

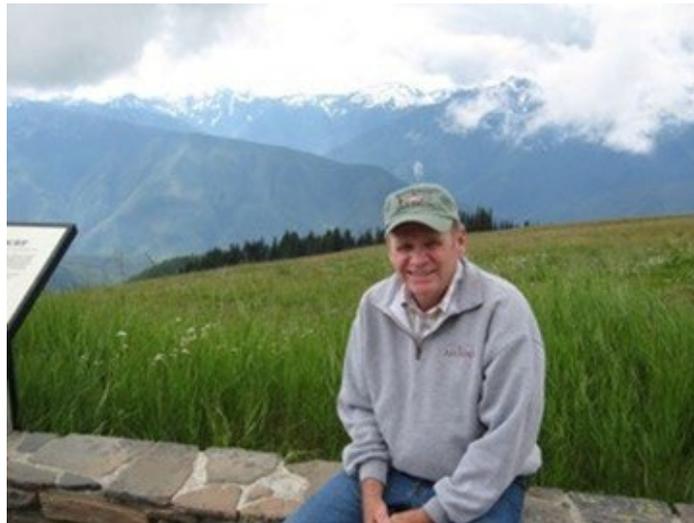


## The Oral History of Gary Hagedorn

January 21, 2020

Interview conducted by Cindy Uptegraft Barry

Yacolt, WA



# Oral History Cover Sheet

**Name:** Gary Hagedorn

**Date of Interview:** 1/21/2020

**Location of Interview:** Yacolt, WA

**Interviewer:** Cindy Uptegraft Barry

**Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service:** Worked with the Fish and Wildlife Service for 39 years (1968-2007).

**Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held:** Refuge Manager Trainee Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge 1968; Refuge Manager Trainee Malheur NWR 1969; Assistant Refuge Manager Benton Lake NWR 1971-1974; Assistant Refuge Manager National Bison Range, NW Montana Wetland District, Swan River NWR 1974 - 1979; Assistant Complex Manager for Lower Columbia Refuge Complex and Manager of Columbian White-tailed Deer and Lewis and Clark NWR's 1979-1987; Assistant Refuge Manager Sacramento NWR 1987 - 1988; Deputy Project Leader Klamath Basin Refuges 1988 - 1995; Project Leader Mid-Columbia Refuges 1995 -2007.

**Most Important Projects:** Worked on many projects over the years. Highlights include: aiding Dr. Carroll Littlefield with Sandhill Crane Research; Botulism management; National Bison Range, range management and wetland evaluations; Columbian white-tailed deer recovery, elk trapping, and habitat improvements; wetland management on national treasure refuges like Sacramento and Klamath Basin Refuges; water resource issues with tribes, Bureau of Reclamation, farmers, and irrigation users in balancing water use for refuges at Klamath; pest management on very large refuge farming programs with Bureau of Reclamation, farmers, and environmental groups on Klamath; Columbia River use issues and working with many political leaders, refuge users, colleagues, and neighbors over the years.

**Colleagues and Mentors:** Worked with many refuge managers, biologists, and employees over the years: Relationships that stand out include Bob Prather, John Scharff, Elden McClory, Dr. Carol Littlefield, Owen Vivion, Gene Cofer, Ben Lucas, Marv Kaschke, Milt Haderly, Babe May, Bob Watson, Larry Ditto, Bruce Wiseman, Forrest Cameron, Dave Geoke, Roger Johnson, Tom Stewart, Bob Fields, Rick Coleman, Dave Brown, Ed Collins, Dan Walsworth, Dr. Dave Mauser, Dr. Alan Clark, and Don Voros and many maintenance, management biological, public use, fire, and administrative personnel.

