



The Oral History of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge 75th Anniversary Panel of former Refuge Managers



Graham Taylor, Janet Kennedy, Frank Drauszewski,
Pat Martinkovic Pascuzzi, George Gavutis, Ed Moses

September 27, 2019

Oral History Cover Sheet

Name: Parker River National Wildlife Refuge 75th Anniversary Panel of some of the former Refuge Managers – Ed Moses, George Gavutis, Pat Martinkovic Pascuzzi, Frank Drauszewski, Janet Kennedy, and Graham Taylor

Date: September 27, 2019

Location: Parker River NWR, 6 Plum Island Tpke., Newburyport, MA

Interviewers: Interview conducted by Peggy Hobbs and Video by Libby Herland

Brief Summary of Interview: To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Parker River NWR, six former refuge managers were asked to discuss what the refuge was like when they worked there, what their major activities and accomplishments were, what the most significant issues were, and to highlight some of the memorable staff.

Key Words and Names: See Addendum

The Interview

PEGGY HOBBS: Good morning. I'm Peggy Hobbs and we are at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center located in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Today is September 27, 2019. We are here to commemorate Parker River National Wildlife Refuge's 75th anniversary with a special interview panel. We'll start by having you tell us your name, what your job title was here at Parker River and during what years you worked here. We'll be going into more detail about topics afterwards. I'm currently the Administrative Officer and I've been here since 2013 and I'm the regional rep on the FWS Heritage Committee. So, we will start with Ed – your name, title when you were here and what years did you work here?

ED MOSES: Ed Moses. I was the refuge manager, in parentheses project leader, for Parker River National Wildlife Refuge from 1969 to 1973 and carried over into 1974 until George arrived on duty. As I returned home from the Regional Office each day, I'd have Bill Forward sitting on my doorstep with the problems of the day [laughter].

GEORGE GAVUTIS: I'm George Gavutis. I was here at Parker River as a UMass Amherst Student Assistant, biological technician and a laborer back in the early '60's, but I became the manager – I had 1973, Ed, but I could be wrong. It was the summer, June I believe. I think it was – you said '74 [looking at Ed] but I think it was 1973.

LIBBY HERLAND: We'll have to get those narratives out.

GEORGE: I can talk about my early days in some of the questions.

PEGGY: What year did you leave the refuge?

GEORGE: I left in '80, but I was detailed in and out of the Regional Office near the end of my tenure, both in Boston at the former U.S. Post Office and the Courthouse building, and then later in Newton Corner out to the west.

PEGGY: All right. Pat?

PAT MARTINKOVIC PASCUZZI: Hi. I'm Pat Martinkovic and now it's Pat Pascuzzi. I started at Parker River Refuge as a primary refuge manager, and I started on October 9, 1988. Seven years later is when I left. That was September 30th of 1995. Like George, the last maybe two years I was filling in at different refuges along the coast.

PEGGY: So, you started in 1988?

PAT: Yes.

FRANK DRAUSZEWSKI: Hello. I'm Frank Drauszewski. I was an assistant manager when I first started, which would have been May of 1992. When Pat left, I got bumped up to deputy refuge manager, and I retired in May 2016. So, I was here for 24 years.

JANET KENNEDY: Hi, I'm Janet Kennedy, and I had a couple of stints at Parker River before I became the manager in 2000. I was refuge manager here from 2000 to 2005. I had been the ORP here for just one year in 1989, working with Pat, and I was project manager for this visitor center building for 2 years. I was on a detail from Great Meadows.

GRAHAM TAYLOR: Hi, I'm Graham Taylor. I was the refuge manager/project leader here from about July 2006 up to June 2013.

PEGGY: All right. So, we are going to start with Ed again, work our way down. But our first question is "Describe what the refuge was like at the time you were here?" For example, where was the office, how many acres did the refuge encompass? Who was your supervisor? How many staff were located at the refuge while you were here? So we will start with Ed.

ED: Okay. There were approximately 4,700 acres as I recall. The refuge headquarters was located up near the lighthouse at the north end of Plum Island, approximately a mile from the entrance gate. The supervisor at the time I came was Thomas Horn who retired in '70 or '71. George might be able to confirm that. Then, Howard Woon came in as a refuge supervisor following Tom Horn. The refuge was heavily abused by people at that time. It really was a major problematical people management situation that we were faced with for the years I was here. I can speak to some of those points later on. The staff started as 4, excuse me 5 maintenance men when I first came. Yes, that was the highest number of maintenance men on any refuge in Region 5 at that time. In a budget reduction, Tom Horn ordered that we cut back our staff, so Harry Sears was the last hired and according to the personnel process, was the first one that had to leave. Horn called it "Operation Ratchet". In essence, cutting back, ratcheting down. Harry was given the option of taking early retirement or taking a maintenance man position at Great Meadows, which he elected to do. He served at Great Meadows until he was 91 years old. I did hear Libby mention yesterday that he worked right up until 5 days before he passed on. I think that covers it. That's pretty astounding.

PEGGY: Okay.

GEORGE: I came just before, when Ed was leaving. We occupied the residence by the lighthouse...

ED: Fully furnished.

GEORGE: Fully furnished. That's right. There was Ed's storage there. For six months, then we bought property and built a home, 'cause I knew, when we came to Parker River, it was inevitable that we'd be going to the Regional Office next. That was the trend [lots of laughter].

LIBBY: It's worked.

GEORGE: I knew we were going to be there at our Kensington, NH, home for a long time.

ED: Can I interject? There are two heel marks in the sand that still remain when George was asked to come into the Regional Office [lots of laughter]. They haven't eroded away yet.

GEORGE: I was very used to the Regional Office though as a detailee for different things that Washington had us working on – the mission of the refuge system and all that kind of stuff. Anyhow. The refuge had gone through, on a regular basis, maximizing for recreation and the emphasis on wildlife management was always a lower mission, it seemed at Parker River anyways. It was a 7-mile nuisance of a beach which was open to the public. There were multiple, like 11, parking lots. Most of them were recreational beach oriented. Some of the memories I have date back into the '60's when I was a student assistant and biological technician and that type of thing. But I know there was a period before I came anyways where they had picnic benches and lifeguards and hibachis, and a bathhouse which remained when I came. But the emphasis would change every time there was a change in administration in Washington with the Secretaries of the Interior, it seemed. I had a heavy bent on biology and wildlife management, and it came to be that we reduced parking lots from 11 to about 5 or 6 and made several of them wildlife recreation or education only. We did reduce the public use but still it was a quarter of a million visitors annually. There were hundreds and hundreds of violations issued. We had law enforcement staff, people like Don Grover who was a maintenance man, was converted to a refuge officer. The refuge officer had an assistant, Tony Léger, when I was there. We had a public use specialist – ORP, outdoor recreation planner I believe. We added a clerk receptionist. We had a bookkeeper, so there were two positions there. We had a YCC and YACC program.

PEGGY: How many people did you have on your staff, would you say roughly?

GEORGE: It varied. In the summer, we had YACC and YCC. We had a YACC permanent camp.

PEGGY: What was YACC?

GEORGE: Young Adult Conservation Corps, 20 student enrollees with a staff of four or five people – permanent staff, well permanent for those years. Every year we also had a summer YCC staff with about 20, and a staff of four. So, it varied a lot. We had up to eight people (seasonals) at the gate, because we had an entrance gate. Some years we charged fees depending on what Washington wanted us to do. Other years, we didn't. We'd put up a sign that said, during one period, "Since there was no entrance fee, please consider one bag of trash from the beach as your exit fee". [laughter] Things like that.

PEGGY: Do you remember what the entrance fee was at the time?

GEORGE: It varied. I don't. At least a few dollars, I believe. Ed might recall.

ED: It started at 1 and went slowly up to 5.

GEORGE: I submitted, while I was there, an incentive award saying that we should charge, let people in for a Duck Stamp; use the Duck Stamp as an entrance fee, and I was given a substantial "incentive award". It went national, finally and it's still in effect. I felt it would promote more acquisitions for the refuges and get the birders to buy a Duck Stamp which was \$15 then. Now it's \$25. It's still in effect on national wildlife refuges around the country. I guess that's enough of that.

PEGGY: Okay. Pat?

PAT: When I started in 1988, the refuge acreage was a lot larger than what we have today, and the reason for that was we had four on-staffed refuges in southern Mass. Those were under the administration of Parker River. At the time, Jack Filio was the refuge manager.

PEGGY: Which refuge were those? Do you remember?

PAT: Yes. They went to Ed, actually. There was Monomoy, Massasoit, Nantucket ...

ED: Nomans.

PAT: They called it another name.

ED: It was an overlay refuge.

PAT: Yeah, Nomans.

GEORGE: Block Island?

PAT: No. So, we had originally those four but nine months later, they were gone. I was bummed out that I never got a chance to get to them, but they went to a good manager and it made sense for it to go to Great Meadows. I haven't held it against Ed [laughter]. Then, we also had administrative oversight of Rachel Carson refuge in southern Maine, even though it had its own budget since Fiscal Year '83 and they had an assistant manager and a part-time clerk there. We still continued with that but it was just really probably more of a supervisor oversight. In terms of staff, when I arrived, we were allocated 11 permanent full time. There was one permanent full time law enforcement with three seasonals in the spring, summer, and fall. And the same with the gatehouse. We had seasonals too. One year later, it all shrunk down to 5. So I got to firsthand up close personal experience with a lot of other programs, which was good.

PEGGY: Do you remember what year refuges so drastically ...?

PAT: Yeah, it was 1989. Summer. Anyway, the other thing was the habitat. It, let's just say I was very grateful George got into the Regional Office, because as a result, and his push for the biological program, he came down in I think it was '89, the spring, summer of '89, and conducted a biological review of the station. As a result, that was the beginning of the start of OMWM, our cooperative relationship with the [Essex County MA] mosquito control commission. Then also we got some additional funding – those were the years we started putting in good concrete water control structures – so the impoundments could finally get – they were only freshwater, and the only level that you had was from rainfall. So, anyway, that's another issue. But George really had a phenomenal impact on Parker River at that time in terms of our biological program when we got a full-time biologist. I think the other thing that our structures were all run down. They all needed – we had our refuge office where Ed and George were up at the northern two acres of [Plum] Island. It was an old building, concrete building, that was abandoned by the U.S. Coast Guard. It had 3 rooms, and we would squeeze people into that, or more depending on how the staffing was going. The gate house was a shack at best. There really wasn't a visitor contact station. It was really a restroom facility that we enlarged. Frank worked with some volunteers and got this beautiful overlook deck area for people. Our facilities and the habitat – it was just ripe for getting in at the ground and really starting to improve. I was really lucky. You couldn't do anything to damage [laughter]. It was kind of there. It was money from BLHP and all that finally came about. It really was improved as the time went on.

