Freeman: I'm just writing, trying to write a kind of an intellectual history of Ecosystem Management — a history of ideas per say. My first question to you is, when did the name Ecosystem Management actually replace New Perspectives?

Salwasser: I guess we could probably identify the official date as June 4, 1992, when Dale Robertson wrote the letter that informed people that we were adopting Ecosystem Management as a policy for how to approach multiple-use/sustained yield.

Freeman: How did the switch come from New Perspectives to Ecosystem Management? Why did you choose one name over the other?

Salwasser: Let's see, go back to, I can't remember if it was 1990, I think it probably was, or 1989. [In November, 1989] Jerry Franklin was doing something out in the Northwest called New Forestry. It was catching a lot of attention and Dale Robertson, George Leonard, Jim Overbay, Jerry Sessco — Leonard was the Associate Chief, Overbay was Deputy Chief for National Forest System, and Jerry Seseo was the Deputy Chief for Research. They were all trying to figure out how to capitalize on the ideas that were involved with Jerry's New Forestry, but they wanted to have a broader umbrella, because they wanted to deal with rangeland as well as forest, and they wanted to not have such a focus on a particular version of silviculture. So they toyed around with a bunch of terms and there was a hearing that... my recollection it was in September 19[89]. I'm not having a good memory here.

Freeman: Is there somewhere where you could point me, where I could go look and read?
Salwasser: There was a hearing on old growth and forestry in the Northwest.

Freeman: Is that a congressional hearing?

Salwasser: Congressional hearing, yes. Robertson was the witness and he stated in that hearing that the Forest Service was going to explore some New Perspectives in forestry, or something like that. And it was his way of talking about Jerry's New Forestry.

After having said that in a hearing in September or October, we had to put a team of people together to figure out what it was we just committed to. So there was an interdisciplinary group in the Washington Office that had Nelson Loftus from Silviculture Research and it had Ed Schlatterer from Range Ecology, and three or four other guys — some of the more ecologically oriented people in the Washington Office Staff — as an interdisciplinary group to lay out a set of ideas for what this New Perspective search would be. And that was bounced back and forth with the Deputy Chiefs for several months and then finally it kind of boiled down to... some time in December when they had gotten comfortable with what it was they were going to do... and it was going to be a research and management partnership and it was going to try to focus on gleaning from the field some of the better new ideas that people were trying out. And sometime, a week or two before the Christmas holiday they called me in — I was the Deputy Director of Wildlife and Fisheries at the time — they called me in and asked me if I would accept the job of heading up this New Perspectives effort. And somewhere in that period between the hearing in September and when they formalized the charter for this New Perspectives thing, it took on the name New Perspectives for Managing the National Forest System. And it had, as some of its principles, that it was going to be a management-research partnership. And I ended up reporting to the two deputy chiefs simultaneously, Seseo and Overbay. I don't recall at the time that we were offering New Perspectives as an alternative Ecosystem Management, but clearly the Ecosystem concept was in our minds and maybe even in the writings, if you pull up some of the old documents from that time — even the charter, you may find Ecosystem in there.

Freeman: The charter for the New Perspectives?
Salwasser: Yes. However it was also real clear that Dale Robertson had a real problem with the Ecosystem Management terminology. The reason he had a problem with it was because it was being identified with the Yellowstone National Park version of what they were doing. And obviously they were not doing Ecosystem Management; they were doing some kind of a passive approach to letting whatever parts of nature that were still operating out there do their thing and talking about it as Ecosystem Management. So Dale had a problem with that. It is also possible that, based on his career experience and all, it just wasn't a terminology that he was real comfortable with. So anyway we did "New Perspectives for Managing the National Forest System," and we set out all the technical people understanding that we were going to try to take a more holistic view to what it was we were going to do, both in terms of what we did on the land and then managing land to sustain more of the diversity of, not just the biological diversity, but the physical diversity as well — that we were going to do it in team work with the research branch... that we were going to involve outside the Forest Service groups as much as possible in partnerships that included universities and conservation groups like Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Turkey Federation and all those kinds of groups. Anyway that is how we got off the ground.

I started on the project in January or February of 199[0] and I recruited a very small team of people: Chip Cartright of the Jefferson National Forest and Jim Caplan, planner on the Bridger Teton and Winnie Kessler who was an ecologist for the Fish and Wildlife staff out of Logan, Utah. But they didn't start showing up until May and June. So, between February and May and June, I spent a lot of time going out and visiting people and seeing what they were doing and getting their ideas for what we should be trying to accomplish with this New Perspectives opportunity.

