

Maureen and Mike

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**Oral History Number: 431-001**  
**Interviewee: Stewart Brandborg**  
**Interviewer: Matthew Koehler**  
**Date of Interview: March 31, 2010**

Matthew Koehler: What does wilderness mean to you?

Stewart Brandborg: Well, it means the relief that one feels, the spiritual rejuvenation that you get when you're in the high country or in the wide expanses of the desert where the animal community and the plant community are there following natural processes. But a great relief to be in a setting where things are undisturbed by human beings, where you feel the relief of savoring what's there, soaking it up, just the enjoyment, the pleasure. And then the ability to settle in and absorb what's around you, I think, the reflection on the natural world and what we are as intruders upon it. And of course the overwhelming recognition that it's ours to protect and defend in perpetuity. We really can't meddle with it and keep it the way it is. And I think for any advocate, it's a re-firing of your strategies and campaigns to preserve it.

MK: Who came up with the concept for a Wilderness Act to protect these areas, and when did you start working on this Wilderness Act and its passage?

SB: Wilderness law was envisioned by Howard Zahniser. And it was a fair (?) recognition that piece by piece areas of wild country—focusing then more on national forest, primitive areas, administratively designated wilderness and wild areas—the fact that there were these intrusions, non-conforming uses that Bob Marshall had recognized as he went around the country seeking to get administrative protection in the first real significant wild country set aside, so primitive areas. This was going on. And the Wilderness Society documented the case in the *Living Wilderness* magazine, which Zahniser edited and put together. It was a piecemeal but steady attrition that was taking a heck of a toll.

Zahniser involved me not too long after I'd come to Washington in 1954. I called him innocently inquiring about the Dinosaur National Monument and the encroachment on the national park system that was involved in the construction of Echo Park Dam. Zahniser saw me as an easy target—with my feeling for wild country and my experience in wild country and what we had in common in appreciation of it—to involve me in that dialog. I was working as assistant conservation director for the Wildlife Federation. This would have been probably late '54, '55. I began to travel with Zahniser on the Hill. I had a great freedom to throw into that battle for the protection of the integrity of the national park system.

Here was Echo Park Dam, part of the upper Colorado River Storage Project, massive pressures in the South and West to develop water. And Zahniser was the mainstay leader in that campaign with Dave Brower. They were in close partnership and alliance. I was given the

opportunity by my boss, who was himself a great advocate, Charles H. Callison, the conservation director of the National Wildlife Federation.

I travelled with Zahniser in the succeeding years, I suppose in '55 and in the late summer, early fall of '56. He took me to the governing council meeting of the Society, where I became a governing part of the council of the Wilderness Society with, same year that Sigrud Olson was invited to join that body. But here were the old-timers that had really been the mainstays in founding the society: Bernard Frank, Harvey Broome, Ernest Olberholtzer. Broome and Olberholtzer had been with Bob Marshall when they conceived the idea of the Wilderness Society down in the Smokies in Tennessee. Zahniser just pulled me in, and I was clay to be molded by him.

I had enjoyed the best of the wilderness over 12 years and as a kid with a dad who loved wild country, had great experience in it from the time he was in his twenties: Glacier Park and the Forest Service in 1914. He associated with that great group of people that were beginning to feel that the wilderness had to be protected. But I had not identified the term until I fell into that great influence of Zahniser, Zahney as we called him.

MK: You mentioned you spent 12 years in the wilderness researching wildlife. In which wilderness areas and what were you researching?

SB: Basically over 12 seasons, starting at age 17: backcountry lookouts, Polaris Peak near Kellogg, Ward Mountain, Deer Mountain, training lookouts, maintaining trail, maintaining telephone lines. And then going into timber survey, range survey work on the advice/pressure of my dad who said, "You want to diversify your experience." At one point I wanted to be a Smokejumper. He had all the old boys lobbying to say, "No, you need to know range, you need to know what we're doing with timber." So I went with that strong influence and got a really great background. And the standpoint of later years understanding those things.

In 1947, coming back from a year, previous summer on a range survey, a guy named Robert K. Speer (?) had a goat study in the headwaters of the Bob Marshall, the Red Buttes. He said, "I need somebody with range background. Can you come?" And Bob and I lived up on the Red Buttes right near Molly Creek Pass, a tent camp made daily for raising the goats. Nice little bunch of goats, 30, 40 head, and we watched them. So they were our own little band of special animals. Wonderful grizzly experiences, Chinese wall, really the best.