PEGGY: Ok, Frank?

FRANK: Just sitting here listening to you three guys, you overlapped with George, George overlapped with Ed, I overlapped with Pat, Janet, and Graham. There's this thread that's running through this story and it's building right now, and I know we are just getting started, but it's really kind of a cool thing to see this develop. From Ed's days when it was a national seashore to present when it's an actual national wildlife refuge, is really, really impressive. Because, back in the old days that predate me, I heard stories about the way it was just party central down on Plum Island. Ed brought in law enforcement and George continued it and Jack Filio and Pat continued it, and it's developed into something we can be proud of, where wildlife comes first. It wasn't that way in the old days. To see that development through the years is really, really impressive. I'm fortunate to be part of that. As I said, I overlapped with Pat. When I first got here, we were at the old headquarters site. We crammed into this space. I don't know if any of you guys – you guys know about it – but you guys out there in the audience have seen the old headquarters. It's amazing that we conducted business from that facility. I lived in that lighthouse, the house adjacent to the lighthouse, for 24 years. My kids were little at the time, so we grew up in the community. We've seen Newburyport develop quite a bit over the years. So, I really felt like I was part of the community, and I got a lot of crap from a lot of people that lived in the community, because "What do you mean, you're closing our beach down? You've got six and a half miles of prime oceanfront, and we can't use it?" That was a challenge. It started when Pat first got here, I believe, in '89, '90.

PAT: Yeah, it did. I stirred that up.

FRANK: That was a major challenge, to close the beach to the public. I'm sure from the top down, from the Washington Office, the Regional Office to the field, repercussions were felt.

PEGGY: What year did you start doing that?

FRANK: 1990. 1991.

PAT: That's when we instituted the first complete closure. But that was something I was going to talk about.

GEORGE: I'm sure, when Ed was here, we had tern colonies that were closed. Least terns and piping plovers were a secondary thing until they became endangered species.

PEGGY: We'll dive more into issues and things like that pretty soon.

ED: I want to interject, Peggy. Prior to my time, the Service thrust had been increased public use, increased public use. So, the refuge manager at the time, who might have been either, probably J.C. Appel ...

GEORGE: J.C. Appel is when it started.

ED: J.C. was a big a public use guy. They created 15 parking lots in the refuge. What this did, as opposed to looking forward to creating public use that was wildlife oriented, was 7 miles of beautiful beach which I referred to as an attractive nuisance. The parking lots were used almost exclusively for beach use on the weekends. Wildlife observation – they fought for a place to park. They came in on Audubon guided tours, which they run to this day. When I came, one of the first things that I saw that we had to do because of the people problems and abuse, we started shutting parking lots down. When I left, there were 11 from 15. We closed one a year to do it gradually rather than abruptly. We did avoid controversy because of that. As Frank just mentioned, as soon as you start taking something away that the public has been previously enjoying using, you've got a major issue and it can get blown into a political issue, especially here in Massachusetts.

PEGGY: We will be talking more about our issues and top priorities and things like that in a couple of questions, which is easy to do as we are more conversational at this point. But, Frank, is there anything more about what the refuge was like during your time here?

FRANK: Yeah. The main thing was going from that public use to closing the beach for the plovers. Following our mission, what we are all about. That was crucial. I must say I've heard a lot of those stories via Mal Fraser. He and I were good friends. Mal Fraser was a long time YCC director. I want to say Mal passed away last year. That was a major blow to this institution here at the refuge because he had a lot to do with the boardwalks, the trails, the YCC programs. He was a good man. I just wanted to put that in for Mr. Fraser.

PAT: Thank you.

PEGGY: Janet?

JANET: When I came in on a detail to work on the visitor center project, the headquarters was up at the north end of Plum Island as everyone has experienced. It was decided they were to take this parcel of land that we are on right now, which the refuge had acquired some years before, and design and build a new visitor center. So, the headquarters actually moved during my tenure, starting at the north end and then over the course of the time that I was working here, we were able to plan and construct this visitor center and move it in. It wasn't long after that that I went to the – where do you go after Parker River? – I went to the Regional Office. When I was here, there were about 10 permanent staff. We had two refuges – Parker River and Thacher Island off the coast of Rockport, Mass. The supervisor that I worked for was Dick Dyer.

PEGGY: Okay. Graham?

GRAHAM: I'm the only one that didn't work in the old office there. I got the opportunity to start right from the get-go in this facility here. We had Thacher Island when I arrived as well, like Janet just said. Acreage? I don't know whatever the acreage was, but we actually acquired two parcels while I was the project leader here, which I think were probably the first parcels acquired other than this one we're sitting on since the refuge was established. That was the Pink House which I think that effort started under Janet's tenure here. We actually made that happen, which is fortunate. Then we picked up some property down in the salt marshes in Ipswich. Somebody had developed a property out there without all the permits and they ended up working through DU [Ducks Unlimited]. We actually ended up getting that property as well. So that was pretty cool to be part of that.

GEORGE: One of the early refuge managers that Ed just mentioned, Gordon Nightingale, lived in the Pink House. That was worth acquiring for wildlife.

GRAHAM: We might want to keep that quiet [lots of laughter].

GEORGE: It was the snowy owl roost site for anybody that came on Plum Island, especially when somebody was living in it, because of the warm chimney.

GRAHAM: That's interesting.

ED: The history of that is fascinating.

PAT: You know, this site was originally Jack Filio's - it was 12 acres set aside to someday be this visitor center. For those of us back when, yah yah yah, until it actually happened. So, Jack Filio affectionately referred to this 12 and a half acres as "the promised land" [laughter].

FRANK: It was a dump.

PAT: Yes, it was. It was a dump. It was something that Mass Audubon and different groups helped the Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire and they thought it would be great for people to rather than use up space on the refuge for visitors, orientate them before they came on site. In fact, we were originally going to put the headquarters on the island, on the refuge - but they [some of the public] objected so strongly to the use of good habitat for a building. That's how we ended up with this site to begin with.

PEGGY: Going back to Graham, what were your staffing levels like?

GRAHAM: I think when I was here we had 11 permanent full-time positions and then, as everybody said, we had lots of seasonals as well. We had two maintenance staff when I arrived. We had two permanent full time law enforcement officers. Two visitor services, two admin, biologist, deputy Frank, and then lots of gate staff in the summer, seasonal law enforcement in the summer. But we talked about workforce reductions in '89 and I remember even '83, going down in positions. We've lost some positions during my time. We went down to 2 officers. We lost the seasonal. Went down to one maintenance position. And like everything, we also picked up a couple extra refuges and that makes two. Great Bay refuge in New Hampshire was de-staffed as part of the 2006 workforce reduction and we picked up responsibility for Great Bay refuge and Wapack refuge in western New Hampshire and the Karner Blue butterfly easement in Concord, New Hampshire. So went down but we expanded.

FRANK: One of the things that I would also like to talk about is the development of the law enforcement program in refuges. It became a real professional group of refuge officers. Prior to that it was sort of a seasonal thing. Everybody who wore a uniform basically had law enforcement authority – maintenance workers, biologists, biotechs, managers. It started changing. With the way the world has become, we needed more of a – the International Chiefs of Police did a review of our law enforcement program. They told us “You guys need to go professional.” So, eventually we did. We phased out all the collateral duty law enforcement and we started hiring permanent, professional law enforcement officers. I think the training they get now and the expertise they have, something that they do all the time, you know, you can become very good at. If you strap on a gun and you have a badge and you do it occasionally, how good are you really going to be at it? A lot of people didn't even want to do it. They used it to get their ticket punched.

PEGGY: We're going to jump into our next question, only because time will escape us very quickly.

GRAHAM: That is to say that my supervisor when I was here was Janet [laughter] then Sharon Marino was my supervisor after Janet left. I was warned when I accepted this position, I think George had told me, you realize that every refuge manager has gone on to the Regional Office. I don't know if it was a curse [laughter].

ED: It is a curse [laughter]!

PEGGY: All right. So we are going to go into the next question because you are going to be picking up on some of the things that you're starting to discuss right now. If this is hard to prioritize because you probably have more than one, but because of time, describe just one major activity or accomplishment that you saw while you were here. It could be wildlife management, public use, infrastructure and construction, land acquisition, etc., that happened while you were here at Parker River. And again, prioritize. If you have more, and we have time, we'll come back. Ed?

ED: I'm going to give you a list and I'm only going to talk about two or one. We had, as George mentioned, we had the YCC program, and that started while I was here. John Langan was the Director. We had an ongoing young waterfowl training program. We developed a Parker River environmental project at that time which dealt with the local schools. We had a major dedication of Rachel Carson [NWR] that we had to prepare for and do. That was about a month-long preparation. And then of course, as I had mentioned, the parking lot closures. Bringing the refuge, getting control of the refuge, was done. We had a lifeguard program at that time and we had four lifeguards on the beaches. So, the thing I want to talk about, probably what I felt was the most important project that I undertook – and that was, as Frank just mentioned, collateral duty law enforcement people were who performed all the law enforcement. When you came on with the Fish and Wildlife Service as I did in 1963, they handed you a badge, they handed you the Title 50 book, and sometimes they gave you a sidearm. If they didn't, you used your own personal sidearm.

GEORGE: Right.

ED: We had the five maintenance men here and Bill Forward who was the biologist that I failed to mention in the first question, and the only one who didn't have law enforcement authority was our clerk typist, Kathryn Welch. To do law enforcement that way is just, it's a wonder we didn't have a serious problem, because you have untrained people and you had people who did not want to do it. I had, of the five maintenance men, four that did not want to do law enforcement. Don Grover did, and he was good at it. I was involved with it. We were, I made the decision we were the only two that were going to be doing it. Don had such a command presence and handled the public so well, that I approached him and said, "Don, would you like to become full time law enforcement?" He said, "Yes, I would." We wrote up the position description. It was approved. Don became the first, as far as I know, the first full time law enforcement officer in the refuge system. I had heard about a formal training program that was just starting at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center now, but it was the FLETC program. It was conducted by the FBI at that time in Washington, DC. We enrolled Don in it. There were a lot of other county sheriffs and that type of thing that were in that program. Don went through that formal training program. It was the beginning of our having to deal professionally with some serious drug abuse problems, gang related problems, at Parker River because it was bad. That I feel is probably my best and highest contribution to the program.

