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Sierra Club History Series

BUILDING THE SIERRA CLUB'S NATIONAL LOBBYING PROGRAM
1967-1981

Brock Evans Environmental Campaigner: From the
 Northwest Forests to the Halls of Congress

W. Lloyd Tupling Sierra Club Washington Representative,
 1967-1973

With Interview Introductions by
Denny Shaffer and Michael McCloskey

Interviews Conducted by
Ann Lage
1982, 1984

Underwritten by
The National Endowment for the Humanities

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PREFACE

The Oral History Program of the Sierra Club

In fall 1969 and spring 1970 a self-appointed committee of Sierra Clubbers met several times to consider two vexing and related problems. The rapid membership growth of the club and its involvement in environmental issues on a national scale left neither time nor resources to document the club's internal and external history. Club records were stored in a number of locations and were inaccessible for research. Further, we were failing to take advantage of the relatively new techniques of oral history by which the reminiscences of club leaders and members of long standing could be preserved.

The ad hoc committee's recommendation that a standing History Committee be established was approved by the Sierra Club Board of Directors in May 1970. That September the board designated The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley as the official depository of the club's archives. The large collection of records, photographs and other memorabilia known as the "Sierra Club Papers" is thus permanently protected, and the Bancroft is preparing a catalog of these holdings which will be invaluable to students of the conservation movement.

The History Committee then focused its energies on how to develop a significant oral history program. A six-page questionnaire was mailed to members who had joined the club prior to 1931. More than half responded, enabling the committee to identify numerous older members as likely prospects for oral interviews. (Some had hiked with John Muir!) Other interviewees were selected from the ranks of club leadership over the past six decades.

Those committee members who volunteered as interviewers were trained in this discipline by Willa Baum, head of the Bancroft's Regional Oral History Office and a nationally recognized authority in this field. Further interviews have been completed in cooperation with university oral history classes at California State University, Fullerton; Columbia University, New York; and the University of California, Berkeley. Extensive interviews with major club leaders are most often conducted on a professional basis through the Regional Oral History Office.

Copies of the Sierra Club oral interviews are placed at The Bancroft Library, at UCLA, and at the club's Colby Library, and may be purchased for the actual cost of photocopying, binding, and shipping by club regional offices, chapters, and groups, as well as by other libraries and institutions.

Our heartfelt gratitude for their help in making the Sierra Club Oral History Project a success goes to each interviewee and interviewer; to everyone who has written an introduction to an oral history; to the Sierra Club Board of Directors for its recognition of the long-term importance of this effort; to the Trustees of the Sierra Club Foundation for generously providing the necessary funding; to club and foundation staff, especially Michael McCloskey, Denny Wilcher, Colburn Wilbur, and Nicholas Clinch; to Willa Baum and Susan Schrepfer of the Regional Oral History Office; and last but far from least, to the members of the History Committee, and particularly to Ann Lage, who has coordinated the oral history effort since September 1974.

You are cordially invited to read and enjoy any or all of the oral histories in the Sierra Club series. By so doing you will learn much of the club's history which is available nowhere else, and of the fascinating careers and accomplishments of many outstanding club leaders and members.

Marshall H. Kuhn
Chairman, History Committee
1970 - 1978

San Francisco
May 1, 1977
(revised May 1979, A.L.)

PREFACE--1980s

Inspired by the vision of its founder and first chairman, Marshall Kuhn, the Sierra Club History Committee continued to expand its oral history program following his death in 1978. With the assistance of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, awarded in July 1980, the Sierra Club has contracted with the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library to conduct twelve to sixteen major interviews of Sierra Club activists and other environmental leaders of the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time, the volunteer interview program has been assisted with funds for training interviewers and transcribing and editing volunteer-conducted interviews, also focusing on the past two decades.

With these efforts, the committee intends to document the programs, strategies, and ideals of the national Sierra Club, as well as the club grass-roots, in all its variety--from education to litigation to legislative lobbying, from energy policy to urban issues to wilderness preservation, from California to the Carolinas to New York.

Together with the written archives in The Bancroft Library, the oral history program of the 1980s will provide a valuable record of the Sierra Club during a period of vastly broadening environmental goals, radically changing strategies of environmental action, and major growth in size and influence on American politics and society.

Special thanks for the project's later phase are due to Susan Schrepfer, codirector of the Sierra Club Documentation Project; Ray Lage, cochair of the History Committee; the Sierra Club Board and staff; members of the project advisory board and the History Committee; and most importantly, the interviewees and interviewers for their unfailing cooperation.

Ann Lage
Cochair, History Committee
Codirector, Sierra Club
Documentation Project

Oakland, California
April 1981

SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

March 1985

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- David R. Brower, Environmental Activist, Publicist, and Prophet, 1980
Brock Evans, Environmental Campaigner: From the Northwest Forests to the Halls of Congress, 1985
J. William Futrell, "Love for the Land and Justice for Its People": Sierra Club National and Southern Leader, 1968-1982, 1984
Patrick D. Goldsworthy, Protecting the North Cascades, 1985
Alexander Hildebrand, Sierra Club Leader and Critic: Perspective on Club Growth, Scope, and Tactics, 1950s-1970s, 1982
Richard M. Leonard, Mountaineer, Lawyer, Environmentalist, 1976
Martin Litton, Sierra Club Director and Uncompromising Preservationist, 1950s-1970s, 1982
Norman B. Livermore, Jr., Man in the Middle: High Sierra Packer, Timberman, Conservationist, California Resources Secretary, 1983
Michael McCloskey, Sierra Club Executive Director: The Evolving Club and the Environmental Movement, 1961-1981, 1983
Raymond J. Sherwin, Conservationist, Judge, and Sierra Club President, 1960s-1970s, 1982
William E. Siri, Reflections on The Sierra Club, the Environment, and Mountaineering, 1950s-1970s, 1979
David Sive, Pioneering Environmental Lawyer, Atlantic Chapter Leader, 1961-1982, 1984
Theodore A. Snyder, Jr., Southeast Conservation Leader and Sierra Club President, 1960s-1970s, 1982
Wallace Stegner, The Artist as Environmental Advocate, 1983
W. Lloyd Tupling, Sierra Club Washington Representative, 1967-1973, 1985
Edgar Wayburn, Sierra Club Statesman and Leader of the Parks and Wilderness Movement: Gaining Protection for Alaska, the Redwoods, and Golden Gate Parklands, 1985
- In Process: Phillip S. Berry, Claire Dedrick, Pauline Dyer,
John Zierold

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Harold C. Bradley, Furthering the Sierra Club Tradition, 1975
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Francis Farquhar, Sierra Club Mountaineer and Editor, 1974
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Thomas Amneus, New Directions for the Angeles Chapter, 1977
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Arthur B. Johnson, Climbing and Conservation in the Sierra Club's Southern California Chapter, 1930-1960s, 1980

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Robert R. Marshall, Angeles Chapter Leader and Wilderness Spokesman, 1960s, 1977

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Sierra Club History Series

Brock Evans

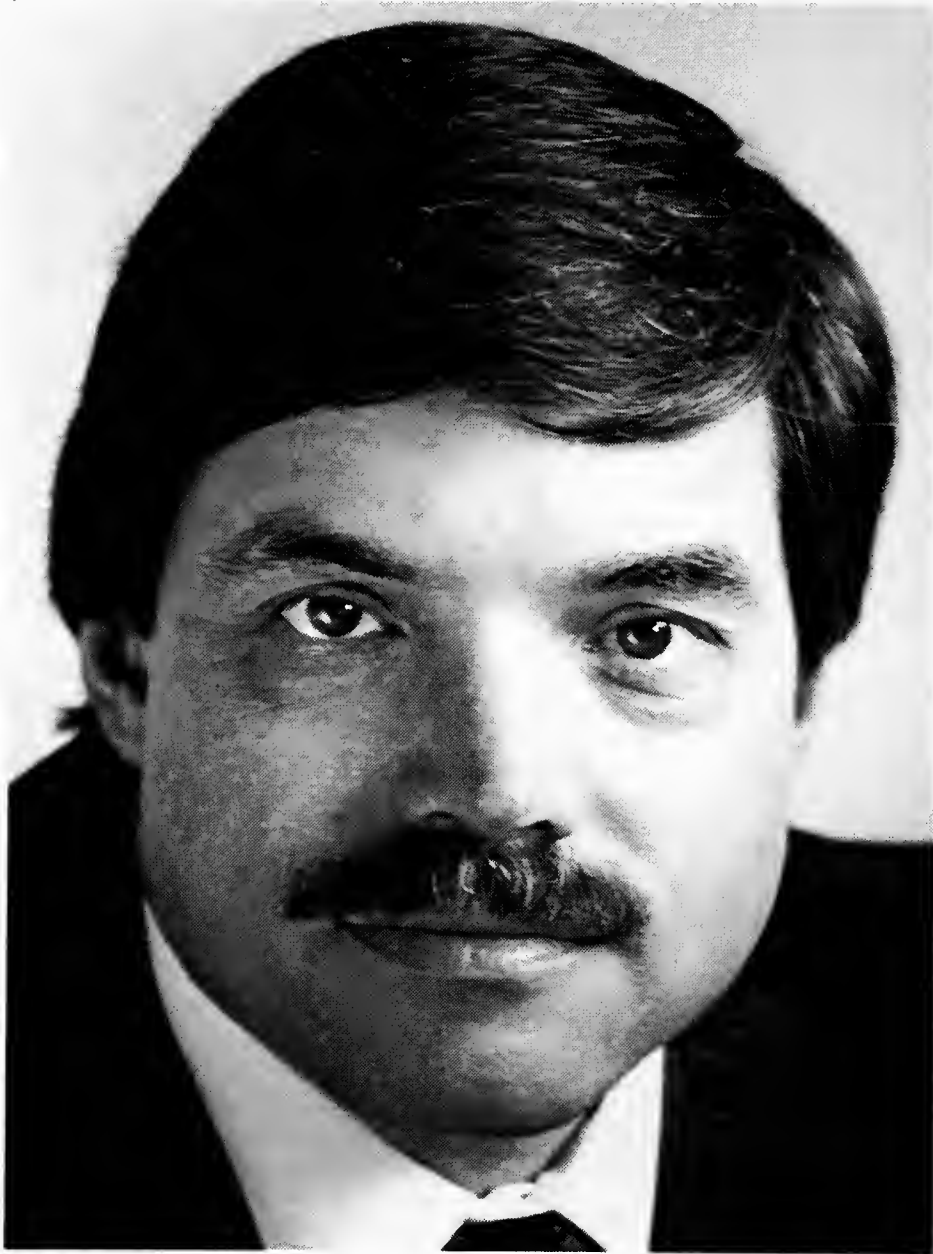
ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGNER:
FROM THE NORTHWEST FORESTS TO THE HALLS OF CONGRESS

With an Introduction by
Denny Shaffer

An Interview Conducted by
Ann Lage
1982

Underwritten by
The National Endowment for the Humanities
and the Sierra Club

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BROCK EVANS

1984

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INTRODUCTION

Brock Evans is one of the strong personalities in the conservation movement. He is handsome, with a strong personal charisma (he would still look right at home in that Marine uniform he once wore).

Brock is driven . . . to save more wilderness, to be heard by new audiences, to find new challenges. It is as if there is a primitive drive deep inside him that demands "this must be done . . . you must do it, Brock . . . do it now!" The drive has contributed to his great accomplishments. It has also contributed to some weariness, frustration, and disorderliness evident in his oral history.

Brock is articulate. He has been heard by more of us in the movement than perhaps any spokesman. Many of us, including myself, moved into the Sierra Club activist ranks with Brock's urging. He has also been an effective spokesman to the "outside" world, presenting our case to industry groups, the media, or any place our message should be heard.

Unfortunately, our movement has more than its share of speakers whose style is that of an anthropology professor delivering a lecture on a lovely spring day shortly before his retirement.

Brock is a stark contrast, not only to this dreary example, but to the best among his peers. He speaks with a softness that pulls his audience towards him and his message. He takes us from the present, to our history, and back again. He is reasoned and reasonable, always in touch with the facts . . . but always those facts are wrapped in a softly spoken, but deeply felt passion.

For Brock Evans is emotional.

Though most of us are in the environmental movement because of our love of wild places, our anger at the arrogance of polluters, our deep caring for life, most of the voices you hear from our leaders intellectualize those drives. But not Brock.

It was 1975 in Columbia, South Carolina, that Brock addressed activists of the Joseph LeConte Chapter at a rally that was part of the campaign to save the Congaree Swamp. Brock said,

So I say to you: go out and save it. Go out and save your rich earth. Go now. Go into all your towns and villages; and spread the word. Save it for all of us. You will do it. You will in the end, because you have one thing that our opponents cannot understand. And this is

the greatest force of all. It is what keeps us going day after day. It is what keeps us going nights and weekends when other people are at parties and picnics. It's a force called love. Love for our earth. Love enough to fight for it. Love enough to never quit.

Our enemies are frequently motivated by short-term financial gain. While there is value in those goals, from the legend of King Midas and most religious and philosophical teachings we know that it is a perversion to love profits and material gains.

Yet wilderness appropriately draws from us that passion, that love that is part of the religious drive in us all. Wilderness with its agelessness is part of the fabric of our creation, and part too of the fabric of creation's continuing maturity. It is our source, our homeland. It sustains us physically with its water and air and life. It is a base line against which to judge that which we call progress.

We love those wild places. And Brock helps us feel the bond we share with others who also care so much.

On May 2, 1981, I had the honor of presenting the John Muir Award to Brock. I said,

Brock, you have inspired us and led us . . . organized us and taught us. You have helped us recognize, and value, that which is special within us . . . that which sets us apart from our enemies . . . that love that is the most unstoppable of all forces.

For many things we each owe a personal debt to Brock Evans. His greatest contribution, however, is his ability to help us acknowledge, and rejoice in, that force that binds us together in this never ending fight.

. . . a force called love. Love for our earth.
Love enough to fight for it. Love enough to never quit.

March 1985

Denny Shaffer
Sierra Club President
1982-1984

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Brock Evans was first interviewed for the Sierra Club oral history series in April 1982, in the year following his resignation as associate conservation director of the Sierra Club. As vice president of the National Audubon Society, attending an Audubon conference at Asilomar in Pacific Grove, California, Brock looked back on his youth and the roots of his extraordinary commitment to the environmental cause and discussed in detail his work with the Sierra Club in the Pacific Northwest. Hired as Northwest representative for the club and the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs in 1967, Brock developed his unique skills as an environmental campaigner. He quickly became known for his abilities to organize and motivate grass-roots activists, as well as to spearhead legal challenges and mount extensive legislative lobbying efforts. He recalls most vividly his work on Hells Canyon, French Pete, Cougar Lake, Alpine Lakes and many other efforts to save the wilderness of his beloved Northwest. Here also he naturally began his involvement in forest management issues, leading to battles that culminated years later in Washington, D.C. Brock's watchwords, "endless pressure, endlessly applied", surely grew out of the five-, ten-, and fifteen-year campaigns that originated in his Northwest years.

The oral history interview with Brock continued in June 1982 with three sessions in his office at the National Audubon Society in Washington, D.C. Taking place in the midst of a Senate markup on a bill that Brock was carefully following, these sessions with their interruptions for phone calls and brief conferences gave the flavor of Brock's years from 1973 to 1981 as head of the Sierra Club office in Washington. Through his discussion of the Alaska campaign, pipeline issues, national energy issues, and other park and wilderness campaigns, he gives a lively and vital picture of the growth and development of the club's lobbying effort on the national scene--its increasing sophistication and complexity, the coordination of staff efforts and volunteer support, the outreach to other interest groups and coalition efforts with other environmental groups. He also comments perceptively on Sierra Club management issues and the evolving place of the Washington office in the club's structure.

Brock was on the Washington scene during four administrations, arriving shortly before the dramatic Watergate days of Nixon. His observations on the club's stance toward the Nixon and Ford administrations, perceived as basically unfriendly toward the environmental movement, and on the club's close but sometimes critical relationship with the environmentally-aware Carter administration are insightful and rich in anecdotal detail.

The transcript of this ten-hour interview was only lightly edited for clarity and accuracy so that Brock's personal style and enthusiastic and free-wheeling delivery would be apparent. Even transcribed to the written page, his words reveal the strength of his commitment, his almost evangelical approach, and his impressive ability to inspire and motivate. Also evident are his vivid recollections of the emotional context of key campaigns, as well as the factual events themselves.

Brock has a strong sense of history and of the importance of preserving the historical record of the environmental movement. In 1973 he arranged for the papers of the Pacific Northwest office to go to the University of Washington's library. He has at various times written up a daily record of campaigns as they happen so that the excitement, the ups and downs, the incredible complexity of the lobbying process would be preserved. One such record documenting the Boundary Waters Campaign he submitted following this interview, and it has been placed in The Bancroft Library. The historical papers of the Sierra Club's Washington Office (over 200 cartons) are also at The Bancroft.

Ann Lage
Interviewer-Editor
Co-director
Sierra Club Documentation Project

Berkeley, California
March 1985

I CHILDHOOD, SCHOOLING, AND EARLY INFLUENCES

[Interview 1: April 5, 1982]##

College, Travel, and the Marines

Lage: We're going to start with early influences, your personal background, Brock.

Evans: I have to say, just when you play that back, I'm always appalled to hear myself on tape. I never sound like what I think; maybe everybody feels this way. I have an Ohio accent, and I can't believe I still have an accent after all these years. I just don't sound like me to me.

Lage: I don't notice the accent.

Evans: That's a help anyhow. I was born May 24, 1937, in Columbus, Ohio. I was born and raised there by my family, and I lived there until I was eighteen years old. Then I went away to college. I went to Princeton University. I spent four years there.

After I got out of school, I was all set to go to law school, which is what I wanted to do. But I also wanted to go and see the world. It was one of those kinds of things. And I had no money. I was on a scholarship all the way through, and I was working every year, digging ditches and sweating and cursing on construction jobs every summer to make enough money. And I thought, damn it, I just want to get out and see something.

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 293.

Evans: I wanted to go to Europe, but I didn't have any money to go to Europe. So I went up to New York, and I walked up and down the docks and gangplanks for a few weeks. To make a long story short, I found a job on a Norwegian ship going to India.

By the time we got to Ethiopia, which was about the middle of July, I'd realized that I'd never get back to law school in time. I was all accepted, with a scholarship and everything, to law school, and I wasn't going to make it. So, to make a long story short again, I wrote them a letter which they never got. I didn't get back until about November.

Lage: What year is this?

Evans: 1959. It was two months after law school started.

The dean was most unhappy. And I had to go up there with a sack cloth and ashes on my head and beat my forehead on the floor (figuratively of course!) and apologize, even backwards and everything. I got accepted again for the next year, but I had to do something.

So I enlisted in the Marine Corps. I had got my draft notice and I couldn't do that so I went in the Marine Corps for six months, and then I was in the reserves after that. That took me through to 1960 when I actually started law school.

But I only cite that experience because that had a profound impact on me. Being in the sea, the great, vast, empty spaces, really touched me very deeply. I love the sea, the storms and albatrosses and flying fish. We went from the port of Beira in Mozambique around the Cape of Good Hope and back to Baltimore in our final return voyage after many, many other adventures. I didn't see any other land or any human being on the face of the earth for twenty-six days. It was an incredible experience to do that.

And then I came back and was in the Marine Corps, which was a total comedown from everything else. It was a total reversal of all of this. The most important thing was polishing buttons everyday and avoiding getting beat on, and all the terrible things you hear about Paris Island were all true, too. I was glad I did it, but it was a vastly different kind of experience. It made me appreciate school very much.

So I finally started law school in the autumn of 1960. And I hated law school. I was a history major in college and studied about kings and queens and armies and marching across the planet, and I had just come from this great trip on the ship, and the Marine Corps was just sort of an aberration, and all at once law school was

Evans: to me like taking a cram course in Sanskrit, and I hated it. I just had no idea what they were talking about. If A did this to B, and C did this to C, and the grandmother lives in Florida and someone else lives in Nevada, what do you do about this? And it was so petty and trivial and hairsplitting. I had a struggle with it. I had a very hard time my first year in law school, as many people do.

For relief, I would read other things, any kind of thing. And I read Loren Eiseley's book, The Immense Journey. Someone gave it to me; I came across it then. Those were very fruit-dripping times for me. They were very lush and ripe, and I was very open to many kinds of impressions. And I was falling in love all the time, and I was just really involved in anything else, and I was very open to things like that. And The Immense Journey made a powerful impression on me. It was a beautiful and wonderful book. I used to curse it, though, because it opened up so many new things to me and made me realize so many things inside myself that were always sort of there.

Childhood in Ohio

Lage: I was going to have you back up when it was appropriate because we need more about--

Evans: About my childhood. Yes, I didn't cover all that. Let me back up right now with that, then, because I grew up in a suburb of Columbus, Ohio, a place called Bexley. When we moved to this place when I was three years old, in 1940, we lived in sort of the very end of it. And beyond that were just fields and fields where I'd go walk with my dog. And I'd go play, and there were thickets and woods and things like that.

Then World War II came along, and I was--I remember some of it-- I was, you know, five, six, seven, eight years old. I loved nature, always did. I remember loving birds. I remember reading one of Audubon's books and loving things like that.

Lage: Was this something encouraged by your parents, or did you get it from your parents?

Evans: They encouraged me. They were not that way themselves. I went camping with my father once, I think, in all that period of time. They encouraged my love for all things and my love for nature. I remember my mother once told me that when I was about five years old, I said, "Oh, look at the beautiful sunset." I sort of vaguely remember; she could tell you more, but I always had a love for beautiful things. I always had a love for nature.

Evans: I remember once my father took me hunting on a farm somewhere--we had relatives who lived on a farm outside of town--and he took me hunting when I was five years old. He shot a woodchuck out there, and I can still see the thing curled up with a bloody hole right in the middle of it, and I cried and cried so much, he said that he threw away his gun and never went hunting again.

I hated hunters then, because I hated the idea of killing anything. I remember going to the dictionary and encyclopedia and ripping out the pages that had hunting in it and describing it. I just really felt so strongly about killing anything, and I still feel that way. I couldn't even fish. I couldn't stand to put worms on hooks. That's still the way I am although, politically, I don't want to get involved in those issues. It's just not for me, that's for sure.

Lage: Did you have brothers and sisters?

Evans: I have two younger sisters.

Lage: Did any of this come out in them as well?

Evans: Well, they're both fanatic supporters of what I do and always believe in them. My younger sister, later when I went to Seattle, came out and worked for me for a little bit out there. Yes, I think I'm perhaps a bit more of a pragmatic politician; they're the ideologues. They're the passionate, fire-breathing believers, I think, all the way through.

My family always encouraged-- We used to go for long walks down by the river; Columbus has a couple rivers through it. And twice a year, in the fall and the spring, my family would go down to the hills of southern Ohio with a circle of friends. They called themselves the Vicious Circle. It was sort of unusual for a place like Columbus, Ohio; they played string quartets together. And I grew up in a home with a lot of culture and a lot of music and a lot of books and a lot of good talk all the time about many, many things. And a lot of interesting people often coming through. So I was exposed to a lot of things in that way.

Lage: What was your father's field?

Evans: My father was an editorial cartoonist for the Columbus Dispatch; so was my grandfather too. They were a father and son team, newspaper people. That's what he did.

Lage: Political editorials?

Evans: Yes, like Herblock, that's what he did. He also did a comic strip. When I was thirteen my father, my mother, and I did a puppet show on the local T.V. station, which is owned by the newspaper. And we'd go down every Sunday afternoon and have little kiddies out there and have a little puppet show like "Kookla, Fran, and Ollie," and some of those.

Early Social and Political Beliefs

Lage: I ran across a letter, which looks more like a personal letter, in the Washington papers at the Bancroft, to your father, commenting on the fact that he had always been very suspicious of American imperialism. This was written in the seventies, but you were reflecting on things that you had remembered. What kind of a political milieu did you grow up in?

Evans: Actually, I grew up in a very conservative household. When I grew up, my three greatest heroes were my parents' heroes too, which were Robert Taft and Douglas MacArthur and Joseph McCarthy. Even McCarthy. I didn't know any Democrats, much less black people and other minorities. I mean I grew up in a very right-wing Republican environment.

All the way up through law school, I remember having violent arguments about whether Roosevelt was a traitor or not and got us into the war. I really had very strong feelings that way. And that was the way everybody was where I grew up. It wasn't until later that I changed a good deal.

It was a milieu of a lot of culture, a lot of good talk. My father's passionate love was history and books, and books and books and music and art. He painted a lot on the side too. And he played about eight different musical instruments. And loved history and developed a historical theory of life in the world that made a lot of sense to me and probably governs a lot of my attitudes toward things now too.

We'd talk and argue and debate; my friends would love to come over and do that sort of thing. He was the one who pushed me on to Princeton. I would have gone to Ohio State like all of my family, and all of my people, and all of my friends always did.

I had a coin collection. He caught me when I was fourteen teaching myself Russian so I could read my coins in my collection, and he said, "That's it." I was going to a public school there, which wasn't all that great, and they sent me to private school, a day school there in Columbus called the Columbus Academy.

Evans: There you had to say "sir" to your teachers, and there was rigid discipline, but everyone there went to an Ivy League School. I'd never heard of any such thing before like that. All at once my horizons expanded. I had to go on a scholarship there and scrimp and save. We never really had much money in my family all the way through. And it was really a struggle.

But I remember when I applied to college, my father said, "Oh, you'll never get into this one, better apply to this one." So I applied to six of them. And I got into all six. That was a really nice thing.

So I went to Princeton because my football coach had gone to Princeton, and I sort of admired him. It seemed like, what did I know? It was my first time East, which was a real revelation. It was an introduction to me into a class system. I wasn't aware of any class system in American society before. But there were all the old eastern money people in their fancy clubs and cars, and little peons like me, down there doing something. But it was a wonderful school in many other ways.

Lage: Did that have an impact, that sense of class?

Evans: It made me very conscious of things. It did in a certain sense; I'm not sure just exactly how. It was an eye-opener to the world. That the world was not an equal place, necessarily, and that merit didn't govern everything, obviously.

Of course there everybody was football captains and valedictorians anyhow. I was just little old me down there. It was really an eye-opener because I thought I'd done pretty well in high school. But compared to these people, it was different. It was what I called the teeming East. I was out there with all these people and all these cars and all these places, and it really opened up that.

But to come back quickly to growing up with my parents--they encouraged my love for birds. I had an Audubon list, and I kept a bird list, even. I'd forgotten all about it until I joined Audubon here again, but I remember I did that. And I used to walk in the woods and fields and read passionately about all these things. And I loved geography. When I was six, I could draw a map of the whole world with my eyes shut.

My father used to bring me down at parties and spin a globe around and have the guest pick out a country. I had to spin around and put my finger right on it. And I'd pick up the capital of that country and get right on it.

Evans: I taught myself how to read when I was four, and he used to call me down and have me read; he would give me books like Spinoza to read. I didn't know what it meant, but I could read the words.

So I grew up in sort of that milieu and sort of that way.

Lage: They encouraged you a lot.

Evans: They encouraged a great deal. They reinforced me. They kept telling me how great I was. It wasn't until I got to college that I realized that I wasn't that great after all. It was really a comedown because I thought I was. But in a way, the reinforcement was very, very good in many ways because I had a lot of insecurities too.

We used to go twice a year with this Vicious Circle, this group, down to the hills of southern Ohio. There are a lot of lovely little state parks down there. We'd stay in a cabin. It would be a big group kind of a thing. And all the children would play together, and all the grown-ups would argue and talk together and play their music all night. It was a very nice place, a place called Pike Lake State Park and another place called Conkle's Hollow. I have many, many memories of those years down there. There was a lot of nature. I just loved it.

Changes in the Ohio Landscape

Evans: All the time I was growing up, the place I lived was being built up, in the great postwar boom. They were building houses, and I would cry when they cut down trees next door. It would really make me very, very sad, and I would be very, very unhappy. The woods I used to walk through with my dog Skippy are now miles and miles and miles of more houses. We used to call it the North Woods, and it's all gone now, you know, forever.

Columbus, I think, is a classic monument to the golden age of consumption, the overconsumption of the 1940s and 1950s. Now, the whole city is drawn and quartered by freeways. A great big freeway goes through the middle, east and west, another one goes through the middle, north and south; then there's an inner beltway and an outer beltway, and it's just a big blob of nothing right now. Everything is just paved over for miles and miles. And the lovely little countryside that I remember and used to work in later, in highway gangs and so on, is just gone, just gone.

- Evans: Remember the song "The Taxi in the Parking Lot"? It was back in the seventies. They pave paradise and call it a parking lot. It was a popular song back in the early seventies and made me think of Columbus so much. They take my lovely little spot that I had so many memories of, and it's just a big blob of sprawl right now, very much.
- Lage: Was that a dominant theme in your life at that time, or is it looking back at it from the position you're in?
- Evans: It's looking back at it. Then I would cry when they cut down the tree. I would lament the loss. I felt very sad about the loss of these things. My parents could probably say more about that, but I remember all that very much. And I remember how much I loved nature, and I did appreciate the things and loved the birds and the flowers. But it was a formless kind of thing in a way; it was just sort of there. It was a deep love. I could never kill any living thing. That was in me, and my parents didn't drill it in me; it was there. But they encouraged it. They didn't sneer or laugh at it or anything like that. And I think it was much more in me than in my sisters. I was just sort of a sensitive boy, in lots of ways.

Teenage and College Social Life

- Evans: Then I became a teenager, and I grew up. I'd date girls and love to get drunk and go out and drink and drive fast cars. There was a gang of kids that wore leather jackets, and we'd swagger around town, carry switch-blade knives, and brag about all the fights we'd been in. Of course, we never would dare get in one, but we would brag about it all the time. It was big tough talk. I tried to smoke, and thank God, I couldn't. I choked every time I inhaled, so I couldn't do it. But I could drink beer. I loved to dance and rock and roll and everything else. That was the milieu I left when I went to college. So I sort of went away from it a little bit when I got to college.

Although I always used to love to take my girl friends on walks--that was my idea of a good time, to go for a walk in the spring night somewhere and smell the flowers. I still always had that love with me somewhere for these things. I just never did anything with it.

That was the way it was all through high school and all through college and all through the adventures I mentioned to you until I got to law school. That sort of brings us back again to the autumn of 1960, my first year in law school.

Lage: Just one thing, was there any religious influence?

Evans: No, no. My parents, I guess, were agnostics at most. I was baptized a Catholic because my mother was in the Catholic church and she left it, but my aunt, my mother's sister, snatched me out of the cradle and had me baptized, so I am covered that way. [laughter] But the neighbors down the street were Lutheran, so they took me to church. I went to church a lot. I became confirmed a Lutheran and went through the whole Lutheran sort of thing. But it wasn't really a factor in my life, in that kind of a way, no. I never made any connection between that and any environmental issues in any event.

Well then, autumn of 1960 came along and I told you I was taking this cram course in Sanskrit called law school. And I suppose the real reason I'm here talking to you today is because I hated my first year in law school so much.

At the University of Michigan in that time, the only exam your first year was in June. From September to June, that was it, one four-hour exam in each subject, and that was your grade. Since I didn't start understanding anything until about March, by then it was too late. You know, I had to make up for the last six months, what I didn't understand.

After being at Princeton, which is a fairly celibate kind of a place anyhow, here was Michigan. I went there because there were coeds, eight thousand coeds. I couldn't believe it. I was dating all the time, just making up for lost time and having a wonderful time that way.

Then all at once, all my sins started coming on about that March, and I had to buckle down. It was terrible because I had just really fallen in love with somebody too. After all, it was glorious springtime and the blossoms were out, and all I wanted to do was be with her. And I had this terrible exam schedule crashing down on my head. It was just a dreadful spring. It was a dreadful and beautiful spring at the same time. I just had to study. The exams were in late May and early June. I thought, I just cannot, even if I survive this--

First, what I would do was go over to the undergraduate library, instead of the law library, to study because there would be some relief from all this terrible stuff I was having to study. And for relief in between study breaks, I would pull out any kind of book I could find. I pulled out a lot of World War II books and things like that, just anything to take my mind off of law school. But one time, I was just sort of cruising the shelves there and I

Evans: remember very clearly, I pulled out a book called Yosemite, with pictures by Ansel Adams, edited by Nancy Newhall with words of John Muir, all there together.

Lage: This was all new to you, I assume?

Evans: Yes, totally new. It was totally new to me. I just remember sitting down there and flipping through. I thought, my God the combination of those words and those pictures; I wrote Ansel a letter about this years later. I was stunned by the impact.

At the same time, my roommate had a record of Russian songs, these beautiful soulful, soul-stirring Russian songs. And I was falling in love, and the blossoms were dripping through the sunlight in the springtime, and all these things together just had the most powerful impact on me, you know, just stunned me. I just couldn't believe anything was so beautiful.

I tried to buy it in a few years, out of print. I can't find it. One time I had it, and I can't find it, can't snatch it back.

Lage: Is the title just Yosemite?

Evans: Called Yosemite, yes. But it was enough for me, that whole magic springtime I would read it and read it and read it and try to study and try to see my girl friend and everything all in-between. I thought, well, even if I survive this year, I cannot go back to Columbus and get a job in a law firm, the way everybody else was doing it. I just couldn't stand that. I had to get out of there.

Going West: The Impact of Glacier National Park

Evans: I went to the student employment office, which is where you can look for jobs. They had jobs in a place called Glacier National Park, which I thought was in Alaska. It had glaciers, what did I know from glaciers or mountains. I had never seen a mountain before. I was from Ohio. So I signed up and by golly, I got a job, a summer job there, as a waiter, in Many Glacier hotel in Glacier National Park.

Evans: I got through the law school finally and said good-bye to my girl friend and went back to Columbus and repacked. About four or five days later I was on the train in Minneapolis, getting ready to go west. When we got on that train, I was scared to death. I'm going to this new adventure and new terrors and new unknowns, and I just had this terribly intense spring behind me, and what was I going to do. I got on the train with all the other kids, and we were all like that together and didn't know anybody, just sitting there. We went hour after hour going west and west and west, and the country flattened out and flattened out in North Dakota and then into eastern Montana. Then it got dark and we were still going west and this great ringing blue bowl of sky around and the little small towns, and we were still going west.

I had been to the ocean, where you would expect to go on and on, but not on land.

Lage: You hadn't been West?

Evans: Never been West, no, never been west of Chicago, and that was only once very briefly.

I remember the next morning, waking up, going up to the observation car, and I said, "My God, we're still going west. The sun's back there somewhere." I looked way, way off in the distant horizon; there was some old guy sitting next to me, and I said, "My goodness, sir, those clouds are awful low on the horizon out there." He said, "Them ain't clouds, son, them's the Rocky Mountains." And I couldn't believe anything like that.

I sat there enthralled and watched them get closer and closer and closer and then right into them. There it was in the full flush of the glorious springtime in the Rockies. There was snow on all the peaks and all the heights.

I remember from the instant I stepped off that train in Glacier National Park, in a town called East Glacier. There was the blue sky, and the ice-pure creeks coming tumbling down from the snow-fields, and the smell of the pines, and the wind. It was like some lost chord was plucked inside me. Just some old chord from all those times back when I was a child, you know, whatever it was was just plucked, and it's been humming ever since. It's been humming for twenty years now; it was in 1961, June of 1961.

And I knew from that instant that I could never live in Ohio, ever again. I just knew I never could. This was my home; somehow it had just been a spiritual home. Wherever it came from, that's where it was.

Evans: So they got us on the bus, and we had this glorious mountain drive up to our hotel. And I mean, I just couldn't believe anything like it existed. I have kept a diary for thirty years, and sometimes I go back and read about those times, and my awe and wonder, the flood of passion and emotion it seemed to unleash inside me some way. Every step was some new magnificent vista. How could a place like this even exist?

Lage: Then how could you return to Columbus, Ohio?

Evans: That was finished. That decision was already made; that was done. There was no way I was ever going to be in Columbus.

I spent two magic summers there. It was glorious. We lived in a coed dorm, had all the companionship I wanted, and I wanted a great deal of it. It was gorgeous country. And I was making good money to help pay my way through law school, and it was just fantastic.

For about the first two weeks I was just sort of stunned by the impact. I remember I couldn't even write in my diary for a couple of weeks, I was just so stunned by it all. Finally, gradually, my word power came back a little bit, and finally I got going on it again.

As a waiter, you know, you work in the morning, and then you'd have a couple of hours off; then you worked at lunch and had a couple hours off in the afternoon; then work at dinner again. So I'd just go down to the lake, and we'd all sit around the dock there and swim in the water and look around and talk.

Some of the other gang weren't there. They'd take off, and then they would come back about dinner time. I said, "Where have you been?" They said, "Oh, we've been up the valley." I said, "That's way up there; it's three miles. How'd you get up there and back?" "Oh, we just walked up." "You mean you can walk more than three miles a day and not get tired?" I had no idea anybody could do that. They said, "Yeah, we're going on a hike next week, why don't you come with us?" I said, "How far is it?" "It's about twenty miles."

I let it be known loud and long that my manhood wasn't threatened. If I got tired, I was going to come back, by God. I would go, sure, but I would probably come back, and that was okay with me. I made myself obnoxious about that.

But we set off that morning, and I had the most fantastic time in my life. We went on a twenty-mile hike up and down across the mountains. I saw things I'd never seen before, I was very tired at the end, but it was just magnificent.

Evans: That was just it, poof, a whole new world just opened up like that. I ended up, in those two summers there, hiking five hundred miles in that park, most of it alone. Just taking off by myself and going and singing at the top of my voice. It was just really a magic sort of thing.

My next two years in law school were only a matter of where in the west I was going to live, not when or whether; jobs or anything else were ancillary. I survived law school, barely.

Lage: You didn't question, at that point, whether you wanted to be a lawyer?

Evans: No, I wanted to be a lawyer because I wanted to be free. That was the way I put it to myself then, that was the way I felt. I didn't want to go into academia; I didn't want to go into the corporate grind. I had considered both, and I didn't want to do that. What else was there for someone like me to do? I couldn't be a doctor or scientist. I can't stand the sight of blood. All those were out. I don't have any aptitude for it.

Like so many people who go to law school too, it's a way to mark time some more and think some more. It's a way to keep up an interest. It's a profession. It's a discipline. It has lots of advantages that way. And it's a springboard to many things.

Look where I am. You know, you get into many different sorts of things. But I was just going to be a corporate lawyer, that's all; you know, make some money. I would have a trade in a sense. So that wasn't an issue, really, it was something for me to do.

But what I did was far secondary to where I was and where I lived. That became the only important thing. It was still golden California in those days, for all of us Easterners. So I wanted to go to California. Being brought up on Muir and the High Sierra and reading all that--

Somewhere during that period of time, in law school, someone said, "Boy, you talk so much about this stuff. There's a group you ought to join. It's called Sierra Club or something like that." And I said, "Yeah, what do they do?" He said, "They hike in the mountains, and they know about all this stuff." I didn't know it was called the wilderness, in Glacier, I just knew it was beautiful, and I loved it. I didn't know what it was. I knew it was a park, but I didn't know much more about it than that. So, I just sort of heard vaguely about the Sierra Club, probably about 1962 or so. It sounded good to me, but I didn't know much about it.

Evans: The time came to decide to leave law school and go somewhere when I got married in February before law school ended. My wife was from Boston. She didn't know anything about these things either. She'd just heard me talk about it ad nauseum all the time. I remember just before we got married, I was saying there was something else we need to talk about, something very, very serious. She told me that she got terrified, what is this? I said, "You know, I have to live in the West. I just have to live there." She said, "Oh, is that all?"

So golden California, it cost too much money to take the bar exam and then take the cram course. I just didn't have that much money. So, I couldn't afford it. I couldn't afford to move to golden California. However, my last summer in Glacier National Park, which was the summer of '62, was also the year of the Seattle World's Fair. We would see all these people come in from the East, and they'd park. I was a bellhop that particular summer. I'd pack their bags and they'd talk about going to Seattle. "Where's that?" "Oh, it's on the West Coast."

I remember I thought to myself, there's nothing out there. I've been on top of these peaks, and I've looked off to the west, and there's nothing but range after range after range of blue peaks receding off into the infinite distance. And that's all, there's nothing out there. What do you mean, Seattle?

But then people started coming back. "Where have you been?" "I've been to Seattle."

Lage: Something really was there.

Evans: Something was there. Something really was there. I couldn't believe it. Some friends of mine and I, we had an old beat-up car. We quit our job about a week early to go and see this thing. We went up through Canada and across the trans-Canada highway, just when it was opened. It was just a few days before it was officially opened.

I remember waking up the next morning; we drove all night through the Fraser River Canyon, and the next morning we slept beside some river and woke up and, my gosh, you know, it was one of those rare blue Northwest days. The great peaks rising straight up. I had never seen forest like that and trees.

We drove into Vancouver, and then we took the freeway down to Seattle. I remember my first feeling was one of disappointment, all these millions of people had been there before I was. There was a civilization out here. People were breathing air and listening to radios and having cars, just like I did. I couldn't believe it. There were all these people here.

Evans: We were there on a very nice day, by the way. I learned that Seattle had a mountain range on either side and salt water in the middle. Then I had a long drive back and went back through the West and back to school.

II CONSERVATION WORK IN THE NORTHWEST

Moving to Seattle

Evans: I had a nice memory of Seattle. That might be a place to try, too. So that winter when it became apparent that I could not go to California, I wrote the Washington State Bar Association and applied to take the bar exam there, and it was much cheaper. And they had salt water in the middle, which Rachel liked because she was from Boston. They had mountain ranges on either side, which I liked because I like mountains. So it seemed just like a good place to go.

The bar cram course, I remember, started about June 10th. The day we arrived in Seattle was June 8, 1963. We left about a week early after law school and drove across the country like that. All our friends thought we were so brave. We were going West. We didn't know a soul within a thousand miles. I had a cousin in San Francisco; that was the nearest place.

We just drove out there. It was all great fun. I was sort of showing the West to my young bride and the whole thing. Then all the way across until we finally hit Washington state. We drove across the great plains of the dry central basin there and hit the mountains. Then drove into the mountains. We finally came across on this June day, June 8, because we got there two days before the cram course started.

Then she started crying. Then we were there and all the bragging about what brave pioneers we were. Then we had to do something. We had to put up. We had to find a place to live. We had to be like real people and do something.

We ended up in the university district there because we were just familiar with university districts, and found a place. Started taking that cram course, but the main thing I was there for was just for the country.

Exploring the Northwestern Wilderness

Evans: After we got settled, we took off on these long, long drives. It was such a wonderful feeling, exploring the whole place, not knowing anybody. And we would take off and get lost, just to be there. And all this time, this magnificent scenery was all around and all those places.

I joined the Seattle Mountaineers right away, too, because I wanted to climb mountains. They were the one group I knew of. That's sort of the background that brings up to the next new stage; all this was prelude in a sense, of course. But it was sort of exploring this country.

We fell into some natives, friends who were natives of the state, and they took us on our first hike. I remember stumbling across what I didn't realise then was a great big clearcut. An enormous clearcut with downed logs and slash all over the place. I remember cursing and sweating; I remember thinking this was awful. But I didn't--

Lage: You didn't put it together?

Evans: I didn't put it together. No, I thought, well, you know, that's industry land; that's what they do.

We found this beautiful forest, and we had a lovely place to camp, and I liked that. We drove and explored everywhere, the first two years. We'd go off on what I called nine hundred-mile weekends. We both had jobs; I got a job later. I took the bar exam, and then I got a job as a lawyer. I was in some court all week long--wills, and divorces and trial courts and things like that. I spent four years practicing law, just doing various things. But the weekends were what we lived for, as most people up there do. And we would take off on Friday nights and go for nine hundred miles. We'd go over to the Snake River in Idaho and down through the mountains somewhere and down into Oregon and just explore in this magnificent Northwest. I couldn't believe a land like this existed.

Lage: Did your wife respond to it in the same way?

Evans: Yes, she loved it. She became a fanatic about it too. She just loved it.

These were the days before the guidebooks and the days before the hiking equipment and all the fancy stuff. We had wooden frame packs and didn't know where we were going, stumbling around with Forest Service maps and all those things. It was just before those things started taking off.

Evans: I took the climbing course from the Seattle Mountaineers, and I did it as a device to get me into these places and see them with some supervision. I ended up climbing quite a bit. I really loved that and loved to do that. Up there it's a lot of ice climbing, glacier climbing as well as roped rock climbing. I never became a pro climber with ice screws and pitons and so on, although I've driven my share of pitons and other things.

But my view of mountain climbing was always that I was a tourist. I was there for the view and the scenery and the magnificence, and that was a way to get there.

Involvement in Conservation Politics##

Evans: I did a lot of climbing and saw a lot of country, and that's sort of how the dawning awareness came upon me. When you live in the Northwest, you see the big logging trucks coming out of the forest, big huge things. I never liked it. I was always unhappy with it. I thought it was awful and ugly and the beautiful trees, and it always made me sad. But I thought, well, you know, that's what the industry's doing. That's just the way it is.

But I remember one day, in September of 1964. I was over at the Mountaineers climbing session at a place called Lundin Peak. We were above Snoqualamie Pass, one of the main passes there, on a beautiful autumn day. It was a roped rock climb. We just completed up and were getting ready to rappel down. We were sort of sitting up there having lunch.

I was looking around at this great ocean of peaks and thinking once again that the smartest thing I ever did in my life was moving here. I had only been there a little over a year by then. Smartest thing I ever did, and it was a perfect life. A great ocean of mountains in every direction; I can never explore them in all my life, no matter how long I live here. And what joy and on into infinity, just looking around me.

Then I looked right down from me, right down below me in the valley down below. And I said, "That's awful; that's ugly. What is that?" Someone said, "Well, that's logging." I said, "Look, they can't do that. Looky here." I pulled out my map and said, "Look at all the green in that. This is national forest. It's public land. You can't do this here." I had seen the trucks, but they were on private lands.

Lage: You thought?

Evans: That's what I thought, yes. Someone says, "Hey, son, you got a lot to learn here." He said, "You know, we cut our national forest here." Because in Ohio, what little public land there was was all state park and things like that; they didn't do it. I thought, "My God," and all of the sudden I made the connection, "This is terrible."

In the meantime, I had been a member of the Seattle Mountaineers. And this was the time of the passage of the Wilderness Act, in September of 1964. So I knew about it, and I was concerned about it. And I remember all that and I was reading about the Grand Canyon dams going on because the Mountaineers published little blurbs about it in their little newsletter. So, I was becoming aware already.

Lage: Were they very conservation-oriented?

Evans: The Mountaineers? No, they had a conservation division where those who were conservation-oriented could go.

Lage: Was their newsletter predominantly activities?

Evans: Yes, predominantly activities. It was very much a hiking club. But all the old-timers from the Northwest belonged to it, all the old-time conservationists did. And Mike McCloskey was our representative out there at that time too. And I think I probably vaguely heard his name by that particular time.

Lage: But he was a representative of several groups.

Evans: He was a Northwest representative, right; he was not only the Mountaineers. It was called the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, of which the Mountaineers were a premier member. Mike was a representative at that particular time.

I got so upset. I was just very unhappy about it. And so I started going to the conservation division meetings. I remember reading about the passage of the Wilderness Act and arguing with some friends that this was a good thing to do. You know, I was vaguely aware, and I knew there was a wilderness area or two around and so on. But I hadn't made too many connections other than that yet.

But I started going to the conservation division meetings. Somehow, I remember reading about the Grand Canyon too, through all this. I got passionately concerned about the Grand Canyon. My God, how could they possibly put dams in there and do things like that?

Evans: I remember that very plainly because I remember when the Sierra Club Exhibit Format book on it came out in December of 1964, sort of a presale; I remember I bought it for Rachel for a Christmas present, but I really got it for me. She knew it too. I remember getting it; I read the whole thing to her. I was passionately involved. I was so concerned.

So, I started going that fall to the conservation division meetings. I started listening and getting some of the lore. I was just a little peon, in the back on the room. All the aces in the executive committee were sitting up there in front saying all these brilliant things. I felt I was just sucking my thumbs, just wondering what was going on, but I was there, at least, because I passionately cared about trying to do something.

Well, I'm not sure of the exact sequence of events here but it was roughly-- I remember I got so concerned about the North Cascades Park, which was also an issue at that time. I remember reading about that, and there was a T.V. series called "Wind in the Wilderness," and I remember looking at that. That's where I first learned about all that too.

I finally screwed up my courage enough that I wrote my first letter to the editor, at the very beginning of 1965, about the North Cascades. I wrote it to the Seattle Times paper. And to my great surprise, they published it. They published it in the Sunday paper.

I remember flipping through, and there it was. I was so embarrassed; I saw my name. I shut it, and I said to Rachel, "You read it and see what it says." I couldn't stand it. I was so embarrassed about being exposed in public, all my personal thoughts. But they liked it apparently.

And I wrote my first letter to my congressman, whose name was Brock Adams, very interestingly. And he wrote me back, I couldn't believe it. I mean you can really do this. And I wrote him about the North Cascades. Of course, now he said the usual things. I will keep your views in mind when this issue comes to the floor, the usual stuff. But I was very awed. You know, this god answered me back, somehow.

So, I was getting more and more involved in going to the meetings. This was in 1965. No one ever asked me to do anything. And this was something I never forgot in all my years of organizing a little bit later on.

Evans: I would sign every sign-up sheet that was there. I would passionately pray to get asked, but no one ever asked me to do anything. And so I didn't know what else to do. And I'd pick up all the literature and read all the stuff. So I was gradually steeping myself in the lore.

And in the Northwest, remember, these wars had been going on for ten, fifteen years, a lot of them. There were a lot of old-timers there who really were brilliant, who really knew the stuff. They were wonderful people.

I was sort of a hero-worshiper sitting down there at their feet observing. And isn't this brilliant and wonderful? But no one ever asked me to do anything.

So, I finally stopped going to the division meetings. I was taking the climbing course; in '64 I took the climbing course. In '65, we're into now, I taught one, because that's what you do your second year to get your intermediate badge.

And so I just started going off on my own. I started going to the wilderness, the Glacier Peak wilderness, and I had my first long hike. Rachel and I went eight days in there, in the summer of '65, to really see something. That's when they had the proposal for open pit copper mine there in this beautiful place called Miner's Ridge. And I remember seeing the stakes and the helicopters and being so upset. I remember picking up the stakes, the road stakes and throwing them away. Doing my little bit for ecotage, or whatever it's called, and being very, very unhappy about all this going on.

I came back from that trip in August of '65, just so concerned about it, and no one asked me to do anything as an organized volunteer. I didn't really know what to do.

Lage: Had you joined the Sierra Club as yet?

Evans: No, no, wait; oh, yes I had; yes, I had. Rachel's college roommate lived in San Francisco. In October of '64 we drove down the coast to see her, all the way down. I was at a party in San Francisco, and Rachel's roommate brought this woman over and said, "Hey, you ought to meet so and so, you know all this guy talks about is environment." And she said, "Oh, I'm a member of the Sierra Club." I don't remember her name. She pulled out her little thing and signed me up. So I became a member of the Sierra Club in October of '64.

That's when it happened. So I was a member, and I was starting--

Lage: It's kind of interesting that she had something to sign you up with.

Evans: I know, I know. I never carry stuff with me. I really should do that.

Lage: Well, now there's a package you can carry. But then, I wouldn't expect it.

Evans: But she did. She had it with her. And that's how I joined. It was right about then. So, I was a member. I was on the mailing list. But I never participated in the Pacific Northwest Chapter activities. There was a small group of aces there. I probably never got personally invited to it; that is why. I didn't really know anybody with it. So I just went to the Mountaineers conservation division.

Volunteer Work with N3C

Evans: There was another group called the North Cascades Conservation Council [N3C]. They were the ones leading the charge for the North Cascades Park that I was getting so more passionately involved in. And I know I joined them about that time too.

I was at my law office, just passionately waiting for the next newsletter from them. I couldn't wait for the newsletters to come so I would know what was going on. I felt so frustrated not knowing what was going on all the time. And finally I set out after the wilderness trip, in August of '65, to write my own article about the North Cascades.

I just sat down. And I drove up to the roadends and places, and I wrote an article, all my own, that I wanted to sell to a new magazine called Seattle Magazine. Or give it to them, I didn't care, just so that they would print it. They almost did, but they never did. I spent months writing it and researching it and typing it. I was sort of self-educating myself, in doing these things.

By then I had stopped going to the Seattle Mountaineers conservation division meetings for a while because I just felt, what could I do, they don't need me very much. I was just going to work on my own, when I got a phone call from the chairman of the conservation committee.

He said, "We've lost our conservation education chairman, would you like to be that?" I said, "Yes, of course, of course, anything." I didn't care. I didn't know what conservation education was, but I decided to be chairman of the conservation education division.

Lage: So, they did know you were back there.

Evans: They somehow must have, because I must have talked to people, and buttonholed people, and asked them and things like that. So they must have known I was there.

That was my real formal involvement in the movement. That just set me on fire. I had a budget of \$250. I remember writing a brochure on the Alpine Lakes. I remember I got all my young lawyer friends into a speakers bureau around the state. I wrote and got a slide show for them and put all that together. One thing after another just really set me on fire.

Lage: Did your young lawyer friends have the same concerns?

Evans: Yes, they were all mountain climbers too. They all cared. I was the most aggressive of the bunch, in the sense of being an activist, but they would do it if I dragged them into it. They would give their speeches, and they would do what I told them to do. It was nice.

There were a gang of us that all ate lunch at the Y together when we got to know each other. We were hiking and climbing friends too. So, I just got them into it too.

Joining the North Cascades Battle

Evans: That takes us up to the end of '65. The North Cascades battle was reaching a very crucial stage at that particular time, unbeknownst to me at the time. In '63, because of a growing controversy over management of the North Cascades, the conservationists had forced an agreement between the secretary of the Interior and the secretary of Agriculture, Freeman and Udall, which is called the peace treaty or something like that.

Lage: Potomac treaty.

Evans: Treaty of the Potomac, that's right, you remember. Well, they had done a study, a study of the North Cascades, and resolved this issue. The study team had met for a couple of years. All this was going on while I was just sort of becoming involved, and I wasn't participating in it.

The study team released its report in December of 1965. And they recommended a North Cascades National Park, which was a victory of enormous proportions. They didn't recommend the boundaries

Evans: we wanted at all. So we were bitterly disappointed with that. But the symbolic factor of recommending something, in the face of the powerful Forest Service opposition, was very important. They also recommended a series of other areas, Alpine Lakes Wilderness and others were very inadequate and Cougar Lakes Wilderness and so on. But they had done it, they recommended the park. Senator Jackson then released that report, and announced in January of '66 he was going to hold hearings on this.

At the same time he did a very typical Scoop Jackson kind of ploy, political ploy, and it may have been very clever, looking back on it. He also released a specially commissioned report that he had commissioned, from a fellow named Overly of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, called the Overly report about Olympic National Park, which had been a bone of controversy for thirty years up there. You know, there are forty billion board feet of timber in it. And the industry never liked it, never accepted it, always were trying to get it unlocked and get it undone.

The Overly report recommended releasing sixty-six thousand acres of rain forest back into the logging circles, the cutting circles again. So Senator Jackson planned to hold hearings on both of these together, sort of his way of pacifying the industry.

Well, that just sent everybody sky-high because everybody loves Olympic Park, in Washington state. You know, that's the holy of holies, the favorite place; it's mine too. And everybody loves the rain forest. It's the one magnificent temperate forest left on earth, I think.

But anyhow, all these things were coming up. The hearings were the middle of January, the end of January. I remember thinking, I've got to do something about this. So I called up Pat Goldsworthy, who was president of the North Cascades Conservation Council, later on the Sierra Club board. He was my hero. I'd seen him and heard his name. He was like some god up there on Mount Olympus. I wouldn't dare talk to him, maybe talk to him backwards with my eyes shut, or something like that. I was afraid to even approach him carefully.

I remember I said, "Well, this is silly. But I'll just try to look him up in the phone book." And my gosh, his name was in the phone book. How could a god have his name in the phone book, but he did. I remember I called, and he answered the phone. God answers his own phone. What's going on here?

I said, "Mr. Goldsworthy, you don't know me, but I'm Brock Evans." He said, "I know you, Brock." [laughter] God knows who I am. I said, "I understand these hearings are coming up, sir." He said, "Don't call me sir, you know, I'm Pat." "Well, sir, I heard these hearings are coming up." [laughter]

Lage: How old a man was Pat Goldsworthy?

Evans: He was probably in his forties somewhere. I was about twenty-eight, twenty-seven something like that. He was in his forties.

Lage: Probably made him feel ancient.

Evans: [chuckle] I don't know. He's such a nice, plain, ordinary-- He's a wonderful guy, you know. The way he survives all this is he's oblivious to it. He just goes on and does his thing. He was the best leader we could have ever had for those things. He kept all the fractious people together, that's what he did. That was his main function.

Anyhow, I said, "These hearings are coming up, and can I come and testify?" He said, "Sure." I said, "Can anybody come?" He said, "Sure." "Can I come?" "Sure." "Can I speak? Will they listen to me?" "Sure you can; we want you to. We need you to do this." Okay, I'll do that. I said, "Do you need any help?" He said, "Well, we need all the witnesses we can possibly get. We especially need businessmen to come if we can get them."

So I got close to a hundred of my friends to come, or write. About twenty-five of them were small businessmen, clients and things like that. I said, "By God, you will come and you will testify. I wrote up all their statements for them. Got them all there. Dragged them over, got them set. Some of them didn't need any persuading, but some of them did. But they all basically came.

That was my first introduction to the political world. There were these classic Northwest type of hearings, you know, tense, and the air crackling with passion and tension, and everybody hanging on every word. You could hear a pin drop through all the testimony, and the bad people get up and say their terrible things at first, and all the politicians say the terrible things about the places you know and love. Your heart is sinking all the way through and you think you can't possibly-- You know, what is this? They're going to destroy the places I know.

Our witnesses always come on at the end, of course. And our witnesses were always hurried up. But we had hundreds and hundreds of them there. We just smashed them. We all got our thirty seconds apiece. That was my first hearing.

Lage: Did the other side have an organized plan of getting witnesses too?

Evans: No, no, no, you know they had their bodies there. They ran the establishment. They ran the power structure. That's always the way it was in the Northwest. We had the people. They had the power structure. That was the way it was.

Evans: So it's the classic tension. In fact, my technique in the Northwest in later years became--realizing we could never match them in the power structure, we had to match them with numbers, beat them with numbers. I like to think we developed the Brock Evans style of hearings in the Northwest. No matter what hearing it was, anytime anybody came into my territory, by God, we're going to get hundreds of people there. There were eight hundred people at some of my hearings.

I spent a lot of time organizing for them. Not just to have the numbers and the testimony, but to make the subliminal impression upon the congressmen. You know, something's going on here in the Northwest. Eight hundred people came out; we had to split the hearing. This was later, but they had to split the hearings into two and hold simultaneous hearings all through the night. And that's the way I always wanted it to be in my hearings, in my territory.

But that was later. We're still in January of 1966. Then I just went wild with the conservation education committee all through the fall and spring and summer of '66. We organized the county fairs. I wrote up brochures and fact sheets. We passed them all by the hundreds and thousands all over the state. I didn't know if they were doing any good or not. I sent them back to Columbus, Ohio, for my mother to pass out. Whatever you could do, we did.

Lage: Did you have ready helpers?

Evans: Oh, yes, lots of people. I recruited everybody I could possibly find, got all my friends and things like that. As probably typical in many places, many folks are just there to enjoy it. What's all this political stuff? They don't want to get involved in it. They want to enjoy it all right, but they don't want to get too involved. But I roped everybody in I possibly could. So there were lots of people, really, doing it. These were always great collective efforts, which was the wonderful thing about them.

Campaigning on Other Northwest Issues

Evans: It was also about this time, I think it was in '66, that I became passionately involved in something else. They were trying to ram a big freeway right through the middle of my city. I lived in the central part of the city of Seattle. It was called the Interstate 90, the Third Lake Washington Bridge, it was called.

Evans: That was announced in November of '66, I remember. I was working on North Cascades, and the wilderness and the open pit mine was a big controversy at that particular time. Those were all issues that we passionately cared about. I started going to the Mountaineers Conservation Division meetings.

It was also about that time, it must have been in '66 also, maybe the spring of '66, the Northwest held their biennial wilderness conference. The Northwest Wilderness Conference was held in one year and the Sierra Club Wilderness Conference was held in alternate years, like that. So, it must have been in the spring of '66 that I met David Brower, whose name was sort of known to me. Talk about gods, my goodness, wow, he was up there somewhere else, floating around in the clouds all the time, directing and masterminding all the campaigns to save the Grand Canyon. I read his writings, and I read his books, and I read his forewords, and I got all the Exhibit Format books I could ever get my hands on. I read them all cover to cover, and they were Bibles. I would thrust them on unwilling friends: "You read this, and you come back and tell me what you think about it." And I was really very much like that in those days, just reading anything I could get my hands on and absorbing it.

Those things are coming back to me now. It was in April of '66 that I was looking for material to write our first brochure on the Alpine Lakes, which was sort of one of my causes there, Alpine Lakes wilderness. I was looking through a friend's pictures, and I saw pictures of some waterfalls, and I thought this is the most beautiful place I've ever seen. What is all this? He said that was a place called the Boulder River. It was only an hour's drive from Seattle. It wasn't in the Alpine Lakes; it was somewhere else. I remember dragging my wife over there on a rainy Easter weekend. We got rain all the way up and all the way back, and we found the beautiful waterfall. It was in a stunning place.

But we also found the logging markers, the markers marking that a logging road was being laid out there. I thought, what the hell is this? They're going to log this place. I went back to the Seattle Mountaineers, and at the next conservation division meeting, we rammed through a resolution opposing logging in this. And rammed through a resolution to protect all low elevation trails. We named twenty-two trails. We were going to protect our trails.

To me, the threat always was in the low country. It was always for the big trees, because that was where it was always being cut. That was all it was. The high country--everybody always talks about the Alpine Meadows, but they weren't threatened. The threat was with the forest. The forest was the rare thing in the Northwest. The big trees were what was left. There was more rock and ice than you can ever imagine. The Forest Service would love to give that to us.

Evans: I love trees anyhow. I always focus on the forest. I always made sure our slide shows had pictures of trees in it, instead of all the pretty little lakes and so on. And it was a big effort to educate our own people about that because the climbers don't really care too much about these things. You know, they want to get there on that rock and drive the pitons in and so on. So it had always been a problem with the climbers. And after they're too old to climb anymore, they want to get roads in there so they can take their kids and families and see what used to be there, so they can show them that.

Jim Whittaker was very much that way. He's converted now. But he was never a strong supporter, for example, in those early days.

Lage: So that was one of the tensions within the movement.

Evans: It certainly was. That's why the Mountaineers never were that strong a voice. They had a lot of conservatives there who believed in business and logging and things like that. But they let us go and do our thing. Their board of trustees, generally, would approve the radical resolutions we got through our conservation division. But there was some resistance all the way through.

So, the N3C, the North Cascades Conservation Council, was much more of my cup of tea. Somewhere about then I got asked to be on the board of directors of it. I couldn't believe the honor. I had been touched and tapped and all that. With bated breath, I hung around to see if I would get chosen. It was a self-selecting kind of thing, but they approved me. That must have been some time in 1966. I couldn't believe my fortune.

There I was finally. I was in the inner circle. I was in the sanctum sanctorum, the holy of holies, with all these heroes. That was a wonderful experience; Brower was on that too. I think I met him then. At the wilderness conference, they had a board of directors meeting of N3C too. I remember, there was Dave up there giving a speech. God, I was just overcome. He floated down from the clouds to come and talk to us for a little while. That was never his manner. It was just the way I saw the whole thing.

Then there was sort of a break, and everybody was milling around, and there he was. I noticed he was all by himself, over there looking at some pictures on the wall. Dave Brower, all by himself, you know. Where were the angels and the retinue holding his ermine garments and things like that? [laughter] So I sort of went up and stood beside him. I was too afraid to talk to him, of course. But I just wanted to stand near him. That's what I did. I just sort of stood there and just sort of basked in the reflected glow, like that for a while.

Evans: But that night there was a party, somewhere in the N3C, and Dave was there. And I talked to him. He talked back. He said, "Oh, I've been hearing about you. You're doing good things up here. Keep it up." Mike, by the way, had left by this time and gone down to San Francisco. The new representative was Roger Pegues.

Lage: Oh, I thought you took over directly from Mike.

Evans: Not quite. No one remembers Roger Pegues, and for a good reason. He wasn't all that effective. He's now an attorney up in Juneau, Alaska. That's where he was from. He was a nice guy. He just wasn't very, in my opinion, very effective, in many ways.

Lage: But it sounds as if you still weren't that involved with the Sierra Club.

Evans: No, not at all, but remember in the Northwest it was always this peculiar beast; it was called the northwest representative. And the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs and the Sierra Club in the beginning, in Mike's day, chipped in equally to pay the northwest rep's salary. And in Roger's day, pretty well equally too.

So the forty-eight outdoor clubs of the federation also had an equal claim on the northwest rep. It was a peculiar, many-headed monster here. So you spent a great deal of time servicing the local clubs, and you paid as much attention to them as to the Sierra Club, which was not a great power in the Northwest in those days, in my perception at all. N3C was much more so. Of course, it was interlocking. Lots of people were directors and active in all of them. So I never got involved in the Sierra Club at all during those years. I was too much passionately involved in these things.

Just to come back to the Boulder River quickly--when I came back, I remember calling up Roger Pegues and saying, "Hey, what is this? I found these logging markers." He had never heard of the Boulder River. And I said, "Let's do something about it." He said, "Well, go ahead and do something." So I remember writing a letter to the Forest Service, and we killed those, I killed my first timber sale. I don't know how.

Lage: Just with that letter.

Evans: I guess.

Lage: They must have been getting a sense of power behind all this.

Evans: They must have been getting some sense here. Because we sent them a resolution too, the Mountaineers. Then I guess it wasn't a big deal, somewhat it was. So now I get great pleasure out of seeing

Evans: the Boulder River wilderness; it's going to be part of the Washington state wilderness bill, somehow. It was one of those things that I learned.

No one had ever heard of the Boulder River. No one ever went there then. They want the wilderness area further to the east. And I just got a lot of publicity, I organized the Boulder River Protective Association. That was a little bit later on. One of my trademarks up there was organizing the local protective associations. The Alpine Lakes and the Hells Canyon and all the others. That again was later.

Leading a Seattle Freeway Revolt

Evans: All through that spring and summer we were doing various things like that and getting more active. I mentioned this freeway. That was the other great cause in my life in those years. They were going to ram it right through the heart of my beautiful city. And it was on Thanksgiving weekend of 1966 that the Highway Department released their plans for this freeway, this great big fourteen-lane thing coming across the lake, this beautiful lake--

Lage: Coming right across the lake?

Evans: It came right across the lake, yes. It was on a floating bridge kind of a thing. The lake is so deep, you have to float it on big pontoons. It was like a big aircraft carrier, this great big thing.

But the worst part was, when it hit Seattle--I don't know if you know Seattle, but there is a low ridge there, called Mount Baker Ridge, and now it's a beautiful and friendly entrance to the city. You sort of go through in a tunnel that says, "Welcome to the portals of the North Pacific," and you just go through the tunnel and then you're in the city, on the other side.

Well, they had a great big cut and fill, ramming through their fourteen lanes and a great big spaghetti mass of interchanges spewing out all over the place on the other side. You know, the highway boys just loved that. That was their favorite. Oh, boy, that's part of the slide they showed all the boys, you know, in the meetings of the engineers. Wow, look what we got here.

Everytime any citizen saw it they would just gasp. My God, this is the plan! But they released that plan then. And I wrote a letter to the editor, you know, what is going on here? And I got about four or five letters in response to my letter to the editor.

Evans: So I organized a little group. I forget what we called ourselves; we didn't have a name. That was what it was, to fight the great highway monster. An awful lot of time in late '66 and all through '67 was spent fighting this freeway.

Lage: Was this more or less on your own?

Evans: It was on my own.

Lage: It wasn't part of your conservation education committee?

Evans: No, it wasn't, although, you know, I would do what I could to get the apparatus involved. It was not easy.

Lage: They weren't that concerned with city issues?

Evans: No, not at all, not in those days. But I was passionately concerned about that too. So, I spent probably more time on that than on anything else during that year.

I remember we all worked on the election campaign of our local state representative, got him elected to the legislature. His name was Dave Sprague. He had just gone to the legislature, so we said, "We need your help on this. They're going to ruin it." He hated it too. So he got himself on the transportation committee of the legislature, and we had some big hearings of January of '67.

I remember it was my first testimony in the legislature anyhow. We didn't know. We all went down to Olympia, in the middle of some night and testified about freeways, innocents that we were. They all laughed, ha, ha, and we asked our questions.

But that's when I coined the phrase, at least it was new then, that it was "time to move people and not machines." And that was picked up by the headlines all over the papers. The press covered it very heavily, and that was our rallying cry. Move people, not machines. It seems so innocent now, but that was a big deal then.

And so it was a long and beautiful story about how we started the freeway revolt in Seattle. I'm as proud of that as anything. I led the freeway revolt there. And we organized community groups up and down the city because when the whole panoply of plans prepared for the city of Seattle by the highway department--we had the highest gas tax in the nation--was unfolded, it was just awesome. There would be no place in the city more than a mile from a major freeway going north and south and east and west, and it was just unbelievable.

Evans: There were mass rallies all over the city and revolts everywhere. We took them to court, and we got the mayor involved. It was always a desperate struggle, and the issue has still not been resolved. They're still talking about it. But now the thing costs a billion dollars, and I don't think they are ever going to build it in the same scale. But we held it up for years and years and years.

Lage: It must have really struck a chord.

Evans: It struck a very passionate chord. I remember speaking at rallies, you know, five or six, seven, eight hundred people just packing auditoriums all over the city. It was great, the freeway revolt. It was the most dramatic thing.

You know, the one you had in San Francisco was much more dramatic and got the headlines with the Embarcadero right there. But this was going on in Seattle, just as intense and just as passionate, but it was Seattle. It was in the provinces more, but it was there. I spent a lot of my time doing that.

III ON THE SIERRA CLUB STAFF

Hired by the Club, 1967

Evans: In the meantime, as the North Cascades issue was going on, I started working for the Sierra Club on March 1, 1967. I remember it was February, I guess sometime, Pat Goldsworthy called me up and said, "I'd like to have dinner with you." So I had dinner with him. He asked me if I would accept a job because Roger Pegues was leaving. He was going back to Washington to work for the Park Service.

And my first thought was no, I don't want to do anything like that. I love my purity and nobility of being a volunteer; I love sacrificing and giving of myself. There's something really--you know; you're doing it too. There is something noble about it. And that's what I've always loved about the people I work with. They are giving of themselves.

Why should I be a paid gun? Also, it was a cut in pay, and it was certainly a cut in pay for all my future expectations. Most of my young lawyer friends at the Y now are big partners making eighty, a hundred thousand a year now or more, you know. I didn't realize the implications then. [laughter]

Lage: You might have been better off staying as a volunteer. [laughter]

Evans: Maybe, but no, I wouldn't have had anywhere near as much fun. In any event, Goldsworthy asked me, and I said, "Well, let me think about it over the weekend." And I thought about it. I finally just thought, why not get paid to eat, breath and sleep what I'm obviously eating, breathing, and sleeping anyhow. I was even taking on some environmental law cases in my job and spending a lot of time on that too, and those are other stories. But my involvement was deepening and deepening and deepening all the time.

Evans: I ended up like so many of us spending half my time at the office, all my nights, and all my weekends just doing conservation work, and that's what I was doing for the last year or so. I was passionately pouring myself into it, in every waking moment.

So, I thought about it all weekend, and I finally decided on Monday, yes, sure, I'll do it. And that was the end of that. So I accepted, and I told my partners in the law firm, "Well, this is my two weeks notice. On March 1st I'm going to start work at the Sierra Club, and thank you very much." They said okay.

Then Pat called me back that night and said, "Listen, I just found out from the Sierra Club--this is so typical Sierra Club--we agreed up here, but the Sierra Club board of directors has to approve of you too." So all at once, it became uncertain again.

So the next day I had to go on back and see my law partners again and backwards and beat my forehead on the floor, and say, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean it. Please, take me back. It's all right." They were very nice and said, "Sure, you can stay with us, all right." I was liking my law practice, but it wasn't my love. It was a job, really, more than anything else. And I wasn't that unhappy to leave.

I remember sometime in late March, there was an executive committee meeting, and they flew me down to San Francisco. They were meeting at the Clift Hotel. I remember there was a big bearded Ansel Adams there and all these other heroes and gods, and little old me, sucking my thumb, standing there, hand behind my back and, "Hello, sir." I had met them all; I guess they liked me because they gave the seal of approval. I went back, and I had the job, and on March 1st I started.

Lage: Was this again the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs and Sierra Club?

Evans: Yes, it was still called the northwest representative; it was still the equal kind; probably the club was putting in more by that time because the club had more resources. But it was very touchy, it was equal, equal time. You know how it is, state rights and all those things. The position had a lot of momentum behind it, in that particular direction.

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Evans: We're at March 1, 1967, a banner day, certainly for me. And I remember it so clearly too. Roger Pegues by then had been gone about two months. He was happy to be gone, very happy to be gone.

Evans: The club had a little, tiny one room office in a dingy old part of the university district in Seattle. It was on the second floor of a grubby little old kind of semi-office building. And it was wooden floored, and there was one bare lightbulb hanging down and two months worth of piled up mail, unanswered, piled all over the place and piled up papers and files. I had no idea what everything was. No instructions, no nothing like that.

We were right above a submarine sandwich shop, so all the onion smells and everything kept coming up all day long. I'll still never forget the smell of that place as long as I live. And it was pretty grim, and it was a grim, gray, cold day, the way Seattle can get. I thought, oh, my God, what is all this? But, on the other hand, it was fascinating. I saw the papers as a treasure house, all these things I could learn about because all at once, my territory was the whole Northwest; it wasn't just my own beloved Washington state; it was everything--the country I had seen on those nine-hundred-mile drives beforehand.

I rapidly found out that to the Sierra Club the northwest representative then didn't just mean the four Northwest states, but it also meant Alaska and the four Northwest Canadian provinces and territories and Wyoming if I wanted it too. And maybe even northern California, nobody else was there. And my goodness, talk about a kid in a candy shop with all these toys. All these treasures were mine. Everything I read was business. Everything I read, I get paid to read now. And I can read about Alaska all I want. I can learn about it. British Columbia fascinated me. And Oregon fascinated me. And Idaho. I just couldn't believe my fortune being in a place like that. Of course, there was an enormous amount of catching up to do.

Meeting McCloskey and Brower

Lage: You didn't really know Mike McCloskey then? You hadn't had much contact with him.

Evans: No, I had met him. I'd spoken with him several times. I remember very clearly speaking to him at a Mountaineers conservation division meeting once. But I had never spoken to him much. We must have talked in San Francisco. You know, I knew he was my boss and all that. But I don't remember much else about it at that particular time.

Lage: Was there a set idea of what you were supposed to do?

Evans: I don't recall any such thing. When I moved to Washington [D.C.], six years later, Mike sat down with me and very carefully laid out a whole lot of things he wanted me to do. It was much more formal than that at that particular time. But remember this was the Brower era, and Mike was the conservation director. Mike may have other perceptions. I would like to know what they were because I don't remember much of that. I was so really on my own, basically.

Lage: Just took the job and do with it what you could?

Evans: Basically. That's what I loved about the Sierra Club. You know, after the first few months, I realized this was what they were doing.

Oh, I know what happened. I'll tell you a story about that. This really lays it right down. I had almost been on the job two weeks when I got summoned down for the wilderness conference. This was in '67, the one in San Francisco. I was supposed to go to it, and I went on down. I thought good, you know, the North Cascades issue was heating up again; it's on the Sierra Club's priorities. I'm going to go down and get the word. I'm going to go down and find out what to do.