**Brief Summary of Interview:** Gary Hagedorn was born and raised in North Clark County Washington in the late 1940's and 1950's. His family was involved with hunting, fishing, logging, and outdoor interests. He went to Washington State University during the Vietnam Warera. While he was in college, he got his first job with the Fish and Wildlife Service between his sophomore and junior years of college and was a manager trainee (GS3) under Bob Prather at Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge. The second year he was a

refuge manager trainee (GS4) at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge under John Scharff. He graduated from college in 1970 and joined the National Guard. He was offered a job at Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge but could not accept it because of Army training. In 1971, after his Army training, he was again offered the position of assistant refuge manager at Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge. His next position with the Service was as wetland manager and assistant at the National Bison Range in 1974. In 1979, he applied for and was offered a position as assistant complex manager at Lower Columbia River Refuge Complex where he also managed the Columbian White-Tailed Deer and Lewis and Clark Refuges. As his career continued, he worked at Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, Klamath Basin Refuges, and finally at Mid-Columbia Refuges as Project Leader until he retired in January 2007. He received two DOI awards from the Service, the Superior Service award, and the Unsung Hero award.

## INTERVIEW

**Cindy:** Good morning. This is Cindy Barry conducting an interview for oral history on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020. I'm pleased to introduce Gary Hagedorn and take it away Gary.

**Gary:** My name is Gary Hagedorn. I was born and raised in north Clark County, Washington, where we are today. My grandparents had small farms in this moderate climate area. My wife Sue and I currently live on one of those farms. We're on a 200-acre farm that I now own with my brother. My maternal grandparents lived about five miles away on a small dairy. That's the backdrop of where I was raised in the late forties and fifties. My parents were in the logging industry primarily, and the wildlife interests that I developed at that time were incidental to life in general. My family was heavily involved in hunting and fishing and outdoor activities, but I really had no knowledge or background in any kind of wildlife science at all.

I was educated here in Amboy, Washington, but when I was in fifth grade, my parents moved up to Kelso, Washington. They moved back to Amboy when I was a junior in high school in 1965, but I stayed and graduated from Kelso High School, in Kelso Washington in 1966. After my junior year of high school, I was never at home full time again, which was kind of interesting. I chose to go to Washington State University. I don't particularly know why I chose Washington State because most of my friends at that time went to the University of Washington. It was 1966 and the Vietnam War was going on strongly at that time. It tended to be a turbulent time, and the Vietnam War was not like our parents' war. They had Hitler and Pearl Harbor, but the Vietnam conflict was more vague. We were losing classmates and family in a conflict that people couldn't quite understand. This set up a natural divergence between generations and generally defined the 60's kids as wayward. My experience was a little tamer than that though. I didn't experience a lot of the newsreel depictions of that time period.

My freshman year at Washington State I took up civil engineering as my major. My first roommate was a very strange fellow and he was in wildlife biology, and I got interested in his course of study. I switched to wildlife biology my second year and he flunked out and went into the Army. I changed dorms my sophomore year and my second roommate was also in wildlife biology. He heard about job opportunities with the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, and he was going to take a civil service test and apply. I tagged along with him, and I ended up getting a job that would last me the next 39 years. My roommate did not get a job at that time so there was a bit of grace that impacted my circumstance. My junior year of school, Sue Bailey came over to school and she was a major distraction for me, but I did get through school and had a job. My first job with The Service was between my sophomore and junior years. I was a refuge manager trainee, GS3, at Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge. Toppenish and Conboy were standalone refuges at that time. The manager was Bob Prather. I spent a lot of my summer building fence with George Fenn and a lot of refuge acquisition was going on at that time. It was a new refuge, and the plan was for 30,000 plus acres. The Toppenish valley was rich in wildlife and wetlands. The acquisition program was opposed by the Yakima Tribe. It stalled out and the final

pieces of that refuge ended up being fairly small. I was involved in my first biological projects at Toppenish. I also went with Bob to get involved with the tribal government issues. This time was an interesting learning experience for me. I went back to school in the fall of 1968. The following summer I was a GS4 refuge manager trainee at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. The manager at that time was John Scharff. He was a well-known long term refuge manager of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Malheur is truly one of the jewels of the refuge system. It's a large refuge. I gained a lot of experience and worked a lot with biologist Elden McClory. We were out on the marsh a lot doing surveys, and I learned greatly. I also banded sandhill cranes with Dr. Carol Littlefield. He had a long term sandhill crane study at Malheur, and he was an interesting fellow, and we got to know each other fairly well.

