANET: So, yes, it was a bit of a, bit of a transition, but I was doing much of the same kinds of work. I was still doing the people work, working with the visitors, you know, working with information stations, Friends groups, even more so with Friends groups in Fish and Wildlife Service. Oh, yeah.

LIBBY: Yeah. You had an active Friends group at Parker River at that time, didn't you?

JANET: It was, it was...

LIBBY: Or was that when it just starting to ramp up?

JANET: There wasn't much of a Friends group there, it was bigger at the, at Great Meadows, and then both of them ramped up from there. So it was, it seemed more, it seemed less insulated.

LIBBY: Yeah, yeah. Did you, did you learn anything in, well think about Jack Fillio and Pat Martinkovic, who were both at Parker River for a long time. Did one of them really kind of reach out to you to mentor you a little bit into the Fish and Wildlife Service, or were you not really there long enough for that?

JANET: I wasn't, I think they were both supportive. I really wasn't there long enough.

LIBBY: Yeah.

JANET: I do think that Pat, being my supervisor, was especially wanting to ensure my success, and that, that was valuable for my future in the Service.

LIBBY: Yeah. So, but, Great Meadows never filled their position, the ORP position?

JANET: I don't recall. I don't think they did. I'm not sure, but I'm not exactly, I don't recall exactly why it was still available a year later, but it was.

LIBBY: So how did that happen that you decided to go over? Did you just lateral over there?

JANET: I did.

LIBBY: You didn't have to apply.

JANET: I don't recall if I had to apply. I kind of don't think I did, but, because I had been accepted into a 9/11 and then I got a 9/11.

LIBBY: Right.

JANET: So, I don't think I did. I went there, I went there at, in January I believe of 1990 and was sent off to refuge academy that very same year, I believe. I got a lot of support from Ed and Roger. There was just, there was a lot more, it was more responsibility and more going on as far as responsibilities for the outdoor recreation planner.

LIBBY: So, had you filled a position that had been Dena Richardson I think her name was? Do you know who had been in the position before you? I'm just thinking...

JANET: Oh, I do!

LIBBY: 'Cause I'm just thinking about all the narratives and all the files because I became the manager at Great Meadows at some point in my career. I don't know if she was before or after you.

JANET: Dena Donaldson, are you thinking of?

LIBBY: Donaldson – maybe that's it.

JANET: Donaldson. She was a SCEP student while we were there.

LIBBY: Oh, okay.

JANET: I followed, I can't, I'm sorry...

LIBBY: That's alright. It doesn't matter. I don't think I really knew the sequence of all the ORPs, but I know how important that is to that complex.

JANET: I followed, oh, Cheryl Branigan Simpson.

LIBBY: Oh Cheryl, yes. Cheryl Simpson.

JANET: I followed Cheryl Simpson, and it was such a smooth transition because she kept the best notes.

LIBBY: Yes, I remember her, yep. I remember her (laughter). So, you go to, you're at Great Meadows, and at that time, was the complex the same as it is now?

JANET: It didn't have the New Hampshire...

LIBBY: Oh, at that time?

JANET: ...refuges.

LIBBY: Okay, so they got added.

JANET: Yes.

LIBBY: 'Cause then they were taken away.

JANET: It didn't have the New Hampshire refuges, and the real focus was on, well most of the activity was at Great Meadows or, and Monomoy.

LIBBY: Monomoy.

JANET: However, Oxbow and Assabet was acquired at that time. We had Nantucket, we had Nomans Land Island. Massasoit.

LIBBY: Yep. And then you picked up John Hay and Wapack, during that time?

JANET: Yes.

LIBBY: Wow!

JANET: It was a lot.

LIBBY: I can't imagine that. (laughter). Wow. Alrighty. So, yeah, tell me a little bit about what you did at Great Meadows. What were some of your day to day, did you, I know Friends groups?

JANET: Absolutely. As Friends groups liaison, was big. It was the SuAsCo Watershed Association. It was a very small group, but passionate about the refuge and some of the refuge projects. I did all those ORP things. School kids, it was Great Meadows was on the, was part of the school curriculum for two different grades at some nearby schools, where all the children in a particular grade would come for a day at Great Meadows. So, there was meeting them and orienting them to the refuge. Sometimes leading a walk.

LIBBY: And you got actively, you were actively involved with that?

JANET: Oh yes. Oh yes, I was doing those. It was great fun. I loved that.

LIBBY: That changed you know, over time.

JANET: We did, oh, the Meadows Messenger. It was a newsletter that was done by rubbing on letters back in the day (laughter).

LIBBY: Oh, my goodness.

JANET: It was before computerized newsletter.

LIBBY: Oh, I didn't realize that.

JANET: Oh, yes. I did some law enforcement there, and it was really resource focused. It was hunting patrols. That was, for the most part, that's what we did at Great Meadows. It was during that time that they trained me as a firearms instructor.

LIBBY: Oh!

JANET: So that was another thing. That was a unique, or a rare opportunity. Another thing I wasn't much of a gun nut at all, so I didn't have a lot of the bad habits that one might get, and I was one of, I guess I was the only one at the time, the only woman as a firearms instructor, and I was left handed, so I had a lot of unique things to bring to it. So that was a neat thing and I enjoyed working with the officers and the other firearms instructors. There's a nice camaraderie among that group, and I enjoyed being part of that.