PEGGY: Ok. George?

GEORGE: I'm going to give somebody my notes here because I've got a lot of things I haven't discussed that would fill in what other people have discussed. I didn't list all the refuges that were under my supervision. There was a time, because of the Area Office program, that - we had three area offices besides the Regional Office - and we were designated a whole bunch of refuges. All the ones that we've heard mentioned and more. All but Moosehorn and maybe some of the Rhode Island refuges were under Parker River for a period. I was being, my heels were dug in the sand like Ed said. They wanted me to go to the Area Office as an assistant supervisor for this part of the New England area, which was in the Area Office out of Concord, New Hampshire. When I resisted that, I was able to convince them that I could do the job here at the refuge and not go to Concord. So that was part of it. We had Wapack and John Hay refuges in New Hampshire. We had Missisquoi. We had all of, a lot of the refuges Ed mentioned and others had mentioned, but I have some of them listed in here. I was probably one of the last ones, refuge managers, to retain law enforcement. I attended the many week-long, formal refuge law enforcement training programs (FLETC) at Glenco, Georgia, and retained my credentials. I felt here, I found it very necessary to work some weekends, supervisory patrol, because there were times when some of the - especially the gate people - would get exuberant. Some of the law enforcement people (there was only me by then) would start searching vehicles for alcohol at the entrance. Bill Ashe was contacted one day, and we heard about that the next morning. The phone would ring on Monday morning after a busy summer weekend ...

ED: Deputy Regional Director.

GEORGE: ...your ears would be burning. So, I found it necessary to work at least once or twice a month on weekends as a supervisor to keep control over the search and seizures and entrance fees and all that kind of thing. I've forgotten to mention things, and I know when you want me to discuss what was going on but before, when I was here in the '60's, Gordon Nightingale built the refuge impoundments. I think that's an important thing to know. And he went on to the Regional Office. But you've all got notes that are kind of hodge podge, I'm sure. Somebody's going to have to rake through all that. But he built the impoundments. I managed the impoundments for maximum water levels, and we even looked into wells and all kinds of other fresh water sources. We used brackish water. We did have brackish water management and we had thousands of white perch trying to go into there. While I was here as a student, they (the Essex County Mosquito Commission) were spraying with DDT in the marshes [to kill mosquitoes] in the early '60's, still. They weren't supposed to spray the refuge impoundments, and they sprayed the refuge impoundments and there were tens of thousands of dead white perch in the north pool. I can remember seeing the whole pool white with the dead perch with

the DDT spraying and whatever else they were putting on. After that, I think it was the last time they sprayed the impoundments, but there was a lot of spraying going on back then.

PEGGY: Does anything jump out as a major accomplishment while you were here?

GEORGE: Well, we managed the Stage Island Pool for maximum water levels. We were able to do nightlight banding in summer, several summers, because we had water way up on the roads at the North Pool and the Stage Island Pool, by not dumping any freshwater, and we had about a dozen unique species for Massachusetts at least, or even New England, nesting, especially in the Stage Island Pool. We had gallinule, moorhen, Virginia rail, sora rail, king rail, least bittern, pied-billed grebe, coot, gadwall, ruddy duck, pintail, and on and on. We had vast roosting flocks of snowy egrets in impoundments at night and tree swallows. We did a lot of cattail crushing, promoting millet and other natural smartweeds. We had tremendous numbers of snipe and waterfowl coming into the flooded fields and marshes that we had.

PEGGY: We'll circle back and talk more about other activities and accomplishments unless there was something you wanted to add.

GEORGE: I'd like to mention too on the staff, we probably had 11 as other people said, but we also had several trainee positions – at least two at a time, and people like Doug Spencer, who was a trainee who went on to Region 3. We had Wally Soroka as a biotech. He became an agent and ended up in Alaska and retired not too many years ago. There were a lot of people like that. Bill Koch and Lou Hinds were at the refuge as assistants. Tony Léger, whose first job was Don Grover's assistant law enforcement officer. Billy Papoulias you probably don't know, but he went to NOAA, to Marine Fisheries. Also, the guy from Newmarket that died, Chris Schoppmeyer, also started at Parker River. He died prematurely of cancer, and they named a park for him in Newmarket, New Hampshire. There were a number of other people – I've got them written down here, but it's hard to follow them. I'll give you these notes. I've got it spelled out pretty well.

PEGGY: Yeah. We'll take those notes for sure. Pat, were there any major accomplishments when you were here? I'm sure there were.

PAT: Yes, there were several 'cause it was exciting how we were starting on the open marsh water management, and we had "The Promised Land" which had this contaminant cleanup. But the one that was probably the most near and dear to me was the piping plover management. My first summer was '89. They did what they called a symbolic closure. I need to preface it with, in 1986, because the piping plover was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, so that gave us a little more teeth to manage the beach with. So, the first year I was here, we had tern wardens, and they would, starting April 1st, have symbolic closures to see – but it didn't go all the way down to the edge of the water. People were allowed to still walk by. Well,

if you had plovers nesting, the plovers and the chicks could not get down to the wrack line to feed. This is where having worked in the Regional Office is a phenomenal thing. I have to say, okay, I may be the odd person in the group, but I certainly wouldn't be the first and I won't be the last, but...

GEORGE: You're not the only one.

PAT: I think working in the Regional Office is a phenomenal experience. You get a whole other perspective, and you make these great contacts. Two of the contacts I made when I worked in the Regional Office before I came to Parker River was Paul Nickerson and Anne Hecht. They were in Ecological Services, but specifically working with endangered species. So, I saw what was going on - even the predator problems - but mostly it was the visitors that were causing [problems with the plovers]. So, I spoke to Jack and gave a few ideas and then one of the times when I had to be up in the Regional Office, filling in for someone, I spoke further. As a result, Paul Nickerson and Anne Hecht worked really well and we agreed that we needed to have complete closure. Now, it was easy for me to say. I wasn't the refuge manager. It wasn't my face right with the public. But anyway, I couldn't help it. I really appreciated Jack Filio. He just gave me lots of opportunities and he supported me and so on, but I did work with the Regional Office to do that. At the time, it was kind of like just the right people were in the field, in the Regional Office and in the Washington Office at the same time. It was a so called "perfect storm", perfect opportunity for the piping plover. I'll never forget, the Deputy Refuge Manager, Kaufman, Nancy Kaufman, I spoke to her ...

LIBBY: Deputy Regional Director.

PAT: Oh, what did I say? Oh geez ...

FRANK: You demoted her [laughter].

PAT: No, she didn't deserve that. I'm sorry. Anyway, she came out on a Saturday afternoon, drove from where the Regional Office was all the way out to Parker River. I met her. I literally spent four hours with her, showing her the beach area, showing her Sandy Point. We went over to Crane's Beach. We just talked about everything. She had a lot of experience in ES and in public use, so she suggested well, it would probably help with the public, to make it more palatable, if we did an informal section 7. Now, section 7 can raise hackles and figure in all kinds of things in people, but God bless them, they all worked together. Jack and I went up to the Regional Office. We pounded this out. The bottom line was it was the nicest feeling. I felt like wildlife won. That was the whole reason I ever got into this field. So, we had a complete closure of the beach. We'd mark it all the way from the dunes all the way down to the mean high-water mark. You couldn't go down to the lower, it'd get knocked out. From April 1st through August 31st, that was closed to all public use. Probably maybe in June, July, if there were sections that

were not used by the piping plover, well then, we would safely reduce the complete closure. Then, as the summer went on – I remember the first year, we were able to open it up twice because our chicks were fledging – but they were not there, the piping plovers were not impeded by people walking along the shoreline. A lot of time and effort and I really thank Jack Filio because he took a lot of – I remember the public meeting we had, right on the island. PITA [Plum Island Taxpayers & Associates] Hall.

FRANK: PITA Hall?

PAT: Yeah, PITA Hall.

PEGGY: We'll be talking about issues that came up. That will be one of the big ones.

PAT: Okay.

PEGGY: I would say that what you just talked about was a huge accomplishment here at the refuge, for sure. Sorry. We'll come back ...

PAT: No, no, that's good. I feel very strongly about it.

PEGGY: Frank, do you have something to talk about?

FRANK: When I first got here, and several years after that, the refuge had a number of camps that were left. They were life estates. I know Jack Filio used to talk about them like they were a real thorn in his side because they were an attractive nuisance. They'd get broken into. They were just junky. They were falling to pieces. One in particular was Camp Sea Haven. Everybody remembers Camp Sea Haven. He said, "Boy, I'd like to get rid of Camp Sea Haven." So, I said, "All right, we'll get rid of Camp Sea Haven." I got in touch with the volunteer fire departments in the area and we just had a big roast one day and we burned Camp Sea Haven.

PEGGY: What year was that?

FRANK: What year?

ED: Marshmallows?

FRANK: Well, it was hot. You couldn't get within 100 feet of those buildings.

GEORGE: Originally it was a Coast Guard.

FRANK: A Coast Guard station.

GEORGE: Then it was a polio camp for children that had received annual special use permits for many years.

FRANK: There were about 14 buildings. 14 camp buildings there. There was a big cook house, kitchen, and 14 little cabins, surrounding a swimming pool, a saltwater swimming pool.

PAT: But it was totally dilapidated.

FRANK: It was falling to pieces. So, we burned it down. We got rid of it. That was a good thing. Jack was real happy about that. And there were several other camps that we also burned down and got rid of. One in particular, the Knobbs Camp, you guys would remember that one. We had the volunteer firemen there, and we were burning the camp down. The firemen were like "You better go talk to that guy over there." There was a guy, pacing back and forth. He came from his boat. He was beached over there. He's pacing back and forth. So, I went over to him, and I said, "Sir, can I help you with anything. You seem like you're troubled." He says, "Are you responsible for this?" I said, "Well, yes sir, I am." "I want to punch you right in the nose!" [laughter]. He spent many a summer there fishing and then fall duck hunting and he was just livid because we were getting rid of the camp. But c'est la vie, life goes on. It's a wildlife refuge. We had to get rid of these old attractive nuisances. Little things like that, I think the refuge is better for it.

PEGGY: What about you, Janet? Did anything stand out?