I remember very plainly, I don't know if it was Mike or Dave I talked to, probably Dave. Mike may have been there, I know. But this sounds more like Dave. I'm paraphrasing only slightly. I also told this when I gave my farewell speech to the board last year. Went down there to Mills Tower [the Sierra Club headquarters] and wisked up there to the tenth floor, in the inner sanctum.

The feeling I had was very much like a young private in the Marine Corps--Marine Corps was what my military service was. And I say, "Private Evans reporting for duty as ordered, sir." [laughter] And Brower said, "What are you talking about?" I said, "Sir, here I am, I'm your northwest representative up there."

"I know that. How's everything?"

"Everything's fine sir, fine, but what's the plan?"

"What are you talking about, Evans?"

"The master plan, you know, the North Cascades that's heating up. It's a big battle. It's on the priorities. Show me the master plan. Show me the battle maps. What's the order of battle? What are you going to do? I'm your chosen instrument. I'm your spear point. Tell me what to do and I will do it, sir. Where's the plan?"

"What the hell are you talking about, Evans. What's going on here?"

Evans: I said, "Well, you know, the North Cascades."

"I know about the North Cascades. A great place, isn't it?"

"It certainly is, it's beautiful. And we got to save it, sir. We got to do it."

He said, "Well, I agree about that."

I said, "Where's the plan?"

"There aren't any plans. There just aren't any plans."

"Well, what should I do?"

And he said, "I don't know, Evans. What do you want to do?"

I said, "Well, I think we ought to do so and so and so and so."

He said, "That sounds great. Go ahead and do it."

And that's the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club is perfect for someone like me.

Lage: Now is that the Sierra Club still, or is that the Sierra Club then?

Evans: I think the Sierra Club has changed somewhat. It's still somewhat like that. The field jobs just have to be like that. Because there is too much to do. It's changed a good deal, I think. But it's still somewhat like that in my perception of it. It's certainly still like that with Audubon and the Audubon field staff, in a way. You know we're all getting bigger and more bureaucratic. That's a later story, I think, about that.

Involvement in Northwest Conservation Issues

Evans: Then all at once other visions of heaven opened up. You know, it's all in my hand, I can do what I want with it? It's my own little dukedom, my kingdom up there, my fiefdom? I couldn't believe it. So that's fine with me. I'll just go and do my thing. So that's when I went back, and we had sixteen hearings those months of March and April, sixteen hearings in about six or seven weeks there. Because the first wave of agency hearings on wilderness were coming through and wildlife refuges around the Northwest and the freeway hearings, some other things too.

Evans: Hearings on another issue called the Snoqualamie dam I was working on. And there I was all by myself in this little one place. No secretarial support, no nothing. The very first thing I did--I said, I'm not going to do all my own typing. It's silly. So, I'm just going to spend whatever money is necessary to do my job.

So, I found a typing service up the street, and I turned out fifty thousand words a month with them. And they sent all the bills to San Francisco, five cents a word it was.

Lage: You didn't have a budget then?

Evans: I had a little budget, a little dinky thing. I typed all my own budgets out. I didn't know what it was. But usually they just paid the bills. I thought, I'm just going to do that. I must do that. And do the xeroxing and all these other things. We're going to cover these issues or we're not.

So I did it in the style to which I had become accustomed as a lawyer. I guess I was familiar with that modus operandi, so I did it.

I remember bouncing all over the Northwest, from plane to plane to rainy place and hearing after hearing and preparing testimony on things I didn't know. And reading on the plane on the way out. And towards the end of the month of March, Brower sent me back to Washington, D.C., my first time in Washington because the Grand Canyon dams were up.

That was another great big hearing before the dread Wayne Aspinall committee. And the issue then, you may remember, was water diversion, diversion of water from the Northwest to the Southwest, as well as all the dams. So, Brower wanted me to be back to be a northwesterner talking about water diversion and all this.

What did I know from water diversion? I knew I probably didn't like it because it was our water, and we didn't want you all to have it, or whatever it was. But I remember going over to the University of Washington. They said there was a professor there who has made this his career. And he gave me about a foot worth of tomes, you know, ten years worth of work and all these complicated phrases on the whole water issue.

I remember taking them back in a suitcase on the plane and sitting up all night in the red-eye. We all flew red-eye because it was cheaper. And I was sitting up all night and going through all this stuff. I was going to have my testimony the next day or so.

Evans: I landed in Washington, D.C., first time I had been back in all these years. You know, back in the teeming East again, the place I had fled from. There I was back, and it was a gray day, and we took the long bus in through all the crowded, dirty city streets. And I was back in this filthy, awful place, reporting into the hotel, sort of blurry, at six o'clock in the morning. They were just having breakfast. And there was Dave, and there was Jeff Ingram, who was the southwest rep at the time. They had been up all night getting ready. There was going to be a hearing that day.

I remember going over to the hearing with them and you know, I mean, it was just all sort of groggy. And I sat down there falling asleep every so often and trying to keep awake and listen. There was the terrible Wayne Aspinall, destroyer of the wilderness system, putting the dams in. And there I was in the old familiar hearing room of the Interior committee, where I have been so many hundreds of times since then.

I was going to testify that next day, I guess. The hearings were going on. They took me in to see Congressman Foley, Tom Foley, who was from Washington State and on the committee. It was the first time I met him. We have a fast friendship now. I've known him very well since then. He took one look at me and talked to me, and he said to Brower, "You can't let him testify. Wayne Aspinall will chew him up. These congressmen would love to have some innocent like this come up there. They'd bounce questions off of him, and they'd play off of him, and they'd blow this issue way out of proportion. They'd just love it. This would be a lamb to the slaughter. You can't do it."

There was nothing really against me, except I was obviously very young and innocent, but I wasn't any pro, and it would just raise an issue unnecessarily. So they pulled me off.

Lage: The water diversion issue?

Evans: Yes, exactly.

Lage: You would need to be ready.

Evans: That's right, and they would just raise it. So I just got to sit back there and didn't have to do it. So I helped them write their testimony and do their things. That was my first Washington experience. I had only been on the job about three weeks. And that was my Washington experience.

Evans: And then I went back and plunged back into all these other hearings going on back in the Northwest. The North Cascades issue was blowing up again. We had hearings coming on in May, senate hearings again. And I had all these other territories to go see, the whole place. I had to get down to Oregon and Idaho. I had to see all these places and do all these things. The whole thing was just a blur and swirl and a dance, a shifting kaleidoscope of names and faces and places and events. It's all in the archives, as I mentioned to you in my letter. It's all in the files. I sent fifty file drawers worth of stuff over to the University of Washington archives, which are there. It's all in my memory and my heart too, and it will come out, if you ask questions in one context or another.

Acquiring Organizing Skills

Evans: Let me just dance over the North Cascades campaign briefly, to give the flavor of it because I don't know how much detail you want here. But I came back, that March and that April. Had to go back again, went back to Washington again in April with Pat Goldsworthy, to lobby on the North Cascades and see the other conservation groups. That was another experience back here [in Washington, D.C.].

And then the hearings were coming up in May. I spent a lot of time organizing on them, the senate hearings. That was where I developed what I call the trademark, you know, turning out lots and lots of witnesses and getting technique.

It was about that end of May that I went to my first Sierra Club Executive Committee meeting. Then the Pacific Northwest Chapter was all the four northwest states and Canada and Alaska and everything, it was all in one big thing.

Lage: This was the chapter?

Evans: That was the chapter, yes. This was before groups. There weren't any groups. It was just the chapter.

It was all this vast territory. That's where I got to know a lot of the old-timers like Sandy Tepfer and Dick Noyes and Polly Dyer and some of the others who were also sort of my heroes. Mardy Murie would go, and I remember she was the wife of the founder of the Wilderness Society. I couldn't believe it. She let me drive her home after a meeting once. I couldn't believe it. She lived in Seattle then. My God, she let me drive her home. What a wonderful experience that was.

Evans: But anyhow, in fact it was Mardy and I who drove all the way over to Malheur, Oregon, in April. That was another seven-hundred-mile drive to the nether reaches of my territory for hearings in Lakeview, Oregon, and Malheur, Oregon, on the wildlife refuge there. So, I got to explore that.

So I was always on the road. I was always driving, and I was always dancing from place to place. And the freeway battles were going on at the same time. All these things were happening.

Lage: When you danced from place to place, you wouldn't find Sierra Club people there to motivate, would you? You were kind of on your own at times?

Evans: Well, I would find people there. Early on my style of operating was developing; it was always the same. I didn't care what organization they were with. I just wanted people.

Lage: Where did you get your ins?

Evans: I would look up names. I would read the file on the issue beforehand and pick up the names. I'd call them ahead of time and say, "I'm coming through, can you be there and meet?" That's a little bit later, when I developed the organizing technique.

Whatever the issue was, I would try to organize around it and find somebody. You could always find one or two people in every town. And my style was to call them up and say, "I'm going to be over two weeks from Tuesday. Could you call some of your friends together?" Because they in the local towns would know who their friends were. I would just call until I found somebody willing to call the friends and get together.

And they would do that work and get their friends together. I would say, "I don't care if there's five or fifty, but the only criteria is that they must be true believers. I don't want anybody that I have to argue with. They have to believe in the cause, passionately. Because they can spread the word." That was always my style.

Then I would go into town, and I would testify on whatever it was. We would have lunch, and we would break bread, and I'd sleep on somebody's floor, and we'd have a meeting. And we would meet late into the night. We'd plot and plan and strategize. Then I would go on to the next town.

I felt very much in all those years like a preacher riding circuit, going from town to town to town. We were breaking bread and preaching the faith and the sermon and holding the hands. It

Evans: is a religion. They are very, very, very, deep feelings we have, as you know, about these things. So anyhow, that was the way it was, and that's what I did then.

Although in Lakeview, Oregon, there wasn't anybody, just me and Mardy Murie came six hundred miles from Seattle. All the ranchers hated wilderness, and were opposed to it all. But that's the way it was elsewhere.

IV HELLS CANYON: A MAJOR CAMPAIGN

Early Awareness of the Issues

Evans: The Northwest Chapter had its May meeting, sort of like its annual meeting, over at Emily Haig's house--a lovely little place on Puget Sound. She was one of the grand dames of Northwest conservation, a fighter for the Olympic National Park years before. She was in her late seventies then.

We'd meet over there and eat oysters and talk about all these things. At this meeting an emissary from darkest Idaho came across the mountains and the passes and the rivers to come over to see us, all the way from Idaho. No one had ever seen anybody from Idaho before. It was part of my territory, and nobody had ever been there, as far as I know:

He was from the Snake River. He said, "They're putting a dam in Hells Canyon, and we've got to have the help of the powerful Sierra Club." And the chapter discussed it for a while. They said, "Evans, you look into that." I said, "Yes, sir, I'll sure look into it and do that."

I didn't remember whether the Snake River flowed north or south or anything about it, really.

Lage: You had never been in that area?

Evans: I had never been there. One of my nine-hundred-mile drives just barely circled it, skirted it, but I never really quite got there. However, I did know about Hells Canyon because, interestingly enough, the year before, in 1966, the law firm that I worked for then represented the public power supply system of the state of Washington.

Evans: They were the big consortium of public utilities there. They wanted to build a dam in Hells Canyon. And the law partners were just getting in a big flurry of activity, getting ready to go back to Washington and argue the case before the Supreme Court. What was happening, there was no issue about whether there was going to be a dam; it was only between which combine of interests, the public power companies or the private power companies who were going to build the dams in Hells Canyon. That was the only issue.

Well, they asked me to do some briefing on it. I said, "Please don't make me do this, sir, because I don't believe in dams." So they laughed and said, "Okay, you don't have to. We can find somebody else." So I didn't have to work on that case. I just stepped out, and that was the year before.

So a year later, ironically and interestingly to me, this emissary from Idaho came and said, "Help us." So I got the job of helping. I subscribed to one of the Idaho newspapers as part of my job to keep up on what was going on. I was trying to follow issues. I was getting more deeply into them, learning about them, and this sort of thing. I didn't really know what to do. They got the dam case in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court hasn't made a decision yet. How can we possibly help? It's almost over. The place is finished and the only issue is which dam.

And it wasn't until about June that year that I read in the Lewiston paper that the Supreme Court had issued its decision, and they'd sent it back on remand, on the issue of whether there should be a dam at all. That was an unheard of kind of thing, and guess who wrote the opinion? It was good old Justice William O. Douglas. It was even what lawyers call obiter dictum. It was just a way of speaking. It had nothing to do with the legal issues in the case whatsoever. But he convinced his brothers that there ought to be a hearing on that issue too, which was an enormous breakthrough at the time.

By the way, just to back up a few months, when I came onto the Northwest job, I wrote a little piece, a little article explaining myself and what my ambitions and goals were for environment, conservation we all called it then, in the bulletin of the North Cascades Conservation Council. I said then, "Its time to weave a legal framework around the places we love." That was a web of things, laws and structures.

Taking the Case to Court

Evans: One of my dreams and ambitions and desires always was to take cases to court. I knew the power of the law. I knew the power of the court system to protect places once and forever. So, I spent a lot of my time, in that year and years to follow, developing a stable of attorneys to take things to court. It was sort of working in parallel with other people around the country. But that was the idea.

Lage: How did that relate to other movements around the country in environmental law?

Evans: It did not. We were sort of doing it independently, and so many of these things were happening, and it was in the air, really. It was just the obvious thing to do, to fight freeways, whatever it might be, to fight dams. You have to do something when you have exhausted every other remedy. Then you have to still save the place you love. You have to do something else. It was the obvious thing. There were no precedents. I remember having correspondence with Bob Jaspersen of the Conservation Law Society in San Francisco. And he would write me back nice letters but there was never any--

Lage: Did you know Dave Sive or any--?

Evans: Never heard of him. Never knew him then. I got to know him later because he has relatives in Seattle, but didn't know him then. Didn't know Joe Sax of Michigan, didn't know any of those people. I had never heard of Victor Yannacone. I was just sort of doing it because it was an obvious thing sort of to do. The Hells Canyon case, which I'll get into in a minute, was one of the first Sierra Club involvements, I think.

I wrote the Supreme Court. I didn't know what else to do. They'd sent it back on remand, which meant new hearings, new proceedings. I wrote the clerk of the Supreme Court a letter, "Say, hey, I'm a little fellow out here in the Northwest, sucking my thumb and just happened to read this thing the other day. I see you're back on remand. Does that mean that anybody can get involved? Can anybody intervene in the new proceedings?"

They wrote me back a letter about the end of July and said, "Well, yeah, I guess you can if you want to, sonny. If you can." That's all they said. They weren't very cooperative.

The deadline was September 1; all the papers had to be filed. They did tell me that much. I spent a large part of the month of August. I went down to the King County law library, and I said

Evans: I've got to write up a petition of intervention. I didn't know how to do it. There weren't any form books or anything like that. And I finally came up with what looked like a petition of intervention to me. I read the FPC [Federal Power Commission] rules of procedure. They just said you had to have one, and it had to be signed by all the parties and so on.

I wrote up the petition of intervention and then I had to find the parties. Who were going to be the parties to this sort of thing? I got the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, that was easy. Getting the Sierra Club was harder. I think Ed Wayburn was president then, and he was in Europe or some damn place. I didn't track him down till the end of August, but I finally got him. He agreed.

Lage: It was not hard to convince him?

Evans: It was not hard, no; it was not hard at all, after I told him what it was.

Lage: Was this after Storm King or before? Because that was a similar thing.

Evans: Storm King was a similar thing. I think it was about the same time. Storm King was around '65-'66; this was '67. I remember reading about Storm King. I don't remember much about it. You know, we were so far out in the provinces there, you didn't know what was going on.

Lage: But that set the precedent, didn't it, on the club's right to intervene in an FPC proceeding?

Evans: I'm not sure. It may have. It may have. And that was a similar kind of proceeding because it was before the administrative body, not before a court as such, at least in its early stages.

Anyhow, then I had to find a group in Idaho. I had to find somebody in Idaho to make it look legitimate and good. So I found the Idaho Alpine Club. They were part of the federation. They never came to any of the meetings, but I finally tracked somebody down and pulled them out of the mountains, and they agreed to sign on too.

So about 11:00 p.m., on the night of August 31, 1967, I finally got everything all typed up and all printed and all the papers all signed and all bundled, thirty copies, and took them down to Sea-Tac airport and got them stamped before midnight of August 31st and got them shipped off.

Confrontations with Prodevelopment Interests

Evans: After I filed the petition I just sat back and waited. Boy, the stuff really hit the fan after all that. I had no idea what I was getting into. I heard the story somewhat later. Remember, my former law firm had worked for the public power supply system which wanted to build the dams. One of the partners told me much later that about the first week of September, they got an angry call from the private power company lawyer down in Portland. A guy named Hugh Smith, who became a great antagonist years later on this issue. "Say, what the hell are you doing letting this guy even do this?"

They said, "What are you talking about?"

"One of your gaddamned lawyers filed a petition and got in this case and got all these damn conservationists. What's going on here?"

They didn't know. They said, "Oh, he left a long time ago."

What he'd done is look me up in the lawyer's directory. "Who the hell's this Brock Evans?" He looked me up, and there I was working for this law firm in Seattle. He was furious and angry because then we were in the case. That was a precedent of enormous proportions as it turned out later on.

I thought, my God, I've got to get some help. So I called up my good old climbing friend, Tom Brucker, who is a lawyer and a conservationist from Seattle. And I said, "Tom, you've got to help me in this." I said, "We'll pay you a little bit; we can't pay you much. But you've got to help me on this. What do I know about FPC proceedings?"

Right away I got a notice saying that the first hearing is going to be September 27th in the federal courthouse in Portland, Oregon, for the western district of Oregon. Oh, my gosh, a federal court. Federal courts are really sort of god-like to lawyers, and it's very formal and very intimidating and all that, especially for a young kid like me.

He agreed, and we all flew down there that morning. The scene was just so typical of the whole Hells Canyon battle. In the first place, there were twenty years of history behind this thing; I knew nothing about it basically. To me it was irrelevant history; it was just two people fighting over which dam. That's irrelevant. The studies meant nothing because that wasn't the issue anymore. It's a new equation now, I thought. But it meant everything to these people. It has been their lives and their careers.

Evans: So, there were about twenty-seven lawyers sitting all around in a big semicircle out in front. We were far on one end. The judge was sort of sitting ten feet off the ground, up really high. And he came in, gaveled it down and silence came down. I could feel my heart palpitating. I thought, "God, what is this?" Lawyers from the Indian tribe, lawyers for every interest in the Northwest, lawyers for the cities, lawyers for the states, lawyers for the private and public power companies. There it was, thirty or forty years of Northwest history right before your eyes. Because these were all old, old wars, and many, many places, not just Hells Canyon.

The administrative judge went all the way around the room asking each lawyer for his statement. And all these old, grizzled pro veterans in their three-piece, three-hundred-dollar suits, sat up and hooked their thumbs in their belts and gave these long orations and referred back to this and that statute of Congress and this and that pronouncement of the secretary of Interior. And the government was there. Jesus, it was really something. They were reciting all these histories.

It took all morning just to listen to all these guys. Finally they got down to the end of us, and the judge looked at us very contemptuously and says, "Does the Sierra Club really have anything to say, counsel?" I said, "Yes, your honor, we kind of do have a few things we would like to say, if it would please the court, please."

I got up and said a few things about the river and the other things like that and everybody snorted and guffawed and sneered.

Lage: Was yours more emotional?

Evans: It wasn't lawyerlike; yeah, it was lawyerlike emotion. I think I've never been able to be as lawyerlike as many lawyers I know. I am a lawyer by training, and I did it for years, even won some cases and things like that. You try to be careful when you're talking to them. "We are here to talk about the qualities of the other resources and the qualities of the river and the value of these things. Our case will show that these values are more important than the dams." People were snorting and guffawing in the other end of the room. Little piddly stuff, like we were the most insignificant little fly speck right there.

My co-counsel, Tom Brucker, said a few words. He was more lawyerlike than I was, I think. We were both sort of in it together. And that's how the thing began. We'd intervened in the case, and it's a long and beautiful story which we'll talk probably more about later because it was a very big part of my years then.

Lage: You might want to carry it through here, rather than break it up and come back to it.

Evans: Let's carry the whole thing through. It took eight years.

Campaign Strategies and Tactics

Lage: It sounds as if it used almost every element of conservation tactics.

Evans: Yes, it did. It was that way. Two weeks earlier, I had made my first trip through there. Took Rachel over on one of our drives to see the place. And I met Cliff Merritt, who was then western field director of the Wilderness Society. He wasn't someone I'd known already; we sort of met there.

I remember driving across eastern Oregon, driving into Lewiston. This emissary had come from darkest Idaho some months before, a guy named Floyd Harvey, who ran a jet boat. He ran tours up there, in a jet boat, up through the rapids. It's a great big powerful river, much more water than the Colorado, great big river, sixty-foot deep, sometimes. Anyhow, it was a big powerful place. Unknown, most people have never heard of it, never been there.

Anyhow, he took us, Cliff and I and Rachel, up the canyon, up and back. Cliff and I sort of sat on the banks, went hiking in the trails; we were just stunned, you know. It was like going deep into the bowels of the earth; I'd never seen a mighty living river before like that. You know, they have a life of their own.

I wrote an article about that which came out in the Sierra Club magazine about a year or so later--about the play of light and form and the way the river boils and sucks over the rapids and the hawks wheeling about and the little sandy beaches. The whole thing made a powerful, powerful impact on me.

And Cliff and I were sitting on the banks of the river, and I knew these hearings were coming up. We had just intervened; it was the most utter of lost causes. The cause was the most desperate, hopeless sort of thing. We never could possibly save this place. Once the hearings were over on this little insignificant subject, that was poof, that was it.

We thought we've got to give it a try. We've got to organize something politically here. All the old troops were beaten down. They'd fought and lost the battle of whether there would be the dam. They'd fought that ten years before and lost it, already.

Lage: So there had been some opposition to the idea of damming the canyon?

Evans: There'd been some by the Wildlife Federation; the Sierra Club wasn't involved, but it was the Wildlife Federation from Idaho and Oregon who'd fought these things because of the fish, the salmon, which was a big issue, as you know.

So, we were sitting on the banks and we said, "Well, we are working on wild, scenic rivers; that's an issue. We could do that." And I thought, "Let's do bigger. This is magnificent country. We'd seen some of the country all around. Look at the maps here." So, we said, "Let's call it something bigger. We'll call it the Hells Canyon-Snake National River, something like that. And we'll put in, not just the river itself and a little quarter mile back, little piddling stuff like that, we're going to put in the mountain ranges on both sides."

So, I got on my hands and knees in subsequent months, and I drew a boundary of a 700,000-acre or 660,000-acre Hells Canyon Snake River, which later became the 668,000-acre Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, which is what it is right now.

Lage: Did you walk the boundaries, or is this more a map tracing?

Evans: It was a map tracing then, but over the years, I've been through almost all of it. Hiked down from the tops to the bottom and flew over it, and of course, backpacked through it. I really got to know it very, very well. I spent a lot of time there.

But we drew the boundaries. What we did was a map tracing first and then refined the boundaries later. We had a lot of help from the Hells Canyon--I went on from there to organize the Hells Canyon Preservation Council. I went over to Idaho Falls, Idaho, where our nest of devotees was over there. We organized the Hells Canyon Preservation Council. I also went through the Sawtooths in September of '67. I organized the Sawtooth Conservation Council to fight for the Sawtooths, which later became the Sawtooth [National] Recreation Area. So it was my first organized swing through Idaho, and I went all over the place.

Lage: This was the start of your technique of building up local groups?

Evans: That's right.

Lage: Did these groups look to you for organizing and direction, or did they take off on their own?

Evans: They looked to me for help. My aim-- I didn't realize it was an aim until later looking back. You know, often that's the case: you reflect back on what you've done, and you realize that's what you did. My aim was always just to be a help, to be a source. I didn't care what group it was or anything, but if you need help, come to us, turn to us; we'll help; I'll come there. I'll give myself. I would extend myself, whatever it was, because I just loved those people and respected them so much for all they were doing. That's the least I can do is give myself too, sort of my driving force, I guess.

Since I was the only paid person in the whole Northwest, I felt I had a special obligation to help these struggling people in some ways. So, often over the years, I would get phone calls saying, "We're having a crisis, come over and help us." I'd drop everything and get on the plane, go on over there, and we'd struggle through something together. That's often the way it was.

Lage: But they had a life of their own?

Evans: Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes, they had their own meetings, their own executive committees, their own newsletters, all these things. That was the way it should be. It had to be that way. But I would be there to help. My idea was to spawn them and to get them going. Then they would do the thing. They would do the work. That was the way we could expand our reach and our power far more than just if I could do it all by myself. There was no way I could do it all myself by any means. So that's the way it was.

We got the idea of Hells Canyon-Snake River; then we started the legal proceedings. Then the first thing they did--to get back to October or September, October or November--they appointed task forces to study all the different aspects, the wildlife and the energy power and so on.

Lage: Who did this, the FPC?

Evans: Yes. The administrative judge, the FPC did all that.

So, we were all supposed to divide up into task forces and see if we could reach a consensus on it. Luckily for us at the time, the federal government advanced its own idea for a federal dam in that place. That would just ball up everything, and it made everybody mad. So, they wanted to build a dam; this was Stewart Udall [secretary of the Department of the Interior]. They wanted to build their own dam there.

Evans: At the same time, the Department of Agriculture--the Forest Service was very much opposed to the dams because they had Forest Service land and a lot of people inside the Forest Service loved the Hells Canyon. They were not very strong on this because they were a very cautious agency.

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Evans: But I cite this now because that became an interesting little story later about six or eight months later with the Nixon administration.

But, anyhow, you had these conflicting elements: you had private power companies who wanted to build one dam and the public power companies, another dam. The state governments just wanted to get their share of the goodies, whatever the goodies were. Labor was interested in it because they wanted the jobs. The fish and game agencies wanted mitigation; they secretly didn't like it, but they were afraid to speak up because their governors told them to shut up. The Indians wanted their share of the goodies; they weren't against the dams either. They just wanted to make sure the salmon were mitigated or something like that, and they wanted their share of the goodies. Then the federal government comes in messing everything up with their own new dam proposal, like that. Oh, it just upset the whole apple cart; they were much madder at the feds than they were at us.

We didn't understand all of this. We said, "What's going on? A dam is a dam. It's all terrible. It's all bad." Later on, looking back on it, of course, it served the function of balling things up even more and dragging the proceedings out. But then there we were too. And they didn't think we were a force, but we thought we were a force. We were just going to go ahead and do our thing.

So we entered in these task forces and all these studies. The first realization was that we didn't have any money to pay consultants \$250 a day to review all these reports and do all these things. What did we know about power generation that we could really stand up in court and do this? We were there because we loved the way the river sounded. That was what it was. That was why we were there. We wouldn't dare say that in public, but that was really it.

So we just didn't participate in the task forces. They'd invite us, and we'd say we can't do it, can't afford it and this sort of thing. About February of '68 I got a copy of a letter from the private power company lawyer [Hugh Smith] who got to hate me. (He's the one who got upset by my being in it in the first place.) He said, "We're going to move to strike the Sierra Club out of this case because they aren't participating in good

Evans: faith." Oh, I had to fall all over myself and write a long letter saying, "We don't have the resources to pay people. We really do care. Here are some comments." This sort of thing. But it was always a constant battle to keep ourselves alive and in the case as a part of the proceedings because these are big money proceedings; everybody expects them to last years and years and years.

We got into 1968 that way. I remember, at the same time, we were trying to drum up some sentiment. The Hells Canyon Preservation Council then was going and was active. Those are wonderful people over there. They were starting, trying to get a little something going in Idaho. I don't remember all the sequence.

I know what happened then, the public power companies and the private power companies got together. They all got in bed together, the most unholy kind of alliance if you know Northwest politics. It was unbelievable. It just stunned everybody. They got in bed together, and they came up with a new baby, and the baby was the one dam they were going to jointly build together.

And the judge said, "Are you sure you mean this? What is all this?" And it made a dramatic splash all over the Northwest and headlines and the shiver of fear ran through us. Oh, oh, the enemies have gotten together; China and Russia are now buddies again or something. It was a very scary kind of a thing, their going to go ahead. So the only opposition then was the federal government, who wanted to build their own dam, and us. That put a new complexion on it.

But anyhow, it was in July of 1968 that I flew out to Washington again to-- You know, the North Cascades battle, by the way, was reaching its climax, and I haven't even talked about it, and I guess we'll come back to that; that was going on too. It was reaching its very fascinating climax in the springtime and the early summer of '68. The issue was almost decided.

But let's deal with Hells Canyon for the moment. I remember working on Hells Canyon and going back in July, 1968, to see if we could do something about Hells Canyon because there were some public hearings there. We'd retained a lawyer in Washington by then. There was somebody who just had to be the representative there, and he was there, and I wanted to meet with him, meet this guy.

So I met with him there, and I thought--in the meantime--yes, this was '68-- The story I wanted to tell comes a year later. But anyhow, I just remember going back there and working at that particular time. We went through more and more proceedings.

Evans: I remember what happened. Then in the summer of '68 we requested and the FPC granted public hearings. They didn't have to do this--the trial started. The trial started in September of '68, after a year of all these task force proceedings; that's what it was. And they had three days of trial, that's formal hearings on the case, legal proceedings in Lewiston and two more days in Portland, Oregon, different places. We got them to do that too. And each day, each trial would be preceded by a day of full public hearings, so the ordinary peons and the people could come.

Organizing Local Conservation Groups

Evans: I spent the August of '68 going around eastern Oregon trying to find a few people to fight this thing, and eastern Oregon's a very tough country. They all wanted jobs there. I found a couple of people and had some nice experiences, but not much. But I spent a lot of time in Lewiston and Boise, organizing in Idaho, and the Idahoans were more willing to turn out.

The biggest effort in those days--and I remember meeting in February of '68, now to go back--was trying to get the old tired warriors from the Wildlife Federation, who were really good conservationists too, back into battle once more. I remember going over there and struggling and coming back all depressed because the old ones said, "You can't beat it, Brock. The only thing is to get the salmon runs okay and get the mitigation. You can't fight it. Let's compromise on some dam."

The new Turks, who were there and led by myself, said, "No, by God, we're going to fight it all." They said, "Oh, what do you new guys know?" It was sort of like that.

Lage: How do these two groups differ, the old--

Evans: The old warriors were the fishermen and the hunters and so on.

Lage: So they might have been a little more conservative to begin with?

Evans: A little more conservative, but in the interior they were always very good. My experience with the hunters and the fisherman, the Wildlife Federation affiliates in the Northwest states, was that the coast ones were pretty bad on all of our issues. They were what I called "meat hunters." The stereotype I have is, sort of, driving up in your pickup truck and blasting something from the road and guzzling your bottle of liquor and slinging your bloody meat on the truck and going home and bragging about it.

Lage: And then what were the new groups like?

Evans: The new groups were the young scientists, the young people. The reason Idaho Falls was so important to us was because they were nuclear people, nuclear scientists who are often hotbeds of loving the wilderness, wherever you go. They loved this canyon. So, they were the young professionals.

Lage: More urbanized, were they?

Evans: Yes, more urbanized and from other backgrounds. They weren't natives. They were from other places, our kind of folks. In Lewiston, it was the teachers and people like that plus a few of the old warriors. In Boise, it was sort of a mixture like that. But that's where we found our support.

There are some pretty wonderful, sophisticated people who had been carrying the battle, some natives too. Enough natives to give it some legitimacy at the same time.

Lage: Was it hard to draw these two elements together?

Evans: We just called a meeting, said, "Let's come." And they came. That's a little story. It later came in the autumn of 1968.

To back up quickly, I realized early on that in the state of Washington there was far too much going on for me to lobby in the state legislature too, as I tried to do earlier. So, it was in late '67--Washington state was also the most advanced of all the four Northwest states in terms of political activism, sophistication, and our kind of folks and all the rest; this is important to the story I just want to tell--in late '67, I called a meeting at the University of Washington. I called it on two successive weekends so those who couldn't make it on one, could make it on another. We met all the weekend in some little place up there. It was all the leaders from all the environmental groups we could identify all over the state, the idea being to discuss forming an umbrella organization where we could all coordinate, all work together, in the state, in the state legislature, on state issues because I knew I couldn't do all that and do all the federal things too.

And I chaired the meeting. I remember having splitting headaches after each one and getting all these elements. It was where I discovered, I think, another skill of sort of working people and blending them together and harmonizing and keeping everybody reasonably happy and all working together.

Evans: I had worked it out with a friend of mine named Mike Ruby, who was very active in the Sierra Club at that time. He was a real political mover and knew how to do these things too. I would be the Ike Eisenhower, the chairman and keep everything harmonious, and he would be the guy suggesting things at little bits and times and try to move the agenda along because our aim was to have everybody agree to have an umbrella organization.

Well, we did. And in January we did get everybody to agree, everybody except the Wildlife Federation folks. January of '68 we incorporated the Washington Environmental Council, which became the statewide body to organize this whole thing. I became the acting chairman of it and rapidly turned over the baton to somebody else. And that went off beautifully. It's wonderful to see all this whole thing lobby in the state legislature.

Lage: So, that took up a life of its own?

Evans: It took up a life of its very own and took the burden off me. I kept a deep role, and I was an officer for years in it and went to the meetings and was on the board of directors until I left, and things like that.

But I wanted them to do it. It just made a whole new force. My philosophy in all these things had always been that people say you've got too many organizations all the time. It's not true; new organizations bring in new troops because we need new chiefs as well as new Indians. And people who are active, our kind of people, are volatile and intense and articulate enough that they want to be recognized. They want to be leaders. So let's give them the opportunity. Let's form new organizations, and let them be leaders. Let them develop their own talents in their own ways. And that's what we did.

So, in October of '68, we organized the Idaho Environmental Council because I was the only one who had been going from the northern part of the state to the southern. I'd see all the people in the north--that's how Idaho is divided--and the people in the north would always say, "Ah, the people in the south don't care about us and our issues." And the people in the south would say, "The people in the north don't care about us and our issues." And I'd say, "Hey, I was just there; they do too." So we organized the Idaho Environmental Council in October of '68 at Coeur d'Alene. I had membership card number one in that.

Then two weeks later I went down to Oregon. We called all the Oregonians together and organized the Oregon Environmental Council, probably the most successful of all the three. We did that.

Evans: I would like to feel I was the father of all those, and we spawned all three of those in the space of a year. They then took off and did get their own wonderful life of their own. They have been successful beyond all dreams, I think. They've brought in new troops. They're powers in the state legislature. They're contacts. They're alliances. And it's just fantastic to see.

Insights into the Conservation Revolt of the Sixties

Lage: It just sounds like such an exciting, fertile time. How does it relate to other things that were going on in the world? I mean, do you think this could have happened in 1958 or 1978?

Evans: No, I don't think so. What I've always thought about, often I've wondered about myself, who am I? How does a little person like me come to this time and this place? How could I have had the good fortune to sort of blaze like a comet across the Northwest sky? It wasn't because of me and my qualities, I don't think. I was just there. I was there, and I was willing to extend myself. You know, fate is that way. People are presidents who are not--not because of their own selves but because of events. And I just happened to catch the rising tide of the movement; that's how I've always seen this sort of thing. I just caught it, and I was willing to give of myself, and I was willing to do these things, and I did have sort of an adventurous spirit and some abilities in certain ways of moving people and doing that. I just rode with it.

Lage: Do you have any sense of what was causing the tide?

Evans: Yes, exactly. It's what I call the dam-burst theory. The dam-burst theory is that all throughout the fifties was an age of overconsumption where we were paving over everything and having highways to connect everything. We were paving over to pave over the rest and driving ten-miles-to-the-gallon cars to get us through what used to be there. We were cutting down all the forest for our houses and our paper wrappings, and we were losing millions of acres of wilderness. All this was going on in those years.

And gradually the revolt rose. People got very upset. The North Cascades was a good example. People would hike in one place--my story is the same as others; remind me to tell you about June '66, which was another turning point in my life, too, in this whole thing--people started hiking one summer up a place they'd dreamed about all the summer before, the winter before, and found it gone, logged off, finished. That was the whole sad chronicle certainly in the Northwest.

Lage: Was logging picking up in those days?

Evans: Yes, the cut of the national forest tripled from about four billion board feet a year in 1950 to about twelve billion in 1970, just tripled. Everything was opened up. We lost millions and millions of acres of wilderness there without a fight, without a murmur. Then nobody even knew what was going on. Or they did know, and they started fighting.

Small bands first, larger ones later. That's where the desert protection people are now. We who cared about the forests just started first. They're where we were fifteen years ago, I think, just getting started on these things.

And all these movements get a dynamic and life of their own. Freeways run through central cities, the great revolt in San Francisco and elsewhere. These people responded to a threat. They revolted in the 1890s against the exploitation of land. You know, we finally had to rise up again and revolt.

So, as you know, the Earth Day rallies in 1970 didn't spring full-blown like Venus out of the ocean, out of the shell or anything like that. They came because of all the hundreds and hundreds of battles and little small people fighting pesticides and freeways and nuclear plants; remember Bodega Head, and you know the others, all over the place, all the time.

It finally crested and burst across the nation in 1970, a great wave of anger and revolt in American people; that's why. So, I was catching the tide, the rising tide of that.

Relationship Between Environmental and Social Protest Movements

Lage: Do you see any relationship between the environmental movement and other kinds of social protests?

Evans: Like Vietnam and all that?

Lage: Vietnam, the student movement?

Evans: No, not in the same sense, except perhaps in the sense it was in the air. The American people were restless and angry and upset. So, direct means of protest were the mode of expression.

Evans: But we'd been there before all that. We were revolting and fighting these things before all these things, in the early sixties. Civil rights and that was there, too. It was in the air, in a sense, but my perception never was that we were doing it because they were doing it. We were connected in that, but there wasn't any generic link between us and the civil rights movement and the antiwar movement.

Lage: You weren't getting people interchanging between movements?

Evans: You know, a lot of people who didn't like the war were also good environmentalists. The fact is, when I first moved to Seattle, in June of '63, I joined CORE. I was in the civil rights movement in that time. I desperately wanted a cause, is what I realized and what I found out. I marched some picket lines. We were trying to open up to get fair housing and things like that. I really believed in that. And a lot of people who were, at least white people who were, of that persuasion also cared about the environment as well.

So our members cut across those folks, but there was no linking between organizations. In fact, during the height of the Vietnam War protest, we'd get a lot of flack and static from the antiwar people, saying, you know, "You're draining up energy from the real important cause which is my cause." The civil rights people said that too, "You're draining up energy from the important cause, which is whatever I'm doing. You know, you environmentalists are fuzzy heads; join us; that's (the environment) not important."

Lage: How would you respond to some of this?

Evans: Personally, I thought that was very arrogant of them. You know, "What do you mean? My cause is important too." But I would just say, "Your cause is very important, and I certainly support it, but we have to do this, too, because we're defending air and water, and we're just all in this together." I would not be the angry one; let them be angry.

Basically, I would just go on doing my thing because there were plenty of recruits for us. What they were upset about is that we were so successful. You know, we were doing very, very well. We were doing well working within the system. The system still responded to us at that time.

But I had a lot of debates like that and a lot of stuff like that. I remember coming down to Santa Cruz, down around here and debating in front of the whole student body with somebody like that. He said all these things. He said we were cop-outs because we were working within the system. We were selling out. You know, the Rockefellers really ran us. All those sorts of things like that. I wish they would. I wish they'd give us some money. It would be nice. [laughter]

Evans: But you know, there's a lot of that. My view of all these things is just to keep my eye on the main ball. The main ball is saving the earth. The main ball isn't all these debates except to get new recruits and new causes, and if you don't win here, you go on and on because there's no time to sit there and get bogged down in ideological things like that. There's too big a job to do outside.

As we talk about it more and more, links may come to me, but I don't really perceive them. The bulk of the issues that were getting all the headlines, of course, were the antiwar and the civil rights movement, but that was okay. As long as we were winning battles, it didn't really matter too much.

Lage: How was the media responding to the environmental movement? Mike McCloskey has recently been interviewed, and he mentions feeling like an outcast when he was in the Pacific Northwest, that the media was very unfriendly.

Evans: In those days, that's right, it was very hostile. It was a long struggle to get a morsel. Some papers, like the Lewiston Tribune and the Seattle PI were pretty good. The Portland Oregonian was terrible; they wrote an editorial blasting me by name once, for example, things like that. It all depended on where we'd go, but it got better. It got better and better because there were just more and more of us.

Most of the newspapers, it's true, were run by the local establishments up there, and the local power structures, who were pretty much commodity-oriented. But we would always get media coverage; I would always be on TV and radio. There was plenty of it, I thought, especially on Earth Day.

I remember I gave thirty-five speeches the month of April 1970. I was bouncing from high school to high school all over the state, lots of coverage, I thought, of these things. They couldn't ignore it, in those days.

Lage: It was quite a change.

Building Momentum in the Hells Canyon Fight

Lage: We got taken off the track again. We were in Hells Canyon.

Evans: We are still in 1968 somewhere. We're still on Hells Canyon.

Lage: You'd just formed the three environmental councils.

Evans: Oh, the three environmental councils, that's right. That was explaining how we got the people together, the old grizzled veterans and the new young Turks. And that was the way it was again and again and again. There were thousands of recruits for the cause anyhow, people willing to come on if they just had something to do and someplace to go. Part of the aim was to spawn new groups.

The whole French Pete fight was coming up then too. That started in '67, and that was going on at the same time as all this. We organized the Save French Pete Committee and that's a long and beautiful story too, I think, about how another utter lost cause was rescued and snatched out from the jaws of defeat and turned into a total victory years later. There was a lot of ferment going on and a lot of things at this particular time.

Lage: Let's continue kind of following Hells Canyon.

Evans: Let's try Hells Canyon some more, okay, some more singling out of the events as they come.

Lage: I don't think we want to go into each battle because we have a good deal of your papers.

Evans: It's too much; you have all that, and you've got Washington, D.C., to cover and all that too. So, let's follow Hells Canyon.

Lage: Let's follow Hells Canyon and some general things that you learned from the various battles.

Evans: Just to tell you another story about Hells Canyon, and cut me off if I'm telling too many stories, if there's too much detail here.

Lage: Oh, I think the stories are what make it real.

Evans: Then the elections came on in 1968. The Wally Hickel thing, that was another issue I was deeply involved in. I remember two days before Nixon was elected, I got a phone call from Roger Pegues's wife, who was working with the Democratic National Committee back in Washington, D.C., where they were then living. She woke me up out of bed, 7 o'clock in the morning and said, "Guess what we just found out?" I said, "What?" "Guess who's going to be the new secretary of Interior if Nixon get's elected?" (This was before the election.) I said, "Who?" And she said, "Wally Hickel." I said, "Oh, no, my God." He was terrible as governor of Alaska. He had done awful, outrageous, terrible things. I said, "This is impossible; it couldn't be." But she said, "That's right. That's the information we got."

Evans: So, then, a few weeks later, Nixon got elected and all this sort of thing happened and sure enough Wally Hickel got nominated; I could not believe it. And I remember, it was in early December; the club had a board meeting down in San Francisco. I picked up the headline and "Wally Hickel, secretary of Interior"; I went down there, and they hadn't really heard much about him.

I said, "This is terrible. This is awful." So, they made me in charge of the fight, the campaign against him. It was our first big campaign against the secretary of Interior. And what I would do--this is just a digression again, but it's part of all the events going on at that particular time--I would spend all day on the phone to Alaska getting information on Alaska and talking to Alaska people all over. We had a teletype machine; I put it on the teletype there. This was while the hearings were going on in January.

Then I'd send it all back, the long teletype back to our Washington office back there to Lloyd Tupling. They'd put it all together, and then they'd get the information to the members of Congress to ask them questions. You know, it was a great big splash at that particular time.

And then as the hearings went on, I would, based on this information, write up questions for the senators to ask him. And I'd write up the answer Hickel would probably give. And then I would write up what the real facts were and send all that stuff back, reams and reams of it.

Lage: So, you had senators you were feeding?

Evans: Yes, exactly; that's the way a lot of these things go. It's all in the archives still. There's an enormous amount of stuff there on all that. That was a big fight that went on, but he got confirmed.

He started doing terrible things at first, but you know, the tension was just like on Watt, and finally he did shape up a little bit better. Mike probably told this when you talked to him, but we did have to make a judgment whether to try to save him in '70 or '71 when Nixon wanted to fire him. We decided not to try to save him because he wasn't all that great. You know, he was better than we had hoped, better than we'd feared, but not as good as we would like. So, we didn't try to save him at that time. He was riding on an undue reputation, I think, as being better than that. But you know, he got a little bit better.

Nixon was in power, and there we were. I remember it was in the summer of '69, we'd had this round of hearings in Hells Canyon. Let me go back to September and October of '68 because it was

Evans: another typical Northwest hearing. I'd spent all this month organizing in Idaho, it was the darkest of possible circumstances. And the first day, every labor union and every chamber of commerce in three states came and wanted that dam, and it was just really awful, and all the politicians. It was just really a classic Northwest sort of thing.

But the second day, all of our people came on, mechanics with dirt under their fingernails and housewives and little people from all over, and it was beautiful. It was just a beautiful thing to see some eloquent statements. So we stood them off. And we went to Portland, and we smashed them because that was where our strength really was. So, that went on. Then we had the legal trials. The way it would be was that all day long we'd try the case and cross-examine our witnesses and put our witnesses on.

That night I'd go out and I'd hold a press conference because I was also the political officer. I was always the legal officer and the political officer of the Sierra Club. Some lawyers thought that stretched the bounds of ethics, in a way, to do all that. You know, I would blast the power companies, and I'd blast this and that, and I was also the lawyer, doing all this and trying the case.

I'd get the glares the next day. Finally my great antagonist, Hugh Smith, complained to the judge. And the judge said, "Will Counsel, Mr. Evans, please approach the bench here." And he lectured me, "What are you doing. You know, you can't do this. You can't be, are you the lawyer or not; what are you here?"

I'd say, "Well, I'm sorry, your honor. You see, here's my situation. I've got to do both of these because I'm the only one to do all these things." So, they forgave me and let me do it anyhow.

So the evidence was all in; there were more briefs. Actually no, it wasn't until 1970 that we filed the final brief on it. The proceedings dragged out back in Washington and other places, and it just went on that way. At the meantime we were building up our political campaign and our political momentum, because we knew we could never save it in this forum. We knew that judge--he'd already ruled in favor of dams once. We could tell from his questions and his remarks at cocktail parties what a big crony he was with all these power people and the bad people, that he was just going to be with them. So, we knew we had to organize politically.

So we just spent a lot of time organizing. We organized chapters of Hells Canyon Preservation Council. I remember, it was actually in 1967; I made the proposal to the Sierra Club Board of

Evans: Directors for Hells Canyon National Park, that it ought to be a national park. That would never go, so we drew up our recreation area boundary area.

We got that publicized. We got literature. We worked on the local congressmen. We worked in the elections. We did many new and different kinds of things. The momentum was building. It was all going on under the surface, which is the way all these issues always go. But it was building and building and working away, and there were little beavers in all the places. And we'd get it written up in our magazine, which is the way we do these things.

In 1968, Senator [Bob] Packwood beat Senator [Wayne] Morse in Oregon, became the senator there. And he became interested in being our champion, and by gosh, he got it. We went back to see him.

Lage: Did you contact him or did he?

Evans: I forget how it came about; I think we contacted him. But he was very interested. He was a young environmentalist then, and very interested in these things and not committed the way most Oregon politicians are, the other way.

And he got very interested, and he said he would put in a bill for us, much to the disgust of Senator [Frank] Church and all the other old power, water-power politicians. This young Turk was putting in these bills for us, and we had some legitimacy.

We got a national forum. People started writing articles about the forgotten place, Hells Canyon. There was a great wave of sympathy all around. And it was just building. It was very exciting in those years. We seemed to get some publicity and some play.

Lage: Was there much of an attempt made to get the people right from these groups to the politicians?

Evans: Yes. That's where I developed my favorite phrase, "endless pressure, endlessly applied." That's the only thing that wins battles for us, really, when all the fancy lobbying, the computers are all done. You've just got to keep at it, year after year, day after day, and month after month, all the time.

So, whatever it would take, whenever the politicians would come home, they'd see them; they'd visit them. They'd write them. Any proposals, they'd send them information, send them material. We'd hold public meetings and forums on it and educate and go into the schools with slide shows.

Evans: We know that our only strength is with the people. The people are what we have. The other side has the money and the bucks and the power structure, but we have the people and the American people basically, I've always believed, really love their land. If we can just get to them and explain it to them, they'll come through. And they always have in the past. That's how we've won our victories. So, that's what we did. We just worked with the people, and just kept building support.

Working with John Ehrlichman

Evans: We weren't ready to move for legislation yet and the Hells Canyon hearings were just dragging on and on and on. And I remember it was in the summer of '69 that I came back to Washington again on this.

I had been back on other issues, too, but I was back on this this time. And I did this because a friend of mine, a Republican friend of mine from the Seattle area, said, "Hey, when you get back to Washington, look up my brother, Buddy. My brother, Buddy, works for the Nixon administration--Buddy [Egil] Krogh. Actually, I had never heard the name Buddy Krogh, who became famous in Watergate later.

Lage: Oh, yes.

Evans: "Look up my brother, Buddy," she said, "he works for John Ehrlichman." Well, I did remember John Ehrlichman because another issue I got involved in in early '67 was to save Port Susan Bay. They wanted to put a big oil refinery up on Port Susan Bay in Puget Sound, and all the conservationists got this local lawyer to stop this oil company from getting a permit before the Snohomish County commissioners, and the lawyer was John Ehrlichman fighting this oil company, up there. "John Ehrlichman," I said, "that name rings a bell; who's he?"

He said, "Oh, you remember him. He used to work to save Port Susan Bay."

I said, "That's the same John Ehrlichman that I knew back when--he's Nixon's right-hand guy?"

Lage: You were working on his side, right?

Evans: Yes, so I went back to Washington, and I asked Tupling, "What's the White House number? I'll call him up." I called him up, and I asked for John Ehrlichman. He said, "Who is this?" I said, "Brock Evans from Seattle." Right away Ehrlichman came out, "Brock, how the heck are you? Come right over, love to see you."

So, poof, I got into a cab, and I was whisked into the inner sanctums of the White House, the Nixon White House, and up to Ehrlichman's plush office, and he took me in tow. And Buddy came in later and took me to lunch and all this sort of thing.

And Ehrlichman said, "What are you back here for?" I said, "Well," and I explained Hells Canyon. I said, "The Department of Interior wants to build this dam, and the Forest Service doesn't. Can we call the Department of Interior off? Can we get them off this thing, you know, get them to support our position on it?"

Ehrlichman said, "That's terrible. The Department of Interior is in this dam? I hate dams," like that. And he called up Russell Train, who was then undersecretary of the Interior. Said, "Russ, I got a guy I want you to meet. I want to send him over."

So I went over and got to see Russell Train at that time. He was Nixon's undersecretary, and I explained the whole case. And Russ said, "I'll see what I can do." And I held my breath, and a month later they reversed their position. So, now we got the whole weight of the government on our side.

Lage: That's amazing.

Evans: Isn't that something. That's my information. Ehrlichman told me then, said, "You know, Brock, my job is to give the president the best information possible, but," he said, "I'm a fanatic environmentalist"--fanatic preservationist is what he called himself. And he did feel a lot like that. So I never forgot that in all the years to come. But that was another little anecdote about the many things that were going on.

Lage: That's the first good thing I've heard about John Ehrlichman.

Evans: I know. It's probably the only good thing you'll hear about him, but I knew him in a different way. When he got out of jail, the first thing he did was go hiking with his family on the beaches in Olympic Park, and the guy does have this love for these sorts of things.

I don't know what power does to a person. It transforms them, but there are many different sides to many people. So, that was another little anecdote along the way.

Lage: How about Russell Train? How did you find him?

Evans: Well, he was fine.

Lage: You must have worked with him later.

Evans: Yes, he was sort of solid. You know, I worked with him a little bit later on many things and got to know him. I don't know if he even remembers that. But yes, he was a grand old warrior for all these things. I got to know him when I moved to Washington later on.

Hells Canyon dragged on through various political levels. My next memory of it is in July of 1970. We had to write our final briefs, and my friend Tom Brucker and I got a cabin up in the mountains. We holed up in it, and I took all my records there.

We sat there and cooked and drank and ate and yelled at each other and threw books and briefs across the room and cranked out a twenty-thousand-word brief, I think was the final thing. And that was the end of the legal involvement.

At the meantime, we were escalating the political wars all the time and, to speed it up a little bit quickly here, we finally got Packwood to introduce some bills that made everybody else mad. We got some hearings on it, made everybody else madder yet. Other things were going on.

And the trial judge finally issued a decision in 1971, I think, in favor of the dams, as we knew he would. However, the remarkable thing I thought was that he said, "I will not issue a final license until 1975. I'll give you four years because I know there's a big interest in Congress, and maybe they want to pass a bill." He gave us four years to pass a bill, and that was the incredible thing.*

*Hells Canyon National Recreation Area was established by Congress in 1975. See page 73-74.

V CONTINUED CONSERVATION BATTLES IN THE NORTHWEST

Barclay Creek Timber Sale: A Crime##

Evans: Just to back up a little bit because it was an important event to me, in June of 1966--I even remember the date, because that's just the way I do things, June 12, 1966--it was a beautiful Sunday morning, in Seattle. I was still a lawyer at the time, getting more and more deeply involved in issues and concerned and upset and things like that. But I think there was a final dimension that was missing which got put into place on that particular day.

It turned out to be a beautiful sunny day, which is not the most common sort of thing in that part of the world, and so we all had what we call the Seattle syndrome. When a sunny day comes out on a weekend, you drop everything you'd planned to do and go into the mountains, go out somewhere and enjoy it for what it is.

I had always heard about a place called Barclay Creek. It was supposed to be a beautiful forest hike, and it was only an hour's drive from the city. It sounded very, very nice. So we got in the car, and we drove there and found it and drove to the road end and got out and stepped into this magnificent, cool, green Northwest forest, classic forest with the trees four or five feet thick and two hundred feet high, golden shafts of sunlight coming through and little streams dancing across the trail and squirrels chattering high up, and it was just a glorious place.

We danced along that trail for about a hundred yards. It was a six-mile trail to a little lake. And a hundred yards later I came to a yellow sign nailed on a tree; it said, "Clear-cut boundary, U.S. Forest Service." And I couldn't believe it. My heart sank, and I can still feel it to this day, the way I felt.

We stumbled on, just blind, tearful, to the next sign and the next one and the next one--

Lage: Had it been cut, or was it just set up?

Evans: It had been sold. The timber had been sold but the forest was still there; it was a magnificent forest. It was still there. This magnificent cathedral had all been sold to be destroyed. I just could not believe it.

And we stumbled all the way up, and it ruined the day. It destroyed the day. We went up there, and it was a beautiful lake and all that, but they were logging everywhere up to the lake, until within about a mile of the lake. In effect, they were logging up all the big trees, was what they were doing.

I made a vow to myself that day, through my tears, that I would spend the rest of my life stopping crimes like that because that's exactly how I considered it. That was a crime. A criminal act to do something like that.

About three or four years later, I took a pack trip through the proposed Cougar Lakes wilderness with the U.S. Forest Service. We'd been there three days and had campfires with these very nice Forest Service guys. We just happened to be sitting up in some high point looking over the wilderness with a Forest Service ranger, and he mentioned he was the district ranger up there then. I said, "Well, what about Barclay Creek?"

He said, "Ah, I laid out that timber sale. Good timber sale, isn't it?"

And I couldn't believe it. I'd met the perpetrator of this crime right there. You know, I told him how I felt, but it was already done. The place was done and gone.

Lage: You had a direct relationship, now, with local Forest Service people?

Evans: Oh, very intense, very continuous, all the time, back and forth. I was always going on trips with them and always looking at places and going into their offices and doing things like that.

I like to think that they respected me as I respected them, in many ways. I spent a lot of time speaking to foresters and speaking to forestry associations, a lot of time going to the University of Washington School of Forestry and others around the Northwest and giving speeches there and answering questions. And it was always tense and hostile, hard questions anyhow, but we always sort of got along in a good old boy, backslapping kind of way--kidding each other and nudging and jostling. That's just sort of the way I am, I think. We got along well together as persons.

Evans: But on the issues, there was just little agreement many times. I figured that one of my functions as the representative of the Sierra Club was to be visible, to be there, to be strong, to be a presence, but not to alienate unnecessarily. I only cared about winning the issue, whatever it was I wanted to win. If that meant being nice, that was fine; if it meant being angry, I'd be angry. But anger is only effective when it's controlled anyhow, I think. When it's on purpose, when you're doing it, I think, politically, it has an effect then.

So, we got along fine.

The Good Guys and the Bad Guys

Lage: One thing, as you talk, that sort of strikes me is that you seem to set up a dichotomy between the good guys and the bad guys.

Evans: Yes, I really believe in that. That makes it real.

Lage: Then that puts the Forest Service on the side of the bad guys. What's the motivation behind them? Can you see them as people motivated differently?

Evans: I say that for color because it's just part of this, maybe one might call it, romantic vision of the world I have. And it's just sort of Don Quixote riding up once again to fight against the powers of darkness. And I like to refer to the forces of darkness. A lot of it has to do with our own internal conversation with each other. I never say that to them. I never say they're bad guys. I try to talk the agency language and speak in terms that relate to them. And, of course, they are nice people as individuals; I am only talking about their position on issues vital to us.

The ones who lay out the timber sales in the wrong places are the enemy, are the bad people. They have to be fought and have to be opposed, whether it means taking it away from them, as in the case of the North Cascades Park, whether it means getting a court to stop the sale, whether it means getting them transferred. Whatever it means, it is appropriate, as long as the means are legal.

Lage: You can still relate to them as persons? What did you see as their motivation? Where were they coming from?

Evans: Sure, I still relate to them as persons. The motivation of the foresters--this is pretty true across the board; I thought about it many times, an awful lot--when you go to forestry school,

Evans: first you have a predilection to do something like that; it's what I call an engineering mentality. The foresters, in effect, are the engineers of the woods.

That's a mentality that sees things in mechanistic kinds of terms. It wants to quantify things. Foresters, for example, call trees sticks and stems. They don't call them trees--sticks and stems, that's what they are. How many stems per acre, things like that.

And you're talking basal units of wood volume and that sort of thing. So they depersonalize, anyhow, just as we on the other side, of course, personalize these things. But they depersonalize them. They see them in these kinds of terms.

They don't have the same passion and emotion. They like the forest because they like to be out in different kinds of ways, and I don't want to take that away from them. But it's a job for them, and it's grubby, and it's dirty lots of times. They get all bruised up. They'd probably like to go shoot pool at night, because they do this all the damn day. The loggers, I know, feel like that. I know lots of loggers too.

So, it's that sort of mentality. Then when you go to forestry school, having this predisposition already, what are you taught? You're taught that trees are a crop. You're taught that old ones are decadent and dying and ugly and dirty and decayed and that the bugs come everywhere, and they're infested. And you finally get this whole specter of this awful place. Those big old trees are just--you're going to see sickness and fungus and decay and dying, and you look at a nice young tree, all the Christmas trees coming up, and aren't they pretty, and they're young; and they're growing, and they're fertile.

You get a whole attitude, a whole aura about it, I think, that just permeates the philosophy. And then all your peers think this way. All your professors think this way. Anybody you go to work for thinks the same way, whether it's an agency or industry. They are the only ones that hire people. So the whole thing is perpetuated, and it's an attitude that carries on through.

So that's why I've always said that foresters may be very good at laying out the logging road and deciding whether the tree is sick or not and what to do to it and so on. They are not competent to decide what should be wilderness and what's not, anymore than anybody else. In fact, they are less so because they already have a bias against it. You aren't managing it. What good is a forest if you can't manage it? I've heard this so many times.

Lage: Could you ever get across to any of them your point of view?

Evans: We talked about it all the time. But could I get across to them my point? Sure. But what I would do, I would say, "You know, we all love this place, don't we?" And they'd have to nod their heads, "Sure, yes." They aren't going to say no. "We all love to hunt, and we all love to fish." "You know, that's really right." And you sort of get a little cadence going, get the thing going. "Yes, that's sort of right." "Don't you agree that big trees really do have a value, too? At least to some people, if not to you." "Well, yes, I guess so; some of them ought to, yes, a little bit here and there." You could edge them along and move them over maybe 15 percent or so from where they were before.

But I never was one of those who had any faith whatsoever that the agency would really do the right job. They will not. It's not in their nature. The job is to work with them when you can, to respect them, to be friends if you possibly can, but never to let up and to never trust them. They won't do it. The people are going to save the places we care about-- you know, the Congress and the courts and people like that. What Forest Service people don't realize, is that most people do not think the way they do about the forest. Most people love their forests the way they are. It's very easy to get support against cutting down trees.

I spent an awful lot of time with agency people. I was always going on these long trips with them, floating down rivers and horseback trips and joking and talking and the whole thing and kidding each other. They'd kid me. We had a nice kidding relationship about it.

In industry we do the same thing; we kid each other. "You give my speech this time, John, and I'll give yours." We would just laugh and have a good time like that. And I'd get along with them.

In fact, when I left the Northwest, many people wrote lots of nice letters and things like that. But what I was proudest of was, there were four or five from timber industry people saying I was an honored opponent and they were going to miss me and things like that. I really liked all that.

Lage: That's interesting; you'd think they'd hate you.

Evans: Well, no.

Lage: You really went after the timber industry.

Evans: I sure did, and you know, I never let up on them. But it was always fair. I like to think I fought fair, and I always fought on issues and always with respect for opponents. That's to me the way it should be.

Evans: And the same way out here. I'm always speaking to industry people and associations and so on in Washington. I'm proud of that; I like that because it just shows you're just as strong as you can be, but you don't have to be personally antagonistic about it.

There were very few people I met in agencies that I really just didn't like at all, not very many at all. I hate what they're doing. I despise it. We're fighting for that.

But that's what happened to me. I made a vow then, as I said, in '66, to spend my life fighting for those things. Barclay Creek was the final thing that really finished the set of preconditions necessary to make the ground fertile for me. So when they asked me to take the job, I would certainly take the job even though I was worried about the other things.

Lage: I'm glad you went back to that because that helps us understand your motivation.

Success in Hells Canyon

Evans: Back to Hells Canyon. In '71, Senator Packwood started putting in some legislation and making speeches about it. Our great coup then is that we got CBS to do a documentary on Hells Canyon. We had a big boat trip; we got agencies and Senator Packwood along and TV cameras standing as we were going through the rapids listening to us scream and yell and we all went out and had a glorious time. That was a great vault into national prominence. We got an awful lot on that.

CBS did that documentary; and in 1970, NBC had done a documentary too, where I was given prime billing around the country. They showed a picture of me in my outdoors shirt saying what a beautiful place it was in a soft tone of voice. Then they would see this Hugh Smith, this jerk--one guy I never really did like very much, the power company lawyer. He'd sit back in his chair, in his Portland office, smoking a cigar in his three hundred dollar suit and blow smoke all over people and say what a terrible place this was. And all the time he was talking about how ugly it was, they would pan their shots of the canyon, showing the river dance and the birds soaring, while he was saying what a dry, barren place it was.

Evans: We got some great national coups in TV in those two years. The momentum was totally building. By the time I came to Washington in '73 and Doug [Scott] took over, there were lots of legislative things to be done, but it was really a matter of putting the nails in the coffin and working it through. There was still heavy opposition, but we clearly had the momentum.

The election of Governor Andrus in Idaho in 1970--we fought very hard on that for many issues. We beat Governor Samuelson then.

Lage: You were supporting Andrus as he came into office?

Evans: I first met Cecil Andrus in October of 1970 when he was campaigning for governor. I went to a Democratic party fund raiser in Pocatello. All the conservationists were rallying around Andrus. I landed in Boise and Andrus met me there, and we flew together in the plane across to Pocatello. And I gave a warm-up speech for him.

I campaigned for him right there. I remember I was saying "I flew over Hells Canyon on the way over, and I looked down there. Take a look down there; it won't be there if Samuelson gets elected; it will be there if Andrus gets elected. Look off to the north and you see the Sawtooth; it will be there if Andrus gets elected."

That's where I met Andrus, way back then. That election transformed Idaho. Governor McCall of Oregon finally came around for us, and so did Evans of Washington, so we reversed the politics of three states, by that time. Basically, the momentum was all with us. We'd snatched another disaster and a total defeat and made it turn. We had a growing momentum for victory all over the place.

Then it only became a matter of timing and legislative strategy, which Doug did. I worked on it back in Washington, too. But then it got taken over, and finally in 1975, I guess it was, we got the bill finally through in November of '75. There was a last-minute flurry when the power companies made one last-ditch effort to get President Ford to veto the bill. Senator [James] McClure, of all people, talked him out of vetoing the bill, and they passed it. And there it is, safe, all done.

Opposing the Northwest Power Structure

Lage: Was it easier to fight against the power companies than the timber industry in the Northwest?

Evans: No. The two great powers in the Northwest, in my era, were the timber industry and the electric power industry. There were two. They were equal powers, I would say. They each had their apparatus everywhere, their local establishments, their long histories and traditions and so on. They were both very, very formidable powers. Agriculture was the other big power there; you can include ranching in that. That's the power structure of the Pacific Northwest, basically.

Lage: Pretty entrenched.

Evans: Very entrenched. Yes, except we have the votes too, and we beat them. We had the numbers; you know, once again, we're strong in the cities; it's the city West. James Watt [Secretary of Interior] makes such a big mistake these days saying he has the support of the West here. He has the support of the cowboy West maybe, but that's a third of the votes. The two-thirds of the votes are in Boise and Salt Lake City and Denver and San Francisco and Seattle and Portland and all those places. That's our vote; that's us.

If we can muster it, if we pull it together. These became the tactics of later years, which we'll talk about when we talk about my work in Washington, D.C.--how to hold this power together and make it work on a national scale.

Lage: But this was laying the groundwork.

Evans: Yes, it was that way on a local scale, too. The basic tactic all the time, in battles like this, was to neutralize the opposition as much as you can. Then use your own power to pour into the gap.

By neutralizing, I mean I would go into the local communities and try to get somebody to come up so we could show the politicians that it wasn't just from the cities, trying to rule the countryside. We would get the countryside to speak up, too. Never enough to win, but enough to show the neutrality. "Okay, so it's a wash-out, but look at Seattle and Portland who are all for it." So, they'd go for us that way. That was a very simple tactic, but that was basically what we did all the time or tried to do if we could.

The other issues: I just remember, in 1971 again, we had hearings on-- I'm going to talk about this this afternoon as a matter of fact--there was an uproar against not just the logging off of the wilderness places, the wild places in the forest, but the way they were logging also. They were cutting on slopes too steep and soils too thin where trees wouldn't grow back and larger and larger clearcuts, and silting up the streams. There is a long, sad chronicle of the destruction of the Northwest. And not just in the Northwest, but everywhere else too.

The Revolt against Clearcutting

Evans: In October 1968, we were organizing the Idaho Environmental Council. We were all sitting up in a little hotel room in Coeur d'Alene drinking, passing a bottle around. Old Guy Brandborg, former supervisor of the Bitterroot National Forest who lived in Hamilton, Montana, he was there. I had gone over to Montana a lot, and I knew Guy Brandborg. He's one of the great old-timers. He had a drink or two, and he says, "You know, old Brock, I'm getting tired of watching them cut up all them mountains there on my old forest. They're ruining everything, and so we're going to take them on."

"What do you mean, Brandy?"

"Well," he said, "We're going to stop all this clearcutting going on down there. We are not going to let them do it anymore.. We didn't do that when I was supervisor. We did selective cutting. We're going to stop this clearcutting. It's ruining the land."

I said, "Brandy, you can't do something like that. We're having a hard enough time getting the wilderness. How can we possibly attack industry on its home ground, which is forest management. Let's just save the wilderness areas."

"No, Brock, we're going to take them on, going to have to do it."

The next thing I hear--

Lage: Now, Guy was retired?

Evans: He was an old retired forest supervisor. He's Stewart Brandborg's father. Stewart Brandborg, you know, was the executive director of the Wilderness Society. This was his father. Great big bear of a man about six and a half feet tall.

Lage: What was his first name?

Evans: Guy. Everybody called him Brandy. But his arms hung down to about his ankles, I think. Great big bear of a guy. Big wonderful man. He died just a couple years ago, unfortunately.

The next thing I know, he and Doris Milner--she was a wonderful lady who lived down there--they were leading the battle at that time to save the Magruder Corridor, another issue that finally got resolved a year or two ago. The Forest Service in 1963 had reclassified the Selway Primitive Area into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness; in so doing, it eliminated four hundred thousand acres of prime land that

Evans: used to be protected, so it could be logged, of course. So, the Save-the-Selway Committee was formed. I had nothing to do with this, but I joined them later and worked with them a great deal to get this land put back in and save it again, four hundred thousand acres.

Well, to make this story short, it was put back in when we reclassified the River of No Return Wilderness two years ago. One of Frank Church's last acts was when we added almost all the Magruder Corridor back and saved it again. Most of these stories are success stories, and it's the beautiful thing about the battles in the Northwest.

So the next thing I know, old Brandy and Doris were going up, and they were in these little logging towns in Bitterroot Valley and holding public meetings about the ruination of the forest. And all these loggers would come out and be furious with them and get angry. They made contact with Senator Metcalf, and Metcalf got the University of Montana to commission a study called the Bitterroot Study with respectable academics, not just freako environmentalists coming along. And sure enough, they issued a report about 1969 called the Bitterroot Report, which sent a shock wave through the Forest Service which is still there.

These academics, these respected forestry academics, said, "That's right; they're destroying it. This is timber mining. We can't have timber mining anymore." It was couched in academic language, but it was overwhelming.

That was the beginning of the revolt against forest management itself, which again caught the rising tide of the movement. All over the country at this time, from West Virginia to Alaska, these same kinds of abuses were going on, these massive clearcuts and all the things we just mentioned. And all over the country unbeknownst to us, people were getting upset, not just in the Northwest.

In 1969, Montana erupted and Wyoming erupted into flames. The big revolt there was from the ranchers and others who loved their forest, about the same kind of logging in the Bridger National Forest and Teton National Forest, large clearcuts, other places, other things. And Senator [Gale] McGee [Wyoming] got interested, and he appointed a blue ribbon commission of his own to issue reports. It came out devastating against the Forest Service.

So, all this outcry was building and building. In 1970, we took on the timber industry; that was one of my first campaigns, and we defeated the Timber Supply Act. When we talk about the Washington years, we'll come back to that one, I think.

Lage: But that really wasn't your Washington years.

Evans: That was still my Seattle years, very much. It was my first real experience with a big national campaign back in Washington and how it works. That was again a classic story of another utter disaster turned right around in the space of a week or two into a total victory. It was very, very dramatic, how these things worked. You know, again, we caught the times with us.

The outcry against forest management kept growing and growing, and in 1971, Senator Church finally called hearings on clearcutting back in Washington. I spent months organizing for those; again, the club put me in charge of it. We found witnesses from all over the country, from Georgia to Alaska and every place in between. And we brought them back, and we smashed the Forest Service.

We had names and dates and places and photographs and scientists as well as citizens from back there. And we did such a complete job on the Forest Service that the Church committee issued its famous guideline on clearcutting. You shouldn't do so and so; you shouldn't do so and so; it created many reverberations.

Using Numbers: A Campaign Tactic

Evans: Clearcutting was just another issue. That's the reason I cited it. Another issue was French Pete Creek; it's all in the papers again. The French Pete Creek issue, the freeway issues, were still going on; the Sawtooth Recreation Area; the molybdenum mining was going on in the late sixties, early seventies; the Minam and Eagle Cap Wilderness was going on then.

They were just beyond count. The Oregon shorelines, wilderness areas up and down the line. The story of Oregon is an interesting one because I always considered Oregon to be the worst state in my territory. Now it has this reputation for being this great conservation state and so on. Well, I can tell you, all through the sixties it was by far the worst. It was the most rapacious and most awful and most dominated by the--

Lage: More so than Idaho?

Evans: Even Idaho was better. Montana was always good. Even Idaho was better than Oregon, in lots of ways. We couldn't save Hells Canyon from Oregon; we had to save it from Idaho until the very last.

Evans: I remember in 1968, I was very concerned about the logging of this beautiful, gentle Cascade wilderness; French Pete Creek became the symbol of all of this. This was one of the last three valleys left.

Just to give you another example of how I operated, and this is probably legal training too. Any lawyer who's worth his salt, has a very healthy respect for facts and the use of facts and the use of numbers. You can't get up--no apology for being emotional--but you can't just get up there and be emotional about it. You have to have numbers and facts. That's what persuades uncommitted people.

I liked to look for the dramatic fact, too. Something that would symbolize what was going on. It all became rapidly apparent to me, in my first year or so, going down to Oregon and getting to know the people and the issues, how hopeless everybody felt. It was all lost, and they'd lost battles before, and all the old warriors were very tired, and there was no hope to save the wilderness anymore.

But look how little was left. We had much more in Washington State. How little was left. And the Oregon Highway Department was always putting out propaganda saying "Come to beautiful Oregon and see it." That's only true if you stay next to the road. If you get off the road, it's all lost, all logged off.

So, I remember sitting down, in early 1968, with Richard Noyes, who was one of the real leaders then at that time, a long Sierra Club activist in the Sierra Club's Pacific Northwest Chapter. I always stayed at his house in Eugene when I came there, either that or across the street with Sandy Tepfer, and they were great friends and everything.

I would look at all his maps and all his lore, and he knew everyplace and everything. He had all the pictures and data. They were a wonderful group of people; Holway Jones was another fantastic guy there. I would get with Dick's maps, and I thought, "So much is lost. Let's document how much has been lost. No one will believe it if we show the whole story, the sad story."

So, I sat down for weeks, as often as I could get there. I said, "Let's take valleys, ten-miles long in length. How many valleys are left untouched ten-miles long in length?" And after a while, I came up with the research and found out that there are three left; three out of about seventy or eighty were still left intact. So you could walk from one end to the other through an unbroken strip of forest. In Washington state, you would have about twenty or thirty that you could do something like that in.

Evans: So that fact became the rallying cry, became the number, because industry didn't dare refute it, or the Forest Service. What if I was wrong about one? They'd say, "Oh no, you're wrong; it's four or even five." They wouldn't dare say that.

So, we just had them. And it was true too. No one ever did bother to refute all that. We modeled our case around that--what we'd lost and that we've got to have a few places saved. And we organized students; it's a lovely story how we got them back to fight again.

Revitalizing the Old Warriors

Evans: I'll tell you the anecdote; it was very important. It was in October of '67, and I was down in Eugene for a meeting; Dick Noyes had called a meeting. I'd hiked in French Pete that summer; I'd seen it. I'd read all the sad story of how we lost the battles to save it years before.

It used to be a protected place. And when the Forest Service reclassified the primitive area there, they cut it out. They knocked it out. They called it the "fifty-three thousand acres"; they left fifty-three thousand acres out. Of course, it was all trees; it was all forest because they wanted to log it. And they proceeded to log the first valley called the East Fork of the Mackenzie. French Pete was next.

That was about the time I came on the scene, and I hiked through there in the summer of '67. I thought what a beautiful, gentle place. This is lovely; it shouldn't be lost. And I was steeped in all the lore of all this, the sad battles and the loss of it. It was in 1957 that those early battles happened. In 1957 it was reclassified; in the early sixties they fought the last battles and lost it. Now they were just sort of waiting for the axe to fall.

In the summer I tried to talk the Oregonians into doing it, and they were just too tired.

Lage: Were these people like Noyes and Tepfer?