LIBBY: Where did you qualify? Up at [Fort] Devens?

JANET: Yeah. Most of the time it was at Devens, yeah. We also did it wherever we happened to have our annual refreshers.

LIBBY: Did you have any assistants or did, were you the only visitor services staff at the refuge complex?

JANET: We had a SCEP student, Dena Donaldson. We had another SCEP student by the name of Jackie Cornish. That was one of our very sad experiences was that Jackie passed away in a diving accident on a weekend. So that was one of the low points of the career, was losing her tragically.

LIBBY: That must have been really difficult on the staff.

JANET: It was, it was. Thank heavens for EAP [Employee Assistance Program]. They sent a counselor over and we chatted as a group and people could chat individually if they wanted to. She was a wonderful, wonderful friend and colleague and passed away so tragically, just like that. It was so sad.

LIBBY: Yeah. I met her mom you know. She – they had that little memorial garden for her on the walkway and she died in June, I think it was, June or July. One day there was a woman out there. I had planted some native flowers in there, but unfortunately the deer really did a job on all the flowers. So, she, we started talking and I didn't know who she was. She said, "I'm Jackie's mom."

JANET: How nice that you got to meet her.

LIBBY: Yes, it was so sad. And that would come up occasionally amongst the staff, people would remember her. So.

JANET: Oh, when I first got there, too, there was a recreation technician, too, but he was only there for a year or so, and then moved west, and left the Service I believe. But we, we had help from the Friends and the volunteers and so forth. It was good.

LIBBY: So, you said that Roger was your supervisor. Did you, and then Dave Frisque. Did you, would you consider them mentors, or would you consider anybody in particular as a mentor? Maybe Ed?

JANET: Honestly, I would say Ed.

LIBBY: Yeah, Ed Moses.

JANET: Ed Moses. One of the things that I was, I was fortunate to have was his support and, you know, sort of he respected my abilities, so I would say he, of all of them, was probably the biggest mentor. I was an outdoor recreation planner and I think that at the time, outdoor recreation planning was sort of like one of the lower rungs of the, of the status of the organization. Important work but some people didn't want to do the people work, and I understand that. Some of us loved doing the people work. I got a lot of credit for the things that I was able to do by people like Ed Moses, so I think that he certainly fostered my career and gave me sort of some management responsibilities when I wasn't a manager. So, I appreciated that. I learned a lot and if he had not been willing to share those opportunities with me, I probably wouldn't have gone on with the career that I ended up having, which was in management.

LIBBY: We're going to do an oral history together in a couple of weeks.

JANET: Excellent.

LIBBY: Hard to believe that there's never, he's never done an oral history, but he is full of stories.

JANET: He's one of the icons. You have to interview Ed.

LIBBY: He definitely is. So, yeah. So, you - how long did you work at Great Meadows?

JANET: I was there...

LIBBY: You were there for a long time, but you changed positions while you were there.

JANET: Yes. Ed retired in 1996, and I had an incredibly rare opportunity to be the acting project leader for a number of months after Ed retired, which was remarkable in that I was an ORP, and ORPs don't become acting project leaders! But I have to, I have to give a thank you to Ralph Pisapia and Ron Howey. They were, back in the days of GARD/PARD [Geographic Assistant Regional Directors/Program Assistant Regional Directors], they were the supervisors.

LIBBY: Right.

JANET: One day they were asking me who they thought might be a good person for acting project leader, and I had this – I came out of my shy cocoon and said, "How about me?"

LIBBY: (laughter)

JANET: And they were a little surprised but then they agreed to it.

LIBBY: Yeah!

JANET: So, I think that that being able to be the acting project leader for a few months gave me some exposure and some credibility I guess, that I might be able to make it in the manager series. I have to, I have to say one other thing, too, that was a huge opportunity. One of the important things that was happening in the '90s was we had a cadre of meeting facilitators, and as an outdoor recreation planner, in the mid-GS ranks, being a meeting facilitator for some of the meetings that had the upper echelon of managers and supervisors and so forth - regional directors – having that exposure, being able to facilitate their meetings for them, also I believe that was critical in getting known more than as the person who was doing the newsletters or the outreach, that sort of thing.

LIBBY: Did you facilitate any of the ecosystem teams, do you remember?

JANET: Yes.

LIBBY: Were you associated, were you assigned to an ecosystem team?

JANET: I was the ecosystem team facilitator for the northeast one, the North Atlantic.

LIBBY: Gulf of Maine?

JANET: Gulf of Maine, yes. I believe that's right.

LIBBY: Yeah, 'cause I was the facilitator for the Hudson River ecosystem team.

JANET: Okay.

LIBBY: And I completely agree with you. They got to see you in a different light, and you got, you were seen by more people, too.

JANET: Yes, I agree with that.

LIBBY: Not just refuge people.

JANET: Yes. We also got, being a facilitator, occasionally I would go, if I, if a fellow facilitator needed an extra hand with either their meeting, or well, with their meeting, I had been invited along to help out. So, a lot of those, some of those meetings had partners, state partners, Friends groups or affiliates. So that whole opportunity for that exposure I think was key to helping me move into the manager series.