Then the following spring, picking up on that for the Montana Fish and Game Department. Travelled these west side canyons on snowshoes—travel, airplaned—counting the goats this side of Big Creek on up on every canyon—April I think it was—trying to get a population reading on the little bands that were and are still wintering on the south aspects of each of these canyons. So all that had given me a real feeling for being there.

You know, from the mountain goat to the beaver to the grizzly, it took me a long time to get out of undergraduate work: four and two-thirds year, wildlife biologist. And then an opportunity: the University of Idaho started up a wildlife research unit, and they came by with a magnificent fellowship that paid something like 78 bucks a month (laughs) for a couple of years work there. And that took me to the Salmon River where, you know, the community: goats, bighorns, elk, mule deer, lovely populations of bear and all of the...That was a great year wintering down on the end of the Tin Cup, the Salmon River Road, Polson Creek near the mouth of the Middle Fork.

Anyway, that was deep in me as background. Then I worked as the big game biologist for the last year or so for the Fish and Game Department from the Salmon River to the Canadian line, which was, you know, this tremendous bunch of country to work and about which was laughable. You couldn't accurately cover the Clearwater, Selway, Elk, the St. Joe Elk. You really didn't know what was going on. Except for the old-time game wardens, and some had been poachers. They knew those mountains. They'd snowshoed up and down the Selway. They knew the country, and I had a great respect for that. I could mine those guys as they mined me. There was a great fear on the part of the old-timers of the young, smart—disrespectful sometime—biologists. That was no problem. I just really bonded with those characters and put 'em in circles and said, "Okay, we got the elk season coming up. What do we know? What do we want to do?" It was a relationship in which I gained great respect for their wisdom and knowledge and their feeling for wilderness, although the word was not used throughout all of that.

Well, back on the subject, Zahniser got through Echo Park Dam. It took years. In the process, he and Dave were in partnership. I was there as somebody that was in the Wildlife Federation, but my boss let me travel with Zahniser in the Senate to lobby. The big battle first was in the Senate. But finally that culminated with a vote. John Kennedy stood up—we lost our first speakers on the Senate floor—I remember on crutches, he spoke for stopping the invasion of the national park system. The first one—a precedent-setter by the Bureau of Reclamation—that vote was close. We didn't make it, but it prepared us for the House fight. What they had done...

MK: What year was that first vote in the Senate?

SB: I'm not precise. '59, '59, somewhere in that range.

MK: So quite a few years before the Wilderness Act passed in '64.

SB: The Wilderness Act hadn't been conceived. He didn't get to it. He fought this with all of his life. And as I said, I was involved in (inaudible) to lobby. I remember on Saturday going with the Zahniser family, his kids, and we distributed a great flyer to every Senate office. And that was to prove I was part of the family. And his kids were young, I mean these were children. Of course they could walk into an office and there was none of the tragic concern you have now about the violence. It was kind of a pleasant, bright sunny day.

So the media, with the help of a man by the name of (inaudible) in St. Louis, had been exploited by Dave and Zahney, full page ads, and (inaudible) *New York Times*, papers in the Midwest, I think some in the...But big ads mobilizing people. They'd also used direct mail extensively, a real lobbying campaign with organizations that were activist in the sense of not being burdened by 501c3 restrictions: do it now, put pressure on those members of Congress who have the responsibility. And that succeeded.

Well, that technology came in beautifully for Zahniser. It was his training ground, our training ground for the wilderness bill. And the wilderness bill was written by him at his dining room table, like this one that we're sitting at now, in pencil on a white lined tablet. It wrote easily. Here was the first draft.

I believe I might have looked at that first draft or an early draft. I didn't have enough background. As the assistant conservation director of the National Wildlife Federation, I'd been introduced to Congress and the legislative process. When I first got into town from Idaho where I sat on a mountain looking at the elk through binoculars or studying the goats, what a cultural adjustment this was. I had a hell of time getting from the National Wildlife offices in the northern part of the District on the (inaudible) to the Capitol and back driving myself. In fact I depended upon cabs most of the time.