JANET: Yeah, the building that we're in. Getting this building planned and constructed and getting the buy in that we needed from lots of people to make it happen. There were some big challenges after I left [laughter] but we had a good, a lot of work done with a design firm. Doing interpretative exhibits was a great partnership. We got buy-in from Mass Audubon. We also got eventually some buy-in from the State where some money that had been promised but not delivered was delivered. So, that was, with the help of the mayor of Newburyport at the time, she was able to help us get a million dollars that had been promised by the State some years before. I think that this, getting this visitor center built and getting community involvement and partnerships made all the difference because as we heard from Frank and actually all the way up, there was some pretty poor community relations between the refuge and the community. Things going on inside the refuge were really good biological accomplishments that were happening and I'm thankful to all my predecessors for that. The visitor center and helping improve community relations was something that I think both of those things happened while I was there.

PEGGY: Graham?

GRAHAM: Yeah, it's interesting to hear what others have talked about and thinking about accomplishments here. Janet alluded to building this building here, but we actually ended up replacing the geothermal system that was here, went to a conventional [system] because it was problematic. I think about we put solar on this building while I was here. We rebuilt the bath house at Lot 1. The bath house was the visitor contact station there. Put the bridge in here. Used to just come in off – I can't remember the name –

ED: Rolfes Lane.

GRAHAM: Rolfes Lane. Yeah, that was how you got in here, but we got this bridge built. The piping plover work that was something that continues. It's very successful to have more pairs of piping plovers nesting here. The salt marsh sparrow work that's been going on the last 10, 15 years or more. You hear about Camp Sea Haven was demolished when Frank was here as the deputy while Jack was the project leader. You go out on the beach today – half that swimming pool is now in the high tide zone because we've lost that much beach erosion, which was something that was an ...

PAT: Issue.

GRAHAM: ... a big issue here while I was here. We had houses in the center of Plum Island, falling into the ocean. We would attend meetings on this. So, sea level rise, climate change are things that we really were starting to think about and address. The parking lots that were reduced earlier when I, just before I got here, we had, I can't remember the Mother's Day storm or Patriot's Day storm. We had two storms one right after another in two subsequent seasons. They were rebuilding the Lot 5 boardwalk at the time. We went out there, this is before I came down here, and we looked at the dunes, and it was like someone took a hot butter knife and just went down and everything to the ocean side from the peak of the dune was literally gone. We had 15,20-foot cliffs down there. Then, a year later, it happened again. So, we made a decision not to rebuild the stairs onto the beach at Lot 5 and just make it an overlook that was open all the time. Didn't have to close down the boardwalks. People were opposed to that, but I subsequently heard people say it's one of my favorite spots on the refuge now. Thinking about the birds that are out there, especially the fall migration when the beach has been reopened after the plover season, now we had a section of the beach that you could only get to with a little bit of effort. So, for people who wanted to put that effort in, and walk two miles, they got to a spot where there were fewer and fewer people and more and more wildlife. Those are some of the things that we tackled while I was here.

PEGGY: All right. Back to Ed. What was the most significant issue you and/or your staff or co-workers faced during your tenure? This could be resource issues, budget, staffing, community relations, etc. Again, if you have more than one, just prioritize your top one and if we have time, we'll come back and talk some more. And how did that issue get resolved?

ED: It's repetitive, I think. I think the public use control and law enforcement really was the big issue for me. We were at that point where we were taking the refuge back for more wildlife-oriented use, purposes for which the refuge was established at that time. That's a rocky road, believe me. You have to proceed so carefully in that area because of public alienation. But the problems from the inner city were being brought to the refuge. A lot of drug abuse, a lot of alcohol abuse. We had a rape, two attempted rapes, a murder at – that happened post-me, that was you, George. But just an example of being so close to within a 45-minute drive of a lot of people. Boston, Lowell, Lawrence. They were bringing their inner-city problems out to the refuge. Again, coming here and not using it for the purposes for which we were managing it. To get a little more perspective, Crane's Beach south of us, operated by the Trustees of Reservations, charged a fee. Salisbury State Park north of us, which is a lovely beach, also charges a fee. At that time, Parker River National Wildlife Refuge was a free beach. So, you can just imagine working the weekend here with cars backed up all the way to the bridge up here and beyond, waiting to get into the refuge. We had to maintain constant activity on the road. Once the parking lots were filled, we shut the gate down and we wouldn't open it up again until there were enough open spaces to let people in. It got to be that kind of an onerous situation. The staff hated the thought of the weekend. We had rain dances going on, on Fridays [laughter]. People hoping for an inclement weekend, including myself. The resolution of that was basically the slow process of reducing the opportunity by closing down parking lots. That carried on when I left, and George came on. It wasn't a resolution to it at the time but we began the resolution to it.

GEORGE: We were opening and closing the refuge gate half a dozen times. We did want to let, especially birders, in. We got to the point where we could because we had these restrictive lots, like Hellcat Swamp and the Pines that were signed, "no beach access permitted", so we were able to fill those lots selectively if they had binoculars, if they could convince you that they were really going there. Oh, and they also had the right to go to the State park on the south end of the refuge which the refuge could not control and was a legal right of way. That was a problem, but with radio contact with our patrolmen and the State, which didn't do a lot of patrol – the State had very little to do with it – that was a problem. But if we knew if there were no parking lots left on the State beach, we were able to close the refuge period and not let anybody in.

PEGGY: That was your biggest issue as well?

GEORGE: Clamming. Somebody was going to clamming because it was low tide. They had a permit to go clamming. These were all the things you had to deal with.

ED: The State park – we were this close to having a land exchange.

GEORGE: Well, I was there. We had Governor Dukakis, who was running for president under the Democratic party, got very interested in it. I supplied him with a lot of material to justify my proposal, informal, was to swap Lot 1 and the bathhouse and the parking lot for the State park at the end, so we would have no more of this “Well, I’m going to the State park.”

FRANK: Can I interject something there? There was a meeting, gee whiz, it was probably - Jack Filio was still here, and Jack and I went to this meeting. It was regarding Sandy Point State Reservation. There was a Sandy Point Advisory Committee back then with a couple of yahoos, ex-refuge employees – Paul Accomando being one of them without mentioning his name (laughter). He and his cronies - we talked about exchanging Sandy Point for parking lot 1. That was ongoing through the years. Well, Paul Accomando stood up and he says, “Well, we should consider taking the refuge and giving you Sandy Point.” So that was something that they were trying to drum up in the State. State politics. In other words, Sandy Point should take over the refuge.

PEGGY: As far as we know, why did that proposal not happen?

FRANK: Because it was ludicrous [laughter].

PEGGY: No, not that. No, I’m talking about exchanging Lot 1 with Sandy Point. That obviously didn’t happen. Why did not happen, do you think?

GEORGE: The Governor was very interested in it but he got involved with the national politics and I got transferred to the Regional Office about that time. It didn’t go anywhere. There was a lot of resistance with the Sandy Point Association. They had, down there, there was a hermit that lived down there for years on the beach. Then we had an inholding on Grape Island where Lou Kilborn lived. I’d go visit Lou about once a year by boat, or you could get there at low tide from the road out to Grape Island. Every time I went up to see Lou Kilborn, he was in the outhouse [laughter] and there’s no door on the outhouse. And he’s in there reading. He was getting supplies and mail from Ipswich by boat. The hermit was living down there in a shack, I guess, basically homesteading. That’s how little to do with the State. Also, the State allowed hunting on it and we got tons of lead into the Stage Island Pool as a result of the State management area until we (USFWS) went to mandatory steel and non-toxic shot for all (nationwide) waterfowl hunting. After that, we did a sampling of the Stage Island Pool and found incredible lead doses. We had dying Canada geese that were in there in the fall and summer. We ended up, we got a large bog plow and plowed under. The lead was all in the top few inches. We were able to roll that over with a big bog plow. And we did plow the pool that was within a hundred yards of the State area, maybe 150 yards, of Sandy Point, we were able to turn the lead under. It was the only way we could figure to make it unavailable to wildlife. Couldn’t get rid of it. It worked.

PEGGY: All right. We are going to move on to Pat. Pat, what do you think was your major, most significant issue that you faced?

PAT: Well, I would first have to apologize to you, Peggy, because I kind of switched up the list of accomplishments with issues.

PEGGY: That's okay.

GEORGE: I think we are all doing that.

PEGGY: It's all conversational. That's fine.

PAT: But I would like to say at the start, '88, '89, in terms of accomplishments it was just as you've heard. We got back into habitat management. We actually, and that was through open marsh water management and the plovers. Also with the facilities, because we removed some of the underground gasoline tanks and started to spruce up some of our public use facilities and the gates. We actually worked and established a "Friends group" which was a lot of fun. The best one was planning an appreciation day for them, and George here – again, here's how contacts in the Regional Office pay off – I called George and said we wanted to do something to really thank our volunteers, nothing's better than an airboat ride. So, George, being the good sport that he was, came out. Then we started a Friends group. We also started based on when I first came, I could see that the refuge had become so isolated. It was us versus them, and they needed to know. That's where I think my background in public use came in handy 'cause I understood that people can't appreciate or work with you if they don't understand what you are doing. That's where – do you remember, Frank, I got this idea – I used to go to some meetings, what was it? Well, anyway, I wanted the refuge to be more a part of the community. One way was that they had a parade, Yankee Homecoming.

FRANK: Oh, I remember the parade [laughter].

PAT: Yes! So, as a result, I said, "Well, let's make this float." [laughter]. It was a great float. Really, Martha Parmenter, everyone on the staff kicked in. We took this, what was it a trailer, a flatbed thing, and we made cattail marshes and...

FRANK: Can I just add one thing to that? I drove the truck that towed the float. My wife and two boys were on the float. My boys at the time were maybe nine and 10 years old. We were driving down High Street in Newburyport, and we had a plover beach scene on it. You'd hear the people as we drove by, "Plover Lover" [laughter].

PAT: I was mortified because I got stuck on it. I preferred to be behind the scenes, getting the ideas and getting it going, but in terms of sitting there, waving – no way. Anyway. So, we did start, we saw the need for these things, so we did start, but thank heavens, they really took it up more. In terms of the most significant issue, I really feel it was the piping plovers, 'cause that's what we are all about. That's what refuges are – it's wildlife first. All the effort and flack that we got for working into it, to me is like a grain of sand. It's nothing. This is what we do. We did learn when it started, we made these information packets. Janet, I don't know if you were here at that time. But we put in information about why it was important to close the refuge and do this. I'm sure a lot of people just burned it in effigy, but we were trying. I really feel that was the most significant because it was letting the public know and our own employees that yes, wildlife comes first. I think it was significant because it never would have happened if the Regional Office and the field didn't work close together and the Regional Office worked with the Washington Office. To me it was a really significant time.

