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Interviewee: Frank Cook

Interviewer: Gyongyver "Kitty" Beuchert

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Gyongyver "Kitty" Beuchert: Mr. Cook, can you give me your birth date and place of birth?

Frank Cook: I was born September 4, 1925 in Silver Springs, New York.

GB: Can you give me the name of your parents?

FC: My father's name was Michael, and my mother's name was Anna Cook.

GB: And some details about your family?

FC: We came from a family...I have two sisters, one deceased to this time, and I have an older brother. I was the baby of the family.

GB: Can you tell me a little bit about the schools that you attended? Primarily your higher education.

FC: Yes, I began my higher education originally in a school in Hagerstown, and then I was interrupted my college education, World War Two. Then I returned from the service in the Navy and went to Seton Hall College [Seton Hall University] in South Orange, New Jersey for one year. Then I moved west to the University of Denver where I graduated in administration.

GB: Can you tell me a little bit about your military experience?

FC: Well, I served in the Navy on mostly sea planes. I was a radio man and radar man and a PBM mariner and spent about a year in the South Pacific—Saipan, Guam, Okinawa. When the war was over, I was chosen to be the radio man for the Commander of Marianas Islands. So I stayed additional months, sort of touring the South Pacific, enjoying the various bases that we visited. So that was enjoyable part of my life. I have no regrets.

GB: Can you tell a little bit about your business career and how you selected it?

FC: Probably I think that I may have been one of the youngest men that ever knew what he wanted to do because I was raised on a farm. I did an awful lot of hunting and fishing, and I thought that is really the career you should have. Coming from, not a poor family, but not a wealthy family, we always had enough to get by with and lived on a farm so we had a very enjoyable life. I said, "You hunt in the fall so that means you have to have some occupation that will not interfere with your falls." So as I was going through high school, of course, I was quite

interested in business, and I came up with the idea that the only locked-in occupation that at that time was from January 1 until March 15 was doing income taxes. So I felt that the thing to do is get hot on the taxes, which I did. Actually, when high school beginning to really...various tax laws. Of course when I went through college, I definitely went to them, and very fortunately I went into business immediately. It's a little rough shuffle, but you get by if you work hard enough. But I can truthfully say that when I got out of college and I came to Alaska, I actually have hunted and fished every summer and fall since I've been here. I think I had my mind made up, and it worked. Maybe I'm not wealthy, but I've done the things I want and I think that's the success in your careers.

GB: What made you choose Alaska as a place to settle?

FC: It's the only place you can hunt and fish. (laughs)

GB: This is a terrible question to ask somebody like you, but do you remember any really memorable hunting trips? (laughs)

FC: I think all my trips are good. I finally got down to my famous saying now, "As long as you can go back, get back home so you can go again, you got it made."

GB: In this country, I can see why you say that. How did you develop your early interest in conservation activities?

FC: Well, I think there was no question it all started when I was on the farm. I had a father that probably was one of the finest conservationists that I knew. We always had to set aside so much of the grain crop for the birds, we always had to work the swamp over and burn it every year, put small dams for ducks and muskrats and what not, plant trees. We planted trees for everything. In fact, I'm still doing that today. I have one of the finest maple trees in front of my building in Anchorage. I haven't had it mothered long. Actually on the farm, we had lots of game, and we made sure we had lots of game. We used it for food, but we also used it for recreation. My brother did not hunt much. He trapped with me. We did a lot of trapping. I can remember one year in the '30s where—I imagine I was probably ten years old—that I'd made over 1,500 dollars trapping, and that was a tremendous amount of money at that time. I've always had a yearn to make money and have fun at the same time so that's one of the things that, I think, brought out. We had a beautiful farm. We still have it. But I have to admit it's gone down because the young kids are not taking care of it. My father insisted that we have things for game animals, and the strange thing is I have never seen him fire a gun.

GB: How did you become a member of the Boone and Crockett Club?

FC: I think I probably became a member because of my activities in Alaska. I worked with the Guide Association as president of the Izaak Walton League and members of other sports clubs around Anchorage, and worked hard particularly so we would have hunting for the future and

good hunting every year. Of course, the only way you do that, you get in there and you really put your foot down and get in the action. Of course, I met Bob Reeve since I've come to Alaska, and I assumed that he figured that I was pretty tough and maybe I just might do a few things that would benefit the Boone and Crockett Club and the game of our country.

GB: Do you remember who proposed you and your supporting letters?

FC: Of course, Bob Reeve sponsored me and Jimmy Doolittle second. I had a letter from Dunc Hodgson and William Sheldon and Don Hopkins.

GB: What year did you join?

FC: I think it was 1964.

GB: What prompted you to take an active interest in the Club affairs?