But the point is that he drafted it, he took it to good people in the agencies—and there's a lot of stories there—but wilderness-minded people in the agencies: a man named Dick Griffith of Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge Branch. "Read it, tell me how to make it better." And the first draft said that all wild lands—the parks, the refuges, national forests—un-roaded wild lands except for the primitive areas and wilderness would go in automatically. The first drafts, in other words if you had a park, the wild parts of that area or a refuge would automatically go in. That didn't get through early evolution of the bill. But John Saylor, Pennsylvania, a banker, conservative bent, was the valiant leader in the House; Hubert Humphrey, great liberal zealot, great person to savor the wilderness and see the concept: the two sponsors.

What happened then was the phenomenal experience. Zahniser, with a gentle persuasiveness that typified the man, secured the lists of all the conservation organizations. Wildlife Federation, of which I was a part then, had the big list that made the money. They sent out sheets of stamps, an idea brought out by Ding Darling who had headed the refuge program under FDR and had a great commitment in the sense that he said any piece of undesignated federal land, let's get it into the refuge system; I don't care if it's a spit off the tip of Florida or out from San Francisco, let's get it. And he did. Well, they made great money on this stamp, \$300,000. The Izaak Walton League, Audubon, National Parks Association called in, titled in. All of these groups gave lists and Zahniser mailed (inaudible), government paid the postage, no postage paid, brown envelopes designated from John Saylor or Hubert Humphrey to these 4 or 500,000 people. It must have been in the neighborhood of 500,000 because the smaller lists were 30, 40. The Federation, as I said, was 300. That went out.

Well, not only did he do that, but then we had a Senate hearing, brought in people from over the country testifying from the heart, "Here's what wilderness means to me..." from the birdwatcher to the wilderness advocate to the scientist to the grazers. The grazers recognized it as protection against loss of cattle and protection of grazing lands, and it did have a provision to allow, ultimately, grazing in the wilderness. This went out, as did subsequent hearings and subsequent developments.

So all of the sudden, through this strategy, you had hundreds of thousands of people saying wilderness is number one. Clean air, clean water were coming through, but wilderness was one of the five major issues. And every member of Congress with the complimenting of that good literature by lobbying citizen organizations, not tax-exempt, saying get your message into this member of the subcommittee or the full committee. Gracie Pfost who was chairman of the Public Land Subcommittee and who was from Idaho confided in me at one point when we reached a culmination five years, six years into it that the Congress of the United States had received more mail on the wilderness bill than on any time on any issue in the history of the Congress. So that was phenomenal.

MK: And without one email being sent out.

SB: In the absence of email. Oh (?) God bless us all. That's why I still resist email basically (laughs).

MK: So I'm struck by the fact that when the Wilderness Act finally passed in '74, there was only one dissenting vote in the Congress. So what were the major obstacles to the passage? Were there any people, any industries saying these hundreds of thousands of people contacting Congress have it all wrong and we really don't want wilderness?

SB: They were there in force from the minute the wilderness bill got exposed to the light of day. Initially, one of the former, one of the associate chiefs of the Forest Service was given a copy when he sent this out to agencies saying tell me how to make it better. And one of those guys, a very able operative, Ed Crafts, distributed it to industry. And when I went down as a young guy to the North American conference—Zahniser didn't go—dozens of people had it. And wilderness was targeted by the major industries of the country: oil, mining, logging, U.S. Chamber of Commerce. And quite a few of the so-called conservation organizations said, "Well we really don't know that we need anything but a simple statement that wilderness is good and that where we can, we should save it." We knew that was misleading and that was the opposition. Oh, a tremendous onslaught of testimonials at the hearings, the industry fighting it from the get-go, the first hearing.

But we could outnumber them with this job that had been done through direct mail and the mobilization of good, fighting calls for action from the citizen groups that we, Zahniser had put together, Brower had put together. Because they were carrying the burden of not being able to

say straightforwardly to their membership, "Get this legislation through." There was a great vagueness in the IRS law that caused all of the so-called tax-exempt C3 organizations to be cautious. And there was a great preoccupation on the minds of the teams of people, conservation leaders, about not getting on thin ice and losing tax-exempt status.