There was a small, but good rock building museum and I would give programs in the evenings to visitors that came to the refuge. It was just a big learning experience for me. I remember that after those programs in the evening I would just go out in the lawn, and I would just lay down on the grass and look up at the stars and just appreciate life. I felt very blessed. For a kid that started with no clue about what he was going to do, I felt I was actually being led in a direction. I truly was blessed.

There are certain moments in time that are precious that become enduring memories. One of those special dates for me was June of 1970. I graduated from Washington State University, and, because of the Vietnam War Conflict, I joined the National Guard at that time, and I married my beautiful wife, Sue. When I graduated, I was offered continued employment with The Fish and Wildlife Service (Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife at that time) at Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Montana which I had to pass on. I went to Fort Campbell Kentucky for basic training and then on to Fort Sill, Oklahoma for AIT (advanced individual training). My service comp date at that time was June 10th of 1968, but because I had to sit out and go to Army training, my service comp date was changed to February 2, 1969. In June of 1971, I was again offered a job. I went to the Service and told them I was done with my Army training. They again offered me Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Great Falls, Montana. So, Sue and I packed up and went to Benton Lake in June of 1971. We lived on the refuge in required housing and were about 15 miles north of Great Falls, Montana out on the wide open windswept, short grass, prairie - lots of wind, lots of extreme temperature changes. In those years, there was quite a lot of snow that occurred, and Sue had to drive the 15 miles to town to work and I had to walk across the parking lot to the office - seemed fair to me. She had some difficulties with snow at times and we did experience some blizzards coming home from Great Falls at times where we could not see. These were good times. Sue and I were basically newlyweds, and this was an important time for us in walking our path together and becoming established as a couple. We were away from family. It was a time where our marriage could get buttressed, and we just enjoyed each other. We learned how to become a "We." We did everything together and it was a very romantic time. We gained values and developed habits together that are still important to us 50 years later. We are still walking as a "We." I think that's very, very important because family walking with

you through the various moves that are required in Service life can be stressful yet adventuresome. It was important for me to be able to come home to a safe and enjoyable home environment.

Refuge staff at Benton Lake consisted of a manager, the assistant, a clerk and two maintenance men. At that time the Refuge was a little over 12,000 acres. I was the assistant refuge manager. I was very green. I was learning rapidly, but the assistant refuge manager wore a lot of different hats. I was the assistant, the biologist, the admin officer, the public use specialist, the law enforcement officer, and whatever. For law enforcement, I was given a book of pink slips and was sent out. There was quite a variety of things to be done. It was an interesting time.

During the three years that I was at Benton Lake, I worked for three different refuge managers. Owen Vivian was the first when I first went to Great Falls. Jed Devan was the second, but he got in a bit of trouble, and they moved him. Then Lyle Stemmerman came, and he was still there when I left. I remember, I started to grow a mustache, and Owen called me into his office, and he pulled out the refuge manual. At that time, it was not the three-volume brown refuge manual. It was a smaller black manual that showed things like how many chickens or cows you could have on a refuge. It was the first refuge manual. It stated that refuge managers would be clean shaven, and so I went home and shaved off my mustache - interesting times.

**Cindy:** What year would that have been?

**Gary:** That would have been 1971.

There was a special agent in Great Falls named Gene Cofer and he took me under his wing as far as law enforcement. There was no formal LE training at that time. He helped me a lot with learning law enforcement laws, policies, and procedures. I have one law enforcement story from this time. Benton Lake usually froze up hard in November. It was towards that freeze-up time. The last hunter came off the refuge. It was stormy and icy, and we had a little check station. Sue came down to the check station because the only hunter on the whole refuge was coming out and it was cold. I just asked him what he got, and I was ready to go home. He said he got one goose and Sue asked if she could see the goose? So, he opened his trunk, and it turned out to be a Common Loon. So, she probably saved him a terrible Thanksgiving dinner, and he did end up getting a ticket out of the deal.