FC: I'm not a joiner. If I'm going to get into something, I just get in and go after it. Otherwise, you shouldn't take the space of someone that would be able to do something constructively.

GB: Do you remember what offices you held and what years?

FC: I was on the Executive Committee in 1971 to 1973. I've been on the Records Committee several times.

GB: Why were you interested in the Records-keeping Committee?

FC: In the early '50s when the hunting was outstanding in Alaska and we had a lot of good young men going out, we used to vie for big trophies, and we spent a lot of time at it. It was something we looked forward to each year. At that time, Harry Swank was scoring for the Boone and Crockett Club, and Grancel Fritz was making several trips to Alaska. He would always stop off and see Harry, and of course I was always there. I always looked forward to Grancel to come up. We used to go over scoring at that time, and he would score certain trophies and teach us the methods that should be used under his programs.

GB: What other conservation organizations have you belonged to or have been an officer of?

FC: Actually, as I say the Izaak Walton League. Of course, that may be a fishing outfit, but through them I think it was one of the very first reserves for goats and sheep was set up outside of Anchorage. That was done in 1952. So even though I was in the Izaak Walton League, I was still more of a hunter than a fisherman so we did a lot setting up. In fact, we gained land from the federal government in about '53, 1953, which today is the range that they used to site in their rifles. So actually, I think the Izaak Walton League in Alaska does awful lot for hunting. Of course, we've had guide associations, which worked on the promotion on guiding and good

hunting methods. There's Alaska Big Game Trophy Club, which I was one of the founders, and it's patterned quite a bit after the philosophies of the Boone and Crockett Club. I don't know if you would consider it an organization, but I was a member the Fish and Game Department as a board member for four years where at that time we set all the game regulations and the habitat control and the reserves and what not. It was quite an active period.

GB: Did belonging to these inter-relate to the activities of the Boone and Crockett Club?

FC: Yes, I think that probably the two that really were was the Alaska Big Game Trophy Club. We, as I say, closely follow the pattern of hunting and conservation. Even in the Fish and Game Department, we worked quite strongly on our game animals in the fact that we were managing some areas for trophies and we manage other areas for strictly meat otherwise, particularly in the moose. It was surprising. We always had good reception, and that still followed by the Department of Fish and Game in the state of Alaska, which I think is a tremendous thing. I feel if it wasn't for the Boone and Crockett Club's program, that wouldn't exist in Alaska. If we're going to have any hunting, this will be the place where it will be done, and I think we will always have good trophies.

GB: I think you touched on this a bit ago, but how did you become specifically interested in the North American Big Game Committee?

FC: As I say, I was interested in trophy hunting. So I followed through, and I noticed that as I visited the Club that several members were not interested. Of course, obviously with the membership you have to have someone in every field. I knew I was interested in it, I knew I would work hard at it, so I consequently went into it because I felt that it was being somewhat neglected. I thought it would be a little bit stronger on your trophy hunting and your game management. I think we have the game management because we have that through our programs of projects, which in effect do the same thing. So I don't know. It's just one of those things that I felt it was being neglected.

GB: You kind of feel thought then that that committee dovetails with the Conservation Committee.

FC: I don't think there's any question about it. I think it's probably almost first because I know one thing, that if you don't have the place to hunt and the habitat for the animals, we're not going to get any trophies. So I think that a good trophy hunter wants to preserve areas and good hunting probably more so than the fellows that just say "we'll save something" but they really don't know what for.

GB: In other words, we have motive. (laughs)

FC: That's right.

GB: You were one of the very few regular members of the Club who is an official measurer. How did you become interested in becoming a measurer, and then how did you actually become one?

FC: Actually as I said, I was doing trophy hunting, and of course, it was associated with Grancel Fitz when I visited to Alaska. So that got me started. As soon as I went to the Club, I said, "This is what I want to do," and, of course, they didn't hesitate. Anybody that wants a job, they're more than welcome in that club.

GB: How were the measurers picked and trained prior to the Boone and Crockett / NRA [National Rifle Association] affiliation?

FC: I think they were chosen by people that were interested. It's surprising, you go into, well, any locale even in the states, you go to Arizona when the deer season opens up, everybody's trying to get a big buck so they sort of try to measure this or measure that. They may not be perfectionists at it and they may make errors, but at least what they did, they measured them all the same way, which in effect is the same thing that we're doing. I think it was just people that were interested in seeing good specimens, and they would sort of make it a pleasure by assisting someone else to become a good trophy hunter.

GB: Now, in line with that, taxidermists have an obvious interest in being a measurer, but sometimes it's possible that a taxidermist could serve a self-interest by being a measurer. Has this ever caused any problems your knowledge?