Concentrated effort, a meeting of these people—and I again was young watching this—one of them, one meeting involving a guy that's long since forgotten, Spencer Smith. He headed the Citizens for, I think Citizens for Conservation. Anyway one meeting was held in the home of Mrs. Gifford Pinchot. She was an elderly lady, but I don't know how Spencer got us there. But oh really worried about this. So when you wanted to make a hard-hitting appeal to good people, you went to your C4 organization. And that was a big pain.

You could explain in the magazine: here. You did that, and I did it later: "Here's what conservationists are saying, here's what opponents are saying, now you write your congressman, tell him what you think. And that was the way you, and that's ultimately without clarification of the bill, I as the head of the Wilderness Society faced that. You had hundreds of areas coming in through the review process proscribed in the law. Where it all came through to Congress and you sure as hell, you had to get all of those good citizens that were behind you to put the heat on the members of Congress, pour the hot oil down their backside to make them do what they should for the lord and the public interest. So that (laughs).

So were they after us. And then they took us, they got Chairman Aspinall to take us to field hearings. And they thought...Well we have these great Washington hearings, we can bring the people in. And this is rounding a lot of corners and broad generalization, but we can win. The hearings for them were a catastrophe because we could get all these great advocates there. They said, "Well we'll go to the field hearings." So away we went to the hearings, places like McCall, Idaho and Reno. They could get the miners, the stockman and everybody, and then chambers of commerce. Then of course what we did was get out there and scramble among these great citizens and get them. We could whip them into field level (?), and we did. That took a big stretch. I was part of it. That's where we got introduction to grassroots.

MK: And this was the early '60s then? '62, '63?

SB: That was the early '60s, late '50s. That was early '60s probably.

MK: So even when the opponents of wilderness, they thought, well let's go to rural America and see what people think. You folks, through grassroots organizing, go your people in the small towns in Idaho, in Montana, and throughout the West, to show up and support wilderness.

SB: Example: Ted Trueblood of Boise and I took my goat pictures and made a tour up through to Northern Idaho, stopping at every rotary, every high school class, every bird club we could. Of course we had Gracie Pfoest there and ultimately Frank Church who became a great advocate. But that was the way it was done. So you went out there, and you just did a systematic job of

finding leaders, conservation leaders, they were pretty much aboard. You laid out the reality of hey, we got to load this damn hearing and let them know. They wouldn't be appreciated sometimes by the presiding chairman, but to just say what you believed and what was in your heart and supporting the bill. And that's what happened. So those hoops were successfully handled. We had this great sentiment, and these people responded when you let them have a call for encouragement to their members of Congress.

And of course you defined the role of the congressman. The ones that were tough, didn't always win those. And you never really won as much enthusiasm out of the House Committee as in the Senate. In the Senate, you had the leaders like Clinton Anderson, Lee Metcalf, Frank Church that eventually came to the top. And you had some good Republicans. Same in the House. We tried to make it and consistently made it bipartisan. Saylor, example: republican; Hubert Humphrey: liberal.

But in the Senate we had a nucleus of hard leadership. We had a man that had worked as staff for the Senate that was integral to the whole process: Benton Stong. And he was our unofficial advisor, Zahniser's. He looked at everything we did, was our conduit to strategy, gave his heart to it. He had two loves: saving agricultural land for farmers and working for that, and the wilderness bill. We wouldn't have had the wilderness bill without the contribution of Benton Stong. He was that important. And he's the unrecognized source of so much of our strategy. Somehow, we've got to get out some history on that man. He succumbed while I was still there in Washington, before '76.

MK: So were there people who said the Wilderness Act, it's a good concept but it's just too much; it's too radical? Were there people pressuring you both within the conservation movement or maybe politically, saying you folks need to make compromises here; you need to allow roads into these wilderness areas or you need to allow some development? Were there pressures like that? And how did your team handle those pressures?

SB: The tireless persuasion of Zahniser to sit with anybody.

But the American Forestry Association, which had been founded by Pinchot as the fighting arm for the national forest, over the years had been taken over by the national lumbering circle, the hierarchy of the conservatives in the Forest Service. And that was their line that you really don't need it, and that's in their magazine if we had the energy and the time to look. All kinds of that stuff: ah, you don't need that.