LIBBY: What about, what I recall, not sure exactly when, but there was a time when we really started talking a lot about partners, partnerships, and not being able to do everything on our own. We really needed our partners. And you had experience with that too because of the Friends groups and the volunteers.

JANET: Yes, it makes all the difference in the world. They could help with outreach; they could help with work on the ground. They could also – Friends and partners – can do some things that we couldn't do. They could say some things we couldn't say to others. So, they are a wonderful resource and our best cheerleaders. I think that the more, the more support we can get from Friends groups and partners, the better off we are. I think it's the key to the refuge system's success and the agency's success. It's worked, it's worked well for us. It certainly worked during my career. It was key. We had an opportunity – well, when I moved to Parker River – well, I'm getting ahead. When I moved to Parker River as the manager in 2000 and, in the year 2000, we were in the process of building a visitor center. The refuge didn't have a lot of community support. There was a history of focusing inside the refuge and less in the community.

LIBBY: You had that big piping plover beach closure controversy at Parker River.

JANET: Absolutely, and if there's one time that people don't like the agency or the refuge, refuge administration, is when there are too many restrictions in their eyes. Now we still have to do wildlife first, and so trying to be more open and more open to the public and to public use while still maintaining our mandate for wildlife first, that was something that I was trying to do. We had a Friends group that was growing. We were able to open some certain areas to some activities, while still protecting the plovers. That went a long way. But getting to the point of Friends and partners, the Friends and our partner organizations when they saw that we were trying to make the refuge more user friendly while still maintaining or following our mandate, that, that worked wonders. The Friends and Mass Audubon Society were very helpful for us at Parker River. Beverly Heinz Lacey was the, was the Friends president early on.

LIBBY: Yep, I remember her.

JANET: She also helped foster Friends groups around the Service, which was wonderful.

LIBBY: Right.

JANET: Getting to the visitor center portion, I'm jumping around a little bit but. The Friends and the partners were key in one of the high points. Not only improving community relations with us but in helping us secure a million dollars of funding from the State, which one person in State government had promised to the – excuse me, I'm getting a little bit confused. We were able to secure \$1 million from the State from an earlier promise that pre-dated me, with the help of the mayor of Newburyport, working with the state U.S. Senator, the Massachusetts U.S. Senator, we were able to secure that million dollar promise towards the visitor center.

LIBBY: Was that Ted Kennedy?

JANET: No, it was John Kerry!

LIBBY: Oh, John Kerry.

JANET: The mayor of Newburyport had been the chief of staff for John Kerry years before. So, working with the city and the city working with the senator and the senator working with the state, it worked out that a million dollars came to the visitor center and the visitor center, too, had, has space – it's built now – has not only space for the refuge but there's space for a state office in there as well - for the state park that's located on Plum Island as well. So, I felt that was a real success through partnership that would not have been able to happen without partnership from the city, from the Friends.

LIBBY: Yeah, partners - they are really critical to success of us being able to do our job. Right! So, you, let's go back to Great Meadows. Were you at Great Meadows, or you were there, but I don't know what your involvement was. I'm thinking about some of the more difficult things that you may have had to deal with.

JANET: Oh, like the gull control at Monomoy?

LIBBY: Exactly what I was going to ask! Do you think that was that the most difficult thing that you ever had to deal with in your whole career?

JANET: That was one of them. If there was ever danger in my career, it was probably then, although nothing ever came of it. But there was concern that there might be some physical danger, so we had some special agents and so forth. I was...

LIBBY: Why don't you tell people a little bit about that as best as you can, because you and I know what we're talking about when we say "gull control at Monomoy" but the listener or the reader may not.

JANET: Okay. There was, of course you know it intimately well too. There was an influx of gulls on Monomoy that was crowding out, if you will, talking, speaking in laymen's language, that was crowding out the nesting tern population of common terns and some roseate terns, an endangered species.

LIBBY: Right.

JANET: The goal was to clear a tern-safe area of nesting gulls, and since they – a tern-safe area. It was determined – the science, the science said – that the way to make a gull-free zone was to poison gulls with a chemical avicide called DRC-1339.

LIBBY: Right.

JANET: I haven't thought of that in a little while! So, working with USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture] after MUCH study, the Service implemented this gull control project, this avicide program. We were assured that the gulls - that this poisoned bait would be placed on the nest of the nesting gulls - and that the gulls would ingest the avicide and would die on the nest. That would be that. However, when it was actually implemented, while many gulls died on the nest, many others didn't, and it included them flying to the nearby city of Chatham, village of Chatham, during peak tourist season, and dying there.

LIBBY: They were looking for water, right, is that right?

JANET: There were freshwater ponds.

LIBBY: And swimming pools.

JANET: Yes, it was, it was the actual implementation had effects that we never expected. So, it became a public relations nightmare. We had some great help from the Regional Office where, who sent a couple of people out to Chatham to man the phones, do interviews with the media. It was real crisis management, and we owe a lot of credit to – two people come to mind, and that would be Diana Weaver and Kathy Zeamer. Both of them were on nearly 24/7 managing this crisis. It was, it was – what do they call it?