FC: Yes. I don't think there is any question that...I wouldn't say definitely because when you say definitely you're getting down black and white, but I'm sure there's been a little fudging on the scoring of trophies because a fellow comes in and says, "Well, gee, I'll have this head mounted if I find it makes the book, and if it doesn't, I'm out." That's bad business, there's no question about it, but people are human. I have sort of always been a little bit negative to taxidermists being scorers or measurers, but then again they're not all bad so I don't think we can just make a blanket rule. I've always felt, and maybe someday I'll get it through, but I feel that if a good taxidermist wishes to score I think that we could make a rule that if he has any financial interest that he cannot score the trophy and I think he would be glad to score trophies for others. I think that can be done. I think you can just walk right up to him because if he doesn't agree with that we don't want him as a measurer.

GB: You have also been a judge for the final judging of the trophies for the North American Big Game Awards Program. Do you remember any particular problems that might have arisen during these judgments?

FC: I remember a lot of problems. (laughs) I think the best way to win was to be the biggest. No seriously, there was not too many problems. I think the biggest problem we have, particularly with newer fellows showing up and doing the scoring or people getting involved, they always

want to attempt to change the system. Well, we know the system isn't perfect. So if we can tell them that, okay, maybe we're not the greatest, but as long as we do it the same, we at least keep our situation well in hand. I think probably some of the major problems was...Let's see, we had trouble on a pronghorn particularly when the prong comes in one of the quarter measurements. Well, that problem has resolved. That was resolved in Pittsburg, I think, with Don Hopkins and Rusten, Dr. Rusten and myself. There was others there, but we were supposed to have been, I think, sort of the key men at that particular competition.

We've had some problems on the measuring on the length of points on the deer, but I think that's been resolved and I don't think that it has materially changed any of the scoring. It might have made a slight difference, but it was a case of measuring on the outside curve. So I think that in general our problems are there, but they're not that much. Of course, one thing that I know that the committee, at least myself, I have been thinking of ways to bring this system to a new plateau. I have suggested at our various meetings that maybe we should consider when we have our Centennial for the Boone and Crockett Club that we can start out with a new scoring system where we feel it should be adjusted. Now, I don't think for instance there'll be any changes in the bear. I doubt if there would be any changes in the...oh, say the moose. There could be, and there could be changes definitely in the deer and some of the others. On problems that actually sound logical, and I don't think there would be any big problem. Of course, that would do one thing that we could start another Centennial competition. That would create the interest in trophy hunting and we'd sort of have the old book and new book. I think it's something to consider, and I'll keep pushing at it.

GB: I don't know how quite to word this next question, but I'd like you to explain a little bit about the fact that the top trophies in any given awards period are brought in for the judging. This is what we're referring to as far as a judge, so that it double checks the integrity and the correctness of the trophy. Can you explain that a little?

FC: Well, yes—

GB: (Unintelligible) measuring—

FC: Yes, I think that's fine because after all there has never been a training program for the bulk of the measurers. So someone sitting down in Texas, he gets a caribou, and he's got a few problems. No different than when I really got into measuring non-typical whitetail. They were quite a problem for me, but the other fellow says, "Well, anybody knows that." But actually, it's a case of the geographical location of the measurers and the number of trophies of certain kinds. So the bringing together of all the trophies and the rescoring is actually a good process because it eliminates a gross error. Like this last time, we had a caribou that decreased 17 points. Well, it was a matter of decision, and I do not know the gentleman that scored it and I'm sure they did it in good faith. Yet, when we had our group there together, there was no question on our scoring. So these things, of course, sometimes affect the hunter's attitude, but

overall I think it is a fair shake. I think it should be continued because I don't figure I know it all and you can make mistakes.

GB: Well, I think in the case of the top awards for trophies, this would cut out any of the taxidermist-measuring problems too in case they were trying to fudge a little. Don't you feel that's true because it's double-checked?

FC: I don't think they dare to fudge too much on the top ones because they know their destiny. I think we have it checked there. That's why I say I think on the lower scores there might be a little hanky-panky, but I think we may catch a few because sometimes what they think what might be beaten later isn't and then they sit there. I think we've caught a few of those too.

GB: Why are pick-up trophies accepted for the records book?

FC: I don't think there's any question that the records book is a record of trophies. Sure, we consider the hunter. We like to have him true blue and a guy that goes bouncing over the hills, but number one what we're interested in is the trophy. To me a fine trophy, whether it would be found or picked out of somebody's garage and if it's something even when we don't know where it was taken or when, it's still there. Of course, we should have that as part of the records, and it's noted in the book. So it's a good program.

GB: Would you explain the difference of intent in accepting an animal for the records listings only, such as a muskox or walrus and one that is accepted for the awards?