And the fact is that if you didn't have a law, if you didn't have a national wilderness system, if you didn't have policy to say this will be protected in perpetuity for the American people, you couldn't hold the line. It was being lost piece by piece as people did whatever the local administrators or the local pressures would put through, dictate. And those outfits in the early years and consistently were relentless. Of course I have never seen the US Chamber of Commerce or its local entities do one damn thing that was really significant for the



environment. You can depend on them for being on the wrong side. But that's just a small personal prejudice. We'll run into quite a few of those. Now does that answer your point, or am I...?

MK: Oh yeah. So in '64—the bill was passed in September, wasn't it, of '64— and passed by President Johnson at that time?

SB: Yeah, the bill had been through this long, arduous seven years. JFK had come through, had talked to the chairman of the House Committee. He was the obstacle. It had passed the Senate twice, second time around in the House. JFK had said, "Wayne, I want the wilderness bill." Well, when the president tells you that...Then, of course, there were the guys on the Senate side.

MK: Wayne who?

SB: Wayne Aspinall. "Wayne, I want the damn bill." Wayne was tough—west slope of Colorado congressman—and astute—able progeny when you went to testify in front of him. One time, when I had become executive director, after the bill—this is just, it's in that hearing record here—he'd asked me something I didn't have the right answer to or not the answer I wanted to give. So I took him into the tall lodgepoles on a snowy day where there was no relief—you couldn't see a mountain, you couldn't see anything but snow on my snowshoes—and circled around a couple of times. He said, "Mr. Brandborg, that doesn't tell me what I want to know, so I'll restate the question." So I took him through another circle and he then came back, "You haven't clarified the point." Then I took him on another circle and he said, "Mr. Brandborg, I give up on you." That's in one of these damn hearing records; I just throw that in there.

Aspinall had said no, we ain't gonna have a wilderness bill unless we do two things: extend the mining mandate for, I think it was 19 years, so you can go into the dedicated wilderness of the national forest, lay a claim, and go ahead with plans for extraction. That's one. The other was you're not gonna put in all of these other lands; the only things that you're gonna put into the wilderness system with the initial passage are the 9 million acres of the administratively designated wilderness and wild areas. Primitive areas and any other wilderness has to come later. He later got busy and said, "We ain't taking any de facto wilderness. You gotta finish the primitive areas."

Cecil Garland of Lincoln put through the Lincoln scapegoat over his dead body. And at a training session of citizens, 20 of them approximately we brought into Washington, we had lunch with Wayne Aspinall for letting our grass-rooters get acquainted with Congress. This Cecil Garland—brilliant operative—built this campaign over the dead bodies of the Forest Service to save this Lincoln backcountry, said, "Congressman, what do you do when you've got a de facto area that you want to go ahead and get into the wilderness system despite your mandate that only primitive areas will go in?"

Aspinall said, "Just exactly what you're doing."

What he'd done was get Metcalf and Mansfield to say, "Wayne, don't send anything over," — Mansfield being the president of the Senate—"Don't send anything over until we get this Lincoln scapegoat wilderness in."

Aspinall just told Wayne, "Exactly what you're doing. No taking the laundry, Wayne."

MK: So at that time, Montana had true wilderness champions representing us in the Senate with Mansfield, Metcalf...

SB: We had a wilderness champion in Cecil and Doris Milner, my dad, Loren Kreck that we lost two days ago; these people were there and we had a Wilderness Association that was vibrant, led by a wonderful couple from Bozeman. Their name's slipping away from me. Damn it.

MK: So Zahniser never quite made it to the passage; he passed away before it was passed, right?

SB: The house hearings were completed and the deal had been made. "Okay, we'll give on those two points," separate consideration, legal action by Congress on all the additions: park, wildlife refuge, national forest, primitive, and roadless areas, whatever, and the mining. And we'd had a good hearing. Zahniser was his articulate self. He had a working relationship with Aspinall. Aspinall liked him, came to the funeral home after he'd passed. I don't think he was at the funeral but he visited the family.

Zahney—I think it was the concluding night of the hearings, maybe it was a night or two later—came home, had had dinner at the Cossman's (?) Club where we rendezvoused to make medicine on the Wilderness Act. The place that was a block from our old offices, modest offices, upstairs, downstairs, narrow building. Put his shoes on the stairs as he went up and then went out in the night, just one terrible spasm. So the bill then went through, and I was out with a council meeting in August up on the Flathead at the Bud Cheff ranch.