LIBBY: It was a crisis!

JANET: It was crisis management because they just didn't, it just didn't go as planned in the short term. In the long term, if we can make, look long, it worked biologically.

LIBBY: It did!

JANET: We did control the gulls. There was now a gull-free zone where, where terns could thrive and there was also a gull-safe zone a little further south where those colonial birds could nest. So that was a big, that was a big, a BIG incident. My role, however, even as the ORP, was not doing outreach or media relations. In hindsight, it probably should have been, but my job was actually placing bait with, with a dozen other people, and it was done very systematically and so forth, but I was working more with biologists than with the media.

LIBBY: So, was it Ed Moses who was the main refuge person interacting with the Regional Office staff?

JANET: Yes, and we had two biologists. Stephanie Koch was a biologist then and I forget the name of the other biologist, what was her name?

LIBBY: Hmm. I'll know it when you say it but I'm trying to think who it was, who might have been there.

JANET: I can't think, I'll let you know if I think of her name.

LIBBY: But Stephanie was young.

JANET: She was very young at the time, yes. It was very early in her career.

LIBBY: Hmm. How did that, did that experience and living through that and the ramifications just went on for years and years...

JANET: Oh yes.

LIBBY: ...and years for the Fish and Wildlife Service and for Monomoy in particular. Did that, how did that influence, or did it influence how you managed - I don't want to say controversies

– you may not have had any more controversies, but even preventing controversies, you know what I’m saying?

JANET: I’m not sure that that one – I’m not sure that that incident could have been helped from a, from a, I mean there was plenty of outreach done prior to this.

LIBBY: Oh, there was.

JANET: Oh, yes. But what wasn’t expected was the extent to which it would, the birds would be able to move. Having a plan, having a media plan, having an outreach plan, being ready to do crisis management if it’s needed, yeah, it’s big. Having a good rapport with the media also helped. I did learn, though, that I think with that one, you could only have so much rapport. There was good rapport with the editorial board of local papers, but sometimes editorial boards changed their focus. But having good rapport with the media, being, being honest and forthcoming, which we were, we always need to be ready to be honest and forthcoming. So yeah, that was, it’s all about the communication, I think. And sometimes, mistakes happen. You know, sometimes, things go wrong, but you just have to explain what you can.

LIBBY: And I think that’s one of the values of you being, becoming a refuge manager, was that you understood that, so. Many refuge managers come from the biological series and they’re not necessarily as comfortable working with the public.

JANET: I agree with you, 100 percent. I think that I think there are more managers nowadays who have the, not only the communication skills but the interest in doing that. So, it worked out, I think that I think it’s good that communication skills are key. You know, if you, if you aren’t steeped in the biology, you surround yourself with good biologists and take their advice.

LIBBY: So, I know that at some point you became the deputy project leader at Great Meadows, the Great Meadows Complex.

JANET: That’s right.

LIBBY: There was more than, there were several refuges in the complex. There must have been 9 or 10 at one time. So, Mashpee wasn’t around yet, so, right? You didn’t have Mashpee at that time, or was Mashpee...?

JANET: I think we did. It was 1997.

LIBBY: Oh yeah!

JANET: But it was brand new. I was selected for the deputy refuge manager job in 1997 and I was in that job for a little while when project leader Bud Oliveira arrived. So, I guess I have to thank the Regional Office people, I believe they selected me in the interim, between Ed and Bud, to be the deputy. I would, I would have to say a million thanks to Dick Dyer and Sue McMahon and Tony Léger, because all three of them were also taking a chance on the ORP and

all three of them fostered me and my career from there. I spent a couple of year being deputy refuge manager, which I have to say is one of the hardest jobs.

LIBBY: Yeah.

JANET: There is a lot going on when you're the deputy. So, I did that for two years. I learned a lot in that job.

LIBBY: Did you have to take some classes to qualify?

JANET: No. The other people I have to thank are the, are the classification specialists in the Regional Office, because I gave them my resumé and they said it qualified. I have to say that my recreation and parks management degree focused a lot on biological sciences...

LIBBY: Yeah.

JANET: ...and recreation and communication, so apparently, I, you know – when they looked it over, I had enough to qualify for the 485 series.

LIBBY: Yeah, for many people, botany – they didn't have enough botany at that time.

JANET: Yes. No, I didn't [have that problem]. I thank them and I got to thank my curriculum people back at Orono because I was, I qualified for, in 1997 and got into that series and then I didn't need to have it analyzed again. So, I was very fortunate that way. I spent a couple of years being deputy at Great Meadows and then was detailed to Parker River while I was still the deputy – 1999 – to work on the new visitor center. They had had a fellow come in as a project manager for that visitor center facility, but he was only able to stay for about a year or so and left. So, they needed somebody to come in on a detail to really just focus on that project. And I, so I did that for a year or so.

LIBBY: You know, if you think about it, that's pretty surprising that they would bring somebody – I don't know of anybody else who ever got detailed just to get a visitor center built.

JANET: I think you're right.

LIBBY: Can you tell me some of the – I know there were some challenges with that building.