FC: Yes, well the reason on the ones that are just for the book it's predominately where it may be a limited-hunt species. For instance, your bison. They still hunt bison down in the States, but I wouldn't say it was a wild and wooly hunt. So in that case, maybe those wouldn't be in. As I say, I know what they are trying to do. The same thing on polar bear. When the hunting got down, we didn't like to the methods and means. We just decided to have the records because we're still trying to maintain records for animals, and even though they may be taken legally if you only got five permits for a certain animal, you don't have much of a competition.

GB: It was thought that the records keeping would show that the more recently taken trophies would be smaller than those taken many years ago. In fact, there are records broken even now. Would this tend to prove as a fallacy the theory that if sportsmen seek only trophy-sized animals they will kill the best breeding stock?

FC: Well, I don't think there's any question about that because first of all when you do take a fine trophy usually it's an animal in his last years. So if you shoot them in their last years—you harvest these animals in their last years—they have been able to breed for a great number of years. I would rather go out here and take one large animal as go out and shoot a number of small ones. It takes 100 small ones to get maybe ten big ones. So as long as the animal has...and as I say, in most cases will have to have done most of his breeding by the time he becomes a

trophy, you have all the background in there so I don't think it's actually any detriment to it. Now, I'm sure obviously if you let him go one year possibly certain animals would still breed, but then again I don't think we've done enough research to find out and say "Oh yes, the big animal will normally breed all good animals." There's probably a numbers scheme in there somehow. It's just like families. You don't always have big ones. Some may come out somebody's small and somebody's big. But I think that most of them have done most of their breeding, and I don't think you're losing stock in taking the older animals.

GB: Since size of an animal is obviously affected by good or bad habitat, do you feel that the records keeping program can serve as a gauge or indicator of good habitat areas or diminishing of habitat requirements?

FC: I don't think there is anything about it. I think our study on the grizzly bear is a good example on where a lot of the species were beginning to be not taken in the numbers. I'm not saying they were smaller, but the numbers weren't there. So obviously we knew something was going on. That there was not that many bear around because you still have to go through hundreds of bear to get a good trophy. I think that this program actually alerts probably...if people want to read it. Now if they don't want to read it, they'll never get anything out of it. If they actually get in there and study and you see for a number of years, for instance, in a certain area in Colorado that they are getting big mule deer, then all of a sudden you get none out of there, something has gone wrong. If you look at that I think you can do a tremendous amount of game management really by using the book. The thing is that really is probably more important than that is when we run into an area that we start getting large trophies that never showed up before. Just like on your deer in Iowa and through that area. Missouri. Now who would ever think that a world's record whitetail would come out of Missouri. But they do. That has alerted us that there's other places in Pennsylvania and Saskatchewan. So really I think that if anybody...of course, it might be a little bit too simple. Maybe you got to go several years through a bunch of garbage to come up with an idea that isn't actually as well founded the trophy system.

GB: Well, my next question is more or less answered. Do you feel that the statistics compiled through records keeping program can be used as conservation tool?

FC: I think it's the very main one, and I think that the items that we've added to our statistical data such on the moose, the weight, and on the caribou, the weight of the antlers and all that, I think that will help more. We're trying to get teeth from certain animals, on the bear and so forth, so that they can be aged. I think that we are actually refining the book to probably, if it is pursued correctly, that probably it would be one of the best management tools as a general program of anything going today.

GB: Okay, now I'm going to ask one question, and I certainly don't mean it as a loaded question. Many of the members feel that the Boone and Crockett Club should become totally disassociated from the records keeping program, or that the records keeping is all right but the

hunter should stop having their name recognized because this way it would cut out all the dishonesty involved. How you feel about this?

FC: Well, I don't think it's a case of dishonesty in general. I think we have to look at the overall picture. After all we are getting this information through the hunter, and I think he should be recognized for the things that they do. To go out and say that just have the animal and no name that would be like publishing a book and not putting the author down. If everybody would like to publish their manuals, the Fish and Game Department members and everything, and not put their name in it, I'll sort of consider a little bit more. But there is pride in trophy hunting as there is pride in any other item. I think that the ill effects are so small that it doesn't mean a thing. In fact, I don't consider that any problem whatsoever.

GB: You also mentioned a minute ago about being able to get them to help do work.

FC: Well, sure. I would rather go out here now...I think that if...of the number of people that have their name listed in the book, I'm sure that if we have projects and that we want to work on, I would sure go to them because I think we'd get a 100 percent support on them before we would some Joe Blow that we don't even know and we don't even know their attitude. At least we know one thing, this fellow is interested in hunting, and I think that in general a trophy hunter is not a devastating hunter. He goes out and takes animals, sure. Ones that he wishes to take. He just doesn't go out and blast away and go over and look and see how he did. (Laughs)

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

[Tape 1, Side B]

GB: Were you for or against the arrangements with NRA to cosponsor the North American Big Game Awards program with the Club?