PEGGY: You made it happen. Frank?

FRANK: This is really kind of cool because it's almost like going back in the file and pulling out the old refuge narratives and reading through the narratives after hearing these stories.

GEORGE: I'm glad to hear that.

PAT: They're all online.

GEORGE: Are they?

PAT: Yeah.

GEORGE: I have the original circulating narratives for several years with comments from all over the country from all the refuge managers and the Washington Office, even, which I should donate to the center.

PEGGY: NCTC. We'll take it whenever you're ready.

GEORGE: I will. I'll bring them here.

FRANK: Those are wonderful documents.

GEORGE: They have a lot of comments from all over the country, from a lot of refuge managers and people who became Washington Office personnel and so forth.

PEGGY: That's cool.

ED: Mostly constructive comments but there were some of the other variety too [laughter].

FRANK: That was the best part, was reading the comments.

GEORGE: It was!

PEGGY: So, Frank, what were some of your significant issues that you remember?

FRANK: There are so many controversies over the years, but one that sticks out is the deer hunt. The refuge had a deer hunt back in the old days. I think it was an archery hunt. Then it was stopped for a number of years. The population of deer was exploding, the health of the deer was not very good. So we initiated the deer hunt. There's a lot of folks in this area that were opposed to that, so we had to deal with the anti-hunters. They were trying to sabotage the first couple of years where we had the deer hunt. That was sort of a tough time to go through.

PEGGY: How did you resolve it? Was it outreach?

FRANK: I think we basically just plugged ahead. We did have a meeting at the PITA Hall. We brought in a deer biologist who spoke about the health of the deer and how they were basically eating themselves out of house and home on the refuge. It's kind of marginal habitat to begin with for deer being salt marsh, and not a whole lot of upland. So, we basically got the word across to those that wanted to hear it. The anti-hunters still didn't buy into it, but it's a priority public use. We plugged ahead with it.

PEGGY: Janet, did you have any issues that stand out that you had to resolve?

JANET: It wasn't entirely smooth sailing, but I would say that improving communication and outreach and community relations was probably the biggest challenge. A lot of people didn't know who we were. Building on what Pat said, they didn't know who we were except the "people that don't let you go to the beach", and they're killing the deer. All of these things that were negative things. Communication with the public in general was not all that it could have been, I think. Now, kudos to Pat for starting the Friends group because that was huge. For getting into the community with the parade. That was huge. While I was here, we tried to build on those things, and be more visible and be more communicative. I have to put in a plug for partnerships. We had a lot of partnerships and couldn't have gotten things done that we did if we hadn't partnered with other conservation organizations, NGOs non-governmental organizations and so forth. I tried to improve things visibility wise for the refuge in the community by becoming a member of the Chamber of Commerce. That was big, because these were community leaders who now had somebody representing the non-business part of the

community. And, the community benefitted from the refuge, so I thought that was an important thing to do. Also, just talking with people, even people that opposed what we were doing. When I first became the manager and the deer hunt controversy was going on, I met with one of the leaders of one of the animal protection groups. I said to her that I wanted us to find out what we had in common, since we both are dedicated to wildlife. Well, as Frank said, that kind of went nowhere because she said we had nothing in common. But of course, I would look at it from wildlife populations, from the fish and wildlife perspective, and they're looking at wildlife individuals. So, there is not a lot you can do with that other than be willing to communicate and explain why you do what you are doing. So, I would say that community relations, public relations, did improve over the time that I was here, thanks to the Friends, the partners, our volunteer coordinator who did a fabulous job as well as our public use specialist, getting out there with the public. It really did help. So I would say that's how it got resolved. Basically, talking with people.

PEGGY: Okay. Graham?

GRAHAM: Sure. So, you get to reap the benefits of others work before – piping plover I would say it's not as big of an issue as it had been in the past. Pretty much everything's always going to be an issue, it's just the level of intensity. It's not the same. The parking lot closures that were done before me, when I came on board here, I spent a weekend working at the gatehouse in the summer to get that experience. I remember we were full, no space for vehicles, and closed the gate. Having to walk down and explain to people why it was closed and they would have to wait a little while. Some guy, I remember, said "Well this is ridiculous. Who's your boss? How do I get in touch with him?" And I said, "Well, that's Janet Kennedy and she used to be the manager before I was, so you won't get any sympathy from her." [laughter]. One manager's success is another manager's future headache. George's success with the impoundments and as he said getting all the least bitterns and Virginia rails and sora rails and the challenges of the impoundment management, resulted in the North Pool becoming a major issue for the refuge. Looking at trying to restore that impoundment back to salt marsh because it was so hard to manage given the sole reliability on precipitation for freshwater. That's still an issue that the refuge is still working through even today. Trying to work with the State and the birding community, we became sort of adversaries because of the presence of these state-listed species or just because it was such an attractive area for these birds. The bird watching community wanted to come out there. I remember my first week here, I spent time with each of the staff going around the refuge. I wanted to hear what's important to you, what's the issues. I was with Nancy, and we were driving down, and we'd had a lot of rain and we were trying to manage Bill Forward Pool for part of a regional shorebird study. Trying to get all the water out there, and North Pool was so full, we were pumping it. Nancy was like, "We'll just open the gate, and we'll get somebody else to close it." This is my first week so I completely forgot about the North Pool as we were going further down, and I'm thinking all weekend, as I go to do something - like I said there's two maintenance, two visitor services, and I'm like, "oh,

somebody else will do that". I'm thinking "first week, this is a piece of cake." [laughter]. So, Monday, come into work and Frank's got a big grin on his face, like "Welcome to Parker River" because we had forgotten to close the gate on the North Pool and all the water had come out. So the birding community went ballistic because of those rare birds. It was entertaining in a sense, and of course then we were restoring the structure of the Bill Forward Pool and a week later, this new water control structure showed up and then the public was like "You've been brought in to get rid of North Pool." That's what they were assuming. So, that's probably one of the biggest ones we struggled through before I got here and even after I left here. It's still, we're still trying to work through that.

FRANK: One of the things about the impoundments – when Ed and George were here, the impoundments were [built in the 1950s and were still relatively] new. We talked about the honeymoon period when things are flourishing, and its new, and you have native species in there in that habitat. Fast forward a few years [decades] after that, and we have invasives encroaching and taking over. So, it's a matter of invasive species management which is ongoing, I'm sure. So, things change, they're not static. They don't always remain in that honeymoon period. So it's a real challenge to manage those impoundments and has been.

GRAHAM: The important thing is we learn as we've progressed. Like George said, we [the County Mosquito Commission] used to spray DDT back in the day. I think if you look at an aerial photo of Parker River refuge there are some nice concentric circles out on the [salt]marsh in places [Nelson Island]. I think looking back through some of the narratives that they used explosives to open water spots for different wildlife [killfish sumps/reservoirs for biological mosquito control].

GEORGE: I had a number of things I didn't mention. If I could spend like a minute on four or five subjects.

PEGGY: Of course.

GEORGE: I interrupted Ed I think when I was talking about something and didn't know enough to stop talking. If I could. Libby had asked me to talk about the – I could talk a little bit longer about that one, I'll come back to it - but that was the reduction from 12,000 acres to 4, 000 acres and how that came about. I can give you a few minutes on that.

PEGGY: Sure, right now. 5 minutes.

GEORGE: I just want to mention a few other things. For this public use problem we were having, we initiated a bail forfeiture system so we didn't have to go to court as often. We were able to write tickets. That was approved by the U.S. Attorney's Office. Basically, when we were prosecuting cases, we were the prosecutors. Many cases – we were cops at Parker River, that's

what we were. That's what we were. And we were prosecuting cases. I even went to Washington on one case, but that's another [story].

ED: Let me interject before you go past that. We had dual credentials – we had federal and state. We had no capability to prosecute through federal court because the U.S. Attorney would not take these miniscule cases. He told us he was dealing with bank robbers. So, we prosecuted everything through local Newburyport District Court. It wasn't until the Division of Law Enforcement, when I was here, got ahold of me and said, "Hey, look. We've finally got a U.S. Attorney that is a hunter." His name was Hollingsworth, Wayne Hollingsworth. "Could you take him on a tour of the refuge and take him on a goose hunt?" I did, and we established a very good working relationship with him, and that was the beginning of our ability to get cases into federal court.

GEORGE: We actually had state deputy credentials, and that enabled you to have full state police powers in Massachusetts, if you can imagine. I still have my credentials by the way [laughter]; I didn't turn them in.

FRANK: They're not current though, are they [laughter]?

GEORGE: I don't know. I've never tried to use them. Another thing, a big thing, was a Headquarters proposal that we were going to relocate the headquarters. We had funding and everything else, for planning. I felt, having been on a number of refuges by the time I came to Parker River, that we should have a refuge headquarters on the refuge if it was at all possible. The sub-headquarters area had been so modified with goose ponds and the dikes and the YCC program and the original buildings that were there, that I felt that would be a good site, right against the North Pool dike. Put you in the middle of a management program that and it was probably as far from the ocean that you could get on the island. That became quite a controversy. It was only dwarfed by the sign I saw in the refuge narrative report, which is probably still there in the files. This is when they reduced from 12,000 to 4,000 acres. There was a sign on the boulevard right out here, by the airport. "Welcome to Plum Island except U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service." There is a picture of that. We were defeated on that proposal. We had a narrow [unintelligible]. Judge Jodry – I think his name was Judge Jodry - had made the comment when they took the refuge down from 12,000 to 4,000, he said about the refuge sub-headquarters – it got political – so the new headquarters proposal was defeated by the Washington Office basically with the political interference. Judge Jodry's comment was "We beat you then and we're going to beat you again." That was the sentiment of a lot of the people who were very upset. I'll go back to what happened with the 12,000 acres. There was very poor title on a lot of the properties on the refuge. Nobody could prove title. It was just, some families had been living there for 200 years. It was passed down. So vast amount of that – well what we ended up was 4,000 acres – a lot of that was Presidential, Secretarial proclamation waters of the Ipswich Bay. So we really only had a few hundred acres, maybe a thousand, of island, if

that, and then salt marshes. But the proclamation waters were areas that we could close for hunting for migratory birds, but you really couldn't manage it. It's a tidal area.