We had big botulism problems. I was primary in picking up and treating ducks. We'd pick up 20,000 dead ducks each year and a lot of my summer was spent on botulism problems. I had a little duck hospital, and I would bring baby ducks home and put them in the bathtub. Sue didn't really appreciate that. We also had a few research projects at that time. We had a DNC (dense nesting cover) study on the refuge and a formal lead shot research program through Patuxent. Many refuge studies were coordinated and centralized through Patuxent research center.

When I started at Benton Lake, I was in Region 1 with the Regional Office in Portland, Oregon. In 1972, Region 6 and the Denver Regional Office were formed. I found myself in Region 6, which was fine. I enjoyed the mountain states.

I spent a lot of time on the program, planning, budgeting, and evaluation program (PPBE). The Service was trying to evaluate the benefits of each refuge and base funding allocation on the value of each refuge. I spent a lot of time on data gathering and filling out forms.

What I remember about Great Falls was the large concentrations of wildlife. The big bunches of geese and ducks and the outstanding displays that you could see. We had Snowy owls in the wintertime. We had a Peregrine falcon chase a mallard into the side of our house. We had a wounded bald eagle that we nurtured. We had a little raptor hospital thing that we built up and took care of him. He hung around our house for a long time after he healed up. Life on Refuges always resulted in experiencing wildlife in ways and numbers not easily seen by the public.

We had special friends. Gordon and Kathy McKerrow were a young couple our age that lived near the refuge. They were farmers in the area. What I found was that every place we've moved, we established friendships that lasted. We still have deep friendships with people from all the refuge areas where we've lived that we still value today.

Area offices were formed in 1972. In early 1974, Bob Ballou from the Billings Area Office gave me a call and he asked me if I would like to move to the National Bison Range and be the wetland manager. I didn't even ask Sue on that one. I just said, yes. So, in March of 1974, Sue and I moved to the Flathead Valley of western Montana. It was the most picturesque place we have ever lived. It was beautiful. Glacier National Park was close by. We lived 65 miles north of the Bison Range in a FWS house on the Creston National Fish Hatchery. I established a one-man sub-station in that fish hatchery. Marv Kaschke was the manager of the National Bison Range at that time, Milt Haderly was the primary assistant, and Babe May was one of the long term maintenance supervisors who was well known throughout the region at that time. They were great guys. They knew range management well. My duties were primarily at the wetlands. I was to monitor and designate wetlands for procurement under the small wetlands program that the Service had and there were some existing WPA's at the north end of the valley and Swan River National Wildlife Refuge that I also managed. So, I lived north of the Bison Range, but I'd go down to the Bison Range often for projects such as big game counts, range surveys, meetings, and bison roundup. I learned big game management as well as waterfowl banding and again it was a great time.

In about 1974, The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife changed to just Fish and Wildlife Service, and we changed uniforms at that time. I have patches still today of both those uniforms. In 1976, I went to Canada on a waterfowl banding assignment. I was a crew leader for one of those Canada banding assignments and Doug Benning was in charge of all of the crews. I went to a Wing Bee in 1975 at Fort Collins with Larry Ditto.

That's the first time I met Larry. He was a great manager, but at that time we were both pretty young. Another place that I met a lot of my

long term colleagues was in 1977 at Glencoe, Georgia at the Law Enforcement Training Academy. I met a lot of the people that became my friends within the Service. Bruce Wiseman became a really good friend, along with Richard Voss, Forrest Cameron, Dave Goeke. There were a lot of us that were in our late twenties and early thirties that I knew for the next few decades.