JANET: Yes, that was one of the last buildings before they did standard design. It may be one of the reasons why they did standard design, is because the building itself, while quite green, and an architectural beauty, it was expensive. It, it's a wonderful facility, but it's more complex than the Service realized they could, they could sustain in other buildings. So, they went to a centralized, standardized design, and it went much better, once with standardized design. This facility – I shouldn't say much better, but this facility I think is a fabulous facility.

LIBBY: Oh, it's beautiful.

JANET: It does what it needs to, but it was, it used a lot of new things that were far more complex. One of the new things it was using was...

LIBBY: Geo-thermal.

JANET: ...geo-thermal energy. A lot of solar energy. Of course, the site itself had a, had some history. It had been a dump and a Superfund site, so that was all cleaned up. Before I ever got there, that work had been done and it had been certified. Then we also needed to have support in the community and so, it was just in the conceptual stage, conceptual designs, when I got there and my focus was to be the building and you know, boosting, boosting rapport and involvement from the community. I got an apartment (apartment!), I got a little office space downtown because the north end of Plum Island was a little out of the way, and we had a lot of meetings right in town. And then, of course, we - there's a lot of work dealing with the finding the A&E firm, the architecture and engineering firm. So, there was, it was a lot. And it also frees up the manager to manage the refuge while you've got this person to work on the building. However, it didn't quite turn out that way, because Jack [Fillio] retired only about a year after I got there, and I applied for and became the project leader there. So that was my first project leader job.

LIBBY: So, Pat Martinkovic was, had already gone to Long Island [NWR Complex]? Right?

JANET: Yes. Pat had gone to Long Island, and Frank Drauszewski, Frank Drauszewski was the deputy. And I have to give a shout-out to Frank Drauszewski and Martha Parmenter because I have to thank Frank as the deputy and Martha as the administrative officer for my success as a project leader. They had both been there a long time. They knew the ropes. For me, having a top-notch deputy and a top-notch administrative officer made all the difference in the world. I think that for every project leader, they probably really thank their administrative people and their deputies or assistants. So, Frank and I from that point focused on the visitor center building. That was probably the biggest project there along with trying to make the refuge more welcoming to the public while maintaining our wildlife first mandate. So, we were able to do, we were able to do that.

LIBBY: Were you still dealing with some of the fall-out from when the beaches were closed to protect piping plovers?

JANET: Oh, yes.

LIBBY: 'Cause I know, its, they still are seasonally closed, but either you opened up more as soon as you could, but it does seem for sure that the resistance dropped significantly over time.

JANET: Yes. We were able to – when I was there, the beach was closed seasonally. In a short amount of time, we were able to, working with the biologists, we were able to open certain portions of the beach, depending on what the piping plovers were doing. We sometimes even moved closures. We also had what were called at the time “tern wardens”, I think the volunteer – this is a huge volunteer project there, where volunteers were based at either end of the closures to turn visitors around and tell them to go back to the open areas and explain what we were doing to protect the piping plover. So, they were doing an outreach mission for us as

well as a little bit of enforcement, if you will, to make sure that people were not disturbing nesting plovers. But by, by giving where we could give, on our restrictions, that seemed to help enormously with community relations.

LIBBY: Definitely. I mean, I know that for sure. I mean, if we can, why not? Did you get any pushback from the conservation community on that? Did they think you were being too open or were they just really appreciative of what you did?

JANET: I think that there was probably more resistance internally than externally. I think that the – well, there was some resistance. I can remember some of the birders thinking this was awful, that we were opening up any. Some, some people who were very focused on biology and not on people – there was resistance there. So, I guess I would just say it was mostly, the resistance was mostly here and there, although some birders and other groups can be very vocal.

LIBBY: Yes, they can.

JANET: I learned.

LIBBY: Everyone's got their own interest.

JANET: Absolutely. And you have to respect their interests, which I did, but we also needed to be able to be as welcoming as we could, but, as I keep saying again and again, staying true to our mission. We aren't wildlife only, we're wildlife first. And one of the things I remember hearing from my very early days with Fish and Wildlife Service was, "ducks don't vote." And so, there's another thing. You want people to understand who you are, what your mission is, why it matters, and act to support conservation. One of the first projects that I did in Fish and Wildlife Service, and it was my first one that was cross-program, was working on a book called "Outreach: One Day at a Time".

LIBBY: I remember that.

JANET: It was, it was basically an outreach manual. I was coming in kind of at the beginning of recognizing the importance of outreach, and so with, with people from all the other program areas, we came up with basically a manual on how to do outreach and why it matters. I think it did, it goes, it went a long way.

LIBBY: Now, did Kathy Zeamer work on that?

JANET: Yes.

LIBBY: Did Marci Caplis work on that?

JANET: Yes indeed. Jan Rowan.

LIBBY: Oh yes.

JANET: Some other ORPs from the field.

LIBBY: I think I edited; I was a reviewer of a certain version of it. Yeah.

JANET: And Pat Martinkovic, who was in, who was in Long Island at the time, I believe used some of her experiences as case studies. So, it was a real, it was a real cross-program group effort to get out the importance of outreach, community building. It can help you as a manager when you want to get your wildlife work done.

LIBBY: You know, it's really funny to think about that, because we can now take the long view but back in those days, this was novel thinking.