Evans: Yes, they were all like them. They were the ones and a few others, too. It was a little cabal.

Lage: They'd had it by then?

Evans: Eugene was really a hotbed of the environment. They'd fought it already, and they'd lost all the battles. This was even before Mike McCloskey, for the most part. And they'd lost.

I remember trying to say, "Let's go fight it again." They'd say, "Oh, Brock you know, you don't understand what it's like right now. We can't do it. We'd love to, but we're just too tired. We can't do it."

And I came back that summer all depressed, and I called Pat Goldsworthy and had him comfort me a little bit. And I said, "What's going on? Why can't we fight down there?" We talked about it a little bit.

So I went back in October again. I said, "Let's try once more." And Dick said, "All right, we'll call a meeting. We'll get everybody together, and we'll just see." It was a rainy night, in Dick Noyes' house, and we all sat around. I just told them I thought we ought to do it again. We had a chance. Let's fight this thing once more.

There was a dramatic pause; there always is in meetings like this, and things will go one way or another. There's sort of a breath of silence for a minute, and finally good old Sandy Tepfer says, "Okay, if you do it, I'll do it if the others will. We'll go back in once more." And one by one they all picked up their hands and said, "We'll go back." And they all pledged themselves to go back into battle.

You just had this wonderful vision, all these battle-scarred warriors, just strapping on their shields one more time. Buckling on their swords and, "One more time into the breach, dear comrades." And they did, it was beautiful like that.

Organizing Around the French Pete Issue

Evans: We formed the Save-French-Pete Committee. And I spent an enormous amount of my time working on it for two reasons. One is because I love French Pete. But also I saw this was the symbol for everything in Oregon. And I felt that perhaps we could use this as a symbol and thereby, by winning on French Pete, save other places too. Because we were so right, and they were so wrong. The industry was so wrong and the Forest Service. We were so right to have a few places left, and they were so wrong to want to take it all and be greedy that we could alert the people of Oregon to this sort of thing and transform the politics.

Evans: I saw this as the vehicle I was dreaming of in those days to transform the politics of Oregon. And in a way, I think that's somewhat what happened. You know, we organized the Oregon Environmental Council a year later and did some of the other things, too.

Anyhow, the fall of '68, I remember going up and down the line, the whole valley, the whole west side of Oregon from Ashland all the way up to Portland and back, looking for people, trying to meet people in coffee houses and wherever I could find them.

Lage: Just people in general without--

Evans: No, I would do my technique; I would call in advance, and I had my little fact sheets. I'd devised a fact sheet called the Oregon Cascades Controversy. People would say, "What controversy? There's no controversy; what are you talking about?"

And I would drop into town, see the local newspaper editors and get to know them and talk to them and leave them the little fact sheets and some brochures we had. And then I would meet with the local conservationist: in Medford there was only one person I met with; in Ashland, there was no one; in Grants Pass, there was one or two; in Roseburg, there was one; in Eugene, there were a lot; in Portland, there were only a few, too; in Salem, there were a few. I spent a week going up and down the line, just trying to see anybody.

There was nothing. This was in 1968, and there was nothing going on in Oregon. You know, a few good people in Eugene, a few in Portland, that was it.

Lage: No wonder you were discouraged.

Evans: Yes, there was no activity. But we kept hammering away with the French Pete issue. We kept trying to build it up and get some publicity for it, and we finally got this three valley idea. We tried to use all that. And the movement was coming on.

The students were getting interested in it. We started building. We got the Oregon Environmental Council organized. There was a little synergy starting to grow; it was starting to roll a little bit. And in 1969 we forced the Forest Service to hold extra hearings on French Pete. And we turned out some people there. I was on an advisory committee for it. And the Forest Service stacked it, of course, and they were going to go ahead.

But the sales were scheduled for the spring of '68, and they were cancelled for then. They were put off for another year until the spring of 1969. And so we decided we had to do something then. In the May of '69 I hired Larry Williams, who works for the Sierra Club now, and he became the executive director of the Oregon Environmental Council a little later.

Evans: I hired him, got Mike to approve of it; he's a master with the media. Larry and I held a joint press conference in May in Forest Park, up in Portland, where I announced that I filed our appeal of the French Pete timber sale. We were going to go ahead, and we filed the first big appeal of the thing.

And we announced all that, and we had a big splash of publicity on that. Then I sent Larry around the state. We ran a full-page ad. Larry and I drafted up the ads, "Oregonians, wake up! Are you aware of what's happening? Here's French Pete, but here's everything else." (We focused on the whole thing and drew it all together.) "Three valleys, is that really too much to ask for out of all of this?" And we ran ads all around the state; we raised money for it, and we sent Larry around the state on a flying tour. Traveling, putting on pressure and pressure. And that seemed to be the event that tipped the scales and turned it over and galvanized everybody.

We got the troops rolling and made the senators mad. They had to introduce bills or listen to us now, and many things flowed from that. That was sort of the beginning of the French Pete Creek issue and the transformation of Oregon into a real good state.

Lage: What about Packwood? When was he elected, did you say?

Evans: He was elected in '68. He was doing Hells Canyon. Packwood never touched the timber industry.

Lage: He didn't get in on that?

Evans: We forced Mark Hatfield to come around. Hatfield was never a very good senator for the environment, I didn't think. But we forced him to deal with that too. But that was French Pete. That's a good classic story, again, of rescuing something like that and taking it on.

I'm sort of talked out about the battles right now. I know there were so many; there were hundreds more. I can't remember them. Lincoln Scapegoat of Montana sort of comes to mind; the Saint Joe River Wilderness in Idaho, the Salmo River, the dams in the Salmo River. The Salmo was up in northeast Washington, and that was how we transformed the conservative city of Spokane and made that into a conservation town. That was in '68 and '69 too; we made that a conservation issue. And all of the Earth Day stuff and the events there.

Coming back to Washington on the Timber Supply Act and the other battles and campaigns back nationally-- of course, we did our share by getting involved in it. The SST was a big thing.

Lage: Yes, I wanted to talk about that. I don't think we need go into each battle. You're really giving the things where you learned lessons and the crucial turns. The SST is of interest. I also wanted a little bit more on the relationship between the Pacific Northwest office and the Sierra Club and how the upset in the club in '69 affected you, if it did.

VI WILDERNESS STRATEGIES IN THE NORTHWEST

Brower Supporters in the Northwest##

Evans: We in the Northwest were all passionate Dave Brower supporters because we saw the national Sierra Club as our ultimate salvation, as the one force which had enough power nationally to stand up to all the power of the big boys at the national level. You know, we saw ourselves as northwesterners, of course.

Even though I would get back a lot and get to know the structure--I spent a lot of time getting to know everybody around the club--I still considered myself a northwesterner, and I was sort of representing my people, in a way. That's the way these dukedoms get to be after a while, as you know.

Lage: And you had on the national club board, eventually, Pat Goldsworthy and Polly Dyer, two prominent northwestern conservationists.

Evans: That's right; they were very strong Brower supporters because of Pat, and Pat goes way back with Dave to the old days in California, climbing.

So we were all steeped in it. All we knew of Dave, basically, was that he was a fighter, and he was willing to take on the enemy and tell it like it was. I was passionately involved in that, passionately cared about all that and did what I could within what was permitted as a staff person to lobby, to try to persuade other people to support him. When the 1969 elections to the board of directors came on, we urged everybody to vote for him. We did our share to let it be known how we felt about all that.

There were three field staff then: myself, Gary Soucie, and Jeff Ingram. We were very, very close in those times. Gary and I still are. And we did a lot of talking together. We were all

Evans: passionate Brower supporters. We were his disciples. We were his briefcase carriers. That's how it was. We would follow him. He always has some young men following him along somewhere.

Lage: But they were all hired by him, weren't they, and you were not?

Evans: That's right, they were more his creatures than I was. And in a way I always felt that he paid more attention to them than to me, in that way. And, of course, he had more control over them than me also.

I always felt, gee, "I love you too, Dave. I revere you too; pay some attention," in a way. It was always a nice relationship in any event, but you are right: they were more his persons, specifically.

Nevertheless, we were all his briefcase carriers, and we were all glad to be his disciples and carry around wherever we possibly could and sit at his feet and learn from him and go out and drink with him and all the rest.

I really enjoyed those years coming down to San Francisco, and he always did things first class. We always had nice little cocktail receptions at lunch, things like that.

Lage: Things you weren't used to.

Evans: That's right. Dave knew how to live right. I really enjoyed that. Now it is all wine and cheese, and it's dutch and on your own now in the Sierra Club. But it was just a different institution that way.

And, of course, it was smaller. I liked it smaller. It was about thirty-five, forty thousand members when I came on. I liked the atmosphere. It was really clubby. I really loved the atmosphere. And I loved to come down to San Francisco. All the people were just terrific. Everybody knew everybody. It was really a very nice sort of a thing. This was in the, say, late sixties, '68, '67, '69 or so.

And then just all at once, names like Diablo Canyon became familiar, and what is this? Here's this Ansel Adams that I revered attacking my other hero. What is all this, two heroes fighting? What is going on here?

I didn't want to know much about it. I didn't like it. All I wanted to do was to be free to fight the Northwest battles. And all I wanted was my beloved club to be out there with a sword, out front doing battle with the forces of darkness. What is all this?

Evans: But nevertheless, at every board meeting--I went to every one of them--you know how they were: we just all sat transfixed on the edge of our chairs and every single vote and every single word had a nuance and a meaning to it. And at every single one, my hero was getting beaten a little bit; it was inch by inch, in a whole long, dreadful process. It took a year or so.

I never believed for one instant that Dave was doing any of the things that they said he was doing. I thought it was all a pack of lies and all bad stuff. Of course, I was staff, and I knew my responsibilities to the whole club, so I was not going to voice my opinions down there in that dangerous atmosphere of San Francisco. When you're coming to Rome, you sort of really have to be careful about it.

When I was back in the provinces up there, in the mountains somewhere, I could say what I felt because all the people there felt the same. All we wanted to do was do battles. We had so many issues that became transformed into simplistic things like that. To me it was the good people and bad people, all over again.

Lage: Did the Pacific Northwest pretty much support Dave? I know the Atlantic Chapter did.

Evans: I'm pretty sure they did because the issues became more: do you want to be fighting, crusading, organizing out front, doing battles with the enemy, or are you going to let the apparatchiks take over who want to get back and make it a hiking club? That was sort of the way the issue was put. That's sort of the way we put it all. And that's the way we saw it.

I remember all those long months. Finally, I think I was back in Washington; I was in the National Airport flying out when I called back to San Francisco to see what the board election results were. And Dave had been defeated. I remember how stricken I was by the whole thing. What a dreadful thing; it was a tragedy of the first rank.

Repercussions from Brower's Resignation

Evans: We had the next board meeting; it may have been in Los Angeles. It was in May of '69 when Dave made his resignation. And Gary and Jeff and I talked about it among ourselves. We said, "We don't want to work for an outfit like this anymore, if this is the kind of outfit it's going to be that would do something like this to a great man like Dave."

Evans: And so we requested to meet with the board, the whole new board. And I remember all three of us went in to sit down with them. I don't remember the exact words, but we said, in effect, we don't want to work for you if you're not going to fight. We don't want to work for an outfit that's not going to be out there in front crusading.

They fell all over themselves saying, "No, that's not what we are at all. Of course, we are going to fight. You'll see us; you watch what we do. We had to do this. We regret it too, but we had to, and we'll fight too. We'll show you."

And then we were fighting the Timber Supply Act; I remember I got twenty-five thousand dollars out of them to fight the Timber Supply Act with. They were falling all over themselves to really show how strong they were. And they were, they were good.

Lage: So, did this revise your judgment of them?

Evans: Yes, it did. I never lost my basic respect for Dave and my love for him in many ways and what he's done. Dave was always the great Christ figure of our movement, I think. He was there and doing what he did, and we needed him. It was his publications that got so many of us, including myself, into it, and his words and everything else. Every movement needs someone like that. You know, he hired me. All that was there.

Then over the years to follow, just every now and then, I'd hear another reference about still trying to pull ourselves out of the financial hole. So, it finally dawned on me, gee, that was true. We were in a hole. I wasn't aware of that. We really were. And every now and then, I'd hear another reference about some other little things there. Maybe Ansel wasn't all lying after all and all this sort of thing.

You know, gradually the wounds healed. Dave comes and gets ovations when he's there, and he deserves them. It's all good right now.

But the most important to me was that I was, in fact, free. No one was telling me not to fight any harder. This was still in '69. I've already recounted other events in the years to come. So, it was okay.

Lage: You did have some fears that you might be sort of leashed in?

Evans: I was very afraid, so were Jeff and Gary, that this was a revolt. This was a revolt by the conservatives inside the club to take away our great victories and take away our chances for even more victories. That's the way I saw it. That's what I thought it was.

Evans: I thought all the other stuff was just chaff to get rid of him. But I also tried not to learn too much about it. I didn't want to know. I didn't want to clutter up my mind. I can't stand issues like that. I don't like personality things anyhow very much.

Lage: Well, did it effect your work? Were there differences in the way you operated before and after '69?

Evans: No, because there was no effort to stop the way I operated. Phil Berry came on as the next president. He was very supportive all the way through. And Ed was always supportive. Ed Wayburn and I went up to Alaska together.

My experience was that they were all supportive. And those I didn't have much contact with, like Will Siri and Lewis Clark, were always very nice. So, there was never any problem.

The only problem later, since we're getting into internal politics, was when Phil tried to oust Mike McCloskey, and you know, be the paid president and so on.

Lage: In '71?

Evans: That's right. My feeling on this was that, gee, what a great idea because Phil was a hard charger. I thought, boy, Phil's a man after my heart. Mike's a little more solid and quieter, but he's not out there. He's getting more militant now, sometimes. But I thought, what a great combination, Phil and Mike. Wouldn't that really be great?

Phil would be out there in front saying the strong things and Mike would be out there backing him up. So, my first thought was that it was a good idea. I had no idea of the implications of it then.

But then Mike called all the staff together, I guess this was in '71? I think it was. And we held this little staff meeting. Mike, not in quite so many words, almost demanded our support. "Are you with me or against me?" All at once it dawned on me: my God, I didn't realize; I thought Mike would be delighted with it too. It shows how innocent I was. We all had a great team here.

When I realized how important it was to my boss, of course, I couldn't go against my boss. So, I just shut up about anything about Phil and supported Mike right down the line. Phil Berry did not speak to me again until 1977, after all that. And apparently I'm not the only one. Phil seemed to us to hold his grudges a long time, about all that sort of thing. Phil doesn't seem to like me very much now either, I don't think. But you know, it's one of those things. It's interesting how these things go.

Lage: Well, did you have to do anything actively against it?

Evans: No, I just didn't support it. I guess Phil was looking for support.

Lage: It would have been a difficult thing for you to do, to support him.

Evans: Oh, yes, that's why I thought, I said, "Why is he so mad at me? He must know I couldn't support him. I can't go against my boss." He knew that, but he just was mad.

Now maybe if you interview him, or if you have, maybe he doesn't recall any such thing. I'm just telling you my perception of it. Maybe that's just the way he is. I don't know.

But we were very close once. He would give speeches and say what a great guy I was, and I would say what a great guy he was and all this, and poof, it just ended. Just like that. So it was just one of those little nuances; people are people, and they do their own things.

I've always treated him very gingerly, at arm's length ever since.

Lage: Interesting.

Evans: More internal politics. That's part of the personalities. The Sierra Club's a beautiful, passionate, volatile, intense organization. The passion is what makes it what it is. It also makes the bad problems what they are, I think, in some ways. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. It's a wonderful family.

Strategies for Wilderness Protection

Lage: Let's talk a little bit about strategies on wilderness issues.

Evans: Well, let's talk about strategy for a minute. There was sort of a general set of operating principles that always made sense to me that sort of explicitly or implicitly governed how I would approach an issue and get us involved in an issue.

First place, before I say that, the Sierra Club is a constituency-based organization, and it is what our constituency wants us to do that's most important, I think. This was always the governing principle. And having come from the constituency and been one of the constituency myself, that was a powerful reminder to me of having known and sensed and felt how alone and desperate and struggling

Evans: these folks feel and knowing how much even a word of encouragement means, much less money or help or something like that--just kindness and extending oneself.

I had a general operating principle which was not really strategic, it was just never saying no. I would never say to somebody, "No, I don't have time." I would never say, "No, that's not important." I'd always say, "Well, I'll do what I can." That was just sort of a general principle to never say no to anybody, to anything, because there's too much to be done, and that's just not a nice way to treat somebody that's giving themselves or all that.

I may not be able to help very much, but I would try. And often that alone is enough, a word of encouragement is enough to keep the people going. Because the people are the only resource we have. That was just sort of a general rule, a rule of thumb I just had.

Lage: That didn't make you too scattered?

Evans: I don't think so. Some might say, well, how could he do all the things? Well, I couldn't. I couldn't do them all, but I did an enormous amount because I put my own self and my own psychology of not saying no in it, and I extended myself.

And there was a cost to it, I think, for my family life. Certainly there was a cost to it. I could have been like Roger Pegues and not done much at all. But that just wasn't what I thought was important to do. Remember, my mission was not to do everything myself either. I would do an awful lot. But my mission was to get other people involved and build a movement; my mission was raise the banners and let the troops flock around the banner, and we can all march forward together.

I might carry the banner, but they're doing the fighting too. We're all doing it together. And I do like to think we built a whole big movement up there in those years. And we raised many, many armies, and the times were right for it too. But we raised new divisions and troops and had new generals and lots of people came out of all those years, and they're still there, still with us. Some of them are there today, as a matter of fact.

That's sort of background. We had a general strategic concept. When you're looking at an issue and deciding beyond whether just to say, "Yes, we'll help on it," when you are deciding whether to say, "We want to commit major resources"--that was a different thing. Committing major resources was, to a degree, a reactive decision. Sometimes we couldn't control the pace of events, and the dynamic just whirled us on, and we couldn't do much about it except hang on and do what we could with it.

Evans: But some issues stood out: Hells Canyon was one; French Pete was another; Alpine Lakes, to a degree was another; there were others, too. They had certain characteristics to them that were very, very important. We would try to pick issues that were, first, easy to explain; they were easily understood. Cutting down trees, building a dam, those were the good issues because everybody knows that and understands that and feels for it. Maybe an air polluting plant, a big freeway smashing through a park or something like that. Those were dramatic and easy to explain and everybody can understand the implications. It's much easier than parts per million and milligrams per liter; some of these pollution issues are much more difficult for us to get a mailing on, unless we could simplify it.

The second characteristic that's important and cuts through is that the issue must be of long enough duration so that we can mobilize around it, so that we can have time to explain it to our troops and our armies. Get them so that they feel comfortable enough with the issue and the jargon and the terminology to want to go out and fight for it. It takes, normally, I would say six months to a year to build up consciousness on a new issue before you can get something really going on it.

Lage: So it has to be an issue where you know the decision is going to take place over a period of time?

Evans: That's right; it ought to be at least a couple of years, anyhow.

Lage: Is that one of the functions of litigation, to slow it down that much?

Evans: Not on purpose, but it works out that way. You know, the function of litigation is to win if you can. But I never minded if it slowed down the juggernauts for a while--you know, throw a few road blocks and get it all balled up to where you can mobilize. That was certainly the function of the Hells Canyon litigation to do that. All of it has that function, basically. So, yes, it really is. We were glad; we had to slow things down, so we could get reorganized, and say, "Hey, wait a minute, what's going on here?" We'd get the people to say that too if we could.

The third function that really distinguishes an issue that could be elevated and made into a major concern was the right answer to this question: did this issue, if we want it, have the capacity to fundamentally change power relationships in the arena in which we were dealing?

By taking on the whole electric power industry in the Northwest states--this potent industry on their home ground building a dam on a river; they had been building dams for thirty years--and

Evans: beating them in Hells Canyon, what would that do to the perception of us as a power? Well, it had everything to do with it. It would mean that we could beat these people.

Now remember we would set the stage so that (A) they wouldn't want to build any dams anymore because the fight would be too costly or (B) if they did, we could beat them again. They see that we were just a powerful institution. My whole aim all the way out there was to make us credible, make us powerful.

For example, when I would issue press releases, I got in the habit of just saying--since I wrote the press releases--I'd say, "Brock Evans, spokesman for the powerful Sierra Club says, so and so, and so and so, and so and so." [laughs] And by God, they would pick it up. They would say, "Brock Evans, spokesman for the powerful Sierra Club."

Appearance is so much in this business. The game is so much. It's not what the reality is. It's what they think the reality is. And that's what really counts. It's what the politicians and the opponents think how strong you are. So we created an aura of invincibility, I think, in those days. We built up an aura of innumerable numbers, and people like that.

French Pete was a classic example of that. Remember, I mentioned earlier that we sent Larry Williams around the state and had the campaign. The aim was to draw the industry in and suck them dry on an issue where we were so right and they were so wrong. The more they hammered away and said, "No, we've got to have even this last valley," and we said, "Please let us have this little one," the worse it was for them because the public would say, "What's the matter with you guys? You want everything, really everything." And they would have to say, "Yes," because they were so greedy. Of course, they wanted everything.

But it would make them took terrible and make us look good and make our case look more and more just. It would drain them dry of all their treasure and substance in fighting something they were sure to lose later on. In the meantime, it was leaving the way open for us to move into the vacuums in the other places, Fuji Mountain and Eagle Creek, and a whole lot of little places that we were fighting for too at the same time.

Lage: Now, did you see this with this much foresight?

Evans: Yes.

Lage: Because you described that you had to persuade the people, the conservationists, to enter the battle again.

Evans: I'll tell you how I saw it.

Lage: But you did have this much confidence?

Evans: Yes, we talked about some of these things later, you know, the inner cabal, the young Turks would see things. I would sort of say, "Hey, what about this?" It sort of became a rule of thumb, almost, among some of us.

Lage: Who did you develop the strategies with? Was it done at all in San Francisco, or was this done with the group in the Northwest?

Evans: Mike and I would talk; I respect Mike's judgment greatly on these things. Mike's a very different style of person than I am, so that's why I like to bounce things off him and work with him. He was sort of a rock, in a way. And Mike had some of these constants. Mike loves to think in those terms, and he was very good at it, I thought.

I never saw Mike much during these years. You know, I would see him in airports and planes, and we'd joke about hotels and whisper to each other in meetings when he was doing something else. It was always like that. But I always liked to think of myself as Mike's lieutenant. He was a very great boss because he just let me do whatever I wanted to do, basically. He seemed to trust me. He gave me trust, and I liked to think we gave it back.

Lage: You got some feedback on strategy?

Evans: Every now and then I'd say, "Hey, how about this? What do you think about this?" and things like that, yes. So we would talk about that. And he shared some of these views, too, about the capacity of an issue to change power relationships.

Alpine Lakes: Dreaming Big

Evans: Alpine Lakes is something like that; it was the next big issue after the North Cascades. Even while we worked in the last stages of the North Cascades, I got very concerned about what was going to happen to the Alpine Lakes. Our beleaguered people made a proposal, way, way back when, for a three hundred and thirty thousand acre wilderness, maximum. But they said we would accept two hundred and fifty thousand or something like that, minimum. It's not right ever to say that, by the way, to say that you would accept a minimum because whatever we asked for was always the beginning point for bargaining, not the end.

Evans: That's just the way we were treated. I got this in my session (at the Audubon Conference where I was being interviewed) today; one of the Forest Service guys there said, "You ought to get some economists and look into the community planning, and don't be so negative all the time." Well, Jesus Christ, that's all fine to say but, first of all, I don't think it's negative. But whatever, if we compromise down to accommodate the industry's values, they'll just take all that and grab it and say, "What next? Now, we get this and this and this."

I'm perfectly willing to negotiate, but I don't want to negotiate from a weak point. I want to negotiate from the strongest point we have. That's Alpine Lakes in a way.

We had made this proposal. Then we got the North Cascades battle. As soon as we had won it, I wanted to turn our attention right away to how we were going to save the rest of the North Cascades. But even before the North Cascades Park fight was over-- that was 1968, summer, October of '67--I think it was in 1967; I was coming back from a long plane trip somewhere. It was early on, early the first year, so I was worrying about Alpine Lakes even then. What are we going to do about this? How are we going to handle this?

We have this proposal. They're running timber sales in there. They're logging it all off. They're chewing it all up. And the plane from the East, from Washington, D.C., always comes in low over the mountain ranges right there as you come in to land at Sea-Tac Airport. The plane flies low down, right across this whole magnificent jumble of peaks. Same peaks, by the way, where I climbed years before and got upset by the logging; that was the Alpine Lakes. And I was sort of looking at it and looking out the window and thinking about it. And it suddenly occurred to me, this is all magnificent country, and you can hardly tell where the roads end and the wilderness begins.

You know, it's all similar country. Some of it just happens to have roads in it. But there are lakes in there, and there's forest in there, and there're rivers in there. The only difference is the road. Why should we have a boundary that only includes the wilderness, because I remember in all the hearings I'd been to already, whatever boundary we draw, all the interests come in and want to carve it up. The timber people say, "We like wilderness but not trees in it, please." The mining people say, "We like wilderness but no mines in it, please." The ORV people and the ski people said, "Keep our ski areas out, let us run our motorbikes everywhere in this wilderness."

Evans: So, we end up with a nice little boundary that we originally drew, and it gets all carved up by all that, and Congress accommodates everybody and cuts up our area. I thought, "Hell, let's raise the ante; we'll start carving up a much larger area. Let's draw a boundary around the whole dam thing from pass to pass; instead of three hundred thousand acres, let's make it a million acres, and we'll start from there."

Let them carve that up. That's fine with me; we'll do all that. Of course, we'll have a wilderness core in the middle. That is what Mike referred to, the strategy of--I just call it "raising the ante"--whatever you want to call it. That was first off. That was in my mind.

The second thought: I'd come to realize by then, after six months to a year on the job, that the most effective thing was an action group devoted only to that one thing, because they're the ones who carry the battle, night and day. They'll furnish your citizen troops, and they'll know all the facts and figures and numbers you have to have to carry the field.

I can't remember exactly how it happened--it's in the files, but to make the story short, I called together some people we knew who were especially interested in the Alpine Lakes, and we organized the Alpine Lakes Protection Society. We used some of the young Turks again, some new friends we'd recruited already in other battles or I'd gotten to know--

Lage: Any of them Seattle people?

Evans: Many Seattle people, right. There were a couple of people from the east side; it was an east-side, west-side issue. And we all met. It was October of '68, I guess, and we met over the shores of Hyas Lake. We all joined hands and formed a compact in the rain, and we organized the Alpine Lakes Protection Society right there, right in the middle of the place.

We went back, and we developed some fine citizen leaders out of that whole process, some wonderful people who are still active and doing other things. And they became the Alpine Lakes Protection Society.

And we would meet, and we spent the first year drawing maps and getting down there and getting resource information and getting little publications and drawing more and more people in and justifying our 900,000-acre area, which was what we finally ended up with. And we started beating the drums for that and pushing on that. It was remarkable to watch the transformation of the situation after all that. I remember going into Congressman [Lloyd] Meeds's office--he was the local congressman--a year or so later.

Evans: He was saying, "My God, Brock, what have you guys done?" [laughter] He said, "I can't go for nine hundred thousand acres; you know better than that. The wilderness area, okay, I can go for all that, but not the nine hundred thousand acres."

I thought, "My God," a little light inside said, "It worked. He's ready to go for our 300,000-acre wilderness." Of course, I said, "Ah, well, no, we got to have the whole nine hundred thousand acres, Congressman. We can't stand for any less. That's what we really want." I'd keep to the hard line all the time, secretly delighted at all that.

That was the way the process was. We had this great plan for a national recreation area. The human dynamic then took over and the Alpine Lakes protection people became greatly committed to the nine hundred thousand acres--bleed, live, and die over that, anything less was sellout and a defeat.

That was the human dynamic I hadn't counted on basically, really. Of course, I was delighted with, you know, whatever we were going to possibly get. To make a long story short, it finally ended when Doug came there; the process had been set. And I lobbied on it, back there in Washington too, a great deal.

We finally ended up with about a four hundred thousand-acre wilderness, far more than our wildest dreams ever before. But we never got a recreation area on the outside. So, the Alpine Lakes people, who were still dear friends, thought we'd been sold out and had a bitter defeat. Whereas I thought we got far more than we ever wanted; it worked like a charm. It's a strategy that we had never worked before.

Lage: They weren't in on your strategy?

Evans: Yes, they knew. They knew what I wanted.

Lage: But they just got bitter?

Evans: No, not exactly bitter. They just became so devoted to their places, and they were wonderful places. And actually the management is pretty good. It wasn't a total loss; it just wasn't a protected boundary. The great dream didn't come true. The society still exists. I'm still on their mailing list and we're still good friends and all that.

I don't think I ever told them that that was my reason for organizing. I just kept saying, "Let's dream big." And that's how I feel about everything. In Washington, I say this all the time too, and I said it at the Oregon Desert Wilderness Conference

Evans: where I spoke two days ago. If we don't dream big, nobody else will. Our job is to dream the largest possible dreams and set out what ought to be and use that as a standard and raise the banner from there; because it's large dreams that fire people's souls, not small dreams. It's big dreams that make people passionate and excited, because we're emotional creatures, and I am too. So we dream as big as we can, and we got on from there.

The Barrier Islands issue and the formation of the Coast Alliance, which is a story later in Washington, D.C., was a classic example of the same kind of dreaming too, I think. But it was early on when I developed that way of approaching things.

The Sawtooths and Cougar Lake: Other Big Dreams

Evans: Sawtooth was another good example for that, in Idaho. When I first went over there, in 1967, my first swing through, we organized the Sawtooth Conservation Council with a few people in Ketchum. The issue then was, could we create a national park out of the Sawtooth mountain region, which then was a special managed area called the Sawtooth Primitive Area run by the U.S. Forest Service.

And it was a very scenic region. People thought, "Could we make that plus some of the surrounding country a national park, maybe a couple hundred thousand acres?" There had already been hearings on it during Roger Pegues's time. Well, I had never seen it before, but I was stunned by the beauty of the place. Then I noticed that on one side of the valley was this beautiful Sawtooth mountain range, but on the other side of the valley were three other mountain ranges. They were the Pioneers and the Boulders and the White Clouds. I thought, "These are beautiful places."

We got back to the house that night, after looking at this, and I said, "Let's spread out the maps and take a look." We looked at the maps, and all those mountain ranges were also national forest land. I said, "What the heck, why shouldn't they be in the national park, too? Let's have a big national park."

So instead of a two hundred thousand acre proposal, we drew up boundaries for a nine hundred thousand acre national park proposal. Let's put it all in there. And that became our rallying cry and our banner. And to make a long story short, we ended up in 1970-71 with a seven hundred and fifty thousand acre national recreation area. We didn't get our park, but we had drastically upped the ante, and it's all part of the Forest Service's special planning area now. It was very, very successful again. So, that was the idea. Why not dream? Why not do all these basic things?

Evans: There were many other stories of battle. I remember in 1968 now, after Johnson was going out of office and Nixon was coming in, there was this interregnum period, as you know. And Brower conceived the idea that now was the time to get some national monuments signed into law under the Antiquities Act. We tried to do it again when Carter went out of power, and we didn't succeed.

Brower passed the word down to all of us, "Draw up your monument proposals, right now." And, boy, I was down on the floor on my hands and knees, and I joyfully drew up a Sawtooth National Monument and a Hells Canyon National Monument and an Oregon Cascades National Monument. I'd draw millions upon millions of acres of boundaries there, and I got the resource information.

We all flew back to Washington. We had a meeting with Secretary Udall in the secretary of Interior's office there. We laid out our proposals and maps and charts and figures and data. The others had done theirs. Jeff Ingram had done his too, I guess.

I had a few in Alaska, but I didn't know Alaska too well-- West Chichagof National Monument, the Admiralty Islands and some of the other ones I knew.

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Evans: The idea was just to dream big, wherever you were. Why not? Here's the chance; here's the last chance in my lifetime to do something, and as long as it's in my power, I'm going to dream. And I'm going to let other people dream, too.

Everywhere we'd go around drawing these big proposals for things. My favorite phrase was--when we would sit down with our local little sessions--"These tables around which we sit are not bargaining tables. The bargaining is later." The night before the committee's taking its final vote on our wilderness bill, and the chairman says, "Well, I can only go for this valley or that valley," that's the time to cut. That's the time to compromise.

But not now saying, "Oh, the timber industry won't like this, so let's cut this valley out." "No, the mining industry won't like that; well, they will fight us." Not now, let's put it in there and see what the hell they're going to do. Maybe they will, maybe they won't.

Lage: So your initial boundary wasn't absolutely scientifically and precisely drawn?

Evans: No, I don't believe in that stuff. That's what gets me mad about scientists. They want to have every "i" dotted and every "t" crossed. I want to be accurate in my facts, but I want to save

Evans: places. That's what I really want to do. And the scientists do not understand that whatever we start with is the beginning place of bargaining. They think somehow these issues are going to win on their merits. They have some ideal like that.

But in our political system, merits are only part of the process. They're important, but they're only part of it. So you just have to consider all the angles. And if we don't ask for it, no one else is going to ask for it; you can be sure Congress isn't going to ask for it. They're going to do the minimum possible, so we have to ask for these things; we have to dream.

Lage: Then what about that later process when you come down to the compromises in the final stages of the bill?

Evans: We do all the time. I think I am a very pragmatic person. My whole life has been compromising and cutting things and going on maps over and over again and doing all that. I don't like to do it, you know; it bothers me. It hurts sometimes, but that's part of the process too.

That's okay, if that's what has to be done. But it's a lot easier to cut ten thousand acres out of three hundred thousand than ten thousand acres out of a hundred thousand, for example. We'll cut it out that way, and do it that way. We'll come out a lot better. The whole Alaska Lands bill was like this. We kept adding things and adding things and adding things on that whole process. We originally were just going to start with a few little places, maybe. And no one even thought about putting Southeast Alaska in there. That was an afterthought, sticking that in there.

And the wilderness system overlay on top of all that. How outrageous can you possibly get? I said, "By God, we're going to ask for it all, every bit of it we possibly can. Eighty million acres, let's get it up to one hundred and twenty," like that.

It wasn't that the areas weren't perfectly justified. Of course, they were justified, but it was just the boldness. It's boldness sometimes that excites and fires people's imagination, which it certainly did, and it always does.

Lage: Were there any differences of opinion in the club about that? Or was that pretty well accepted by that time?

Evans: I think it was pretty well accepted. I never recall any difficulties, you know, in my own dukedom up there. No one was challenging the things we had to do up there because these were citizen things. It wasn't just me drawing the boundaries; it was me encouraging and helping the other leaders draw, and I loved to do it.

Evans: In the Cougar Lakes, I did the same thing. I drew a big proposal. I remember I took a horseback trip to the Cougar Lakes, in 1969. For years we'd only wanted a one hundred and twenty thousand-acre area down there. A very nice area, and I got a nice little horseback trip through it that we talked about earlier.

And all the while we were doing that, I kept looking up to the north; I said, "What's all that country up there? What's all this?" It was on the other side of the highway. Just a little highway in the middle, that was all. They said, "Ah, that's--you wouldn't be interested in that; it's just not very much nice stuff." I said, "But look at the map here, it's all roadless; there are no roads. What all is going on up here?" So, later, after the horseback trip, I went back to that place and looked, and it was beautiful, lovely country.

So, of all people, it was Doug Scott, who worked for the Wilderness Society then, who called me up. This was in 1969. He said, "We got a congressman who might put in a bill for Cougar Lakes. Do you want to draw us a map?" So I got down on my hands and knees in the office, and I drew a much bigger map around the south unit, so it was two hundred thousand acres, something like that. Then I looked at what we now call the North Unit, and I drew seventy thousand acres around that.

That is now the North Unit of the Cougar Lakes Wilderness. And it's in all the bills, people are fighting, bleeding, and dying over it. We're going to get a big chunk of it like that, just because it was there. We may as well put it in and do all that.

VII PARK SERVICE, FOREST SERVICE, AND THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

Relations with the Park Service

- Lage: I don't quite understand why the Forest Service kept taking you on these trips? Didn't they feel a little scared about it?
- Evans: I'm not really sure. As I say, in spite of all the constant clashes, I like to think I fought fair. And I liked them. They were enjoyable trips. We enjoyed each other.
- Lage: How about the Park Service? Did you have much communication with them or cooperation?
- Evans: Well, my perception of the Park Service was that they were a real drag all through the North Cascades park process. I was a little soured on the Park Service. Here we were fighting and bleeding and dying and laying ourselves on the line to get them a new park, a jewel for their park system. What would they do? They'd get all mishmashed in bureaucratic stuff, and they weren't sure they wanted to support it.

Then they had the temerity to publish management plans, propose management plans with tramways up and roads into places and structures and facilities. We wanted a wilderness park. We were the ones doing the fighting for it. They almost killed us with our constituency.

I remember when that came out, and we had a terrible time pouring water back on the flames they'd just lit with all our people. Because the big argument against the park always had been, "Yosemite and Yellowstone and all the people and cars, we'd rather have a Forest Service wilderness."

Evans: Well, you say, "No, you can mine the wilderness." We had great trouble going for the park the whole time. That's always an argument against parks. So then they did this overdone management plan. I was really very sour on the so-called professional parks people.

They lifted hardly a finger to defend Olympic National Park when it was under attack. We defended Olympic. They didn't defend it. And they were nice people. But the issue of park management inside existing parks really wasn't a vital issue. Sure I wanted wilderness and parks, but the existing park lands weren't really threatened, very much.

Lage: Except by their own development?

Evans: Oh, you know, we'd fight them off, and we'd fight them off. We got a good wilderness plan out of them finally, and we did it like that. But otherwise, although we'd talk to each other and so on, I didn't get too much involved in Park Service issues except to get new parks. I wanted to go where the threats really were, the lands that were really under attack.

Lage: You didn't have somebody in the Park Service that you worked closely with?

Evans: No, let's see. I did work with John Townsley, supervisor of the Mount Rainier National Park, and got to like him and respect him a great deal. We used to have him come and talk to us in those years. He's dying now, unfortunately, of stomach cancer. He's superintendent of Yellowstone right now.

I liked him a lot. But he used to love to come and speak to us and tell us how we were rich elitists, and we should understand urban people, and we've got to find ways to get minority groups out in parks. He loved to come and tell us off, but we all liked him anyhow. So we just had him come back all the time.

I can't remember the name of the regional guy right now. He's retired right now. They liked to consider themselves one of us, but they really weren't much help in any kind of way to the battles that we were passionately involved in at the time.

I got to know Russ Dickenson, now the chief of the Park Service. He was out in the Northwest. I got to know him during that period of time, too. And George Hartzog was a real colorful character. He was the director of the Park Service earlier. He was the guy with the holes in the doughnuts and the tramways. He was the big recreation promoter. He loved those things. He was a wonderful, colorful, South Carolina good-old-boy kind of guy, and I loved to talk to him and kid him and everything. But you couldn't trust

Evans: his philosophy, and you couldn't turn your back to him in any way, because he really didn't like wilderness or understand it all that well, I thought.

But I'll never forget, at the end of the last big round of North Cascades hearings, in May of 1968, he sort of came up to us and said, "You all have done a wonderful job. Thank you for what you've done." And I just could hardly resist saying, "Where have you been all these last few years. We've been bleeding and dying and fighting. Now you're coming in when it's almost a sure thing. Where were you? Why didn't you help us?"

They just weren't there. They never have been there. We fight all the battles for them, in a way. Of course, we weren't fighting them for them. We were fighting them for us.

Lage: For yourself, but they were benefiting.

Evans: But they could have helped.

Assessment of the Forest Service

Evans: The Forest Service, on the other hand, they were a lead agency. I've always respected the Forest Service. They're top-notch professionals. They're, you know, clean cut and crew cut and all the rest of it, and uniforms all starched and pressed. And they work together and plan together, and they work the chamber of commerce.

They were out there lobbying all the time, the Forest Service, against us. They weren't supposed to, but they did. They would go to the Rotary Club meetings and the Lion's Club meetings and show the slide shows. They did a real job against us. The Park Service never used their apparatus. Maybe they didn't have an apparatus.

Lage: I think that might be true. They haven't got that.

Evans: And that's why they weren't as good an agency. They were not as elite an agency as the Forest Service was.

I'll tell you another little story about my relations with the Forest Service that was not all nice and roses the way I'm making it. I remember in the summer of 1967, when I made my first trip down to central Oregon, to Eugene, to hike in French Pete the first time and look at Mount Jefferson and some of the other issues we were involved in, I went to see the forest supervisor. I always

Evans: did that wherever I went because I wanted to get to know them. He was a fellow named old Dave Gibney. He was a mean son-of-a-gun, boy, he was a real timber beast. He was supervisor of the Willamette National Forest. I still remember going into his office and saying, "Hi, I'm Brock Evans, the new Northwest representative, and I'm here to see you and want to talk about issues." He just put his feet up on his desk and said, "I don't like your ethics." "What do you mean, sir? What about all that?" He just didn't like conservation. So he vented his spleen on me about conservationists' tactics, wherever they were. He just didn't like us at all. And he referred to the forest as a jackstraw of dying, decayed junk, and they were going to clean it up and get everything. He was really the timber beast of the year right down the line. He was a timber beast, and none of our people liked him at all.

I sure came out of that meeting determined to fight, by God. This is what I was up against, all right. We were really going to give it right back. It drove me with even more fervor to try to rescue French Pete from a person like that. And Mount Jefferson and the rest of it. Dave Gibney was still supervisor when in 1971 we got a couple of thousand students from the University of Oregon to march under the Forest Service office, protesting French Pete Creek and waving the banners and hanging the Forest Service in effigy. He was still there, by God, and we broke his back on that.

Lage: He must have liked you even less.

Evans: Yes, I don't think he did very much. He's one of the people I did not like. He was just so insensitive to the things we were talking about.

There's a mixed breed of folks. Some of them are like that. Remember, you know, the timber industry ran things so much in the local power structures. We were just considered insignificant, just the way the Federal Power Commission administrative law judge thought of us: who were we? We were these little fly specks that had to be brushed out of the way. They were guilty of a sin that we are sometimes accused of--of talking only to themselves. They didn't realize what was bubbling and fermenting all around them.

The Timber Industry's Counteroffensive

Lage: Later on, didn't the timber industry develop a counteroffensive?

Evans: Well, yes, they did.

Lage: Developing their own support groups?

Evans: That was the Timber Supply Act. Yes, it was.

Lage: Well, but I mean in terms of public support also, developing, organizing support.

Evans: Sure, now they would always try to turn out witnesses at hearings and do things like that, but never in any organized way. The Redwood Park hearings were the first ones that I remember where they really got good at doing--they shut the mills down and sent everybody in their jackboots to sit back and give hate stares and intimidate everybody. They wouldn't speak much; they'd just sort of be there and boo and chortle when our people would speak and clap and applaud when somebody from their side would, and sometimes worse.

The RARE I hearings that were held in 1971 and '72 in the Northwest were more sophisticated examples of industry trying to do all that. They were held by the Forest Service all over, including lots of little logging towns, and our witnesses got beat up in Idaho Falls and Grants Pass, Oregon, for example. There was a lot of bitterness--

Lage: Actual physical beatings?

Evans: Actual physical beating up, right. And threatened in many other places; those were very tense times too. The industry really turned people out for those particular hearings.

Lage: Do you think this type of thing was organized by the industry, or was this the loggers really feeling they were threatened?

Evans: Oh, the industry would put little slips of paper in the paychecks, saying, "Your job is threatened; you better turn out at these hearings. You're going to lose all your timber." They would do things like that. They would shut mills down for a day in various places. Superior, Montana, is a place where this comes to mind, just to name a specific place name. Grants Pass is certainly another one.

There was stuff like that, threats and a lot of violence. These were very violent issues. Strong passions, anyhow, behind them. I remember in the case of the Eagle Cap Wilderness, we were trying to save a valley called the Minam River Valley over there. Mike was involved in that. It started when he was there in '61, and I picked it up later on. It was a beautiful place. It's now pretty safe. We saved most of it.

Evans: During the last round of hearings on that, about in '71 or '72, before we passed the bill, the timber industry tried our tactics. They ran an ad; they ran full-page ads in the Oregon papers saying, you know, save your job and all the usual sort of thing.

I said, "Oh, my goodness, this is the end. They've got our technique, and we're going to lose." But guess what, you know, they only got about four or five responses to the whole thing. I found out later. Nobody responded to the industry ads because we had the people. That's what I thought: they've got the bucks, and we've got the people. I never forgot that lesson. They can do our same technique, and it won't have the same effect as our ads will.

Lage: In the [Sierra Club] Bulletin you mentioned that in '72 the Forest Service held hearings on wilderness. A lot of mass recreationists came out which you felt was--

Evans: Yes, those are the RARE I hearings. The ORV people, the motorbikes and the timber industry people were at it. They all came out.

Lage: Aside from the physical violence, was this a kind of mass demonstration such as you'd organized earlier?

Evans: The motorbike people always were pretty well organized. The four-wheel drive people, they were the best organized in the Northwest. They came out to a lot of these things. They would wear their leather jackets with tassels on them--thirty-two zippers and all that sort of thing on it. They were always there in force.

In fact the industry uses them as their grass-roots, front-line troops. The timber industry does it. I read, for example, the National Four-Wheel Drive Association now has gotten a \$25,000 grant from the American Petroleum Institute to help them prepare their plans to do things like that. Innocently they said in their newsletter--I'm on their subscription list--that they're asking timber and mining and other industries for help, financial help too.

You know, it's plain; they furnish the grass roots for the industries that don't have any grass roots. But they're not very effective because they know so little about the areas and the issues they're talking about. They just come in there and knee jerk against it all again and again and again. They have that emotional power, but they don't have any factual power behind it. They usually don't prevail in any event, but they can ball the works up to a good degree.

Lage: Are they really responding to a felt need that they have?

Evans: In a way, yes. I don't want to give them short shrift. Just as we see ourselves losing places, year after year, they see trails that they used to go on get closed off in a certain way. Our response is, "Look, you've got thousands and thousands of miles of old rough logging roads that are going to bed and thousands of miles of trails that nobody's arguing about either. Why not focus on those and enjoy that, since our recreation requires that you not be there because you ruin our recreation."

They will not admit that what they do interferes with anybody else because they like machines. Why shouldn't everybody like them? It's sort of that idea. You know, it's just one of those things.

So, yes, I think they feel a need but they're inarticulate about it. Interestingly, I did lobby in the state legislature some-what in those years in Washington. We devised an idea for a state-wide trail system. I lobbied with the League of American Wheelmen Bicyclists and made a friend with a wonderful old ninety-five year old guy named Harry Coe who is president of it. He still bicycled and had a wonderful time. But we joined the coalition of the horse people and the four-wheel drive people to do all that and put it all together. And we got to know each other and like each other a lot.

Lage: Were the trails separated?

Evans: Yes, in some places. A lot of time we had separate trails and special ones, goodies, for them. And it was a nice dream. We dreamed big on that one too. I loved drawing all the maps and getting lots of things.

Lage: That must be unusual that all those groups would come together.

Evans: It was unusual. I remember--this was in the springtime--and a few months later, I got a call from one of them, saying "We'd like to come over and talk to you tonight." It was really funny. I said, "Sure, come on over." So they came over and my little boy was sort of playing around on the floor, and it was sort of like my vision of an oriental meeting, where people all sit down and have tea and cup after cup, and no one ever brings up the subject.

And I kept waiting and waiting, "What's your subject?" And they sort of hemmed and hawed and shifted around and finally looked at each other, and they said, "Brock, we want to know if you would like to be our lobbyist." They wanted me to lobby for the Four-Wheel Drive Association. They thought I was good.

Lage: What a compliment.

Evans: I thought that was very nice. So I didn't laugh; instead, I said, "Gee, that's really an honor, and thank you, and I'll think about it. I don't know what my people would say, though." They wanted to hire me part-time, I think, to lobby their bills for them and things like that.

Lage: They didn't really understand that you were doing it out of a sense of commitment, it sounds like.

Evans: I don't think so; no, I don't think so. I don't know what it was. They wanted a lobbyist, and I was the best one they knew, I guess. But I didn't treat them with disrespect or anything like that. We were working all together. We'll fight where we have to and do all that. That was sort of an amusing little footnote to what was going on in the Northwest.

Industry's Five-Point Plan

Lage: I wondered how the wilderness battles led to the forest practices battles. Then we can get into the National Timber Supply Act.

Evans: Okay, in 1968, we had won four big issues. We'd just culminated our first big push and on October 2, 1968, I was invited back to the White House, with some others, because then-President Johnson signed four bills into law: The Redwoods National Park, the North Cascades National Park, Wild and Scenic Rivers Bill, National Trails Bill. Each one representing years of struggle. Each one also representing a significant loss to the timber industry, which fought us bitterly on each one. So that was a grand slam, really, it was a great leap forward again, in our drive for these things. It gave us a great shot of confidence and boost and everything else.

Well the timber industry, obviously, was reeling from all that and in a serious state of shock because they'd been invincible before then, and they hadn't been beaten on anything really, basically, too much before. About December, they held a conference, I think it was in Victoria, British Columbia. They mapped out a five-point battle plan. I got something anonymous in the mail. I was always getting anonymous things in the mail. Somebody sent me this little thing, a little secret document. It mapped out a five-page program for a counteroffensive. In fact, it wasn't called a counteroffensive, but that's clearly what it was. They wanted to come roaring back and recapture their losses and stymie us, nip us in the bud in some way.

It was a five-step program leading to logging of the national parks and wilderness areas. That was number five. Five points like that. They always loved to do that, of course.

Lage: They were thinking big also.

Evans: Surely, but they were dreaming. And the very first part was to have hearings on the growing lumber price crisis. I read into that "manufacture a lumber price crisis." There was always a boom and bust in that industry anyhow.

And sure enough, this is late '68 and early '69, just sort of at the tail end of the Hickel fight and Hickel campaign. Oh, I know what happened, there was a great big shooting up in the price of lumber. Just like that, poof, like that. It later turned out it was because there was a shortage of boxcars; they couldn't transport it right, and they weren't cutting enough in the woods and so on.

How much was actually manufactured and how much was real in the context at the time, I'm not really sure, but it was there nevertheless. And it came hard on the heels of this memo, saying "Do it." And the next thing you knew there were bills introduced into Congress called the National Timber Supply bill, which settled once and for all the problem of "timber supply," "to assure a guaranteed supply so Americans can have lower priced homes." That was the whole thing.

The next thing you knew the friendly House and Senate Agriculture Committees started holding hearings on the Timber Supply Act. We were sort of picking ourselves off the ground saying, "What's going on here?" and fighting all these other battles too. And I said we had better get involved in some of these hearings.

Gordon Robinson and myself--Gordon was our forester, and Gordon was a great help to me in all those years. I really relied on him a great deal and learned a great deal from him. I got Gordon to go back and participate in the hearings. I remember we had some back there.

It was a classic scene. We had hearing after hearing on this; in the Senate it was sort of grinding through the Agriculture Committee and all these nice southern senators were egging on the timber industry. They loved it all. There were about three or four of us and about fifty of their lobbyists at all these hearings.

You could just see the wolves at the door getting ready to pounce on the national forests again. To make a long story short, we succeeded in getting the thing dragged out--the panic button was pushed. I thought, "My God, we're going to lose everything here after we just won so much."

The Timber Supply Act

Evans: We started writing articles. But it takes, as I said, about six months to get our troops and get them going, get them able to speak out.

Lage: The Timber Supply Act is not as specific an issue too, to arouse people--

Evans: No, we had to simplify it and say this means the end of all the wilderness and national forest, because the Timber Supply Act would have created a trust fund. That was a tricky kind of a deal where all the receipts from timber cutting go into a special fund that can be only used to reforest and plant and administer more timber sales. So, it would be a revolving fund, the only result of which would lead to greatly increase the timber cutting above the levels we already had, with no protection for multiple-use values.

We dragged the thing out through the summer and through the fall and the House Agriculture Committee took it up. We were trying to write letters and get the word out on the whole thing. And finally in November--I know because it was the time of the First Mobilization [Against the Vietnam War]. I was back there lobbying when all these people are marching against the Vietnamese war. It was a very powerful experience with me to see that too, and I joined the marchers one evening.

So November of '69, and the bill finally got reported on the House Agriculture Committee. It was a twenty-three to one vote, which was a sure sign the bill was going to pass, poof, just like that. Our lobbying had gone to naught. We couldn't find anybody to support us.

Lage: Was it primarily the Sierra Club doing this?

Evans: Yes, it was mostly Sierra Club. Larry Williams and myself were back there lobbying at the time. Mostly Sierra Club, some Wilderness Society folks were helping too, and that was basically about it. The other environmental groups knew about it, but they hadn't been too deeply involved yet.

Somehow Tupling, in Washington, got the vote delayed through Christmastime, thank God, until they came back from the recess. And in the meantime, we were getting the national media; we got Life magazine and others interested in it. We were building up our consciousness about it, but we still weren't quite ready yet. We were getting our mailings out and started doing the Sierra Club work.

Evans: This was when I got money from the new board, \$25,000 to help carry on the campaign. Remember, after Brower got defeated? So we were putting a lot of resources into it at that time, relatively speaking, for the period of time.

I knew the vote was scheduled for a Thursday about the end of January, 1970. This was the first real battle of the Environmental Decade. A twenty-three to one vote in the House Agriculture Committee, how were we going to stop this juggernaut?

We had no friends, really. I remember flying back, about the Friday before the vote coming up on the following Thursday, and Mike came back and some other Sierra Club staff, the regional staff came back. By then we had the Wilderness Society staff there and a few other organizations, maybe about fifteen lobbyists or so total from different organizations. We formed a coalition on it.

Well, I had lunch with Congressmen [John] Saylor and [John] Dingell. They were our great friends at that time. In fact, we could only find six congressmen who would speak up and be on our side at this particular time.

Lage: Was this just on this issue--

Evans: Just on this issue.

Lage: --or the club just didn't have that many contacts in Congress they could count on?

Evans: Well, just because of this issue. Well, that too, earlier; I remember first lobbying for the club in 1967 and walking into offices. No one had ever heard of the Sierra Club then. You had to explain everything about the environment and all that. But even then we had plenty of contacts, I think. But these were the only ones we could interest in this issue that would stand up and be counted.

Well, these congressmen said, "No way. We can't help you here. This is a hopeless kind of a case. A twenty-three to one vote in the committee and not any friends here; the vote's less than a week away. You'd better fight it over in the Senate. Haven't got a chance here."

But some of us, myself included, said, "No, we have to fight right here. You know, we can't let it go. It's a disasterous bill," and so on. And they said, "All right, I guess we'll help you if you're that dumb. We'll do something."

Evans: So what they did was give us a little space right in the Rayburn building there, a little secret kind of room up on the fourth floor. And that became our campaign action headquarters. They had some phones installed for us, three or four phones, too. And that became our headquarters. Really a fantastic place because the industry lobbyists were going around outside all the time and they had no idea where we were, running campaign central right out of the House building. I don't know if we could get away with that today, but that's the way it was then.

It was a wonderful place, and they made me chairman of the emergency committee or whatever it was there.

Lage: Now, who made you chairman?

Evans: Just the consensus of the group. I was the one making the most noise. My forests were more threatened, and I was more passionate about it. So they were glad to have me do the work and be that way.

We spent the whole weekend organizing. We built a great big chart, put it on the wall, all 435 members. We had charts with "yes," "no," and "maybe," and we had little fact sheets all prepared. I had written up all the fact sheets, typed by myself, by hand in the old Sierra Club office over there, fact sheets on all the subjects and answers about the bill. It was all primitive by Alaska campaign standards, but it was all brand new to us.

First National Grassroots Coalition

Evans: The Timber Supply Act campaign was the first real campaign I'm aware of where we had a real coalition of all the different groups working in a big national working of all of our grass roots we could possibly find. You know, the Alaska campaign folks would laugh at it now because it's so unsophisticated, but it was very advanced for the time, I think.

We organized all the people for it. Each person had thirty members of Congress they had to see; fifteen of us had thirty apiece to see. We had to start on Monday morning. The vote was coming up on Thursday. We had "yes," "no," and "maybe," a column after all these names. And that was sort of what we did. We had the fact sheets all ready and the information. So we just started out. We started out making our calls.

Lage: You saw the whole Congress, not just the ones you thought there was a chance--

Evans: Everybody. My strategy always was what I call a full-court press. You got to see everybody because that's all we have time to do. You didn't have time to pick it up by swing votes. We didn't have any time to do anything but see everybody.

It was also a new and untested issue, so we didn't know where anybody would have stood. Because we hadn't had the resources to do that preliminary lobbying to target all that.

Lage: That's right.

Evans: To build that. So there we were. We saw everybody, and most people had never heard of the issue before.

As we started out, the whole purpose was not just to give the information from the fact sheets, but also to get information: "Where does your boss stand on that? How do you feel, Mr. Congressman, about that?" We'd come back at the end of the day and check those marks, "yes," "no," or "maybe."

We looked down the list and people were saying, "Well, he's for us or against and yes, no or maybe." The yeses we sort of wrote off. The nos we sort of wrote off. But the maybes, the great maybes which were maybe three hundred people, were the ones we really wanted to focus on.

After getting that information, day after day, we would get on the phone, and we'd call our members, wherever we could. We'd call all the Sierra Club members. We called the Izaak Walton League. We called anybody who had grass roots. The way we would do it was just to look at the list and say, "Here's Indiana, and here's Congressman Roodebush. He has a big maybe. Where's he from?" We'd flip through our little directories, and say, "He's from Fort Wayne. Who do we know in Fort Wayne, Indiana?" And someone would say, "I know Tom Dustin in the Izaak Walton League"--he's a real person, and we'd get on the phone.

By this time we'd all gotten our mailings out to all our people. People had gotten mail on it, knew what it was about. We'd call up Tom, and we'd say, "Tom, the vote's coming up on the Timber Supply Act on Thursday, and do you realize your congressman's right in the middle on this thing?" And Tom would say, "That son-of-a-bitch; we'll get on it right away." The next day, a hundred and fifty telegrams would pour in, like that. And that's the way it was around the country.

Lage: I'm surprised that you had that kind of response.

Evans: We had the most enormous outpouring--

Lage: I thought that came later, especially with Alaska, that you could reach out and say, "get busy on this," and you would get a hundred and fifty telegrams in congressional districts?

Evans: The difference between then and now, as far as I can tell, was that the times were right. The people were eager. This was the first real battle to come up. And we made it, somehow, it touched a chord; everybody understands cutting down trees, and somehow it was very powerful because we didn't organize anything like that. We just had people out there. We were trying, and we'd get mailings too.

And it was that way all over the country. Our people in Spokane, Washington, told me--this is Congressman Foley's district--that when they called up Western Union to send the telegrams, first they had to wait forty-five minutes to even get through. Then the Western Union operator would say, "Oh, you're the ones who want to write to them about that Timber Supply Act, right?" They'd get the same old message again.

It got incredible. By Tuesday, the telegrams, which were all yellow then, started pouring in. We'd go into offices, and we'd see them packed, stacked up on desks. We'd see mailmen going down the halls carrying these things, and they'd be falling out of the mailbags.

You'd go into a congressman's office, and he would say, "I don't care what the issue is, I'm for you; I'm for you, get them out of here. Call them off." It was just an incredible outpouring. I learned later, something like a hundred and fifty thousand letters and telegrams came in, in three or four days. It was an enormous avalanche.

And it was all over the country, everywhere. I remember tracking down Dick Cellarius in Michigan somewhere, in some Michigan meeting. And tracking down other future leaders there. A lot of them remember those calls they got in those days. The Sierra Club was just really cresting and really coming into its own glory those days.

It was the first test of our new networks and our growing chapters and groups. I think everybody was exhilarated by the chance to really do battle on something really tangible in the beginning of the Environmental Decade.

Lage: It sounds like a very national response.

Evans: Very, very national, very much so. Everybody was really affected by it all over, and it turned out to be a glorious sort of a thing.

Evans: There are lots of other little stories about it. The industry had no idea what hit them. They couldn't believe all this was going on. They were trundling by in their little carts. One guy was carrying around a little piece of wood to show how much better the trees grew when you fertilized them. We'd laugh about him--Jim O'Donnell with his little cart. But anyhow, a lot of stuff like that.

But on Wednesday, something new surfaced. The industry had apparently been working all night to counteract this flood of mail coming in. They'd prepared a new fact sheet called "Setting the Facts Straight," right off the printing presses.

Actually, we got one because it was showing up in all the offices. And it said, "Don't believe these environmentalists. This is a great bill. It's going to make houses better, and it doesn't hurt multiple use," and a lot of jargon like that, and it said, "You want more information, call one of these two numbers."

So immediately, as soon as we saw the information--Lloyd Tupling was lobbying with us then too, and he and I both dived for the pay phones, right near the office building, right where we were. And he dialed one of those numbers, and I dialed the other, and we both left phones off the hook so that nobody could call.

Lage: Dirty tricks.

Evans: That's right; that's right. It was actually pretty harmless, but we had great fun. And when the vote finally came, it was just an unbelievable thing. It was something like two to one. Clobbered them, just like that. It was just a stunning defeat. They tried to bring it up a month later. We came back and clobbered them once more, so they couldn't do it again.

Actually, on the first vote they pulled it off the floor. They didn't vote on it. They knew they couldn't win. So they tried again a month later. We came back and clobbered them again, the same way, and the vote then was two to one.

Lage: That's an amazing story.

Evans: It had a reverberating impact. The impact of that defeat sent a wave through the industry.

Nixon's Stand on the Timber Supply Act##

Lage: What was the Nixon administration's stand on the National Timber Supply Act?

Evans: Let me wrap this up now, then I'll come to that. Years afterwards, there were attempts then by--let's call them honest brokers--the American Forestry Association and others to get us and industry sitting around a table to see if we could do something about the national forests. I participated for a couple of years; I would fly back. We would all sit around a table and talk, and we couldn't agree very far.

Lage: Who put those things together?

Evans: Bill Towell. He was the executive director of the American Forestry Association. He saw himself as the honest broker. I didn't think he was all that impartial; he was more on their side than ours, but it was worth doing. We had several meetings together. We really couldn't get together too much because they wanted more than we could give, and I guess vice versa, but we tried. It was called the Areas of Agreement Committee.

We tried to narrow it down. It still continued in some way. I think Paul Swatek is on something similar and Mike participated over the years. But it never really came to all that much. We did testify together on the same panel for more appropriation for the Forest Service several times. That was a positive thing out of it, and we did do that. But every time the industry would say, "Ah, we've got to do something about the national forest. We've got to get more timber out." I'd say, "Well, you know, we sure would hate to have another Timber Supply Act battle, wouldn't we?" He would say, "Oh, God, yes, we don't want that again; please don't do that again. Nothing like that." So, it really had a big impact.

The role of the Nixon administration was very interesting in all this. They didn't really take an overt stand on it until the very last minute. They came out for it. But early on during that very intense week we were involved lobbying against this, Stewart Brandborg, executive director of the Wilderness Society, he said, "Where's the administration? We don't know if they're for it or against it. Let's find out."

I guess this was on about that Monday. So Brandborg called up the White House, and they said, "Oh, Mr. Colson's handling that issue." So we called up Chuck Colson's office. And, "Oh, Mr. Colson's out right now, but maybe you'd like to talk to Mr. Hodges. He's handling that issue for us." Mr. Hodges turned out to be

Evans: Ralph Hodges, who's the executive director of the National Forest Products Association. He was right there, working out of the White House, right at the right hand of Chuck Colson, telling him everything to do.

The timber industry and the Republican Party have always been very close, as far as I can tell. It's explicable in those terms. After we defeated the bill, Colson gave a speech and talked about these grumpy environmentalists who defeated this wonderful bill and gave this ringing speech to the industry saying, "Yes, we're going to get out there and fight for you."

They were for it all the way through. They were not as blatant as the Reagan administration would have been, however. Several years later, in 1973, when Nixon came into power again after the '72 elections and before Watergate, he made Earl Butz the sort of chief commissar of all natural resources and in charge of the whole shebang.

One of Butz's first actions was to issue an order. He got Nixon to issue an order to increase the cut. This is what the timber industry always wanted, to raise the cut by a billion board-feet a year and get more logs out. And it send a shiver of fear through our 'friends in the Forest Service.

I remember the chief of the Forest Service, John McGuire, took me aside and said, "You know, we're going to resist this as much as we possibly can, but we need your help from outside." He didn't use the word resist. He was much more cautious, but I knew exactly what he meant. I said, "We'll help you, John, all we can."

So, we filed a lawsuit against it, we and NRDC [Natural Resources Defense Council], and got it knocked down on legal grounds. But that took several months. In the meantime, they were doing this: The Nixon people sent in what I called their commissars-- they sent their political commisars to sit right down there in the regional offices and the national offices next to the Forest Service and be right there in the same office to make sure they got the cut out. To make sure they were on the phone everyday, "Are you getting your cut out? Are you getting your cut out?"

Lage: That's really intruding on the Forest Service.

Evans: This was a very scary thing, and they're probably doing it again today, right now. That's what I've come to feel Republicans do when they come into power. They really abuse the resources. But that's what they did. That was the attitude of the Nixon administration about the forest.

Lage: So at this point the Forest Service looked to you for protection?

Evans: Sure they did.

Lage: Were they against the National Timber Supply Act also?

Evans: No, I think they liked that. I think they liked the idea of a revolving fund. The timber receipts were enormous, and they would be applied right back instead of going into the general fund; they would go back to them. They liked that, I'm quite sure.

But you know, once again it was us and the industry fighting over the forest with the Forest Service sort of more in the background. That's the way it's been, and that's the way it is in all the wilderness battles too, except when they take industry's side.

VIII FOREST MANAGEMENT AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Developing Congressional Interest in Forestry Legislation

Lage: Shall we talk about the steps that led up to the National Forest Management Act? Would that be a logical procession?

Evans: Yes. Remember for most of the fifties and sixties all the battles were over allocations of land, not management at all, just over how much was going to be protected and preserved. Remember when we organized the Idaho Environmental Council, old Guy Brandborg said, "We're going to take them on on their home ground." And I said, "You can't do that." But he went on and did that, and I think I mentioned in the session today, that the result of their agitation was the Bitterroot Report on clearcutting.

I don't know if I mentioned that or not, but they got the University of Montana to issue the Bitterroot Forest Report, the report which said, "That's right; they're cutting too much."

Wyoming erupted, I think a year later, in '69. I remember going on a nice trip to the Wind River Mountains with some Wyoming people learning the same things, a Forest Service trip again. Senator McGee had this Blue Ribbon Commission appointed which said the same thing. And you had agitation elsewhere around the country.

Did I mention the clearcutting hearings? Do you remember anything like that? I said it earlier today.

Lage: You mentioned it briefly.

Evans: Okay, then I'll review it quickly and briefly again. I was involved in all these things in the sense that I was encouraging and helping and making use of the material and doing all that.

Lage: Did you have a long-range plan in mind?

Evans: No, it was just the target of opportunity. The long-range plan if any, was to carry the offensive to the industry's backyard. Let's keep it out of our backyard. We'll mess up their backyard for a while. We'll attack them on their home ground and let them spend all their blood and treasure defending that.

It just gives us a great advantage. It's one more way to raise troops and new armies and recruits on other issues. It's a way to get into wildlife people and the hunting community on these things. And the result can't help but be more positive for our long-range goals in the national forests, which is not only better management but more wilderness allocation too.

So let's pour gasoline on those flames, and we'll build it up, and it became a serious issue. I wasn't aware then just how serious it was. And I don't want the foresters not to be regrowing trees either, even if there is not wilderness.

So, it quickly became a real issue of concern. Clearcutting is ugly. It is. It destroys things too, and they are silting up the salmon spawning beds and all the rest. So, it became a disputatious issue of major proportions, not only in the Northwest but all around the country.

And after the defeat of the Timber Supply Act, we tried again in '71, we prepared our own bill which would dictate better management of the national forests. There were hearings all around the country in '71. [Mark] Hatfield had his bill, which was sort of an industry bill, and we had ours. It didn't come to anything. The forces clashed, and we were at a standoff.

But also in '71, the agitation over clearcutting got greater and greater and Senator Church, on his own, called hearings back in Washington, D.C., in April of that year. I was in charge of organizing for them again. I thought here's our opportunity to really make another quantum leap and quantum jump in this thing and make it even more dramatic.

We spent a great deal of time. We got witnesses from Alaska to Georgia, citizen witnesses. And they brought photographs, people couldn't come unless they had photographs of current abuses with names, dates, places, and specific documentation.

We had a couple of panels of scientists, soil scientists and fisheries biologists and others, all the way down to foresters, to document these other things like that. And we had a regional scope. They were from all regions of the country, from every place to document that this was a widespread, pervasive problem.

Evans: They were very dramatic hearings. They lasted three days. We got enormous press coverage out of them. Morale was sky-high and for the very first time in my memory before or since, we got to testify first. The environmentalists had the first two days, and the industry lobby had to sit in the back waiting for us to finish before they could answer. It was fantastic.

These wonderful citizens from all over the country came with their little pictures and their little dates and we got it all edited and put in. It was a devastating indictment of the Forest Service.

Lage: What would be the committee?

Evans: Senate Interior Committee.

And we had great hearings, and we fed Church questions, and he asked all the right questions, and it just really went beautifully. And there were lots of transcripts of it and some pretty strong stuff. The result was the "Church Guidelines."

His committee didn't issue a law, but they had guidelines saying, "We wish the Forest Service would do a better job on clear-cutting, and only as a last resort and only forty acres, and so on and so on and so on."

They sort of followed those guidelines but not completely. The agitation continued because it wasn't all resolved. And in 1974, Congressman [John R.] Rarick, from Louisiana, wanted to get in on the act; he was on the Agriculture Committee. And he wanted to do something on forest planning. I'm not really sure exactly why he did it. The Forest Service must have put him up to it.

We spent some time lobbying. This was when I was back in Washington, of course. And we lobbied on the forest, the range land, RPA.

Lage: Resources Planning Act.

Evans: Right. Which I thought was kind of a nothing bill. I never was too interested in process, like that bill focuses on. I just cared more about the substance.

But there it was. We had to lobby on it. I wouldn't have asked for it. It mandated a whole lot of planning procedures for the Forest Service.

Lage: The club didn't have much input into it then?

Evans: No. Rhea Cohen was the lobbyist who worked for me in Washington; she and I both worked on it. We didn't have a lot of input into it. We got the word "wilderness" written into it, for example, and some things like that. But we didn't have a whole lot of influence. Rarick was a very conservative Republican. We didn't have much influence on him anyhow.

Lage: And you didn't initiate it?

Evans: No, we didn't initiate it. We didn't want it basically. I didn't see the point of it, but there it was. It became very significant later on. Just a lot of planning mishmash, pretty cumbersome: You've got to issue this and that report. There wasn't much substance in it at all. But there it was, and it was passed. That was a prelude for all this.

The Monongahela Decision

Evans: A year later, in 1975, the court issued the Monongahela decision which had been filed some years earlier by our West Virginia people who were very upset about clearcutting there. And as you know, that decision said that you cannot clearcut green timber, only dead trees. That's the Organic Act and what it says.

I had just come to Washington in '73, and I knew this case was being filed and I remember strenuously arguing with Bruce Terris, who was our lawyer, and others that we should not file this. This was a dangerous case to file.

I had a thing about lawsuits, and it's just a little sermon I like to give someday. It's called "sow the wind, reap the whirlwind." It's dangerous to file lawsuits on things like that, that have great implications all the way through because they provoke a violent political counter-reaction in Congress.

Later on I'll tell you all about the Alaska pipeline experience that was exactly that. We pay a bitter price in blood and treasure for these lawsuits that we win, sometimes.

The lawyers had gotten in their nice fancy victories, and they win them on fine points of law and little piddling things like that. Tellico is another good example. Then the political people have to pick up the pieces because the lawyers go home; they win their lawsuits, and we, the lobbyists, get screwed. We have to drop everything we're doing and pick up the pieces and deal with all this

Evans: rage and fury in Congress for all these things. I had been pleading for years to get better coordination between the lawyers and the political people. We're finally getting it, by the way.

Lage: That's an interesting point.

Evans: It's a very great point.

Lage: So the lawyers don't take in the political considerations.

Evans: No, they didn't seem to give a damn, at least in those days. Hell, no. Jim Moorman, I guess he was involved in Monongahela somehow, and he got on some special committee to help Senator [Jennings] Randolph draft our bill. I'm jumping ahead now.

The Monongahela case came out, and we had to have a response. The violent counter-reaction hit Congress. Senator Randolph was going to be our champion because it was his West Virginia people. So, he asked Moorman, who was getting a reputation as a forestry lawyer, to sit in on the drafting committee.

They were going to have a bunch of conservationists drafting up a bill which was going to be the ideal bill. They never asked me to participate, and I really felt cut out. You know, it was always a sore point on that.

So I wasn't consulted about all this. They put in all this grandiose stuff and all this stuff that would never ever pass. But that's the bill we had to live with, and I had to lobby on. That was the order; I had to do it.

Lobbying for the National Forest Management Act

Evans: They called it the Randolph bill. It was a great bill; it was the damnest thing you ever saw. It was drafted in the fall of '75, and it became lobbied on in the spring of '76 and the summer of '76.

And the industry, in the meantime, had put in their own bill, doing their own thing. It became sort of the Humphrey bill, in some ways. So the battle really was joined then, and there was a lot of fast and fierce lobbying. The club put a lot of resources into it, but we made one fatal mistake, and I was party to it, too.

Evans: Since NRDC was putting in equal money to us in lobbying for the Randolph bill--we were the two main groups on it--we had to have both an NRDC person and us be cochairmen of it. And Tom Barlow of NRDC became the cochair. Tom was a nice guy, but--

Lage: Cochair with you?

Evans: Yes, with me, we were cochairs. So, I had no control over him.

He's a nice guy, but he's a loner, and he knew little about the political process then, in my opinion. He was spending money hand over fist, putting out fifty-page fact sheets on it that nobody would ever read. And he would go down to Panic Press for a quarter a page and get them xeroxed. He spent \$100,000, I think, in the first six months of the campaign and we hadn't even got started so we could get our mailings where it really counted. I had to sit down with him and demand an accounting, but it was too late. He just spent it all gloriously. And I didn't supervise him enough, and it was just a terrible thing. We couldn't replay the old timber supply campaign the same way.

We spent enormous resources, and it was just a bad situation all the way around. There was no control, and he did what he wanted to do. And we didn't have any good coordination.

I won't give you a blow by blow of that whole campaign, but we did have long intensive hearings, and we dragged the whole thing out through the summer again. Congressman Jim Weaver was our good friend then. I remember in July saying, "Jim, you've got to drag this thing out until September. We can't have a vote until September because we'll never get any mail in. Our people are gone in the summer. They're always climbing mountains and getting out of town." It's always bad for us to have votes in July, if we can possibly help it.

So he did. He delayed it, and delayed it, and delayed it until August. In August, the Senate voted on the Randolph bill and voted it down, seventy-five to twenty-five. You knew it was going to get defeated; we didn't lobby that hard in the Senate. The real battle was going to be on the House floor.

And I tried to revive the old timber supply coalition. It was all I could really think of to do in this whole thing. To try to get the Wildlife and the National Rifle Association and the right wing groups back together the way we were on the Timber Supply Act.

Evans: It was a dreadful job because there was so much suspicious of us for going off on the damn Randolph bill, which was a dumb thing to do, and I didn't want it. You know, I didn't want to do it, but there we did it.

Finally in the person of a guy named Mike Zagata, who was the head of the Wildlife Society--he and I were personal friends, and I asked him for help. He took on the job, and because he was respected by the right wing groups he did a great job of bringing them back into the fold so they didn't support the industry bill anymore but supported something we could do.