Then we hosted a workshop in Philadelphia and invited seventy-some odd people to come in for several days, and half of the people were not Forest Service people. By design we opened it up to try to get a broad spectrum of ideas. We had people from what you might consider traditional view points: Society of American Foresters... Wood Products Industry, and we also had people from the conservation community — National Wildlife Federation and that sort. And, we came out of that workshop with some guiding principles, and that stimulated
us to engage the field folks in putting forward a series of projects that would exemplify managing for diversity of values in the land and team work between science and management. It expanded beyond Forest Service research to university type folks and the partnership idea. And we set in motion a series of projects and a lot of projects were... they had explicitly said they were taking an ecosystems approach. So as we went forward with New Perspectives, it was really clear that the Ecosystem Management idea was bubbling up from the field and how people described what they were doing. And some places were more explicit about that than others. The Northern Region, here, had Sustaining Ecological Systems as its title as to what it was doing. So it was probably the most overt than any of the regions in using Ecosystem terminology.

As we got well into this and it became increasingly clear that this set of ideas and principals was practical, was working alright and there was enough field evidence that we probably could embrace the set of principals as an operating philosophy. We had an opportunity for Jim Overbay, the Deputy Chief for National Forest System, to give a talk at a workshop in Salt Lake City, and this would have been March of 1992. And we used the opportunity of his key note address to this workshop — it was a soil and water type workshop — to lay out as a trial balloon, so to speak, the idea that it was time to adopt these principles as Forest Service policies and not just a pilot program. A team of people worked on writing his speech. Many of the people who worked on writing his speech were the same people who developed the charter for the New Perspectives program about a year and a half earlier. And, Jim's speech, was routed through the Forest Service's leadership, which is called Chief of Staff, and it was actually edited and approved by Chief of staff before he gave it, which was a fairly unusual thing to have happen. And Jim commented to us that it was the only speech in his 30 some odd year career with the Forest Service that had ever been approved by Chief of Staff before he gave it. And the reason for that was that we knew that this speech was a policy sensitive kind of speech.

Oh, I've got to back up about a month. The deputy Chief for state and private forestry, Al West had been watching what was going on, even though what we were doing was focused on the National Forest System, and he was involved as the lead Forest Service person with an FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization] group ~ the United Nations FAO Regional Commission on Forestry. FAO's got these regional commissions all over the world, and we're in the North
America Commission with Mexico and Canada. And earlier in the fall of ’91, Al had proposed - and it was accepted by the Chief - that the United States presentation at the North American Commission meeting for the following year would be what we had been doing on New Perspectives. So that was, it was set for drafting as a paper, and I enlisted the help of a person in research, named Tom Snellgrove, who was involved with forest products and harvesting systems and Doug MacCleary, who was Assistant Director Timber Management, and who has spent a part of his career as a political appointee as the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Agricultural Office, overseeing the Forest Service. And we developed a paper that was built around New Perspectives, but it identified that New Perspectives was building an Ecosystem approach to sustainable forestry.

That paper was given in February of ’92 in Cancun at the regional commission meeting and Dale was there, and the paper was really well received by the Canadians and the Mexicans, who complimented the Chief profusely over what the United States was doing with this ecosystem approach. Dale was still not ready to accept Ecosystem Management terminology. I can distinctly remember the Mexican style was that we would start at about 9 in the morning and work until 1 or 2 and then we would have a big lunch and then everybody would take off in the afternoon; I guess it was siesta time, and we would reconvene at 5 in the evening and go until 8 or 9. The afternoon after I gave this talk, I was walking along the beach there — Cancun is a phenomenal resort area — and Dale and his wife were lounging in some recliner chairs out along this beach. And I walked up to him and said "Dale, I would like to talk to you about something. The substance about what we talked about yesterday was really well received, and I used the term Ecosystem Management frequently in explaining what we were doing. I think it's time that the Forest Service adopt the Ecosystem Management terminology for what it is we're moving towards, and that we shape it, rather than let somebody else define what it is and then us having to live with that definition and not being able to make it mesh with our other legal mandates, we should embrace the terminology and at least play a part in shaping what it comes to mean."