PEGGY: What did the 12,000 acres encompass?

GEORGE: The 12,000 acres included everything from Georgetown on the Parker River and Crane Pond and Newbury all the way out to Scotland Road, and I don't ...

ED: Route 95.

GEORGE: Yeah, Route 95, and it should have been beyond because the Little River drainage actually went into West Newbury. I didn't realize it did. But when I got to the refuge, there was a Congressional Record, four or five books of thick, black binders. I don't know where they are now, but it listed what had happened. The bottom line was that it became political, and the town and the state and federal representatives got together and basically refused to let the refuge keep [the acreage]. What had happened was the feds had condemned this acreage because you couldn't prove title and they deposited millions of dollars in court. If you could prove you owned it, then you would get paid for it, from the courts. But nobody could prove ownership. So, it was a dilemma. So, what they ended doing is, most of it went to the state. It was given to the state because nobody could prove ownership. Nobody had title, even though they had a history of it.

ED: There were a bunch of them that when we said we would give you the land back, they didn't want it. It was all included in that parcel that went to the state.

GEORGE: And we had of course, taxes. We had that thing about the government would still pay a small amount to the towns from refuge receipts and fees, etc., "in lieu of taxes".

PAT: Revenue sharing.

GEORGE: Revenue sharing. But the bottom line is of course the State didn't have enough money to maintain it. Parker River Refuge would have been an entirely different refuge. When I was managing the impoundments for waterfowl and wildlife production, we had pintails, gadwalls, shovelers, blue and green-winged teal, mallards, black ducks, broods all over the place. A pintail brood that was seen in Lot 3 and I had to, that wanted to go to Stage Island Pool. I spent an hour and a half slowing down traffic, stopping traffic. This hen is running down the road all the way to the pool. It took her an hour and a half to do it [laughter]. We were producing wildlife. Several hundred waterfowl we produced annually. But that's the story of why the refuge got reduced. Let's see, I had one other...

GRAHAM: It's interesting too. There was a bill before Congress to completely abolish the refuge. It went to President Truman's desk, and he refused to sign the bill. But the Secretary was directed to divest the acreage that we don't have anymore. A lot of that, I don't think I ever saw the four- or five-inch [thick] binders that you talked about, George.

GEORGE: They used to be right behind the secretary's desk right by the window in the old office, on the shelf. They were 5 or 6 volumes, this thick. I didn't read them all. I did go through them. It was very boring.

GRAHAM: I found some documents that were still here.

GEORGE: It's a Congressional record of this whole fiasco.

GRAHAM: What's interesting too is that back in the early 1920s the Service was looking at creating refuges and they were already looking at what's now the refuge because of its importance on the flyway for migratory waterfowl. They had a lot of information on clamming and the biological resources of the area. I found that in the files too.

GEORGE: All the marshes north of the refuge by Plum Island Airport and Joppa Flats would have all been part of the refuge under ideal circumstances, 'cause that's where the birds went at low tide. At high tide, they came to the refuge impoundments. One other thing that I did while I was there, I got involved with as a student, with J.C. Appel as the manager, was that he had me inventory the mosquito producing areas in the Nelson's Island area. I went out all summer long and staked - the breeding areas which were very limited. They were on the high marsh next to the uplands where you get a certain amount of brackish water from runoff. But wherever you had salt marsh with pannes or ponds, natural ponds, there was no mosquito production at all. So, J.C. Appel and I, he had me - I was his henchman basically - I'd worked with the Fort Devens Army, military, and they brought out their crew with cratering charges, which were designed to destroy enemy airstrips. Basically, the idea was we would blast potholes in these breeding sites which were all staked out with lathe, and obliterate them, and create permanent pothole habitat for killifish. Because what happens when you get rain or some runoff they get these little temporary puddles but there is no fish there to eat the mosquito larvae. So, again, the narrative report should show I did this, pictures of the blast going up. What it was, was ammonium nitrate and fuel oil mix, basically the thing that Timothy McVeigh used to level the federal building [in Oklahoma]. I became the regional blasting expert which I wanted nothing of. I even got the manual, and I went to Bombay Hook, Montezuma, and Brigantine NWRs doing it.

FRANK: You're on someone's list, George [laughter].

GEORGE: Finally, one of our cohorts, what's his name, Berlin Heck, tried it at Great Meadows, and it shook houses all around the refuge – well the same thing happened at Parker River, but it wasn't so bad – but people's ...

PAT: ...windows...

GEORGE: ... shelves were losing their spices and bottles and cans were rattling 'cause of the ground [shaking]. But the bottom line was, when I came back as a manager, I walked that property and there was still no mosquito production in that area around Nelson's Island of any significance because there were still the potholes full of hungry minnows. What happens when you get rain, you get a little puddle. The mosquitoes lay their eggs and it takes the minnows a substantial tide to reach these areas and if you don't have it – it only takes four or five days for a mosquito to go from an egg to an adult. So, it was very successful. I wish somebody would check that area again. You got into open marsh water management after I left, we did a little of that with the backhoe along the back edge of Plum Island and in Stage Island Pool adjacent to the State Park.

FRANK: Connecting those pannes and what not.

GEORGE: The pannes and deepening a few places. It made a big difference for mosquito control. It was a big deal then. You don't hear as much now.

PAT: I didn't know you were so instrumental in forwarding that.

GEORGE: We all benefited from the previous guys with everybody else, like Gordon Nightingale.

FRANK: What comes to mind to me is back in the old days, and that is a relative term I guess, but back in the old days, doing things was easier. As the years progressed and the dreaded "p" word entered into refuge management – permitting – we needed to do a permit for just about everything undertaken on the refuge.

GEORGE: Even to *restore* wetlands!

FRANK: You talk about slowing down the process of accomplishing things out there. Permits was a major hurdle. Maybe if I was born in....

GEORGE: "General permits" is the only hope you had, where they would give you a general permit to do wetland restoration and all this stuff.

FRANK: Right. It just adds to the task and slows everything down.

PEGGY: It does. It is different now. I'm going to ask the next question as we are approaching our last half-hour. Who were some of the memorable staff you worked with? Did you stay in touch with them? And did they go on to other positions in the Fish and Wildlife and if so, where?

ED: All the folks that I'm going to mention, with the exception of a couple, are deceased. There was Woody Deserres, one of the maintenance men. Very capable mechanic that just kept all of our very rusted out rolling stock moving.

GEORGE: Government surplus stuff.

ED: You bet. Bill Forward, who was the biologist here. Bill was probably one of the most affable individuals anyone would ever want to meet and a very capable biologist who conducted the banding program on the refuge and all the biological thrust that we were into at that time.

PEGGY: Do you happen to know when our structures were named after him? We have the pool, and we have the blind.

ED: Well, that happened at the time George was here. I participated in and put together the brochure with a whole bunch of photographs which was the dedication brochure. That was something that I had done at Iroquois for Larry Smith when he moved on to a different refuge. But it was a good tribute to Bill. Tying off of that activity his good friend that he had, Bill Jerome, made a suggestion and they dedicated one of the state areas over by – I forget the name of that one – they changed the name to the Bill Forward Wildlife Management Area.

GEORGE: It was the Mill Creek, Parker River area. All the acreage that was under part of the refuge once.

ED: Yes, part of that turn back.

GERORGE: Land that was given back to the state, mostly marshes, wetlands. Salt marsh, fresh marsh.

PEGGY: Any other people come to mind?

ED: Yes, then there was Red Walker who was a carpenter here on the refuge. One of the maintenance men. Of course, Tom Stubbs who basically was the major domo and supervised all the maintenance men. Tom was just the finest kind of guy. He functioned more like an assistant manager than he did a maintenance supervisor.

GEORGE: There wasn't even an assistant [manager] at the time when I arrived. He was the assistant, really and he ran the maintenance program.

ED: He was the assistant, but he was not in title or pay. And then of course, Don Grover, who I had the highest regard for. Don was just a real capable guy. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Kathryn Welch who was the clerk typist there. I used to refer to her as my gatekeeper. She had a very stern demeanor about her and when complaining, problem people came in, Kathryn would scare them away [laughter]. John Langan was the very first YCC director. John was a schoolteacher in the Pentucket school system. He worked real hard to get that program up and running and did a wonderful job, and moved on into the Regional Office. He became the deputy YCC coordinator for the region. That's when Mel Fraser came in behind John and Mel was just, as Frank mentioned, Mel was just the finest kind of guy. You could always count on him. Anytime you had something that needed YCC attention, he was there with flying colors.

FRANK: You know, he always spoke highly of you. He always spoke highly of you [looking at Ed] and George.

ED: That pretty much covers the staff [unintelligible].

PEGGY: How about you, George?

GEORGE: I had most of the same staff that Ed had, but we added a lot of positions while I was there. With increased funding, we were able to put Tony Léger on as an assistant law enforcement officer for a couple of years. We established an ORP position, Outdoor Recreation Planner, I guess it was. He had law enforcement authority too. He was Brian Robinson, I guess was his name.

ED: Right.

GEORGE: We had Bill Koch who went on to be the manager of Great Swamp for a long time, now retired. We went to his retirement, and he and his wife Loretta stayed with us last year enroute to Maine. Clara Bell came to us after Kathryn Welch retired. She was a former secretary to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy and to Senator Tydings of Maryland. So, she came overqualified for her position. She was a wonderful person. Very good with people and kind of made up for some of Mrs. Welch's personality.

ED: She didn't scare them away.

GEORGE: She attracted them in fact. She was quite a gal. We also had a bookkeeper, our fiscal person. So, we had two positions replacing Mrs. Welch at some point. That was Katharine Garrett.

ED: I want to say [unintelligible] but that wasn't it. It was one of my officers.