We ended up supporting what we called the Weaver Amendment to the industry bill which had been sailing through the House Agriculture Committee, just like--

Lage: Was this the Weaver Amendment to the Humphrey bill?

Evans: The House bill was even worse than the Humphrey bill, which the Senate ended up passing. It wasn't all bad. It wasn't all great. It was mixed.

The House had an even worse bill; the House Agriculture Committee voted out a terrible bill, far, far worse. So we ended up with the Weaver Amendment to that, which would bring it up to more like the Humphrey bill. That was the best we could do in those days. You know, it was all right. It wasn't the end of the world. We could have lived with all that.

I remember, I came back from summer vacation about the end of August, and they were holding another hearing. I was getting ready to go to the hearing, and as soon as I walked into the hearing room--you know how you can feel a room and feel what's in there? The minute I walked in, I knew something was terribly wrong. I don't know what it was. I just knew I shouldn't waste any more time monitoring these damn hearings and mark ups. I'm going to get the hell out of here.

I went right back to the office, and we spent the next few weeks just organizing our grass roots, getting ready, getting the mailings, getting the fact sheets, raising the money and all this sort of thing. We got a \$20,000 donation from a special friend in the Northwest to make a first-class mailing to all of our people. Just pushing the panic button all across the country, getting the mailing in for the Weaver Amendment. That's all we had time to do, and getting our troops together.

We finally put the whole coalition back together again, but it was a little bit too late. It was three or four days too late. The mail started cascading in just like in the old days.

Evans: But all the while the industry mail was clobbering us, industry was getting much more mail in than we were.

Lage: They'd started your same technique?

Evans: They did, and the whole industry was united this time because they saw a real threat. It wasn't just a wilderness bill. This was going to change the whole national forest equation that they depended on. So they had all the lumber yards and savings and loan associations writing in mail for them too, as well as their own people.

You know, I had no real idea of the full extent and scope and power of the lumber industry. It's the fifth largest industry in terms of employees and gross products in the country, I think, when you count the lumber yards and everybody else in it, and they're all right there.

It was a very powerful thing. They had computer tapes and all the best stuff, and they were clobbering us in the mail, until the last. Then our mail started coming in. Everything was really finally working, the mechanisms were in place. We were going to have the big floor vote on the Weaver Amendment.

The lobbying was done. The head counts were coming in. It looked like we might win the thing and actually, you know, have a great victory here. And the vote was on, I remember the date was September 17, 1976, and I don't remember the day. I think it was a Thursday; maybe it was a Friday.

We tried to get the vote timed when congressmen were still going to be there and not go home and all those things that you have to do, all the incredible nitty gritty things. And we sat back and waited. Weaver was going to offer it and get a vote on it, and it would be okay.

And I remember the time came for Weaver to stand up and offer his amendment, and he stood up to do it. But the first thing to do in the process is that you hear the yeas and the nays. So, Weaver says, "Mr. Speaker, I want to offer an amendment to this bill that is being debated." So, he offered his amendment and said, "Let's hear from the yeas and nays." Well, the Republicans are always there. My theory is that the Democrats are out serving their constituency. They're always back in their office doing things. Republicans are always serving their constituency by being there. They're serving the industry and their clients like that, by being there and voting everything down.

So, sure enough, the yeas were a few scattering voices and the nays were a great big shout, "No." Because the Republicans were always there voting it down. We all expect that. Then the procedure is that you ask for people to rise and stand up and be counted.

Evans: You say, "I demand a quorum call" on that sort of thing. If you get twenty people to stand up and support you, you can get your quorum call. Well, that is where Weaver fell down. He was supposed to get twenty people there to stand up. He demanded it, and twenty people weren't there to stand up. So the whole thing was done, it was voted down like that. It never got our vote like that, so we were defeated like that.

I was so bitterly unhappy. I'll never forget that day. I thought this was the end, and we'd lost everything. I wanted to quit. I wanted to quit the Sierra Club all together and move. We'd lost it. We'd worked so hard on this, and then we were finished. We'd lost everything.

I was really just very, terribly despairing. I wrote a long memo which is in the archives somewhere, probably at the Bancroft Library, about the feelings of this defeat and trying to analyze what went on and what happened. It's more detailed than I remember right now.

But we lost by such a bitter thing. We didn't get a fair vote. It appears that we might have won but we never will know, never know to this day, whether we could or not. Then the bill passed--the bad version did--and then they went into conference. It was a long conference, but I didn't participate in that. I was sort of destroyed. For a long time I really felt burned out, after all my years in the movement here; and so [Tom] Barlow went to them all, and we came out not too badly when it was all done. Somehow we got some support, and Humphrey became more of a supporter, and then we came out with an act that probably gave us 30 percent of our long-range goals in the national forests.

We were better off than before because of that law, not worse off when it's all said and done--in spite of all the mistakes and all the wrong things there.

Lage: Did you know what was happening in the conference committee?

Evans: Yes, I knew what was happening. Yes, I knew everything, I would get reports on it. I went over a few times. But basically Weaver was there pitching away, and George Brown; Congressman Brown was there, and Humphrey was sometimes. The Senate became our great supporter, even Herm Talmadge was there. So, we came out of it fairly well, all said and done, for that round of it.

Lage: I thought the Humphrey bill itself was kind of a disaster from the Sierra Club's point of view.

Evans: Well, you know, we were all pumping the Randolph bill, saying vote for the Randolph bill, that was all of our publicity. And we did all that. Then when it got defeated, it was pretty obvious that we had to change our tack and say, "Support the thing we had been trying to defeat." It was very awkward all the way through and people didn't understand, but that's just the way the lobbying pattern went. There was no way around it, I don't think.

Lage: Partly because the Randolph bill that you didn't think was too feasible had all this support to begin with.

Evans: Yes, and Moorman and the others wanted to fight for it right down to the last. I thought that was not a right thing to do but there it was, and we did it. That's what happened.

So, it was awkward. So a lot of people thought we had a terrible defeat and really, when Mike and I sat down to analyze the pieces, we figured out we got about 30 percent of our goal. But it took a lot of explaining to get around that, and there was a lot of distrust among our people whose hopes had been raised so high by the Randolph bill then dashed--it was hard to get them to ever believe we ever won anything out of all that. But we did. And we're better off than ever before.

Lage: Does this contradict what you were saying about asking for something big and dreaming big dreams. Wasn't that was the Randolph bill was doing?

Evans: Yes, that's a good point except that you have to temper this with pragmatism sometimes. You have to know what you can and what you cannot get.

The Randolph bill was okay to draft in the beginning and hold up there as a model, but the time to abandon it and get off that ship would have been about May or so, of that year, when it became clear the Humphrey bill was going through. Then we would try to add to the Humphrey bill and make that a vehicle, but not push it right through to the very end. Not push it right through until August or anything like that.

So, in a way, the two do fit together that way. But there just comes a time to jump ship sometimes on these things and cut your deals as you possibly can. So, I don't think it really contradicts it. The dream was nice. But we should have abandoned all of our publicity and everything else before that time.

Politics and the Club's Legal Defense Fund

Lage: Is the club set up in such a way now that the lawyers from the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund [SCLDF] couldn't exercise the kind of judgment that would cause such a political reaction?

Evans: No--I don't know. I get the sense that there's no formal mechanism to stop SCLDF from doing whatever it wants to. It was one of my big sore points. Rick [Fredric P.] Sutherland and I had a go-around about this every now and then. I don't bother with it much any more. They're an independent institution. They run independent fund raising. They just use our name.

When they wanted to move to Washington--this was in 1977, they were going to move there. First place, I didn't even hear about it. All at once somebody said, "Hey, do you realize, they're going to move here?" No one ever told me, and I was running the Washington office of the Sierra Club. I ought to know when a Sierra Club entity's coming to town at least. Are they going to be like NRDC and EDF and lobby all the time? You know, how was this going to confuse them? What's this entity going to do? They're not beholden to us or the Sierra Club board or anything.

So, I gently suggested that, "Gee, whiz. If you're going to come here, why don't you locate in our office and be with us? And I should have a say over who you pick. I should have some control over all that."

Well, you know, Sutherland would have none of that sort of thing. He just hit the roof. By God, they were going to locate wherever they wanted to, and they were going to do this and that. And he was supported by Bill Futrell and Ted Snyder and Phil Berry--they were all lawyers. And I guess I always felt sort of betrayed by all that sort of thing.

But at that time, I don't think I was very popular inside some quarters of the club. I think there was an era that I went through--the Forest Management Act gave me a reputation as a bad manager. Barlow had spent all this money, and also we lost. In the confusion about what was right and what was wrong, and the whole thing, all at once I wasn't in good odor those days anymore. So anything I said wasn't too well thought of; that's the sense I get looking back on it in retrospect.

And even though I think I was justified in wanting to have a unified entity back there--I mean I didn't care for it as a turf thing; I didn't want all that extra work, but I sure as heck didn't want them out there lobbying in the name of the Sierra Club all the time.

Evans: Rick finally did compromise. Every argument he made for not locating where we were I didn't think was very good. But he did compromise by hiring Jim Cohen. And he did let me interview Jim and do things like that even though he didn't really have to do all that. Jim Cohen, I thought, was an extremely right choice then. I know they didn't like him later, but I always liked him. He was very, very nice to me and very cooperative. And he went out of his way to consult me and do those things.

When all was said and done, it did work out okay. And SCLDF promised us that they would not be lobbyists, that they really just wanted to be lawyers and be real lawyers and practice law. And that's in fact the way it's worked. They've been very good about all that.

I like to think my agitation had some impact, but it's worked out pretty well for SCLDF. But it's the other lawyers, it's the NRDC and the EDF, that file all these lawsuits. The classic pattern when I was back in Washington would be we would be working up to our eyeballs on some issue, clean air or wilderness or something like that. And I would get a panic call from the NRDC, and here we were all friends and worked together. They said, "Brock, we've got to have your help. A bill just passed the Senate committee the other day, negating our lawsuit on the Colorado Basin." That was a good one. I remember that.

"What's this all about? What are you talking about?" And he would explain the whole case. They wanted us to lobby, drop everything we were doing, lobby and save their lawsuit for them. In the first place, it was too far gone. It has passed the Senate committee already. How could we possibly do that?

But they didn't seem to understand that you just can't--you've got to think about your lawsuits. There were enough instances like that, that it just stuck very firmly in my mind. But SCLDF usually was not party to all those things later on.

Lage: That's something that hasn't been brought up in the interviews that I've done, the interaction between litigation and how it can mess up the political process.

Evans: Probably because I was the only one on the receiving end of it, all the time. You know, we got the full force of the "sow the wind, reap the whirlwind" idea. And Rick Sutherland was not the kind of guy you talk to about such things, very much. He's a very good lawyer, but very much in his own way. And as long as Phil Berry was there on the board, supporting, you know, Rick can do no wrong. It was a very awkward situation all the way through.

Evans: So I just had to make the best of the situation. Now, in Washington, as I mentioned, I had the great distinct pleasure of going in January to one of the first meetings of the legal/political coordination committee.

I was over there and gave my little speech about "sow the wind, reap the whirlwind" again. They all laughed because they all heard it from me before privately anyhow. It's very good. It's a nice atmosphere now. And it's just all working out pretty well.

Lage: That's good. That sounds like a step ahead.

Evans: Yes, it certainly does.

The SST Controversy

Lage: Shall we talk about SST? Was that a divisive issue?

Evans: It's in the files. It was not a divisive issue, and my memory is a little bit fuzzy on it. I was in Seattle, of course, at the time. This was where the SST was going to be built.

Lage: Yes, that's why I thought it might be divisive.

Evans: Surprisingly, it was not. Sierra Club was very strong out front against this thing. An awful lot of our members worked for Boeing, but it caused no divisiveness among us all.

Lage: Well, how did the members who worked for Boeing reconcile it?

Evans: I can't begin to remember how many members of Boeing came up to me and said, "I don't like this thing either. This is a dumb thing. I work for them. I may even have a job in the project, but I still think it's a dumb thing."

This was the age of pure environmentalism, I think. Clearly, you couldn't lobby on it much back there. It was much too dangerous to do that, politically dangerous, I mean. It would just hurt our image on other issues. But my main job was to get information and feed it back to the lobbyists who were handling the case out of Washington, D.C., mostly. I remember meeting people in parking lots in the dark of the night and getting little documents and stuff like that and shipping them back. And doing things like that.

Lage: From your members who worked for Boeing?

Evans: From our members who worked for Boeing, that's right. We got a lot of material that way.

That's how Dick Fiddler [Sierra Club Board member] came into the club, by the way. I met him during the SST fight; I think it was that period of time.

Lage: Did he work for Boeing?

Evans: He worked for Boeing; yes, he did at that time. He came in as a volunteer, and we put him to work.

Lage: Did he come on because he was concerned with the SST?

Evans: I can't remember if it was that or just in general, but he came on during that period of time. And I'm pretty sure he was opposed to the SST and didn't like that, too.

I remember the day the victory came. There were monstrous celebrations back in Washington. We were all overjoyed too. But, of course, I got a deluge of press calls right away. I was on local TV. Cameras came in to interview me, and they said, "What does the Sierra Club think? You beat the SST, nine thousand people out of work here. Now how do you feel about it?" That sort of thing.

Lage: How did you respond to that?

Evans: I was very careful. I thought, boy, I really better be on my best behavior now. And I said, "We certainly regret the loss of jobs. The Sierra Club always has deplored that. These innocent people are hurt, and we wish them no harm. We'll do our best to try to help out here, and you know, we really think this was the wrong kind of project. We'd like to see our great Boeing Company put its great resources and technical skills into something else," and I named a few other things. But I was very sober and solemn and not exulting, not joyful at all. I thought that was the only safe thing to do in that context, and that was the way I dealt with it.

I think we survived it because we never got any hate calls or anything like that. But that was basically all we really did on the SST from the Seattle regional office. They were all really out there working on it more in Washington, D.C.

Northwestern Urban Issues

Lage: Could you talk a little bit about urban issues that you were involved in in the Pacific Northwest--urban, energy, pollution?

Evans: They were mainly freeway kinds of issues, fighting freeways. I mentioned the Seattle freeway revolt that was going on. I spent a lot of time talking to the community clubs, getting community clubs involved. So we couldn't help but deal with air pollution and transportation issues also.

We had people studying transportation issues and dealing with it. Portland had its own freeway revolt; I would go down there and help them. And some other cities did too.

We dealt with pollution and those issues probably only peripherally, basically. Water pollution and those issues were never something that I got deeply involved in up there. Other people were working on it primarily, at least my memory is fuzzy, if we really did. I was deeply active in battles to preserve the integrity of Puget Sound, however. I put a lot of effort on behalf of the Sierra Club in the battles of the early seventies, to keep oil tankers out of the Sound; in the first skirmishes over what later became the Northern Tier Pipeline across it; in the Puget Sound Water Quality hearings of 1971; and in the drafting of the State Shorelines Initiative of 1971.

Noise was an issue, but it was basically mainly transportation related. That's why I call them urban issues. They had to do with urban planning and urban parks and things like that. And it was a way to get involved with a lot of architects and community groups that wouldn't have gotten involved basically otherwise.

It paid off in a way, in a curious sense, a little bit later on. When we had the RARE I hearings in 1971 and '72, I was able to go back to all my old friends in the urban movements whom we had dealt with, who couldn't care a fig for wilderness. They didn't know anything about it, never saw it, never went there.

We got twenty-two community clubs from the central part of Seattle to send testimony in supporting the wilderness that the Sierra Club wanted, for example. So we developed some nice working relationships, and I spent a lot of time with the Sierra Club and the Mountaineers and others, trying to set up urban committees to deal with these people and urban kinds of problems.

Evans: We got involved in zoning kinds of issues. Seattle; Pike Place Market was a big battle in 1971. If you've ever been to the open air market up there, it's a wonderful place. They were going to tear it all down and make it a big hotel complex and we fought to preserve that.

There were other issues that escape my mind right now. There were more urban planning kinds of issues and that sort of thing. In the Northwest, the cities didn't have the awful problems that they had out in the East. You didn't have the slums and the rest of it so much.

Lage: What type of groups were you involved with that you could count on later?

Evans: By the way, it was an interest that I carried on over in Washington, to a larger extent. We'll talk about that later. I worked with community clubs, minority groups, labor, if we possibly could, architects, planning associations, League of Women Voters, groups like that. Wherever we could find them. They were our useful allies.

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Evans: I liked the urban issues because it was a way of showing another face of the Sierra Club to another segment of the public, who just thought that we were just a bunch of hikers and mountain climbers and all that. They'd see me coming in meetings and speaking up and talking about planning and pollution and noise and inner cities and all these things which I care deeply about.

It would just help soften the image, and it would help develop the respect for the institution which I thought would carry us over in other battles. And I already mentioned that it did pay off years later when the community clubs testified for wilderness there.

We built up good working relationships and now I know the Puget Sound group and other groups that I work with do have urban committees and people working on urban problems. It was a very important sort of a thing, I thought.

Lage: Did your club members that were more involved in wilderness issues carry out an interest in urban issues, too?

Evans: Not too much. It was more like new people. The first effort was to get a grudging acceptance that this was a proper issue. You know, there were the usual debates inside the club, as in any organization, about whether this was the proper thing. We ought to be saving the wilderness. We've got too much to do out here. We can't do all these other things too.

Evans: And I would just try to say, "Look, you know, we'll bring in new people to work on these things. Let's give it a broad ambit and a broad scope, and it's better that way, and it'll help us later on." It sort of gradually happened that way. We'd recruit a band of people who wanted to work on urban issues and turn them loose and let them be very active and do things like that. The future John Hotlzclaw's [San Francisco Bay Chapter leader] would come out of things like this and do their thing. And we got a lot of good people that way.

It's also a way to identify with your community a little bit more. You feel like you're a better community-oriented organization-- recycling and picking up trash and all those things that ought to be done. It's part of being part of your community.

So that was the idea, and it just seemed to sort of come naturally over the years, gradually an evolutionary process.

Lage: Now what percent of your time would you say you spent on issues like that in the Northwest?

Evans: Urban kinds of issues? Ten, twenty percent, maybe something like that, overall. The freeway fight took an enormous amount of my time in those early years. I was really passionately involved, and I spent more time than I probably should have and that Mike knew about, I'm sure. He probably wouldn't have liked it if I did tell him, but we couldn't let that freeway go through. I learned a lot from those issues.

IX EARLY EFFORTS TO SAVE ALASKA

[Interview 2: June 7, 1982]##

Initial Involvement in Alaskan Issues

Lage: Before we start, would you repeat for the record what you have been telling me about your preparations for this interview?

Evans: To try to respond to what you said in your letter, to try to get ready for this interview, I went up into my attic this weekend to sift through what papers I've kept with me, which were very few. Most of them I've sent to archives or threw away or whatever.

The problem I've had in thinking about this interview was trying to remember what I'd done over the past eight years when I ran the Sierra Club Washington office here, and I have not been able to remember very much of it at all. It's such a shifting thing. It's a blur, everything ran into everything else, and I couldn't remember any specifics of anything very much. Just a few things stand out in my mind. One thing ran into the next, and it's hard to even remember little vignettes.

Finally, I found out why when I went into the attic. I had little time; I was doing all sorts of other things all weekend, including the kids, and soccer games, and taking things out of the attic, and cars to be fixed, and all the rest of it. But I just pulled out a few files. They were the first ones I saw. There wasn't any order to them because I'm not a very orderly person, as you can see from around you. I realized it's such a rich record. There's so much. I can't believe that all those things were done, given the resources and materials we had to work with all the time. That's why; it was just too much. It was too much for any--at least a mentality like mine to absorb.

Lage: Well, hopefully, the papers are going to reflect this, and those papers that you have in your attic eventually will go somewhere.

Evans: Eventually they'll go somewhere too.

Lage: Did you take more personal things home?

Evans: Yes, I took a lot of the personal things home with me and back with me.

Lage: What I've seen so far in The Bancroft Library is not that much related to you; it's very impersonal.

Evans: Yes. The personal things I kept. For example, here's a fifteen-page memorandum after our defeat on the forestry bill in 1976. That's an analysis of what happened, and only a few people got it. I don't know if it ever made the archives or not. I kept the personal things that I could.

Lage: And you have vignettes in here.

Evans: There are vignettes all through it, anecdotes and vignettes, everywhere. Reading through my own letters and memoranda, there's an awful lot of that because that's sort of my style, you know, the vignettes and the anecdotes and everything else in there. So I'm not so sure how much of what we sent to Bancroft finally is more than the bare bones of what went on. That's, of course, I know, what we're here to talk about. But that's the reason it was such a blur to me, because it was too much.

Lage: Well, we're just going to select almost arbitrarily.

Evans: We'll just select. That's right.

Lage: And hopefully some of the organization I've tried to give to it will bring things back to you.

Evans: That's right. And the examples you gave, I may decide other examples would be better, because I think your concern is not so much the details of specific campaigns as how it worked and why it did.

Lage: That's right.

Evans: And what we did and what the Sierra Club was, let's say, when I came or before I came and what it was during and afterward, too.

Lage: Right. I thought Alaska would be a good one to illustrate that, but you may--

Evans: Alaska may not be from my personal standpoint. It was almost too big and too enormous, and it was beyond me. I certainly played my part all the way through, but so did hundreds of others play their parts.

Lage: Let's start with your work as Pacific Northwest rep on the Alaska question.

Evans: I first became involved, concerned about Alaska, in about 1965 when I was still a lawyer in Seattle. The newspaper was called The Daily Journal of Commerce, and I remember reading about a big timber sale on Admiralty Island in Alaska, and this was when I was getting passionately involved in the environmental movement there. The idea of a timber sale upset me, and this upset me too, and I remember reading a little bit about it.

I was a member of the Seattle Mountaineers then, and I remember going to the Mountaineers with this newspaper clipping and saying, "What's going on up here?" There were some old Alaska hands, and they said, "Oh, that's terrible. Admiralty is a beautiful place," and that's when I first heard about it. We filed a resolution of protest or something. This was 1965. That was the first timber sale.

Lage: And this was sight unseen? You hadn't been to Alaska?

Evans: Yes. I just knew it was bad. It was a million acres, and it was a one hundred- or fifty-year contract. I mean, that couldn't be good. It just couldn't be. Something had to be terrible. They were selling it for \$2.65 a thousand, an enormously cheap price, and it just sounded like a total giveaway. As it turned out, in fact, later, that was true because the Forest Service was hell-bent on attracting more economic structure to Alaska and more business, and they'd give away the timber just to get it: "You agree to set up a mill, and we'll give you the timber." Forget the eagles and the wildlife and everything else.

Lage: How did they see that as their role, I wonder?

Evans: It was a self-appointed role because the people who go to forestry school believe in logging off of trees. That's the long and short of it, and that's the human side of all of these disputes. When you're a forester, big old trees are dying and diseased and decadent, and they aren't any good unless they're put to use, and the use doesn't mean to view them or for the wildlife or for water. It means logging; it means cutting.

Lage: And to do that you need to get the mills in.

Evans: That's right. These were Japanese companies, by the way. It wasn't going to us; it was going to Japan, and mostly in the form of pulp, these big old trees. But that's another story.

Evans: Then I became the Northwest representative in 1967, and Alaska was part of my territory at that time. I didn't get up there until a year later. But I remember the first timber sale fell through. A company picked it up--Georgia Pacific, I think--and then defaulted, decided not to go through. It was still too expensive for them to do it. In 1967 the second timber sale was announced, and I remember writing letters (and the file's probably somewhere) protesting it. But, you know, it was already sold. What did we know? What could we do? It went ahead.

I remember in August of 1967 making a proposal to the Sierra Club Board for three new national parks they should endorse: the Southeast Alaska National Park in the Archipelago that I still had not yet seen, but I had read a lot about it and seen the pictures, and it was in all the files; Hells Canyon National Park; and an Oregon Cascades National Park, three big magnificent units to the system. That was a proposal just to see what we could do.

Lage: Now, that was the year the club made Alaska a priority for the first time, wasn't it, '67?

Evans: It may have been. I'm not sure. It was right around that period of time that, of course, Ed Wayburn was getting very concerned too, and I was concerned.

The next specific I remember at this time was that in about March of 1968 a letter that went to San Francisco from three schoolteachers on Hoonah Sound on Chicagof Island was forwarded to me because I was the representative. They said, "We know the Forest Service has a fifty-year timber sale here. What can we do to fight it?"

I remember writing them a long letter back, saying, "Of course, the Forest Service will do this. Then you do this, and the Forest Service will say this, but don't let that worry you. Then you do this, and then the Forest Service will say this, and don't let that worry you either. Then the Forest Service--" I gave them a very detailed letter about all the things to do.

Years later I talked to Jack Calvin, who was one of the people involved up there in the Sitka Conservation Society. He said, "That was incredible. Your credibility really went way up because everything you said the Forest Service would do was exactly what they did, word for word."

Lage: Did these schoolteachers have a base of operations, a group?

Evans: No, they were just three schoolteachers up there, but that later became the Sitka Conservation Society. The sequence of events is not quite clear to me, and it's probably in the archives at the University of Washington.

Early Trips to Alaska

Evans: In July of 1968, Ed Wayburn and I and our wives went to Alaska to meet Jack Calvin and the then beginning Sitka Conservation Society. We took a three- or four-day boat trip around the Archipelagos, especially to West Chicagof, with him, going in and out and exploring the place and learning a lot. For me it was my first trip in Alaska, and I was very awed and impressed. Later on Rachel and I went to Juneau and met with the local people there and then flew over the Juneau ice cap and went to Glacier Bay, so I got fairly familiar with some of it there.

It was during that time that Ed and I were chased by a brown bear up there. I don't know if he told this when you interviewed him, but he and I have a different version of the story.

Lage: Well, he and Peggy have different versions. [laughter]

Evans: That's right.

Lage: Tell me your version.

Evans: So I will tell you my version, which is verified not only by my wife, who's prejudiced, but also by Jack Calvin, who was there.

Ed and I were in the front. This was in a logging operation on West Chicagof Island. Then Jack Calvin was in the middle and then our wives were in the back. The bear came around the corner, and I'd forgotten everything I'd learned about grizzly bears and brown bears and things. You're supposed to stand your ground and so on. I thought, "We're going to die. Let's get out of here!" So I said to Ed, "My God, there's a bear! Let's go!"

So we both turned and ran. See, Ed denies that he ran, but Ed ran like a rabbit. I'll tell you that, and Jack Calvin agrees with me that he ran like a rabbit, just like me. We both ran past our startled guide and past our wives, who also ran like rabbits. Jack Calvin stood the bear off himself.

There's a lot more to the story than that, but since I'm sure Ed has his version on the record, I have to get mine on the record too, that he ran the same as all the rest of us did, even though he will never let himself admit that. [chuckles] But that was our introduction to Alaskan wildlife, you might say.

Lage: [laughter] I think Peggy put something about that in her book Adventuring in Alaska.

Evans: She did and she never mentions--she said Ed held his ground, or something like that, and every time I see him we kid about it. Anyhow, all I can say is Jack Calvin agrees with my version of it.

But, in any event, at the same time, we came back after that trip, and Ed and I checked into the Baranof Hotel in Juneau, and there was a big headline: "Oil strike in Prudhoe Bay." There it was, and we both looked at each other, and we knew this was the end of an era, the beginning of something else.

Not too much detail here now because it's blurry in my mind; it's part of the Northwest Archives, in any event [at the University of Washington]. But one of my major concerns then was the Arctic Wildlife Range. We all thought that was going to be destroyed next. Remember, all of this coincided with Wally Hickel and his nomination for secretary of Interior a few months later. I think we talked in an earlier interview about the long fight that I was very active in because as Alaska rep I was the only one who really knew much about his record, and we funneled lots of information back there. Hickel was always talking about opening up Alaska and, you know, all the Alaska rhetoric, the development rhetoric, that you always get.

Well, I remember a major concern. A fellow named Wilbur Mills came into my office. Wilbur was a well-known photographer. You've seen a lot of his stuff. He loved the Arctic Wildlife Range, and his pictures really impressed me, and so, I remember, at the Wilderness Conference in San Francisco in 1969 Wilbur and I put together a little brochure about the Arctic Wildlife Range and had an exhibit on it. I remember giving a speech and debating Howard Johnson, the regional forester then, on Alaska. I think it was I who put together the very first map of all the areas we wanted in Alaska. It was part of my speech. It was sort of an appendix there.

Lage: And how did you develop that?

Evans: It was based on extensive conversations with our people in Alaska, because these places were just names on maps to me, or the vaguest kind of names.

Lage: So that really came out of the Alaska conservation people.

Evans: It really did. It really did. They knew most about it. Even they--some of these places like Nowitna, you know, nobody had ever heard of before; few people have ever been there. Togiak.

Lage: What was the first place you mentioned?

Evans: Nowitna, which is now a wildlife refuge, or Togiak, was unknown. The places that were known were Gates of the Arctic, the Wrangells, the Arctic Wildlife Range, some of the Southeast areas, and a few places like that. The immense sophistication came much later, from the years 1976 to '80. But then it was all terra incognita to many of us, certainly myself included, just the vaguest sorts of things.

I remember going up there on an organizing trip in the summer of 1969 when the BLM [Bureau of Land Management] held its first hearings on the pipeline, and that's when we organized the Alaska Chapter of the Sierra Club. We had members there before like Mark Ganapole and others. This was when we really started getting off the ground. We're running ahead of the story somewhat, but it's all part of the sequence, I think.

There was a lot of ferment in Alaska at that time. The oil strike was announced, then we all held our breath, then we went back from our trip, and I went back to all the Northwest battles and campaigns.

It was in early 1969 that Mark Ganapole and others who'd been very active there--I cannot remember all the names now, but Ed probably does--organized the Alaska Wilderness Council, and I was a member of it. We had a meeting in Juneau in the winter of 1969 where we tried to put together some of these various pieces, tried to bring together people from around the state who'd been working on various different pieces. As you know, there's a big dichotomy between Southeast and the interior; I mean, between Juneau and Anchorage. We had three or four glorious days there trying to put together a lot of things, and talking, and a lot of parties, and just really getting together on this.

Then we had the Wilderness Conference very shortly after. I hope I get my dates right, but I think that was about the time. That's when I put together the first compendium as I saw what our views were and debated Howard Johnson, the regional forester. Ed and I had gone in to see him that summer before and realized there was no way we were ever going to rely on the Forest Service to save anything in Southeast Alaska. They were going to log it all. It was all a part of the allowable cut except for a few bits and pieces in natural areas. That was typical of the Forest Service anywhere and certainly in Alaska.

Then, in the summer, I went up again in August. The pipeline matter went apace, and in August of 1969 the BLM called its first hearings on proposed stipulations to decide if the line was to be built, what were the stipulations to protect wildlife and all these diverse kinds of things? Of course, the knowledge of arctic environments was very, very rudimentary at that particular time.

Evans: So I went up there again. I think Ed may have been there too. That's when I saw a lot more of Alaska. We spent a lot of time in Anchorage and drove through and saw the Wrangells and went over to Valdez. I'm glad I saw Valdez before the oil pipeline came through. It was a very different kind of place then. We went all through the Kenai Peninsula, went to Fairbanks, and took the train, the Alaskan Railroad, and saw a lot of Alaska, or relatively, you know, the parts of Alaska you could reach by car or by train--and I saw about all of it.

The Sierra Club in Alaska

Evans: The biggest part of the job was trying to organize our people and get them going. I remember very, very clearly. We had a meeting in Anchorage of the Sierra Club people in Anchorage and also then a meeting in Fairbanks. We were organizing an Anchorage group and a Fairbanks group, in effect. In Anchorage people were willing to be pretty strong. The Fairbanks people were very afraid. I remember long arguments with Bob Weeden, who is now on Audubon [Society] board and became our first Alaska rep later. Bob said, "We're Alaskans, and we can't be against development; we'll be dead right here if we do anything like that." I remember passionate statements like, "We're the Sierra Club! Somebody's got to speak up on this! Do you all want this pipeline?" Everybody said, "No, we don't want it."

Lage: These were Sierra Club people? '

Evans: These were Sierra Club people in Alaska. "Then if we don't want it, we've got to say so and do that." It was very, very tense and very interesting.

Gordon Wright was the first chairman of the Sierra Club group. He's a conductor of the Alaska State Symphony Orchestra, and it was in his house that we held that meeting.

Lage: What was their fear? Was it specific fear of losing their jobs? Was it that personal?

Evans: No, it was more a fear of just being pariahs in the community, more a fear of just being ostracized and totally out of step with everything else, because the development fever was and always has been, as you know, very high in Alaska. So it was like that.

So we organized. Finally we did organize an effort. We did get people to say--I forget exactly what it was now, but I remember drafting up the first flyers, the first mailers, the first fact

Evans: sheets on it all, when I was there. There was a big conference at the University of Alaska also where they had scientists from around the North talking about these things, so that the effort was building and growing in that way.

Lage: Did you bring Bob Weeden and others around? You say he was our first Alaska rep. Was he by that time seeing things your way?

Evans: Only to a degree. Bob has always been more conservative, I would say, than most Sierra Club people are. That's why he didn't last long as our representative either. His sentiments, his feelings, are just the same. I always felt that Bob was a little suspicious of us. Our personal styles or whatever it was were just different. He's a scientist by training and nature, and quieter, and a whole lot of different things. He's on the Audubon board right now. I see him a lot, and he's a great guy, but I think it was a little too much. I think he also was concerned about his own future, and to be the Sierra Club public person up there in Alaska every day does not help one's future if you want to have a career with a government agency or somewhere like that. That was a big concern to him.

The sequence of events is a little unclear to me after that. I remember heavy involvement in West Chichagof and the Southeast. The Southeast was my baby. I just love the Southeast.

I remember the next thing. I think it was flying up to that Wilderness Conference in the winter of 1969. We flew up the whole magnificent coast, British Columbia and Southeast Alaska, great big mountains coming down to the sea and this immense green train of forest and the great tumbling rivers and the islands all cloaked with this cover of green. Every now and then you'd see the big swatches of clearcuts all over, and you'd see what was happening to it, and it was all clear.

I remember looking out that window then in the plane before we landed at Juneau and thinking, "We've got to do something to save this place," because the second timber sale had then fallen through, and we knew they were preparing a third timber sale, once more on Admiralty Island, which I'd only flown over the summer before and had never really seen much. That's when I got the idea for the lawsuit. I thought, "We have to have a lawsuit to save this little place." There were long discussions, and they ought to be reflected in the archives somewhere that--

Lage: I thought the lawsuit started sooner.

Evans: The lawsuit started in 1970, the spring of 1970. Now, in '70 or '71--I forget which--was the lawsuit against the Admiralty Island timber sale. What I remember about it especially was that we kept

Evans: it quiet from our Juneau group. The former mayor of Juneau was big in the Sierra Club group, part of the establishment and all that. The Sierra Club wasn't thought of so badly at that time. But we didn't dare tell our Juneau group in advance. We thought they'd try to talk us out of it and wouldn't like it. We knew we had to do it to save Admiralty Island.

So the moment we filed the lawsuit, we called them up then so they could respond to the press. We didn't tell them ahead of time to tip them off. It was one of the few times that the Sierra Club has not worked closely hand-in-hand with the locals, because the Alaskan chapters have always been much more conservative. They're very parochial about being Alaskans, and we're outsiders, and they use the old Alaskan rhetoric about outside and inside, and so on.

Lage: So that's a problem within the club as well as--

Evans: It's always been, yes. During the whole Alaska campaign it was like that. To give them credit, you know, they really had a rough row to hoe, and they were up there with their neighbors hating them and so on, and we were down here safer, and we could not let them ever be more conservative than we were. There was a national interest at stake here, and it's one of the few times when a local Sierra Club entity was much more conservative than the national entity. There was a good deal of tension between Ed Wayburn, as you probably know, and some of the Alaska Chapter people.

Lage: He doesn't talk about that.

Evans: I mean some of the Alaska people still mutter to me about their perception of Ed's taking too much to himself and so on. It's a real sensitivity to Alaskans, whether it was true or not.

Lage: Is that because of his personal style, or is it philosophical differences that they have?

Evans: Both. It's his personal style I think; a perception of an unwillingness to communicate, and when he did communicate it was sort of, "We're telling you what to do." The substance probably wasn't any different, you know, like Bob Weeden's substance probably isn't much different from mine or yours, but the style was different; therefore, the way the substance is communicated. That's what they told me they felt, anyway.

Lage: Plus, the willingness to compromise is different.

Evans: Yes, and they were much more willing to compromise than we were, too.

Lage: I had understood that in the final compromise, 1980, they were not willing to compromise; they weren't happy with it.

Evans: The Southeast people were not. The Southeast people really got screwed in that whole thing. But by then--that's the way all these things evolve. You have to take all these things in context, and what seems like a radical thing in 1965 is nothing in 1970 and is conservative in 1975. So what happened in the mid-1970s is you had the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council and other groups coming into the fore, who were never there in the early years when we were debating these things and all was desperate. In the years when Howard Johnson was telling us that everything was already sold and committed in Southeast Alaska, there wasn't any SEACC down there then; there wasn't any SEACC for five or six years.

So you get all the young new Turks coming in. It's classic in any kind of movement, I think. It's great. I mean, I think it's wonderful. I was probably there once myself, and some people working on the Mount St. Helens legislation now think I'm selling them out on Mount St. Helens, when a month ago there was no hope of getting 115,000 acres; we were down to 95,000. Now I got them up to 115,000, and we've got most of the things we want in it. The people in Seattle who didn't live through all this are saying, "What's the matter with that damn Evans? Why didn't he get more for us?" Because there was no way. We're doing darn well.

The context of the times is always very important to evaluate these things and the judgments of one generation cannot be applied to the judgments of the previous generation. You just go on, and hope it's a long continuum going on and on.

But, in any event, that's what happened in Alaska later on. Sure, the Southeast people really got screwed, but it was a miracle that Southeast Alaska was even in the bill at all. There was no justification under the Native Claims Act of 1971 that anything in the Southeast was ever thought to be part of this. It was always going to be separate. It was a specific strategic decision we made in 1976-'77 and heavily debated, by the way, too, whether to put Southeast Alaska in it at all. Some thought that would drag down the whole rest of the bill.

Lage: What was the date on that?

Evans: It must have been 1977, when we first formed the Alaska Coalition--how are we going to do this? That was really an add on. Remember, the Native Claims Act amendments, which we get to next, I guess, in the Alaskan saga, and I wasn't deeply involved in that battle. Jack Hession and Ed were and many others. It specifically said that, "The secretary of Interior has to withdraw 80 million acres

Evans: of public interest land." That was never considered to be southeast Alaska. That was already National Forest. That was already there. That wasn't any part of that 80 million acres. We got 100 million acres later because we added all sorts of stuff. Anyhow, that's the context of all these things always, as it always must be.

Organizing in Alaska

Evans: Let's go back to the pipeline now. I know that's the main thread of interest. I went up to Alaska a lot, spent most of my time in Southeast and Sitka. I remember going to Ketchikan. I remember I went to Ketchikan in March of 1971, for example, and met with the Tongass Conservation Society, I guess, or one of the local chapters in Southeast Alaska, but they were really small. We met at the home of Buster Dioron, who was a logger who was ostracized by the townspeople. It says that in a newspaper article I came across.

We had to sneak in the back door, sort of one at a time because there was really an awful lot of hate about any kind of conservation there.

Lage: When you say "logger," do you mean he actually worked on the--

Evans: He was a logger. He worked out in the woods logging. He was a big, burly kind of a guy. He was really one of the few people willing to stick his neck out and do this sort of thing.

The day I got there, there was a big headline, "Margaret Piggott Fired for Conservationist Activity." Margaret Piggott was one of our activists in Southeast Alaska. She was a physical therapist who traveled on the ferry from city to city doing physical therapy for the Elks. She was in public service for the Elks. She showed me a copy of the letter that the Elks had written her saying, "I hear you are involved in that there Sierra Club or some group like that. I don't care which one it is, but you're fired for your activities." Just as blunt and blatant as all that.

Lage: So their fears were certainly not poorly founded!

Evans: They were very real. Rich Gordon, our key guy in Juneau, Alaska, was fired from his job as a librarian for that sort of thing. It was very, very typical. Alaska is worse even than Utah or some place like that to be a conservationist, Southeast Alaska.

Lage: I was going to ask you what the differences were. You organized Oregon; you organized Washington, and this must have been the primary difference.

Evans: Yes, but it was bad in those places too, and our people would get beat up and harassed and things like that at various kinds of hearings and functions. There was an awful lot of hate there. But in the Southeast, my theory on it was that you get the mountains coming down into the sea, and you have these little tiny towns at the base of these mountains, and there aren't any through roads. Up in Ketchikan the main road is about thirteen miles long up and down the side of the cliff right there, and that's basically about it. There is no place to go. It's a very insular society. It's all based on logging and fishing, but the fishermen are always out fishing, and they aren't organizers anyhow, so they are never speaking up. We did all of the fishermen's fighting for them until recently.

The loggers up there are very, very virulent. I am not sure exactly why, but they are very angry, and that's the main payroll in town. And the mill people (management) were there. They are college educated, and they were whipping them up all the time, and they hate standing trees anyhow by philosophy. It was a very angry kind of a thing. I cannot overemphasize the viciousness of it. So there is no escape in those towns. You can't drive anywhere else, and it's all based on this primary extractive economy anyhow.

The thing that saved us in Sitka and why Sitka was fruitful ground was that there was a hospital there, so you had doctors from outside who came and said, "This is beautiful. I don't make my living from tearing this up. We ought to save it." That's how the Sitka Conservation Society began. In Juneau, what saved us was that we had the capital with some government. There were other sources of employment; that's often what the difference is. In Skagway or Haines there was no chance for anything like that. Petersburg was fishing, and we had some people there, but it was mostly fishing, but Wrangell, no way. Ketchikan was all logging. It was hopeless down there, but that was sort of the way it broke out.

Lage: How was Buster Dioron different from the others?

Evans: He was tougher. He really believed in it. He was a big, blunt, outspoken guy, but every now and then you run into a logger like that. In Oregon, we ran into one, too, a guy by the name of Bob Ziak, who was willing to speak out and take on his buddies and things like that. It's very rare. It would take an awful lot of guts.

Lage: And a different point of view.

Evans: Yes. Well, yes. Now, Buster Dioron wasn't allowed to participate in the logging championships they had anymore. His kids couldn't play with anybody at school, and it was really tough, and he finally had to drop out. He had a really tough time, and those are the people who sacrificed an awful lot during those years in Alaska.

Now, we come to the pipeline. Do you remember the Native Claims Settlement Act in '71, which was rushed through finally after years of not rushing anything through, so that we could get something going with the pipeline? Once big oil was interested in it, all at once there became some movement there.

The main events on the pipeline issue were being played out here with the lawsuit that was filed, with negotiations over the environmental impact statement thing. That was back here [in Washington, D.C.], and I was back in the Northwest. Then the Native Claims Settlement Act went right through. We got this wonderful victory, I think, at the last minute. We got this public lands--the public interest section--through. That was a real stroke of luck and good timing and everything else that we got that finally through.

Then in 1972, I guess, the Wilderness Society filed its lawsuit. I remember big arguments with Jim Moorman over the phone. Moorman was the lawyer back here. He wasn't associated with the Sierra Club at that time. Moorman was calling me up for information of some kind, and he says, "We're arguing in the court case that this thing ought to go through Canada instead of going down to the sea because of earthquakes and things like that." I said, "Gee," my alarm bells were ringing, "How do you get through to Canada?" He said, "We go right across the north slope." I said, "That's the Arctic Wildlife Range up there. You can't go across the north slope." He said, "It's a lot safer than going this other way." I don't think he knew much about the type of environment there. We had an argument about it, and he hung up on me, he was so mad.

Lage: There you have the problem we talked about last time, the lawyers--

Evans: Yes, exactly--

Lage: --and political strategists--

Evans: He wanted to win his case and do his thing. Jim and I had clashes over the years on this sort of thing. I remember we had an argument over Admiralty Island when I thought he was going to sell some of it out. I had to argue him down in front of the board of directors. Jim did not seem too fond of me, I don't think, in those days. We had it over the Forest Management Act campaign in 1976,

Evans: which we may come back to a little bit later, but it goes on and on, this sort of thing with the lawyers not understanding the politics of these things, willing to give away more than I think should be done. That's another--

Lage: Of course, this wasn't even politics. It was that they did not understand the land.

Evans: That's right. He had not been there or seen any of these places.

Lage: But he wasn't with the Sierra Club then?

Evans: No, he was--I forget who he was with, now. I can't remember who he was with, but he was here then. That brings us more or less up to 1973 when I came here.

Moving to Washington, D.C.

Evans: To back up quickly, it was in late August of '72 that Ed Wayburn called me up, probably because I was closer friends with Ed than anybody else on the board at that time, to ask me if I would go back to Washington because Lloyd Tupling was going to retire. Now, I had been back here quite a number of times before that, lobbying on various Northwest issues. I spent about an average of four or five or six weeks a year back here at different times working on various Northwest issues.

I remember when he first asked me, I sort of laughed and snickered on the phone and said, "Who would ever leave a place like this, like Seattle, to come back to a place like that?" And I said I couldn't consider it. But he called up again, several times, and tried to persuade or talk about it again. All at once, something peculiar happened inside me, and it seemed as if I had to go. It just seemed that I should really seriously think about this, even if it didn't seem right at first. They said the Sierra Club office needed some building up, to come back here, because then it was just Lloyd Tupling and Linda Billings basically, and half-time another person or so, and it was much too small for what was going on and what was building all of the time.

I remember going to Asilomar where I met you [for the first interview]. I have very full memories of that, as a matter of fact, when I was there this last time. I was at Asilomar on Labor Day of 1972 because that was where the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs had its annual convention that particular year. I remember walking on the beach out there with Mike McCloskey in the early

Evans: morning, and Mike was trying to talk me into coming, and I was thinking about it, and I was thinking of all of the arguments I possibly could for not going, but at the same time I had the greatest feeling of pain inside, an ache inside--

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Evans: This is all part of the Alaska pipeline story.

Lage: We wanted to talk about that.

Evans: But it was like losing a lover, that was how I felt, my beloved Northwest, and all of the people I had loved there and all the land I loved so much and all of the years I--that's exactly how I felt. In fact I got this awful, aching pain inside, and I kept trying to put up all of the reasons why I shouldn't go, and Mike kept answering them, but I knew I was right in terms of the love and emotions I felt. But somehow I felt I had to consider it at least, and it was just terribly, terribly painful. I remember it ruined my whole time up there.

I remember going back the whole long way and thinking about it and talking about it and calling my staff together in the Northwest and telling them what I was thinking of doing, and we all went on hikes together and talked together. Finally, one of them said, "You have made up your mind already." I kept insisting I hadn't made up my mind, that I wasn't going to do it, that I really probably wasn't going to do it. He said, "I can see in your voice and your eyes, you are probably going to do it," and I kept denying it all of the time.

Finally, in October of '72, late October, the club paid Rachel's and my way back to Washington. I said, "We'll come back and take a look at least, and if we don't like it, we'll make our decision then." So they paid both of our ways back, and we drove all around, and we realized that there were civilized neighborhoods around outside of the downtown area, here and there were pleasant places where children were playing in the yards, and it really wasn't that bad of a city to live in after all, in spite of all that I thought. I was sort of hoping it would be a terrible place to live, but it wasn't that bad; it hasn't been that bad.

Finally, on the way back we made an agreement, Rachel and I, that, okay, we would go on a temporary basis, and if she didn't like it within two years we would come back. It was on that basis that I agreed in November to come here, and it was just really a very, very traumatic time to experience--the house we now live in (in Washington) we had only seen for twenty minutes before we came here; we looked at various houses for sale. I remember we decided to come, so I called him up and made a bid on it, and it was an outrageous

Evans: price. It was twice what a Seattle house cost and nowhere near as nice, and I couldn't remember what it looked like after we got the house, and the Sierra Club had to help me make the down payment. I didn't have any up front money to do this, and I have no independent source of income whatsoever and no inheritance, nothing like that.

So financially it turned out to be a disaster to move out here. We had to sell our house at a steal out there and didn't make enough to pay for the new house or get going. We had an income tax here and they didn't have one in Washington State. Even though I got a raise, I was making less money than before. The trauma of leaving all of the friends, all of the old associations in the Northwest was very, very painful. There were farewell parties and tears, and it was just really very painful. My second son was born two weeks before the movers came. He was born on January 14, and the movers came--actually, the movers came about January 20. He was born a week before the movers came, and then we moved out here on January 31 of 1973.

I still remember so plainly landing here on the plane and--well, in the first place, we lived in Rachel's parent's house in Seattle with the newborn baby getting up around the clock, every four hours like that, in a little tiny room about twice as big as this. I guess it was the living room. We all four--we had a three-year old son and a little baby.

Then we got on the plane, and we all moved out here to this strange new place and said good-bye to everything we knew and, you know, the beloved Northwest gone forever, and landed here. Friends picked us up and took us to another friend's house. We lived for two more weeks in a room about half the size of this, all four of us together, because the movers hadn't come. No one knew where our furniture was. It was in Wyoming somewhere. Who the hell knew where it was?

I wasn't able to come to work. I was trying to take care of the family and everything like that and finally I just had to go to work, and I just couldn't wait any longer. I remember one of the movers called up and said, "We're here, where do we go?" I told him where, and I remember leaving Rachel sitting on the steps of our empty house, which was a gloomy, dreary place, and we didn't like it at all, and we burst into tears when we saw it again: Is this what we bought? We're finished; it's all over. There was a baby crying in her arms and the three-year old tugging on her sleeve, "Mommy, Mommy." I said, "Good-bye, honey, I've got to go to work." You know, like that. There it was; it was just awful. There are lots of nightmarish stories about the whole thing. It was very, very traumatic.

Lage: Did you move here in town?

Evans: Yes, I lived in the District. I was living in the northwest part of the District. We didn't want to live in the suburbs or commute forever, and Rachel didn't want any part of Virginia, which was a southern state. She didn't want any part of all that and so the District was the only place we could live--which I am very glad. It's very pleasant actually up there now that we are settled.

But it was very nightmarish and very traumatic, and I plunged immediately into the storm here. A couple of days after I came here to work (this comes back to the Alaska pipeline) I was trying to take care of the baby and find the furniture and unpack things and all of the rest of the nightmares and crying every night because Seattle wasn't there and all the rest of it--and right then the appellate court released its decision on the Alaska pipeline case, and it upheld our position. It said that it's a violation of the Mineral Leasing Act to make this pipeline take place. You can't do all of that. You have got to amend the Mineral Leasing Act first. Well, you might imagine what happened. It precipitated the most violent political counterreaction in Congress. The roof just crashed down upon us. I wasn't here a week or so when all of this happened. All at once, senators and congressmen started putting in bills to amend the Mineral Leasing Act and just totally wipe it away and amend NEPA, and get this thing going, get this thing moving out of the way.

So next six months--it was March through August--that's what I remember most about my first six months here. I am sure there were other issues going on, but my time was totally absorbed by fighting the Alaskan oil pipeline. It was the first real assault on our ascendancy in years.

The First Alaska Coalition and the Oil Pipeline

Evans: We tried to make a big fight of it, and that was the first Alaska coalition. We called ourself the Alaska Public Interest Coalition, and I was the chairman of it.

Lage: That's when it was brought together?

Evans: That was the first one. There were three Alaska coalitions basically, and I was chairman of the first two.

Lage: Now, who was in that Alaska Public Interest Coalition? What I have used as background, and I hope you remember this, was a memo you wrote at the end of that battle. Do you recall that? Apparently, Ray Sherwin suggested that the club had not fought hard enough--

Evans: Oh, yes.

Lage: And you and Linda Billings and Dick Lahn, I guess, wrote this extensive memo outlining exactly what you had done.

Evans: That's right.

Lage: It was a good record.

Evans: Okay, good, I forgot we had done that, but I remember it now. Anyhow, the first Alaska coalition was really much more ad hoc than the third one. The third one was the most successful and the best one, obviously, the best organized and the best resources, everything. The first one was really a paper thing. It was myself, Stewart Brandborg of the Wilderness Society and George Alderson of Friends of the Earth. That was who were the main players in it, plus our organizations.

Lage: You mentioned in the memo that other people didn't help, that those three were the only ones.

Evans: No, that was really it. We could not get Audubon to do very much until the very, very last, or very much at all. The National Wildlife Federation was against us. The other groups in town really weren't doing much. It was really basically just those three.

Lage: What was the problem getting the others?

Evans: The Wildlife Federation thought it was too radical to be opposed to this oil line. It was too much. They were fearful, and they were afraid. That was part of it. The other part of it was that they didn't like us basically, then. We were the Sierra Club; it was the new, aggressive, brash kid on the block coming in. It may have been partly personal style. I don't know in retrospect. Lloyd Tupling, my predecessor, was a nice, sweet, older guy that everybody knew and loved and respected, a very good lobbyist, too, but he wasn't very aggressive, and he wasn't very out front on many things and even though the club was hard charging, the image was--

Lage: The image back here might have been different.

Evans: Yes, the image back here was very, very different. I was sort of the young kid coming in from the Northwest. This gets into relations with other groups, but we may as well leave it in because it all is tied into together.

Lage: That's right, rather than talking about it separately.

Evans: There has always been sort of a right wing and a left wing to the movement, just for descriptive purposes only, and we were certainly considered to be very much in the left wing then and Friends of the Earth only a little bit further to the left than we were. The Wildlife Federation and the Wildlife Management Institute and the American Forestry Association and the Audubon Society were very much in the right wing in those particular days.

Lage: The Audubon with those other groups?

Evans: The Audubon certainly, too, very conservative people. Charlie Callison who was a good guy personally; he was their executive director, but the board was very conservative, and you couldn't get them in very much. They were fearful of their tax status. They all saw what happened to the Sierra Club in the Grand Canyon fight, and how we lost our status there. So even what slight predilections there might have been to be more aggressive politically were certainly dampened by all of that.

To add on to all of that, there was probably something personal in it. Tom Kimball was the director of the Wildlife Federation and Bill Towell was the American Forestry Association. They went on down to Argentina in the fall of '72 to speak at a World Forestry Congress down there, and I saw a copy of their speech. Somehow it came across; it was sent to me. They blasted preservationists, and they blasted wilderness. They thought they were far enough away so nobody would see it back here, but it all got back here. They blasted the wilderness idea in front of all of these foresters from all over the world. Foresters don't like wilderness anyhow, but it didn't help to have these conservationists-- here they were called conservationists, they said, "We're the true conservationists, and we don't like wilderness any."

So I took the liberty of circulating the speech around to some of the affiliates of the National Wildlife Federation in Idaho and Montana who were my good friends--and Wyoming--because those people loved wilderness there, and they were great fighters for it. So I circulated all that around--you know, "No comment, I just thought you ought to see what's been said down there."

That all, of course, got back, and they didn't like that. This was before I knew I was coming back here. I might not have done it otherwise, but I was really mad. So when I came here, Tom Kimball and Bill Towell would not speak to me for a year. Backs were turned on me--

Lage: They knew you had been responsible for that.

Evans: Yes, sure they did, and the fact is I had to apologize to them later, although I felt I was certainly within my bounds to do that. Nevertheless, that didn't help anything very much. Later on, we became very good friends. We became fast friends, and I consider them now among my closest allies and so on, but it took awhile for them to-- it was that plus the fact that I was so much younger than any of the other heads of any offices back here and all of that together, plus my own style was much more aggressive and out front and more public than Lloyd Tupling had been. It probably took some getting use to.

X. THE ALASKA CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

Senate Battles Over the Pipeline

Evans: But I really think in the case of the Alaskan oil pipeline it was the substance of the issue. How was anybody going to oppose getting oil out. We've got to have oil, and it's just a pipeline. It's not hurting anything. They really went out of their way to make it a wilderness versus nonwilderness issue, all of our opponents did. They made it a caribou versus pipeline issue and trivialized the whole thing. So there was a whole potpourri of reasons why we didn't have any more allies, but we just didn't have any more allies. That was all we had.

The battle was first in the Senate. We had a long struggle there. I have some vignettes and anecdotes, if this is an appropriate time to get into them, but the overwhelming impression I had from that struggle was it was sort of like the Polish freedom fighters in Warsaw fighting the Nazis. I don't know how much you know about World War II history, but in 1944 the Polish underground rose up against the Germans before the Russian armies came to rescue them. They wanted to rescue Warsaw by themselves so they would get credit for it.

I saw some movies of it, and I read a lot about it anyhow, and that was exactly how it was. Here was this tiny band of guerrillas with their white arm bands and irregulars without even uniforms fighting the whole power and weight of Nazi Germany all of the time, division after division and paratroopers and bazookas and tanks and all the rest. They held them off for months, and that's the way it was for us--barricade to barricade. We'd set up at a street corner--this was the image I had--and we'd fight until we were bloody at one street corner, and then they would finally overrun our barricade, and we would retreat to the next street corner down one more block, but there were a few less of us, and there was always more and more of them all of the time. There was less and less of us. That's the way it was that whole bitter six months.

Lage: So that was your gut feeling of the battle in Congress?

Evans: Yes, exactly, and then we'd fight another bitter battle, a battle over rules or a hearing, committee hearings, and a battle over markup, and we'd get overwhelmed again, and what's more, we'd fight forever. We'd fight desperate last-minute fights--running here and there and trying to get a few more votes and a delay again and get this and that going on. It's all in the memos. And then we'd get overwhelmed again and retreat again down, down the long street until finally August came along, and there just wasn't any of us left. There wasn't much left. We had exhausted every possible avenue. We couldn't get a delay one more time. It was all--it's a miracle to me now we lasted six months.

Not only that, but the deciding vote was in the Senate. I think the date was about July 16 or so, and the vote was forty-nine to forty-nine on whether to amend NEPA, and Spiro Agnew broke the tie. We came that close to saving almost the whole thing. It's a miracle now looking back on it. There were lots of little things like that.

For example, my image of that campaign forever is the way we went around to see every senator. The main battle was really in the Senate. We saw every single senator and after a lot of pulling and hauling, we actually saw everyone face to face, which is no mean feat and very, very hard to do. We got a lot of hostility, too, but mainly we had to see the staff and the assistants all of the time. Well, here we'd be, two or three of us, a little ragtag band, talking to the third legislative assistant outside standing up or in the hallway of the senator's office while inside the senator's office talking to the senator would be twenty-seven contractors flown up from the home state by the oil companies to talk to him inside about how we had to have that pipeline. That's the way it was.

Lage: And this happened again and again.

Evans: Everywhere, day in and day out, day in and day out. It was overwhelming.

Lage: They weren't open to you. They weren't willing to listen?

Evans: No, no, not very much. Well, they would listen, but our arguments had to be very defensive: "We're not against the pipeline. We just want it to go a different way. We want another study of another way." That's what we were saying we wanted. People said, "You're just trying to hold this thing up. You aren't kidding us any." And probably that was right; we were.

Lage: You were thinking of delay.

Evans: Our real position was we would like to see it come down the way the gas pipeline now is coming, but we had no resources. They were running ads night and day in every media in the country; the whole administration was against us; half of the media was against us. We were a band of extremists fighting for caribou, and we had to get oil out of here and all that sort of thing; jowls were quivering and fingers pointing at us.

Let me tell you the story about the ad. Senator Mondale was our great champion. He and many of the Midwest senators who were our champions favored our position because they wanted the oil to come to the Midwest. There weren't five senators in the whole Senate who believed in it for environmental reasons, but that's all right. We take our allies wherever we can get them.

I remember going into see Mondale, and our spirits were really low--it was day after day in that whole long bitter summer in June or July. It was just awful. He said, "You've got to get an ad." He showed us an oil company ad. He said, "These guys are running ads everyday on this, and I can't stand the heat from my state. Can't you run even one ad?" I said, "We don't have any money. How can we run an ad?" He said, "You've got to do something."

So I remember spending the whole July Fourth weekend. I took my family out to Rehoboth out here on the beach. We spent a weekend at a motel with my little baby and my three-year old, and it was our first time away in a long, long time at the beach, and I remember padding up and down the motel corridor in my bare feet and going to pay phones. I spent all of the July Fourth weekend trying to track down people to raise \$5,000 to run an ad--one ad in the Washington Post, just one ad to show we had some clout, too. My little three-year old said, "Daddy, when are we going to go to the beach?" That's the way it was. I spent the whole damn weekend on the phone. I called Charlie Callison of the Audubon Society. He didn't want to give any money. I had to twist his arm to get him to agree to give some. The Sierra Club was willing to give some, but everybody had to chip in together.

Finally, I raised \$5,000 for an ad, but then we had no fancy ad men to write this thing, so I had to write it myself. We found a volunteer in town here who knew a little bit about public relations and advertising, and he and I got down on our hands and knees in my office right after July Fourth and wrote this ad in a real, real hurry. We had to do it really fast, night after night, writing it out and laying it out on our hands and knees and checking all the facts out. Then we had to persuade the Washington Post to run it. They don't have to run ads, and they were very suspicious of us--weirdos and things like that. They demanded to go over every word. They demanded a source for every single statement we made in the whole thing.

Lage: Is that a usual--

Evans: It certainly is not. It absolutely is not. They demanded cash payment in advance, and I had to get the money order. I think they wanted cash. I can't remember how it came. I remember jumping into a cab. The thing was due by twelve o'clock noon on a certain day, and I remember waiting for the money order from San Francisco to come or wherever it was and getting the cash out of the bank and stuffing a briefcase full just like Watergate and running down there with a briefcase full of money to pay them. It was just the most incredible thing to get that one ad. But that's what it was like, too, again and again and again.

Lage: What about response from the ad? Did you have coupons to clip or anything--

Evans: Oh, yes, we got the response from it. It was a really good response. The main response I remember now though was getting a very angry and virulent phone call. This is really another insight into Washington. This was the big time. It wasn't little kid stuff in the Northwest anymore. This was big stuff even though I was just a kid. I got a call from a guy named Reed Irvine from Accuracy in Media. It's a well-known, right wing group now, I found out a little bit later. He said, "I want to know about this ad because this sounds like a Communist kind of thing. Now, what about this fact, and what about this figure," and boy, he was really rude and mean and abused me for an hour and a half on the phone. I was trying to be polite and respond.

We got hate mail on that ad saying, "You goddamned Communists are trying to turn this country over to the Arabs," or something like that. Whatever it was, it was really a very violent and a very angry reaction. We got some good reaction, too, but it was in Washington, D.C. There wasn't much constituent mail that came out of it. We couldn't afford to run them in the states where we ought to run them, but it was like that, again and again.

There were lots of other vignettes and stories. I remember I was sitting in Senator [John] Tunney's office one day, Senator Tunney from California. The Sierra Club had eighty thousand members out there, and he said, "Brock, I just can't be for this. I'm getting too much mail on the other side." "What do you mean too much mail?" I thought there must be tens of thousands of letters coming. "How much are you getting, five thousand letters?" "Oh, no, not that much." Apparently he got about fifty letters against us, and that's all he got.

So that was a good story. I got on the phone right away and called the San Francisco office, and we got thousands of letters on our side and did all of that.

Lage: Did he change?

Evans: He changed, yes. He voted for us and came out with us in the end, but it was the most bitter kind of struggle to get anything going. Then it looked like at least the thing was going to go through the Senate but not through the House because the House was moving much, much slower and the Senate was racing this thing through, and I remember being back at a Sierra Club staff retreat on Mount Tamalpais at the end of June of the same year, 1973, and all at once I got a panic call from my staff back here, who said, "You better get back here right away. Congressman [John] Melcher has scheduled hearings on it."

Melcher had been promising us for months he wasn't going to do anything about this, "Maybe this fall, no worry. I'm not going to do it." It was the most incredible thing to see the power, the unseen power, of all that oil money at work. He scheduled hearings in two days like that, and he rammed that thing right through. Day after day he ground this thing and overcame every objection, overcame every witness, went through all of the pro forma process, but you just knew down the end of the road it wasn't going to be much longer, and sure enough the House got its bill through within a record short time.

We struggled for months and months to even get hearings on our bills. There are stories about Melcher and the Eastern Wilderness Bill later, just to show you how much he can delay if he wants to. You can sort of feel the unseen tugs of oil money just pulling and pulling at this thing and tugging and hauling.

There are so many other stories about that now that I start; we probably don't need them all. But the overwhelming thought was this bitter, bitter struggle was the very first thing that happened to me when I got there. It was the first full assault of all of the energy industry bearing down on one thing, and for once they had the specific to fight for. We usually do best, in my opinion, when we fight for something very specific--this wilderness or that redwood or something like that. When we are fighting for something larger, for an abstraction just because we don't like it; it's much harder for us to get all revved up about it.

They were fighting for their specific; they could focus their whole resources to bear. They could simplify the issues, whatever it was, and the miracle is not that we failed, as Ray Sherwin was interested in, but that we did so well, that we got forty-nine to forty-nine in the Senate, that we got a lot of stipulations written in the legislation and that the oil companies hated, that it was a

Evans: better pipeline after all that. So that was the first clash. It finally ended in August sometime, and I remember going back to the Northwest for a month vacation just to lick my wounds. It was a very, very bitter experience all the way through.

Rousing the Troops

Lage: Let me ask you a couple of things that came to my mind when I was reading that memo. You mentioned, or Linda mentioned, that there was a problem in rousing the troops, that people were away in Europe and away in the mountains. Did there seem to be less enthusiasm among the troops, the conservationists?

Evans: Well, yes and no. Basically, that's true; it's always difficult for us to get mail in in the summer because our people, if they have any sense about them, they wouldn't be good Sierra Clubbers if they aren't out hiking somewhere, or they are in Europe, or they are wherever. So it was very hard to get mail, that plus the fact that our networks really were not well organized. We didn't have them for years until the Alaska campaign came along. That's the first real intensive effort to organize a real, true grassroots network. Before that, we had always relied on our chapter conservation chairs and our leaders.

There is a long analysis of that in this forestry memo where we really didn't fail in the end, but our networks really weren't as good as they ought to be and I recommended that we spend more time with it. We had always relied on sort of general mass mailings and generally got lots of mail back, but above all, we'd also rely on the other side not being able to respond so well. When you get a case where the industry is able to concentrate and focus on something very specific that the whole industry perceives as vital to its life's blood, rightly or wrongly they perceive that, then they can respond as they did in the forestry campaign, too.

For us it's more--not an abstraction--but it's much vaguer: "We just don't like the pipeline because of earthquakes, and it's caribou," but it wasn't saving the Arctic Wildlife Range. If that thing had actually rammed across the Arctic Wildlife Range, as it did in the case of the gas pipeline, we could have done a lot better, and we did pretty well on the gas pipeline later on. So there are lots of analyses--

Lage: You didn't have a really good alternative--

Evans: We had an alternative, all right. The alternative was to go through Canada. That was the alternative. We had to come up with that. Some of our troops thought we were selling out even at that, but we couldn't even get thirty seconds on the floor of the House or anywhere else without some alternative of some kind like that.

Lage: Just in working out that strategy was there a lot of controversy among the conservationists, or was that pretty well accepted?

Evans: It was at first. At first, people--this was in the first campaign--people didn't know Washington very well. They said, "What's the matter with you guys? We don't want anything at all. Let's have energy conservation." Isn't that nice to say? That's all sweet and nice, but you show me the barrels of oil saved by specific energy conservation measures and maybe you could support it, but you can't just mouth rhetoric about energy conservation. If there was a specific bill or a specific vote that does a specific thing and has the same number of jobs, the same number of times, then it's real. Otherwise, it's not real; it's just rhetoric.

So, yes, there was some argument in the very beginning about all of that, and I can't remember it all right now, but there was some considerable discussion about--as we do when we begin every campaign, we talked about our strategic goal and our strategic underlying approach to this whole thing. I remember we talked about it extensively then, which way are we going? Are we going to uphold the court decision, period? We made the decision right away that given the angry mood back here, there was no way we would last very long if we tried to do it. We would be overrun in a month or two. We had to have some reasonable alternative--i.e., let's go through Canada instead. We made that judgment. Who knows? I happen to believe it was the right judgment, but that is what you always have to do back here. The climate back here is so different.

Lage: Has that been a problem internally in the Sierra Club, the fact that say Ray Sherwin criticized the outcome? Is there a lack of understanding in San Francisco of what you are facing here or was there?

Evans: I think there certainly was in the early days among most of the board, most of whom had little experience back in Washington, most of whom were from California and didn't like Washington. I think that was fair to say. I certainly felt that way the first few years back here. That's why we organized the volunteer training program among other things, to bring people back here so they could see what it was like and see the pressures that we lived under back here all of the time, and it worked out pretty well. Four of the present directors or past directors went all through that.

Lage: So you weren't just training lobbyists, but you were--

Evans: No, no, we were looking for future board members. That was always a part of what we were doing, trying to figure who would be the future board members or people who would be influential later on in the Sierra Club because by definition they were going to be lobbyists if they were going to be with us a long time. So why not salt through the Sierra Club leadership people who really understood what Washington was really like. That could only help the overall national effort and people would understand us a little bit better.

The one big thing I found out when I came back here was that the Washington office had no constituency, none whatsoever. It was a listening post, basically. It really wasn't aggressive and moving on its own, and when budget time came, there was nobody to defend it as there was in the Northwest office or the Southwest office or any of those places. It had no defenders at all. There are other stories about all that, but I tried to change that very much by making us not just a listening post, not just a lobbying office, but making it plain that we were available to respond to comments to give help. I sent my staff out all around the East and the Gulf Coast to give speeches and handle the liaison and things like that.

An Assessment of Scoop Jackson

Lage: I wanted to ask you to kind of give an assessment of Scoop Jackson, who was considered a great friend of the environmentalists on many issues--

Evans: Scoop has stood still. Scoop's position has probably always been very, very similar over all of thirty years or so or the forty years he has been in the Congress. There was a time when the environmental movement was behind him, and he was out in front with the Wilderness Act and taking that on. There was a time when the environmental movement caught up with him during the time of the redwoods and the north--no, not the North Cascades, he screwed us on that one--but the redwoods anyhow, some of the battles in the mid-sixties--the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Since that time he has still been the same, but we've gone way beyond him, and he is very conservative.

Lage: So you don't feel he's changed?

Evans: He may have gotten more conservative. Age may have something to do with it.

Lage: Is it energy issues? That seems to be--

Evans: Energy is a big set of issues with him in any event, so he has gotten more conservative than anything. Remember, his main thesis is defense policy, and people think it's because of Boeing, because he's just their boy, but he believes these things. He really believes in national security and having more hardware and all of those different things, so he has always been very, very consistent on these things, and it's very hard to get to him with political pressure from his own state because he always wins by such overwhelming majorities.

What I remember about Scoop, especially in the early days, in the 1964 election he was up for Senate. He was facing a tough re-election race. He ran against a liberal Democrat in the primary, and I can't remember who he was against in the general, but this was just after the Wilderness Act had passed and a lot of our people--well, not a lot, there weren't that many of us in the state then--a lot of people had worked on him to help the Wilderness Act and encourage him and put pressure on him and so on, and we got a Wilderness Act finally through him. It was very controversial in its time.

We didn't help him during the election campaign. We were not organized. We didn't understand all of these things. We voted for him; or a lot of people did, but beyond that not much, and he turned on us. I heard this story later. I never was there, but I just heard about it a number of times, and he turned on me several times later in years and said, "You people never helped me. When you needed me I was there. When I needed you, you were not there. I'm never going to forget that." And he never really ever did.

Lage: Even though the club wasn't in the business of politics at that time.

Evans: It didn't make any difference. That's right, he didn't understand that, or it didn't make any difference or whatever. He never quite forgot it. He was still willing to carry the water for us in the Land and Water Conservation Fund and in the redwoods, certainly, he did. So often he looked good compared to Wayne Aspinall, who was the chairman of the House Interior Committee at that time, but he really wasn't--in the North Cascades he really screwed us badly. We could have done a lot better in that--maybe in retrospect that was all we could do, but that isn't how we saw it. Then he got the John Muir Award in 1969 and never stopped using that. It was a big mistake, I think, to do that for him because then when the crush of the seventies came on, we went way beyond him in everything.

Lage: So he didn't pick up the sort of expanded issues of the seventies?

Evans: Not really. His interests were always public lands and things like that, but he was less and less willing to do anything but what the timber industry or the Forest Service wanted to do, and it took great pressure to get him to do it. For example, in the Alpine Lakes issue, his tactic was always to wait until the House of Representatives argued it all out and made all of the compromises and then they would pass basically whatever the House did. So he didn't have to take a stand. That's the classic way he often operated.

On the Alaskan oil pipeline, he was the main person pushing this thing through; the amendments to the Mineral Leasing Act, for example.

Lage: And willing to ignore NEPA--

Evans: Yes, oh, yes, he was the father of NEPA and all that. So he'll screw us on Mount Saint Helens if he gets half a chance. My main strategy with him there has been to try to keep maximum publicity and pressure on him. He can't stand it. He hates it. He gets mad at it, but that's the only way to deal with him.

Lage: Pressure from the state of Washington?

Evans: From the state, right. It's the only way to deal with him at all.

Lage: Do you have much entree to his office?

Evans: Yes, yes, I'm friends with all of the people over there. He is hard to see directly. I don't try to see him too often personally. He is never friendly. He is often rude and brusque and things like that, but at least I get along with him, and he won't even talk to Doug Scott at all; there is real bad blood over there. At least he thinks I am a nice guy or something except when he gets mad from the pressure. Wayburn is the guy he always would see and do things with, and he wasn't any great friend on Alaska and Alaskan issues, I think.

Lage: He delayed a lot, didn't he?

Evans: Yes, he did, and he's always very conservative. I never counted him as a favorable vote, a guaranteed favorable vote on everything. If you want his vote on something, you have to work for it very, very hard. However, if you get it, it has enormous clout. He was friendly in the case of the Watt confirmation, for example, but he didn't really help us much when it really came down to it.

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Evans: The Alaska pipeline bill was finally signed into law by the president. It went into a new phase, basically. That was the end of the first Alaska public interest coalition, in effect. We all went back to lick our wounds, and we all recovered and repaired and saw that, well, it wasn't all that bad after all. Most things are neither as good nor as bad as they seem anyhow back here. I think it works both ways.

Impact of the Arctic Environmental Council

Evans: A sequel to that from my own personal standpoint, which had a big impact on me for a number of years was in November of '73, a group called the Arctic Institute, some sort of an independent institute, called together all of the conservationists--I guess they got some oil money or something--and said, "Look, we know some of you fought this. We know you are all interested. This is going to be the most scrutinized project in history. We'd like to put together something, an inspection team of environmentalists who would go up and take a look at it."

It was a very interesting proposal, and I remember sitting around the room and all of us talking about it--there were the representatives of Sierra Club, myself, that is, the Wilderness Society, and the Friends of the Earth, as well as all of the other groups who were environmentalists but had never fought the line in any way or had actually been against us, our position on it. Most of them were interested in being part of it, but the Wilderness Society and Friends of the Earth would have none of it. They said, "That's selling out to the bad people, and we can't do that sort of thing."

I thought it was kind of intriguing. I thought, "Gee whiz, what an opportunity. They are going to pay for it. We ought to get up there and be part of it." So we had an internal debate, and I came across the memos this weekend about an internal discussion with Ed Wayburn and myself and maybe Mike, I guess, about whether we should join, especially since Wilderness and Friends of the Earth were not going to join and be part of it, how we would look bad. We'd look like we might be selling out and so on. On the other hand, what a unique opportunity to see what was going on.

It was finally agreed that we should participate and that I would be the representative to do it. Then we had a vote. They called the conservationists back together again sometime shortly thereafter, and it was interesting that the industry people who

Evans: were sitting there voted for me to have me on it, but the right-wing conservationists voted against me, not to have me on it because I was too outspoken and too vigorous, and I think they saw this as a soft-soap kind of a job.