Obviously a public agency can't control everything that it does. We weren't thinking that what we were going to do was going to control everything, but at least by embracing it, have an influential role. And my recollection was that he said, "Well, we'll think about it." It was the first time that he didn't say "No, we won't do Ecosystem Management, and we aren't going to use
those words," etc. I think the reaction of the Canadians and the Mexicans caused him to think about it a little more. Subsequent to that the FAO Forestry Director out of Switzerland picked up the draft of the paper and asked that it be published in an United Nations document, because they were impressed by what the U.S. was doing. And then the speech that Overbay gave in Salt Lake City came about a month later, where we did the trial balloon to see how people would react if we had a Deputy Chief in a major speech, openly talking about Ecosystem Management. And the reaction was very positive. And the reaction fed back to both Dale Robertson and George Leonard that this is a good thing to do. The science was there; the support from the rank and file, while not unanimous, was strong enough; and then we had a whole round of projects, 200 some odd projects from the field that were feeding information that said this was feasible to do. I'm trying to figure out a date here. I may have slipped a year early on, it may have been the January of 1990 when we started this.

We had the workshop in Philadelphia in the spring of the first year we were doing the project. We went through all of the field work. We put together the synthesis paper for the Cancun meeting in February of 1992. Overbay gave his speech in Salt Lake City and we were starting to move toward development of the... what I'm stumbling over, Rick, is we had a meeting in Roanoke that was the wrap-up, and it was in December, and I'm thinking it was the December before we did the Cancun talk and before we did the... so it must have been December of 1991 that we had... what we did is we repeated, in Roanoke, Virginia, what we had done in Philadelphia. In, Philadelphia we'd invited a bunch of people in to help us shape what we ought to do; in Roanoke, two years later, we brought some of the same people back, but not entirely the same group, but the same type of venue, where we had half non-Forest Service people and we did a show and tell and basically said "here is what we have put together in the field. Here are the kinds of things people have done, here's what it looks like." And in the workshop setting after the show-and-tell, the message came back strongly to us: "adopt Ecosystem Management as the Forest Service operating philosophy, and focus around a set of principles," and that is where I'm getting. I'm sorry I'm just rambling. I didn't read over any notes getting ready of this talk. It was that set of recommendations that then I began to shape as pushing from the inside to get us to make a change. That is what went into the Cantoon talk, the set of operating guide lines and

Hal Salwasser Interview, OH 370-01, Archives & Special Collections, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, The University of Montana - Missoula.
principles that we had drawn from this mixed group that showed up in Roanoke that December, and in fact it went into Overbay's speech.

Dale Robertson in March of 1992 was still not comfortable with acknowledging Ecosystem Management as an operating philosophy. But people were talking about it more openly... and none of the other federal agencies had adopted it either. There were rumblings from field units here and there. And obviously in the scientific field the concept had been around for at least a decade, because there were even books written about it.

Late May, early June of 1992, I was out doing a site visit in Arizona, and we were looking at how the National Forest in Arizona had taken the principles of New Perspectives and were using them in the design of the field work and in any adaptations they were doing to the forest plans. And the day I went out, it was a one week site visit around the first week in June, and President Bush was getting ready to go to Rio, and the word came that the President needed to make a bold statement about forestry, because sustainable forestry was a big... you recall biodiversity and sustainable forestry were big issues at Rio. I was out in the field and I was in contact with Jim Caplan who was my staff person on New Perspectives back in D.C., and first it was "we need to pull some stuff together, the President wants to announce a major policy of the U.S. Federal Government regarding sustainable forestry and clear cutting." And of course a year ago prior to that Dale Robertson had gone for a walk in the woods in Arkansas and had come out with an agreement to change the clear cutting policy of the agency.

Freeman: What happened there?

Salwasser: Senator Pryor, alarmed about clear cutting in the South having an effect on forest diversity, asked to go out in the field with the Chief and on a summer day in August, Dale Robertson and Senator Pryor went for a walk in the woods.

Freeman: Right in the middle of the hottest time of the year.
Salwasser: Yeah, it was horrible. I can remember sitting in the motel room with Dale at five in the morning talking about what do we need to come out of this walk with, cause it was clear you don't go for a walk in the woods with a Senator in Arkansas, with just raging controversy over clear cuts and not come away with something that shows some responsiveness. So we set out to just talk in general about the principles where clear cutting would be an appropriate silvicultural practice, and this is something Dale had been on for pretty heavy for a long time; he was not a great fan of clear cutting. He had been trying to send signals to people to knock off the clear cutting and only use it when it is absolutely the only appropriate tool. So Dale went for a walk in the woods and came out with a set of principles that he had talked about with the Senator and they ended up being seven or eight principles on clear cutting that went into a letter from the Regional Forester out of Atlanta to the field.