FC: Well, I'm sure that a matter of record. I was in opposition.

GB: Okay. Can you relate some of the actual discussion in the club and possibly who was for or against?

FC: Well, I can give you the general ideas that were kicked around, and I don't think it's necessary to pick anybody out as a good guy or a bad guy. Obviously, I knew where I stood because I was in the minority, but I think they...a lot of them did not want to lose a project that has been strong in the Club. I think that it was a project that brought the Boone and Crockett to the eyes of many American sportsmen. I'm pretty sure that I have never heard any detrimental words about the project or the Club, which this is a big asset. Then others felt that when you take a program and turn it to a new group, the one thing you don't have is the history and the continuity of people that were working on the project. I think that was probably the biggest anti-, and that was my opinion. I felt, not that I had spent that many years, but it was several years, trying to (unintelligible) a system that would be acceptable without too much debate. Going to a new agency and having them assist in the program could cause lots of problems. I was against it. I felt that the Boone and Crockett Club should have pursued it. I realize that it's a tremendous cost to do what we're doing today, and I felt that the club had an option to take this and evidently they chose not to get involved. Possibly it's a case of time and money and funds spent well by having another agency assist.

GB: Do you feel that the affiliation with NRA is working well now and that the integrity of the program has been kept intact?

FC: I have been pleased with it. I think that it's something that we specifically have to watch, and probably that might have even been one of my strong motives for being negative. If anything sails through unanimous, everybody drops it and walks on down the street and they just forget about it. I thought, well, maybe if somebody gets up here and squawks a little bit that at least they will follow through so we don't run into any problems. Of course that's been one of my main concerns and main interests, but I do feel it's going along fine. I'm not unhappy with it, but I just don't think we can say, oh good, we've gotten by three or four years and its going fine." I think we got to watch it every year, and I think we got to watch it very closely. I don't think there has been any great harm done. In fact, in several portions of the program I think it's been done much better than we have ever done.

GB: Okay, getting a little bit onto a different subject. Can you describe some of the meetings of the Boone and Crockett Club, which you have attended, and some of the social get-togethers?

FC: Well I have attended most of the annual meetings, and of course, the system that they have at the annual meetings of the executive meetings and the various committee reports and the acceptance of the visitation of anyone that's a member of the club to these meeting. Normally, your input is always accepted. I feel that that probably is the nicest thing the club does. Of course the social event after our regular meeting gives time for everyone to sit down and tell their stories and get deeply involved in certain projects sort of off the record. To me our annual meetings are fine. I think they're a great thing.

GB: Some of the older members feel that the social get-togethers are almost more important than the business meetings because, like you were saying, the members get a chance to get together and swap stories and the people who live in an area can really explain problems to the other members. Do you feel that that is true?

FC: I don't think that there is any question about it. I think that, after all, you have very professional members, and usually a meeting becomes very professional so you tend not to vary off of the subject. All though once in a while we do seem to get into little orangutans on the side, but I think that the social part really is the strong part. But of course the executive part is a good part because it actually does the feelings of the club. The opportunity of meeting men from opposite parts of the country and with either different or new ideas sure makes it a great social function. I think if we did away with that we'd really be in trouble because it would be too static.

GB: Could you mention some of the great men in the club that you...whom you have had an opportunity to get to know well and work with, and relate a little but about them?

FC: Well of course, I think probably Dr. Rusten is one of my several favorites. He was a busy man that always had time for one more thing, and he was very sincere in his work. He worked very diligently on it, and he had lots of stories. Most of them were fish stories, but every once in a while he'd get a good hunting story in. But I think that of what I would call a western member, I think he contributed a tremendous amount to the Club and sure was an active asset in the Club in all matters. He was very well versed, he does lots of traveling and he's a very capable individual.

GB: Okay, I think it might be worth mentioning here that Dr. Rusten was chairman of the Records Keeping Committee, right?

FC: Yes.

GB: And that's how you came to know him so well. Okay, and I'll look up the years. Are there any other people that you would like to mention that you've worked closely with?

FC: Of course, as I say, I'm going to stick to my group any how because I still like Jack Parker. He has taken over from Dr. Rusten and pursued under the same tactics, and I think this is

important. I have always felt that when you are in a group such as we have that you have to pick your channel. You can be a master of one maybe, but you just can't go helter-skelter through and say, well, I know this and I know that. So of course, that's why I have stuck with that, and Don Hopkins, I think, is the same. He's done an awful lot of work. I think my most friendliest character that we have is old [Duncan] "Dunc" Hodgson. He's always worth a laugh, which I think all the rest of the members know. His ability and actions in the club were very highly thought of. I think that those are some of...as I say of course, there's a lot more. We could go right down the total membership, but as I say, ones that I have sort of a close interest with are...those are some of them.