So I ended up being the only environmentalist who had ever fought the pipeline actually on what was called the Arctic Environmental Council. We called ourselves the Arctic Environmental Council. To make a long story short, we did go up there four times. We went up there in October of 1974 and then, I think, in May of '75 and July of '76 and one time in '77--at different stages in the line. In October of '74, nothing had been built yet. Then we saw it during two different stages of its construction. Then we saw it later after the revegetation was all going. This was an incredible experience in Arctic engineering. I think I am the only Sierra Club official alive that people knew was a club official who has ever been from the Prudhoe Bay to the Gulf of Alaska about four or five times now and survived it and did all of these things, and on the ground because we were on the ground the whole time going by vehicles of all different kinds.

Lage: What impressions--

Evans: Oh, it was overwhelming. We issued four reports. I wrote most of the reports, each one of the reports. We had a long discussion among ourselves after what we saw. The overwhelming impression was--

Lage: You issued four reports as a group?

Evans: Yes, as a group, that's right. We wrote them and rewrote them and had a consensus on them and things like that. It was an incredible experience. The overwhelming impression at first was that the face of the North had been totally forever changed. There was no North like the Jack London North any more. It was gone forever. It had been ripped in two and torn asunder. From now on when we were in Alaska, we were talking about museum pieces. We weren't talking about that whole vast North. No matter how big it is, there is this enormous industrial complex going all the way to the Arctic and the sense of wilderness exploration all through that is gone. That was the first overwhelming impression and very poignant, I thought, to see it like that.

The second was that by the sheer fact of its existence, the line had to do enormous environmental damage. It just had to do. Once you got beyond that though, you came to the third fact, that a lot of it wasn't so bad given the nature of the thing, given the fact that it was, given the fact of what they were going to do. In many places they did a pretty good job, a lot better job than

Evans: there would have been had we not been there, had the fight not been there. There was lots of back and forth with the Arctic Environmental Council. Friends of the Earth always thought we were selling out. A lot of the other conservationists in Alaska did. For me it was an incredible professional experience; what an insight into Arctic engineering. It's carried me through many other places since that time.

Lage: Did it soften your approach, do you think?

Evans: Oh, no, not at all. What is, is, and you have to adjust to what is. It didn't soften my belief that we were absolutely right in what we did. The enormous engineering required to compensate for the fault zones, let's say crossing the Alaska range, you wouldn't have to do it if they had gone the way we had said, for example. It only reinforced my view that we were absolutely right in what we said. But the real reason it was built the way it was because the company really wanted to export the oil to Japan.

They denied this all through the debate, but we have a quote from Richard Nixon to Premier [Eisaku] Sato that Richard Nixon made in 1971 and Sato thanked Richard Nixon publicly for promising they were going to get that Alaskan oil right there. It was right there in public print. They denied it until they were blue in the face all through the campaign, but then what's one of the first things they did in 1974 or '75 when they got the bill through for the pipeline? They applied for an exemption so they could sell oil to Japan.

Well, we had the statute written specifically that it would have to go to American ports. That was one of the great coups we got stuck in the bill and the oil companies said, "Oh, we don't mind that. Of course, we'll sell to Americans." Then they applied for an exemption for it. There was a process. We went up there and protested against that and beat them down, so they have not got that exemption yet to sell to Japan, although they would dearly love to. There is probably a lot of sleight of hand going on; they're doing it anyhow, but at least we stuck it to them on that basis.

But anyhow, no, it did not soften my views in any way. It made me understand an awful lot better what it is like to have an enormous construction project and the time pressure and the Arctic engineering and so on, and there were a lot of bad things done there too, because of the time pressure and because they didn't take the biologists seriously. A lot of lessons we learned about implementing a great construction project we tried to have applied to the gas pipeline fight which came up a year or so later and went on through 1976, through '77 actually.

Evans: So that was the sequel to the oil pipeline. Since then, all of the line has been built. It has done pretty well. It's had a few leaks. It's totally transformed the face of the place, but it could have been a lot worse. I guess that's what you have to say about it.

Lage: Did the other environmentalists that participated with you change their views at all?

Evans: They were all right-wing environmentalists who wanted the pipeline anyhow. They were for it in the beginning; they were for it in the end. You get a curious thing going on in trips like that. We were living at the workers' camps, living with the workers, living in their dormitories, going out on their tractors with them, being taken everywhere by Alyeska. There was really a danger of a Potemkin village, kind of a trick, where you see only what they want you to see. I was the only one who was concerned about that, about our image, because I had my constituency to worry about. They thought I was selling out just by being on this silly thing. My colleagues on the council did hold a couple of press conferences when I wasn't around, unfortunately, and said some pretty toady kinds of things, I thought, and made me look bad, too. There were problems there.

We had an information network in Alaska, at least the Sierra Club did. People would say, "Hey, you ought to go to Minton Creek and take a look at that." So in the middle of the trip, I would demand to switch the schedule from here to there and be taken over there in a hurry and hope they couldn't fix it up before we got there, and we did see some places like that.

But basically Alyeska was pretty good. They would take us anywhere we wanted to go. They had to arrange a schedule, but they would change it, and they didn't really try to hide too much, I don't think, when it came down to it. It was too big, too enormous.

Lage: When you made the surprise visits, did you see a different face?

Evans: Not that different, no. It was worse, but there were biologists for the state of Alaska going up and down the line and some of them were friends. They were our main source of information. Our main effort was to strengthen them because they were the ones who were on the line day in and day out. The main problem was that they had no power to stop the project.

The engineers had all of the power and they had an engineering fraternity. Whether the engineers worked for the oil companies or for the government as inspectors, they were all brothers. They would all wear the same class rings and everything, and it was a

Evans: brotherhood that went on up there. The biologists were considered the weirdos and freaks and crazies and Communists probably and probably environmentalists to boot. So it was really a hierarchy there right down the line. But nevertheless, given all of those odds and so on, a pretty good job was done in many places--not in others. There were some pretty awful things done, too. But, as I said, it gave us the ammunition to fight the gas pipeline a lot better in demands and reforms and do things like that.

The Gas Pipeline

Evans: The gas pipeline was the second Alaska Coalition. It was in September of '73 or September of '74 that I saw the first article about the government, the administration, offering some exploratory permits to explore the Arctic Wildlife Range for possible gas transmission routes. I remember saying publicly somewhere, "We are going to fight that to the death," and getting calls right away from the press, and we got a spate going on that because that was the Arctic Wildlife Range we had always been worried about. Remember, Jim Moorman had wanted to run the oil pipeline across it, and Wally Hickel wanted to open it up, and there it was coming again with the gas pipeline because there was enormous amounts of gas in Prudhoe Bay as well.

That's a long fight, too. I think maybe it is sufficient to say that went through many twists and turns, the most interesting was the fact that you had two competing companies, the two competing routes. One was called Arctic Gas, which wanted to build right across the Arctic Wildlife Range to pick up the oil fields and gas fields in Canada and come down the Mackenzie Valley. The other was El Paso, which wanted to follow the existing pipeline.

Both companies courted us in the beginning. But we made it plain we could never accept a line across the Arctic Wildlife Range. We could never agree to that, so rapidly we fell away from the Arctic Gas people. El Paso courted us assiduously, and we had extensive negotiations with them, with maps and staff, joint staffs, back in San Francisco in the Sierra Club offices going over the whole route: if they would agree to this, would they agree to this, and we got their support. They supported the things, the modifications we wanted, because they were going to go along the route of the existing pipeline, land already destroyed in a real sense.

So we supported them for a while. There were a lot of misgivings because it was a liquefied natural gas, and a lot of our people don't like LNG.

- Lage: Here was another area where the local chapter had an interest--
- Evans: The local Alaska chapter?
- Lage: No, the southern California chapter, where the LNG terminal would be located.
- Evans: Oh, that's right; that's right. They didn't like that at all, and we got all tangled up in all that.
- Lage: So was this case where the staff sort of went ahead and made these negotiations?
- Evans: Ed Wayburn was deeply involved in that. It wasn't just staff. It was the leadership of the club. I am trying to remember how we resolved the--oh, we had extensive negotiations with them about the site of an LNG terminal, and I think we even picked a place, an offshore site or something that "if you do that, we won't oppose you; we'll support you in the route, but you'll have to fight your own battles in California" because we could not go against our southern California chapters. We didn't want to do that, but we had to somehow save the Arctic Wildlife Range too, which was under a threat.

Finally, out of the sky came the Northwest gas pipeline proposal, which was the third alternative. It came in very, very late in the game, and this was the one that ran it the way we wanted the oil line to go down to Fairbanks and then down along the Alcan Highway. This was at the height of hearings on legislation to expedite the Arctic gas pipeline, and I felt a little awkward about ditching our allies in El Paso, but this was clearly better all the way through, and we always made it plain to El Paso that theirs was just the better of the two alternatives. Here was something better. I can't remember how we resolved it. It was a tightrope walk, but clearly our people wanted this. It removed the LNG problem and so on.

- Lage: How did the Canada chapters feel on it?
- Evans: The Canada chapters didn't mind going along the existing transportation corridor pretty much. There were impacts, of course. There are impacts all the way through, but the reality was that in Canada there was going to be gas coming down from the North going down the Alcan Highway anyhow. It became a question of where and how close to the highway rather than whether, all the way through. It got much more complicated than that. There were study commissions and reports and all that all through 1976 and then finally in 1976 Congress passed another law, the Arctic Gas Transportation Act, which set up a process. It didn't name which

Evans: route. It said, "The president has to make a report or CEQ has to make a report and hold hearings and some other people do and then CEQ makes a final recommendation to the president and within thirty days he has to pick a route and Congress has to approve it." So it passed the buck in a way, but at least it didn't authorize the terrible line we were all concerned about.

That was the time when the CEQ [Council on Environmental Quality] did hold extensive hearings. Carter came into power. CEQ held extensive hearings throughout early 1977. We all participated. That's when we had our second Alaska Coalition. Actually, it began the year before. That's when I remember writing the letter to Wayburn or someone out there saying, "This Alaskan issue is the tail that is wagging the Alaska lands bill dog" in a sense because it was getting much more attention. The urgency was much more there.

To make a long story short, CEQ did come out right. Luckily, our friends were in power finally, and we could influence them and talk with them, and they chose the right route. So that's how it finally was resolved. They chose the favorable route and the issue was kind of over. So that was the end of the second Alaska Coalition.

Lage: Did that involve all of the groups?

Evans: No, no, but it involved many more. I'm not real sure just exactly why, but it was again us and the Wilderness Society to a degree. The Wildlife Federation, I think, was involved because of the wildlife. The Audubon Society was in there. There were more groups and more clout, but the clout against us wasn't so heavy, and we had a corporation working with us. What a dream to work with those guys. They have so much money and so much stuff to do. They offered to fund things for us. We didn't do that.

Lage: Now, which corporation was this?

Evans: This was Arctic Gas. Excuse me, Northwest Pipeline, that's what it was called, something like that.

Lage: So here you were working in tandem--

Evans: So we worked with big fancy corporate fat cat lawyers. They had money and resources, and we wouldn't let them give us any money to do any of our things, but we could tell them what we thought ought to be done and they would do it. We worked very close. It was really a dream to work with somebody else's money for a change.

Lage: Sort of a lobbying effort--

Evans: Yes, right, because they had their friends, and they had people they could reach and we couldn't touch and vice versa. So it was kind of fun. We met down in their offices a lot. I remember meeting with El Paso earlier on--talking about the corporate world--they had us over for lunch and served us these fancy catered lunches, all of us little environmentalists in our sandals (figuratively!) and everything. Early on they were saying, "Well, we're going to run over you if you don't go along with us. You better go along with us." I remember standing up to them and fighting back. It was really an interesting world for many of us to be in because we had never been in it before.

There was a lot more to it than that, but that was the second Alaska battle, which sort of leads up to the final Alaska lands campaign, which is in '76 and from '77 and there on. I would rather review stuff tonight and go back to all of that. My role in that was not as major as it was in the other two, so it will probably be easier to talk about, I think. That was a many-headed operation with many different parts and different people handling different things, and so we'll talk more about that later.

XI ENERGY ISSUES AND THE SIERRA CLUB

The Energy Crisis of the Early Seventies

- Lage: Shall we get into energy, then, because that follows the pipeline issues?
- Evans: Let's try.
- Lage: Why don't you just outline what your role was on that to start with?
- Evans: When I first came to Washington, I had the naive idea that I would handle all of the public lands and all of the energy issues. That would seem simple enough. Then you might say that the first big energy fight was naturally over the Alaska pipeline. It was an obvious energy issue. It was the first time we came up face to face with all of the weight and might and power of the energy industry in a real sense on a gut issue to them. Then, as you remember, no sooner had the Alaska pipeline bill finally been signed into law than the Arab oil embargo went into effect at the end of October in 1973. Thank God, we got the Alaska bill through before it was done. We would have been rolled over in a week if that had happened in March or some time like that. We had a hard enough time with the energy arguments even then and, of course, there was inflation and all of the panic.
- Lage: On the energy crisis thing--
- Evans: That's what I mean; that's when it started. Immediately two things happened in early November of '73: a shiver of panic went through the whole country, and certainly here in Washington, over what's going to happen when we lose our supplies of oil. And a bitter cold snap happened, an unseasonable cold snap in this place, and people started thinking about heating. How were we going to be heated during the winter? I remember immediately Congress started

Evans: hearings on what was going on and who was responsible because in Washington so much of the business is fixing blame, who is to blame for something, who is taking credit and who gets the blame for it.

I remember them hauling up Larry [Laurence I.] Moss, our president then, before committees--committee after committee and hearings day after day around Thanksgiving: "I demand you tell us how much the Sierra Club and you environmental extremists are responsible for holding up the supplies of energy to this country." Boy, what a field day the oil companies and everybody else were having with us. Finally, after four or five years on the defensive, they could come back, and they were the good people, honest people trying to provide energy supplies, and we were the bad people, extremists--"look what they did on the Alaska pipeline. They held it up for years and months with their lawsuits; we have to amend this so we can't have any more lawsuits holding up energy supplies."

These two factors together really caused a very intense thing. The first thing it caused was the introduction of the Emergency Energy Bill. It had all sorts of exemptions. They changed the time from daylight savings to something else. They authorized overrides on NEPA and overrides in environmental acts all over the place, anything that got in the way except in an emergency. It created a czar kind of energy authority to take care of all of this stuff. It was an incredible thing.

We were just sort of cowering in the trenches while the artillery thundered overhead, and there wasn't a thing we could do about it, just sort of barreling through. All through the month of December, they came back in this long, long session. Finally, the thing was first brought up on the floor of the House of Representatives a few days before Christmas, and they debated for days, and it was the most incredible scene. It was like something out of Boss Tweed or some place. Every special interest was hanging there at the door getting special little exemptions for themselves. Funeral directors were getting exempted and used car dealers were getting exempted. Everybody was getting out of it except us. We were the main target, the consumers and environmentalists and the people, and it was just an unbelievable scene.

Finally, they couldn't agree. It was too corrupt. It was too much. They were giving away too much, and they finally adjourned just before Christmas, the day before Christmas, and they all went home for a month, thank God. So the first full fury of the assaults on all of the things we talked about was delayed only because they were too greedy, and they asked for too much all the way through.

Evans: So we all went back for Christmas and we all licked our wounds again, and we peeked our heads out over the trenches a little bit and saw that the smoke and dust and battle and tumult had died down a little bit, and finally we realized that the wounds on all of us were just head wounds. We were bleeding a lot, but we weren't severely injured yet and nothing terrible had been actually done yet. We had just enough time to rally and get back. They didn't come back from the recess until the end of January, and they were going to debate finally again in the Senate this time. They were going to take it up in the Senate.

So I remember about the middle of January we pulled the pieces together, and this time we had a broad coalition, everybody together on it, all of the environmental groups of various kinds plus consumer groups for various reasons, plus Common Cause, and plus League of Women Voters. We had several coalition meetings, and we put together an ad hoc coalition, I remember now. It wasn't anything formal.

About fifteen or twenty of us went down for several days and used Common Cause's phone bank. They had lots of WATT lines in a big office downtown. We made calls to all of our networks all around the country saying, "Wire your senators or call and vote against the Emergency Energy Bill, vote against it." And it was a wonderful feeling to be doing that because here we thought we were finished; it was all over; the whole bubble had burst, and all of the golden days were over, even though they weren't that golden, but they were over whatever they were, and calling up our people around the country just like the old days all over again. People said, "Thank God, you're calling! Thank God, somebody is still alive back there. Yes, I'll do it. Tell me what to do. I'm still here. We're all still here."

We got our networks going right away, and that's what happened. The mail flooded back in against the Emergency Energy Bill and a combination of ourselves and the oil industry--the oil industry was opposed to it for other reasons; curious, because there were a lot of restrictions on them as well as on us.

Lage: So you were "in league" with them. [laughter]

Evans: In league with them, but we never touched them or talked to each other, but their votes and our votes--we probably had about fifteen votes in the Senate; they probably had about thirty or forty, but it was enough together to beat the Emergency Energy Act on the floor of the Senate about late January, early February of 1974, and that's what happened. That was the first big fury. So that was the end of the Emergency Energy Act. Finally, we could

Evans: get down to a sane amount of business and try to work on how to deal with the energy situation. That was the first flush of it. I did a lot of lobbying and phone calling then. At the same time--

Lage: But that was defensive, not--

Evans: Very defensive, very defensive.

Lage: Later you were putting forth programs.

Evans: That was later, a good deal later, yes. We were always, in our speeches and things like that--we always were arguing for energy conservation and solar power, renewables, but we had to come down out of pie in the sky and get down to specifics, building standards and plant standards, efficiency standards, things like that so you get a kind of long-term approach on something like that, more research. How can you make solar power economically competitive? What do you do in the meantime about the rush toward nuclear and the rush toward all sorts of supply and all of the oil drilling in sensitive areas and all of the rest of it? So you always have to fight an offensive and a defensive policy.

Finding Technical Expertise

Lage: Where did you find the technical expertise to get to specifics?

Evans: We had some of it in our own ranks. Ellen Winchester came on then, and they had this energy policy committee, and there were some good people there. I hired Dick Lahn about that time to be our energy lobbyist. He was a local volunteer, and I realized right now I couldn't do these things any more. There was just far too much to do, and he became our energy person.

Lage: Did he have a technical background?

Evans: No, he did not, I don't think. He also was working with us on the strip mine bill. Remember, energy and related issues with the strip mining was our big thing during those years, too, and he was our strip mine lobbyist. He became our air pollution lobbyist, I think, a little bit later, but I don't remember now. But he worked on strip mining for us very, very much, and he worked on energy issues very, very much for us.

I remember all throughout 1974 there were hearings, oversight hearings, and all sorts of things going on, and learned person after learned person got up and proved beyond a shadow of a doubt

Evans: that we could have all of the energy conservation anybody ever talked about and still never do it. Therefore, we had to have more nuclear, we had to have more dams, we had to have more of everything all of the time. What's amusing to me now is that we've conserved far more than all of the learned folks ever thought we could. You don't hear about their famous studies any more because, by the press of events and economics, than anybody had thought. But that's what it was like throughout '74.

Let's see, we had continental shelf legislation going on at that particular time and those are all energy-related very much, and each one of them had a specific context. They were played out against the ever larger theme that we have to do something so we aren't dependent on the foreign oil any more. The Arctic gas pipeline issue was certainly played out against that. All of the debates--strip mining was played out against that--they all were. So when you talk about being involved in the energy issues, we have to talk about not just trying to get more appropriation for more energy conservation or building standards and things like that, which we did work on and get through.

We hired Rhea Cohen who worked on building performance standards for us, too, at that time. The club was pretty generous at that time in adding on more staff as we felt we needed them. So we ended up a year after I had come, we went from three people to about six professional lobbyists, with more on the way. Now, when I left it was about thirteen or fourteen or so and that has kind of been there for a while. So the club was good about that.

Working Relationship of Staff and Volunteers

Lage: Energy seems a good topic to use to discuss how the volunteers and staff came together in working out policy. Now, maybe you weren't intimately involved in that.

Evans: Well, there were always problems doing it, working together, too. In 1975, late '75, we hired Greg Thomas and Dick Lahn left us. We hired Greg Thomas to be our energy lobbyist, and he was sort of a technical guy. He had formerly worked with the Atomic Energy Commission and things like that. He was a lawyer. He didn't understand what it meant to work with volunteers.

We had a volunteer committee run by Ellen on the one hand out there whom Greg just thought was a great big bother. They would call them up and want this and that bill and want information, and

Evans: they would want to make policy, but none of them were in Washington, none of them understood the nuances of working everyday on these things. There was infinite little detail and all of these little things running back and forth, so it never worked out well in terms of the volunteers never trusted the lobbyists, and the lobbyists thought the volunteers were a drag and not relevant to what they were trying to do, and it always was a real problem working it out and shaping it. I wasn't much closer to it than that.

That's when we're talking about the generic energy issues, how to get more appropriations for conservation, how to promote our energy conservation program as opposed to the specific ones which we were working on, how to get better strip mine controls, or outer continental shelf, or whatever those issues might be. Clean air even, of course, got very much into the act, too. I'll think about it between now and some other time.

I'm not sure I can add a whole lot more except some nuances like that, how the volunteers and the staff worked together to develop a policy. The board passed resolution after resolution. The board had clearly laid out energy policies which we and the staff tried very hard to follow.

Lage: Were they adequate, do you recall?

Evans: Well, they were okay. Yes, they made it pretty plain, but the policies they articulated were pretty much what anybody would naturally want if you were a conservationist. The one thing we did have trouble with was Larry Moss's insistence on--what was it?--incremental pricing. The pricing issues were very, very difficult for us. Carl Pope was big on all of that, too, and when rationing came up in the Carter Administration, all of those were very hard for us.

Lage: Hard in what respect?

Evans: They were hard in the sense that there were so many players, and we are talking about gas deregulation, oil deregulation, and all of those pricing kinds of issues; they clearly had a major impact. They'd have far more impact on energy conservation than anything--than any bills we got through to have better building standards, for example, or anything like that, or any appropriations for more conservation. They'd have far more impact, and we all knew that, but it was difficult to be a player in it because we had formed alliances with consumer groups on many different kinds of issues and they were violently against these things, so it was always a tightrope for us to walk.

Evans: Our board would sit back in the ivory tower of San Francisco and they would pass a policy, "We want better energy conservation" and "We are going to support deregulation," then I have to talk to my friends in the Consumer Federation and say, "Gee whiz, I'm sorry," or the League of Women Voters or whoever it might be.

Lage: And you also have a lot of social implications if you are trying to work with urban groups--

Evans: Enormous, yes, so we try to hedge it with saying, "Oh, we want equity, and we want windfall profit taxes to get pushed back into it," and we try to cover it, but back here things are always translated in a very simplistic way and "you are for or you are against deregulation. Which are you?" We ended up still being for it, for example. That was one problem, the alliances and the unraveling of our previously held alliances.

The other problem was the fact that we were just minor players in that game. The Sierra Club isn't all-powerful. Our weight isn't going to make much difference in some issues. It is going to make a lot of people mad at us and not gain any new votes that wouldn't be gotten otherwise by doing all of that.

Lage: In the game of deregulation or the whole entire area of pricing?

Evans: The pricing, the game of pricing, period. When we stuck to things that were obviously more environmental like building standards again or appliance standards or things like that, those are only "good guy" sorts of things. There is solar power funding and so on. The deregulation, as you pointed out, was perceived to be much more of a social kind of an issue.

Lage: And yet, as you say, it does have more impact on energy conservation.

Evans: It sure does--and it did. I'm glad it passed, and we did lobby for it. We did send letters around; we did bite the bullet and take on our friends and say, "We're sorry; this is where we come down," and just did it. But it was difficult; painful. So I would say also that about energy policy.

The only other energy thing I can remember outside of the strip mining and others would be the Energy Mobilization Board in Carter's later years. We had a big fight over that. Then we had Jonathan Gibson. Greg just didn't work out. The volunteers just didn't trust him, and he didn't like them, and he didn't want to return their calls; he wanted to do his lobbying. Jonathan also had trouble.

Evans: Ellen Winchester is not the easiest person to work with, I have to say. But Jonathan was better at it and did a better job and was able to make some use of it. Their main argument was they had to spend all day on the phone talking to her and telling her about what was going on on all of the bills when they had to be over on the hill lobbying people. "Am I an information person," they would say, "or am I a lobbyist? Which do you want me to be because you can't be both." Ellen wasn't willing to come and lobby, usually. She just wanted the information about it to get the newsletter out--this was the perception, and it's true. We didn't get much specific lobbying help often. Sometimes we did. Every now and then we would have a couple of persons--I can't remember the names now--but people did come down and give technical advice.

For technical advice we mostly used what other organizations were doing or the government. Often there would be good government studies. So we got our information, the way we always do, from other sources. The Sierra Club has never had a strong research capability. The volunteers weren't close enough to the changing scene all of the time to give good technical information about this specific thing. There could be good background papers, some excellent stuff done that way.

Lage: Or making your initial policy point of view.

Evans: Yes, that's right, and making the point of view and all that sort of thing, but beyond that it was--

Impact of the Club on National Energy Policy

[Interview 3: June 8, 1982]##

Evans: On the question of whether the club made an impact on the formulation of national energy policy--I guess that was your question, wasn't it?

Lage: Right, or what kind of an impact did it make?

Evans: And if so, what kind of impact. I would say, yes, definitely it had a definite impact on this, and once again it depends on how you break it down, realizing again there are many different kinds of energy issues. There are the ones that directly affect the environment like strip mining or clean air, and there is the one that affects use and consumption--there is one that affects supply and one that affects consumption. You might break it down in that kind of a way, and we by necessity were involved in all of those in one form or another.

Evans: We had a huge impact on the clean air end of the energy issue by determining how different producers used energy in relation to the air would also affect the use of energy, like catalytic converters. Sometimes it wasn't always reducing the consumption either. Some of the new cars might use actually more because they were heavier, and you get into debates like that.

We also had a big impact on location of new energy developments. Obviously, that is clearly in the Sierra Club's historic generic interest--offshore oil drilling, the statutes that regulate offshore oil drilling, the Alaska fight, for example, against strip mining--all of these things have very much to do with energy, and we had a big impact on those. Linda Billings, for example, was our main lobbyist on the Outer Continental Shelf Act. We had many volunteers from Ellen Winchester to Anita Yurchyshyn up in Boston and many others. That was a big thing with the Sierra Club, the offshore oil. The Alaska gas pipeline was clearly something which shaped the focus and pattern of future energy development in the country. All of these we had major, major roles in.

Then you get down to the more generic sorts of things that most people associate with energy issues per se, as we talked about yesterday--more funds for solar and conservation research, building standards, things like that. The Price-Anderson Act and the whole panoply of nuclear power was important. The Energy Mobilization Board of the Emergency Act was important, and there we were certainly players, too, but we were not the premier or the major players in my experience. Then you finally get down to the ones we talked on briefly yesterday, the deregulation pricing issues. There we were clearly not major players at all, but we played our little part, and we were there pushing shoulder to shoulder for or against certain other interests.

Beyond that range of specifics--there are many specifics more that I know we need to have here--you have the tenor of the debate, the philosophy, the rhetoric that goes on, the endless round of discussions in the public press and in the public media and quoting Larry Moss, let's say, or maybe myself or Mike McCloskey or others about what we thought about the meetings with the administration. Certainly, we had meetings with Frank Zarb when he was in the Ford administration and this guy named Love, when he was the first energy czar of the Nixon administration. It seemed that I was always going to meetings of one kind or another with these people representing our interests on the whole broad range of philosophy that we articulated--from true-cost pricing, Larry Moss's big thing, to better energy conservation and solar to the environmental effects of things, but always hammering away day in and day out on all that.

Evans: It's hard, as you know, to predict exactly what effect that has, but the fact that we were there all of the time, the fact that we had a strong voice, the fact that we had publications on it, the fact that we were always saying it in every speech anywhere wherever you go certainly had its impact. So by the time that President Carter came to power, the mechanism and the rhetoric and the climate was right to really try to get some meaningful reforms. As it turned out, we didn't get that many. He appointed a very bad secretary of energy, James Schlesinger, for example. But Carter himself was very, very good on this, and we did get a lot of different kinds of things done. We got a change in philosophy and shift in tenor and emphasis throughout.

Keep in mind that all throughout this time, there were other groups who were strong players who thought of themselves as the energy people in town, and it sort of became the game in the mid-seventies, say from about '74 to '78, sort of the main game in town of many games being played out. The Environmental Policy Center, for example, was very big in this; NRDC, also. EDF and even the National Wildlife Federation started getting into it; the Audubon Society to a degree did. I can't remember the other groups. There were a lot of smaller groups. The Solar Lobby was formed about that time, for example. Of course, there were many players in the nuclear field. The Friends of the Earth got into it in a big way and many different groups did according to their interest.

The Sierra Club was, I think, the only one for a long time that really cut across the broad range of interests. The Environmental Policy Center pretty much focussed on coal issues and pricing issues to a degree and some specifics like OCS.

Lage: Do you mean across the range of energy issues?

Evans: Yes, from supply to consumption to pricing--everything, yes. We were the only ones that really dabbled in each one of these. There are memos in my files that I found in my attic (that I can't lay my hands on right now) where I am sort of complaining to Mike about all of the issues the board gave us to work on all of the time. This is typical of the way the Sierra Club Board of Directors worked: they would have the directors' meeting in February--that's when they set the priorities for us--in February of 1975, and they gave us twenty-two priorities to work on. No lobby in its right mind in this town ever works on more than three or four a year, if they can. No industry would ever work on any more than that. They really focus in and narrow them to the very specific and very focussed. They gave us twenty-two. Now, that's the nature of being in this business because environment by definition cuts across so many things.

Lage: Would you have a chance to present your point of view to the board?

Evans: Yes, and I want to come back to that; I just want to finish this thought, though. The problem is that one of the priorities was "wilderness." Another priority would be "energy." Well, each one of those things breaks into twenty different bills, twenty different things. Each one of them would take a lifetime of some lobbyist's work to break in. So, yes, we had our input, and I like to think that one of the major services I rendered to the club in those years that has carried through until now has been a reformation of the priority setting process because what you used to have on the board was everybody coming up and every special interest voting up or down--"Get Congeree Swamp on there"--because that's the way we used to do it in the old days, and it was adequate in the old days.

When I first came on, the board would say, "We're going to focus on the North Cascades and redwoods and the Grand Canyon this year." And that was perfectly okay when you had 40,000 members and the interests were clearly delineated. When you have 130,000 members, say, in the mid-seventies, 140,000 or something like that, and by then our constituency was vast in the East and, again, people like Ellen Winchester joined because they wanted energy programs, by God, and the other traditional issues were less.

There was a whole urban thrust with Bill Futrell and his people coming up, all of which I certainly believed in. I supported all of that, but there was no way with four or five lobbyists--by then we had about tripled our size from two lobbyists, let's say, to six by that time. There is still no way you can possibly handle all of these things. There are just too many different kinds of things to do. So I like to think that one of the major reforms I helped make was reforming the priority-setting process, where you get away from this log rolling and get some kind of organization and cohesion to it and general directions, and let the staff try to figure out which way to go within it, with the interlocking committee structure.

So to answer your question, yes, we had lots of input. We were there; we made our case; we said what we could do and what we couldn't do. We gave the best analyses we could of all of these things. The board had its own axes to grind all of the time, and they had their own agendas. Ellen certainly had hers, and Bill certainly had his, and they might say, "We want you to work on this anyhow," and if the votes came that way, then we had to do something about it. We'd do a lot of tearing our hair on the staff about that.

Lage: Did you pretty well follow the line of those priorities, or did you have a lot of leeway?

Evans: Oh, clearly, if we got a clear directive, if we were going to work on Congaree Swamp, we sure were not going to not work on it; we were sure we were going to work on it, and we would. However, there was always enough leeway later on to make an emergency phone call, let's say to Bill [Futrell] or Ted [Snyder], and say, "Look, gee whiz, for the next two months urban issues aren't going to be very much. So we've got this new thing coming up; they just appointed a new secretary of Interior." "That's okay." The club is very good that way. The club works with a lot of consultation, at least when it's working well it does that.

The nature of our membership, in my experience, is that it is so volatile and so passionate and so verbal and articulate that there are always people who feel that there is not enough consultation. I could spend all day, as you've seen. This is just nothing compared to what it sometimes is in a big campaign, just consulting. What am I, an information center and a consultant, or am I down there passing notes up to the Congressmen in the markup? Everyday around here is sort of a tightrope, a balancing of judgments between what you have to do, how you keep this constituency and this tightrope walk, and how you keep this obligation done and how you move them altogether, forward.

The process is somewhat reformed now, I think. First, there are more lobbyists, and there is a much more professional way of doing it and of polling the membership. I will be intrigued to see, now that I am on the board, what it is like when they come to the priority process. I have some ideas that I want to get through right now. Am I going to be able to do this? [laughter] I may not be able to; I don't know! But whatever, it's a better process.

But in those days we had twenty-two--and this gets into board relations, by the way, and we'll talk more about that later--but that was one major sore point, and that memo here, if I can find it, I'll mail it to you; you will be intrigued with it.

Lage: This one you gave me has some of this in it. There may be others.

Evans: That was the forestry one. No, this is--

Lage: Right, you talk about priorities there, too.

Evans: Okay, this was an internal one to Mike, and I'll see if I can find it because I know I set it aside. But it says, "Look, see how the twenty-two priorities break down by staff count." We had a staff meeting after the board meeting--twenty-two priorities break down to forty-nine bills right away, and that was just in February.

Evans: That was before they even started having hearings of the substitutes and the amendments and everything else. It will be 150 bills before the session is over. How do we grapple with all of those things?

Our energy lobbyists in particular, as I mentioned yesterday, just tore their hair out because their subject was very technical. They were up against all of the power of the energy industry and everybody else, and it's hard to work energy issues the same way it was with the traditional wilderness bill--say, redwoods, or Grand Canyon or Congaree or something like that. It's hard to get the focus. The politics are national. There are many, many different kinds of players. The press is neutral at best and usually hostile because the national security argument was very, very strong, and you cannot focus on the beauties of a particular area. It's a lot of things that played to some of our weaknesses.

What we did (I'm just jumping around here on energy just as things come to me), and it really wasn't by this conscious of a design, it just sort of evolved that way. We learned to play the game, too, so by the time the president's Mobilization Board came up, we didn't argue on the grounds of environmental impact or things like that. That's why we cared about it, but we talked about states' rights and stuff like that: "By God, we can't let the terrible federal government override the nice state governments who really want to do their thing."

Lage: Didn't that ever backfire on you? The Sierra Club has always worked for a lot of federal regulations. Did other people point this out to you?

Evans: Well, I'm sure they did, but you take these things issue by issue as they come. In this case, this clearly had states' rights implications, as does the nuclear waste legislation right now. From our perspective, the states were clearly better on this than the federal government. Normally, as you point out, we normally favor federal control--strip mining, clean air, clean water, and all that sort of thing. No, we're perfectly happy to--to me, there is always a consistent philosophy behind everything we do and that's protection of the earth, protection of the land, protection of the environment. If it means sometimes the states are better than the federal, so be it; we're for the states. If it means the feds are better, so be it; we're for the feds.

But I feel very clear in my own conscience and my own heart that there's no deviation; there's only the variations on the theme up and down the scale. But that's what we want to do. We learned very rapidly in the energy debates to not talk about environmental impacts too much unless we are talking to our own

Evans: people. We can talk to our own people about that, but I'm not going to talk to senators and congressmen about that. I am going to talk about states' rights; I'm going to talk about saving money, and I'm going to talk about foreign competition, whatever it might be, and we have become--and by "we" I mean not just the Sierra Club but the whole community has become much more sophisticated that way lately.

We have certainly found this is the case of the Alaska Lands Bill. We had much better facts, much better numbers, much better economics, much better everything than anybody else. I am fond of saying there are two kinds of power in this town: one is the power of money and one is the power of votes. But there is a third kind of power and that is the power of knowledge, the power of information. We never have the first power, but we can hold our own sometimes with it, and we can certainly overwhelm the other side with the other two kinds of power often.

XII ALLIES IN THE ALASKA STRUGGLE

Friends in the Interior Department

Lage: Okay, shall we turn to Alaska then?

Evans: Let's try, yes.

Lage: --and talk about the power of knowledge or votes, or whatever it was that won.

Evans: Okay.

Lage: Alaska seems like a good issue to talk about the club's planning of campaigns and how it became more complex as the decade went on. Where do you want to begin?

Evans: We carried the Alaska discussions yesterday up to 1972, when Secretary Morton made his withdrawal of those eighty million acres. In '73, he announced his proposals. I remember because I came here in February of '73, and in December of '73 (now that I refresh my memory I remember these dates again), they released their first proposal of what to do. I can remember going to their press briefing downtown.

By the way, since I guess part of this is to articulate my own role in all of this, my role in those years, '73 and '74, on developing the Alaska lands issue as distinct from the oil pipeline or gas pipeline issues was to try to keep track of what the administration was doing, to try to influence them as we could. I remember many conversations with Jack Hession trying to get some input into the Department of Interior and others as they were drafting their initial proposal trying to get more areas added here, trying to get more rivers added, whatever we could to influence their proposal.

Lage: How would you get into the Department of Interior in those years?

Evans: It was not hard with the Nixon or the Ford administration. We had friends over there. For example, in the Department of Interior the key guy was Nathaniel Reed, Nat Reed. Now he is on the Audubon Board of Directors, as you know. Nat was very easy to see. Nat's assistant in those years was Amos Eno. Amos now works for Audubon right downstairs. He used to be head of the Office of Endangered Species, too, under Carter. We had a network of friends through the Department of Interior.

If we had to, we could get into see Nat and get him on the phone and, of course, he couldn't always do what we wanted to do. I remember Undersecretary of Interior [John] Whitaker, who has since died of a heart attack. These people weren't great friends. They were what I call typical Republicans, but they weren't real, bad, hard, right-wing Republicans. They had business interests foremost, except for Nat. Nat was clearly an environmentalist. So we were able to have a lot of input.

The problem that happened in the Department of Interior in those days was that this was the day when Earl Butz was still riding high. He was President Nixon's counsel for resources. We thought we had passed the Native Claims Settlement Act with three land systems in it, basically three parts: parks, wildlife refuges, and wild rivers. Anyhow, that's what we thought we had it passed for.

Because Butz was called super counselor for natural resources or something like that, by going to Nixon he forced the Interior Department to give some land to the national forest as well. So they added a fourth system, let's say, and this was called the national forest. It was giving land to the national forests, 18.8 million acres, or something, of some of the best land that just got turned over to the Forest Service for their management.

We thought, God, that's the last thing we want is to have that Forest Service manage anything. They were cutting down everything in sight. So that was one of the big disappointments of their plan, but it was forced on Nat and others that way.

Drafting Counter Proposals

Evans: Once they had made their recommendations for how to deal with the eighty million acres, then we started drafting up our own proposals and that was in 1974 or 1975, and I have lots of memories of going

Evans: over to the Wilderness Society offices and getting down on the floor on my hands and knees with Stewart Brandborg, who was then the executive director, and drawing maps.

Lage: This was before the Alaska Coalition was formed?

Evans: It was before the Alaska Coalition was formed. Brandborg was very vigorous and very interested in all of this. I was there, and Jack Hession would come in sometimes, and we were constantly in contact with the Alaska Wilderness Council (we mentioned them earlier), and we all knew each other, and we were all talking. We were trying to draft up subsistence provisions. I remember long debates over what does subsistence mean? Can we take whale bones to carve scrimshaw and stuff like that, all of these little details that really were important. Rich Gordon was one of our prime resource people. He seemed to know more about it than anybody else and was a longtime Sierra Club member from Juneau.

But there was constant back and forth as we were trying to put together some comprehensive package, some kind of legislation. I also remember in February of 1975--I'll back up quick. The Alaska people, as I mentioned yesterday, always were a little suspicious of us outsiders always doing all of this. It was their state, and what were we doing and even though they were environmentalists, they were Alaskan sometimes, I thought, first, but then again, rightly so.

So finally a bunch of us went up there in February of '75 to Fairbanks, so we could all say we had been to Alaska in the winter when the hearings came out later on, and Senator Ted Stevens loved to ask you that. [laughter] He said, "Have you ever been to Alaska?" I said, "Yes, sir, I was there in February when it was thirty below zero at eight o'clock in the morning and the high for the day was ten below."

So we all went up there. We met three days with all of the Alaska conservationists from all over the state, and we had long discussions. We talked over every issue. It was kind of tense at first, but I think we worked up some good working relationships, got some good general directions, went back to drawing and re-drawing those maps once more, and we were getting ready for all of this. So that was the first sequence of events.

Then an event happened, and I am not sure exactly, I think it was in the summer of 1976, the spring of '76. Stewart Brandborg by then had been forced out of the Wilderness Society. There was a putsch over there, and he had been kicked out much to a lot of our regrets and a lot of our sadnesses here. I am not sure of the time, but it was early '76.

Evans: In any event, there were people who followed him in revolving door order. His first successor was a fellow named George Davis. George became very impressed with Chuck Clusen who was working for me at that time back here in the office, and George tried to hire Chuck away from us. I didn't want him to go. I valued him. He was working very well as a lobbyist in '76 on FLMPA (the Federal Land Management Planning Act). Chuck was developing into a very good public lands lobbyist, and I didn't want to lose him.

So I remember Mike McCloskey and I had a long discussion about it, and we finally decided we would try to match the salary offer, but that wasn't all Chuck wanted. Chuck also wanted to have full charge of the Alaska campaign. I was up to my ears in the gas pipeline issue, and I made a decision--and I've always been a little regretful that I did sometimes, that I could have been chairman of it if I had wanted to because it was my right if I so chose--but I gave up my role in it so Chuck could do it full time. In balance, who knows? Chuck did a very, very good job, and we have what we have, but I have always felt a little bad personally because my interest in Alaska had been on about ten years by then, and damn it, I wanted to have a major role.

But from that moment on, we did turn it over to Chuck who later also delegated a lot to Doug Scott. Chuck brought Doug in in 1977 to work for Chuck--in effect to work for Chuck, who was chairman of the coalition, as you know, and Doug became director of legislation or whatever the official title might be. It turned out to be a very good team and all worked well, but I've always been sorry personally.

But then starting about August--I was still party to a lot of things, but I just wasn't running it--starting about August, late summer of '76, this was before Doug came back, but Chuck and some of the others gathered together people who had been involved in other kinds of campaigns. I was away on vacation and didn't take part in those discussions then. They discussed every campaign that we had ever fought from the Timber Supply Act, to the forestry campaign then just concluding, to many, many others to see what the good points were and what we had done right and what we had done wrong and how we could do better. It was that very intense kind of analysis, I think, that carried the Alaska Coalition through later on.

In November of '76, a lot more was done. Around the turn of the year, Doug was brought in as a full-timer. It became a full-time consultancy job and by then, in November of '76, after the Carter election, we realized finally we had a chance because finally we had somebody in power who really could make a big difference. The key factor in all of this, I think, was not just

Evans: a great lobby, not just a great grass roots, but the fact that we had an administration fully behind us. If we didn't, we never would have gotten anything near what we got because we lost some bitter things anyhow towards the very end. If we hadn't had Carter there, having his executive order and having Andrus there standing up to all of this pressure--that was an enormous achievement.

Lage: It must have made quite a difference in your work in the legislature.

Evans: Absolutely, because on any kind of an issue, the administration's position was worth maybe a hundred votes on the floor of the House or the equivalent on the floor of the Senate. Just because they are for it, it adds enormous weight to the arguments for you or against you if you are going that way. To have the secretary of Interior in all of the public forums and on the Today Show and things like that talking about this added enormous political and psychological weight to what we were doing, gave our lobbying effort credence, and gave us something beyond just an environmentalist. Here is the steward of all of the land, the secretary of Interior, talking about these same things. That's another factor.

But the key thing is right after the elections in November of '76, we met again and we laid out the groundwork for the final legislation we were going to draft which then became H.R. 39, and there was a big debate right about then--by the way, this was where the Southeast Alaska issue really finally reaches a head: Were we going to put it in, or were we not going to put it in? I remember the Southeast people saying we had to, and I sure felt we had to. I remember Wayburn wasn't so sure because there were political liabilities for it. But finally we agreed to make a special section of the bill and put it in, and if it got fought too hard we could drop it out if we had to. I'm glad we did it. It became the vehicle for saving places we never would have saved otherwise.

Anyhow, as you know, in January of '77, H.R. 39 was introduced with 124 million acres in it. It was far bigger than anything Morton had ever done. "We're dreaming; all right, we're going there." And that's when the networks started to work. As you know, our main vehicle was to have these hearings.

Oh, the other major event that really saved our bacon, too, is the fact that with the change in elections in 1976, [Morris K.] Udall became chairman of the House Interior Committee. You have to have a confluence of luck, a certain amount of luck in all of these things. Carter and Udall together also made a big difference.

Evans: We could not have mounted a lobbying campaign like that in this administration no matter how potent we were because we would have fought the administration every step of the way. We would have fought a much more hostile Senate every step of the way.

At the same time, the Alaska folks, the Alaska delegation, had to do something. They came out with their ridiculous twenty-five million-acre proposal, too--a hundred million less than us--they had a fifth system, some federal cooperative land, which was a bunch of bull. That's what they were going to do.

I think the fact that saved us again and again throughout all of this was that we had a unified plan; we had a clear goal; we didn't waver from it all the way through. We had these potent allies. The times were right, and we were better organized than ever before, plus the fact that the Alaska Coalition must have raised at least a half a million dollars, which was an enormous amount of money for us.

In the forestry campaign, we might have spent twenty or thirty thousand, for example, or something, but the odds were--

Fund Raising, the Media, and Grassroots Workers

Lage: Who was in charge of fund raising?

Evans: Well, all of the organizations--

Lage: Was it all done by the coalition?

Evans: All of the organizations chipped in. There was substantial help from the Rockefeller family fund, for example. Larry Rockefeller helped a very great deal. I am sure he raised money from his other friends. He was also available for some spot grants on something or other like that. Larry really was the mainstay there.

There was a real problem about coalitions in this town. Years ago we had the Barrier Island Coalition, and the Coastal Alliance, and the strip mining, and all of the other coalitions. The coalitions tend to get a life of their own. The Alaska Coalition was the best example of that. There was Chuck Clusen on TV every day, the chairman of the Alaska Coalition. He was just an employee of Bill Turnage for the Wilderness Society. He was getting all of the glory and all of the goodies, and here's the Sierra Club working its head off and Audubon and all of the others and they weren't ever interviewed. So you can see the egos and the problems with all that. It probably is inevitable.

- Lage: When did he leave the Sierra Club? I thought he was, during most of it, with the Sierra Club.
- Evans: That's right. He left the Sierra Club in 1979, I think, so it was right in the middle of it. The Wilderness Society sure took credit for him all over the place. They said, "This is our great conservation effort; Chuck Clusen is the chairman of it." He was actually chairman for the first two or three years when we was with us. So it was just one of those little ego things that are very important nevertheless in this town, and it caused a lot of problems. I don't think the coalition raised much, if any, money on its own. But the individual organizations did give money, and Ed Wayburn would raise money for it, and the Sierra Club Foundation would probably--I'm not sure exactly how it was all handled. But there was certainly an awful lot of resources.

Lage: What about managing the media? At one point in the oil pipeline fight there were indications that you felt the public really didn't catch on to Alaska. It was too far away. Was there a conscious effort to bring it closer through the media?

Evans: Yes, when we first had our hearings, remember, that gave us the exposure all around the country. We had them in Chicago and in Atlanta and Denver and, I think, Seattle, and I forget the other places like that, places where no one--Chicago and Atlanta especially--no one had ever held hearings like that, and so we turned out an awful lot of witnesses. Our main effort in the spring and summer of '77 was to build up our grass roots networks. We appointed--what do you call them?--team captains or something like that. We had eight grass roots coordinators working out of the Sierra Club office.

The Sierra Club office, as you probably know, was the headquarters. It was the place. We had enough space there.

Lage: In Washington or San Francisco?

Evans: In Washington, right down the street. I have always thought that the best thing I probably ever did for the Sierra Club here was to get our new space, our new "old" space. For the first two or three years I was there we lived in this old, dingy place with rats running around and cockroaches, and we had eleven people at peak time crammed in about twelve hundred square feet, something like that, and half of it was bathroom. It just really was awful, a terrible place.

We moved across the street to about forty-two hundred square feet at a very, very low price. It was a great big, barnlike space, and it was just right for this sort of thing. So we could

Evans: have room then, a big conference room and a big place for volunteers because our strength is having people. So it became the headquarters of the whole Alaska campaign, the physical plant. We had batteries of grass roots workers working back there night and day, and we had the phone banks run out of there, and we also had the conference rooms available, and that was going on. We had eight coordinators, eight grass-roots coordinators and each one responsible for a region in the country.

Lage: They were paid coordinators?

Evans: Yes, they were paid--not much, but they were good, eager, young kids. A bunch of Alaskans came down, and the whole thing was really incredibly organized.

Lage: Would they get on the phone to your local--?

Evans: Yes, they would get on the phone to the team captains and keep them informed. The main thing was to keep them informed all of the time, even if we didn't want them to do anything, keep them informed. That is part of the building up of the trust and the relationships, encouraging them and exhorting them.

We hired a person to work on media, especially in the later stages. I spent a lot of my time in the later years going around and talking to editorial boards of newspapers and doing stuff like that. That was something that we had never done before, and Mike did a fair amount of it, too. It was surprisingly easy to get in to see these people. We'd pick out the states. I remember during the summer of 1980 for the Senate fight; they sent me to Virginia and New York, for example. This was because in those states we had some swing senators we wanted to get, and we got some really good editorials just by sitting down and talking to these people.

Outreach Efforts: Support from Jewish Organizations

Evans: This is all jumping around a little bit here, but that was one part of the effort. One part was the grass roots; one part was the media (which was getting information out); one part was the lobbying (I'll come back to it in a minute), and one part was the outreach to other organizations. I developed quite a number of contacts with the Jewish community over the years, and I remember we had a scare--was it in '79 or '80 (I can't remember which now; maybe it was both years when we were having some votes coming up)

Evans: that Senator Stevens had a Jewish person on his staff that had gotten to the Jewish groups and said that if this Alaska Land Bill passes, that is an anti-Israel issue that is going to lock up oil, that the Arabs are going to put pressure on, and stuff like that--all sorts of stuff like that at one time.

Lage: Elaborate on that.

Evans: Okay. We heard about that, and the first thing I did was call up a person named Phyllis Sherman, who is head of the American Jewish Committee. That's a very small, but very influential Jewish group. There are about thirty or forty different Jewish groups in this country. They are up in New York City, and I had met them in previous years because of my work with the Jewish National Fund. One of my responsibilities for the Sierra Club all throughout my time there--self-appointed at first, but later on formalized--was to what we call do outreach to other groups, and outreach meant looking for allies beyond the traditional environmental spectrum of various places--labor, minorities, churches, business, whatever it might be, and the Jewish group became one of those.

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Evans: Actually, they came to us first about 1978 for different reasons. The Jewish National Fund was looking for allies too. Israel is always a beleaguered country, and they wanted allies. The Jewish National Fund is a group that plants trees in Israel; they have a real environmental thrust in many ways, and they raise millions of dollars a year, and they also build villages and settlements and things, do a lot of agriculture work, so it's really an interesting thing. We got along well enough that they invited me to address the National Congress of the Jewish National Fund up in New York at the Waldorf Astoria in March of 1979. I went up there and met a lot of people and one thing led to another and--

Lage: What did you address them on?

Evans: I talked about the similarities between the American environmental movement and the culture of the Jewish people. It was a good speech, I thought; it really was. I did a lot of research on it and read the Bible, and there are a lot of wonderful things in the old Hebrew tradition.

For example, they have a little saying in Hebrew folklore, "If you were planting a tree and you see the Messiah coming, you have to first finish planting the tree before you can go greet the Messiah because planting trees is so very, very important." And it wasn't until--this is what the Jews say--the Arabs came with a different culture. They have lots of goats which tear up

Evans: things by the roots, as you may know. Being from the desert, they don't revere trees the way the ancient Hebrews did, except olives and lemons, and things that produce economic cash crops. So the land became deforested, and Israel is trying to restore it (they say) to the former times.

They invited me to go on a trip to Israel, which I did in November of 1979; I went there for ten days. It was called a "peace mission." It was the anniversary of Sadat's visit, and it was a fascinating sort of thing. There was a lot of sightseeing; mainly we were seeing new forests being planted and agriculture in the desert; it was enormously impressive, a real eye-opening experience.

I made a lot of friends, a lot of contacts there. One of my main jobs with the club has always been as an ambassador, in different ways. Maybe we can come back to that, but the contacts made there and elsewhere--we worked with Fran Gendlin and tried to get an article in the Sierra Club magazine about them, and one was run--I just sort of built up alliances. I've given speeches to them off and on; we talk about it.

It certainly helped a great deal when this particular crisis came up, so I was able to get in right away to see Phyllis Sherman of the American Jewish Committee. Friends in JAF set up the meeting. As I said, the American Jewish Committee has contacts with all the other Jewish groups, and she said, "Well, that's true, you know, we are concerned. Senator Stevens and the oil people told us there are so many acres of oil-bearing land up here, and this is a concern, and what is it?" So I brought all the maps and charts and graphs and photographs of this because we felt we could document using the oil companies' and state's own statistics that 95 percent of all the oil-bearing land was out of our bill. You could drill a thousand acres a day on good oil-bearing land for thirty years and never touch anything inside our legislation.

And so we gave them all those facts, and they seemed to be impressed by that, and they helped us get in to see the B'nai B'rith, because B'nai B'rith is the big membership organization--they have about 600,000 members, or maybe more--and they were the ones who we were afraid were going to come out against us. In those days we didn't know what the Senate vote was going to be--this was in the days before the Senate vote, July of 1980--you know, one or two senators might have made a big difference we thought, so we didn't want the Jewish senators to go against us.

Barbara Blake (a Jewish person on our Washington staff) and I went down to see B'nai B'rith and laid all of our facts and figures and numbers there. It was very successful, and to make

Evans: a long story short, we neutralized them. They did not take a stand for us, but they certainly did not take a stand against us. That was just one of the many little bits and pieces of things that were always coming up and always coming around.

Working with Organized Labor

Evans: There were similar dealings with labor. We had some labor on our side, like UAW [United Auto Workers]. Of course, we had the construction unions against us as they always were against us. We made efforts--

Lage: Did you work to curry their favor?

Evans: That was early on; it wasn't hard with the UAW, but I personally did not. Other people did that and handled that particular end of it. But we had UAW actually in the Alaska Coalition, I think, we were doing that. Our main effort with labor on most issues is to try to neutralize them and have them not come out too strongly against us.

I've spent a lot of time working with labor on other issues, on wilderness issues, and I was active in helping the Sierra Club set up this Clean Air-OSHA Coalition; that was in my last couple of years at the Sierra Club. The reason for developing an alliance with labor then, and this is the Industrial Union Department of AFL-CIO, was to build a counter-weight, because for all these years, no matter what the issue seems to be--whether it's parks or wilderness or clean air or whatever it is--the labor unions were always against us.

But labor is not a monolith; you get wood molders and cement finishers and retail clerks and teachers and everything else like that, they have no reason to be against saving Alaska or Boundary Waters or whatever the issue might be. But they were against it because of the brotherhood factor. For the construction unions, sometimes jobs were affected, and they were so violently against us that their environmental policies pervaded and dominated everybody else; no one else cared as much as they did, so they'd just vote with their brothers.

There are stories in that forestry memo I gave you about Evelyn Dubos of the Garmet Workers. She lobbied against us on every wilderness bill. She knew every member of Congress by face;

Evans: she's one of those rare people that can do that, and she'd stand at the door of the House whenever we had a big vote on any wilderness issue I can think of and just buttonhole congressmen saying, "Vote no, vote no, vote no," like that, for the garment workers.

Lage: And this didn't affect her.

Evans: No. The Garment Workers, can you imagine a wilderness bill affecting them? She was doing that because the AFL-CIO told her to do it, and, you know, the Carpenters asked her to do it; that's the way it sort of was. That's the way it was with labor most of the time. So we formed this coalition, we and the progressive elements inside labor--

Lage: Is this the OSHA-Environmental Network?

Evans: OSHA-Environmental Network, to give us a common working ground to help us build up methods of trust and mutual respect and working relationships and mutual interest in things so that there would be another voice inside labor for the environment, so it wouldn't just be the construction workers all the time, but it would be other labor unions, to split labor, in effect, and that's part of what's been done.

Lage: Who were the unions that you developed this coalition with?

Evans: Steelworkers, UAW, retail clerks, OCAW, to a degree, those are some of the main ones.

Lage: How did you approach, say, the steelworkers?

Evans: Well, we'd always known them. Some of their individual people, like Jack Sheehan over there, we just became good friends really. They're good people. They really care about environment, too. They say, "Hell, you know, our guys like to hunt and fish." I mean that's the way they put it, "our guys" do these things.

Lage: How do they feel about clean air and the effect it might have on their jobs?

Evans: With the present issue, we're not going to get UAW on the Clean Air Act, for example. But there we might even get the mineworkers; no, we wouldn't get the mineworkers either; we'd get the retail clerks. You know, you try to pick them off wherever you can.

Lage: The UAW wouldn't be turned off to you because of your stand on clean air?

Evans: No, no. In fact, I just went to an OSHA-Environmental Network meeting about a month ago, and a labor guy there was saying, "Well, we're sorry we weren't able to help you more on clean air the way you helped us on other issues; it was just too much into the issue. Wait till clean water though, even the construction workers are environmentalists on clean water; we'll work better on that." So you get pragmatic around here after a while, and you just take each issue as it comes. Sometimes a congressman will be against you and sometimes not. Sometimes a labor union will be against you and sometimes not. You just have to keep on looking to the next issue and the next because they're all just coming at you all the time.

Lage: So part of this was your own network of personal contacts it sounds like.

Evans: Yes, pretty much.

Bolstering the Thin Line in Washington

Evans: One of my teachers when I first came here was Joe Browder. Joe was then head of the Environmental Policy Center, and they shared office space with the Sierra Club. They were right upstairs, and Sierra Club even gave them some money. And it was Joe who finally got me to come out here. I realized I didn't finish the story of how I got to finally come out here.

Came back in November of '72, and Rachel and I had had this agreement to come back, but I still wasn't sure. And Joe Browder, with whom we'd stayed when we were here, called me up and said, "You've got to come back here now. What do you think?" And I said, "Oh, I'm not sure." And he said, "You've got to come back; there's such a thin line of us back here; we need you." So that appealed to my romantic sense much more than anything else, the fact that I was needed.

Lage: Part of a thin line.

Evans: That's right. The fact that there were so few of us really appealed to my crusading instinct! And I thought, "Gee whiz, well, I have to go back then." But that was sort of what happened. So Joe is sort of my teacher. Joe is a political pro, done everything.

Lage: Had he been here for a while?

Evans: He'd been here for a long time. And Joe had a lot of ideas about energy, and also a lot of ideas about other groups; that that's one of the best things Sierra Club could do is go out and meet

Evans: other groups. And there's a report somewhere in my files I was looking at the other day reporting to Mike on all the other groups I'd met with. I embarked on a little campaign, go out and just meet everybody in town I possibly could, go over and make appointments, see them and get them to know me. Some of it paid off and some of it didn't, but I always thought it was very important for me to go to lots of meetings and wave the banner of the Sierra Club and show the flag, in effect, that we were there, because it sort of adds credibility and respect, especially if, you know, you're not too abrasive yourself personally.

So I did a lot of that over the years, and I think that helped to soften the image of the Sierra Club and make us part of the power structure, let's say, of this whole town. It has implicit values that you can't always pinpoint, but the fact that I knew these people now, it's the personal contacts. They return my phone calls, and I return theirs. So I did an awful lot of that. And it paid off with various stuff. Talking about the media and the press, I spent a long time with them, too.

Lage: So this was part of the building up of the club's Washington power?

Evans: That's right. What I also didn't say, and this is important to the whole thing, when I decided to come out here Mike McCloskey and I met with each other--it was in the Portland airport. We could never see each other any other place; it was always at airports and hotels. He was going to be there going one way, and I was going another way, so we met for about an hour in the Portland airport, probably November or December of 1972, after I'd decided to come but before I'd actually come, and he sketched out what he wanted me to do basically, what was expected of me. They wanted the office built up to be something commensurate with the club's power, with its growing grass roots power; it should be more than just two people and be a listening post. They wanted us to be a major part of the national scene; they wanted us to be more visible. Those were sort of the three basic things.

And I remember that because somewhere in the archives, somewhere in the files, is a memo I wrote to him. In about 1977 there was sort of a, I guess, wave of dissatisfaction with me, I think--I guess that would be the simplest way I'd put it--among some of the board, you know, some things didn't go right, whatever it might have been, and I was sort of trying to defend myself in a way, and I said, "Look, you asked me to do these things, and I think I did them. I expanded the staff so they could handle the workload of issues dealing with us. I outreached other organizations. We're well known; we're respected here; we've expanded the grass roots power." I felt I was sort of outlining the things that I interpreted to be my mission.

Evans: I was never really a nuts-and-bolts kind of guy. I wasn't a person who wanted to spend all my time worrying about the Xerox machine and how the pay scale was working out and things like that; those were essential management functions, and I did them all, but I never really liked them all very much. I would much rather be out there doing battle and building things up. I would have loved to have had an administrative assistant that I could have really trusted, that could handle all the budget, because I had to spend an enormous amount of time on the budgets and the Xeroxes and all the rest of that all the time.

Lage: You didn't have a budget for that kind of a staff person?

Evans: No, never did. We had more budget all the time, but I kept on hiring more lobbyists. I felt that was really the way to go and somehow the budget would take care of itself.

The Club: A More Technocratic Organization

Evans: What happened in '77, I remember now, is there was sort of a management revolution. It was against Mike as well as against me and because we were senior staff, you know, we got the brunt of it. I think 1977 was one of the Sierra Club's recent budget crises, and for the first time I'd gone over my budget; I hadn't paid much attention to my budget, I confess that right now. In past years I'd always made my budget and it was just sort of one of those things, and this year I think we spent something like \$20,000 more in phone bills; we fought a hell of a lot of issues all the time, we won all the issues--

Lage: I can see why your phone bills go up.

Evans: That's right. But that's how you win these issues, that's what you do, but this time we were \$20,000 over, and it was a bad budget year, and they'll say, "What kind of managers are we getting back there?"

This is very important, I think. It has everything to do with the way an organization evolves. You're sort of young, and when you're young you're very flexible and very open, and the people that do best in organizations like that are, I think, entrepreneurs; I'm in that category somewhat, people who are willing to take risks and willing to get out and willing to be up front--"front people," if you will--speak and write and inspire others and keep things moving forward.

Evans: But the very success of these entrepreneurs--this happened to Ford Motor Company as well as happened to the Sierra Club, let's say, and others--maybe breeds the demise of the entrepreneurs too, because you bring in more members; you bring in more troops; you bring in more activity; you bring in more money because you've inspired and got all these things moving all the time, then you leave a great trail of broken things behind you that have to be picked up. You know, the budget has to be met, so someone's got to pay the bills, and someone's got to--

Lage: It sounds a little bit like the Brower controversy, in a sense, a repeat of that.

Evans: Yes, in a certain kind of sense that's quite true. And I think my own success here meant that we had to bring in more what I call technocrats to run things, things that I really didn't care much about doing. I'd rather be out front, anyhow.

And the club has changed a lot in my opinion now, to be much more of a technocratic kind of organization. It's very, very big right now. You don't have any great, charismatic figures like Brower, let's say, up there anymore. It loses something and gains something, I think, both ways. We have the best computer networks in the world, but do we have a soul? I'm not really so sure anymore. Do we need a soul? I think we do, because the Sierra Club is peculiarly a passionate, volatile institution; it's made up of the people.

We have management charts and divisions and things like that, so I have very mixed feelings about a lot of things right now. But I'm glad I am where I am because we're in the process-- It's interesting; I'm new in an organization [Audubon Society] which is like virgin territory all over again.

Lage: Where they're trying to build up--

Evans: Yes, they're trying to build up the same thing that I was doing fifteen years ago, so it's really great. People let me do what I want to do, and I don't have to meet budgets and things like that anymore, and with that one exception I think I'd have to say I did meet all my budgets, and I did fill out all the personnel forms, and I interviewed everybody and had evaluations. I did all those things, but I sort of held my nose doing it. I just didn't want to do all that.

Lage: But did you ever try to get a good administrator or was that just out of the question?

Evans: I never tried that hard. Mike got one. And finally he got smart back in San Francisco, and Mike got Len Levitt, which was one of the best things that ever happened, so Mike doesn't have to deal with all those little things anymore. I would liked to have had one in the Washington office; I never did. John McComb had some of those skills; his main skill, I think, is doing those things. So now they don't need John because John doesn't have the front person skills, but he had those kinds of skills, I think.

So it was sort of a mixed bag in my last years there. I would say my first four years or so in the Washington office here were a great building up of everything. I was doing everything I was asked to do. I'm an expansionist by nature I guess; I built up the Seattle office from nothing into something, and then that's what I was doing here, the same way. And then the last two or three years there were sort of the bureaucratizing of everything, the solidifying of everything, if you will, and the improvement, no question the improvement; getting better Xerox machines and getting the computer program in operation. All these things are definite improvements in a way. The fervor and excitement are different, too, I think, but I think that's just the way organizations evolve. I was there; I played my part when the time came to play parts, and other people are playing their parts now. We got digressed somewhere--

Lage: I know, we were talking about Alaska, but this was a good digression.

XIII THE VICTORY IN ALASKA

How the Alaska Coalition Developed

Lage: We didn't talk about how the Alaska Coalition developed. I mean we have some of the background, but would you speak to--

Evans: That's right. It started out with a hardcore of organizations-- the Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, Audubon was certainly involved in it, Defenders of Wildlife, and some of the others--the sequence is unclear to me, but certainly by 1977 the coalition was well and going. We had something like maybe eighteen organizations to sign on at first, and it gradually expanded to thirty-three or thirty-five total, I think. I can't remember the exact number, but finally you got all kinds of organizations--

Lage: Was the plan clear by that time, so you didn't have to compromise and get input from every group in developing your strategy?

Evans: What you had was a steering committee, an Alaska Coalition Steering Committee with representatives from each of the organizations who were doing something. I was on it sometimes, and not on it other times, depending whether Ed Wayburn could be part of it or not. It shifted with the Sierra Club. But they were the people who made the decisions, and if I remember correctly now it was demanded and insisted that they have authority to speak in the name of their organizations. There were very, very few controversial decisions. After the initial decision was made, say, to put Southeast Alaska in, almost everything was done by consensus, and there was very little difficulty--

Lage: Even things over subsistence hunting or had that been worked out?

Evans: That had already been worked out by that time. We pretty well agreed on some of those things. I cannot now remember specific big new issues that came in, nontactical. There were a lot of tactical decisions to be made later on.

Lage: And were those done without consulting the Sierra Club board, say, or the task force?

Evans: They were certainly done without concerning the Sierra Club board. Ed Wayburn was in constant touch. You know, Ed's nature and his style is such that nobody in the Sierra Club was going to do anything about Alaska without consulting Ed Wayburn. We were always on the phone to Ed, back and forth, and we relied on Ed as the contact for the board. And, of course, Mike was in on things and the president of the Sierra Club was. Generally for the Sierra Club, it would be the club's representative on the steering committee, sometimes myself, more often not, someone else. Jack Hession was sometimes on it, and of course, Doug was right there all the time anyhow, and Chuck was, so the club was well represented throughout the Alaska Coalition and always in touch with Ed Wayburn and Mike and/or the new president, whoever that might be. So no decisions were made of anything that didn't involve that.

Beyond that it's just a simple chronicle of how the lobbying went, and the dramatic votes of 1978 when we had our first big test vote in the House, and we won. We beat Don Young's substitute bill and won overwhelmingly. The even bigger vote in May of 1979, when gas lines had started, and this was on the House floor again, and this time Congressman [John] Dingell and Congressman [John] Breaux had their substitutes, so that was an even more dramatic fight because then the gas lines had started in California, and the National Rifle Association a week or two before the vote got out a mailgram to all its million members saying, "This is a gun control issue; vote against the Alaska Lands Bill; vote for the Dingell substitute."

Lage: A gun control issue?

Evans: Isn't that incredible? And, of course, it was a total falsehood, a total lie, but the mail poured in--

Lage: Was the a group you were ever able to make contact with?

Evans: Not on this issue. We got them on the forestry bills in '76 and 1970. But NRA had had a purge of their own about 1976 or '77 or so, where they'd thrown out their conservation department, and now it's all gun control and all the hard-right stuff. So they've been against us on almost everything since that time. But every now and then you could get them on a few things earlier than that.

Anyhow, that was very dramatic. That backfired on the NRA because it was such a blatant falsehood. We just exposed that, and we got members of Congress on the floor of the House waving

Evans: their little mail postcards and then saying, "I've been duped by the National Rifle Association," so it actually helped us and hurt them. Sometimes I say rhetorically when I give a speech to our own people, "Name me one interest group in the history of the United States that's ever beaten all at once the oil lobby, the timber lobby, the mining lobby, the National Rifle Association, the AFL-CIO, all at once, all at the same time?" Only environmentalists have ever done that; they beat them all.

We beat them very dramatically in May of '79. You know, this is a chronicle of many things here, and probably there are other documents that have all the chronicles in it, but in '78 we got our first House bill through the Senate, finally got through a weak bill. We tried to work out an agreement in the dying days of the '78 Congress, which was a wild scene, went all through fifty-six hours straight, round-the-clock, in October of '78 before the elections. The agreement was all reached on a pretty decent bill, then it was torpedoed by Senator Gravel at the last minute in little, closed, behind-the-doors sessions. And that meant we had no Alaska bill and the Native Claims Act provision expired, so that's when President Carter made his dramatic announcement in December of '78 to withdraw the lands by executive order.

Coalition Influence with the Carter Administration

Lage: Was Carter's executive order done with Sierra Club input or was that just on their own?

Evans: No, heavy input. Chuck Clusen and-- It was done through the coalition again. Carter did not do it on his own. Andrus was in constant contact with Ed and Chuck and Doug sometimes, and I was in on a few of those. There were lots of sessions back and forth with the Department of Interior officials. Andrus at that time had appointed Cynthia Wilson to be his chief deputy. Cynthia was a former lobbyist for the Audubon Society, so we had a friend right there the whole time, and she worked on Alaska.

Now Juantia Alvarez, who was formerly in the Sierra Club's office in San Francisco, was the assistant for Bob Herbst; he was assistant secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, so she was a constant source of information and working together too. So we had our friends all throughout the place.

Lage: Would one of the roles of the environmentalists in influencing Carter be information? I mean, you already had the sympathy there.

Evans: Oh, yes. Cecil Andrus was never a total 100 percent environmentalist by any stretch of the imagination, but we had a sympathetic ear. So yes, they would be told one thing by their experts; we'd come rushing in there with more information from our experts, and we'd get boundaries changed. You know, we could save hundreds of thousands of acres that way, by getting boundary changes in their proposals.

Lage: And were they pretty receptive? Say they got one recommendation from the Park Service and one from the environmentalists--

Evans: Sure. I can't give you any specific examples now, but I know from my experience, sure, if you can sit down and show them that here's a photograph and some statistics that show that this area was left out inadvertently, you can redraw the boundaries on the map. We're doing that in Mount Saint Helens right now, redrawing boundaries all the time. So information has that impact, and a lot of places get left in and left out based on good information, especially when the overall numbers aren't changed too much, when they basically agree; those are political decisions for the most part.

So then in 1979 we roared back again and started all over again with even more hearings and an even stronger bill. That's when we fought off the battle again, won big on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Let's see, I'm looking at my chronicle, but it's such a complicated chronicle here [referring to papers]. Oh, I know what happened. In '79 we roared back again, but then the election in '78 had brought in a more conservative Congress, so we actually lost in the House Interior Committee. And our bill was not the one voted on--it was the Dingell-Breaux bill or something--we had to get our own substitute for the whole thing, so we had a big victory on the Udall-Anderson bill, I remember that's what it was called at that time.

Well, the Senate didn't even start marking up its legislation until October of 1979, and they didn't finish their markups, I don't think, until early the next year, January of 1980. You know, it brings us almost up to the end of the long chronicle.

Lobbying the Senate in 1980

Evans: Finally the Senate reported out a weak bill in early 1980, and it was a bad bill and unacceptable, and we thought, "Well, we'll just get it amended on the floor. We have a whole year to work on it.

Evans: Things really look good; we have a great House bill ready to go, and a great victory staring us in the face." And here's where the quirks of the legislative process come in, because in February of 1980, sort of towards the end of the day once more, our main champion on the Senate Energy Committee, Tsongas--the vote, by the way, was seventeen to one, and Tsongas was the only vote on our side--got summoned in to meet with Senator Byrd (the majority leader) and Senator Jackson and Senator Stevens. They all sat down with the freshman senator, and these three big honchos who had been there for many years and were powerful and so on talked Tsongas into making a time agreement on the Alaska legislation; that the Alaska senators would give up their right to filibuster if Tsongas would just limit himself to two or three main amendments. We'd just fight out the amendments, and we wouldn't filibuster and all that.

Tsongas thought he was getting something good, but the catch in it was that nothing would be decided until July. They couldn't even debate it until July. So we got five more months to get ready and get all the gears up, so instead of having a chance to debate it out and get a long, good debate on it and get our votes done, we had to put it off until July, near the end of the whole session. And Tsongas had been duped; he didn't realize it, and afterwards there was this tremendous blow to us where they had put all this momentum off for five more precious months. Stevens and Gravel told the press right afterwards, boy, they never thought they'd ever get away with something like that; they got a whole thing in.

Lage: Tsongas must have felt--

Evans: Tsongas's agreement really hurt, and it was really very sad. Well, one thing led to another then, and we finally had the key votes in the Senate. Finally everything got ready again, and my main role in 1980 was, as it was in '79, to talk to editorial writers and talk to the press, and I also was given the responsibility for organizing the VIPs, that is, we had to get the heads of all the organizations to get here in a certain time. I was responsible for getting the presidents of Izaak Walton League and Audubon and all the others together to lobby the Senate, because that was one of my main responsibilities then.

As I said, the whole thing was tightly organized. The lobbyists were responsible each one for just a certain number of senators and that's all they worked on. They got to know all their habits night and day, and it was just really organized right down. Certain people did nothing but--

Lage: Who was responsible for this organization?

Evans: Doug. Doug was the mastermind of the whole thing, and he delegated to Peter Scholls and Cathy Smith, they were his sidekicks, and it was just incredibly organized right down to the last little detail. So everybody had only a certain piece of the pie, and then the steering committee tried to meet every night and put it all together. And we had those sessions back in the Sierra Club every night while the campaign was going on; there would be these long sessions about what happened today and what do we do tomorrow.

We had a publications department, which did nothing but get out publications. Every day there would be a new little sheet called "News from the Alaska Coalition." It would say, "Yesterday Congressman so and so said so and so on the committee, and here's a position of the Alaska Coalition on it. Here's what they say; here's what we say," same way every day.

One of the best things the Alaska Coalition did, which is a model for all of our other campaigns, is to get a reputation for good facts and good numbers. No matter what side you're on, you want to get the news from the Alaska Coalition because it was crisp; it was hard-hitting; it was very specific, very well written; it said exactly what the situation was, and so everybody can understand. So the staffers of the Senate and House were just crying for our stuff, because then they could explain to their bosses what was going on without working on it too hard.

Lage: No matter what side they were.

Evans: That's right. And, you know, that's part of the whole idea that information is power around this town. Well, to make this sad chronicle short. We had the key Senate votes in July of 1980, July 22nd--I remember it was terribly hot, 100 degrees; it was awful weather--and the first three votes we won, they were sort of test votes on various sorts of things, and Senator Stevens was shocked and so was Senator Jackson and his supporters because more Republicans voted against Senator Stevens than voted for him.