It was hard to leave the Flathead valley, but in 1979, I applied for and received a management job in Longview, Washington. It was the assistant manager for the Lower Columbia River Refuge Complex. It was back home for both Sue and me. So, in June of 1979, Sue and I moved away from the Flathead Valley to Longview, Washington. I was primary assistant at the Lower Columbia Complex in Longview, but I also managed the Columbian White-Tailed Deer and Lewis and Clark Refuges. Sue's dad had heart surgery, and my dad had lymphoma, and they were both in the hospital in Longview in 1979, so it was a timely move back home. We really didn't want to leave the Flathead, but it was a move that took us closer to family.

Sue and I adopted two boys. Greg while we were in Kalispell and Joel when we first moved to Longview. We enjoyed life together and they enjoyed the refuges tremendously.

Columbian White Tailed Deer Refuge was a small 5600 acre Refuge. I was on the recovery team for the Columbian White-Tailed Deer. Lewis and Clark were established in 1974. It was about 38,000 acres in the estuary areas of the lower Columbia River. The complex office was in Longview and Bob Watson was the manager. At that time, the complex consisted of Ridgefield, Columbian White Tail Deer, Lewis and Clark, and Willapa National Wildlife Refuges. Bob retired and Jack Kincheloe replaced him as the complex manager. He lived in Portland and the complex office was moved to Vancouver, Washington and Dave Brown took over as the primary assistant of the complex.

The small staff on the Deer Refuge was me as the manager, Dr. Allan Clark was the biologist (he stayed there his whole career), and two maintenance men, Alphonse Halfmoon and Bruce Britton. That was it except for some youth groups (YACC and The YCC) that we had during the summertime. Interestingly, when I later moved to Mid-Columbia Refuges, Al Halfmoon was on the tribal council of the Umatilla Tribe, and we again worked with each other. When he was our maintenance man at CWTD he lost two of his sons in two different accidents. This was the first time I'd really walked with staff through difficult times. Walking with people through trying life situations can be difficult, but relationships draw close when working on Refuges.

Other duties included habitat management, managing farming cooperators, supervision, budget, public use, a lot of plans, met with a lot of local governments, worked with the Army Corps of Engineers on the lower

Columbia River with dredge soil sites and so forth. We even had an oilspill on the lower river and our shop was turned into a bird hospital.

Another thing that was highlighted at that time was the elk trapping. The elk population on CWTD Refuge grew rapidly on the refuge while I was there. I went down to San Luis Refuge and

observed the elk trapping operation and came back and set up a similar trapping situation on the CWTD Refuge. We trapped and transplanted elk for several years. We had many research projects going at that time including Dusky Canada Geese monitoring and several endangered deer studies and relocation.

One of the law enforcement issues we had was big marijuana growing sites on Refuge islands. The Coast Guard helped us with these. We'd fly in their helicopters, and they would help us land and take those sites out. On Tenasillahe Island, which was part of the Deer refuge, we had big patches of blackberries and growers would make tunnels into the blackberries. You had to crawl into the blackberry tunnels, but then they would hollow out openings in the blackberries and had irrigation systems. It was quite elaborate. but we discovered and removed them.

At that time the wildlife society was changing their criteria for becoming a certified wildlife biologist and I took the time to fill out the paperwork and become certified before I didn't qualify anymore.

We were sued a couple times while I was at Columbian White-Tailed Deer. Most suits were related to elk damage to local cooperators. We ended up having a lot of public meetings. Susan Saul helped us with those. She was the outdoor recreation planner at the complex office. I have a good friend Jay Brightbill who was the local game warden for Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife who participated in a lot of Refuge activities. We became good friends and hunting partners.

One of the main things that happened too, while I was at CWTD was the eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980.

In 1987, the service decided to eliminate the Lower Columbian River Refuge Complex. Sue and I were well settled in Longview and had no desire to move on at that time. The decision was to make Ridgefield NWR a stand-alone refuge and Conboy Lake administration was moved from Toppenish and put under Ridgefield. Steigerwald and Franz Lake Refuges were new refuges and also added to Ridgefield at that time. Columbian White-Tailed Deer and Lewis and Clark were added to Willapa Refuge oversight. The Lower Columbia Refuge Complex office was eliminated for budget saving reasons. That made me excess, so I was offered a job at Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. I had little choice but to accept it, so we decided to go ahead and move to Sacramento NWR. It ended up being a very good decision for us as far as career goes.