GB: Okay, getting into conservation items a bit. At a meeting of the Executive Committee in 1965, the Club decided not to accept polar bear for the records until the world's status of this animal was better understood. Did you agree with this decision, and did you help bring it about?

FC: Yes, I think it was a good move. Probably as I say, there again, following each ones endeavor when they had the first...oh, I think it was a whatever you want to call it...a world council on the polar bear, Senator Bartlett from Alaska requested that Bob Reeve and I be members of the council, which we attend in Fairbanks. Let's see, I'm trying to figure who exactly was there. There was Russian, Danish, Canadian, Norway, and I think there was another. I think there was five, but they had representatives. They had there forum where they particularly did not get down to numbers or estimated numbers. They had harvest numbers pretty well and somewhat of a general scope on the numbers of animals, but it was quite interesting of the approach that the nations took. It sort of come out to be a sparring battle with really no results. If I recall correctly, the Danish and the Norwegians at that time were still using set guns on harvest of bear.

GB: What does that mean?

FC: They would go out, and they had a gun that they would bait and when the animal come to the bait they would be disposed of immediately. That wasn't exactly acceptable to the situation. The Canadians—they had their problem that in as much as I think their harvest was the greatest number, so they weren't particularly on a good list. Then the United States wasn't exactly in good setting because that was the time that our main system of harvest or hunting was done with a Super Cub. So it's either a case of a set gun or the greatest number or a Super Cub. Of course, the Russians, which they come out supposedly clean because they say they have no harvest and they take no animals. The only thing is I don't know if we could be sure of it because we didn't interview any of the people that live in the area of the polar bear so I don't whether they did or did not take any and I would not even guess. It was quite an interesting deal. The state of Alaska, at that time, was beginning to work on the methods and means, and I know myself I was in totally opposition to the Super Cub aircraft hunt. I don't think that it has anything to do with hunting. It's a good method of killing, but I don't we could consider it very sportsmen-like. So after that meeting and my entry into the club, that was one of the things

that I felt that we should slow it down and go ahead and regroup and reconsider the problem. I feel that probably in the very near future we will have a hunting of the polar bear again. At that time we can seek out our methods and means, which I think will be much more acceptable to the general public.

GB: Also in 1965, the Club was concerned about and discussed the killing of brown bear through aerial slaughter. How is this problem curtailed and controlled?

FC: See, that's actually of course...I brought down on the polar bear, but actually the same thing was being done with brown bear. They were going ahead and flying through the outlying area and spotting bear and landing and killing them. Whatever. Right after that...Well, let's see, I think it might have been before. The Trophy Club was pushing a strong, fair chase statement which is actually the spotting from the air and further pursuit of the bear or any animal was not considered fair chase. So we had that in, and I think probably the real strong point was that—not in that year but a couple years later—when I was appointed to the Fish and Game board by Governor Hickel, I went to the first game meeting. One of the very first actions that I had taken was the curtailing of hunting big game animals the day you were airborne. If I recall correctly, it was done on bear and sheep. I know that that was...Since I was the one that proposed it all, I know that it came through. Actually, you might say through the Boone and Crockett, because I know that I had a strong supporter there. Not that it was ever mentioned, but in fact, it was never mentioned that they had anything to do with it. I knew the feeling the so I pursued it, and it was quite piecemeal. We have several units in Alaska. We did get it through on the bear and the sheep in all units, but I was pursuing other areas for moose and caribou and so forth. In fact, it goes to be sort of funny because we went through all the regulations, and it was just standard procedure. We voted on the Cook Amendment (?), and so consequently it was a great successful program. So I think that the Boone and Crockett can very quietly be very proud of their support from them and through me on this.

GB: Are there any projects relating to Alaska that the Boone and Crockett Club was involved in that I haven't asked you about?

FC: As I say, with Bob Reeve and Dick and I up here, I think they get a lot of action that that's not publically known. I think that we go back there and we find out ideas and talk to the other men, and we come up here and we pursue them quietly and with no reference. So I don't think I can just go on and say yes, one, two, three, four. I think that we have done a lot, and it was through the Trophy Club and through the membership on the Board of Fish and Game. I think the Trophy Club since Bob and Dick and I are trustees on that that we gracefully pursue the same following, so we have things that come out up here.

GB: There is still a tremendous amount of wilderness area here in Alaska. Do you have any opinion on how some of it can be preserved but still remain open to hunters and outdoorsmen?