MK: August of '64?

SB: August '64. Had four kids, a dog, and a raccoon in the Volkswagen bus; it'd been a hell of a trip. And the coon, or the dog got left a third of the way, first stop in North Dakota. We had to double back to get the dog. I did that with an airplane, wind blowing.

Anyway we'd just gotten there just in time for a successful meeting, and the conference took place. And I went back for the conference bill. Frank Church, Saylor, Anderson, Ben Stong being insightful and doctored up the bill. Number one: everything we had to keep, fight for. Number two: very important, keep it. Number three: not so important, give it away if you have to. Number four: give it away, it's easy trade and stock. We came out pretty well on that. I have a

copy of that marked bill for your future studies of those priorities. It may have only three priorities.

But anyway we prevailed. And I was still in the, I came back to take the kids home on the time of the signing ceremony. That's why I didn't have my mug pressed into the front of the camera in the row in that wonderful assemblage with LBJ. LBJ always made a great ceremony: wild rivers, other things he'd drag you in. That's how I have this picture of my paw and his as I passed through the line of the signing ceremony on the East Wing of the White House. So it was a culmination. And everybody said, "Oh the Wilderness Act, we got it. We're done." And then it was our charge. And I thought, "What the hell do we do now?"

MK: So after it was passed and after Zahniser's passing, you became the executive director of the Wilderness Society from '64 to '76. So tell us about how did you mobilize people during that period, after the act had passed, to really fulfill the act? Because the Wilderness Act wouldn't have been fulfilled if people had just walked away in '64 and said, "Our work is done." Right?

SB: That's the impression people had. And I really pondered that, and of course had put out the Wilderness Act handbook in the magazine and mailers, and "Let's roll up our sleeves." But that's about like email is today. You get a lot of it and ho-hum, not particular response. So I really didn't know.

I remember I was riding the train from the capitol out to Gaithersburg at that point. And I remember just sitting on that train saying, "Where do we go now?" And deep in my system was my dad's faith in people. If you take good people, you give them the message, they'll do what things require to get accomplished. And I came down that the only thing to do was to go out and get in touch with these people. So I got a, I think in maybe February, I got a season ticket with Frontier Airlines that let you travel from Montana down the frontier, served the little communities of the Rockies. And you could get a 100 dollar ticket and stop wherever you wanted and go from one end to the other. And I did.

MK: And this was February of '65 then?

SB: Right. And that's what I did. I had the damn membership cards for these western states. And I don't know how many stops I made, half a dozen or maybe more, but ended up in Tucson. And I'd call these people and say who I was and they'd recognize me from their membership. And I'd say, "Can we have breakfast," or "Can we have lunch," or "Can I come over to see ya?"

Sometimes I'd go see them and say, "Let's get, can you get some other folks here?" We'd get a half a dozen or ten together and I would take 'em through the rigmarole that they had to go look at this primitive area or this refuge, decide where the lines and boundaries should be, get other people involved, and getting good background, biological and other information, being in touch with the congressman, developing a media campaign to let the public and the state know that this thing is coming through, and then of course being persuasive with the local

congressman and the senators. So that was the beginning of the grass roots program that ultimately saved us.

We grew from that and I used social psychologists to help us develop a three day program where you'd go into a state—sometimes they'd have an issue like a highway through a lovely city park—train on any issue, ideally of course it was wilderness. But to say, "Well, what are we gonna do?" Take them through a process, starting show up for dinner Friday night, spend Saturday to after lunch Sunday. How do we strategize: A) to get the hard facts of the case, good data, the good supporters involved provide that data, developing the case, influencing the decision makers, bringing the agencies along as far as you can get them to go, building a media campaign, finding money, educational outreach to the public. Then of course culminating in getting as much out of the agencies you could at agency hearings before the agency went into the department head, Interior of Agriculture, that then going through the bureau, the budget to the White House; the White House finally submitting to Congress and both House and Senate committees having to take it up and hold hearings. People just took to that. They're smart, able people and they did it with just the most sophisticated, down-to-earth, pragmatic approach you could envision. And from that we grew into another dimension of work with citizens which I'll talk about another time.