This was not directly related to New Perspectives, but it was not unrelated either. They were trying to maintain a distance between the New Perspectives, which was managing land for diversity with science/management teamwork — with partnerships and all that stuff - and clear cutting which is technical practice, but it didn't work. The switch away from clear cutting kept getting cast as a part of what New Perspectives was all about. Anyway, that had been in place for about a year, so the President is getting ready to go to Rio and between the White House and the Secretary of Agriculture Office and the Forest Service, there was a frantic scramble for two or three days on what is the President going to say and what is the policy statement going to be? And first we had the President declaring the policy, and then the Secretary of Agriculture declaring the policy, and as it ended up the Chief of the Forest Service declared the policy, which the President referenced. And the policy was a cut-and-paste job. They pulled... the policy acknowledged that Ecosystem Management was going to be the policy of the Forest Service and that it was going to have the following four principles and that it was going to have a set of operating guidelines and then appended to it was the criteria for when clear cutting could be used. The principles and the operating guidelines came right out of New Perspectives — I mean literally cut, I mean take the scissors out and cut a paragraph, cut a list — and Dale had to define in the letter, on an urgent need to have the President, a strong statement on Forestry in the United States at sunset. We pieced together from the policy from the practices that we had been carrying
out under the New Perspectives and the clear cutting stuff from the walk in the woods. And that is when the change happened. I've taken a long time to build the whole sequence of it.

Freeman: No, I appreciate it.

Salwasser: But that's not all of the story but it's a major part of the story of how things went from doing New Perspectives to evolving into Ecosystem Management and where the Ecosystem Management principles came from.

Freeman: OK, actually that is really interesting to me. So again, how would you say... it seems like the new Ecosystem Management was a big change in direction. What is it that made big change possible? Somewhere in the background here is some force, pushing you in the direction of a new paradigm?

Salwasser: Science is part of it. We had operated for many decades on the regulated forest idea, coming out of old German Forestry that you could regulate a forest of age classes and structures and figure out how to obtain a yield of goods and services. But the ecological sciences of the 1970s and 1980s was telling us that you can't regulate an ecosystem. There's too much unpredictability. Chaos is the current term for it; we didn't have chaos in the jargon at the time. It was real clear from the public, the people who own the forest, that they were not thrilled with the sort of commodity driven approach to multiple use, and that was showing up in law suits, appeals, protests. The Forest Service work force itself had been diversified as a result of the National Environmental Policy Act to include a lot more, a broader diversity of technical training and philosophies and "ologists," so that was a force working internally, and of course, I happen to be out of that force; I'm a biologist. Science was changing, public attitudes had changed, and it was clear that the Forest Service had to change in response. The work force itself was advocating for a broader view. I think those are the major forces.

Freeman: The need to change ~ let me use the word "need" loosely - the need to change or the desire to change, was that kind of discussed, was that discussed fairly openly then, and it sent you on a search for a new frame work?
Salwasser: Yeah, very much. In fact it was really interesting, at the time we were doing New Perspectives, I would have a morning meeting with the Associate Chief George Leonard, sometimes every week, but probably on an average of every other week, for a couple of years before anyone else would get to work, and George and I would talk about what was going on; sometimes Dale would be in the meetings, but usually just George and me. And it was real clear in the discussions that we had that George was simultaneously managing the agency along the traditional budget lines and priorities and supporting and encouraging the New Perspectives that he knew was changing the direction the agency was going in. So you had him implementing an annual budget that was based on an old set of ideas; at the same time he was authorizing and encouraging the program that was going to change all of that. So it was open. Apparently, the Bush Administration was very open to scientifically-based change. The political climate was OK. There was still tremendous pressure from the congressional leaders to keep the timber cuts up and that sort of stuff, but the Bush Administration was very conducive to change as long as it was based to science and responsive to public attitudes and all. John Beuter was our Assistant Secretary, it is now the called the "Under Secretary," but in those days it was the Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources.

Freeman: Would you say that then that the Bush Administration on some level had a fairly significant role in the adoption of Ecosystem Management?

Salwasser: Yea.

Freeman: Pretty powerful. And again, how about Congress, were any Congressmen, (sic) or senators particularly, influential in all that change?

Salwasser: Hum.

Freeman: Any staffers? I probably won't even ask that question, except that I spent so many hours just generally talking with Bob Wolfe when he was in town a couple of weeks ago. And I
realized there is a whole slice of history that I really haven't given enough attention to. He didn't talk much about Ecosystem Management though.