The grass roots were all done, the editorials, everything was just perfect, everything just all came together just like that, but there was a series of parliamentary maneuvers. They pulled the bill off the floor; Stevens was able to do that, and there was a lot of back-room huddling. The whole thing was thrown up into abeyance, and then there was a tangle of events which is chronicled in other documents. What Stevens did was call the thing off the floor and try once more to force Tsongas and Cranston and some of our other supporters into negotiations again to see if they could give us some of the things we wanted without giving away any of the things that Stevens basically wanted. They thought

Evans: there would be a conference with the House, and it might be delayed then, but the Senate negotiators sort of changed their mind part way through. Anyway, there were a lot of behind-the-scenes deals.

In August the Senate passed a bill, which was a very, very weak bill, and things went into hiatus again there. We thought we'd get a conference, but a conference was delayed. There weren't any conferences, and everybody sort of waited until after the elections to see what happened. If Carter had won, plainly Stevens would have been forced to compromise with us, and we'd have gotten a lot better bill. If Reagan won, then not. And that's exactly what happened. The Senate passed a very weak bill, an unacceptable bill. We had to make a decision whether to vote for cloture; Gravel was filibustering.

Anyhow, these are the kinds of tactical decisions that were going on then that there was a lot of agonized discussion about at that time, and there were lots of bitter debates about it. The club was pretty unified on it. We felt we had to get a bill finally. It was a very bitter pill to swallow.

And the worst decision of all came after Reagan had won. Stevens, in effect, had won everything. Stevens's position was then, "Take my bill or nothing at all. You ain't going to get nothing." And if Reagan comes into power, he'll just issue another executive order withdrawing all the Carter protections, so we won't have anything, basically. And we swallowed hard, and there were lots of tears and bitterness because in the Southeast they came out worst of all.

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Evans: But everybody basically saw the political realities, and we had to accept it and took it. And, you know, it still wasn't that bad of a bill. It was not bad compared to our dreams, our wildest hopes, in 1971; it was not at all bad compared to what we thought we would get in '72 or '73 or even '75, when I was on my hands and knees drawing the first maps there. It was only bad after this superb lobbying campaign, when if we'd had any fair, normal play of the legislative process, we would have won big; we would have won everything.

And I've seen us get cheated again and again by some twist of fate, because of that, because our opponents can always pull a parliamentary trick on us and dispute it, and that's just the way things go. So it had some bad feeling to it, and it was a partial victory, but it was still a big victory.

Evans: They did this to us in the Endangered Species Act and in the case of Tellico Dam. We all heard about the snail darter; that's another big issue I was involved in in 1978. We fought the Tellico issue for years, and it became a major point in the Endangered Species Act, and we finally won it. Or, we got the Endangered Species Act passed, which was a big fight in itself, and we got a special provision for Tellico where a president's special committee was going to consider Tellico and vote yes or no, and we all agreed to abide by the vote of this committee. The chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors was on it and the Secretary of the Army Corps of Engineers was on it, and these people. They considered Tellico, and they voted seven to nothing against Tellico because it was a terrible project, a bad dam.

We thought we'd won. And the very next July a congressman from Tennessee slips in a little rider to an appropriations bill which authorizes Tellico all over again, permits it to go ahead, just slipped right through, nobody was watching at that time. And we fought a terrible battle in the Senate to save it, but it was too late. We lost it, so Tellico is now built. So every now and then you get robbed, you get cheated by the things you won fair and square and in open forum, open combat; you lose.

It just sort of brings to mind a thing I'm fond of saying. Sometimes I tell groups when I'm giving speeches, I say, "People sometimes ask me if there's a magic formula or not. You know, what really wins for us, and I used to say that there's no magic formula. There's nothing that really works; there's no magic way, no buttons you can press and really win, but I changed my mind. There is a magic formula. There are some magic words, and I'm going to tell you what they are right now, and I don't ever want you to forget them, and if you use them I guarantee you'll win." And everybody is sort of waiting, listening. And I say, "The magic formula is: endless pressure, endlessly applied." And it's really true. You have to be watching these things all the time; you can never let them go; you can never let them up. And if you do, well, we win most of our battles; we have.

We did over the past decade win most of our battles, all the time. I was always amazed about how many we won. Even in the height of the energy crisis we were not losing; we were sort of holding our own many times. If you look at the record over the last ten or fifteen years, we really didn't lose very many things. We didn't lose very many things that we fought. We lost things that we didn't have the resources to fight; you know, there's destruction going on every day. But when we were able to fight and fight back, we usually did okay.

Ed Wayburn's Role in the Alaskan Struggle

Lage: You've mentioned Ed Wayburn with some comments. Would you have any general comments about his role in this campaign, his effectiveness, his strengths and possible weaknesses?

Evans: Well, I think there are few citizen volunteers in America who've done more for the American earth. I've said this to him directly; I've said it in letters recommending him for awards to American Motors and people like that. And Peggy too; I put her in that category. Few people with passion and devotion and dedication have done more: Redwoods National Park and Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area and certainly in Alaska. He's persistent, tenacious, diplomatic when he wants to be, good back here on the hill, things like that; those are the strong points.

And I think it's safe to say that without Ed, you wouldn't have had the tenacious, unremitting Sierra Club commitment to this all the time. You needed a strong voice on the board of directors just arguing away, gets everybody to roll their eyeballs and say, "Oh God, here comes Ed again with Alaska." But you needed it. It's sort of like this endless pressure endlessly applied. We've got to do it to ourselves too. It's sort of like Cato--remember the Roman senator?--at the end of every speech he'd always say Carthago delenda est, Carthage must be destroyed, no matter what he was talking about, Carthage had to be destroyed! It finally was destroyed. It was like that. And I think there's something that's a lesson in human nature, in human political events, human affairs for all of us in that.

He is not always the easiest person to work with. Ed is the only person in the whole history of the Sierra Club that ever gave me a direct order, for example; you know, Ed had that tendency sometimes to do that, and that isn't the way you operate. When he was president, he ordered me to change my testimony on a forestry bill once after he read it over. Well, I didn't do that. I didn't follow that. I thought that was a very wrong order and arbitrary, and he knew nothing about the subject. So I called up Mike, after he'd given me the order, and I said, "Mike, Ed asked me to do this. Should I do it?" And Mike said, "Aw, forget it. Don't bother with it."

Lage: This must have been in '69 or--

Evans: It was in the early days, when I was in the Northwest, and I was back here for something, and he was back here. I still remember that about Ed. Ed has a--

Lage: Was that a major point he was in disagreement with, or the way you were phrasing it? I'm wondering what would have caused that.

Evans: No, I'm not sure now. It wasn't a small thing, but it wasn't a major thing. It was basically not his field, not his area; it wasn't something I respected his judgment on, and many things I did respect his judgment on. And he tends not to suffer opposition too well to his ideas, his ways. I mentioned earlier, and you may want to verify this sometime with the Alaska folks, but most of them really didn't get along well with him, didn't like him. They thought he was too arbitrary in dealing with them and too single-minded and didn't court them enough, a whole lot of different things, probably some accurate and some not, like most things.

He has a very large ego on many things. It carries over into his tales about the bears, when he says he didn't run and it's obvious he did, to many more important things than that. But a healthy ego is very important in this business, I think.

Lage: It seems like a lot of conservationists--

Evans: Yes, my wife says we're all a bunch of prima donnas! You know, she's really right. We all do it; I do too; none of us are exempt from that. But I think you need one to carry you through. You're always getting battered so much around this, and you're always getting criticized and commented on so much, you've got to have some kind of inner strength, inner ego to carry you through, and Ed certainly had it in spades.

Lage: Was he good at congressional strategy, or did he get involved in those decisions much?

Evans: He did; he did get involved. I would say that he wasn't bad. I wouldn't rate him brilliantly high in that field, but I wouldn't say I wouldn't listen to him either on these things. When he was around, when he was here and he was living here long enough to understand all the nuances, then it was more appropriate to listen to what he said than when he wasn't. But he did have some good contacts. He's the only Sierra Club person I know that can always get in to see Senator Jackson. I couldn't; Mike couldn't; Doug certainly couldn't; Doug's never been there. But he could, and that was very valuable, and Ed has this wonderful, courtly, Southern gentleman way about him when he wants to be, and Ed is very persuasive, so I think Ed was an enormous asset to the whole campaign. I did not think the club would have had this commitment if it hadn't been for Ed. So the weaknesses are really pretty minor compared to the strengths, something like that.

Lage: Because the club surely put a large amount of its resources into this campaign.

Evans: Damn right it did.

Lage: And you don't hear much opposition to that, or there may have been rumblings.

Evans: Not really, no. Ed, from the very beginning, made it plain: this is the major thing, a major issue. And it was, damn it, you know, it was the vote of the century; it was the "last best first chance," all those great slogans that came out of that, "last great first chance." It was the most dramatic. It was a chance to do something right for the first time. You know when the dust settles-- Doug was bitterly disappointed when all this fell through because he was so close to it, and I tried to tell him, "My God, you know, you look back in a few years and you're going to feel pretty good about all this," because in spite of the bitter disappointments of not getting 120 million acres and screwing up Southeast Alaska, we still got a lot.

Now, we're still picking up the pieces, because Southeast Alaska is in big trouble, and we're paying the bitter price. We're losing places there; only the economic situation is saving some areas right now. We lost that terrible big chunk right in the middle of Misty Fjords, for example. You know, there are some real bitter losses there. And the Southeast is always my favorite part of the whole bill and the whole area anyhow, and I feel it personally. But it's still a good bill, when all is said and done. We overcame enormous odds.

Overcoming the Odds: The Boundary Water Campaign

Evans: The only similar odds to Alaska I can think of was the Boundary Waters Campaign, which I was personally, deeply involved in. I may have mentioned that in California, I don't know.

Lage: No, you didn't.

Evans: My main issue in 1978 that I sort of assigned myself was to work on legislation to give final and complete protection to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in Minnesota, about a million acres up there. An exemption in the Wilderness Act of 1964 permitted logging and mining in there, and there was mining; it permitted motorboats. It was sort of a wilderness area, but it sort of wasn't.

Evans: And we first tried to save it with a little rider on. One of the first issues I worked on when I came back here was the Eastern Wilderness legislation in 1974 and 1975. There was lots of behind-the-scenes on that, and we finally got something through in late 1975, the Eastern Wilderness Act. That's a whole other nuance, how the club got along with other groups, by the way; I may come back to it.

But in any event, we got it through and we tried at the last minute to add a little rider to it with the outgoing Congressman, Congressman [John A.] Blatnik, to protect the Boundary Waters completely. We didn't get it then. So we started to campaign again, and we founded the Boundary Waters Coalition in Minnesota, and it was a beautiful thing to work with those people up there.

To make a long story short, in April of 1978, the bill started moving through the markups. We finally got a Boundary Waters bill passed through the House in about June of '78 and through the Senate finally in the dying days of the Senate and through conference and everything. In October it got passed at five a.m. in the morning; at the time they adjourned at eleven a.m. in the morning. It was on a Sunday morning after meeting round-the-clock for two or three straight days.

It was an incredible campaign, and the odds were against us, just as here, just as in Alaska, the local congressman was against us, violently so.

Lage: And it usually doesn't work?

Evans: It usually doesn't work. And here also the congressman was a Democrat, he was from the majority party, not from Alaska where it was just Don Young, a Republican, and you can roll Republicans because the Democrats ran the House. So you had a popular Democrat [Jim Oberstar] from the majority party, violently opposed to this. It was really a tough kind of thing to do. We only succeeded because we got some of the other congressmen from Minnesota to be on our side, and we controlled the committee at that time. And we had a bitter, bitter struggle, but we won big. When we finally had the final vote on the floor of the House, we won real big. I tease the Alaska people and say, "We won bigger than you did," and there was worse opposition in the House, at least.

By the way, just for the record here, I've been through so many of these campaigns, so many of these issues; they have so many incredible twists and turns and so many nuances that never ever get written down, and people forget them after they're done. So I thought [in April of 1978], "Well, you know, for once I'd like to

Evans: record all the incredible things that go on in a campaign," so I did this with the Boundary Waters campaign. Every day from about April to October when I came back to the office after some new thing had happened--maybe some meeting of a congressman or senator or some nuance or some map drawing or some terrible new thing happening with the Forest Service, whatever it would be--I'd sit down and I'd dictate my recollections of who said what to whom that day, and what went on that day, and so and so raised her left eyebrow and that made everybody in tears, and all the things that go on here that really have a difference in this legislation, and I wrote it down.

And by the end of the time, when the final thing happened--we lost it 150 times and gained it back 151 times, that's the way most of these bills are--I had a forty-six page document called "The Diary of the Boundary Waters Campaign."* It's somewhere up in my attic; I couldn't find it. I sent copies around to some people, too. So there is a record of what one of these campaigns looks like from day to day. Because when the histories of the Alaska campaign are in, they're going to be like this, this document here that I'm holding up. It's going to be the bare bones of what it is; this does not capture the flavor of what went on in the meetings, and the agonies, only I can't do that because the players have forgotten most of it, or the totality of it. So anyhow, that's there, and that ought to be a part of something, somewhere.

Lage: Robert Cahn is trying to get Ed Wayburn to work with him on a book.

Evans: They ought to do that; they really ought to, and now that all the players are still alive they ought to capture as much of the flavor of it as well as just who did what to whom going through all that. Probably none of it will capture the tenseness of the times, and the aches when you think you're going to lose it all. And that's what these things are a lot like; there's a lot of emotional roller coasters going on.

*On deposit in The Bancroft Library.

XIV INTERNAL CLUB AFFAIRS IN THE SEVENTIES

Delegating Responsibilities

Evans: From my own personal standpoint, since you're interviewing me, I think it's important to note that while we've just been talking about various issues as vehicles for describing the Sierra Club's operation, we can never forget the fact that there are dozens of things going on at the same time, that any one of my days as head of that office was incredibly fragmented. There were always many, many things going on at the same time.

In addition to Boundary Waters there's been-- I just can't remember them all. I have lists of them here in the papers. There was the endangered species campaign going on at the same time, and there was public works legislation going on, and there were wilderness bills going on, and there were Xeroxes to buy and people to hire and fire. I never have been able yet to describe an average day around here because there is no average day; there're always things going on, always a stream of visitors and people.

Lage: Was there ever a time when you completely delegated something to a staff member and didn't take part in it at all?

Evans: Bills?

Lage: Yes.

Evans: Yes, quite a bit, quite a bit actually. Energy is a good example. The nuclear bills I had almost nothing to do with, except maybe give a few speeches. I'd want to know what was going on; that was basically about it. Chuck Clusen did the whole Federal Land Management Act all by himself; I had little to do with that. John McComb in later years handled a lot of the wilderness bills, and I rarely dealt with them in detail. The strip-mining bill was mostly Dick Lahn, basically. Yes, I didn't do a lot of direct

Evans: lobbying in the later years. I'd want to know what was going on, and my main role as head of the office, the Sierra Club presence in Washington, often was just to be called in at the last minute and stand at the doors and lobby members of Congress I knew when they were walking in, or making key phone calls, and things like that. And that's a proper function for the head of an office or for the executive director or someone like that, because there's just too much to do all the time.

I spent a lot of my time giving speeches, going to meetings, representing the club. The ambassadorial function around here is an important one too, if you want to play the game and want to be part of the structure that's going on around here. At the same time there were lots of others that I had pieces of or hands on in one form or another, too.

Lage: Would you still get involved in Pacific Northwest issues?

Evans: Oh yes, always. I've never lost my love for that. The fact is when I came back here, two of the major issues I spent a lot of time on were the Alpine Lakes and Hells Canyon bills. We had carried them to a certain distance in the Northwest when I left. They finally had to have a final resolution here. I was looking in my attic last weekend and there were files and files of the incredible ups and downs of the Hells Canyon legislation in 1974. We lost it just after Thanksgiving. We had the votes in committee, but our opponents kept making quorum calls, and my memories of the Hells Canyon legislation are committee members filing in and taking a vote.

We had the votes; the votes were right there. Our opponents knew we had the votes, so as soon as people got up there--we had just barely one member enough for a quorum--then our main opponent, Craig Hosmer [R-California], would get up and walk out. He'd walk out and stand out in the hall, and so would his sidekick, Teno Roncalio [D-Wyoming]. They were opponents of ours. So then we didn't have a quorum. We'd beg and plead, "Please get back in there and just let them have a quorum so they can vote. Vote against us on the main thing, but let them vote." Of course, they wouldn't do it. Then we had to race up and down the halls of Congress knocking on doors of other congressmen on the committee to please come here and vote for the quorum. And I have memories of congressmen sprinting up the stairs to get there just in time. I can tell you anecdote after anecdote about stuff like that. But we finally lost it because we couldn't get enough quorums in time to do it.

Lage: I thought you finally won that.

Evans: Oh, we did. We lost it in 1974, but got it finally the next year. So, you know, we were angry and bitter. That kind of tactic only works when there's a press of time, and this was a lame duck session; there was a great press of time. We lost the Endangered Wilderness Act that same way. We lost a lot of things then.

So in January of '75 we came roaring back right in, this time we just roared right into the first session of Congress, and we'd gotten about thirty or forty cosponsors on a bill. We'd try to get a majority of members of the committee; we got the bill introduced right away, and we started ramming it right through to do that, to avoid that problem. But that's the sort of thing that goes on, and each one of these things takes an enormous amount of time.

Lage: Detail too.

Evans: Yes, an incredible attention to detail.

Lack of Constituency for Washington Office

Lage: You had some comments on Washington.

Evans: Yes, I think I was mentioning that when I first came here, one of my first perceptions was the fact that the Washington office had no constituency to support it within the internal Sierra Club operations, so at budget time all the other entities had constituencies, and it didn't. And yet, having been a field person and having been down to San Francisco lots of times, it was just obvious just from walking in the door that the pressures on the Washington office were much more enormous, much more immediate, much more constant, much more unrelenting than any of the other operations of the Sierra Club, in the conservation sense, at least; that's all I really knew about. This was by far the worst situation in the club from the standpoint of resources to deal with the enormity of the load.

And I felt that we had to change the constituency situation in some way if I wanted to fulfill my mission to Mike and do the things that he wanted me to do--to build up the office to something commensurate with the Sierra Club's real power around the country. We had to have more people and more staff. And you can't get that without a budget, and you can't get a budget without a constituency; it all fits in together. I can't just send back memos saying, "I've got to have more staff. I've got to have more staff," unless people know what was going on and feel it's important to what they're doing. I think everybody implicitly knew Washington was important, but they didn't know just how and in what way.

Evans: So there were two or three different ways I went about that. One I mentioned yesterday, first by committing myself to traveling all around the country whenever I could and talking about Washington, to see other club groups wherever I went. I did a lot of that. Secondly, when we got a bigger staff in 1974, having them do that, assign regions, and I had one staff handle New England, one the Middle Atlantic states, one the Gulf Coast, basically.

Lage: So this was sort of internal power building?

Evans: That's absolutely right; it's constituency building. Third was to make it plain in every publication of the Sierra Club that we were your Washington office. We are there to help you. If you need help calling up the Department of Interior or Transportation or something like that, call us up; we're friendly voices on the end of the phone. I got out a list of who the staff were and here's what their subject of expertise are and tried to get it distributed widely. The staff complained, I will say that. You know, I don't blame them in some ways, but I kept saying, "Look, we've got to do this to save ourselves and to protect ourselves."

Third, I wrote a series of columns in the Sierra magazine for a number of years about Washington. I took over from Lloyd Tupling doing all this. But I tried to change it into something (a) commensurate more with my style, with the way I kind of personally am, the way I write anyhow, and (b) into something I felt was more what Washington really was. So I didn't just write about, "this is bill number so and so, and this is the amendment to it, and this is what it all is." I tried to say that, but I tried to convey the flavor and mood of Washington, and the feeling of what's it like to be here with Watergate going on, because that affected everything else, the impeachment process affected everything else, what the electoral process is, what political action committees do, what it's like at the parties here, all of the things that are really part of the Washington scene, so that the readers would feel part of Washington; they'd feel it was a human place, not just some place where people mark up bills in some ivory tower with the voices echoing down the marble corridor--that isn't how it works at all--but seeing the humanness of it all.

And I like to think that that really paid off. And the time it really paid off in the end was in the terrible budget crunch of 1978. You may remember then that we were a million dollars short in our income production from revenue and the Sierra Club had to cut a million dollars off the budget. We had this terrible, terrible session.

Lage: Ted Snyder was president.

Evans: Ted was president, right. Had that awful session, and nobody has ever forgotten it whoever lived through it, back in Marin County over there, at the Yosemite Institute. We all sat through that, and there were lots of tears and gnashing of teeth. But one thing they put up--I saw in on the board; I still see it now--they ranked twenty items, from membership to books to volunteer services to task forces. Everybody was tearing their hair out about what to cut, and they ranked them in order: what you'd like to cut most would be number one, and tenth would be number ten, and last you'd be willing to cut was number twenty.

Well, guess what was number twenty? The Washington office of the Sierra Club was the last thing anybody wanted to cut. And that was when I felt--I never said this out loud, of course--that that was the vindication of all the past policies, that we had in fact done our job, that we had in fact become the people's office, the members' office, that we had in fact educated so much of the people about what goes on in Washington, how important it is to their work in the club and everything. So I felt very, very good about that.

Lage: Do you think there is a change in balance over these years of litigation, lobbying, education? Was lobbying recognized as being a more vital function?

Evans: Well, I think lobbying was always recognized as a vital function, but I don't think people knew what it took. There was a time when people thought all you do is pass a resolution, that was lobbying, and there are still some people who think that: all you have to do is pass a resolution and send it around to every Member of Congress and all the Members say, "Yes, sir," and do it the next day. Then people thought, "Well, all I have to do is write my congressman a letter," and that's lobbying. "Or maybe I'll do a big deal and I'll come back to Washington for a day and I'll go around and shake hands with my congressman and say I want him to vote so and so and he'll say, 'I'll keep your views carefully in mind when I vote on this,'" and that's lobbying.

So I think what we did was to educate--I would say I pioneered--and certainly the ones that have come after me have really sophisticated or improved and fine-tuned--the process of saying, "Look, this is a long-term thing, with people there night and day, picking up every nuance and watching and a constant back and forth with our power, which is our grass roots, which is our people, and the expertise of the lobbyists--it's this back-and-forth kind of process." That's what I think has changed, the perception.

I think the Sierra Club is by far the most sophisticated environmental organization now and knows that through the ranks. I think anybody who's active at all in conservation in the Sierra Club knows that now.

Volunteers and Staff: No Guff

Lage: Well, this is an interesting letter you handed over. It was '74, apparently, that there was some move to cut back the Washington office?

Evans: I think, yes, it was one of the periodic budget crunches that was to not give me more staff. It's a poignant thing that always comes up in the Sierra Club, and I certainly understand it. We're a volunteer organization; we're a volunteer-run organization. We're not a staff organization; we've got to give the volunteers more strength. We in the staff never like that naturally because we were the ones under attack, and we didn't have the constituency, but more so because we didn't see it that way. We said, you know, "We the staff, of course, are the servants of the volunteers; that's what we're there for, but the volunteers are our power."

You can't fund a task force, let's say, and expect that to carry the lobbying operation through unless they come and live in Washington for all the months that that legislation is going through. If the task force isn't willing to come and live in Washington and be in Washington, then you cannot win that issue. The task force has its vital function that the staff in Washington can't do, but it's a symbiotic relationship; it's together; it's not apart.

Lage: So you're saying that you didn't see a tremendous gulf between staff and volunteers?

Evans: I never did.

Lage: Do you think you were unique as a staff person in that way? Were you less pushed by the volunteers?

Evans: I always felt that. Mao Tse-tung had a statement, "The Chinese Revolutionary Army to be effective has to swim like a fish in the sea of its people." That's how I always felt; I felt like I was a fish swimming in the sea of my own people. I felt that wherever I went, whatever Sierra Club meeting I went to, that I was one, they were my people; we were all together; we were brothers and sisters, wherever it was. There was no distinction whatsoever, because I was one of them. It may have been because I started as a volunteer. I like to feel that the people always knew I loved them, that that was my first thing, that was my first concern.

There's a danger in that viewpoint: therefore, whatever I do is fine because obviously I'm one of them. You know, you have to watch out for that sometimes because in any organization of so many people, some people are totally going to disagree with you when you

Evans: do what you do. But, no, I think that love was a clear thing that always came through, and my concern, and my solicitude, and my willingness to spend the time, because I admired them in what they were doing and there was no "we" or "they."

I think that some of the professional staff didn't have that feeling because personalities and background were just different, that's all. Some, we already mentioned, thought it was a drag, that the volunteers were in the way and a problem, and there was constant friction. I never had any friction, to my knowledge, any real friction with any volunteers on any issue that couldn't be resolved very quickly. And so I always thought it was unique, but I certainly felt it to a very high degree. And I know others did and did not.

Criteria for Hiring Staff

Evans: I think that one of the problems with the club right now is that the professional staff is in some degrees almost getting too professional and too far away from the volunteers. There's a lot of lip service paid to it, but it's all a mechanistic kind of sense.

Lage: That's what I wonder; there is a lot of lip service, but I wonder how deep the tie is. Did you do your own hiring for lobbyists?

Evans: Well, yes and no. That was another growing sore point that got resolved in the management reforms of 1976 and '77. When I was hiring somebody, I would do the initial screening, and I would pick out two or three people that I thought were the best, and I had my own predilections about it, but then the board demanded its right to interview everybody too.

Lage: The board would make a final decision?

Evans: The board would actually make the final decision. I remember the last time it happened was in the fall of 1975 when I wanted to hire my energy lobbyist. It was between Greg Thomas and Bill Painter. I thought they were both excellent people, but very different. Bill was a people's man, and Greg was a technician, in a sense. I preferred Bill, but Bill did not make a good impression on the board, and the board hired Greg, and it caused all sorts of trouble internally with, you know, abrasive relations with volunteers. Greg may have been better technically, but he wasn't as good with people. In my experience the board always did this, the board always hired the flashy, first impression, the big impression kind

Evans: of person, and never got to know the soul of the person. You can't do it when you've got fifteen people interviewing somebody at lunchtime, and that's the way it was.

So the management reforms we had that Mike probably talked about, in 1977 or so, said we've got to stop all this; the board can't get involved in every decision. We delegate it to Mike, and Mike delegates it to me or whatever. Mike was responsible through me and so on. We'd do our own hiring and hire our own people.

Lage: Would Mike then review your choices or did you--

Evans: No. Basically I did. Of course, I talked to him about them, and say, "We're down to so and so and so and so," but Mike had sense enough to know he didn't know these people, and I did. It was up to me. As long as I had the budget for it, I could hire who I wanted basically, and that was sort of how it was in '77, '78, '79. I made John McComb my assistant about that period of time, 1979 I think, and he and I interviewed people together. Since he was going to work with them too, I wanted him to have a role in it and be a part of it too. But then the decision was mine in the later years, after the reforms.

Lage: When you were hiring, was the background the candidates had working with volunteers something you carefully considered?

Evans: Yes, yes, yes. Every time we had an application for a job--for a job opening we'd get many, many applications--of course, there was the normal criteria: you have to be fluent and articulate and presentable. I never was too concerned about background, where you've been to school and stuff like that. Some around this town are; I never was. What your previous background was, either; I never was impressed one way or the other if people were EPA or not, or lawyers or not, or whatever or not. But I cared very much about the impression they made on me because the kind of impression they would make on me would be probably the only impression they have to make on somebody they were lobbying, because that's all the time you get with somebody, running down the hall, catch him just before the markup, that's all you get.

So I cared a very great deal about that. I wanted to see writing samples because we demand a lot of writing out of our staff. And then I cared very, very much what experience they'd had working with volunteers, because the Sierra Club uniquely then, at least, among all other groups is a group of active volunteers. So our people had to have people skills, or should have people skills, should not only have worked with volunteers but have liked it, because a lot of people don't like it. As I said, it's the way we had to do our professional job.

Evans: Colleagues in the other environmental organizations would sometimes kid us about all the time we had to spend on the phone with the volunteers, and we'd say, "Oh yeah, you know, that's right." On the other hand they'd always envy us when the time came to demonstrate cloud and power because that was our power. And I'd spend a lot of time in staff meetings sort of preaching the gospel, "We've got to listen; these are people, and bring them in and talk to them." And that's why we started the volunteer training program, to get more personal contact. Even in this big city, this political capital of the world, this is a human business.

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Lage: --Was it important if you felt commitment? Was that important?

Evans: I cared, that's right. I personally cared much more about commitment than expertise. Around a town like this you're always going to get a certain number of people who are what I call "for hire," jacks-of-all-trades, you know, hired-gun lobbyists. And they can come, they know how to lobby and put something together, but I never hired that kind of person, I didn't want that kind. I'd rather have a younger person with less experience than an older one with that kind of experience because I knew very well that our kind of work demands a total commitment; it demands ten, twelve hours a day, seven days a week very, very often. And we're never going to be able to pay anybody enough to make them satisfied with the pay they're getting to do it, so they better have the love and the passion for it.

So that's what I looked for when I was hiring. I wanted somebody who really loved it and really believed it and really cared about it because I knew we'd get a lot more work out of them than we could pay them for. So I looked for those things too.

Lage: In their background or in the way they presented themselves?

Evans: In their background. If somebody had a history of working on a campaign already, then I would be much more inclined to hire someone like that. If somebody had already been working actively with a Sierra Club group somewhere then they stood very highly in my eyes because they didn't just mouth the words and say, "Oh yeah, I want to work hard and all that," they'd shown me they really could work hard and really could do that. And that's the kind of people we really had to have, I felt.

Tension Between Washington and San Francisco

Lage: As the Washington office became more well accepted in the club, was there tension between the Washington and the San Francisco offices?

Evans: Yes.

Lage: A power struggle type of thing?

Evans: There was in a sense. I think it was felt more out there than out here, but that was part of the root and source of the problems that arose in the late seventies. It was in May of 1975 that the board hired Paul Swatek to be the conservation director or something out there, I forget exactly what it was now. And I remember my antennae went up when all that was being discussed, and I insisted that the Washington office not be subordinate to Paul, that Paul not be my boss in effect, that Mike still remain my boss.

Lage: Paul became another step in the San Francisco hierarchy?

Evans: In the San Francisco hierarchy he did, and I think the implicit intent was that he become another step for me to go through before I talked to Mike.

Well, personally I couldn't accept that because I was senior to Paul in experience and stature and all sorts of things, and I'd had this direct access to Mike all these years. So I would have had to resign. I told Mike I'd have to resign if that was the case. I liked Paul personally, but I just couldn't accept that. And secondly, Paul just had no Washington experience. How could I go through him when he doesn't know what we're talking about back here? It's not his fault, he just hadn't been here any length of time. So I insisted and demanded that the Washington office become a department head, just like publications and just like membership and things like that. So we became a separate department, where Paul and I were equal rank and Mike was the boss.

And that was fine with me. One of the board members told me privately then, "Look, Brock, the only reason we're hiring Paul like this is because we want to have an alternative to Brock Evans when we're hiring the next executive director." And I thought, "Gee, that's interesting." So that may have been part of it too. Now, you know, subsequent events showed that didn't work out in any of those predictions, any of those ways. But that was the idea.

Evans: But there was a growing tension I think between Washington and San Francisco. I wasn't aware of it that much; I just kept hearing about it, you know, "San Francisco and Washington don't get along." I thought, "That's funny, because Paul and I never talk like that. We talk together all the time, and it's fine, and who's tense with what? Why? What is going on here?"

So I have to say, unless I've just put it out of my mind, I cannot remember what the reason for it was. I'm tempted to say it was because of our own great success back here. We were the visible ones; we had all the notoriety. We were getting more and more funds; we were building up more and more staff all the time, and this is where the action is. The action is not in San Francisco. The conservation action can never be in San Francisco; it has to be here. And yet there were a lot of people back there, and they were doing good things and so on.

There was constant tension about the National News Report. Our responsibility was to write the inside and the outside pages all the time, and our lobbyists were expected to come back from lobbying at certain deadlines and write up the whole stuff and send them out there. And it was a real pain in the neck, and I always had to crack the whip over the staff to get them to do it, and they wouldn't always do it on time, and poor Gene Coan couldn't always get out on time. We really needed a writer to do it full time, and we finally had a person, Leslie England, to write it, but she wasn't senior enough in rank to intimidate anybody enough to get them to write articles for her, so it never really was a good system. It never really worked out as well. Our lobbyists were just too crushed with work and felt this was a drag and an imposition and that was a source of tension, I think. The fact that we were getting more staff and more money I think was a source of tension.

The fact that--oh, how can I put this?--I had been in the sun for so long, and I'd been sort of the rising star and the fair-haired boy for so long, very human sort of thing, others who felt they were equally good weren't getting their share of the sun. Doug Scott, John McComb, Jonathan Ela.

Lage: People in Washington?

Evans: No, they weren't in Washington then. Doug was in the Northwest, Jonathan in the Midwest, John in the Southwest and then in D.C. They felt that they were as good as me any day, and how come, you know, why was I getting all the attention all the time? And I think a combination of a variety of factors, plus remember I mentioned earlier my lesser degree of interest in the management, about certain things done in a chaotic way. My answer is,

Evans: everything was done, but it just wasn't done according to the book. And it was done on time, but it wasn't done according to some chart. And it's ordered in here [pointing to his head], but it's not ordered out there.

John Mc Comb is a very different kind of person. He's very orderly and very neat and very set in his ways, and he's not a front person; he's an inside person. And a combination of those forces coalescing together on those different currents led in-- what was the date?--we had a staff meeting in early 1979 in West Virginia somewhere, and there were lots of complaints directed at Mike about the organization of everything. Nothing was really working right, they said. I never heard any direct complaints about the Washington office, how that wasn't organized, although I knew John McComb had been complaining behind my back a lot. I couldn't get him to talk to me directly about it. He didn't like the way things were being run.

Decision to Leave the Club

Evans: The result of the controversy was that Mike appointed an organization committee, a staff committee to look at the reorganization. I didn't think much about it, didn't pay much attention to it, and in April or so they came out with a report. Of course, who was on the organization committee? It was John McComb and Doug and Jonathan Ela. You know, all the malcontents were on it! So, by gosh, they fixed that thing right up! And the recommendation was that the Washington office be made subordinate to the San Francisco office, so they created a director of federal affairs. It was obvious the jobs were directed to the people they wanted to fill them. They wanted Doug to be the director of federal affairs, of course. They wanted him to come back and run the whole operation.

Lage: He would be in Washington?

Evans: No, he'd be back in San Francisco. Back in San Francisco running Washington. And there would be the conservation administrator, which obviously was Paul. Paul's skills became very apparent though; he was very good at handling the flow of paper and so on, and his skills were not in other places. Then they had to do something with me.

They didn't want me to be head of the office anymore; that was tailored for John McComb. And so they created this other job; this person would sort of be out giving speeches and meeting the press and so on, which of course I liked to do, but under the new

Evans: plan I had no staff and no budget and things like that. And as soon as I saw that I thought, "I know that's for me, but that's a superfluous supernumerary. I wouldn't do anything like that."

So the rest of 1979 was sort of Mike saying to me, "Look, I've got to do something about this. What will you accept and what won't you accept?" And that was sort of the beginning of my realizing it was probably time for me to leave the Sierra Club because it was plain I was going to be forced to leave my role of being in charge of the office. And the result, as you may know, is that I became the associate executive director, which was the only title I would accept. And I got a lot of freedom for a lot of things I did.

Lage: Did you come up with that idea?

Evans: Yes, that was my idea, right. I wasn't ever going to be that little thing stuck out in left field that they had for me out there. But the internal pressures simply were such, with these others crowding me out, wanting their place in the sun and wanting to do all this, that Mike just felt he had to do something, and that was it.

And so that was what was negotiated throughout 1979. It was all kept a secret. When the volunteers heard about it, I got a lot of calls from volunteers saying, would I accept this or would I not? Because they were offering to lead a revolt inside the Sierra Club to help me; I think that would be the way I'd put it. And I didn't want to do that. I thought, "Well, it's about time I do something else anyhow, and I'm tired of worrying about Xeroxes in any event. I never did like it in the first place, and let John do all that, and we'll see how it works." And I didn't want to tear the club apart either with anything like that, and so I thought I'd just try it and see how it worked out.

So we did. The reorganization took place in January of 1980, and I became the associate executive director. It was sort of a double-edged sword, in a way. On the one hand there was great freedom, and all the speeches I wanted to give, and all the meetings I could go to, and I was Mike's representative, and, you know, had the great title and everything else, and it was real enough. And that was during the Alaska campaign when I was organizing and going to see the editorial boards, and they were good executive director kinds of things to do.

But I had no staff, I had no control. And I had lost my power, in a sense. I had lost my line authority over anybody, except my secretary, and that was really basically sort of it. So it was a real shift in things. And in Washington, where

Evans: everybody judges all these nuances so quickly, my colleagues in the other groups didn't know what to make of it. They would say, "Where are you? Are you still there or not?" It took about a year or so, a year and a half, to really reestablish myself. I had to make the job over again; that was the stuff you read about the contacts with other groups.

It was a lot of fun, a lot of freedom, but it was a real change from before, because now John and Doug basically were calling all the shots about the internal organization; Paul had been effectively frozen out, too. And I had to sort of scrap to do anything. If I wanted to do something I could do it, but I really had to fight for it.

Lage: You created things on your own.

Evans: Yes, I had to create them on my own. And if I wanted to do conservation things I had to demand and insist and things like that.

Lage: Oh, really.

Evans: Yes, because they were running all the conservation things, and I wasn't anymore. And it just became apparent to me by the end of 1980 that while this was all nice if I was sixty or so, because it was a nice way to end my days and my conservation career because it was very pleasant and very free and I had a big office and all the nice things, but I was too young really to be kicked that far upstairs, I think.

Lage: That's what it sounds like!

Evans: And it was as if I'd done nothing all these years, it was as if all the achievements of the past were just sort of down the drain and forgotten. I felt unappreciated too, I have to say that, about all the things that had gone on in the past.

So I decided about the time of the board meeting in September of 1980 that I would just go; I would find another job somehow. But I didn't do anything about it because life was just so pleasant. I was really enjoying myself, and when I didn't think about the loss of what had gone before, I was really enjoying it. It was a great job in many ways. Then Audubon came along, and Audubon re-organized, and just by sheer chance Audubon found out that I was possibly considering something and offered me this vice presidency right away, and that's what I've been doing ever since.

Lage: It came at the right time.

Evans: It came absolutely at the right time, yes.

Lage: So you didn't see the problem or the reason for the changes as being a rivalry with Mike, but more with the people who wanted to move up?

Evans: No, I never felt a rivalry with Mike at all. I don't know if he did, but I sure never did. Mike was clearly the boss. Mike was also my friend and my colleague of all these years. I don't know how many times we sat together, and I just said directly, "Look, I want you to know that I have no interest in your job; it never was in my mind." It never was, in my job. No, I felt that the reorganization was sort of Mike protecting himself. It was easier to get me than to get Mike, you know, those who were pushing their way up there could sort of send a message to Mike by getting me, because I was Mike's friend and his colleague and so on, rather than getting Mike directly; that was how I interpreted the whole thing. And I remember saying once, "Mike, you're next," sometime in all this, in all the painful negotiations we were going through. But, no, I never saw it as that.

It's all past anyhow because actually it was a great favor to me. I feel very delighted. Fourteen years is plenty of time to be with an organization anyhow. If this had not happened--it was very painful for me at the time--then I never would have gone to new horizons.

Lage: And now you're getting to start over with more freshness.

Evans: I'm starting over, and, you know, I have other dreams, and it made me think about a whole range of things. This isn't where I'm going to end up either. So really, I'm quite pleased that it worked out this way.

Lage: Good. Lots of things are like that, aren't they?

Evans: That's right, that's right.

Other Symptoms of the Malaise

Lage: Okay, do you have other things on internal Sierra Club matters, since we're talking about that?

Evans: Well, for example--and this is a small point but it sort of contributes to the malaise--I guess if I had divided up the eight years I was here in Washington working for the Sierra Club, the first four years were the golden years, you might say. There was incredible activity and building up and expanding in every

Evans: direction and reaching out and all the things I really liked to do. And the last four years were sort of the denouement you might say, the way it happens in plays sometimes, too. You can almost date it from the defeat of the forestry campaign after the high hopes of it. It turned out not to be a defeat, but it was way down from our hopes, and realizing that I wasn't so omnipotent after all, that the Sierra Club wasn't going to go on forever like that, and then the budget crunches coming on and the other people coming on. So the last years here we still went on to winning many more victories, but my own personal role was less and less in the individual campaigns.

We were bigger and bigger; the issues were bigger and bigger; there were lots of other people playing and taking part. In effect you might say--this is all hindsight, of course--that I had done my job, that I had really done what I had come for, and had built it and moved it up and got involved in all these issues and reached out, and now we are an established power here. Not only that but we're middle of the road, Sierra Club is. We're not considered left wing; we're just sort of a middle-of-the-road, conservative group basically.

Along with all that were the columns I wrote for the Sierra magazine. In the first years, every column I wrote was great, and everybody loved them, and they were written in my style, which is sort of emotional, and all that. And then Fran [Gendlin] came along [as Sierra editor] and Fran didn't like that style.

Lage: I noticed they stopped abruptly.

Evans: They stopped very abruptly in about '78; '78 was the last one basically, and Fran just didn't like it.

Lage: She didn't like your style?

Evans: She didn't like my style. She got Mike's ear and said, "We want more facts and figures about the bill numbers, and we don't want all this mood stuff all the time." And I would try to point out to Mike--it was all said much more politely than that, but that was really what it came down to--that, "Look at my columns. There's all the facts and figures here; it's just the way I express it, that's all. But all the facts you want are here." There's a letter in here I pulled out for you, and I'll show it to you if you want to see it where I sort of finally asked Mike to relieve me of the duty of writing any more columns because they were always getting edited. They'd always cut out all my mood stuff and leave in all the dry dust stuff, and I didn't want to be associated with it anymore. I'd rather have the other staff write it.

Evans: So Fran and I worked out an agreement where I just wouldn't write them anymore. Now the sequel to that is that I stopped writing them, and she had something else. She wanted a White House correspondent, and there were a lot of different things she tried. But that was part of the general malaise I felt. That was a painful thing too because it was a loss from what was before.

Lage: I wonder though, whether that showed that there was a sense that you were building up too much of a personality within the club.

Evans: Yes. You know, all this was part of that. I think I was getting too well known and doing too many things. I was quoted everywhere and doing all this. And, you know, I can see how any of the others--Doug or John or Mike or anybody else--would, say, get jealous or whatever it was. I was in the center of action, which is why I got quoted all the time. I was on the TV and in the press, and also I'm good at it, so it was all those things together. So I might not have felt this sense of rivalry, but maybe I was already there so I didn't need to, but I can see how they might have.

The sequel to all this Sierra commentary issue was that Fran and I became good friends after all that. We made our peace, and we were good buddies, and she always used to ask me to write pieces anyhow. So I'd just write other kinds of pieces. I didn't write the column anymore, but I wrote other special things, so I felt well treated after it was all done by it all. That was just a little fillip to the other internal thing that went on.

Running for the Board

Lage: One way to get at your ideas about internal affairs would be some reflections on why you ran for the Sierra Club Board of Directors and what goals or changes you'd make. Is that appropriate?

Evans: Well, it's hard. I can give you sort of a vague answer right now. When I went to the board meeting of May 1981 and gave my farewell speeches there, I was convinced that was the last time I'd speak to Sierra Club in a long, long time. I was sure this was it, and it was over and what a nice way to go, get the John Muir Award and see all the friends, because I always felt closest to the people. I always felt very comfortable with the volunteers and, in the later years, not so comfortable with the staff, my peers. So, you know, that was who I loved; I loved the people, and they were there, and they loved me too, I felt. And finally I was getting the judgment of the people that I loved rather than my working colleagues. That was very nice.

Evans: It never occurred to me that I'd be back so soon. If I had my druthers probably I would not have wanted to run for the board so soon. But they did ask me at that board meeting, the nominating committee asked me if I would consider running, and I said, "Gee, you know, it's awfully soon, I don't know." And I wanted to go on and do my job at Audubon. So I thought about it all summer, and I finally had to give them an answer in October. I waited until October, and I finally thought about the possibility of conflicts of interest, and I thought about the time commitments, and I thought about too soon and so on, and I finally decided, "Well, there's not going to be any conflict because that's up to me. And I'm on boards of other organizations, and I don't feel any conflict. That's the problem of those who look at me who want to see it, rather than with me. The time commitment I don't like, but I think it's still a way to keep my hand in it. It's a wonderful organization; it's my family; it's my home, and I'd like to be a part of it.

And then the third thing was that I might not get asked again. You know, you can't always pick things in life; you take life as it presents itself to you. Sometimes you can create things, sometimes not. "I'm asked now; I wasn't asked two years from now. How do I know what's going to happen then? From the standpoint of other ideas I have, this might be a good time to do it." So I decided to run. I know that caused consternation in some quarters, but I thought that's their problem, not mine.

If I have any agenda at all--I really don't have a strong one--it's to make sure the club doesn't lose its soul, whatever that means. That's really what I care most about. I'm glad to have the mechanisms and the mechanics and the computers and all that stuff down, and those were good systems, but I think we also need a staff structure that permits the operation of the soul, permits the volunteers to flower and does all that.

I've thought about it a good deal, but I don't have any clear-- I think it's going to come up bit by bit and piece by piece and point by point. And so I certainly have no agenda of coming in and sweeping the room clean or getting revenge, I don't feel any of those things, and there's no need to feel any of those things. The club is a great institution, and it's doing very well. I'm glad to be a part of it. So, you know, time will tell, but where I can I'd like to bring my influence and my experience to bear to make sure the volunteer structure is the power in the Sierra Club.

Lage: But you don't have specifics on issue committees or the strength of the board vis-à-vis the top staff?

Evans: No. I think one good proposal that came out of the last board meeting, for example, that I really think should be explored is that as the volunteer entities go through the budget process they get staffing help to do their part of the budget process, so that the volunteer entities can have the backup and the professional expertise behind their budget proposals that the staff does. So then we on the board, as we're weighing and judging these things, can really make balanced judgments here. I think that would be a very great help. That helps make the powers equal. I don't want anyone to be stronger than the other, but I want them to be equal at least. And I think I bring a perspective to that from my staff experience.

Lage: More than anyone else right now, I'd say.

Evans: So far, yes.

Resolving Conflict: The Eastern Wilderness Question

Evans: The eastern wilderness question kind of typifies how we resolved a rather difficult ideological situation. In 1971 in Washington, there was an Eastern Wilderness Conference--or the Wilderness Conference was held in Washington, and all the eastern folks came--and that's when we westerners became aware there was wilderness in the East, and out of that came pressure to put together an eastern wilderness legislation of some kind.

There were many go-rounds, and I was out in the Northwest, but I do remember that Peter Borrelli, who was the eastern representative of the Sierra Club based here in Washington, had worked out a deal with Senator [George] Aiken from Vermont. They were going to call it Wild Areas East, because the Forest Service then was maintaining that there was no wilderness in the East. We'd have to call it something different; it couldn't be under the terms of the Wilderness Act later.

So they put together a bill with a lot of good boundaries in it if I remember correctly, but it was called "wild areas" and it had a different kind of management. They still weren't going to log it or road it, but it just wasn't called wilderness. Now, my personal view of that from afar was, you know, "So what? I don't care if they call them beauty parlors or bombing ranges; they can call them anything as long as they get the right boundaries around it, that's all." But some others didn't care too much about that. The Wilderness Society was really upset about that. Doug Scott worked for the Wilderness Society then; he was very upset about it and became a prime actor from the Wilderness Society's position.

Evans: Anyhow, what I would call the ideologues didn't like that, didn't like having "wild areas," you know. They wanted wilderness under the Wilderness Act. And in retrospect--

Lage: And these were eastern people?

Evans: Well, they were both. The eastern people just wanted to get something protected and something done. There were a lot more nuances than that, but basically that was the problem. And I personally came on the scene in '73 when this thing was really being a raging ideological debate. To me, it was like how many angels on the head of a pin. You know, isn't the game here to draw boundaries around places and lock them up? That's what I thought it was all about.

Nevertheless, most of the Sierra Club volunteer people wanted it to be under the Wilderness Act, and they didn't want Wild Areas East no matter how nice the bill was. And that was fine with me, too, if we could get it.

Lage: Was the feeling that it would be much harder to get it through as wilderness?

Evans: Yes. Because you call something wilderness, it's harder to get through. You always have the opposition of the agency and some people--wilderness is a knee-jerk term on both sides anyhow. But I came on the scene, and I was Peter's boss, Peter's superior there, and the Wilderness Society folks turned to me and asked me to resolve it. I came down on the side that said it had to be wilderness, in spite of my own personal feelings on it that I didn't really care that much. I thought if they felt that strongly about it, we just couldn't go off with something like that, let's just fight it through as a wilderness thing.

So that was problem number one. Peter didn't like it, but anyhow it was all finally resolved. That became the Sierra Club position, and I came across some letters from Wilderness Society appreciating that we had resolved that ideological dispute. But then they had to lobby the bill through. And that took two long years to get something through, and the main reason it did was because of Congressman Melcher.

And this is the only other little anecdote that I want to tell about it. Congressman Melcher was chairman of the House Interior Subcommittee that held hearings on it, maybe it was the House Agriculture Subcommittee, I forget which now. And normally when you're having a hearing on a wilderness bill, sooner or later you want the local congressman to be for it, if you're going to mark one up, because that's the way wilderness politics work out. But normally it's sufficient for someone to introduce the bill--it doesn't have

Evans: to be the local congressman--and then for the congressman to tell the chairman of the subcommittee, "Sure, it's okay, go ahead and mark it up. It's all right with me." Melcher was very anti-wilderness in those days, still is in a large degree, and he wanted to hold this up for all sorts of reasons. I'm not sure what all the reasons were.

So we had hearings all right in the spring, spring of '75, or '74, I guess it was. Yes, spring of '74, we had hearings in the spring of '74. Then he just sat on it. He wouldn't mark it up and wouldn't mark it up, and June, July came around; August caame around; he wouldn't mark it up. Finally we kept on trying various ways to get pressure on him. I remember we got a new bill introduced with a hundred cosponsors on it, and we got all sorts of stuff, gimmicks like that and things going. Melcher finally said okay, he would report out of committee an Eastern Wilderness Act, but the only areas that would be in it would be areas where the congressman involved personally wrote him a letter saying, "I want this," in other words committing themselves in an election year, in writing, to "I want this wilderness," which was an unheard of kind of thing. And that caused a great furor, too, because he was demanding really the impossible for a lot of congressmen who would just love to see it go away and pretend it wasn't there or anything.

To make a long story short, the combination of all those delaying tactics delayed it a whole year. We fought some battles, and my memory is fuzzy on it right now, but we finally did squeeze it through by getting this bill introduced the next year with a hundred cosponsors on it and by making a big national campaign.

Lage: Did you get the local congressmen?

Evans: Well, we didn't get them all; we got most of them, and we had a pretty good eastern wilderness bill through in 1975. But there was a combination of ideology and the normal political hassles to get that thing through. But I was always pleased with that bill and the way it worked out.

And in retrospect, it probably was better to have it not "wild areas" but have it "eastern wilderness" because now everybody agrees that there is wilderness in the East, and we're still adding areas all the time, and we don't have to worry about two systems and all that sort of thing.

Lage: Yes, it makes more sense if you can do it.

Evans: It does. If you can do it, it makes a lot more sense. My concern always has been I just want to save places, and I don't care how they're saved. Maybe that's too loose an approach sometimes.

Not Willing to Compromise

Lage: In a spectrum of environmentalists, where would you put yourself as far as being willing to compromise goes?

Evans: I would put myself on a personal basis as a very, very strong environmentalist, and I'm not willing to compromise any possible thing. I feel myself near a 100 percent as far as wanting to save the maximum. I remember we talked in one of the sessions about the Alpine Lakes and so on, where I was always advocating setting the boundaries as large as you possibly could. Everything ought to be put in, then we'll put the roads to bed, too: that's how I personally feel.

The nature of this work forces me always to be in a position to talk compromise, and with Mount St. Helens I certainly have done it. We wanted 216,000 acres in our legislation when we started out in April. After I talked to you, I went back and lobbied on this. That's what we wanted. It became very, very apparent for a host of factors that we could never get anything close to that at all because the other side was talking about 45,000, or 80,000 at the most.

And so I took it on myself, after consulting with our local people, to say, "What must we have? What was going to be lost if we didn't get it? What must we do?" And we drew a boundary of 115,000 acres around that, which eliminated most of the problems of the other 100,000 and saved most of what we had to save, that we could feasibly get this time. That's what I had to do, and it was painful to do it, because good places were left out. But we're going to get the bill now that we agreed on because it made sense to everybody else, and we're getting it through this year.

We could have said, "No, we won't take it; we're going to fight for our 200,000 acres," and let it go four or five years, but we would have lost every place in between times. So that's the nature of the bitter choices you have to make around here sometimes. But my personal view is that I don't want to compromise any damn thing; that's where I start from.

Lage: But you've been in the midst of battle so long that you may be more pragmatic than if--

Evans: You have to, that's right, yes. My view is that if anybody wants to add more, fine; come on out here and add more, I'll back you right down the line. Show me how to do it, give me the magic formula, and we'll go out there and add more. But in the end, I have to deal in the real world. Because the member of Congress

Evans: isn't saying, "Well, Brock, maybe I'll vote "maybe" on this tomorrow," but "I'm going to vote yes or no. I'm going to give you this valley or that valley, which one do you want?" And then someone has to make that decision, and I'm the one to do it, and of course you get the heat for it too, but someone has to do it.



Above: Brock with his sons, Joshua, age 13, and Noah, 10, in 1982.

Left: In the High Sierra wilderness, September 1980. Taken on a reconnaissance trip with Sierra Club and timber industry leaders, touring disputed prospective wilderness areas in central California.



Left: Denny Shaffer presenting Brock Evans the John Muir Award, May 1981.

Mush Emmons, photographer

XV THE ENVIRONMENTAL RECORDS OF THE PRESIDENTS, 1960s-1970s

[Interview 4: June 9, 1982]##

Relations with the Johnson Administration

- Lage: Okay, Brock, we were going to talk about the club and the various administrations in Washington this morning. And I thought we'd talk a little bit about the contacts you had in the Nixon administration.
- Evans: And there was something else I asked you to remind me of too, do you remember what it was?
- Lage: Those were Carter things, the reorganization.
- Evans: Oh yeah, right, right. Okay, so you'll remind me of those later?
- Lage: Yes. I was interested in your comments about the effect of Watergate, but there may be other things you want to talk about, the contacts within the Nixon administration.
- Evans: We could either do it chronologically and start with perceptions of the Nixon and Ford administrations, and then-- Of course, Watergate is sort of right in there, isn't it? Let's do that. Let's do it chronologically; we may as well.
- Lage: It makes more sense. It kind of sets the stage for Carter too, the changes.
- Evans: Sure it does. My first dealing with an administration, of course, was the Johnson administration, and it was all basically from afar. I was in the Northwest, but I do remember getting invited back for a bill-signing ceremony at the White House. I remember the date was October 2, 1968, because it was a year to the day before my first son was born, so I remember the date very well.

Lage: Was that the Redwoods National Park Act?

Evans: That was the Redwoods, North Cascades, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Trails legislation; they were all four signed at once. And because I had worked so hard on North Cascades, I was one of two or three people invited back from the state to be there, and it was really a moving kind of ceremony and very, very interesting. There were other dealings with the Johnson administration though in those early years when I was in the Northwest, we should cover them, too.

What I remember most is going through the receiving line and shaking hands with Lyndon Johnson and Ladybird. I wrote a little article about it. In fact, the whole thing for me was like, I thought, "This must have been what Rome was like two thousand years ago." Only, we're Americans so we don't like to talk about imperial trappings and things like that. And so instead of having knights in armor and great plumed helmets and so on, we have military officers, but they're sort of more subduedly dressed. And instead of courtesans and nobles and things like that and ermines and furs, we just have people who kind of look ordinary, basically. Then the trumpets blow, and they say, "Ladies and gentlemen, the president of the United States," and everybody rises and stands, and instead of some great striding king with a big full beard and so on, in walks this plain, ordinary looking guy, and that's the president of the United States. And so I was struck by all those things, and I wrote a little article about it when I got back, a little piece on how it had changed from two thousand years ago, but how it was all still very much the same.

But anyhow, the other contact I had with the Johnson administration was in the fall of 1968, about a month or so after all that. Stewart Udall, of course, was secretary of the Interior then; we had the main dealings with him throughout. And David Brower, who of course had hired me, had the idea that maybe we could get the outgoing president to do something bold--Dave may have mentioned this when he was interviewed--to try to get these national monuments set up. We had the idea that let's let President Johnson go out in a blaze of glory, like Teddy Roosevelt, and sign a hundred million more acres of national monuments. Why not? It's worth a try. We tried it with Carter again, too, and we'll talk more about that a little bit later; we tried it eight years later.

And so I was one of the three field representatives at that time, and Dave passed the word, and I remember drawing up boundaries. Not for Alaska, I don't think, although I drew up boundaries for Southeast Alaska, for an Admiralty Island National Monument and some of the other places in Southeast Alaska. I spent most of my time joyfully on my hands and knees on the floor

Evans: of my office in Seattle drawing up boundaries for a whole series of national monuments in the Northwest: Oregon Cascades National Monument, Sawtooth National Monument, Hells Canyon National Monument. We had twenty or thirty million acres of national monuments there easily. It would have been a masterstroke and a fantastic thing.

Then I remember all going back in December of 1968. Brower summoned us all back, and we all went in to see Stewart Udall in the office of the secretary of the Interior, and presented our case to him. Jeff Ingram had his national monuments, and I had mine, maybe Gary Soucie had some of his too; I'm not sure. And you all know the story, it came to nothing finally. A few little diddly things in Utah because of Wayne Aspinall's intervention, and Johnson just didn't know the issues and was preoccupied with other things.

Ehrlichman Intervenes in Hells Canyon

Evans: Then Nixon came into power. And, of course, you know about the fight that I led against the Hickel nomination, that was one of the very first things. So we had early on contact in that adversary kind of a sense. At the same time, we needed the Nixon administration; we needed any administration support for various things that were going on. And Nixon did appoint some people who were pretty good. To balance off Wally Hickel he appointed Russell Train as undersecretary of Interior, and Russell Train in turn appointed Nat Reed, so you had some pretty good Republicans there at high levels. It was not at all like this administration.

Well, I may have told the story when we interviewed out in California, but if not I should tell the story now about how they helped us on Hells Canyon, because this is significant. I just wrote Russell Train a letter about it the other day. A week ago I was at a ceremony with Russell Train at the Swedish Embassy, and he got an award. And I was writing him to congratulate him, and I remembered what he'd done for us, and I should tell this because this is the way it sometimes could be with the Nixon administration.

In the Hells Canyon issue, the two federal agencies were split. The Department of Agriculture wanted no dams down there, and they were our allies and supporters, because of the Forest Service. And the Department of the Interior did want dams down there; they were the big dam builders because of the Bureau of Reclamation, and Stewart Udall, all through the Johnson administration, was a strong supporter of dams in Hells Canyon.

Evans: Well, we got the Federal Power Commission case going, and we were testifying, and it was everybody against us at that particular time. And I thought, "Wouldn't it be nice to try to turn the administration around? It's worth at least a little bit of a try."

And I think I mentioned earlier that I'd already known John Ehrlichman. I knew John Ehrlichman as a lawyer out in Seattle when I was out there, and John Ehrlichman was a land-use lawyer, and we fought on the same side of some issues. And I never paid much more attention to that until I sort of started hearing his name back here. I couldn't believe it was the same guy I knew and had lunch with and talked about and fought oil refineries together with out in Puget Sound; it was the same guy.

And so I knew he was back there, and I happened also at the same time in the Northwest to be friends with a Republican lady from the east side of Seattle who was very active. We were working on state trails legislation and things like that. We became good friends. And she heard I was going back to Washington, and she said, "Oh yes, look up by brother Buddy. He works for John." I said, "John who?" "Oh, John Ehrlichman. Remember him?" "Oh, yeah. Well, who's Buddy?" "Well, Buddy Krogh." Egil Krogh it turned out to be, of the "plumbers" fame later on.

So I came back here, and I was here on other business, but I also wanted to work on Hells Canyon in some way. And this was when I thought, "Well, maybe we should try something." So I called up Buddy. And he answered my call, and I said, "You know, I'm a friend of Tish Davis." I told him the problem and he said, "Oh, let me talk to John about that, and we'll get back to you."

And half an hour later, Ehrlichman was on the phone: "Brock, how are you? Come on down and see me." Next thing I knew I got a cab, and I was whooshed down to the White House and went in there and had to have lunch down there with all the bigwigs and the Filipino servants and the whole thing in the White House and was ushered up into his inner sanctum office back there. We talked about things and had a great old time. And he said, "You know, I'm a fanatic preservationist, always have been, but my job is just to present the facts to the president" and so on.

When I told him the situation he was very sympathetic and said, "Let me see what I can do." So he picked up the phone and called Russell Train, who was undersecretary of Interior, because we had to get the Interior Department to change its position. He said, "Russ, I've got a problem here. We've got a nice young guy over here who wants to talk to you about Hells Canyon, and I think you ought to go see him."

Lage: You didn't know Russell at that time?

Evans: No, I did not. And you know, Russ said, "Sure, send him on over." So an hour later I was over there in Russell Train's office, just like that, had my maps out and my charts and my graphs, and I was explaining all these things, and he was nodding, listening, sage old statesman that he was, "Uh-huh, uh-huh."

And he said, "Well, it sounds pretty good to me; I don't see why we can't do that. Why don't you send me some more information." He asked some questions, some pertinent questions, and so when I got back to Seattle, by gosh, I wrote up a long letter--it's all in the archives--of other answers to his questions. I don't know exactly what happened, but about a month or two later, six weeks later, the attorneys for the Department of the Interior at the next Federal Power Commission proceeding announced they'd reversed their position--no dams. Just like that. You know, we chuckled inside and we laughed, and the other side was dumbfounded and dismayed and gave them hell and so on, but that was a big boost in the case. So that's another relationship with the Nixon administration that was not impossible to have then.

Lage: Now what did Ehrlichman do back in Seattle? He was an attorney; was he taking on pro bono land-use questions?

Evans: No, this was for pay. We were fighting a refinery proposal location--about 1967--at a place called Port Susan Bay, north of Everett. And Ehrlichman was the attorney for the landowners up there. And Ehrlichman, good politician that he is, enlisted us, called us for friends and wanted some help from the Sierra Club. And the environmentalists were opposed to it too, so we became allies. That's how I got to know John Ehrlichman. So I never had the same impression of him through all the Watergate hearings later on as everyone else did, because I saw this other side of him.

So, not to belabor the whole Nixon connection, but the other connection, of course, does very much get into Watergate. After the 1972 elections, of course, Nixon won with this overwhelming mandate. By the way, I went through some of my old columns that I wrote back in the old days, and letters and correspondence too. And now we sort of tend to look back on the Nixon administration with some nostalgia, because, gee whiz, you know, compared to Reagan, of course, it wasn't bad. And often in speeches I'll talk about the Nixon administration did so and so and so, but they really weren't that good.

Lage: Well, they were also pressured with all the Earth Day enthusiasm, so they almost had to do something.

Evans: Yes. They had to do something, and they did.

Evans: Same as Reagan in California; he did things in California, he had to.

Evans: Exactly. That's what it was. And so it wasn't that they were so great, it's just that they look great compared to Reagan right now. You might say the Nixon administration was 25 percent great and the Reagan administration percent is about minus 10 great. But Carter was about 80 percent great, let's say. So it's all a relative kind of a thing. Nevertheless, it wasn't impossible to deal with them at all, the way it is with this administration.

Friends and Foes in the Nixon Administration

Lage: You had some entrees and you had some people--

Evans: Yes, we had entrees and friends, and we could always get a hearing; we wouldn't always get our way. I remember another anecdote I may have told. My first lobbying operation that I ran back here when I was still in the Northwest was the Timber Supply Act campaign. I came back from the Northwest and became the coordinator of it, and one of the efforts there was to see how the White House stood. This typifies the Nixon administration, I think, in their attitude about forestry and wilderness certainly anyhow.

And we had our little coalition going, and we were trying to do what we could, and someone said, "Well, how does the administration stand on this?" No one really knew, so Stewart Brandborg said, "I'll call up the White House and find out." He was the old guru and said, "Call up the White House." Now we know it's not a big deal to call up the White House, but then we all thought, "How are you going to call the White House?" So he called them up and said, "I want to talk to the person who works on such and such," and they said, "Oh, that's Mr. Colson." Chuck Colson handled those issues; it was domestic policy or something like that.

So he called Colson's office, and they said, "Mr. Colson is out right now, but Mr. Hodges is handling that for him." He said, "Mr. Hodges? Oh, Ralph Hodges." I thought, "Oh, my God, Ralph Hodges; he's the chief lobbyist for the National Forest Products Association." There he was sitting right down in the White House and right at the elbow of Chuck Colson advising the--

Lage: At that time he was chief lobbyist?

Evans: At that time he was there, yes. He was the president of it; he was a big gun in it. He was right down there in the White House handling all the forestry issues for the White House, so naturally the administration didn't support our position on all that. But that's another example.

Well, Nixon was elected in November; I came out that January, late that January, and the whole atmosphere around here was: here's the emperor riding down the golden streets, everything bowing before him as the wind, because he'd won with this overwhelming mandate. And there was a shiver of fear running through us because we knew he never was a friend anyhow.

The first thing he did was appoint his secretary of Agriculture, Earl Butz, to be a counselor for Natural Resources. You know, he reorganized the White House and did all that. And boy, we all knew Butz's record over there; it was a virulent antiwilderness, pro-timber industry, propesticide, you name it. Anything Agriculture can do to us, Butz was very happy to do and did.

They had an assistant secretary of Forestry then called Bob Long, who was a banker from San Francisco who was awful. I had a number of dealings with him. We had to make appeals to him. They were always rejected, always got a reception but always rejected. And he gave some very anti-Sierra Club speeches that I got a hold of, and right on through it was like that.

But anyhow here was Butz as counselor of Natural Resources, who kind of reorganized all the departments and things like that, and this was in early '73. One of the first things Butz did was issue an order, obviously instigated by the timber industry, to increase to annual cut in the forest by a billion board feet a year, which is a pretty big chunk.

Not only did he do that, but he also-- The Republicans are no dummies; they know how to do these things. Democrats futz around and worry about what the people think and so on. Republicans just go ahead and do it and no process, no nothing. So what he did was he had his own special agents from the White House go and sit in the offices of the foresters who were actually here in the Washington office to make sure they were on the phone every day out to the region making sure that cut was getting out. You just don't pass down an order and let it get lost in the bureaucracy, he sent out his commissars--I call them the commissars--right down there beside them, sitting there to make sure they did all those things. So it was really a fearful kind of a thing, and they were going to up the cut like that.

Evans: Well, we raised a big fuss about it--and this was right at the same time that the Alaska pipeline stuff was going on, that was another thing I was involved in then--and we stopped it with a lawsuit, finally, because they didn't have an NEPA [EIS] statement and so on, and it didn't really come to all that much. But we had continual trouble all through the remainder of the Nixon administration with them.

That gets us partly into the land-use bill too, and '73 came along.

The Effects of Watergate

Evans: You know, only a month or two after I came there and Nixon was riding down the streets in his golden chariot and everybody was shivering with fear about who's going to be next, they started the Watergate hearings and the first inklings of it. So it was the most incredible experience to be here during that period of time, for the next year and a half.

After we realized what was going on, after about the first two or three months we realized that something was really serious here; it wasn't anything to be pooh-poohed, and new exposé and revelation after revelation. I can't describe to you the mood here in this town, what it was like. Someone once said that "Washington's cottage industry is politics, which it tries to export to the rest of the country." And that's kind of like what it is here. So everybody here just loves it; everybody lives, breathes, eats, drinks politics and the political system, and everybody is doing something interesting. And of course, we all rather disliked Nixon, too.

And my memories are, in my neighborhood, you know, as soon as the morning paper comes we'd all dive for it, and I'd fight with my wife to see who got to read it first. And then there'd be TV hearings at night, and I'd hear my neighbors cheering next door, and we'd go, and we'd have another beer together and talk about it. I remember the morning when the jury finally convicted Mitchell and a whole bunch of them, Jake, who was my neighbor and worked for the State Department, he came rushing over with a can of beer and said, "Guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty." There were four of them I guess then, and he'd name them all off.

But that's what it was like, and the whole town was just electrified and entranced by the whole thing. What it was like more than anything else--and I wrote a column about this too, I think--

Evans: it was like a fatal minuet, like a fatal dance. All the steps were choreographed, all the steps were known, but all the steps had to be taken, each step had to be danced out according to the tune.

Lage: So you could sort of anticipate it?

Evans: I would say by about the summer of 1973 you felt that there could be no other resolution but the president leaving by impeachment or whatever. It was only a matter of dancing out each little step and getting those smoking pistols one by one, as revelation followed upon revelation. Everybody was riveted to the TV sets, everybody talking about nothing else basically.

Of course, we were fighting for our lives with the Alaska pipeline, but that was one of the big troubles. In those first two years, till fall of '74, we had trouble getting attention, getting publicity for our issues, because we do better the more publicity we get for our things. Industry does better the less publicity they get for what they're doing. That's part of operating in the open or not. We like to operate, and we have to operate, in the open; we have no money to do otherwise. They don't, basically. And it was difficult getting publicity for our position on Alaska pipeline, for example.

Lage: So that was one effect of Watergate?

Evans: Very difficult, yes. It absorbed everything else. Now the oil industry could do it because they just buy ads all the time, but we couldn't buy ads, and we couldn't get any reporters to pay any attention to us too darn much, and so there was always that trouble, all the way through. On the forestry and everything else it was the same trouble.

Lage: You implied in one of your columns that Nixon's policies actually changed as a result of Watergate, and I guess national land use was an example.

Evans: That's right. In the case of land use, that's a very good example. In the early glory days of '72, '73, the administration was all for a good land-use bill, and that was where everything was going. And lo and behold in February of '74--I think it was February--they changed their position. We were going through the House Interior Committee, and we were going to mark up legislation and everything was really going great guns and poof, they changed their minds like that, threw everything into a terrible turmoil.

Lage: Were you aware of the exact reasons for changing it, or was this just a--

Evans: It was just what everybody said. You know, I was not privy to the inner councils of the White House, and no one told me exactly, but it was obvious. By then the minuet had been half danced, and it was quite plain that it was going to lead to a fatal end for his presidency in one form or another, even though there were many pitfalls along the way. And everybody felt he did this to get what conservative votes he could when he needed it, because he knew he was not going to get the liberal Democratic votes, so he had to get his conservative votes. So he changed his position on this, he changed his position on lots of things. I can't remember them all right now, but I certainly remember it in the case of the land-use bill.

Defeat of the 1974 Land-Use Bill

Lage: I don't want to divert you too much, but I had a couple of questions about the land-use bill. Didn't the club kind of drop the drive for national, comprehensive land-use planning also?

Evans: Not till after the failure of the bill in June of 1974, when we lost the vote.

Lage: Right. But later on the push to do that was dropped.

Evans: Oh, yes, yes. Plainly we'd lost, and the reasons were very political, and I was one of the main advocates also of dropping that approach. We tried that approach; we shot our wad. Let me just finish the narrative, and I'll come back to that because it's important.

But then we had that terrible mix-up, and we couldn't get the Rules Committee to act. It was just like the old days of the Civil Rights bill; they'd put it off, and they'd go on vacation, and they'd come back. And trying to get a quorum there was the most difficult thing because the Liberty Lobby and the other hard-right lobbyists against us were trying that tactic, not to bring it to a vote.

They didn't realize, nor did we, that we'd lost power already. You know, the glory days were in fact gone, and we were in a new ballgame already, a much more conservative, an angry mood. And remember we had a big inflation right in early 1973, and food prices really shot up. I remember it was one of the first harbingers of what was going to come for the rest of the decade.

Evans: But anyhow, we finally had our vote. And the vote was important because it's colored my impression, I have to say, of Republicans ever since. I was born and raised a conservative Republican in Columbus, Ohio. I didn't even know any Democrats till I was about twenty-five years old and didn't want to. I was brought up to think they were "traitors" and all that sort of thing. And when I moved out to the state of Washington I'd vote mostly environmental, but I'd vote a Republican ticket sometimes on the state level and usually Democrats on the national level, just whoever was best, but that was sort of how it was.

It really was what I saw in the case of the land-use bill that changed my perceptions. I don't know about forever, but certainly for the time being. I mean we'd all lobbied really hard. It was going to be very, very close. The right wing had really poured in all the stuff; they were saying an awful lot of wrong and false things about the bill, as you may remember from reading about all that. But lies do just fine here when you're on the floor of the House, only the committee members know what's going on in the bill, and usually most of them don't even know either, so it's easy to get away with untruths, if you want to believe that way anyhow.

So it was really going to be close. We had many strategy sessions with Mo Udall, who was our chairman, who was our great leader on this whole thing. And we all went up to the House gallery and watched transfixed. They debated the whole thing for a day or more. It was just a very, very passionate, intense debate, and finally the buzzer came, time for the vote. Finally all the preliminaries were done. They were actually voting on the rule, that's always a little procedural way out. And the buzzer rang, and you get fifteen minutes to vote, as you know, and the whole thing just seesawed back and forth, the way exciting votes really do, except our hearts and souls were in this one. I usually don't go up there; I can't stand to sit in the gallery and watch them vote on a bill I've been working on too much. It hurts too much; it's painful to see all the terrible things they're saying about what I know is right and so on.

But, we watched the tally; and first it was 50 to 60, and then 75 to 95, and the totals keep going up, and sometimes we're ahead, sometimes they're ahead, and finally at the last minute it was about 190 to 185--we were always a little bit behind, but always close enough to catch up--and finally it was 204 to 211, just like that, and it was about ten seconds to go. And the Republicans stood up on their side of the aisle, and they cheered like a football game, "Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one. Yea-a-a!" They were rubbing in the defeat and just cheering their heads off like that. And I've never forgotten

Evans: that moment, in all the years since then, and I never will forget that moment; that's what it was like, this mindless opposition to something that would have protected the values of this American earth, and it wasn't even hurting the interests that they were paid to represent very much, the industry and right wing.

So that was how the land-use bill went down. It was a bitter defeat, but, you know, that's just the way it was. I remember writing letters and memos, and others felt it too; we felt, "Now the only way to go is bit by bit and piece by piece. And we'll get our wild rivers bill, and we'll get a soil conservation bill, and we'll get a this bill, and that bill, and we'll sort of close in on the land-use question from all the different sides."

Probably that's the way our political system works better anyhow. But you might say that, above all things, was the high-water mark of the old days, of the days when we could sort of pass broad things very much. That was a very ambitious and far-reaching proposal.

Lage: A very comprehensive--

Evans: Right. Actually, it was only a lot of federal money to states to do it, but it would have set in motion a system and a whole bureaucracy and everything else that would have probably had a lot better land use than before.

Lage: But it wasn't a disillusionment with that bureaucracy or with federal control that made the club give up the idea?

Evans: No, not at all. It was just a realization that it was a pragmatic decision we couldn't get that now, at this time, or for some time to come. We'll take it any way we can, and the federal government clearly was the best way to do it; but the federal government just wasn't going to be able to do it this time. And the Nixon administration flip-flop was another example of Watergate.

The Havasupai and the Grand Canyon

Evans: I remember we were fighting a really unpleasant battle all that year, 1974, over the Havasupai Indian tribe who wanted to take 200,000 acres of Grand Canyon National Park for their reservation. I didn't like that issue at all, and most of our people didn't, but this gets into internal Sierra Club somewhat, so you might be interested in it.