FC: Well yes, and this again will have to be done in a program that's accepted by the public. I think that on our wilderness area a lot of people don't realize the tremendous size. Through that we have to probably curtail the methods of entry. Now I think it's being done automatically through the settlement of the federal lands and the state lands, but we have areas that we use a tremendous amount of track vehicles in that I have no qualms, you have to get in somehow. But I feel that rather than random running through an area that we will probably have to come up with a off-the-highway trail program for vehicles. I think as soon as we do that I think that we will really do a great assistance to the game. The main thing we'll do is save the habitat. If we got the habitat, we'll get the game.

Then also we probably will begin to curtail entry into certain area by aircraft, which has been done, but it's been done on a very limited scale. Yet at the same time aircraft entry is one of your best because you disturb practically nothing. So it's quite a complex problem, but I think that's what's got to be done. At the same time, we don't want to close it down to where we have no harvest of animals, whether they be trophy or whatever. You get into certain valleys, and you get an overabundance of any game animal. Sure, I'm not saying they don't migrate to another area, but the trouble is by the time they get out they've ruined everything there and it takes several years for recovery. So you actually have to sort of get in and solve your problem before it happens. I think that that's probably going to be the next big era, will be the entry, and I hope not to a total exclusion because I think we will lose more. I think you'd be better off actually having the tracks and having the harvest as to close it down completely.

GB: Can you at this point give a little bit about the specific statistics of how much land there is here in Alaska and how much is wilderness area and things like that.

FC: Well, it'd have to be pretty wild guessing because I'm going to a meeting tonight that will solve a lot of those questions. Basically, there's over 300 million acres of land, and there's a proposal for park and wilderness. I haven't right at this time got it down, but it appears it would be about 65 million of park land and wilderness. That is an awful lot of land, and to me to close it to hunting, I think would be more detrimental than leaving it open under management. The state lands, of course, will be open, but we have to consider the state has parks, so by the time you keep compounding it, all of Alaska isn't hunting country, so we have to get down to what is actually things that make sense. I could give them 80 million acres, and they could have it. And it wouldn't do anybody any good or any harm, it would be a nothing deal. So I think this is the thing, I think we have to get together and use it wisely, whether it be the Park Service, Forest Service, or wilderness areas, or whatever anybody wants to do because there's room for everybody if we just begin to use our better judgment rather than our selfish motives.

GB: From the very beginning most of the Club members have held high-ranking positions in other conservation organizations also, so that at any given B and C meeting many of the other organizations are represented. Do you feel that this is an important factor in the strength and effectiveness of the Club?

FC: I am sure it's one of our very strong programs where we do have these people because if nothing else it brings continuity and it brings adjustments. Now to me, I have no problem sitting down with someone that, say, is head of the Forest Service because he has his problems and I have mine. I think the best way you do is you sit down and we get together, and we can basically come up with a program that is feasible for both. So I think that whether it be the...or any society or any group I think that when it is, what I call a (unintelligible) group, that does at least adhere to the factors other people in the world and come up with a good program, I think that we can do it much faster by having the coordination of the officials in one spot sort of as a little group rather than out there drumming up their own horn. Because I know one thing, if you go to the Park Service that's pretty hard to get anything other than the straight show. While I think that if you get it in a separate group, I think he begins to wear two hats because then he looks at it maybe from the Park side and from the other side. While to me, if you've got a job and it says do this, you're pretty well confined to do this or you'd be unemployed.

GB: Okay, should the Boone and Crockett Club be involved in trophy hunting in today's conservation-minded world?

FC: I think I've harped on that long enough. I don't think there's any question about it, but I think it has to be done constructively. I think that if we do it that way there's no problem because we do have people that, as I say, every time we get another listing in the book, I say we have another friend.

GB: Can you elaborate a little on the role of the hunter in conservation? Their past role and maybe their present role?

FC: There's no doubt about it that if you have a hunter rather than a killer, I think that he does things that assist, maybe, financially in different clubs. I think the hunter, he belongs to several clubs that have really no direct bearing on hunting. After all, they have families, and they got to have campgrounds. I know that up here, when they got ready to set up some of the campgrounds and they wanted to have it to where people could observe game, they came to me. They says, all right you're a hunter where's all the game? So I said "What for?"

They said, well, we want this so people can see. So actually I sat down with a map and took the road system, and I marked spots where to me would be the place I would put a campground because it'd be the most logical to see a moose or a sheep or a goat or whatever you want to see. I think the hunter, he's not just always a killer, you know. Like last year, I didn't harvest any big game animal, but I am still a hunter. I think that a trophy hunter and a hunter is a great person for the out-of-doors, whether it be camping or hunting or hiking or fishing.