JANET: It really was, it really was.

LIBBY: Yeah, to write a book about getting your message out and how to do it effectively.

JANET: We also did a lot of congressional outreach. That was relatively – well, I don't know if that was new. But we did a lot of it over the course of my time as a, as a, well as an outdoor recreation planner but even more so as a manager, and then in the Regional Office. And that was, that was important. That was something I enjoyed doing because we could generally be the ones with the white hats. With all of the things that Congressmen are dealing with, if we could show them our successes in conservation, that was good.

LIBBY: Yeah.

JANET: And we got, for the most part, we got good support. But many, many of our Congress people in the northeast are supportive of conservation efforts.

LIBBY: Yes. I always, I always felt very fortunate to have – we didn't have to fight our Congressionals very often. They generally were sympathetic to us, and they actually treated us with a lot of respect.

JANET: I think so too. I think we were showing good work and doing good things on the ground, for their constituents. You know, a congressman loves a happy constituent, so if a visit to the refuge is going to help them, they're going to like that.

LIBBY: So, we've talked about some of your mentors, but do you feel like you, is there anybody that you feel like you were a mentor to, especially when you were working in refuges as opposed, on, you know, in or on a refuge as opposed to going to the Regional Office, which is where you closed out your career. Think about any of the people you hired or anybody in the Service now because you hired them?

JANET: Oh, I don't, I, I...

LIBBY: (laughter) There must be some.

JANET: I don't know. I guess, I think time will tell. Time from now if any...when they do the interviews 10 years from now, or 20 years from now, when those people have retired, we'll see if my name pops up.

LIBBY: Oh, I'm sure it will. I'm sure it will. So, I know at some point you moved – I don't want to take you off of Parker River, but I know you went to the Regional Office.

JANET: I did. I once again have to, have to thank Tony, Sue and, well Tony and Sue I guess because I was replacing Dick Dyer as Refuge Supervisor North.

LIBBY: He retired.

JANET: He retired, that's right. And that became my working group for the rest of my career.

LIBBY: When did you, when did you go to the Regional Office?

JANET: I went to the Regional Office in 2005, at the end, November of 2005.

LIBBY: So, for seven years.

JANET: Yeah. And Sue McMahon was my supervisor and Tony [Léger] was the, was the [Regional] Refuges Chief. One of the things that was, well first of all that was a huge, a huge honor to be selected for that position. That was, I felt, very honored for that. And then we had, it was interesting. I had more independence for independent decisions as a project leader than I did as a member of the "Senior Leadership Team", and that was fine. I enjoyed being project leader. It was a peak of my career, but I also loved working in a team where, where most of the decisions that were made for the region in refuges were made in, as a team. Everybody had their responsibilities for sure, but we collaborated on so many, on so many issues or directions or focus, so that was, that was very positive. But I really, I did enjoy my Regional Office time. It's funny how you go through your career and the higher up you get, the farther away you get from the things you directly love, like being in the field and doing these things. I realized, though, I wasn't not doing those things anymore. I was supporting those things and other people were doing them.

LIBBY: Right. Right.

JANET: So, it was an important role to still be involved in those, but you're involved from a few steps back, a few steps higher. You're getting them the support they need, the resources they need, the money they need, and so that was, it was also a very satisfying time. And, I had a cadre of managers in the field that were top notch. That was, that was, you know, they were a joy to work for, work with (laughter).

LIBBY: Yeah, we had good people in Refuges North.

JANET: Oh, yes. We did. I agree with that 100 per cent.

LIBBY: I worked in the Regional Office too and I always felt like my job was to support the field. That's why I was there. Run interference between the field and Washington. Yeah, so we worked with, I worked for you, you worked for me (laughter). It's all part of a team.

JANET: Yeah, I felt it was all part of a big collaboration not only in our work unit, which was very beneficial because we were dealing with budgets and that sort of thing. But also, just the mutual support and the ability to bounce ideas and so forth. It was always uplifting to have project leader meetings and be involved with the project leaders, who you really didn't see very often.

LIBBY: That's right.

JANET: When you're in the Regional Office, I mean, you do all you can to get field visits to everywhere, so you can, you can see the work that's going on, on the ground, and chat not only with the project leaders but with their staffs and you know, just to, just to be reminded what it's all about. To hear the successes, to see the successes on the ground. That was a wonderful, wonderful job.

LIBBY: Did you, I'm sure the phone rang a lot, and it was almost always a problem, right?

JANET: (Laughter) Not always.

LIBBY: I mean, you're talking about the successes you see in the... Yeah, you go to the refuge, and they want to show you all the good things and you meet the staff, but....

JANET: Yes, you are there to serve the field and a project leader will come to you if he or she has a challenge, and, and that's what you're there for. To help them, you know, meet their challenge and overcome and you know, press on forward. And so, sometimes it's money, sometimes it's Congressional support or whatever is needed. You're just there to try to help. One of the things that I was especially glad to be able to do and this happened to be in one of those meetings of the Senior Leadership Team, we were looking at project funding for several years. We were, we were putting in projects that would serve the field or serve a station for multiple years, not just year-to-year funding. And one of them was piping plover protection in the northeast.

LIBBY: Yep.