Sacramento was hot in the summertime, and I was the assistant project leader. It was a lateral transfer for me. I was a GS11 at that time.

Sacramento was about 24,000 acres. It included Sacramento, Delevan, Colusa, and Sutter refuges and Butte Sink. These Central Valley refuges were major wintering areas for waterfowl along the pacific flyway. I was amazed. I learned a lot about moist soil management and intensively managed wetland habitats. Sacramento had a large staff. There were five biologists and five admin people and ten maintenance. Ed Collins was the project leader at that time. I

increased my knowledge a lot and I was really pleased for the experience with that type of wetland management. One thing that I was able to do while at Sacramento was attend the Advanced Refuge Academy in Washington D.C. in early 1988. That was a very good experience. I learned more about our central office and the workings of the government that I had only known peripherally.

I applied for Klamath Basin refuges in Tule Lake, California when it came open in 1988. I got that job, and we moved in June of 1988 to Klamath Basin. I was the GS12 Deputy Project Leader there to start and actually got my GM13 at Klamath Basin. Roger Johnson was the manager at that time and when he retired, Tom Stewart took over as manager. Klamath Basin truly is an underappreciated national treasure. It's 200,000 acres of just beautiful wetland areas with extremely large concentrations of waterfowl and is an amazing place. The Klamath Basin Refuge Complex consisted of Tule Lake, Lower Klamath, Clear Lake, Upper Klamath, Klamath Forest National and Bear Valley Refuges. Bear Valley is an eagle roosting area above Lower Klamath. At that time, it was said that 80% of the Pacific Flyway birds came through that area. We lived in a house on the refuge at Tule Lake and when the geese would arrive in the fall, they would wake us with the thunderous echoing off of the cliffs of Sheepy Ridge. It was also excellent for nesting waterfowl, colonial nesting birds and other wildlife. Lower Klamath was the first waterfowl refuge in the United States. It was established in 1908. It was a national historic site and a national natural landmark. There would be 500 bald eagles on Lower Klamath Refuge in the wintertime. The staff was large, with over 50 employees at that time with public use maintenance, fire, biology, one off site manager at Klamath Forest and several admin people. We worked a lot with the Bureau of Reclamation on water use and the early 90's was the beginning of the Klamath water use conflicts. The BOR and farming community had a 1905 water right and ours was 1908 and all were long term. It was an interesting time, but we worked with the irrigation districts and the Bureau of Reclamation a lot with balancing the water issues. There were also pesticide use and farming issues. Farming was actually a designated use on the Tule Lake with the Kuchel Act establishing the Refuge. It actually worked for a long time because we had good communication with the BOR, and the farming community and they did work hard at trying to balance the water needs of the farming community and the refuges. When demands on water flows down the Klamath River increased and minimum flows were established, the balancing on dry years became more difficult. After I left, water use discussions intensified. Interesting issues, interesting time, and I really did enjoy the active management issues.

The very large and traditional hunting program on Klamath Basin was the largest I had ever been involved with. Law enforcement coordination was one of my responsibilities. I think the first time I had really got involved with significant archaeological issues was at Klamath. There were large historical archeological resources on all of the refuges. We had regional archaeologists that were down the Klamath area often.

Personally, my boys grew up and went to grade school, junior high and high school in Tule Lake. They loved to hunt, and I would literally take them hunting in the morning, get our geese, and get ~~to~~ to school on time. It was just an interesting place and a quality hunting place for waterfowl. The boys ended up learning how to duck and goose hunt during that time period and they still have fond memories of Klamath. It was good for the boys. They really enjoyed family life at Tule Lake. We got involved with the community a lot. The boys had fair projects, and it was a special place. We went to barn dances in the farming community, and we had a lot of friends.