GB: The records keeping program is one of the important things that has made the Boone and Crockett Club famous. Many of its prominent members have resigned because they feel that the Club should no longer be associated with the records. What could take its place as a unique function of the Club?

FC: (Laughs) Nothing that I know of.

GB: The Club's regular membership is, at present, down to 76. What do you think should be done to attract new members of the right quality?

FC: What should be done to attract them? I don't think it's a case we have to attract them. I think it's just a case of finding them. Of course as I say, I'm not exactly pleased that the membership is down as low as it is. I think it's natural to any club to cycle, you get a hot go and you get a new trend and you get people that say that, "Well, that does it. I'm out because I'm not going to put up with that kind of (unintelligible). It's out of class." Well, I think we have to think of the differences in the last hundred years. Even at my young age, I feel in certain aspects I'm obsolete or old fashioned, and we got to stick with it. We just can't give up just because we don't like what the ball game is. So that has nothing to do with the members that dropped. I figure, well that's their business. I really don't particularly care why they quit or if they quit or not. The nice thing about it is, which there's a nice side to everything, and that is we now have the opportunity to gain new members.

I think that as I have brought up in the Club before, not maybe particularly at a very formal time when I had the podium and everybody standing in awe around, but I felt that the quicker we move to get a member from every state, the better off we are going to be. We've got to get people from the West, and there is no question about it, predominantly looking at the membership over the years it has predominantly been an East program. Now the hunting and everything is predominantly in the West, although there is a lot of good trophy hunting in the East. If we use these vacant spots to locate men that live in various states where we have no members, I think we'll come out so strong, it will be fantastic. I don't think that there's any hurry that we have to do it in one day or one week, or one year, or ten years, but I think that we have the opportunity. I know when I went in, I don't think there were many vacancies, and I was very pleased and fortunate to get in at that time. Of course, Bob and Dick and I are, you might say, both the farthest west and the farthest east, but I like to see the Club membership going to the West. Not that I think that we should pull them all out of the East. I'm not interested in that. I think that we should just get spread out to where when we need to know something in Nevada, we got somebody to go to or Arkansas or Florida. I don't care where it is because that's what we are doing now except we go...and as I say, Alaska has three members, which is plenty. But actually when you look at the amount of hunting availability in Alaska, I think it merits the situation. I just think that we're sitting in a perfect position to really enhance the values of the Club for our nation.

GB: In closing, how do you think the Boone and Crockett Club can best continue to carry out its original purposes and retain its position of influence and prominence?

FC: One of the things that'd be—just a very common approach is—I feel that regardless of any particular projects that we take, that we scrutinize them very closely before we act. I think this

is one of the problems that we're having nationally. We jump off into something and find out, my god, it's the wrong road. I think that with a history of the Club's actions, I think this was definitely done. I think that's why we today are fortunate to have the background, and we have to continue this. I have to agree as we get into younger members, they get a little jumpy. They got to do something. They got to make a mark. Well, unless it's a good mark, you better not take it.

I think if we pursue that and pursue possibly a closer role with certain environmental groups that seem to want to go in and not particularly close things down, but be very negative otherwise they're not positive. They don't look to a project that we can all be proud of. They say, this is the road and there's no other road. I think that if we can get with some of these groups now, I know it's going to be tough, but you got to be tough. I think that our whole staff that we have as members are pretty tough. They're good executives, they sit down, they analyze, and they don't particularly back off because of a certain pitfall that's in the way. You have to take the good with the bad, but I think we've got to, in effect, infiltrate these organizations that give us a hard time. I don't mean by going in and spying. I think we should go to them and sit down. I think that if we take the time we can get reasonable cooperation from them, and that would do much better for the game habitat and whatnot in the nation.

Of course, the other thing that I feel that we have to do is spread our membership. We should get as much cover of the United States that we can and Canada and Mexico and get this North American program moving in a very constructive smooth-moving acceptable project to all. To me, we have to definitely get down to taking in younger members. Now I don't mean anyone—teenagers of anything of that nature—but we have a lot of good men coming up and not always do we choose an individual that has lots—

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

[Tape 2, Side A]

FC: As I was saying, if we can get some younger men in and have them get their feet wet and their head beat in in the future years, I think we'll have a very strong club. In addition to this whole program, that I'd like to bring out now that I sort of slipped my mind about was the fact that the awards banquet that now have been held in Atlanta—and of course the most recent one in Denver which was very successful—this ties in with the whole program that the more places we attend, the more public acceptance we will have. That also will assist the Club in becoming a stronger and a more knowledgeable club because we do learn things when we go to these areas. I look forward to many years of visitations throughout the nation.

[End of Interview]