JANET: And that was one of the projects that managers, several managers had collaborated in the northeast, to get that funding. I had to fight for that a little bit with my, my fellow supervisors who had also received valid, important projects from their managers. We were able to fund piping plover protection in several refuges in the northeast for 10 years. I was, that to me was, I was so glad we were able to secure that funding for those stations. I thought that was core mission work, and that was one of the ways that I feel that I particularly was able to help that group of refuge managers who had collaborated to put in that project.

LIBBY: No, you clearly did. I remember working with Ward Feurt on that. He really was the [initiator], he was the person who brought all of us together. Folks at Forsythe, Long Island must have been involved with that, Chincoteague was, but it was most of the refuges were in your zone.

JANET: Yes.

LIBBY: But that was significant having that RONS funding.

JANET: That's right, RONS. I forgot about that. That's right.

LIBBY: RONS - Refuge Operating Needs System. RONS funding and it clearly built the, the integrity of the biological program and the management of plovers, which at Monomoy is one of the foundations of managing Monomoy – is the plover management, and all the other refuges. Rhode Island was the other refuge complex, and probably Connecticut too, right, with some of the refuges in Connecticut. So critical. In Massachusetts, the piping plover population is exceeding all the recovery goals, and it clearly had a lot to do with the fact that we had basically guaranteed funding, although we did have to fight a couple years to make sure it got in there, when times got tough. But that provided for some continuity of staff, development of protocols, techniques, you know. That was, I appreciate what you did for that. That was major.

JANET: It had shown results, so I'm glad of it.

LIBBY: Absolutely. What other highlights or things are you most proud of? I know you've got a couple notes there, so let's see what we haven't covered yet.

JANET: Well, I think we've covered a lot of them.

LIBBY: You were working in the Regional Office when the workforce planning...

JANET: Oh, yes. That is not something that I'm particularly proud of, although it was, it was basically the first big project when I arrived.

LIBBY: Yeah.

JANET: That was, that was one of – when you talk about what's, what are some of the low points, that was a very, very difficult project.

LIBBY: Yeah.

JANET: It was, it... I understood the need for it. It was controversial in the sense that the decision was made to keep some refuges strong, put other refuges into more of a caretaker status. And this was people and their lives and their jobs, you know. People were, their jobs - their jobs were moved, or their job series was changed to fill what was needed. That was incredibly difficult, so. I think that as a group we did the best we could, it was received...we did so much outreach to the, I felt we did a lot of outreach to the project leaders, we did a lot of outreach to Congress about living within our means, and this is what it means for the people in your districts, you know which includes some of the employees who are your constituents. But and Congress was for the most part, very understanding. They said, "We'd love to give you more money, but there isn't any more money. It just isn't there." So that was a very, very difficult thing to do, but we were able to make workforce planning work, and trying to be as, as

communicative with the managers and the communities as we could. But that was very, very difficult. It was a tough challenge, and I have heard that recently they're doing it again.

LIBBY: Yeah.

JANET: So, I'm sorry this is a – you know, this is 2018. People who listen to this years later. 2018 - this is a very difficult time to be in natural resource conservation careers. The focus is not on natural resource conservation by the people who do the funding these days, and so I admire the colleagues of mine, the former colleagues of mine who are, who are taking on this, this such important work in such a challenging time.

LIBBY: And now we have a larger, a greater distrust of government, and so less respect for government employees...

JANET: Yes.

LIBBY: ...than we did even back then. Yeah. I

JANET: Do you need a funny story?

LIBBY: I was just going to say, "Wouldn't it be nice to kind of end on a higher note?" (laughter) Or a lighter note!

JANET: I have two funny stories. One is a funny story in hindsight. It was not funny at the time, and that was doing some of this Congressional outreach. It had to do with the visitor center. I was, went down with Tony Léger and Sue McMahon. We were going to brief Loretta Beaumont of the Congressional Appropriations staff on this particular project, because this was, this was a big thing, and it took a lot of money. And so, at the suggestion of my colleagues, I made some wonderful – many colleagues, not just, I mean, many colleagues - I made some wonderful boards – presentation boards, which are a real nuisance to try to bring on an airplane. But I had these wonderful presentation boards with points number one, two, three and pictures – all of that. Carried it into the Congressional Office building, sat it up on the easel, and there we were in the Appropriations meeting room. Loretta Beaumont came in. Some other people were there too. I had board number one, point number one. Began my presentation, and she started asking lots of questions. But the questions were next on board three and then they were on board five, and then back on board one. Finally, I just had to give it up and wing it. It worked out okay, the funding came, the building was built, but Congressional outreach doesn't always go the way you expect it to go. So that was kind of funny.

LIBBY: It is funny, and you know what? Earlier you talked about maybe the reason why we went to these standardized buildings was because of Parker River visitor center.

JANET: Yes.

LIBBY: And I actually remember now, Loretta – when Tony pitched this to Loretta, she liked it. I think we got funding for say the visitor center at Assabet River Refuge because it was on that, it was using that standardized design.

JANET: Oh, yes.

LIBBY: So, that ended up being a really good thing (laughter).