Evans: Our Southwest people, actually Jeff Ingram, our Southwest rep, was very strong on the subject of not permitting the Havasupai Indian tribe to take 200,000 acres of Grand Canyon Park. And I thought he made a very persuasive case. He came back. The legislation was being introduced by the Arizona delegation to in effect do this as part of a comprehensive settlement on Grand Canyon, because it would also at the same time extend Grand Canyon Park, ban the dams, make it a national park, you know, and resolve that long-standing dispute; so it had some pluses in it for us, too.

But the Havasupai part actually became separate legislation, and it was, I thought, just really dead wrong, because the Havasupai tribe had in 1969 signed an agreement with the Indian Claims Commission extinguishing all their claims and getting paid \$2.4 million for all their claims. Signed, sealed, and delivered, all done. The Havasupai tribe, by the way, also was the tribe that had advocated dams in the Grand Canyon. They were strong supporters of dams in the Grand Canyon, and they advocated a tramway in and out of the Grand Canyon.

So the myth of the Indian always being the caretaker of the land has certainly not been verified by my experience, not only there but other places, too. But many of our members think, you know, "Indians can do no wrong, and they were wronged anyhow, and it's okay. If they want to develop it, it's better than Exxon." It's a whole mixture of white man's guilt and feeling for oppressed people and belief that they really are good environmentalists, when some are and some aren't, like anybody else.

Lage: There was also a lot more Indian ferment at that time.

Evans: And there was a lot more ferment at that time. They were riding high then; they were really a strong lobby at that time.

But at any rate, I became persuaded this is really a wrong thing. The tribe that wanted to build dams and put tramways in is going to take 200,000 acres out of the heart of the park and maybe do that, and that would be bad, and then they'd already signed an agreement. Well, there's 200 Indian tribes that would have claims against the government. There aren't enough national parks to satisfy all the demands here. They would never claim private lands because that was politically unpalatable, but they would claim public lands, national forests and national parks and so on.

So there was a whole host of issues that were raised by this thing. So the Sierra Club jumped into it, through me, full fray and right in there, and so did the wildlife groups who had never liked the Indian claims on the national forests and so on. But

Evans: it caused an enormous split inside the Sierra Club among the membership, my gosh. We started getting angry mail from our members, "How can you do this? Indians are wonderful, and they're great environmentalists anyhow, and even if they aren't they deserve it; let them have it." And it was very, very difficult to get any mail in on it. The Sierra Club board ratified our position and supported it unanimously, and that was okay, but most environmentalists of our kind could not support that, so it was very unpleasant.

Of course, the Indians just went up through the roof, you know, "White man speak with forked tongue," and so on, forgetting they had broken their agreement and all that. We were the bad people because anybody who would oppose an Indian is a terrible person, is a racist. That's the way these arguments go, so it was a very nasty issue. It was being played out through the whole time of Watergate. We could never get any publicity for ourselves except adverse publicity, the terrible Sierra Club picking on these nice Indians and so on who just want to build tramways and dams and all that!

So it really was a very unpleasant situation, but that was going on too, and I only cite it for the connection with Watergate at that same period of time, and the lack of our ability to get publicity, and the split that it caused inside of our own organization, and there may have been another reason and I forgot it. I didn't like the issue at all but opposing it was club policy, and I was the chief lobbyist so I did my duty.

So then Watergate came on, and then Nixon resigned and Ford came in. Oh, I remember an event. In October of 1973, remember when Spiro Agnew resigned? These were electric times going on through all this; every day you couldn't wait to read the paper. And Washington papers have all the detail that you don't get in other parts of the country too, so it was really juicy and fun reading.

But Spiro Agnew resigned in about September or early October of '73, and I remember the day very much because I was taking Congressman John Dingell up to the University of Maryland to give a speech to the Maryland Conservation Council, and it was all over the radios that Nixon has selected his replacement. Nobody knows who it's going to be, it's going to be a big secret, and I was wondering who it was going to be, and he said, "Gerry Ford, House majority leader." And I said, "Oh, my God." I couldn't believe it. I couldn't imagine anybody worse from an environmentalist's standpoint than Gerry Ford. It's like he went out of his way, as Republicans always seem to do, to pick the worse person, not just some moderate but the worst person. And that's what they did all through the Reagan administration as well.

The Ford Administration

Evans: Gerry Ford was the leader against us in the oil pipeline debate in the House, saying the most awful, untruthful, demagogic kinds of things. His voting record was just terrible all the way through. And I couldn't imagine a worse person to be president, plus the fact that he wasn't all that bright, and God only knows what he was going to do to us. I remember writing a conciliatory column in the Sierra magazine, trying to put the best face on it, hoping he would read it or that he could read, or that somebody would read it to see! But, boy, I sure didn't believe any of it. So that was what went on.

So then you had Ford taking over in 1974, and then we had the Ford administration. Luckily for us, they kept on most of the Nixon people like Nat Reed and so on. He appointed Russell Train to be head of EPA, which was a very, very good thing for us. We had a terrible fight over the secretary of the Interior, with [Stanley K.] Hathaway being appointed, who was really bad for us, and that was a big fight that I was involved in, too.

We never talked at all, by the way, in these interviews about the battles we always had to wage over confirmations. You always have to do this in a Republican administration. You have big battles opposing all their nominees because they're always nominating industry people to run our environmental positions. That's a whole other arena, and we don't have time in this interview maybe to do all that, but they're enormously time-consuming; they're enormously dangerous for us.

Lage: They're dangerous because then you have to work with them later?

Evans: That's right. Maybe we'll talk about it a little bit in the case of Watt and some of the others as we end all this and if we have a little more time here. But they are, and nobody wants to do them, because the biggest problem with confirmation fights is that no matter how much you're criticizing the person's philosophy and his actions, that person always thinks you're criticizing him as a person. It's always considered to be an ad hominem attack, and therefore you're always hated, and his supporters hate you, and they never forgive you for it. Ted Stevens never forgave the Sierra Club or Dave Brower for us opposing Wally Hickel for example--Brower was the one that testified--he never forgot it, never got over it. And Malcolm Wallop will never forgive me for testifying against James Watt, his buddy. No matter how bad Watt was, you don't like it. "He's a nice guy; I know him as a friend; he loves his kids," and that sort of thing. So you always get into this.

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Evans: And then we had to fight Stan Hathaway. He was nominated in April of '75 or March of '75. I remember he was nominated, and our Wyoming people were in an uproar. They were telling us how bad he was, although they were concerned too, just like the Alaskans were in the case of Hickel, they didn't want to oppose him too much because they had to deal with him all the time. But they fed us a great deal of information.

I remember Russell Train calling me up on a Saturday morning from Russell's house out in Chesapeake Bay, trying in his own statesmanlike way to say, "Hey, you really ought to look into this guy Stan Hathaway. I'm not so sure he's the kind of person you want." Here's a Republican high official warning me about it all. And I said, "Don't worry, Russ. We're going to be right in there pitching" and so on. But that was sort of an unusual thing--

Lage: That's a pretty good tip-off.

Evans: It was a gutsy thing to do, I thought. And we did. And what you have to do in these confirmation fights is do incredibly meticulous detailed research. We hired a person--Mike actually hired him--an investigator to go out there and go all through Wyoming and dig out through all the records and get every little piece of information we could find. Not scandal kind of dirt, but just factual kind of dirt, bad things that they were doing that you could document, because of course as soon as Hathaway's name was announced--and all this is in the archives too, I assume, somewhere--the administration releases a big sheet of all the great environmental things he's done.

So you've got to check and research each one of these things, and you have to get names, places, dates, photographs, and hopefully documents and things like that, because what you're really doing is attacking the philosophy of somebody, but you cannot do it by saying, "We don't like his philosophy," that isn't the way it's done around here. If you attack somebody just because you don't like their philosophy, then people say, "Well, that's just your opinion. You're just disgruntled because you lost, and the president is entitled to his person," and that's what the senators always say and that's why the people are always confirmed.

But if you can somehow document that they've done something illegal or bordering on illegality or questionable or so on, then you can say, "The Senate shouldn't confirm this person because he mismanaged or it's illegal" or something like that, or it's arguable. So you always have to find documentation like that.

And because those who attack the nominee are themselves fiercely attacked personally, you have to really be fortified with all the ammunition. It's much harder than any kind of

Evans: substantive issue you get involved in all the time. So we spent weeks and weeks digging up all this stuff on Hathaway, just as we had on Hickel, just as we had on all the other nominees we can, and putting it in. I remember the day of the hearings we were going over there, and our Xerox machine broke down. It always did. I had to have fifty copies, and all of a sudden it jammed, and we had a terrible tizzy and had to run across the street. It's typical of the way things always go around here. It's only on that day the Xerox machine will break down, not on the other days.

Of course, Laney Hicks came back from Wyoming to work with us; she was our Wyoming rep at that time. And she came back, I think, to make sure that I wasn't too radical and too extreme, because she had all her Wyoming alliances. It was always this tightrope I had to walk between--on the one hand, here's an obviously bad person, unfit to be secretary from our standpoint. Obviously I had to represent the whole club on this whole thing. At the same time the Wyoming constituency was saying, "Don't be too hard on him; he's a nice guy, and you better not embarrass us out there," and the Sierra Club is very constituency-oriented all the time. So it was sort of like that.

Lage: And it wasn't that they were more conservative? It was just the reality of having to work with him, or did they tend to be a bit more conservative?

Evans: They were more conservative, too. They weren't as willing to say this was so bad, they'd say, "Well, you know, you've got to have some development, don't you?" It was sort of like that. Laney had close ties with ranchers and conservatives who were good friends. They all knew Stan. You know Wyoming is a small state, and everybody knew everybody out there.

But Laney and I turned out to be a good team. We testified together, and she did speak out against him, and so did I. And I think I satisfied her that I wasn't going to pound the table or anything like that. It was a good team, a good job.

I remember I was scheduled to debate Senator Hansen from Wyoming on the "Today" show, and he canceled out at the last minute. So I thought that was a good sign, maybe he was afraid, because we did have good facts and good numbers then.

To make a long story short, this was April, May of 1975, he did get confirmed. But we put up a good fight, as we always do. We knew he was going to get confirmed. Then poor Hathaway, a month or two later he had to retire for a nervous breakdown. He went

Evans: over there, and what I heard was that he tried to read every document at the Department of Interior, he tried to really conscientiously do a good job, and it was far too much, and he couldn't handle it.

And that took some delicate handling too. I remember correspondence in the files between me and the Wyoming people. Of course, right away the press immediately calls you up and says, "What do you think about that? Do you think you guys had anything to do with this, his breaking down?" And I said, "Oh, this is a human tragedy of the first rank. We never wish this on any person, you know. We're only concerned about his philosophy, and we're sorry about the personal tragedy," and so on. You just try to keep it like that and soften everything you can.

Strategy Behind Confirmation Fights

Evans: Enough on that. Only to say that with a Republican president, certainly with the Republican presidents I know of, you always have to have confirmation fights, and they take a great deal of time. That was in '75.

Lage: The confirmation fight has to take place, but it never seems to make a difference.

Evans: No, a point on that. Yes, it does. That's something people don't understand, and I'm not surprised they don't understand. It's always worth the fight. You don't really expect to beat anybody in these fights, but you don't need to beat anybody. If you expose and lay the record out on the public, and you have to get massive publicity and lay it all out to the record--we'll come back to Watt maybe in the end because that's a good example of that, or Hickel, of course, is a good example too--you can dramatize your case. You can carry your case to the American people the way you never could any other way because these are very intensely followed hearings and meetings all the way through.

We got twenty-two votes against Hickel, which is an unheard of thing; everybody in these nominations always sail right through. Twenty-two votes against Hickel sent a shock wave through the whole administration. "What's going on?" Hickel was the last one confirmed; we held up his confirmation. All the other cabinet members were already meeting; he was the last one. It was very embarrassing; it was the gravest sort of thing.

Evans: The result was, in the case of Hickel, a verb came out of it: we "Hickelized" him, and he got better. Not that much better, but he got better certainly. So it had its substantial impact. These things are worth fighting all the way through.

Lage: And in Hickel's case you feel it affected his course of action?

Evans: Yes. In Watt's case it certainly did not affect his course of action, but it certainly affected the public perception of him. That was a golden opportunity for us.

Opposing the Watt Nomination

Evans: Here, let's come to Watt right now; it's perfectly okay. Reagan was elected in this landslide. Of course, we had opposed him in the election so, you know, we were the vanquished ones. We all knew there was going to be no mercy or anything like that for us, but we had hoped that maybe the moderate Republicans could get one of their people appointed to be secretary of the Interior.

So we all went through an exercise of trying to get some moderate Republicans to submit good names. You know, we wouldn't dare submit any names, but get somebody moderate who wasn't identified with us. He certainly wouldn't be an environmentalist, but maybe not too much of a developer; maybe sort of a halfway developer or something like that.

And finally I remember--I remember the date, too--December 18--because there was a party over at the Wilderness Society; we were all there for a party, and Watt's name had been announced the night before--he was going to be the one. The Wilderness Society called an emergency meeting, and we all went over. All the colleagues gathered around, twenty-two or twenty-three of us around a room, and everybody was wringing their hands, except me. I was saying, "Well, this is a golden opportunity for us." And they say, "What the hell's the matter with you? This is the worst thing that ever happened to us." And I thought it was a golden opportunity because it was one of these--

Lage: You have a tendency to see the optimistic side of things!

Evans: [laughter] I know, maybe that's why!

Lage: It's probably why you've lasted so long.

Evans: That's why I have these scars on the inside at least, maybe! But I thought it was a golden opportunity because we're not going to get any mercy anyhow. Far better to have a son of a bitch like this guy than to have a nice conservative like Cliff Hansen, the senator from Wyoming, who was another possible major choice there. Cliff would have smiled every day to us and called us into his office and said, "Fellas, you know how much I love you, and nobody loves the environment more than we do, but I've got to sell off the wilderness areas."

We would have said, "Cliff, thank you very much. We respectfully disagree with you, and we're very concerned and very disappointed. But thank you very much, we'll see you again next time." We would have held a press conference and said, "We're really upset about all this sort of thing," and nobody would have come. Or if the press would have come, they would say, "How do you mean? How come you're so angry with this nice Cliff Hansen? I just talked to him yesterday; he's a nice guy." That's what would have happened to us.

Better to have a son of a bitch up there who's yelling and screaming at us and polarizes us back and forth. The same substantive actions are going to be taken, because the hard right dominated the councils of the administration. So let's have a real bad guy up there; let's fight him for all we're worth, and we'll raise money and members off of him, and we'll dramatize our case, and of course that's exactly what happened.

We had an internal discussion inside the Sierra Club--and this may be the time to tell it--in December of 1980. After Watt had been nominated, I was on the phone to Mike McCloskey and said, "What do we do?" You know, I was the associate executive director then; I was still the Sierra Club in Washington. And Watt immediately--maybe Mike mentioned this--called up Tony Ruckel, whom he knew from adversarial proceedings in Denver, trying cases against each other, and asked Tony to set up a meeting with the Sierra Club. And I guess the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth or Wilderness Society finally ended up going. I forget who all went, but some other environmentalists.

So Mike flew out for it, and sometime in December Watt had a meeting with Tony and Mike and a few other conservationists, and they talked about a lot of things and joked and laughed about a lot of things. I remember Mike reporting to me that nothing substantive was agreed on, but you know, "He's a nice guy, sort of. Maybe we could work with him, but not too much," said Mike. I was pretty sure we couldn't work with him in any way.

Evans: And then we had big trouble because Mike didn't want to come out too strongly against him. Well, first it became a question of who's going to testify. I said, "Mike, you're the executive director; I think you ought to testify," knowing how nasty these fights are! I didn't want to be up in front of the TV cameras and getting yelled at by the senators and everything. I said, "Mike, you're my boss. I'm glad to defer to my boss here. You do it." And Mike says, "Well, Brock, I think you ought to do it." And I said, "I'm not so sure." We were like Alfonse and Gaston, back and forth, till finally, of course, the word was passed that I would do it; I would do the testimony.

Lage: Did Mike want to protect his image?

Evans: That was in Mike's mind also. Let me be the heavy and be the bad guy, and then Mike can be the nice broker that comes in. That's a perfectly appropriate role, and I don't mind playing it. I just didn't want all the hassle of getting ready for it.

Anyhow, that was done. But then the question became, "What is our testimony going to be like?" Remember, this was all happening over Christmas vacation, Christmas recess. The Republicans had control of the Senate. Normally we wouldn't have hearings till February, late January or early February. But the Republicans had control of the Senate. Senator [James] McClure-- who was a strong Watt supporter, a strong anti-environmentalist-- became chairman, so he called hearings for January 7th. It was just after New Year's; get them done as quick as you can, a very smart tactic, too.

So we had to give up our whole damn Christmas vacation, the whole Sierra Club staff, to prepare testimony. Investigators going out again, gathering every shred of evidence, the usual sorts of things. I thought our staff did a brilliant job of putting together an incredible amount of information in a very timely way and in a very, very short time, over Christmas, over New Year's, all this time we should have been having a good time and we couldn't. I was just the overseer and the testifier; I didn't really have to do much of the dirty work at that time. But Tim Mahoney did a brilliant job on it for us, for example, and many other people did too.

But anyhow, then the question became, "What was the testimony going to be?" And Mike really didn't want it to be very critical. Mike did not want us to come out against Watt. He wanted us to express concern and alarm and lay out the things, but not come out against him. And Doug Scott and I were just appalled. You know, what are we going to do here? And Doug and I plotted over the phone, "How are we going to get Mike moving along, and do all this?"

Evans: Finally we called other directors, I remember, and other people said, "My God, we've got to come out against this guy." And I think there was enough pressure on Mike finally that Mike realized that we really had to come out against him strongly, and so I got the green light just a day or two before the hearings, "Go ahead and give it to him," and do all that.

Lage: Did you ever find out what Mike's special concerns were? He'd been through other fights.

Evans: Well, Mike had actually never testified. I'd done most of the testifying against these witnesses, I think, since I was here, and Brower testified against Hickel. Mike must have testified against some, I don't remember who. It was perfectly understandable. I don't know if he's ever been through one of these bloody things himself before, but he sure lived through them with me and with Dave, and he knows exactly what's involved. And Mike was always intimately involved with preparation of testimony, and we were on the phone two or three times a day together, so he knows the situation. My guess is--in fact it was verified by subsequent events--that Mike thought he might have a friendship here; he might have a personal relationship that would stand the club in good stead, that it would be good for us to have that.

Lage: Because of that initial meeting with Watt?

Evans: That's right. That, you know, here's a chance, and it's sort of a Mutt and Jeff routine, and it's perfectly appropriate that I be the heavy and the bad guy, because somebody has to speak out and be the point person for the Sierra Club, and somebody of some rank.

Lage: But I'm not talking about why he wanted you to testify but why he didn't want to push the testimony too strongly.

Evans: Oh, the testimony. Oh, that too because of the personal relationship. Shortly thereafter, in February, time for the board meeting, Mike did come out and Mike had a personal meeting with Watt, to which I was not invited and it's perfectly understandable, and it was a terrible meeting, and nothing came of it, and Mike realized then that there was to be no hope here. As you know Mike has been out swinging ever since on the whole thing.

Lage: Do you attribute the change in Watt to the fight you put up? From December to February the--

Evans: No, Watt is a son of a bitch, no matter what. Watt was always that way. Watt hasn't changed one bit; Watt's always been him. Watt called me up the day after the hearings, as a matter of fact, "Brock, Jim Watt here." "Oh, hello, Mr. Secretary, how are you?"

Evans: "Well, I'm sure hopin' we can work together some way or another." I said, "I want you to know, Mr. Secretary, that no matter what we said there at the hearings that, of course, we want to work with you too, and I hope we can resolve some of these differences." And, you know, I was impressed by that. I was then invited to a breakfast with him in May of last year, and that was the last time I ever saw him.

But I read an astrologer's analysis of his sign once, and I thought it was the most accurate thing I'd seen about him yet! He's the kind of person that loves confrontation; he loves controversy. The worst thing that could be happening to him, according to Svetlana, would be to ignore him and to just not deal with him at all. He's a hard-right ideologue; he's not corrupt; he's not getting paid, or even if he is it's not the reason he's doing these things. He really believes that it's for the national interest and national security that he's doing these things, and he's an ideologue. That's just the kind of guy he is. He hates us, and he loves the confrontation, and the more flak he gets from us the more he loves it.

Lage: A symbiotic relationship!

Evans: It really is. It helps us too, so we're fine too! But I can't believe that the Republican party isn't realizing that it's not good for them. It may raise a lot of bucks for them, but it sure doesn't get them any votes. And we'll see in the elections here. There's some more on the Watt business, but that's just sort of another illustration of how we work on these things and decide these things and deal with them, a little later on.

Lage: Very good. I think those are interesting.

Ford Vetoes on Environmental Legislation

Evans: Let me return to Ford for a minute. The other thing about Ford I remember is that he vetoed the strip-mine bills. He was always vetoing something. He vetoed strip-mine bills, and there was always pressure on him to veto things, and he would gladly do it because of his past record in Congress. He'd voted against strip-mine bills, never liked them anyhow.

So we had a terrible time with this agonizing strip-mine fight. It took years longer than it should have because he vetoed them. It wasn't until 1977 that we finally fought it through and won some more; for the third time we passed it, and Carter, of course, was only too happy to sign it. That's how we got it through.

Evans: But we had these bitter losses. I talked about things being snatched away by parliamentary tricks and procedures and bitter things like that. One veto Ford made of the strip-mine bill we tried to override, and we came within one vote. We got a majority, but we couldn't get two-thirds. And I hate to lose land that way, I hate to lose battles that way. But that was what Ford was like, too.

Every time there's a wilderness bill, in any Republican administration, any wilderness bill with trees in it, the secretary of Agriculture always wants to veto it. And the way these things work at the White House level, the president gets a bill, and each agency that cares to comment can write a memo urging, "yes, sign it" or "No, veto it." And they get a big stack of these things and then the president theoretically reads over them and flips over them.

Well, the Alpine Lakes came up for this sort of thing, and of course the Forest Service recommended a veto of it, so did Agriculture, and so did some of the other agencies, and the timber industry was all hot for a veto, and hoped to get it killed that way. It was the same thing with Gore Range/Eagles Nest in Colorado and Flat Tops too. They were up at the same time, the same kind of pressure, same kind of fight.

I just remember Alpine Lakes. Now there are two stories about Alpine Lakes, and I'm not sure which one exactly is right. But I remember going over to the White House, because we had a friend there named, I think it was, Henry Diamond. He was on the Domestic Policy staff. He was one of Rockefeller's persons, because Rockefeller was vice-president, and that was another help in the moderate wing of the Republicans. I said, "I've got to see you on this; the president is going to veto our bill, and we need this bill, and I'd like to explain it to you."

So I got right over there and got in and sat down with our information on the Alpine Lakes and what it was and what it wasn't, and he said that sounded pretty good to him. So the best thing about his position was that his memo got to be on top. All the other memos were sort of in there, and the president could thumb through them if he wanted, but his memo got to be on top. One page is all you're allowed to have on these things.

So I wrote up the memo for him. And I summarized it, here's what they were saying, but here's what it is. And he said, "Keep it short, one sentence. Give me one sentence on this," and it was all just done like that. And the Alpine Lakes was not vetoed.

Evans: A story I just heard on the Alpine Lakes when I was back in Seattle a month ago was that Governor Dan Evans, who was a Republican governor, didn't want him to veto it either, was all for it, and he took back my book--I wrote a book on it, which is sitting over there--on the Alpine Lakes. It was a beautiful picture book; I didn't take the pictures. My text was there, but it was the pictures.

Governor Evans requested an appointment with Ford, just a few minutes to explain this and why he shouldn't veto it, and Ford gave him time. The story I heard was that--it must have been told by the governor--he got in there with this pretty book, and Ford says, "Hi, how are you? What is this all about. Tell me about it." And the governor laid out this whole thing and thought he was only going to get five minutes, and for twenty minutes Ford just kept looking through the pictures and "Isn't this nice? What a beautiful book. What a beautiful place," and so on and so on, and he finally left him with the book. He probably still has the book somewhere, President Ford does.

But to make a long story short, of course he did not veto the bill. Hells Canyon was the same kind of thing, and with Hells Canyon we had to get Senator McClure to call him up, of all people. Same way with Gore Range and Flat Tops and all the others, and that same kind of effort had to be made every single time; you had to work on a Republican president not to veto the bill. A Democratic president would never veto the bill, never even think about it.

Lage: So that's the extra work when it's not a friendly administration?

Evans: That's the extra work; that's right; that's another part of it.

XVI WORKING WITH THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION

Influencing Appointments in Congress and the Administration

Evans: I don't remember when I first heard of Carter because it was probably kind of late in the game. Everybody was thinking, "Jimmy who?" all along through all the primaries and all that and wasn't paying too much attention. But I kept running into our people who were working for him and liked him. Bill Futrell knew him and got down there. And my mentor and teacher here, Joe Browder, went down to work for him early on and became an advocate because of his stand on strip-mining. And other people like that.

In any event, people were working for him; then he won the election. And I heard he was a pretty good environmentalist. Oh, I know. I have a memory of Jimmy Carter. When I was back in the Northwest, somehow I was reading some environmentalist magazine and it said, "Write to Governor Jimmy Carter of Georgia about Spewrell's Bluff Dam on the Flint River in Georgia," a big dam that Georgia conservationists were opposing. I remember writing him a letter saying, "please don't give approval for that dam," because the governor had great say over this. And I got back a thirty-page, handwritten letter.

Lage: You're kidding!

Evans: I have it somewhere; I'm not sure where. I can't believe it was written by him, but it was--

Lage: You should compare the handwriting.

Evans: I should have done that. But I just remember this handwritten letter thanking and explaining his position on the whole thing. I couldn't believe this damn thing. It may have been written by one of his staff; I can't remember. But there it was. And that sure formed an impression on me, I never forgot that, after all these years after that. So I had known of him as a good conservationist.

Evans: Then he was elected and poof! the whole world changed, and this is the next part of the story. Mike was summoned down there to Plains, Georgia--he probably told you all about that--in January.

Lage: I didn't interview Mike.

Evans: Oh, you didn't, okay. Whoever did, I'm sure he told that story. But Mike went on down to Georgia around Thanksgiving time. Carter wanted to talk to the environmentalist leaders. He said, "What do you want? What can I do to help you?" And they said many things. One of them I remember being repeated was, "Mr. Carter, we'd like to have you appoint a person right in the Oval Office there as an environmentalist, so we can always have access to that person." And Carter laughed and said, "What do you need someone like that for? You've got an environmentalist right in the Oval Office; I'm him. You don't need anybody else." And that's sort of the way it was.

Lage: Well, before the election, though, the club wasn't endorsing at that time?

Evans: I remember the Carter supporters coming to a board meeting and asking endorsement, and I can't really remember what happened. To my knowledge, the club did not get actively involved in any organized sense. Remember, our electoral mechanisms were still rudimentary at best. We had SCOPE [Sierra Club Committee on Political Education] I think, but we didn't do much with it then, not until the 1980 campaign did we really do anything with SCOPE in any meaningful, measurable way. So I'm not aware of any club involvement that way. The thread only picked up for me, say, in November and December of '76 and January of '77--

Lage: Did the League of Conservation Voters get involved at that time?

Evans: Oh, yes. Marion Edey was a big supporter of his; they were very involved, and that was our great tie-in all the way through it. Stewart Brandborg had gotten a job working down there for his campaign. A number of environmentalists were down in Atlanta working on his campaign. So environmentalists were sort of infiltrating and writing position papers.

I may have even written a position paper for him on forestry and wilderness. I did that for [Ted] Kennedy during the presidential primaries of 1980. I've written a number of position papers for candidates, and I can't remember all of them, so I may have written one of those. We were probably involved to that extent.

But a fascinating thing happened. One of the most successful things I think I did in my career, and one of the things I enjoyed most, after Carter came into power, came about then, because all at

Evans: once we had a chance to get our people in power. And we were sophisticated enough to know what the implications of that were. They were not maybe so significant in Lyndon Johnson's time. Now we knew what that really meant and what it could mean or could not mean.

We'd also had a little experience--and I never mentioned this in the interview yet--with what I call committee-packing. After every election we try to get good people appointed to the Interior Committee and the Agriculture Committee. We go over the list of committees, and now it's a pretty sophisticated operation. After every election, all the colleagues would sit around a table, often in the Sierra Club office, and they go over all the committees and they go over the list of the new members elected and say, "Well, we want him to be on such and such a committee. We want him to be on such and such a committee." And we make assignments and get their dossiers and try to go out and persuade them to get on the committees we want them to be on because they're good votes.

Then it's a matter of working through the party caucuses, because it's all organized by party caucus; that's how these things are done. And each region has a coordinator, and you've got to lobby the coordinator and get the person to lobby the coordinator and persuade them and get their consent. It's a very arcane, sophisticated, behind-the-scenes operation. But you can imagine the impact. If we're losing Alaska votes by nineteen to twenty in the ratio of committee votes on Alaska, we've just got to get two good Democrats instead of two bad Democrats; we can never influence Republicans very much. Then the votes are going to be twenty-one to nineteen the other way. So that's very, very important to do.

My first experience was in 1974. We ran an operation trying to do it then; it wasn't too sophisticated. In '76 we ran a better one again, although I was working directly within the administration by then, in '78. We do it every time, and we'll do it again this time for sure, too.

Anyhow, so in '76 Mike put me in charge of seeing what we could do to get good appointments, good people appointed. There's a book out called The Plum Book, and it lists about two hundred positions that are environmental in one form or another, political positions, appointments that affect us, in the Department of Transportation and Interior and everywhere else. And I was in charge of trying to get good names up and find out what the system was and get them into the system, get them through the process and get them considered and get our people in power. And, of course, everybody was flooding in with names, everybody wants these plum jobs because they are awfully good jobs and they're important jobs.

Evans: The crucial thing for us was that one of Carter's strongest supporters from Georgia was a woman named Barbara Walmsley. This was in November of '76. In March of '76, she was one of the first people I had come through our volunteer training program. We had just started the program of bringing twenty Sierra Club volunteers back at a time and having them be trained as lobbyists back in Washington, the idea being that they would go back and be effective in their own states and we could always call them on the phone. It's been a very successful program; the club does it twice a year now. I've instituted it here at Audubon, as well.

Well, Barbara was in our very first training group, so was Denny Shaffer by the way, both of them were there. And we got to be friends then, and the next thing I knew Barbara was up here working on the transition team. It's called the transition team, and there she was, right there. She and I talked, and I said, "Can you possibly get on the Natural Resources end of things and get in there?" And she did.

So we had the most fascinating time here for the next few months. I called her the Lady Barbara. We had a whole little game; it's all in the archives somewhere. I used to send long teletypes back every night reporting my contacts. To me it was all like kings and queens and dukes and earls and nobles. It must have been like the court of Louis XIV. I'd say, "Today I got as far as the inner courtyard of the Duke of Agriculture, and I talked to the Lady Barbara, and she passed me information about so and so" and "Today I talked to the Comte d'Interieur and so and so said this."

Lage: This is going to explain those bizarre teletype messages!

Evans: Exactly, did you see any of those?

Lage: No, but whoever does will wonder about it.

Evans: Yes, that's right. That should explain it, because there was a whole host of teletypes in November and December of how we were trying to get our name circulated and get out. Because there were two parallel processes going on basically. One is that all the brothers and sisters, all the colleagues were sitting around joyfully; we met in a room over in the Senate. Stewart Brandborg was sort of organizing them. We'd all sit down and say, "Who do we want for secretary of Interior? Who do we want for secretary of Agriculture? Who do we want for assistant secretary?" And we exchanged names on all the positions and all of that.

Lage: So you got together with the other environmentalists?

Evans: Yes, we did, we got very much together. But I was the only one that had the contact, my agent called the Lady Barbara in there, and no one ever knew who she was, except we just called her the Lady Barbara. I still to this day call her the Lady Barbara. But that was what we did.

And so we'd meet every morning and decide who was what and who we wanted for these positions and took them in order of importance, secretary of Interior being most important, then EPA administrator, and right on down the line to see what we could possibly get. And we couldn't influence them all by any means, but we could have powerful input, and we could have powerful say. We could have veto power.

There are two stories that I'll just tell on that before we drop the subject because this sort of illustrates the kind of operation we were doing. It was right down the street, the transition operation, and I'd go down to see her sometimes or she'd come see me. We'd have lunch, and she'd tell me, "I was looking at the files today, and they're going to make a decision in two or three days about such and such. Can you do something about that?"

I would get on the phone to our people who had already applied--well, we actively recruited people to apply--and say, "If you're really interested, now is the time, come on down here and go over there and call up." And I'll tell you the story of Rupert Cutler and the story of Cecil Andrus because they're different stories. One was a great success and one was a real problem.

The Rupert Cutler story was a classic example of how this operated. We decided who we wanted to be assistant secretary of Agriculture in charge of the national forests. I thought I would try to focus my efforts on that because I thought that was the most important position that we could influence. I got Rupert Cutler to apply, and I got Bob Curry to apply. Bob is the stronger environmentalist of the two; he's been a long-time Sierra Club activist from Montana, but probably had least chance because of that, but had the good academic credentials. We wanted to get somebody that had an academic camouflage to it so it wasn't totally identified with us so it would get through the confirmation process, but still a strong environmentalist. Rupert was the other one.

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Evans: About the time of the Sierra Club board meeting in early January of 1977--I remember it was bitter cold here and snowing--Lady Barbara gave me the word, "Better do something about assistant secretary of Agriculture very, very soon." Because they'd already chosen Bergland to be the secretary of Agriculture, so who's going to be assistant secretary?

Evans: So I called up both Bob Curry and Rupert Cutler and said, "Now's the time to get back here. Come on back and we'll help you out." So they came back, and we'd already got their resumes into the process. And Rupert, being the better lobbyist of the two, actually got in to see Bergland himself, just caught him in the hall somewhere and said, "Can I talk to you?" And Bergland liked him and Rupert got the job. Curry didn't get that far and didn't get the job, probably wouldn't have anyhow, so Rupert became the assistant secretary of Agriculture. And it was all done quietly and quickly before the industry even knew what was going on; that was the beauty of it. It was all behind the scenes, all quick, just bang like that, and before industry could object, Bergland said, "I want this guy; he's my man."

They were furious when the confirmation hearings came along, but they couldn't fight, the same way we can't fight these things. The president is entitled to his man, right? So there it was. That was basically the story of Rupert Cutler.

The Selection of Andrus: An Unhappy Story

Evans: The story of Cecil Andrus was a much tougher one, and it ought to be told somewhere here. It's an unhappy story, and it involves me and Doug Scott and Mike McCloskey and a lot of others, and it hurt relationships for some time to come. I had known Andrus when he was governor of Idaho. I campaigned for Governor Andrus in 1970 because he was so much better than the guy he was replacing; he was good on Sawtooth and good on Hells Canyon. We'd had a nice personal relationship all those years.

And so one of these times the colleagues were all sitting around very early on after the Carter election, and we were around a table over in the Senate and, "Who do we want for secretary of the Interior?" People were saying, "We want Congressman Seiberling; we want Patsy Mink," We had a whole lot of good names of people we would really like to have, and Andrus's name was up there, and he was one of the top ten or eleven people that we really would like, but clearly he wasn't number one. People asked me what I thought of him, and I said, "Well, he was pretty good; he was for us on some things; he was against us on somethings."

Andrus had done us in on the Hells Canyon legislation. He was against the dams, but Andrus has a logging background. He comes from a timber industry family, so he used his efforts very successfully during the last stages of the Hells Canyon legislation to cut out the forested wilderness proposals on the east

Evans: side of the Seven Devils section of the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. He got them all cut out and now they're being logged, I think. So, you know, that wasn't a very nice thing to do, and we pleaded with him personally not to do it, and he did it anyhow.

So he wasn't the greatest environmentalist in the whole world by any means, clearly therefore why should he be our first choice for secretary of Interior? That was the reasoning. But he was a western governor; he had all these good things going for him in that sense, and he certainly wasn't bad by any means.

We discussed it a couple of days among ourselves, and we were just getting ready to prepare our final list in order of who we wanted to be secretary of Interior, since Carter had asked us who we wanted. Andrus was one of the top ten, but he wasn't number one by any means. The next day we were going to meet again to make a final decision.

That afternoon when I got back I got a phone call from Doug Scott, the Northwest representative, and Doug said, "There's a letter on the way from here from my office to you. It's about Andrus"--Doug didn't like Andrus very much--"before you do anything about this, read this." So I said, "Okay." And so the next morning before the meeting the letter came special delivery and so on. It was unsigned; it's probably in the archives some damn place; it was typewritten. I didn't know who it was from. I don't know whether Doug wrote it or someone else wrote it. No one admits it, and I don't even want to know who actually wrote it in the end, but it outlined some very specific bad things that Andrus had done beyond even what I had known. They were not good things, and they seemed to be true.

So I had this in mind, went back to the meeting, and for some reason I thought the same letter had been sent out to everybody else too, all the other colleagues had got it the same way. And I went over to the meeting, and people said, "Well, what are we going to do about all this?" And I said, "Oh, didn't you get the letter?" "What letter? What are you talking about?" So I sort of told them what was in the letter about Andrus. And they said, "Oh, my goodness, we can't make him our first or second or third choice because of all that." And I had to go to another meeting then, and I said, "Well, whatever you do, I'll vote for whatever you do. It doesn't make any difference to me. You just go ahead, and we'll support any one of these choices you have, including Andrus as one of the choices," but it was clear Andrus was not to be the first choice.

Evans: So that was just before Thanksgiving in 1976. I thought no more about it and went to my meeting. We had some more meetings the next day or so about other people and went on back. And I remember getting a call from Paul Swatek in San Francisco on Thanksgiving day. He said, "What did you guys do to Andrus? Andrus just called up here furious. The Sierra Club isn't supporting him; what's going on?" I said, "What are you talking about?" I couldn't remember at first and finally I remembered the whole incident, and I said, "Oh, that, it was a story like that, but it was a very casual thing."

It turned out it was not a casual thing. Someone at the meeting who was an Andrus supporter had leaked everything that had happened and told Andrus. Andrus was furious and called up Mike, and the president of the Sierra Club was furious with me. I called up Doug and said, "What the hell is going on here? What did you get me into?" I was angry with Doug; all at once I realized I was Doug's bag man in this whole thing. I was carrying his water, and I was getting in all the trouble, and this was Doug's doing. And I have to say that is Doug's style; Doug works through other people, and other people take the flak. But that was my first experience with it. But I had done it too, you know, without realizing the seriousness of it.

The next five or six days were really a patchwork operation. Doug and I conferred on the phone, "What are we going to do?" Doug wanted to cook up a story that we really didn't do it, but there was no way to get around it; you know, we did it. We may not have realized it was such a bad thing, at least I didn't, but there it was; now we had to repair the damage. Mike was furious.

Lage: Did you realize at the time that Andrus had the inside chance, so you were going to be opposing the potential nominee?

Evans: Well, we realized he was a contender certainly, but I thought the whole purpose of the exercise was to let the environmental community say what we wanted. And why should it be not the best person in the world if we had a chance for an even better person? If we had a chance for a real environmentalist to be there, why take one who was say a 70 percent environmentalist? It's still good, you know, compared to Watt. And Andrus did many good things, too.

But anyhow, Brant Calkin was president of the Sierra Club then, and that incident turned out to be the cause of Brant's demise, of Bill Futrell upsetting him in the board. Bill Futrell used this extensively as "Brant wasn't in control, staff ran amuck," and that was the way Bill unseated Brant at the board

Evans: election in 1977. And it's unheard of that a president only gets a one-year term, but that's what happened to Brant; it was that incident. I remember lots of talks to Brant on the phone. Brant was very sympathetic and understood us.

Anyhow, Doug and I had to talk to Andrus on a conference phone call. We had to put on sackcloth and ashes and beat our foreheads on the floor and walk backwards and so on, and we had this long conference phone call. Andrus told us how disappointed and upset he was, and he has that tone of voice; he can really make you feel so bad and so terrible.

I didn't think we'd done anything that bad, I must say. We were just doing our job and getting information to the colleagues. What made Andrus furious, and rightly so, was that it was an unsigned memo, an unsigned letter. And Doug put all that together. I was the bag man, but I did it too. I was the carrier of it, and Doug put it together. Doug says someone else wrote it, and maybe someone else did. And I have my ideas, and it doesn't matter for these archives who did.

But the result was that Andrus did get confirmed, and we supported him. All at once the Sierra Club came out foursquare for Cecil Andrus. "He's our boy," and I testified for him and all that. But Andrus wouldn't forgive me. Andrus wouldn't talk to me for about a year at least or so; it was always very harsh and very hostile and very cold. And that's an example of these ad hominem things, or how these things can get to be that way very much. Nor would he speak to Doug either. Andrus would not speak to me or Doug for a long time.

This was hurting us. So all through the glory years, when I should have had the best contact with Andrus of anybody because I campaigned for him, I had the worst contacts with him of anybody; it was really unhappy. Everywhere else in the Interior Department it was great and I could see them anytime and in Agriculture with Rupert there, but not Cecil Andrus. But Mike could, luckily; Andrus would certainly be friendly to the rest of the Sierra Club. It was more about me personally.

It wasn't until about 1978 or so, I couldn't stand it any longer, and I made an appointment with Andrus and said, "I've just got to come over and talk with you." During the reorganization fight, which we ought to talk about too because this talks about relations with the administration, all I could talk to were Andrus's staff. And every time I would go over there I would say, "Look, I campaigned for the guy. He's a great guy, and he was also for the Alaska bill, and, you know, don't be so pissed off at me" and so on.

Lage: And it wasn't public.

Evans: Oh, no, no, no, nothing like that. But Andrus has a reputation for holding grudges and keeping them a long time. Maybe I would too, who knows? In any event, finally I just got a personal appointment with him. I spent a half hour. I said, "If I could undo things I would undo them. I really feel badly about it." He was very gracious and very nice and "that's okay" and "we're all friends again," and he sent me a nice Christmas card with a personal note on it saying, "I really enjoyed our talk" and "thank you, it meant a lot," and we were great friends after that. But it took years to make it up.

And that's the peril of being in this kind of business. It's still a human business at bottom, all the computers aside and all the mailing lists and everything else, it's still people to people, and you're effective or not effective depending on how you can deal with these sorts of things. Doug didn't have to see him in his job, but I did. That's the problem about doing that sort of thing. So, you know, we all learn from that sort of thing.

I think that also, upon reflection now, it probably contributed to the malaise about me. You can't be in a job like this, I think, as exposed as you are all the time, with constituencies tearing at you from one side and the press and media beating down on you from the other and bosses and everybody else, without making some mistakes or ending up doing some things that finally expose that you're human too and you have clay feet too just like anybody else does, and maybe four or five years is the only time anybody can last in such a job, at least if you're a public person the way I sort of was. That's upon reflection that I think those things, and it's probably very accurate. You look at anybody in public life and you get scars and slings and arrows.

Betrayal on the Water Projects Bill

Evans: There was a time--talking about relations with the Carter administration--we thought he was great. You know, Jimmy Carter is there and all this other stuff aside; this is really a great administration. Sure enough, in April Carter comes out with his energy message and says all the things that we'd want him to say, and we helped write it.

He came out with his hit list in February, which was a wrong thing to do, his hit list on water projects. It wasn't a wrong idea, but it was so politically inept. This was when we first

Evans: realized, "Gee, you know, we've got a great philosophy here, but we don't have very much smarts politically," because Carter announced he was going to knock out thirty water projects, but he never called up the state senators or state congressmen to tell them ahead of time. He just did it, and of course they were furious.

But there were lots of good things going on. Anyhow, to make a long story short, the hit list was unfortunate in a sense in the way he did it and the way it was handled because it not only forced us to fight before we were ready to fight to defend it all, but it also precipitated the most violent political counter-reaction. If it had been handled carefully and smoothly we could have done a lot better with the whole thing. Nevertheless, finally we had a president who was willing to take on these pork barrels and these water projects.

Well, we actually fought it through the appropriations bill. What happened was that Congress defied Carter and put all the pork barrel into a water projects bill, and it came out in June of 1977. And we fought bitterly on it. We almost defeated it, but we didn't defeat it. We clearly had the votes to sustain a veto if the president wanted to veto it; that was a big ace in the hole. Finally we had a president who might veto water projects. This was in June or early July of 1977.

We worked with the White House lobbyists, and they said, "We'll get the president to veto it; he will." The president assured us he would veto it. It was on that basis that we fought so hard and got all those votes for the president. When it came down to it, somebody else got to the president; he did not veto it.

So I issued a press statement to say that President Carter betrayed us, because he did betray us. President Carter betrayed us and the next thing--

Lage: It seems like strong words to use against someone that basically supported you.

Evans: That's right, but he did betray us; that's exactly what happened. And that's the best word in the English language to describe it, regardless of whether he was our friend or not. Anyhow, to me it seemed like a perfectly natural thing to say and what you say to somebody if they do something wrong to you after you've worked your-- Because we had expended lots of blood and treasure on that and lots of political capital, too.

Evans: Well, the next thing I knew there was a Sierra Club retreat out in New Mexico, and I was there and Bill Futrell and other strong supporters of Carter were saying, "We better fire this guy. What's Evans doing out there, talking against our beloved president who can do no wrong." It was sort of that attitude; that was how I interpreted it.

They were so blind to the fact that he was-- Because he was so much better than Nixon and Ford he could do not wrong. It's like the Indians and the Grand Canyon. Even Indians can do wrong; even President Carter can do wrong. Why shouldn't we be for the environment, no matter who's doing right or wrong to it; that's always been my philosophy on these things.

Lage: Did you feel the club kind of got too caught up in supporting Carter?

Evans: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. He was our boy, and a Georgian was president of the Sierra Club, and it was a lot of things like that. I, in my naiveté, hadn't realized how strong that feeling was until then, so that was part of the malaise about me too, I'm sure. You know, we had a lot of events: the forestry defeat, the Andrus affair, overspending the budget, Jimmy Carter. You know, looking at it from the outside and not being me, I could see how people would say, "What the heck's going on with Evans? And he's in the public eye all the time and all these other things." This is again in retrospect, of course; it could make some sense.

Other Turnabouts in Administration Policy

Lage: What about other issues where he also did a turnabout later in the administration?

Evans: Oh, Tellico. That was another very sad one. I was smart enough then not to say he betrayed us and everything. It was 1979 when we fought this long, bitter campaign over the Endangered Species Act. We had had a banner year in 1978. You know, I gave you the list of victories we won in '76; 1978 was even more incredible when you look at it. Not to mention the first Alaska votes, but the Boundary Waters, the Parks Omnibus Act with Santa Monica and Mineral King in it and Channel Islands and Redwoods, a whole bunch of stuff was passed in '78. It was a brilliant thing.

We fought the whole, bitter Endangered Species campaign then. There was a big split, by the way, between environmental groups on one side or the other. That's when I hired Jim Elder, had him

Evans: come up here. I think Jim is one of the last real humanists on the Sierra Club conservation staff. He was really good with people. He was a schoolteacher, didn't have the technical background, but he really had a flair for working with people. We put him on the Endangered Species Act, and he did a very good job of smoothing over things with the other groups.

We fought through the Endangered Species Act. Tellico dam* was the main issue, the snail darter, for example, and we fought under the worst of circumstances. We got the Act extended basically intact, so that now [1982] we're fighting over it again and winning it easily this time, by the way. The price for it four years ago was the addition of a special committee to hear cases like Tellico when all appeals fail. We called it the Extinction Committee. I may have mentioned this earlier, but the Extinction Committee took up the Tellico case and voted against Tellico, not on environmental grounds, but on economic grounds because it was a terrible project.

Just to follow through because this relates to Carter, the next year you may remember--I may have mentioned this before--Tellico got slipped through on a special rider. We fought a bitter battle in the Senate and lost, so it was all up to President Carter to veto that bill or not and save Tellico after all this time, and in September of 1979 we put enormous pressure on Carter. We were always calling up Stuart Eizenstat and all his staff and people from around the country were calling. The Tennessee farmers were pleading; everybody was pleading; the press was in on it. "Please will you do this? You don't like water projects anyhow. You can veto it at no cost to you, my gosh, otherwise we'll lose it;" and he didn't veto it.

Lage: Do you have any idea why he didn't?

Evans: I'm not sure. I remember him calling up Zyg Plater. Zyg was the main lawyer on this who'd fought his poor heart out on the whole thing. We're at the Sierra Club office later one night, and someone says, "Ziggy, it's Carter on the phone." Carter was calling from Air Force One, called him up and told him he couldn't veto the bill.

*The Tellico dam in Tennessee was opposed on the grounds that it would destroy the snail darter, which was on the Endangered Species list. This controversy raised opposition to the Endangered Species Act in Congress.

Evans: Yes, the reason was he had to make some compromise on the Panama Canal Treaty or an education act. It had something to do with an education bill that he wanted very badly, and that was the price, not to veto this, then he could get his education bill. I think it was an education bill or something like that. So it was another example of political horse trading.

Lage: It was a political reality.

Evans: Well, his perception of political reality. I remember even going through that exercise, and we pointed out to him he had the votes anyhow. But whatever it was, he didn't do that, and we were bitterly disappointed, and of course we lost it. That's it; the dam was built. So there's another example of that.

To balance that off, of course, was the whole long courageous performance on the Alaska bill. And if that's the price--it's too bad there have to be prices in this world--but if that's the price, it was certainly worth the price. The strong support of EPA, the strong support of Toxic Substances, the Strip-Mine Act, I mean there's no question that that administration was so far superior to anything since, at least, Teddy Roosevelt, if not before that, probably since, at least, Teddy Roosevelt. It was a great blessing to the country and a great boon and a great joy to be a part of it all.

RARE II: A Big Disappointment

Evans: What about RARE II [Roadless Area Review and Evaluation]?

Evans: RARE II was a big disappointment.

Lage: And do you know reasons for that?

Evans: Sure. You know, Rupert is my close friend on these things. RARE II started because of increasing pressure we were putting on the Forest Service during the Carter times to do something about wilderness. Now that we had our friend in power--at least we thought Rupert was our friend--let's get something done about all that. But the first few times that the Forest Service testified on wilderness areas they were coming out with the same old stuff that came out in Republican administrations. They were still against anything with trees in it; it was the same old-- We said, "Rupert, what the hell's going on down there?" Because we could talk to him anytime on the phone. "What are you doing? What are you letting these guys get away with? You know, sit down on them."

Evans: What the Forest Service was doing with Rupert was very smart. They immediately put him on the speaking circuit. They had him giving ten speeches a week all around the country. They sent him out of town, and he was giving speeches to this and that association and--

Lage: Well, he was in charge of them; they weren't in charge of him.

Evans: I know, but they'd just say, "Well, Mr. Cutler, we've got this nice speech. Would you like to give it?" It was great for Rupert's future career. You get your name exposed all over the country, and you get to meet all these professional associations. It's good if you're an academic, and Rupert just couldn't resist it. They had him giving speeches; he gave so many speeches that he finally collapsed in Los Angeles with an ulcer once, and he had to recover!

Then he realized what they'd been doing to him. We'd been telling him, "Rupert, come on back and mind the store," while the Forest Service was playing their usual games against wilderness all the time.

Anyhow, I can't remember whether it was in March of '77 or of '78; it must have been '77 that RARE II got started. It was very early on in Rupert's tenure. And I remember I had lunch with Rupert that day, and Rupert showed me this long telegram he got from Doug. Doug was really concerned about what was going on because of the way we were getting screwed, and Doug was our wilderness man then, and rightly so, Doug was concerned. A long telegram from Doug saying, "Damn it, Rupert, what are you doing? You better come through. We worked hard for you to get you in, and you're screwing the wilderness. You're the Wilderness Society guy! What is all this?"

And Rupert said, "I've got a secret for you, Brock. Don't tell anybody this. I'm going to do something about this. I'm going to order the Forest Service to review it all once again. We're going to do a RARE II." He called it something else, but that's what it became of course, RARE II. I said, "Gee, that's great." Because RARE I actually wasn't so bad, I didn't think. RARE I was pretty good for us, had a lot of good recommendations in it.

Well, it turned out the Forest Service ran away with the RARE II process, and just like the water projects issue where they excited and inflamed the opposition over nothing, the Forest Service inflamed the opposition over RARE II. They didn't want to do it. They held hearings in all these little towns all across the West, and that's what gave rise to the mythology about the

Evans: war on the West: the Carter administration is attacking their water projects, attacking their timber industry. Big hearings would come up in all these little small logging towns where our witnesses would get swamped and overwhelmed. The industry ginned up, so it was a perfect opportunity for the industry to fight the terrible Carter administration, just as we have a symbol to fight the terrible Reagan administration with Watt. And that's what it became, a symbol.

Lage: And you think the Forest Service foresaw that, planned it?

Evans: The Forest Service certainly did everything it could do to excite their opposition. I was reading through my forestry materials the other day. The Forest Service works very closely with the timber industry, and they get out the industry publicity. They alert their networks across the country to call the industry hotline. The industry shuts down timber mills in crucial places to excite people. They're no dummies. If you want to cut down the trees, then this is how you do it, and that's what they do.

So anyhow that's what happened with RARE II. That's the first stage of RARE II. Then, in 1978 they released their first EIS [Environmental Impact Statement] on it, which was a very, very disappointing EIS. It became apparent we were getting screwed in the Northwest, where the trees are, where the conflict is.

The worst thing that Rupert ever did to us was appoint Dick Worthington to be regional forester out in Portland, Oregon. And Dick Worthington was a well-known timber beast. He was back here for a long time. He loved timber and hated wilderness and everything else. I remember pleading with him and so did Doug, "Don't appoint this guy, please! My God, he's the worst of the worst." And Rupert said, "No, I can keep control of him, and he's a good professional, so anyhow let's do that." Well, Worthington ended up being responsible for the recommendations for wilderness in Washington and Oregon. And of course when the recommendations of the RARE II came out, they were disastrous, not a scrap of big trees in any of them.

Lage: Worse than RARE I?

Evans: Far worse than RARE I, because RARE I at least had some timbered valleys in it, some forest in it; these had almost no trees. It was just incredible. With 2.7 million acres of wilderness in Washington state, they recommended 300,000 or something like that. Again and again, all the rock and ice you could get and hardly anything else. It was just disastrous. And that was Dick

Evans: Worthington, and therefore that was Rupert's doing. I've kidded Rupert in a sorrowful way many times since, and he just says, "Brock, you were right on that one. That was a terrible mistake I made."

But Rupert still had some final control over it. In 1979 they were making their final recommendations and Rupert said, "Don't worry about it; I'll fix up these bad recommendations." Well, there were two thousand wilderness proposals, and Doug and I figured out if he looked at one every ten minutes during working days, he could never get it done in three months. And, of course, he was giving many speeches and all that sort of thing, so he never had any time to do it.

I remember going down to the Forest Service office, because we had a friend down there; the former executive director of the Wilderness Society, George Davis, was in charge of perfecting the recommendations here. George called me up just before George Washington's birthday holiday and said, "Look, in a week or so I've got to get these things out. What can you give me from the state of Washington?"

Well, I got all my old maps out and, boy, I jostled them around, and I drew boundaries, and I counted acres just like the good old days. And I brought photographs and brought the whole thing down with me, and George and I went over it in great detail. And what I tried to do--I mean I was compromising even then--I was thinking, "What can we get away with and add and still make it palatable, make it reasonable?" It turned out George could do nothing with it, nothing really happened, nothing came of all these recommendations because Rupert just decided to go along with it.

Cutler Under Pressure from the Other Side

Lage: Was this a case of Rupert being under pressure from the other side as well?

Evans: Rupert was certainly under pressure from the other side, but he didn't have to listen to it. [John B.] Crowell, his successor now, is under pressure from us all the time, but Crowell never listens to us; you don't have to. Republicans don't listen to us; why do the Democrats have to listen to the industry?

Lage: I interviewed Claire Detrick in California [former director and vice-president of the Sierra Club] and it's a similar situation where the club felt she betrayed them when she became California's secretary for Resources [in 1975]. And her view is that when she got in there--

Evans: She represented all the people.

Lage: --she was representing all the people. And she makes a convincing case for it, that environmentalists are somewhat naive to think that they can put their people in and expect them to do their bidding.

Evans: Well, I think that's a fair point. But it always is curious to me why don't the Republicans feel that way? Crowell is only representing one interest, and he's getting away with it and doing just fine. And why is it only Democrats that have to think like that and do that sort of thing? Why can't we get someone who will fight to protect the environment and really stand up for it?

Especially in Claire's case. I don't know all the details of what she did, but, you know, Huey Johnson [her successor] isn't doing that; Huey Johnson doesn't play that way. Huey Johnson is protecting the environment right there. So I think personality and style have a lot to do with it. Most of us felt Claire was way over her head in what she was doing.

Lage: Did you think Rupert was too, perhaps?

Evans: Oh, Rupert wasn't as much over his head as I heard Claire was because Rupert could do some-- For example, in the Boundary Waters issue we did go in to see Rupert and said, "Look, the Forest Service is screwing us. They're still making their bad recommendations on Boundary Waters." And Rupert got on the phone and said, "Get so and so over here right away and get him on the phone." And then he said, "I told you I want this done" and all like that. You know, he would come through; he would do that. Claire probably wouldn't have done that. So I think style and background and experience have something to do with it, too.

Surely Rupert was under pressure from the other side; surely Rupert wanted to be balanced; surely Rupert was probably getting some heat from other White House people, but basically Bergland let Rupert do whatever he wanted to. That's what secretaries of Agriculture do.

My perception--this is Doug's also, I think--is that Rupert was looking to his future. Rupert was looking to his future reputation in academe. He didn't want to be known as too much

Evans: of an environmentalist because he'd never get another job back in the university somewhere. This was before his Audubon thing came up. I've said all these things directly to Rupert, too, and we're good friends, and he's hired me now. I got him his job once, now he got me this job! You know, we're back and forth, sort of going around in a way.

Carter's Reorganization Effort

Evans: The one other aspect of dealing with the Carter administration that we ought to touch on would be the reorganization effort. This is the effort mostly by Andrus to have a Department of Natural Resources. It's an ancient proposal; it's something that has come up many times over the past years. Nixon tried it, or the Republicans tried it; in Johnson's day it was tried again.

Lage: Franklin Roosevelt tried it.

Evans: Roosevelt tried it. You know, why not have all the natural resources agencies together? Well, we environmentalists, at least in recent years, have never been excited about that idea at all. My philosophy is that we don't do well like that. When you have one big central agency it's much easier for the developers to take over and pass the word down to everybody to support the development end of things, and we can't have much input to it. It's better to have agencies competing with each other. Bad as the Forest Service is, it's better to have them competing with the Park Service from outside and have them both jousting for our favor sometimes.

Sometimes you can make them do a little bit better. If the Forest Service was in the Department of Interior we wouldn't be any better off, and we would lose our chance to have them compete. That's broadly put, but that's the basis of it. So it never was something that sounded efficient. There were lots of other arguments, and I can't remember them all right now.

The White House had a reorganization team, and all these hot-shots came in from around the country and consultants over at Office of Management and Budget. We had a number of meetings with them and talked about it, and I voiced our concerns then, and they listened. The final proposals that came out were modified somewhat in our way, but they were still to put Forest Service in Interior and put a lot of other things there. It didn't sound too good.

Evans: Well, once again there was a clash between, say, myself and whatever faction I represented inside the club and the pro-Carter people and the pro-Andrus people. "Here's this nice Cecil Andrus who's been working so hard for us on Alaska, and now he's asking his friends for help." And that's exactly the way Andrus played it. He called all his buddies in in the Sierra Club. Wouldn't call me, not only because of the other situation but just because he knew where I stood on this. He'd call up Ted Snyder and Bill Futrell and say, "Come on now, I need help from my friends, and I've been so good to you." And they--I will say this as staff--being volunteers and not part of the scene back here they were at first awed to get a call from the secretary of Interior; second, you know, all they know is what they read: "He's standing up to the oil interests on Alaska. What's the matter with you, Evans, for Christ's sake? Why can't you do something about that?"

So we had a big fight inside the Sierra Club about it. Mike was basically supporting me because Mike understood these things, I thought, too. And I remember we had a Sierra Club board meeting, it must have been in February of '79, and Andrus invited the whole Sierra Club board to meet with him. Didn't invite me, invited them.

I thought I better make this a point of personal privilege here; I may have to resign. You know, I couldn't let him go around me like that. So I got Mike to agree that I should come, too. So they had me come too, and Andrus did not like that at all because he thought he could sway the board. You know, here's all the naive board members, meet five times a year, and they're getting to go in and see the secretary of Interior and, "Wow, I'm so impressed, and he's such a nice guy, and there's a fire going in the fireplace, and we're sitting down and he's asking my opinions--"

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Evans: So here it all was, and I can see the scene right now. And my point to Mike was, "Well, if my board is going to override me on the basis of one conversation with the secretary of Interior, then I couldn't be effective. Plainly you ought to have another Washington representative." It became that apparent to me that I just couldn't function in an atmosphere like that.

So I got myself to go. And we all went there, and it was all friendly and smiles and the nice fireplace going and cozy in there and the big totem poles up there and the wood panels, and oh, what an atmosphere. And I thought, "Oh, boy, we're really going to get it now." He turned on all the charm, and it was so nice. I just kept my mouth shut. The only time I opened my mouth was to say a few complimentary things about Andrus. You know, it was my one chance to get in friendly. But he would have none of it, boy; he knew who the opponent was, and it was me.

Evans: And we'd had a lot of meetings with the colleagues too, and the colleagues were split up around here too, and I was clearly identified as one of the leaders of the opposition to it. Andrus asked for our support. So the matter was taken up after the board all left. It was really a big split, if I remember correctly, and it was all taken up. I just told my friends on the board, "It's me or him," really it had to be like that. Then I gave all the reasons: "This is not a personal thing, but it's just not in our interest to do this sort of thing."

Well, the board compromised and did probably a pretty wise thing finally. They said they agreed to pursue it some more, and they said, "We could agree to it under certain conditions." And I said, "Oh, I can agree to conditions. You know, if you let us have a say in so and so, and if we can guarantee that the Forest Service won't increase the allowable cut." There were several specific conditions that we had to have from all that.

And they appointed me and Ted Snyder as a negotiating team to go in and negotiate and see if we could get these conditions satisfied. And that was good. Ted was a strong supporter of the reorganization, and I was not, but we were friends, so that was all fine. It was a good experience for Ted, I think, too. I said, "I guarantee they won't give us an inch on this; they won't give us nothin'." And Ted said, "Ah no, you know, because we love him, and he knows we love him, and he's our friend. Of course, we'll get a lot of nice things out of him," and so on.

So sure enough we went over there, and it was all smiles and light. Not with Andrus, but with Chuck Parrish, who's his chief assistant. It was so sweet and so nice, and we danced all around it and smiled and complimented each other, and gradually Ted in his good lawyerlike way kind of laid out what we really wanted, and Parrish smiled and said, "Well, this is interesting. We'll sure take a look at it. Thank you so much, and I'm sure we can help out." But of course nothing ever came of it; we didn't get anything.

We had several meetings like that, back and forth. I kept saying, "Ted, this isn't going to come to anything," and sure enough it never did. We never got anything. So my perception is the whole thing petered out because it never got enough support anyhow.

Lage: It's so controversial anyway.

Evans: It was so controversial anyhow, and it just never came to anything, so it died out. And I'm sure Andrus wasn't happy with me about that either, but it just was not a good thing to do. Again,

Evans: someone had to bite the bullet. And that's the trouble with this job, the director of the Washington office has to bite the bullet usually, because they're the only ones who are here.

Lage: Well, there's another example of the staff-volunteer interaction.

Evans: Sure it is; that's right. That's right; it sure is. And once again it's not that the volunteers don't have the right instincts; it's just that they don't really understand the nuances. Reading the nuances of how these things are is as important as reading what the actual words are. Ted wrote me a letter once that said, "I learned from you, Brock, how to read the nuances and all that, and it was a good experience all the way through."

Endorsing Carter in 1980

Evans: Of course, the election was coming up; now we all realized we had to support him. I and some others took off time. The board voted to allow Mike and Joe Fontaine [club president in 1980] to endorse him. And Mike said, "Brock, that means you too because you're a part of the executive director's office," because I was the associate executive director. So I endorsed him too, and I campaigned and gave speeches for him, took time off and got paid by SCCOPE, if I remember correctly, to take that kind of time off and do that. So we did all support him then.

An interesting sequel to that is that there was a press conference held on October 8, 1980, in the Rose Garden, where all the environmental leaders, including Mike, endorsed President Carter. It didn't in fact mean much in terms of the election obviously; Carter still lost. But the Reagan people never forgot it.

Last week I got a call from a high official in the Reagan administration, one of the few people we're friendly with over there, and he said, "I hear you guys are going to get into electoral politics again." I said, "Well, we're certainly going to have to, you know, within the law, with these elections coming up." And he said, "I meant presidential politics. I think it would be a big mistake for you guys to get involved in presidential politics because you can't affect it that much anyhow. Remember the Rose Garden conference? That thing hurt you more than you people realize with us."

Evans: I said, "You mean we might have done better with you if we hadn't done that?" He said, "Oh yes, believe me, you would have done a lot better because it comes up in every conversation, people remember how you endorsed Carter; they think you're against us. You can't influence an election that much, it's silly for you to get involved. Besides that, if you lose, the administration coming into power might be tempted to look at your tax status and things like that." I said, "Oh boy, you mean like an enemies list, huh? Something like that?" He said, "Oh no, I didn't mean us, and don't ever quote me; I didn't mean our administration. I'm just sort of telling you what might happen in some future administration."

Well, that was a very interesting conversation. It's an example of the veiled threats that we get around here. I read that to mean that he and the Reagan administration are clearly alarmed about the green vote coming up. They clearly realized that they had lost--

Lage: The congressional vote?

Evans: Yes, the congressional vote and the presidential vote. And they're trying to pass the warning, "Better not come out against us or we'll get you a little bit later on," without saying it in so many words. My response to that is, "Go ahead and try to get us; we're going to get you." There was a lot more to the conversation. But, of course, we're not going to do anything illegal, and, of course, we're going to follow the law and all that.

But that's how things are done around here. They'll look at our tax returns, and they'll find some little tiny thing. They never get you on big things; they always get you on little things. So it's just an interesting little sequel to involvement in presidential politics and involvement with administrations. Our view is we have no choice.

Lage: But you do support the idea of getting more involved?

Evans: Oh yes, our view is we have no choice. If one person is clearly in our interests and the other person is clearly against us, then what are we to do if we're going to protect the environment but stand up for the right thing when the person who's for us is asking for our help? You can't say no. If you hope to have any impact later on, you can't say no, or you shouldn't say no because you won't have any impact later on. But we have to follow the law. We can't go against what the tax law permits us to do. So he, of course, was talking to me as an Audubon representative. Audubon can do far less than the Sierra Club can do. Audubon doesn't have the same tax status that the Sierra Club does.

Lage: They're still tax deductible?

Evans: Yes. So I talked to our lawyer about it last night, as a matter of fact, and he said, "Get me a memo on that, and we'll see what we can do."

Lage: It has a chilling effect.

Evans: Yes, it might, it might.

Evans's Political Views

Lage: How would you describe yourself politically? It sounds like you make all your political decisions on the environment. You said you came from a conservative Republican background. Now what's happened?

Evans: I don't really know. I think I'd clearly have to say that if what the Democratic party is doing today is what a Democrat is, then I'm a Democrat. I have to be. If I ever ran for political office, I'd have to run as a Democrat. If I ever ran for national political office, it would have to be as a Democrat.

Lage: What about social issues? Fiscal issues?

Evans: I think I'm fairly conservative on a lot of fiscal issues. I'm pretty liberal on social issues. I'm probably mildly hawkish on some foreign policy issues. I support strong defense, for example. I also support a nuclear freeze, just to name some things here. I don't see any dichotomy. It's quite sufficient to have enough weapons to destroy the U.S.S.R. twice over, but I just don't see why you've got to do it twenty-five times over; it doesn't make any sense to me, and I don't like the building up. I do have a military background. I was in the Marine Corps for example, so I do believe in a military-- I think this is a hard, nasty world and there are a lot of problems in it. I believe in a strong defense and a strong military and things like that. I believe in controlling crime. I believe in prison terms for criminals, and I don't believe in too much parole. Things like that.

Anyhow, I guess I'm a mixture of things. I'm registered as an Independent here in the voting rolls of the District of Columbia because of my position representing environmentalists here. But my social sentiments are mostly liberal Democratic, I guess. You know, I want to help the poor and I want more

Evans: federal spending to help those that can't help themselves. I believe in civil rights, and I certainly believe in ERA, and I'm for choice and right on down the line on those issues. It's such a mixture of things.

But I can't get my conservative central Ohio background out of my head. I grew up with the Russian threat, or the alleged Russian threat, and I grew up not wanting too much government spending. I still get scared when I drive down Independence Avenue and see all these big government buildings like so many rabbit warrens. And I don't like government power--

Lage: Rabbit warrens?

Evans: The government buildings on Independence Avenue all look like rabbit warrens. You know, these rows and rows of little cubicles and all these employees. But government power is the only power that can stand up to the corporate power. I fear corporate power much more than I fear government power.

Lage: What about issues of centralized power versus local power?

Evans: I believe that centralized power is inevitable, that the United States is sort of going into an imperial phase anyhow. We've had a republic for two hundred years, and I hope it continues. Certainly the forms will always continue, but the centralized idea I'm not that bothered by because I've seen from direct experience over all the years that again only federal power can stand up to corporate power. Corporate power is the greatest danger I think, or too much corporate power. State and local governments cannot stand up to it and do not want to, usually.

To put it baldly, it's much easier to buy off a state government or a local government, and that's what too often happens. The special industrial corporate interests can usually get their way in state legislatures and certainly in local and county governments; so can developers. That's why we lose so much at the local level. Only the federal government can do it better, at least from the standpoint of protecting the environment.

Every now and then you get a government like California where you can get a strong state government and can do good things, and I support that wherever it is. But the general rule in this country is that federal power has to have some oversight over the states because of this concern. So I guess I come down in favor of whoever can be toughest to protect the environment; whoever that is, I'm for.

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Sierra Club History Series

W. Lloyd Tupling

SIERRA CLUB WASHINGTON REPRESENTATIVE
1967-1973

With an Introduction by
Michael McCloskey

An Interview Conducted by
Ann Lage
1984

Underwritten by
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and the Sierra Club

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W. LLOYD TUPLING

1968

Joe Munroe, photographer

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1960s, the conservation movement was becoming popular and moving onto the offensive. Of all the groups at this time the Sierra Club, more than any, was focused on moving an ambitious agenda in Congress. To head its Washington, D.C., operation, it needed someone who understood Congress and the political potential of conservation as an issue.

It found exactly the right person in 1967 in Lloyd Tupling, whom we all called "Tup." Tup had just spent twelve years serving as the top staff person for the two Senators Neuberger from Oregon--first for Richard L. Neuberger and then Maurine, his wife, who succeeded him. Richard Neuberger was the first senator in the post-war period to make conservation a popular political issue. Indeed he popularized the issue in his national writings for over a decade before making it the centerpiece of his campaign for the Senate in 1954. He hammered away at the giveaway of natural resources to commercial interests, and Tup helped him continue to do this in the Senate, where he quickly became "Mr. Conservation."

Coming from this experience and from a state that ultimately came to be regarded as the heartland of "ecotopia," Tup was positioned to make unique contributions to the Sierra Club and the environmental movement. It was time for the Sierra Club to shift the concept of its office in the nation's capital. It had been largely a listening post during the five years that William Zimmerman ran the office. On his death, I realized we needed a more active office to organize our lobbying and move our agenda forward. Tup knew the "Hill" and saw that our offices needed to be on the "Hill." He knew how politicians thought and had ready access to many congressional offices. He brought a new level of political sophistication to the Sierra Club and planted the seeds that have ripened today when the club is regarded as the preeminent environmental lobbying group.

Under Tup, the club's Washington, D.C., office came to be the principal place for environmental lobbyists to gather and plan strategy. It was the focal point for organizing campaigns. When Earth Day came in 1970 and a new cadre of activists arrived in Washington, D.C., Tup came to be the father figure they looked to for guidance on how to operate there. Under his tutelage, they absorbed the spirit of the place. He played a pivotal role in the initiation rites of a new generation. With his background with the Neubergeres, he had legitimacy as a conservationist and then an environmentalist--but he understood the place and the political game. In his unassuming way, he eased the passage of a new generation of activists from mere enthusiasm to effectiveness. He taught a new breed how to play the game--how to become winners in Washington.

The prior generation was not used to winning, and some thought losing was the normal state of things. But during Tup's time, we began to win more often than we lost. Tup had a tough side to him. He was willing to put

detectives on Wally Hickel's tail and to work the phones half the night to line up the votes. He taught us how to get into a campaign mode and pull out all the stops. He taught us how to distinguish between mere gestures and indulgences and things that counted--and we started winning. We killed the Timber Supply Act and stopped the SST and passed the National Environmental Policy Act and got the national public interest lands provision in the Alaska Native Claims Act. We were on a roll, and it continued throughout the seventies.

Tup may have been the most important person in helping America's environmental movement get beyond rhetoric and get results. The results are now the vast body of American environmental law, which is the standard for the world. Tup made it possible.

Michael McCloskey
Sierra Club Executive Director

San Francisco, California
March 20, 1985

INTERVIEW HISTORY - W. Lloyd Tupling

W. Lloyd Tupling was interviewed for the Sierra Club oral history series on March 2, 1984, at the Sierra Club national headquarters in San Francisco. The club's executive director, Michael McCloskey, and its history committee had recommended an interview with Mr. Tupling to document the growth of the Sierra Club's presence in Washington, D.C., and to explore the development of its lobbying techniques and capabilities.

"Tup" was the club's Washington representative from 1967 to 1973. He came to the job as a Washington insider, having served as staff assistant to Senators Richard and Maurine Neuberger for twelve years. He brought to the club's Washington office his intimate knowledge of the Congress and his extensive contacts in government and media. Under Tup's leadership the Washington office mounted several major legislative campaigns, developing techniques and strategies later applied on a larger scale to the environmental campaigns of the years following his retirement. Perhaps of equal importance were his efforts to educate the club's San Francisco-based board of directors and other club leaders about the legislative scene in Washington and to develop support for the club's lobbying program.

Mr. Tupling's interview covers the final years of the Johnson administration and the first of Richard Nixon's. He comments on the club's relationship with key figures in these administrations and with congressional friends and foes in the Senate and House of Representatives. Insights on relationships with other environmental organizations and with a variety of interest groups complete a picture of a complex and evolving Sierra Club presence in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Tupling's interview is part of an ongoing series on the Sierra Club and the environmental movement. Other interviews in this series that document the club's national lobbying effort include those of David Brower, Brock Evans, Michael McCloskey, and Edgar Wayburn. Transcripts and tapes of all interviews in the series are available in The Bancroft Library.

Ann Lage
Interviewer/Editor

Berkeley, California
February 22, 1985

I DEVELOPING A DUAL INTEREST: POLITICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT
[Interview 1: March 2, 1984]##

Youth in the Pacific Northwest

Lage: This is an interview with Lloyd Tupling, the Washington representative for the club from late '67 till 1973. I thought we'd begin by just briefly taking a look at your background to see what might have led to your later interest in both conservation and politics, a dual interest. Could we go clear back to the boyhood experiences? Would there be an influence there?

Tupling: Well, yes. I think I was always interested in the outdoors. I remember when I was growing up that books by Ernest Thompson Seton really influenced me. I had all these fantasies about living in the woods and running around with the Indians out in the plains and all that. And I was an active Boy Scout. I think that was the beginning of my interest in the outdoors and nature.