Salwasser: Ya, you know it is interesting though; Bob Wolf had a side kick back when they were drafting the Resources Planning Act and the National Forest Management Act. In fact it was Jim Giltmier. Giltmier and Wolf are two of the people that we brought into these workshops. I think Bob Wolfe's concern is more on the economic rationality of management and not so much on the Ecosystem idea. Giltmier was much more a proponent of the ecosystem idea. I'm drawing a blank on whether there were congressional champions or supporters. We certainly had the support of John Beuter in the Secretary's Office and we had the support of the Chief and the Deputy Chief, even though as I said a few minutes ago, that they had to implement the budget and the priorities that they had been given. They were openly supportive of the change that we were undertaking. I'm not sure... we have a little interaction with folks in the Congress, but mostly it was on the appropriation side rather than the authorization side, and it was mostly focused around making sure that we had enough money in the budget to carry through with the projects.

Freeman: Ok. So you must have gotten the feeling, I guess that at least there wasn't a hostility?

Salwasser: No, there wasn't, and we did have some staff support for the general idea of managing forest for more diversity. And I had headed up the Federal Agency that stimulated the Keystone dialogue on biological diversity, and we interacted with staff folks on the hill when we did that. Jim Lyons was a staffer in the House, Ag. Committee, and Gina Deferari was a staffer on the House Merchant Marine Committee, and Don Berry was a staffer on the same committee. There was a cast of people that were staffers that were very intrigued by this idea of biological diversity on Federal lands. That was one of the major things that we tried to accomplish with the Ecosystem Management approach. Biodiversity is one of the main thrusts, but it is broader than that. So we did have interactions with staff folks, so they knew what we were up to. There was nobody championing it, that I can recall.

Freeman: Staying pretty neutral on it?
Salwasser: Yea.

Freeman: Interesting. Again, and I think you covered this ground but, did the whole Bush Administration and George Bush's stance at Rio... someone had mentioned that it was their perspective that, in essence, the push to adopt Ecosystem Management was somewhat related to George Bush's stance in Rio as kind of a trade off. A trade-off were George Bush was somewhat recalcitrant in Rio, but needed to, in essence, enhance his image in the whole environmental discourse, is that play out at all to you?

Salwasser: That doesn't register with me because Bush had Bill Riley as an EPA Administrator. He was real avid on wetlands — supportive of wetlands. That doesn't register well with me. My sense of the people that I worked with in the Bush Administration is that they were pretty responsive to environmental protection. They were not avid over on the extreme side, but they were not nearly as antagonistic about it as people in the Reagan Administration were, for example.

Freeman: OK. Yea, as an offhand comment they, it had set in my mind of thinking, and I thought well I should ask around about that

Salwasser: Yea. It's not implausible that a person in a Presidential role would try to find ways to make some political compromise.

Freeman: How much pressure do you suppose does he... the administration exerted on Dale Robertson? Was there specific pressure or was it pretty much coming within?

Salwasser: I don't know.

Freeman: I don't either.
Salwasser: It is possible that the Administration needed to do something bold or real, was putting pressure on the Chief of the Forest Service to come up with something. It is possible. Jim Caplan is the person I would talk to, and he is up in our office in Juneau, Alaska. This all happened while I was in Arizona and I was in daily communication with Jim, from Sunday evening to Thursday, when the policy was finally made. Jim was kind of the point person there in the office trying to ride herd on all of this and he would probably know more about who was putting what kind of pressure and why it turned out the way it did. Why it went from a Presidential proclamation on Sunday afternoon to a Chief Policy letter on Thursday morning.

Freeman: Yeah, that is really interesting to me, just because I've gotten the historian's mind. I'm going to let you go. Enjoy your Sunday.

Salwasser: I look forward to reading your report one of these days. I would encourage you to talk to Jim Caplan. And it probably would be a good idea to talk with Jim Overbay — he lives over in the Northwest, one of those Islands off of Seattle — especially for his personal insights on that speech he gave in Salt Lake City and what role that played. Internally that was a major deal. That was the speech that got the Forest Service ready to accept what Dale did a couple of months later. Maybe Jim Gilmier who is with the Pinchot Institute back in D.C. And Al Sample who is also with them. These are all people who were in on the first workshop and were in throughout and in on the last workshop and they're a bunch of people who helped shape the ideas and played different kind of roles. And I'm sure they'll have different perspectives than I do, cause I was so close to it.