JANET: Yes, in hindsight it was, it was funny and ultimately it was very successful for the future visitor centers! The other one has to do with having good rapport with your maintenance workers. I always thought that I did, but I think a joke might have been played on, on myself and my ORP when, as deputy, we – she and I went down to Nantucket. You remember Harry Sears. Harry Sears packed the truck for us, and we were to post some boundary signs at Nantucket, and we were to paint an entrance sign that I guess he had installed on one of his trips out there. So, there we were. You know, you get on the early, early boat – the ferry. You drive down to Cape Cod, get on the early, early boat, and you take the hour-long ride out to Nantucket, then you drive the other hour out to the refuge and take the air out of the wheels and all that.

LIBBY: Yep, over sand, over sand.

JANET: Out we go, and we have lots of signs, lots of paint, no paintbrushes, a few plastic bags, and nuts and bolts that are the wrong size. Luckily, we had a whole lot of washers. And so, we were able to post the signs we needed to but sometimes we'd have to put two or three signs that say, "Area Beyond This Sign Closed" with a bolt and a whole mess of washers, tie that down. We used far more signs and far more washers than we should have. Then as the clock is ticking because we couldn't miss the boat, which you have to get in line for an hour ahead and all of that, we had to paint the sign. We ended up doing, kind of like finger painting, with plastic bags on our hands, and painting the entrance sign so that it would look good. I never heard from the following refuge manager that there was a problem with the signs.

LIBBY: Nope! (laughter).

JANET: So, we improvised, and I think Harry probably had the last laugh. That we were able to get the job done – resourceful – it was Pam Hess who went with me.

LIBBY: Oh yeah.

JANET: She ended up being the deputy subsequently, later. So, Pam and I used our resourcefulness to get the job done and I think that that's the thing about refuge people. They will get the job done using whatever they have at hand.

LIBBY: That's a great story (laughter).

JANET: Next time you're down there, take a look at those signs.

LIBBY: I think we replaced them. I know we ordered them, and they were sitting in the basement for a while (laughter). Alright. So, you retired. Tell me a little bit about the decision to retire. Was that a – unless there is something else you want to cover first? Make sure you've got everything.

JANET: No, I would be happy to tell you why I retired. I retired...

LIBBY: You were young, also, when you retired.

JANET: 56. Whoops, that dates me, doesn't it? I retired in March of 2012, and it, I had been eligible at the end of 2010, but I wasn't ready to go then. I wanted to make sure that I wasn't just getting to the date and retiring. I was, I was really enjoying the team I was working with, the things we were doing. There was a lot going on. But then I got to 35 years of Department of Interior experience, and I thought, 35 years – 12 with the national parks and 23 with the national wildlife refuges – I thought, that's enough. I said, I thought to myself, you know, "You've done your bit, you've done all you can, you've - you feel confident in the next, the next group of people that are going to come in. Hopefully they will build on all of the great work I've done, or they won't. I recognize that. They may take things in a new direction and that's all part of it." So, I was glad for the contributions that I did for the years that I did. I didn't want to overstay my welcome, you know. I think there's a point where you should step aside to let the new generation of leaders come in. And so, I was ready to hand it off to the next group of leaders, and just looking, just looking at them now, the people that are managing the refuge system, despite all the challenges, are doing a fabulous job. So, I am very glad to have been a part of it, and I wish them continued and even better success.

LIBBY: You try to keep track of what's going on, or is it, just because I know you still have friends, you still see people who....

JANET: I still do. I try not to insert myself. I like to, I do hear – I have spies – I do hear through the grapevine.

LIBBY: Oh, you're doing facilitation. Tell us a little bit about the facilitation you are doing.

JANET: Yes. Marci Caplis and I who were facilitators in the Service, have both retired. She has a small business where she does meeting facilitation and I work for her when those opportunities come about. We have worked with various Fish and Wildlife Service programs, occasionally programs that involve their partners. We have worked for individual refuges doing, doing planning, things like that. That's been a lot of fun. But that, you know, that's only here and there, but it's an opportunity to see some old colleagues and hear some of the challenges that the folks are going through now. But I'm glad for my time and I wish them well, too.

LIBBY: Right. Well, is there anything else that we need to talk about? Is there anybody you think we should interview? I think I told you I'm interviewing Ed Moses in a couple of weeks.

JANET: Oh, I think that Ed is key. Have you interviewed Dick Dyer or Tony Léger?

LIBBY: They are both on my list.

JANET: Good. I think they would be key to knowing what has gone on in the refuge system and Region 5 for years.

LIBBY: For sure. Well, anyway, I really, I really appreciate you taking the time. I know it takes, it's a little bit of work to think about this.

JANET: It's been fun. I enjoyed going through the questions and just recalling so many things that I hadn't, I wouldn't have recalled if it weren't for the questions. So, I was really glad for the opportunity to take my own trip down memory lane as well as contribute to your project. I thank you for doing this work, 'cause it's a lot of work for you.

LIBBY: It's fun, too. So, well, thank you so much, Janet.

JANET: You're welcome.

LIBBY: It's been great! Bye.

JANET: Bye.

KEY WORDS: buildings, facilities and structures; Congressional operations; endangered species; environmental education; interpretation; law enforcement; leadership; maintenance; parks, wildlife refuges