You could work through issues with people and still be friends with them and we definitely were that. In early 1995, I applied for and received the project leader position at Mid-Columbia Refuges. That's also where I was promoted to a GM14 refuge manager. We had seven counties that we worked with and congressional districts in two states, Oregon, and Washington. The refuges straddled the river, and we worked with many agencies and governmental jurisdictions. We interfaced with three tribal governments - Umatilla, Warm Springs, Yakama. Some were more intense yet enjoyable to relate to. The refuges of the complex at that time were Umatilla, Cold Springs, McKay, McNary, Conboy and Toppenish. Conboy was moved back from Ridgefield to the Mid-Columbia during my time at Mid-Columbia. It moved from Ridgefield back to the eastern watershed. In 2000, we moved the complex office from Umatilla, Oregon to Pasco, Washington. This was a much larger political base and was more central. We had about 40 personnel - fire, administration, biology, public use, maintenance, and sub - station managers. One thing I did notice when we moved to the Tri-Cities was that some of the staff that were not directly on a refuge where they could readily see the resource lost sight of our mission and purpose. When the wildlife resource is not readily visible in a city environment staff jobs became just jobs to get a paycheck. We had to keep them focused on why we were there. We were the Motel 6 for ducks and geese of the Pacific Flyway.

I do have a story. We had a Russian biologist, Boris Borisov, that came over from Siberia to observe how we managed the landscape. He stayed in our home for several weeks and supposedly he could speak English. But not well at all. So, it was kind of a challenge at times. When I took him back to the airport in Seattle to catch his flight home, we stayed the night in a nearby motel. I had a room, and he had a room. When I went to check out the next day, he had charged \$100 worth of X-rated movies on the bill. Here I am with a government credit card to pay for the overnight stay. I talked the motel into dropping some, but not all of the charges. I went ahead and paid it and had to sheepishly call Rick Coleman who was my supervisor.

**Cindy:** In the regional office?

**Gary:** In the regional office. I asked if he could bail me out on this one and he did, but it was not something I was expecting.

Working with the tribal governments was interesting and having a friend on the tribal council at Umatilla was something special too. I went to Pendleton often to see Alphonse Halfmoon. Al had

been a maintenance man for me at Columbian White-tailed Deer Refuge. When he retired, he moved back to the Umatilla Reservation and was on the tribal council working primarily on Columbia River fisheries issues. We reconnected after several years. His presence on the council was helpful.

I had several assignments to D.C. I worked on the Promises Document and other short term assignments. The Central Office and D.C. setting in general gave me organizational insights and scope of Service activities.

There are moments in time that are fixed in our memory. On November 6<sup>th</sup> of 1998, I was in the office conference room with Kathy Cheap, the complex biologist, and Mike Callow, the station manager for Umatilla. We were looking at maps for an aerial waterfowl census that they were going on. They left for the survey, but I never saw them again. The plane they were in went into the Columbia River and they were both killed. Walking through the trauma that night with the families and staff was difficult. We brought the families and the little kids into the office.

Dealing with that situation was one of the toughest things I'd ever done. It was a very emotional time for all of us. The next morning after the accident, the National Aviation Safety Board was in my office at 6 a.m. Did you have a plan? Did you have an aviation plan? Did you follow your plan? That part of it went well because we were prepared. Then I went up to the site and there was an incident response team of local governments there. The first question when I got out of the car was, where's the money? Well, we'll get you your money. They brought in divers from the Navy, from Seattle. There was quite an expense in pulling the plane and then the bodies out of the Columbia.

**Cindy:** Those costs had to be paid by the Fish and Wildlife Service?

**Gary:** Yes, the Service paid all response expenses. I was in contact with the regional office a lot on that one too, because the expenses on something like that are fairly high and a little beyond our station budget at the time. We had to work those issues out, but the emotional time following the incident with staff and families continued. We brought in counselors and outside resources to help.

I stayed at Mid-Columbia much longer than I had anticipated. I thought I would move on. I was actually offered a few jobs. One at Klamath, which I really, really wanted to take and one at Malheur, but Sue wasn't too thrilled about living in Burns. We passed on those opportunities. Life issues, timing, and age impact life decisions. We had grandchildren, Sue was teaching school so we stayed and retired at Mid-Columbia. My family and I thoroughly enjoyed our life on National Wildlife Refuges, and we feel greatly blessed.