Lage: I've heard other people mention Seton's being an influence also.
Now, you were born in Saskatoon?

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: Did you live there long?

Tupling: No. I was born in 1915, and my father and mother and my brother and sister came down from Canada to Portland, Oregon, in 1919. That's where I grew up.

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 52.

Lage: Were you in a city setting?

Tupling: Yes, right.

Lage: Was there much outdoor activity in the family then?

Tupling: There was because Portland was then still growing, and we lived on the outskirts, you know, very near to the mountains.

Lage: The whole setting there seems conducive to an interest in the out-of-doors.

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: Did you do any hiking?

Tupling: Oh yes, a good deal. Not far from where I lived, maybe a mile or so, there was a mountain called Rocky Butte. It was quite famous because it had a lot of caves in it. I used to go up and explore there when I was a youngster.

Lage: Do you think these kinds of experiences left an impact?

Tupling: Yes, I think so. And then later on, when I was in college--I went to the University of Oregon--in our senior year we had to write three theses. I wrote one on soil conservation, and I think that really brought my thinking more into focus about conservation.

Lage: Now, when would that have been?

Tupling: Well, that would have been 1939.

Lage: Soil conservation was certainly a concern at that time.

Tupling: Oh yes, because it was right after the Dust Bowl and the real problems that they had with soil erosion.

Lage: What was your field in college?

Tupling: Journalism.

Lage: Let me just get a couple more things on your family. How many siblings did you have?

Tupling: Well, I had an elder brother and an elder sister, and then I had a younger sister, who was born in Portland.

Lage: And your father's occupation?

Tupling: He was a salesman.

Lage: How about your mother? Did she--

Tupling: No, she was just a housewife. I shouldn't say "just."

Lage: That's a very dangerous statement these days.

Tupling: That's right. It dates me, too.

Lage: [laughing] I think we all slip up now and then.

Okay. Now, after you left Oregon-- We're treating this very briefly because I know our time is limited.

Tupling: I went to work for United Press in 1939, and I was in Salt Lake City at the bureau there for about, oh, I guess nine months or so, and then I was moved to Boise, Idaho, as a manager of the bureau there in 1940.

And there, because of the wonderful country, I was out hunting and fishing every weekend and camping out with my family. So I think that was another contributing factor to my interest in the out-of-doors.

Lage: Of course, a lot of people who grow up in those surroundings don't turn into conservationists themselves.

Tupling: This is a good point. Back in the thirties and in the forties-- as an outgrowth of Teddy Roosevelt's philosophy of multiple use-- a believer in multiple-use was a conservationist, and I think the definitions have changed. I can get into that a little later maybe when I talk about the National Hells Canyon Association.

If I told a Sierra Club member today, a young one, that I directed that protest group, they would think it had something to do with maintaining Hells Canyon as pristine, but it wasn't. What it was was a battle between the Idaho Power Company and developers of a high dam in Hells Canyon! And those of us in the association felt that the company was taking over public property without full utilization of the flow of the river, and that's why there was a difference of opinion. But it wouldn't be regarded as an environmental organization now; it would be regarded as a developer organization.

Power Struggle in Hells Canyon

Lage: It was a struggle between public power and private power?

Tupling: Yes. That was really the basic issue.

Lage: And you were on the side of the public power?

Tupling: Yes, right.

Lage: I see. How did you become the head of that association?

Tupling: During the war I was a war correspondent out in the Pacific, and after the war I came back to Idaho. I left United Press and bought a weekly paper in Boise, Idaho, and the issue developed while I was publisher. I became interested in it, you know, from a public policy point of view.

There was quite an intense feeling on the issue in the state of Idaho. As a matter of fact, it was a very hot political issue and actually a hot political issue in the whole Pacific Northwest because of the public power influence in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho at that time.

Anyway, the paper was doing quite well until I got interested in this fight with the power company. There was a noticeable drop-off in our advertising revenues because, you know, they started exerting pressure. There was no doubt about it. They pulled their ads, and banks pulled their ads and the railroad pulled their ads, and pretty soon we were in difficult straits. So it kind of got me irritated. [laughing]

Lage: Did it politicize you? Is that what you're saying?

Tupling: Well, I think so, yes, because it wasn't just doing it to me, it was doing it to many in the whole area. The company just felt they owned it, and it made me mad.

Lage: Yes, I see. So then what developed from that? Was this an issue that divided along party lines?

Tupling: Yes, it was because the Democrats supported public power. [Warren G.] Magnuson and [Henry] Jackson, senators in Washington, were strong public power people, and of course they were strong supporters of a high Hells Canyon Dam. And then there was Wayne Morse in Oregon. At the time that I first got involved in it, he was a Republican. Then he went independent, and then switched over to the Democrats, but that's later. Let's see, I don't want to get too far ahead.

Tupling: I left the paper, which was called the Idaho Pioneer Statewide, and went to Portland to open up the office for the National Hells Canyon Association. I had to raise money, and I was in charge of publicity and public relations and all that.

Lage: Now, that was a paid job?

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: It would have to be for that kind of commitment.

Tupling: Yes, basically it was a paid job.

We were fighting the Idaho Power Company before the Federal Power Commission to prevent them from getting licenses to develop this stretch of the river, and we strung it out for about, I think, a year and a half. It cost them millions of dollars, you know. We were just operating on a shoestring, on little contributions we could get, and some backing from public power coops.

One of the people who was very active in the association was a fellow from Baker, Oregon, Al Ullman. As a matter of fact, he and I worked very closely together on things. He decided to run for Congress. After about a year with the association in Portland, I left that job and went to work running Al Ullman's campaign. It was for second district congressman in Oregon, out in eastern Oregon.

Well, to make a long story short, we didn't win; we lost by something like 1800 votes, but the issue of Hells Canyon was really a major issue in the state. It was similar to any power issue, the way nuclear power would be now. And Dick Neuberger was running for senator against the sitting senator, and he had, as a Democrat, an outside chance. I also helped on his campaign.

Administrative Assistant to Senators Richard and Maurine Neuberger

Tupling: Ullman did not get elected, but Neuberger did, and so when Dick went to Washington he asked me to come with him as his press secretary. So I went back to Washington. That would be January of 1955.

Lage: And you were with him until '60 then?

Tupling: No. I was two years as his press secretary and then I was administrative assistant. But he died. He was just a young man. He was only about three years older than I was, so we were very close together. He died before his term ran out.

Lage: That first term?

Tupling: Yes, his first term. He died in '60, March of 1960. His term still had the time to run until the following January.

I wanted to get into this work as a senator's aide because it contributed to my background in this field. He was on the Senate Interior Committee and also on the Senate Public Works Committee. I was his staff person for issues involving the Corps of Engineers, the Department of Interior, Forest Service, and so forth. I got very deeply involved in issues at that time. And incidentally, he was one of the early sponsors with Hubert Humphrey of the Wilderness Act. As a matter of fact, before he died he was considered one of the spokesmen for conservation and preservation.

Lage: Now didn't his wife--

Tupling: Yes. Now, I was just going to get onto that. He died about two weeks before the deadline for filing in the Oregon primary, so Maurine had to make up her mind whether she was going to run or not, and she decided to run, and I helped persuade her.

Lage: Had she been active--

Tupling: Oh yes, she had been a member of the state legislature. He was a senator in the Oregon senate, and she was a representative in the Oregon house.

Lage: I see. So it wasn't as if she was just stepping in.

Tupling: No, she was no neophyte in politics.

Then I came out to Portland to run her campaign. That was the year that John Kennedy was running, the 1960 election. And she won. Her term actually started the day after the election because she ran for both the completion of Dick's expired term and then the whole six-year term. I left Oregon the day after the election with the papers to file with the secretary of the Senate, and then I went to work for her as administrative assistant.

Lage: And was your speciality the natural resources issues or were you the overall administrative assistant?

Tupling: I was overall administrative assistant. She went on the Commerce Committee and got involved in consumer things, which was natural for her because she'd been active in the Oregon legislature on consumer issues. It seems like ancient history, but when they sold margarine back in the old days, you know, they had to have a separate coloring capsule because the dairy lobby was so strong that stores couldn't sell colored margarine.

Lage: So it was white and mixed with red. I remember that.

Tupling: And you'd stir it up. Anyway, she got a bill through the legislature to permit them to sell colored margarine. [laughter]

Lage: So by the time you came to the Sierra Club you were very knowledgeable about Congress and contacts and--

Tupling: Well, yes. I think I had a special background that certainly helped me in my job because as a political activist I was quite well acquainted with the political apparatus, the way it worked. Also, in the twelve years in the Senate I had made a tremendous number of contacts in not only the agencies but also with other staff people, and with senators and congressmen, you know, so that really stood me in very good stead.

Lage: And you had run campaigns?

Tupling: Yes, I'd run campaigns, and also as a newspaper man I knew media. I knew quite a good deal about that, and I had good contacts with press and radio and television. So I was really in a good position.

Retirement and Reentry as Sierra Club Washington
Representative, 1967

Lage: Now, how did you happen to come over to the Sierra Club?

Tupling: Maurine didn't run for reelection. When her term ran out in January, I went over to Majorca, Spain, where I had a sailboat built. I'd been over the summer before and sailed over to Gibraltar, and I left my boat there to come back and wind up my affairs. Then I came back and sailed it across the ocean and up to where I lived, in Chesapeake Bay. I was just planning to take some time off. You know, I'd been so busy those previous years in the Senate. People think it's a bed of roses, these political jobs, but they're seven days a week, and it's hard work--constant activity, wheels-within-wheels kind of things. So I thought, "Well, I'll just take some time off," but I really got terribly bored just--

Lage: Just sailing around. [laughter]

Tupling: Just sailing!

So anyway, it must have been about August or September--
Oh, I've got to go back a little bit.

Lage: Okay. That's all right.

Tupling: Mike's wife, Maxine [McCloskey], worked in our office in Portland for a long time.

Lage: In the Neuberger office?

Tupling: The Neuberger office. She was our gal in the home state, who ran our office there. This was before I met Mike. And then I came back to Oregon in '64 to run the Johnson campaign, which was kind of a black mark on my record, I think. [laughter]

Lage: The Johnson campaign in Oregon?

Tupling: Yes, in Oregon. And Maxine, let's see, she was running--she was always running somebody's political campaign; I can't remember which one it was. But anyway, I got to know Mike then through Maxine, and, you know, we'd see each other once in a while.

Lage: And Mike was the Northwest rep at that time.

Tupling: Yes, that's right. He was working out of Eugene and Portland, I think; it was before they had the Seattle office.

After that Johnson campaign, I went back to Washington and finished out my job with Maurine. So anyway, after I'd gotten kind of tired of sailing, I got a call from Mike one day. There was a vacancy in the club's Washington office because Bill Zimmerman had died. Mike said he'd been over talking to Karl Onthank. I don't know whether you knew Karl, but he was dean of personnel at the University of Oregon. He was older than I was, but he was a good friend of mine when I was in college. So anyway, I kept in touch with him over the years, and he suggested my name to Mike as somebody that could fill the job.

So Mike came out, and we talked. He came out to see me where I lived, out on the bay, and I told him I was very much interested. He came back here and conferred with, I think, Ed Wayburn, who was then president of the club. Then they called me up and asked me to come back and meet with the board, and I came back, and that was my first board meeting. That would have been '67. Yes, it would have been the December meeting.

Lage: Did you discuss things with Dave Brower also? Or was it mainly Mike and Ed?

Tupling: Yes, I'd met Dave before. When I was working in the Neuberger office he'd come in there and see us because it was one of the few places he could find a friendly ear. [laughter] So I knew Dave, but not really too well.

Lage: Was there any discussion back and forth between either you and the board or you and Mike or Dave about--

Tupling: Actually it was really I think pretty much cut-and-dried by the time we met with them; I think they'd all made up their minds. They were really desperate. [laughter]

II THE SIERRA CLUB'S PRESENCE IN WASHINGTON, 1968-1969

Educating Club Leadership on National Legislative Issues

- Lage: Did the board or staff outline for you what they hoped to have happen with the Washington office? Was there any of that? Or were you telling them what could happen to it?
- Tupling: Well, no, actually they just asked me who I knew back in Washington, and I told them I knew these--
- Lage: Most everybody.
- Tupling: No, I didn't; I knew very few people very well, but those that I did know I knew very well, and they were people of some influence. So anyway, I don't recall that we talked about expansion of the office or anything like that, but I guess at the time Bill was ill--you know, when he was getting pretty weak and couldn't come to the office--Dave had hired Bob Waldrop, who had just graduated from college, a young fellow. He didn't really have a lot of background in Washington, but he had the right ideas in his head about conservation and about the environment. And he was running the office. We had an office about this size, maybe another little anteroom on it.
- Lage: That's small. We're in a small conference room now.
- Tupling: Yes. We were on the tenth floor, off Dupont Circle. Now Dupont Circle is about, God, I don't know how many miles from Capitol Hill, and there are no agencies within two miles of it, and you might just as well have the office in Alaska as have it where it was. So anyway, I did tell them that I thought we ought to get up closer to the Capitol Hill where we wouldn't have to spend all our time commuting between a congressman's office and our own downtown office. They said okay, and the then-controller-- What was his name?

Lage: Cliff Rudden?

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: He's still with the club.

Tupling: Well, he came out, and we found an office. It was a row house about two blocks from the Senate Office Building that had been converted into offices. A lawyer had one side, and we had the other side of this three-story townhouse. It was much more space than we needed, but it was the only place that was really feasible. So that's where we got started.

Bob and I moved in there, and I remember it was in January, and the temperature was about ten degrees, and the heat wasn't turned on. So for three days we sat in our overcoats. [laughing]

Lage: That's quite a christening.

Tupling: Yes. Until they got the heat turned on and our phones in.

Lage: Was there any talk about the IRS decision? You were starting just about the time the IRS revoked the club's tax deductibility.

Tupling: Oh, yes. That had happened just the year before. I think it was the year before.

Lage: It was in '67.

Tupling: Yes, it was early '67, when their wires crossed with Mo [Morris] Udall on the Grand Canyon.

Well, I know that there were a lot of people in the club that felt--I mean the directors felt--that it was going to be quite a financial blow, but I think in the long run it turned out to have the opposite effect because there's a certain amount of sympathy for somebody that gets kicked around by the government. [laughing]

Lage: But was there any restriction on your activity? Did anybody say, "Now, you have to be lobbying underground." or--

Tupling: Oh, no, no, because, see, they'd already lost their 501(c)(3) status, so that was a moot question. I just registered as a lobbyist, because in my experience with the lobbyists that I knew on the hill, as long as you've filled out the forms you could do anything you wanted. Nobody has ever been prosecuted for violating the lobbying act. [laughing] Because the congressmen are friendly with the lobbyists, for the most part, and also they depend on them for contributions, for campaign contributions, so they're not going to bite the hand that feeds them.

Lage: I want to ask a couple of questions. You mentioned you started writing the "Washington Report."

Tupling: Oh, yes. After that first board meeting that I came to, I realized that the board members were not really aware of the status of the legislation that they were discussing at the meeting. I mean they weren't up-to-date on it. You know, it's really no way to operate, to operate in the dark. So I didn't say anything. I thought, "Well, when I get back, I've got a Xerox, I'll just type up a one-page summary of what happened that week on different things that they're interested in and mail it off to the board members."

Lage: So they were working sort of in a vacuum.

Tupling: I think I sent it to Dave and Mike and, I don't know, maybe some of the other people, but not more than twenty copies because it was just a Xerox thing. But Mike saw it, and he thought it was a good idea to expand it. At that time we had offices in New York and a Northwest office in Seattle, and--

Lage: And a Southwest office?

Tupling: A Southwest office.

So because of the time difference it really worked out quite well. At noon on Friday on the TWX I'd file my report. So that would get in here at nine o'clock in the morning. And then the other offices would send whatever they had in, and then they just put it together. I guess it did come out four pages right at first.

Lage: This was the beginnings of the National News Report [a club publication of national environmental news]?

Tupling: The National News Report, yes. I don't know how long it took. I think it took about a year before we got everything lined up to go from that weekly thing I was sending out to the National News Report.

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Lage: The National News Report is interesting in terms of how that educated the leadership of the club.

Tupling: Right. And, then, of course, Mike decided-- By this time Dave was-- Was he gone?

Lage: He left in '69, mid-'69. It sounds as if most of your contact was with Mike. Is that right?

Tupling: Yes. By that time Mike moved down from the Northwest into the San Francisco office. They moved him down from here when they were about ready to nudge Dave out. [laughing] They moved Mike in as conservation director. So, under the operating procedures, I reported directly to Mike, and then Mike was supposed to see Dave. I did have direct contact with Dave because he used to come to Washington quite a good deal, and when he was up in New York on the book projects.

Impressions of Dave Brower

Lage: I want to talk a little bit about your impressions of Dave Brower. I don't know if this is the time, or when we're talking about some of the issues. I mean in testifying or in lobbying, on a personal basis, that kind of thing.

Tupling: Well, I'll just try to recall some things. [pauses to think] Dave has such a serenity about his position that it's kind of hard to argue with him. [laughter]

Lage: You mentioned on the questionnaire that you filled out that he would have been somebody who had influenced you in your views.

Tupling: Right. But I think it went back before I came with the club, because when he used to come into the Neuberger office he had such a sincerity about him and was so rational that it seemed to me like, you know, it makes sense.

Lage: You must have had an evolution of your views from the time when you were defending the public power in Hells Canyon--

Tupling: Right, yes.

Lage: --to all the issues you got involved in with the Sierra Club. I'm assuming that you were working in line with what you believed.

Tupling: Oh yes, yes, right, indeed, yes.

Lage: So there was an evolution in your view.

Tupling: Oh, certainly, yes.

Lage: Now, was that partly Neuberger's influence?

Tupling: Partly, yes. But mainly one of the things that happens to you when you work in the Congress is that you become skeptical, and then maybe a little cynical, about things. But skepticism is one of the influences, especially about the position of government, that government always knows what is right. You get very suspicious of that when you see money doled out for relatively worthless things, and not doing anybody any good except the recipients of the money. [laughing]

Lage: So this ties into conservation issues?

Tupling: Yes, well, I think indirectly because I felt that I was a believer in the so-called multiple-use theory of conservation, which, of course, when you analyze it, doesn't hold water because you can't both mine an area, use it for mining and use it for wilderness. That's just incompatible, completely incompatible. So I think it takes a while for people to get from that Teddy Roosevelt philosophy--which I had believed in as a younger person--of multiple use and the greatest good for the greatest number.

Lage: Sort of the Pinchot point of view.

Tupling: Yes, right, sure. As a matter of fact, Neuberger was a friend of Gifford Pinchot, and he used to quote him all the time, and I had to quote him all the time in speeches that I wrote. [laughing]

Okay, we were talking about Dave. Well, I don't know, I just admired him because he seemed to be imperturbable. You know, if people wouldn't agree with him it didn't upset him. He just felt that with a passage of time things would come around his way.

Also, I think he gave staff people a great deal of latitude. He wasn't always saying, "Report to me," or "No, that's not the right thing to do," or anything like that. Mike, I think, is somewhat the same. He gives the staff people a good deal of latitude, and I think that's why the club is successful because people become more creative that way.

The Club and the Hickel Confirmation Hearings

Lage: Let's move on to some of the 1968 issues and maybe in talking about those in particular some other things on Brower might come out.

Tupling: Well, this is one illustration of what I just said, I guess. When Nixon was elected president, he nominated all his cabinet officers. He nominated Wally Hickel, who was then governor of Alaska, to be secretary of Interior. Hickel was just unknown in Washington. I mean there was no way of knowing what his philosophy was about conservation.

So I got to thinking about it in the office; "This guy's coming here, and he's going to be in charge of this. We're going to have to deal with him--I'm going to have to deal with him--for four years and maybe longer, and I think we ought to know something more about him." So I called up Mike. This would have been in December, 1968.

And I said, "Mike, nobody knows anything about this guy. We ought to find out something about him. I've got a friend who's a retired operative for the Alcohol Tax Unit of the Treasury Department, a T-man. Why don't we send him up there and find out what he can find out about this guy."

Lage: A little detective work.

Tupling: Right.

Mike said, "Okay, I'll let you know," and he called Dave and talked to him. Dave called me, and I told him what I thought. I said, "We might be able to find something that would turn this thing around and maybe stop him," because it looked like he was pro-oil and against protecting national forests and everything else. So Dave said, "What do you think it'll cost?" And I said, "He'd go up for a hundred dollars a day and his expenses." He said, "Well, okay." He didn't ask how much it was going to be. And, of course, they had to fly him from Washington up to Anchorage and Fairbanks.

He got into Anchorage, and he started nosing around. He called me back when he started to turn up a few things that were inconsistent with what the press was claiming about Hickel's background. One of the things that Hickel had insisted on is that he had no ties with the oil industry.

This fellow went into the BLM record office in Anchorage and started going through the files on oil permits; you know, leasing permits and applications. Well, hell, he turned up about a dozen applications with Hickel's name on them, and Hickel had denied that he had anything to do with oil development.

Lage: You mean he was actually applying himself?

Tupling: Yes, he signed his name to them, sure. With partners, with other people; you know, maybe it'd be his brother or somebody like that, but he had actually done it. He may have forgotten it. I mean he may not have been lying. Maybe he just thought, "Well, I'll sign this paper with somebody." Anyway, that's not what the record was; the claim that he made was that he had no ties with oil development or anything like that.

Well, his confirmation hearing was coming up, and Drew Pearson was an old friend of mine, so I gave this to Drew Pearson. The morning of the hearing it came out in the Washington Post about these questionable oil dealings. You know how Drew Pearson could make the slightest blemish look like a flagrant violation of every law on the books. [laughter]

Anyway, this was enough to stop it. So all the other members of the cabinet got sworn in but Wally Hickel's was delayed for nearly a week, I think, while they investigated his background. Well, he finally made it, but there were some votes against him.

Now, I don't bring this up to raise any questions about Hickel, but it proved something, and that's what I wanted to do. I wanted to make Hickel conscious of the fact that he was dealing with some people that he couldn't push around.

Lage: It seemed to make an impression.

Tupling: Right. And as a matter of fact this last year I was listening to a program in Washington. People were commenting about how confirmation hearings can shape policies, and one of the guys said, "Well, I remember what happened to Wally Hickel." So it paid off. I don't know what it cost the club. I think it was around five thousand dollars, which they were not too happy about. [laughter] But it was a short-term investment for long-term gains.

Lage: Was there much discussion, do you remember, about whether they should oppose his nomination?

Tupling: No. Well, there were only three people involved in it. It was Mike and Dave and I, and Dave said, "Go ahead and do it." And they didn't consult the board.

Well, Dave didn't consult with the board everytime he decided to do something, and that's really what I think brought on the personality clash that resulted in his departure. I think basically that's what it was; he just didn't consult, that's all. [laughter]

Lage: Right. Not his style!

Tupling: Not his style.

The Ninetieth Congress, 1968

Lage: Shall we talk a little bit about the Ninetieth Congress in 1968, the group of really fantastic public lands issues that were passed. The redwoods, the North Cascades, the Grand Canyon, the trails system, the scenic rivers system, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund all came out of that 1968 session.

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: This may be dredging into the past, but in looking over the old Bulletins, I noticed that Mike had mentioned in an article that the relations between [Wayne] Aspinall and Jackson were very crucial, and I guess the Grand Canyon created a lot of ill feeling between them. Do you recall that kind of tension?

Tupling: Well, yes. I don't remember about really anything specific that I could put my finger on because I don't know what might have passed between Jackson and Aspinall in the way of conversation, but I think that in the nature of congressional politics that Jackson, who was an expert negotiator, would realize that he had some leverage. I don't think that there was anything that Jackson needed from Aspinall, like Aspinall needed Colorado River development. So I think that was a factor.

Many things happen with legislation and often there's nothing ever said about what the true facts are. [laughing] So I really don't know that Jackson would say, "You've got to do this or I'm going to do this." You know, they're smart enough to know what power the other person has so that it's never going to become an issue. It's kind of on ESP or something, on another level, unspoken. But everybody recognizes that Jackson could hold back any legislation he wanted; he could just sit on it in the Senate committee, and it would never get out, and that would kill it.

Lage: And so could Aspinall.

Tupling: And so could Aspinall. So there was a tug of war, but I think that the leverage was on Jackson's side.

- Lage: Now, you mentioned in one of your reports that a lot of the decisions on these issues we just mentioned were made behind the scenes. I think particularly you were describing the Grand Canyon and the conference committee between the Senate and the House, which decided the final bill behind closed doors.
- Tupling: Right, yes. Of course, that's why they have conference committees. You can really get down to the nitty-gritty, and the media is not there, and you don't have to answer in the press for what you say at these meetings. So that's when the deals are made.
- Lage: Well, did the club have any input at that stage? Were there staff people that you had contacts with there?
- Tupling: Oh sure, yes, sure. And also we had input with our proponents, whoever was on the committee. John Saylor, for one, who was the Republican minority leader on the House Interior Committee. And then we had other people, on the Democratic side, other than Aspinall, who were influential and would help us.

Lobbying against Grand Canyon Dams

- Lage: Let's just look at the Grand Canyon, to get more specific, and maybe I'm asking you to remember too many details. During the time when it was in conference committee and the wording was being written and the compromises being made, was there discussion back and forth with the club? Would the club or would you have input at that point in time?
- Tupling: Yes. I remember Jeff Ingram was our Southwest representative then, and Jeff came back to Washington. That's one thing: whenever these bills were up from the different areas, the rep from that area would come to Washington. For the Cascades, Brock [Evans] came, and when there'd be a Northeast issue, in New England or New York, why, Gary Soucie came down. I never regarded myself as an expert on any of these issues. A generalist is really what I was.

Jeff Ingram was the expert on the Grand Canyon. I never pretended that I had his knowledge. I was completely overwhelmed by these staff people that would come in, and they knew where every rock and hill was, and they knew what was behind every tree. [laughter] And I could never-- I knew I'd never be able to get to that degree of expertise, but then there were other things that I did know.

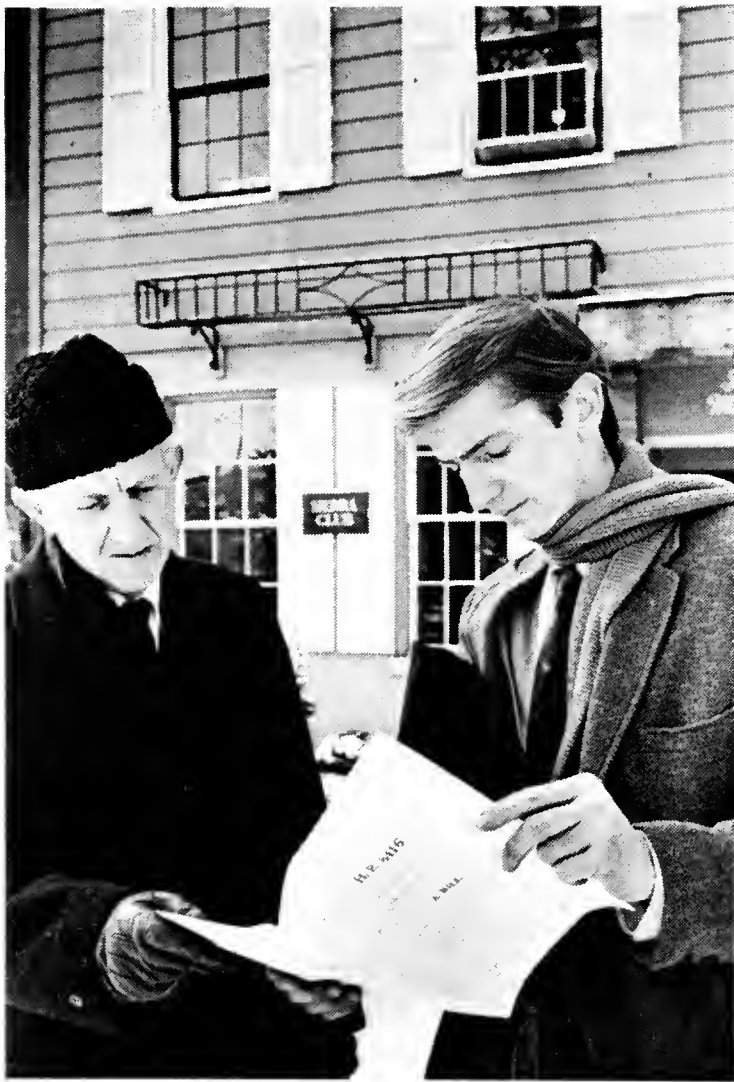
- Lage: You would handle the organizing of the campaign?
- Tupling: Well, we all contributed. I think the staff work in the club was really a miraculous thing because everybody was working for the same objective, and nobody was really trying to grab any glory for themselves; it was really a more selfless thing than in most organizations, where people are trying to do something for their ego.
- Lage: I'm just trying to recall some of the things that happened in the Grand Canyon campaign. There was a tremendous public pressure generated by the ads.
- Tupling: Yes, right.
- Lage: And then there was a lot of expert testimony that club volunteers made.
- Tupling: Yes, right. Now, I didn't organize the bringing in of the volunteers. This was done by, I suppose, Mike and Dave and Jeff Ingram. I just tried to work with the people on the committee and the staff to kind of keep abreast of what was actually going on. Because the hearing records become very voluminous and can also become very meaningless if the congressmen taking the testimony are really not listening to you. You may have stacks of paper, but they're just not hearing you, and they couldn't care less. They just know that it's the procedure, the process, and they have to put up with it just like you have to submit your testimony. [brief tape interruption]
- Lage: Okay, we were talking about the Grand Canyon and the role of testimony versus the public pressure versus the sort of behind-the-scenes work that you do keeping in touch with it.
- Tupling: Well, I guess you'd just have to say that it kind of all came together, you know, it all comes together.
- Lage: Did you have a sense of what made an impact with the ones who were actually making decisions? The senators and congressmen? Were they impressed by letters from constituents or--
- Tupling: Yes, the letters. I think that's a big factor, and the telephone calls that they got from Sierra Club members. The ads, I think, had a really big impact because they hadn't been utilized by interest groups such as the Sierra Club. That's usually the thing that's done by American Association of Railroads or other big-money lobby interests. I think that when those coupons started coming in--remember, the Grand Canyon ad had a coupon

Tupling: to send in money to the Sierra Club and another coupon to the senator and to the congressman--and I think it was a technique that really kind of startled them.

It also gave the impression that we had a tremendous amount of power, way beyond what we had, really. And that's what makes the difference; in these campaigns you've got to make people think that you've really got some muscle. And I think it gave the impression. I know it must have been excruciating for the board of directors because those ads were costing \$10-15,000 a crack, and we didn't have that much money around.

Lage: But they did bring in money also.

Tupling: Right, they brought in money. Also I would say that if there were any one thing that tilted the Grand Canyon fight, it was those ads more than anything else. Not that the input of the members and the staff and all didn't contribute, but I think it's just one of those things that makes the difference.



Left: Tupling and assistant Bob Waldrop in front of Sierra Club's Washington Office, 1968.

Below: Tupling and Congressman Morris Udall, 1968.

Joe Munroe, photographer



III POLITICIANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE JOHNSON
AND NIXON YEARS

Scoop Jackson and the Passage of NEPA

Lage: Did you work very closely with Senator Jackson at that time?

Tupling: Yes, I'd known him when I was on Neuberger's staff. The last year that Dick Neuberger was alive, he was ill, so there were a lot of committee meetings, and I'd have to go and represent him. So I got to know Scoop very well.

Lage: Do you have a sense of what was motivating him to support some strong environmental legislation?

Tupling: Oh, I think he really believed in it. Yes, he really believed in it. Actually, the National Environmental Policy Act--which you don't really hear too much about--I think he told his committee staff to put this bill together, and it really sneaked through Congress; there wasn't very much fanfare about NEPA before its passage.

Lage: I wanted to talk to you about that. Why don't we do it right now? You say it sneaked through Congress. That's kind of interesting.

Tupling: Yes. And even the people in the environmental movement didn't really-- You know, it's got a high-sounding title, and there are always things like that, creating a commission or something like that, going through Congress; they are frequently just a title, window dressing for nothing. But this act had some muscle to it.

Lage: Now, did Jackson--

Tupling: I'll tell you what he did.

Lage: Do you think he realized what it was going to--

Tupling: Oh, I think there's no doubt about it, because I think even after [laughing] the effects were being felt, he never retracted his support entirely for it. After it had been in effect he had to give in a little bit and have it revised, but he stopped it from being weakened. His staff counsel, on the Interior staff, was a fellow by the name of Bill Van Ness, and Bill, I think, actually wrote the act. He used to tell me about some of the things. We'd talk about what was going into it, and it was very obvious that if this got passed, requiring the government to face up to the realities of environmental impact, that it was going to turn things around.

Lage: And this wasn't something that the environmental groups brought to Jackson?

Tupling: No, no, no. No, not to my knowledge.

Lage: But you were aware of what was going on?

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: Did you lobby very actively for that?

Tupling: Well, no, I really didn't have to because you could see that the thing was going right through, and it just went right through.

Lage: It's probably better that you didn't, isn't it?

Tupling: Right, because then people would have started looking at it. If the timber interests, or the power interests, or any of the big interest groups ever had taken a careful look at that bill, they would have gone through the ceiling. But I guess they were pre-occupied with other things.

John Dingell's Practical Interest in the Environment

Lage: John Dingell was also active in that on the House side, wasn't he?

Tupling: Well, yes he was, and this leads me to another story. [laughing]

Lage: Okay, good.

Tupling: You probably have heard about the National Timber Supply Act? That was a big lumber industry move to take over the national forests. John Dingell got somewhat interested in fighting that

Tupling: bill, but not too much. John had been in Congress a long time, and I remember he used to say--his father had held his seat before him, and when his father died, why, John was elected to take it over--"My father always used to say, 'When you fight the king, don't kick him, kill him.'" And so he was always wary about getting into fights with a lobby as big as that.

I remember what a time we had with Dingell--Brock was there and Mike was there. We went out to lunch with John Dingell one day, and we convinced him that it would be possible to beat these guys [the timber industry]. And we did. We beat them in the House, and it was just an almost unbelievable lobbying disaster for the industry. That's when Dingell became more interested in environmental issues. Since then, he's swung back to the old ways, but at that time he could see where, politically, it was going to benefit him. He could see the tide; there was a rising tide of environmental influence, not only among the electorate but in Congress, and so he was riding the tide. He's a smart politician.

Lage: Where is he from?

Tupling: Michigan.

Lage: That's a good illustration, I think, to show how some congressmen take on certain issues.

Tupling: Sure, sure; they see the tides.

Lage: But you don't think that that was the case with Jackson?

Tupling: No, I don't think so, to that degree. Of course, environmental issues are good issues in the state of Washington. And his constituents got a nice North Cascades National Park and all that; you know, it benefited him.

Cordial Relations with Wayne Aspinall

Lage: To go back again to these early times, what about your relations with Aspinall? Did you have much contact with him?

Tupling: Yes, yes.

Lage: Did you see him pretty regularly?

Tupling: Yes, I think I could get in to see him whenever I wanted to, but I didn't want to go to the well too many times. I got along with him. You know, my expectations were not very high, so I think probably it came out pretty well. [laughing]

Lage: He would listen at least.

Tupling: Yes, he would listen. Yes, he'd always give us an ear, anyway.

I remember when they passed the redwoods bill out of the House Interior Committee, and the boundaries were a trunklike thing, it was just a little line on a map, a worm. I thanked him for it, and he was so startled I thought he was going to collapse [laughter], because we both knew it was a hoax as far as a park went. But anyway he threw us a bone, and we got a study okayed for possible additions.

Anyway, it may have helped later on because when the bill went to conference something had been added on the House side, and that gave leverage for further compromise. There had been a terrible struggle on that bill; it never was very satisfactory. But anyway, I did go over and thank him. And I think maybe it paid off in the long run. It didn't cost anything. The damage to the bill was already done.

The Johnson Administration##

Lage: Let's turn to an assessment or discussion of the Johnson administration and the conservation issues of the time, particularly the background that you mentioned in some of your reports, Vietnam and civil unrest and racial disturbances, fiscal problems. Yet in the midst of all this, which seemed to distract attention from conservation, an awful lot of good legislation got passed. Do you want to comment on that?

Tupling: Well, Congress, I think, frequently does the right thing for the wrong reason. I think there was a lot of resentment in Congress about the way things were going in Vietnam, and just kind of, as an antidote, they permitted all this good legislation to go through. [laughing] It doesn't seem like that's the way it ought to be, but I really have never been able to figure out why else they did it.

Lage: I think in early '68, one of your reports indicated that you thought this was going to be a tough year for conservation legislation because of all this distracting bad news.

Tupling: Well, I suppose maybe I was just having a period of depression or something, a letdown at the first of the year.

They were always difficult. I think there were a lot of difficult fights--they weren't easy--but we just happened to have the tide running with us.

Lage: What about Johnson's own support? Were you aware of much support for conservation issues?

Tupling: I think he was preoccupied with Vietnam so much that his direct support was not all that great, but he never stood in the way, so that was some great deal of help. And then, of course, his wife, Lady Bird, was supposed to be for beautification and all that--it was sort of her thing--so I think that helped. I had the general impression that the Johnson Administration was for beautification and protection of the environment.

Lage: Did your office have much involvement with the administration, with the executive branch, or were you mainly working with the Congress?

Tupling: Oh, no. As a matter of fact a great deal of time in the Washington office is absorbed with meetings with the agencies, the executive branch offices. I wouldn't say half of the time, but at least when I was there it was 40 percent of the time. You know, there are so many of them that are involved directly or indirectly with the environment that it's--

Lage: So was this true even in the Johnson administration? Did you have contact with [Stewart] Udall?

Tupling: Oh yes, sure, sure. Of course, we had an open door to Stu Udall. That was all very nice.

Lage: Had you known him previously also?

Tupling: Just barely. No, I didn't know him well. I knew his brother Mo quite well.

Lage: How did that work out on the Grand Canyon? He was pretty adamantly in opposition to the Sierra Club's stand.

Tupling: I never held anything against Mo Udall on the Grand Canyon because everybody is a captive of their constituency, and you've got to take that into consideration when you're talking to these people because they do have certain interests that they have to serve for their own political survival. And that was one of the things he had to do; he had to get water down to Arizona. And

- Tupling: I never blamed him for it. As long as you understand that, then you go on to something else after that's over, because you couldn't ask for a more receptive ear on some of the issues that were far away from Arizona. [laughing] You know, you get out to the redwoods or North Cascades, and, boy, he wanted to slice the whole thing, put the whole damn state in the park. [laughter]
- Lage: So that's part of the political know-how; knowing when you can push and when you can't.
- Tupling: Yes, right. And you have to realize that they do have things that they have to do if they're going to come back.

Phonetapping in the Nixon Years

- Lage: Well, how about the Nixon administration? You must have had quite a bit of contact with his appointees, and with Nixon.
- Tupling: Not with Nixon; I never had really anything much to do with him directly.
- Lage: We've talked about Hickel.
- Tupling: Yes, Hickel. It took a while before he warmed up to the Sierra Club because he knew what was going on. Actually, I think the FBI was tapping our phone during the time that Smith, the T-man, was up in Anchorage. I think finally they got onto what was going on.
- Lage: Oh, you do? Now, tell me more about that.
- Tupling: Well, maybe I'm paranoid, but it just seemed like they knew too much in Washington about what was going on with my man in Anchorage; it wasn't coincidence.
- Lage: How did you find out that they knew?
- Tupling: I never did really, except that the last time we talked on the phone I know it took a long time for the call to get through to the hotel switchboard.
- Lage: Now, would that be a standard--
- Tupling: Oh sure, it's standard.
- Lage: It's standard. That's not Nixon? That's a standard kind of response?

Tupling: Well, I don't know. The "plumbers" were everywhere then. To illustrate that I may not be paranoid [laughing]: When I left the place I lived in in Washington, when I was going out to my home on Chesapeake Bay, I was having the telephone changed over, and the telephone man went down there and he said, "I've never seen wiring like this. This is the goofiest wiring I've ever seen in my life." And I said, "I thought it was kind of funny because I could hear all these background noises." So I had no doubt that my house was tapped, but I think they did that during the Nixon administration. I think about half the town was on the tap.

Lage: You really think so?

Tupling: Oh yes, I think they were just outrageous. And God knows what's going on now! [laughter]

Lage: We're probably being picked up by remote control.

Tupling: I think this administration is falling into the same traps that Nixon built. But anyway.

Lage: Before Watergate, did you have the same impression of the Nixon administration?

Tupling: [pauses to think] You know, Hickel had to resign. He made the mistake of making public a letter he wrote to Nixon criticizing him about not doing enough for young people.

Lage: Was that the issue?

Tupling: Other things, too, but mainly that Nixon wasn't paying enough attention to views of young people. Hickel had to resign because he questioned the policies.

Dealing with Nixon's Appointees: Morton, Ruckelshaus, Quarles, and Train

Tupling: Then Rogers Morton came in, and of course he was a different kind of a person. When Morton came in, it changed the staff makeup. Morton brought a lot of good people in.

Then Bill Ruckelshaus was head of the Environmental Protection Agency, which was a newly-created one and one which we had helped create, so we had an ear there. Of course, I thought Bill Ruckelshaus was a really good person.

Lage: Was Morton a good person to work with also?

Tupling: Yes, he was. He'd preside over the meetings when we'd meet on Alaskan native claims--that was an issue at that time. Actually the staff people were doing the work, but he knew what was going on. I thought Rog Morton was a good man, yes.

Lage: I interviewed Ed Wayburn as well, and he said that Phil Berry, as club president, opposed Morton's appointment.

Tupling: Yes, but I think that was a carryover; we kind of got the Hickel syndrome. [laughter] You know, they were going to oppose everybody; nobody was good enough for the job. Maybe Ed Wayburn would have been good enough for it.

Lage: Wayburn didn't feel the club should oppose Morton.

Tupling: I know, I know there was some conflict there. His previous record was not distinguished, but it was not bad either. He'd been on the House Interior Committee, and he was not noted for any adverse things.

Lage: Would the kind of opposition that the club expressed then make it harder for you to have access?

Tupling: Oh no, because most people in politics put things on a professional level, really, and everybody realizes that everybody else has to make a living. You have to do certain things and say certain things and take certain positions, but nobody holds grudges that long, really. On some issues they're kind of irritated, you know, but it blows over, because you can't tell when you're going to need a friend sometime, and that person may be the one that's going to help you.

Lage: Also, Russell Train was involved in the Nixon administration.

Tupling: Yes, right. I should have mentioned that. Russ Train. And there was John Quarles, who was with Russ, and also John went over with Ruckelshaus when he took over EPA. Yes, getting Russ as undersecretary for Morton was really a major help to us.

Lage: So there were some good people, you felt, to work with?

Tupling: Oh yes, no doubt about that.

Lage: And you did have access?

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: Was it as much access as you'd had during the Johnson administration?

Tupling: Yes, I think so.

Lage: You sounded, in these reports again as if you didn't think too much of Nixon--not much leadership in conservation.

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: It's more gesture than action, you mentioned.

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: Is that still your evaluation overall for the Nixon administration in the field of the environment.

Tupling: I mean Nixon as president; I don't think you could say that about the total outcome of his administration.

Lage: But his own personal--

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: Did you get a sense of what he supported, as opposed to some of these staff people, who were good people?

Tupling: Well, I don't know. In the state of the union message there'd be a section on the environment; there wasn't anything very exciting in it, and that was his position.

Lage: And then on things like timber supply, he was pretty strong for increased cutting.

Tupling: Yes, that's right.

Lage: But Nixon did sign NEPA [National Environmental Protection Act]?

Tupling: Yes, I wonder if he read it.

Lage: [laughing] Nobody seems to have read it.

Tupling: No, that's what I say; it really went slipping through.

IV TWO KEY ISSUES, 1969-1971: NEPA AND THE SST

How the Courts and the Bureaucrats Shaped NEPA

Lage: Let's talk further about NEPA. You were saying that it slipped through Congress.

Tupling: Yes, and it wasn't until the National Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club, and--who was the third party in that suit? We filed suit against the Federal Power Commission, called the Calvert Cliffs case. I remember the months we spent debating whether to file the suit or not. The lawyers we had were not sure whether we could win it. The basis of the suit was to stop the issuance of the Calvert Cliffs license, for a nuclear power plant, to Baltimore Gas and Electric, on the basis of the new environmental impact study that had been made by the AEC.

That was the first time that NEPA had been taken into court, and we took it directly to the Court of Appeals because you can do that on an administrative matter; you don't have to go through the Federal District Court. Anyway, we appealed it directly.

The judge's decision was that Congress intended that administrative agencies give due regard to environmental impact when they issue a license for something of national significance. That, of course, started the whole change in the way the federal government had to deal with environmental matters. And the opinion was so strong it was never appealed by the Justice Department. So a bill slipped through, and then you had a favorable decision, and that was it.

Lage: Do you remember any of the discussions about the decision to file that court case?

Tupling: Well, it had never been interpreted in the courts before.

- Lage: Who were the people who decided? Was it the Sierra Club?
- Tupling: No, actually it was National Wildlife Federation, which, when you think of it, seems to be taking on a real gut decision like this. They're usually kind of in the wings on things--they can be a lot of help, but they don't really take a lead role--but they were right up in front on this. I was trying to think of who the third party was in the case. Well, it'd be in the report.
- Lage: Did they ask your advice in terms of what impact it might have on the Congress? Because that would always be something to consider, I would think; you know, would a court decision lead to problems with congressional override of NEPA?
- Tupling: Oh no, we never really got into that because I think that was too far in the future. Actually, I never thought that NEPA was quite so explicit about how thick the reports ought to be. Once the bureaucrats got ahold of it at the various agencies they could see where they could build a whole empire out of having endless research done on every little thing that came along. I think that the bureaucrats blew it all out of proportion, beyond what anybody had intended it to be, and that's why the reaction occurred. It was almost like the agencies overdid their job so that they would provoke a reaction to NEPA.
- Lage: Oh, that's interesting. Not just to give them more work to do?
- Tupling: No, to get the people on the other side active to turn it off, to cut it back. Because it was so overdone; I don't think Congress had that intention at all.
- Lage: And then there were attempts to weaken it.
- Tupling: Oh yes, afterwards, yes--just really to tear it apart. But in Washington, it created a whole industry. There were all kinds of biologists and agronomists and everything flocking into Washington into private consulting firms, because everybody had to have a big, fat report if they were going to do anything; otherwise, we'd take them to court and get it stopped.

The SST Campaign: A Coalition Effort

- Lage: While we're talking about environmental issues during Nixon's administration, '69 to '73, let's discuss the SST [supersonic transport] battle.

Tupling: One of our great heroes, Scoop Jackson, was a prime supporter of the SST because Boeing was building it. It was kind of interesting because there were a lot of things that we wanted to get out of Jackson's committee and have Jackson do for us. I can remember going into his office, and he'd say to me, "Tup, can't you get your people to kind of pull off on this SST thing?" And I said, "Listen, Scoop, you wouldn't want me to do my job in a half-hearted manner, would you?" And so he'd kind of laugh, and that'd be the end of it. I think that's an illustration of what actually goes on.

He never held it against me. As a matter of fact, after we got it stopped, why, we were on just as good a basis as ever; he never held any hard feelings about it. He may have felt that it was wrong in his heart. [laughing]

Lage: The SST campaign seems like more of a coalition effort.

Tupling: Yes, that's right. One of the things that developed--and I don't know whether that was the first time or not--was that we tried to pull together organizations with a community of interest, whether they were within the accepted conservation movement or outside. You've got to get the votes where you can. I always felt that if you could find some part of an issue where you could maybe get the AFL-CIO on your side, you're much better off than without them. If you could get them just to put in a good word, they have a lot of political muscle.

Lage: And were they on your side in this issue?

Tupling: Not on this issue, no, they weren't. They were very definitely on the other side.

Lage: You had consumer groups.

Tupling: Yes, we had consumer groups.

Lage: Which labor groups might have been supporting you?

Tupling: I can't remember any. A good friend of mine, George Taylor, was a lobbyist for AFL-CIO, and I don't recall that he ever gave us any help on that, not on that.

Lage: Do you recall how this was coordinated? It was coordinated out of the Washington office?

Tupling: Right. We had an office down on the lower floor of a three-story building, a row house. Larry Moss was then president of the Sierra Club, and the club decided they were going to make

Tupling: this a major issue. So Larry hired a young woman by the name of Joyce Teitz to be the coordinator of the activity. We had a meeting, actually it was a dinner meeting, where we got representatives of different organizations to gather and talk about putting this coalition against the SST together.

It so happened there was a gentleman in Baltimore who had inherited some money in the form of tax-free bonds, and he himself was very much interested in stopping the SST. For what reason I don't know--not for financial reasons, but for environmental reasons, and also because he thought it was a make-work project. He agreed to put up a substantial sum of money to start the coalition going, and that's what got it off the ground, because it always takes a little money.

Lage: We've interviewed George Alderson, and he particularly talks about working on this campaign. I guess he was with Friends of the Earth.

Tupling: Yes, he was.

Lage: And he gives you a lot of credit for teaching these people.

Tupling: George should get a lot of credit too. As a matter of fact George was, I think, more in our office than he was in the Friends office during that time. He was the greatest Xerox operator I ever saw. He was always stuffing things in the Xerox and mailing them out to people all over creation.

Lage: Well, he apparently feels he got quite an education in political lobbying from you.

Tupling: Oh, really? Well, good.

Lage: But Joyce--

Tupling: Joyce had had no experience whatsoever.

Lage: Oh, she hadn't?

Tupling: Not in lobbying. But, you know, she's a very bright young woman, and she got information out to people, to the different organizations; she kept in constant contact with people and let them know what was going on.

Then, I really don't know whose idea it was--it may have been hers or it may have been a fellow by the name of George Eades, who was an economist--to send out a questionnaire to, I think, fifteen or seventeen leading economists--you know,

Tupling: Paul Samuelson and a whole bunch of top-bracket economic advisors--and ask them questions about the SST. And, of course, it came back about fifteen-to-one against it. Joyce got that into the Wall Street Journal, a top story, page one. And I think that was the turning point.

Lage: There were so many ways to argue against it.

Tupling: Yes. Then there was a reason. Because they were saying that we needed it for the industry, you need it for jobs, you need it for the economy, and the economists blew that argument all apart, so that there wasn't really much for it except the aerospace industry wanted to keep the flow of federal money coming into this project.

Lage: But that was a battle where you really faced a lot of strong opposition.

Tupling: Oh yes. The administration was all out for it. It was really tough. Oh, that was some fight. Yes, everybody was in on it. Jonathan Ela was down.

Lage: He was one of the Sierra Club's regional representatives?

Tupling: Yes, from Michigan. He came in. Brock came in. Everybody. All the staff people were in Washington for, oh God, weeks.

Lage: How was that all coordinated, then, to have them in the right place at the right time?

Tupling: We had a meeting every day, every afternoon at, I think, four o'clock we'd meet someplace; either in the club, in our office there, or at a nearby hotel where they had a meeting room that we could get. And we'd just go down checking the names off the list of congressmen or senators, whichever side we were working on. Whoever had been assigned to work on that person or whatever would report in what they had done that day. So that's how it was done. It was really day-to-day, just picking them off.

Lage: Did you have volunteers coming in also?

Tupling: Oh yes.

Lage: Was this a more sophisticated, a more extensive campaign than you'd had before?

Tupling: I think it was probably more sophisticated. The first time I remember that we really ran this kind of a joint effort with other organizations, a coalition, was on the Timber Supply Act.

Tupling: It was so successful there that it became apparent that was the modus operandi we should use--to get coalitions together and pool our resources. Because actually, at that time, how many did we have in Washington?

Linda Billings was in the office, and Bob Waldrop was there. And that was about it: Linda, Bob, myself, and a lady, a retired Interior Department secretary about seventy years old, who was our secretary. [laughing]

It was a small office. So we had to bring people in on something like this. At the same time the other organizations didn't have many bodies either. Even though they had their headquarters in Washington, they didn't have that many people to devote to it.

Lage: So this pooling of the effort--

Tupling: The effort really paid off, yes, because then you get twenty-five people instead of a couple of people working. As long as the information was pooled, you had a pretty good idea of where you stood.

Lage: That has an impact on Congress, I'm gathering.

Tupling: Oh yes, there's no doubt about that, because you can see things starting to roll and people realize that this is an important issue because things are kind of boiling around, and they start reading about it in the paper.

Media Coverage for the Environment

Tupling: That was one of the things I always tried to do--to keep in close touch with my friends in the press galleries. For instance, on the radio they're searching for something every minute of the day. They've got to have something to freshen up the story with, and I spent a good deal of my time working with the media.

Lage: Now, that's something we haven't really talked about as a very important component of the job--getting into the media.

Tupling: Well, I suppose we ought to do that. I don't really know how to explain that part of it, except that I did have contacts that I developed over the years in the press galleries in the Neuberger office. And then, having been in newspaper work myself, I knew how it works.

Lage: And the media was pretty receptive?

Tupling: Oh sure, yes. As a matter of fact, some of them were very receptive; you know, they'd call me and really want to get something, get a new story. Because the environmental movement was kind of becoming a-- You know, they invented the word ecology. That was the time when ecology came into its own.

Lage: Even the word environmental was new. I noticed when I was looking up in the Bulletins covering your years as Washington rep that this was the period when conservation was dropped.

Tupling: Right, yes.

Lage: Was that a conscious thing that you know of?

Tupling: It was with me.

Success Mobilizes the Special Interests##

Lage: I noticed a comment in the "Washington Report" about the broadened scope of the club's concerns. That's another major trend I think we're seeing at that time, where instead of staying with traditional issues--

Tupling: Yes, right, we got out of California.

Lage: Out of California and out of park-related issues or land-use-related issues alone.

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: And it brought us into conflict with many more industries, which you commented on.

Tupling: Yes, right. First there was the defeat of the National Timber Supply Act and then the decision on NEPA--the favorable court decision which would require environmental impact statements-- and then the defeat of the SST. Then I think the big money started to look around at their lobbying, and they said, "Listen, we're paying these guys all this money and they're not delivering. We better find out what's going on." And that's when they started to do something to turn things around, to-- How should I phrase it? Well, they did try to dismember NEPA. Then I think the opposition really started to pay more attention. They'd had things their way for so long that they were getting sloppy; that's what had happened to them.

Lage: So there was a period of sloppiness and that's when they--

Tupling: That's right, and that's when they lost. They'd just been too used to winning everything, you know, getting their own way. Then they got stopped a couple or three times, and they don't like to waste money just like everybody else, so somebody was called to account for it. It may not have been quite as overt as that, where somebody sat down and said, "Well, listen, we've got to stop these environmentalists," but you could see where they were really much more concerned than they had been before about our existence.

Lage: Now, how could you see that? What kind of evidence?

Tupling: [pauses to think] I'm trying to think of a specific illustration. I think probably a good one would be the fact that Weyerhaeuser, for instance, did set up an environmental office within their lobbying organization. And I remember after we defeated the National Timber Supply Act, they curried our favor. I remember one time that we went up before a committee of Congress as a group to try and get a national forest program together, and I testified. I was sitting at this table. There were timber people on both sides. Of course, we made the point that what we wanted was different from what they wanted, but they were really trying to get our help.

Lage: Trying to sort of co-opt the environmental movement?

Tupling: Well, yes, and butter you up; butter you up, really, is more what it was.

Lage: That's an interesting way to go about it. Did you have the sense at that time that the club might have been taking on more than they could really handle, that their range of concern was getting too broad? Or was that not a problem with you? Could you keep up with it all in the Washington office?

Tupling: No. Then, of course, there started to be more people coming in. We moved to another building. We had to move to another building; there wasn't enough room for everybody.

Lage: So you got more staff support?

Tupling: More staff support, yes.

Lage: Was funding a problem in getting enough staff support?

Tupling: Apparently not.

- Lage: You didn't have the sense that you had to fight too hard to get it?
- Tupling: No, because memberships were coming in, you know, and I guess that gave the board a feeling that things were working out all right.
- Lage: But we always have these fiscal crises in the Sierra Club.
- Tupling: Oh yes, I know, yes.
- Lage: There weren't fiscal crises during '71?
- Tupling: Well, I think there were, but actually because of this pooling of resources, I think that it did reduce the club's outlay.
- Lage: I see. By working with other groups.
- Tupling: Yes, right. It was a cost sharing, but not, you know, sending checks back and forth or anything like that. You'd have office people that were doing the typing and all that, and it made a difference. You didn't have to hire additional people; that's what I mean.
- Lage: By the time you left, do you remember how large your staff was?
- Tupling: [counts them under his breath] I guess just six, here in Washington.
- Lage: Six people in Washington?
- Tupling: Yes.
- Lage: Was Peter Borrelli in Washington?
- Tupling: Yes, Peter was.
- Lage: I thought he was eastern representative.
- Tupling: Well, he was in Washington. Yes, he came down from New York.
- Lage: So he was part of the Washington office?
- Tupling: Yes.
- And then Doug Scott was in so much, you couldn't tell whether he was a regular member of the staff or not.
- Lage: He was with the Wilderness Society then?

Tupling: Yes, but he spent so much of his time with us, it seemed like he was a member of our staff. [laughing]

Lage: So it was quite a crossover, then?

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: Were there any of these interinstitutional ego trips, or were people pretty well working for the common cause? Did you have a sense everyone wanted to get their share of the glory?

Tupling: Oh, no, I think there was enough to go around, but there were some people that were a little more difficult than others, I guess. [laughter]

Lage: Now, let's see, where are we?

Tupling: We were talking about the SST, and the aftermath of the SST, where I always felt that that's when the special interests tried to reverse the environmental trend, and I think that's been going on ever since, really, I left at the right time. I got out when we were ahead, [laughter] before the roof fell in.

Lage: You feel that now there's an even more defensive posture, ever since then?

Tupling: Oh yes, right.

V ENVIRONMENTAL LOBBYING OF THE NINETY-SECOND CONGRESS

Behind-the-Scenes Influence on the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

Lage: Why don't we look at some of the things passed by the Ninety-second Congress [1971-1972]? There's such a range. This is what's interesting, and Mike McCloskey has commented on this also, that so much was passed even though we had the sense we were on the defensive, so much major legislation, that its magnitude is almost overlooked.

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: And in comparison to the battles of, say, '68, which we remember so well, these are very extensive. The pesticides control [Federal Environmental Pesticides Control Act], Water Pollution Control Act, a lot of wilderness bills, the Coastal Zone [and Estuarine] Management Act.

Tupling: They just went through so fast. This is one [pointing]. This Oregon Dune National Recreation Area was a bill that I started to work on with Neuberger, oh, fifteen years before, and it finally got passed.

Lage: So that was a long time in coming.

Tupling: Yes, right. And by that time I didn't really have too much to do with it because it was on its way.

Lage: And then the various "parks to the people" that Nixon pushed. The Gateway National Recreation Area and Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Tupling: Yes.

- Lage: What about the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act? Now, was that something that the conservationists took a role in, an active role?
- Tupling: Yes. As a matter of fact, the Alaska Native Claims Act was the forerunner for the study of the areas in Alaska that were to be set aside as wild parks and additional such--
- Lage: Right, what later was the Alaska National Interest Lands Act.
- Tupling: In the Alaska Native Claims Act, we tried to get the House to include a section, which Doug Scott named the National Public Interests Lands Study. Well, we lost it; I think it was on a record vote on the floor of the House. So anyway, the thing was coming up in the Senate. Let's see, who was our man up in Alaska then?
- Lage: Jack Hession?
- Tupling: Jack Hession, yes. Jack was down from Anchorage, and Doug was over-- Was Doug working for us or was he working for the Wilderness Society? [laughing]
- Lage: I can't remember when he came over.
- Tupling: I think he was still with the Wilderness Society, yes. But anyway, he was working on that, and the bill was coming up in the Senate. We tried to get the committee to include this section, what eventually became Section 17(d)(2), for the study, but we couldn't get the committee to take it.

So the bill was coming up on the floor. I remember Doug and I and Jack, it was about seven o'clock at night, and we'd been knocking on doors all day long trying to get somebody to give us an ear on this amendment, to try and do something, get an amendment in on the bill, because it was coming up the next morning on final passage.

I remember we went up--it was about seven o'clock--and we went into the Interior Committee staff office, and Bill Van Ness was sitting there. We showed the text of the amendment to Bill and asked him what he thought, and he said, "Well, it's very good, and it would certainly do you a lot of good, wouldn't it?" And he said, "There's only one man that can handle that for you, and you'll have to find that out for yourself," because he was a staff man and wasn't able to direct us. But anyway, I knew what he meant. I knew that he meant Alan Bible, who was chairman of the Parks Subcommittee.

Tupling: So I went down. I had known Jack Carpenter, Bible's administrative assistant, for years, and I asked him to line up an appointment with Alan the next morning. George Marshall was in town because this was a crucial time in trying to get this amendment in; if the bill had passed without it, I don't know what would have happened. You'd never have gotten another separate bill through for study of those Alaska lands; it never would have gotten through.

So anyway, George was in town, and we went in in the morning. And, let's see, who else was there? I don't remember whether [Stewart] Brandborg was there from the Wilderness Society or not. But I know that Doug was there. We went in and talked to Bible and told him what we wanted to have done. He said, "Do you have something I can take?" And I said, "Yes, I've got this piece of paper here, and Doug Scott will explain it to you." [laughing] So he took it, and he said, "Okay, fine. Sure, I'll try and get it through."

Lage: So he was receptive where others were not.

Tupling: Yes, he was. I don't think he really had given it too much thought, but he could see where the national park system would be expanded fourfold, or something, overnight if this thing ever came to fruition in another ten years or so after the study. So he understood the importance of it.

Of course, we were worried about what the Alaska senators were going to do when this thing got out on the floor. But it's another illustration of-- You see, they needed more than Bible needed. The Alaskans had to get the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act through without having it chopped up too much. So they needed Bible's help on it; they needed his backing.

Did you know Jack Hession or ever meet him?

Lage: No.

Tupling: He was the kind that always was so intense about everything. You know, he was afraid that it was going to fall apart, and I remember him just chewing his fingernails almost. We went over to the floor of the Senate to call Alan Bible off, to see how things were coming along. We sent in a card and asked him to come out, and he came out and said, "Things are going to be all right. I don't think we're going to have any trouble." And that was true; that's what happened. He called the bill up, and it passed on a voice vote.

Tupling: Actually, Ted Stevens and Mike Gravel [Alaskan senators], if I recall the record, had no opposition to the idea of the study. Of course, they'd like to have it stopped before the study got anywhere, but they didn't. And that stuck all the way; it stuck through the conference. We didn't have enough votes on the floor to get it included in the Alaska Native Claims Bill over in the House, but we had enough votes in the conference committee to get it to stick there. So they just adopted the Senate amendment when it went to conference, and that's what made it go, but it was touch and go.

Lage: Now, whose idea was it to put forth this amendment, do you remember that? Who sort of planned that strategy to tack this amendment onto the bill?

Tupling: Oh, I don't really remember, but I think Doug Scott was a prime mover in it. Maybe Mike. I don't know, but it seemed like a good vehicle. And maybe Ed Wayburn. I'm hazy about the exact origin of that strategy, but it was a good strategy. It worked.

Lage: Would Jackson have had a role in that also?

Tupling: I don't think so, no. You mean in the formulation of the idea?

Lage: Or in helping it get passed.

Tupling: Well, he didn't stop it.

Lage: So he wasn't crucial.

Tupling: No. He didn't say anything about it. As a matter of fact, if you look in the Congressional Record, this section only takes up three or four paragraphs in the whole thing. There was voluminous debate on the bill, but this part went through without any debate.

Lage: That's interesting, both that and NEPA just sneaking through.

Tupling: Yes.

Wilderness, Water, Pesticides: Joint Efforts

Lage: Now, do you remember the eastern wilderness campaign? That's another sort of controversial--

- Tupling: Well, I do, but I didn't really have so much to do with that as Pete Borrelli did. I could probably remember some things about it.
- Lage: I'm just thinking of the conflict over the interpretation of what is wilderness.
- Tupling: I do remember that because I think the first eastern wilderness area that was passed was a little, wee, tiny one down in New Jersey. I remember I testified on the bill, and when one of the members of the committee, who was an opponent, read the report on the bill, he said, "There are trails in here; they've got a boardwalk here and a boardwalk on this thing and that thing." And he said, "Do you think this is wilderness?" And I said, "Well, I think wilderness is in the eye of the beholder." [laughter] And that's about the only justification you could have for some of them, really, you know, because they've been trampled on quite a bit. But they're coming back, and if you let them go maybe--
- Lage: They may get back to be wilderness some day.
- Tupling: They may get back, yes.
- Lage: Any recollections of the Water Pollution Control Act? Who might have been a major mover in that and what role might the club have had?
- Tupling: Actually, the Izaak Walton League really had more of a role than we did in it; I know we were kind of me-tooing it. In the Izaak Walton League, I am trying to think of the name of their Washington representative who had made his whole life work getting this thing on the books. Yes, Joe Penfold.
- Lage: So it was something we would have supported, but not have had the primary responsibility for.
- Tupling: Yes, right, we were not a prime mover in it.
- Lage: Well, any others here that we should comment on?
- Tupling: I think the Pesticide Control Act was one that we had more to do with than anybody else. I think Linda Billings had a great deal to do with that because I know that was her area.

That's what we tried to do in the office--to divide these issues up where knowledgeable people would have charge of that area, and the rest of the people would help out when they could,

Tupling: but it wasn't a joint effort until it got down to a final vote or something like that. So Linda rode herd on that, and Peter Borrelli on the eastern wilderness.

Then when the other regional issues would come up, like-- Well, Jack Hession was in from Alaska for Alaska Native Claims. Then Brock would be down on numerous Northwest issues. And then who did we get on other things, like from the South? He used to come in. What was his name? Bill--

Lage: Bill Futrell?

Tupling: Yes. Bill used to come up for those.

Lage: How did this relationship work when the volunteers would come in? Here we had Bill Futrell, who was a volunteer, and I'm sure Ed Wayburn came in on Alaska issues.

Tupling: Oh yes, a lot of times.

Lage: Was that a smooth relationship?

Tupling: Well, I think so, yes.

Lage: Were they pretty knowledgeable about Washington politics?

Tupling: Oh yes, I think they were sophisticated people, especially Ed Wayburn; he really knew what was going on.

Volunteer-Staff Balance and the Club's Grass-Roots Strength

Tupling: Another thing that I think should be emphasized is that the strength of the club in its legislative program really derived from the membership, and we just had staff people to implement that drive.

Lage: Now, when you say "derived from the membership," are you thinking of--

Tupling: Well, I'm thinking about the origin of the positions, the policy questions. They usually grow out of board action. The board acts on something and that becomes policy. That's why I think that the Sierra Club is a much more potent organization than others in this field because it's not staff dominated; it still comes from the grass roots, and that's where the strength is, I think.

- Lage: Did you see this in Washington in terms of getting letters or--
- Tupling: And more than that too. As a matter of fact, I remember when the SST vote was coming up the next day, and I said, "Well, I'm going to get one vote," I got on the phone and called our people down in Georgia, and I said, "You've got to get phone calls coming in to the senator."
- Lage: So this kind of started a network of people to call on for support?
- Tupling: Yes, right.
- Lage: And for pressure.
- Tupling: Yes, right. And, of course, now it's become so much more sophisticated. I was talking to John McComb about it recently, and how they've got everything on computer. Well, we didn't have that then, but we did have an active membership. And I don't know whether they still do it or not, but when they had board meetings the staff members would come in, and then of course the council would meet at the same time, and we had that interchange. And they knew who we were, and we knew who they were, so it wasn't like a sterile relationship; it was more on personal contact.
- Lage: Did you have contact with the Sierra Club Council too, when you'd come into meetings?
- Tupling: Oh sure, yes, because they'd be around, and we'd talk to them.
- Lage: On an informal basis?
- Tupling: On an informal basis. We weren't included in their deliberations or anything, but we'd talk together.
- Lage: Now, since then they've started volunteer training in Washington there are more formal interchanges as well.
- Tupling: Actually, the Wilderness Society had started that before we did. Yes, they used to have these training sessions, and we used to go over and meet with their volunteers. You could hardly tell the difference between-- A lot of Wilderness Society people were also Sierra Club people; they were members of both organizations.
- But I want to emphasize the importance of that, because on a close vote, you know, two votes--
- Lage: That helps, doesn't it?

What about questions of policy? Did you always--

Tupling: Did I always do what I was told? [laughing]

Lage: Right! Did the staff always defer to the volunteers on policy, and how might staff have had input into the policy?

Tupling: Well, at the board meetings, there'd be a little portion of the agenda devoted to reports from the staff members from various regional offices. I think we tried to influence policy at that time and tell them what the issues were and what we thought ought to be done and so forth. And I think staff views had a great deal of influence, but I don't think that the board rubber-stamped the staff either. But as far as I'm concerned, I never had any restrictions on what I did. They never said, "You've got to do it this way or that way." You know, it was just kind of a meeting of the minds, I guess.

Lage: What about times when you may have been in a position to have to okay compromises in legislation, to kind of modify board policy decisions. Did that come up?

Tupling: Yes, I'm sure it did, but I can't think of any specific illustration. It did happen, and you couldn't call a board meeting to try and get some kind of a trade-off. But before we'd throw anything overboard, why there was a close liaison with the board, usually through the president's office, either directly to Wayburn or whoever was the president.

Congressional Supporters

Lage: Maybe you could mention some of the congressmen that were particularly supportive, during those years, of environmental concerns. And I'm particularly interested in how interest in parks and wilderness might have carried over to the broader concerns about pesticides and pollution. Did you find that those who were strong on parks and wilderness were also strong on the whole range of environmental issues?

Tupling: Yes, right. It's too bad that I don't have a list of names, you know, because with a hundred names you have a tendency to--

Lage: We discussed Dingell and we talked about Jackson. What about Gaylord Nelson?

Tupling: Well, yes, I was going to say, there're a certain dozen or so that on any environmental issue you could count on; you wouldn't even have to go and ask them whether they were in favor of it or not, because of their background, unless it was a local issue.

Tupling: These included Gaylord Nelson, and Frank Church, Lee Metcalf, [Mike] Mansfield, you could usually count on him. From California, [Alan] Cranston, of course, but I wasn't there long after Cranston was elected. I knew him, but I was never close to him because I was about ready to leave. Then there was John Tunney.

Lage: And he was strong?

Tupling: He was strong. But I don't think he really spent a lot of time thinking about the issues involved. If the Sierra Club was for it, and the Sierra Club is from California, he was for it; you know, it was about like that. But he was helpful because he was influential, not only as a senator but within the administration.

Lage: What about someone like Edmund Muskie?

Tupling: Yes, sometimes. Then Jennings Randolph, who was chairman of the Senate Public Works Committee. I'd known him for years and years, so on some of the things he was pretty good, but he still had the Corps of Engineers closer to this heart than the Sierra Club.

Ingredients of Successful Lobbying

Lage: Was there a certain kind of education by you as a lobbyist for some of these senators and congressmen?

Tupling: Oh, you mean to educate them? Or educate me?

Lage: No, to educate them.

Tupling: Oh sure, yes. Because I think a lot of times, I did know some of these people personally. Nobody from environmental groups had really gone and talked to them before. They thought: "Well, this guy, he's hopeless." So they'd scratch him off the list. Well, nobody's hopeless.

##

Tupling: I would say that sometimes when you thought congressmen had their minds made up against you, if you'd go and talk to them you'd find out that you could at least soften them up a little bit. Maybe you'd get a vote. You wouldn't make a total convert-- they wouldn't become John Muirs overnight--but at least they'd listen to your story, and then perhaps vote with you once in a while. [laughter]

Lage: The personal contacts, how important are they? Your knowing them on the side, or maybe on a social level?

Tupling: Oh, I think it's of some importance, yes.

Lage: Does it help persuade them or does it just get you in to talk to them?

Tupling: No, it's just an entree. No, I don't think it would be decisive either pro or con. I don't think that a Boeing man, being a good friend of Scoop Jackson would influence his vote on a wilderness issue. He wouldn't be able to go in and say, "I don't think you ought to vote for North Cascades," and have Scoop listen to him. Scoop would say, "Listen, that's not your field. Go on and talk about something else." So I think personal contacts are important only for getting somebody's ear.

Lage: Now, once you got their ear, what was your ammunition?

Tupling: Factual information. You know, environmentalists are always accused by the opposition of emotional arguments. Well, they're not emotional arguments. Basically, they're factual arguments. If you make a logical case backed by facts to a congressman--they're bright people, otherwise they wouldn't be there--and they'll listen to you, and then make up their own minds.

Lage: So your approach was to give them information.

Tupling: Yes.

Lage: What about mentioning the pressures from back home?

Tupling: Oh yes, well, I think that was always the key. I think that whenever somebody was indecisive, and they were pushed over to our side, it was from pressure back home and not from anything we did there. So I always felt that, at that critical point--when you had maybe eight or ten votes that you knew were swing votes and needed some pushing--the place to work on them was not in Washington but back home, to get the volunteers there getting that guy's ear, because they would listen--

Lage: But the problem would be to identify those eight or ten people.

Tupling: Yes, right. Yes, sift it down to find out where the marginal votes were. But the push had to come from back home. I wouldn't say that there wasn't anything else that could be done, but if they were marginal, and they started getting pressure from home, it made all the difference in the world.

Environmentalists and Labor, Minorities, and Liberals

- Lage: I wanted to ask you about the relationship between labor and the environmental movement and minorities and the environmental movement. Did that come up during your stint?
- Tupling: Yes, it came up. Because of my background before I went with the Sierra Club, in Democratic politics--you know, labor has quite an influence in that area!--I had a lot of friends in the labor movement who were lobbyists. I'd call them up once in a while and ask them to give us some help. Whether they did or not I don't know. But there was the issue of environmental health in the workplace and we could find a common meeting ground, and we tried to help them out on it.
- Lage: But there must have been other areas where the interests were not as mutual.
- Tupling: Yes, because of the job factor, you know, where you'd be banging heads.
- Lage: What about the question of minorities and trying to work with them?
- Tupling: Let me just put it this way, at that time blacks were not interested in the environmental issues; that was not the issue that was concerning them. They wanted the right to vote. They wanted equality of opportunity. And what kind of a place they lived in was not at the top of their agenda. I think we did make some efforts to bring them in, but you couldn't really lasso them and drag them in. I often remarked on the fact that here all this political ferment was going on in Washington at that time, and you'd never see a black in an environmental meeting. It's always disturbed me because it's not right.
- Lage: Yes, but was this because of exclusionary feelings or--
- Tupling: Well, I don't know. It's hard to think black. I mean, you don't know what their reasons were for not coming in, but I think it's because they figured, "Well, we've got a long way to go before we have to spend our time worrying about how clean the water is; we've got to make sure we get water."
- Lage: What about the congressmen who represented, say, minority communities, or the congressmen who represented labor? Were they hard to reach?

Tupling: No, not at all, no. Ron Dellums [Seventh Congressional District, California], for instance. Of course, what does he have, several thousand Sierra Club members in his district? [laughing] No, I'd say there were a lot of them that were easy to reach because of their liberal persuasion, really. I've always thought that pro-environmental issues were liberal issues.

Lage: Even though you have a number of good Republicans that support the environment. Or were they the liberal Republicans, like John Saylor?

Tupling: Yes. John Saylor actually should have been running in the Democratic party, but he was in a Republican district, so he couldn't. [laughter]

Lage: Is there anything else that you'd like to add that we haven't covered?

Tupling: There probably will be after I leave, you know; I'll think about it after I leave.

Lage: Well, the next step is to have this transcribed, and then we'll go over it, and then you will have it to go over. And at that time if there are things that you've omitted, you can add them; you can write them in at that time.

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