GEORGE: Doug Spencer, I mentioned. Went out to Region 3 and I believe he's out in Region 1. He's retired now. We kept in touch with Doug and Janine with Christmas cards and Christmas letters from him and his wife. Mike Bower, I never, I don't know what Mike became. Wally Soroka became an FWS agent. He was a refuge trainee, manager trainee for us and really liked law enforcement. He started in law enforcement. He had to go to Long Island for the port entry, what do they call it? Customs. That was your right of passage. He drove over the bridges through New York City and had two accidents. He was sideswiped [laughter]. He got there; he called me. He was practically crying. "I can't do this; I can't do this!" He just couldn't stand the traffic and the people. I said, "You know, you're going to ruin your career if you don't go there. You've got to go there. You really don't have any choice. You're never going to..." Well, I talked it over with the Regional supervisor in law enforcement and they took pity on him. He became the agent from Massachusetts. He went out in the marshes in Salisbury when we were doing spy blinds and hunter checks. He went out to enforce the migratory bird regulations on opening day of hunting season. A group of us were in Salisbury. I did spy blinds in Blackwater Creek when we (the FWS) were doing steel shot introduction and compliance checks. Wally parked his government undercover vehicle, and he got in the water and went from blind to blind all over the Salisbury marshes and in everyone made a case. He waded and swam. They couldn't believe it. No game warden ever gets out of his car. You never saw that. He swam up to the blinds. He got them for unplugged guns if they didn't have licenses. He'd say, "See you at the car in about an hour." He had about 20 people there, and when he went into the Regional Office, they couldn't believe it. Somebody had made 20 cases in the Salisbury marshes. Maurry Mills was my assistant at Rachel Carson, now the biologist at Moosehorn. Andy French was in the YCC program and one other position as a trainee stationed at Monomoy, then to Region 3, and now he's manager at the Conte refuge. He was the Realty supervisor in the Region 5 Regional Office for a while. Lou Hinds I think was after me as an assistant to Jack Fillio. Lou Hinds became the manager at Chincoteague. Both Andy French and Lou Hinds became "Refuge Managers of the Year". So, that was a nice tribute to both of them. They're real hard workers. They're all good people. Then there were many others that I can't immediately recall.

PEGGY: Well, those are the most memorable ones, I'm sure. Pat, do you have memorable staff?

PAT: Yeah, but I can't talk about it here [laughter].

FRANK: I had some of those too [laughter].

PAT: In all seriousness, actually two of them are sitting right next to me. I have to say, even if they weren't here, what I admired about both of them is they were very steady eddies and had this really can-do attitude. Equally important with that, they had a sense of humor and some might have it a little bit drier than others, but I appreciated it, nevertheless.

PEGGY: For the sake of the audio, what are the names you are talking about?

PAT: Oh, I'm sorry.

PEGGY: That's okay.

PAT: Frank Drauszewski and Janet Kennedy. They both had intelligence and common sense. You don't lots of times get the two together, but they had it. They had a very calming effect on situations and people. I for one am very grateful. I learned a lot from both of them, observing them, and you know their careers.

FRANK: I got stuck here [laughter]!

JANET: I got stuck in the Regional Office [laughter].

GEORGE: I broke the Parker River NWR longevity record. I was eight years and I tied Gordon Nightingale's eight years. It was unheard of for anybody to manage to last more than five years, pretty much. That's when Ed and I started. I moved four times in five years to different refuges. That was the way it was. Even the best refuge manager in the region, like Larry Smith were not exempted.

ED: When you got the phone call from Tom Horn that says, "Are you standing up or sitting down?", then you went [laughter].

GEORGE: I got requested to transfer to Parker River, maybe because I had already been here, and I had lived in the area. So, I said, "That's not a real challenge for me. It's a law enforcement refuge. I'd rather be on a new refuge – I was at a refuge (Great Swamp) where we went from 2,500 acres to 6,000 acres, and practically no water to 3,000 acres of previously drained restored wetlands and 7,000 wood duck eggs in the nearly 500 boxes. Real challenging type things. But there indeed were challenges at Parker River as you know, as we've been talking about.

PEGGY: Pat, did you have any other standout staff?

PAT: I have to say I agree with Clara Bell. She was like the glue that held the office together. She was very, I think humble and unassuming, but she really knew one heck of a lot. Stations were, the different staff [due to moving], and I think that's the case in a lot of refuges, that's why it's critical to have people who are there for longer periods of time. They are the glue, they hold things together, and thank heaven they have good memories.

GEORGE: She's still living in Newburyport, too.

PAT: Oh, I'll have to look her up.

GEORGE: She went to Tom Stubbs' funeral.

PAT: Well, she was great. She tried to hitch me up many times [laughter]. If someone good looking and single came into the office, she would direct him to me, otherwise she would direct him to Jack [laughter]. Anyway. She also had a sense of humor. And I would also say Jack Filio. I'm surprised he didn't just close his door and when he heard me, just say "Go away!" I always had these ideas of things we should do and how we could do it and stuff like that. Could I please take this on? He could have by all rights said, "No" but he didn't. He knew I was eager to learn as much as I possibly can.

PEGGY: Is he still with us do you know, or has he passed?

GEORGE: I think he passed. I'm pretty sure he did.

ED: No. He's in North Carolina.

GEORGE: Pete Suich did. They (Ed Chandler, Jack Filio, and Pete Suich) were all down in the Carolinas. They all retired.

PAT: Unfortunately, I didn't really stay in touch.

GEORGE: I thought he had though.

ED: I don't think so.

GEORGE: I haven't heard. He lived right down the street from me where we lived in Kensington. I helped him figure out a name for his property – "Drumlin Droll".

PEGGY: I was just curious. Any others you want to mention?

PAT: I didn't stay in touch with folks at Parker River like I do at Long Island. I think that's something I learned from this crew, that the people you work with are everything. They contribute to your growth, sometimes your downfall – just kidding. I would have to say the one thing that I think about with the folks that were with Fish and Wildlife Service, especially on refuges, they are the most dedicated, committed individuals and they're just downright nice. They really are. They all are. That was, even when we went from 11 [staff positions] – we'd go through these drastic staff cuts or financial cuts or controversies – you could always count on your fellow workers.

PEGGY: It's definitely a common thread for sure.

PAT: So, that's really, I think, great.

PEGGY: Frank, did you have anyone you want to mention?

FRANK: Just what Pat was saying about having a sense of humor. I'll get onto my favorites and people I really cared about. One time, for whatever reason, I just had to show the two ladies up front, Martha and Linda, that I could stand on my head. What was really bad about it was that I had my firearm on and my gun belt. I was all loaded up because I was going to check hunters or whatever the situation was. So, I'm standing on my head and my gun, it was a revolver at the time, fell out of my holster onto the floor. As soon as the gun fell out of the holster, I was standing on my head, she walks into the room. I don't know if you remember that [laughter].

PAT: I was trying to use discretion.

FRANK: She bolted. She left right away.

PAT: I didn't see this luckily.

GEORGE: It didn't fire? We had a manager (assistant manager-acting) at Great Swamp, where it did fire and went into the ceiling and patio on the refuge.

ED: Whose name we won't mention.

GEORGE: We won't mention his name. The secretary there also had a similar accident.

FRANK: Luckily it didn't go off. I have a lot of favorites and I'm not going to, I'm going to mention a few.

PEGGY: The standouts.

FRANK: Everybody I worked with is a favorite. There were rocks on the refuge, and some of the rocks that I considered really important to me and to the refuge: Gary Burke, whose a maintenance worker that worked at the refuge for 20 plus years. Just a solid guy. Just a rock. Bob Springfield, who's currently working. Another guy you could go to. Common sense. Tries to save money. Tries to save the government money. Tries to do it the simplest, best way. Solid guy. They made my life a whole lot easier. I could go to those guys and they'd solve the problem and we'd go on to the next one.

GEORGE: Dan Ryines. Do you remember that name?

FRANK: Dan Ryan?

GEORGE: Ryines. He was a laborer? I don't know for sure. He was still here when I left.

FRANK: Those two stand to mind. Right now, I think the rocks on the refuge are Nancy Pau. Matt Poole has been here long enough to be considered a rock. I think there is something to be said for longevity and being there for a while. Moving around is great for your career and your experience but if you could find people who are from the community and live there and know the area, you kind of rely on those folks. I think Nancy's been here quite a while and Matt's been here not quite as long, but I think they are in tune, in touch with the area and the community, and that helps the refuge do its job better.

PEGGY: For sure. Janet, did you have any memorable staff?

JANET: Yes, and I'm glad that you mentioned Gary and Bob because they certainly are standouts. But I have to say that the two people that I needed most and were there for me were Frank Drauszewski and Martha Parmenter. This was my first refuge manager job, at Parker River, and I never could have done what we collectively did on the refuge without a true partnership with Frank to take advantage of all of his knowledge and his approach and his attitude and his support. Also, Martha – budgeting was not my thing, and Martha could keep the ship afloat with all those administrative things and was always able to answer questions and help. I also, I have to mention, Nancy Pau and Deb Melvin. Both passionate for the refuge biology from before I arrived until after I left. They really kept the biological priorities going. Also, the folks in public use – Jean Adams really helped with the volunteer program and Maeve Taylor was here at the time, managing the public use program. All of those folks.

PEGGY: Graham?

GRAHAM: Well you get to this point and pretty much everybody has been mentioned. Frank was the deputy as Pat said. Solid. That continuity was helpful. Why are we doing it this way?

FRANK: 'Cause we always did it this way [laughter].

GRAHAM: Yeah, that institutional knowledge. We've always done it this way. Bob and Gary at maintenance. Jan mentioned Martha. The foundation of any success on a refuge is maintenance and the admin. Nothing happens if those don't exist and those are not functioning. Everything else is sort of icing on the cake, if you will. Important icing but. Again, Nancy and Matt came on not long before I left. Jean Adams. The law enforcement staff, that's still been a big part, and that program has suffered recently across the country as well. But

Jean, you talk about memorable – if you haven't seen Jean's workspace or her signs that she developed for the entrance to the refuge. Those people know those graphics and they come for that.

PEGGY: Well, we're approaching the final few minutes, believe it or not, already. We want to tie this up, as we end, in our final question. And that is, what thoughts do you have about the refuge now, and what would you like to see happen in the future on the refuge? We have about 10, 15 minutes.

ED: Okay. I thought you said two minutes.

LIBBY: It's twelve o'clock, so we can go for 10 minutes.

ED: I'm just so thankful and gratified [with what] I see going on, on the refuge, that we now have achieved a national wildlife refuge as opposed to an overused and abused public use area. That can only be built upon and maintained, holding the line against those encroachments that would certainly be brought on by various other interest groups, 'cause believe me, they're out there and they are going to raise their ugly head at some point in time. I think in retrospect, George, your suggestion about putting the headquarters out on the island, looking back at it now with the Atlantic Ocean rise, it's probably best that it is right here, because there would probably be backwater flooding from the bay side.

GEORGE: I wanted to put it up at the North Pool Dike, which is pretty high.

ED: Yeah, pretty high.

GEORGE: Right at the side of the dike.

ED: It still would probably have been a contentious issue with what is happening today. I'm saying looking back now. I supported it out there, believe me.