**Cindy:** May I ask a question? Was Hanford part, you didn't mention Hanford?

**Gary:** It was not.

**Cindy:** It was pre-Hanford.

**Gary:** Much of it was pre-Hanford, but Hanford was initially set up separately. It wasn't added to Mid-Columbia until after my retirement.

**Cindy:** Okay. Never mind. If you didn't cover it in your time frame, then we don't need to bring it up.

**Gary:** Yeah.

**Cindy:** Ok.

**Gary:** There were a couple of Department of Interior awards that I received that I really appreciated. I think awards are encouraging and it's nice to be recognized. I received the DOI Superior Service award and then Unsung Hero award. Performance awards along the way were also appreciated. They also encourage personnel.

I retired in January of 2007. I had 39 years in, and I wanted to go to 42, but political circumstances led me to decide not to. I pulled the plug at that time. I always learned from my management experiences with the Service, and I went through many life encounters with my family and coworkers, and I really believe that from a kid who had absolutely no idea where I was heading things turned out well. My life was filled with grace.

There were special people within the Service that were really friends and helpful to me in my career. Bob Fields is right at the top of that list. Rick Coleman, Dave Brown, Marv Kaschke, Bob Ballou, Bob Watson, Ed Collins were also special supervisory influences that saw something and took interest in mentoring me. There were other special friends both supervisory and not that remain friends. Bruce Wiseman is a dear friend that lives close and we see each other often. He was the manager at Ridgefield while I was at Columbian White Tailed Deer too. We worked close together. Dr. Dave Mauser was a biologist at Klamath, and the best biologist I saw with the Service. Very, very good. Dr. Alan Clark was a good biologist as well. Milt Haderly, Bob Watson, Babe May, Don Voros, and so many more over the years were a special part of my life. There was a family spirit within the Service that I enjoyed very, very much and walking a career with the Fish and Wildlife Service was great for my family. We walked it together. My wife and I both consider it a together career and we still remained a "we" throughout. It was a family adventure that I was privileged to walk. It went beyond my expectations and in some ways even beyond my abilities maybe, but it was great. It was a life that I thoroughly enjoyed, and I still enjoy.

Could I have done things better along the way? I'm sure there were times that that was the case, but I continually learned so much. I also learned that a person can be more influential than they realize. I didn't fully see that until towards the end of my career. You can influence life around you within your sphere and what goes on with your relationships with people much more than you fully realize.

A couple more issues. Narrative Reports along the way were important to me. They were a valuable resource. Keeping track of history and management rationale is important. The Narrative reports were the first thing that you looked at when you went to a new station. If done right, they told why you did things, and it documented history. The Service discontinued these reports. The reasoning was that data was in computers, but it can get lost there too. The standardized format and consistency of the annual narrative throughout the nation led to recognizing Refuges as a System with quality vision with dedicated and talented personnel. Without documenting the why's you have to rediscover. Instead of a step by step, precept by precept building process a lot of ground rework and second guessing is required.

I saw a lot of good biology, good dedication, and fantastic abilities by people that knew the purpose of why they were there and were dedicated to a known vision. There was a good foundation. This may be controversial a little bit, but I see the current culture as not honoring of the past sometimes. We do have additional knowledge today from research. I don't think we have more dedication. I've heard terms thrown around like - "that was old school", or "good ole' boys", that are hurtful. We have good, dedicated people today as well, but I've heard demeaning terms thrown around by some young people. It's best to use energy and enthusiasm humbly and listen, observe, and learn first before you start second guessing. There is a foundation that has been built up throughout the decades and a culture within the Service that needs to be honored and built upon.

**Cindy:** Well, stated, and I don't think it's controversial.

**Gary:** Unless you have questions, I can't think of anything else.

**Cindy:** Well, we'll pause here, just a second.