GEORGE: There was a time when that could have happened. It was right on the edge when it could have happened. It never would happen now.

ED: Just carrying on, the facilities are wonderful here now. I think the public is really, really benefiting from the opportunity to hit this first then go on out to the refuge. The displays are really great.

PEGGY: What about you, George?

GEORGE: I'd like to see the management of the impoundments for wildlife, especially unique wildlife species, waterfowl and waterbirds - all that, continue. I know we destroyed salt marshes, or Gordon Nightingale did, but that's what we did. We built dikes like that at Brigantine. Other refuges too. Inland, it was wetland restoration at Montezuma, Iroquois, and Moosehorn. I would like to see some of that continue, especially I still think you can manage for a lot of these species I mentioned, whether the impoundments are getting older or not. We had problems with loosestrife. We had problems with cattails just becoming a monotype in the marsh, because of the water management difficulties. It's not an easy thing but I would like to see that continue. I know the birders would certainly appreciate it. It's a jewel for people that like to watch birds and experience rare species. I'd like to see somebody re-evaluate the mosquito production at Nelson's Island and look at that again. Thirty or forty years later - this was the early '60s so, and I looked at it in the '70's, and it was still working. Let's see, what else. Oh, when I was here, I don't know what the rules are even now, in fact somebody was asking me the other day - can you still pick cranberries here? Can you still pick beach plums? I think the last regs I read said you could - with some new restrictions - and it's been a number of years. We stopped coming to the refuge for those things because the ticks got so bad. In fact, I planted my own beach plums at my place. The chipmunks got most of them, though. Does somebody here know if you still allow picking beach plums?

PAT: Nancy knows.

NANCY PAU: Yes.

GEORGE: But you have restrictions.

NANCY: An annual lottery fee permit.

PEGGY: A lottery. We have a lottery 'cause it's so popular.

GEORGE: We used to have fires on the beach. Driftwood fires to help clean up boards that drifted in with nails in them after Labor Day. I used to staff up for Labor Day, and after the first year, I found there was almost nobody there so the gate was unstaffed. So, we would have a family picnic there on the beach with a fire. Our relatives would come. It was nice and I didn't think it was a problem, but obviously it's become a problem.

PEGGY: Well, Pat, what are your thoughts on the refuge and its future?

PAT: I honestly can't answer that because that is something I would need to, I would love to listen to the current staff. Things are always progressing and you're always seeing new things. To be quite honest, I really wish we could have at least an hour after. I really wish we could have at least an hour or a lot more. I would love to hear from everyone on the staff what they

think, what they'd like to see. They're our future. They're the present which, as Frank says, the future is now. Right? Isn't that what you said?

FRANK: I did [laughter]?

PAT: No, I would be fascinated to hear what they had to say. I really would.

GEORGE: Have we got time?

PEGGY: That's another project. After lunch, maybe. Frank, do you have thoughts?

FRANK: Well, we did a lot with partnerships over the years, and I'm sure it started right from the beginning, working with others and it's continued through the present day. That's always a really important thing to do because of limited resources. Just continue working partnerships, bringing in new partners, banging heads together, coming up with new ideas. That's kind of like where things really happen, and good things come forward from those partnerships. We've done a lot of invasive species control on the refuge and that seems to be an ongoing battle. I hope that at some point we can control the Phragmites and the loosestrife. We've got a handle on the purple loosestrife. The Japanese knotweed and all the others that we're battling. I'd love to see us do something with North Pool, 'cause the way it's been the last few years, it doesn't seem to be a viable impoundment with the invasives and the lack of the ability of getting freshwater. I hope we can come to some sort of resolution and, whether it be restore it to salt marsh or try to manage it for those rare waterbird species. I'd like to see us do something with that.

PEGGY: Janet?

JANET: I think that the refuge is in good hands and I'm always excited, since I have now retired, to see what younger refuge, current refuge managers and staff are doing on the refuge. That's always exciting. One of the things that I think is a real opportunity here is, because of the high visitation that the refuge gets, I'd like to see the refuge be able to work in the area of outreach even more. Be more visible in working in the area of outreach, particularly educating people about the importance of protecting our shared climate resource. We are breathing the same water, excuse me, breathing the same air, drinking the same water, as wildlife, so we need to keep it healthy for all. With the threats from climate change, I think the refuge here is well positioned to show the environment here and the importance of protecting our environment through its outreach programs.

GRAHAM: I echo what Janet and Frank have said. It's a bit awkward being the supervisor still [laughter] but I think the work that has been going on for a number of years now, with the salt marsh sparrows and our salt marshes. This refuge, as many of our coastal refuges, given the

challenges of climate change – sea level rise – that is really an opportunity that this refuge can shine in and showcase and make people, as Janet mentioned too, become aware that they are intimately connected to what happens in our natural resource. We manage, I always said, particularly with this refuge, we manage people for the benefit of wildlife. I think that's so true still. It always will be. Populations are growing, our natural areas are reducing. That's a big challenge. But also, finding a way to work with communities on strategic development in the sense – where does it make sense for them to invest their limited dollars whether it's for housing or businesses or industry or whatever, in areas that are the least impact to them from heavy rainfall events and all the things that causes infrastructure damage and challenges to those. Those tend to be the best areas that we can have for wildlife conservation. So, I think finding a way to take a different path, if you will, on getting our message across on why it's important to protect these areas.

PAT: If I could just add one thing for a question I would have, is for them to feel free to let us know what we can do as retired committed employees, to help. When I first retired from the Fish and Wildlife Service, I worked in the private sector for 10 years. So, now I'm kind of coming back. I needed to rest up a little from the schedule that you keep on refuges, because the passion and commitment is still there in those of us that are retired. I think you could hear. We've been where you are and we know the frustrations and handicaps that you have to deal with. I know for myself, just getting more involved with retired Fish and Wildlife Service employees and feeling very comfortable around Congressionals and stuff like that, there are some things that we could do to maybe be a partner and help you? Boy, I think everyone here would love to be there for you. Sometimes, if you just need an ear to nibble, I think you would find past employees to be right there, going "Yeah! I couldn't agree with you more." Just to let you know that we would like to help in whatever way you folks think you need.

PEGGY: That's nice to hear. I will share some resources with all of you afterwards about that.

FRANK: Just quickly, I'd like to give kudos to the current staff. I think over the last several years, while I was still working, they started using this facility the way it should be used. They put on a speaker series and we had speakers almost weekly for a period of time. They'd speak of climate change and sea level rise and topical topics, and the community – we'd get 90 people, 100 people sometimes, filling up that auditorium. Matt Poole also put together a conservation series of movies, film series. We'd get good turnouts for that also. The community appreciated it. It just brings people together.

GRAHAM: We haven't mentioned his name I don't think at all but Bill Peterson, who was the project leader who came in after I did, probably a year after I left, Bill came on board and just left this past May to a new position. I think he's continued a lot of the work and priorities and engaging the public the way that Frank just talked about with the work that Matt's been doing. We talk about closing beaches down. The boardwalks, he actually I think it was Lot 3, opened

up the first 100 feet or so of the boardwalk at Lot 3, because you go up in elevation. It gives you a nice view over the back dune area and out looking over the marsh. A few parking spaces and it's great, it's another opportunity to get people out and see a little something. I just want to acknowledge Bill's work.

PEGGY: Thank you for thinking of him, our most current manager. Well, that will actually conclude our panel discussion and our interview. You've all done a wonderful job, and we have all enjoyed hearing everything that you had to say today. So, thank you. (applause)

PAT: You did a phenomenal job, Peggy! It's not easy being the coordinator.



Addendum

Key words:

Area Offices
Army Fort Devens
bail forfeiture
beach closure
Bill Forward Pool
Bill Forward Wildlife Management Area
Blackwater Creek
Camp Sea Haven
Chamber of Commerce
climate change
Concord, NH
Crane Pond
Crane's Beach
DDT
deer hunt
Duck Stamp
Ducks Unlimited
Endangered species
Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
(FLETC)
Friends group
Georgetown, MA
Grape Island
Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge
Great Meadows
Hellcat Swamp
impoundments
invasive species
Ipswich
Ipswich Bay
John Hay National Wildlife Refuge
Joppa Flats
Karner Blue Butterfly Easement
Knobbs Camp
law enforcement
lifeguards
lighthouse
Massachusetts
Massachusetts Audubon
Massasoit National Wildlife Refuge
Mill Creek
Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge
Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge
Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge
mosquito control
mosquito management
Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge
Nelson's Island
New Hampshire
Newbury, MA
Newburyport
Newmarket, NH
Newton Corner
Nomans Land Island National Wildlife Refuge
North Pool
OMWM
outreach
pannes
Parker River National Wildlife Refuge
parking lots
Pentucket
pink house
piping plovers
PITA Hall
Plum Island
Plum Island Airport
Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge
recreation
Regional Office
revenue sharing
Rhode Island
Rockport, MA
Rolfes Lane
Route 95

Key words (cont'd):

Salisbury State Park
salt marsh sparrow
salt marshes
Sandy Point
Scotland Road
sea level rise
Section 7
snowy owl
Stage Island Pool
tern wardens
terns
Thacher Island National Wildlife Refuge
the Little River
the Parker River
Trustees of Reservations
U.S. Coast Guard
visitor center
Wapack National Wildlife Refuge
water control structure
wildlife management
workforce reductions
wrack line
YACC
Yankee Homecoming parade
YCC

People named in interview:

Bill Jerome
Governor Dukakis
Judge Jodry
Lou Kilborn
Mal Fraser
Wayne Hollingsworth

FWS staff named in interview:

Andy French
Anne Hecht
Berlin Heck
Bill Ashe
Bill Forward
Bill Koch
Bill Peterson
Billy Papoulias
Bob Springfield
Brian Robinson
Chris Schoppmeyer
Clara Bell
Dan Rinds
Deb Melvin
Dick Dyer
Don Grover
Doug Spencer
Gary Burke
Gordon Nightingale
Harry Sears
Howard Woon
J. C. Appel
Jack Filio
Jean Adams
John Langan
Kathryn Welch
Larry Smith
Linda Garcia
Lou Hinds
Maeve Taylor
Martha Parmenter
Matt Poole
Maury Mills
Mike Bower
Nancy Kaufman
Nancy Pau
Paul Nickerson
Pete Suich
Red Walker
Sharon Marino
Thomas Horn
Tom Stubbs
Tony Léger
Wally Soroka
Woody Deserres