But that was the implementation. We found that a couple of our people going out ahead of time, building on the core, and having those people do much to put that participatory effort together. Putting people in circles, what works, what doesn't work, coming out at the end of the week with their work plan. So the state leaders said, "Gee, we wrote this prescription for designating our wilderness. Now we can implement it." Well, the bottom line on that was empowerment. You have these great people within our constituencies, but most don't know how to move into the political realm.

If I had one severe criticism of our social movements generally, including the wilderness movement today, we're not investing in empowerment—showing people how much power they have if they can use their different backgrounds, their different skills. Different individuals integrate us into a planning effort. People have great wisdom; if they learn to pool that and come out with specific ideas, build those into a campaign, learn to disagree. Of course the big thing is have fun in the process. The jubilation and the joy that comes from saying, "Hey, look at us. Look what we're doing for the world." That's the fulfillment there. You see people catch fire.

Now you've got lawyers and biologists—since I used to be one—some people that are technocratically trained and invaluable but they were behind the door when the lord passed the stuff out on how to work with other people, much less how to handle their own psyches constructively. They are incisive, their invaluable on doing certain work on the issues: legal, biological, you name all of the technical, even the media. But when it comes to working with other people...

That was the criterion we used for much of our touring. We wanted people of dedication and commitment, having had a lot of scars and experience to see what, to see that good things would happen. But the third criterion was does the individual have what it takes to relate to other people. And while he or she might be invaluable, and you place high value on what they've done and their commitment, you're looking for the man or woman who says, "Hey, I'll take what I know and see if I can bring this to other people and let them be exposed to it, learn the processes and do what I know I could do, the whole range of things that are employed in any strategy to bring political, social change put through legislation: save the river, save a wilderness. See if I can have that person learn all of these skills so that he or she will be just as good as I. That my measure of success will be that person's coming into full bloom, doing all these things that she's capable of.

MK: So the grassroots organizing and the concept of empowering people to stand up and speak out on behalf of wilderness in their own lives and their own parts of the world. When the Wilderness Act was passed in '64, was it 9 million acres that were originally designated? When you left the Wilderness Society in '76, how much wilderness was designated at that point through this empowering people and giving them the tools to...?

SB: We originally thought if we got 50 million acres, 55. Because of leadership, people in my office. One guy that came and went by the name of John Hall, he had been in Alaska, was, I think, a native. He said, "By God, what's going on in Alaska? Native Claims Settlement—first statehood—then Native Claims Settlement. That's, boy, we've got it up there." So I don't know exactly where we were when I left in '76, maybe close to that target.

MK: Of 50, 55 million acres?

SB: Yeah, maybe a little over. They had the process, the people. We'd been into dozens of states, and we were feeling pretty heady because we were slick, able lobbyists. And while we portrayed both sides of the issue and we avoided printed material that said, "Matt, get out there and get 50 wires on Metcalf's desk by tomorrow morning or whatever." We were careful. We would do that by phone. And that became important that we had done it by phone because Chuck, in the Nixon White House—gosh, his name'll come in a second—went to prison for being part of the undercover.

MK: With the Nixon administration?

SB: With the Nixon administration. Anyway, we took 'em on and the house floor fight (?) one national forest, no the National Timber Supply Act, industries. He sicked the IRS on us, and we went through two or three years of tough examination. Once Nixon left, a couple weeks later, the IRS—we'd had to appeal it to the regional office—they called and said, "Forget it."

MK: So this was early '70s: 72, 3, 4? Around then?

SB: That was early... '70 was the National Environmental Policy Act. Nixon incidentally put through a lot of good environmental stuff. He signed onto it.

MK: But someone in the Nixon administration had it out for the Wilderness Society?

SB: Hold on, this guy that was a friend in the White House... Why the hell his last name slipped because he's inner circle on the Watergate cover-up... Chuck, it'll come. I had a rapport with him because Park Service was dragging its feet on designating the national park areas, ten year deadline dictated by the law for this work. And he was helping on that, other things. Comes the National Timber Supply Act and I discovered that Romney, head of HUD, the father of the guy that's now so prominent in the Republican Party, had endorsed it. And I called Chuck's office and his lady said, "Ah Chuck, Ralph Hodges of National Lumber Manufacturing is handling that for Chuck."

I knew where he was getting bad information from the other side. So I said—I'm slipping on her name, too, because she was quite helpful—I said, "Well, we need to get over there today. He's off, but can't you see..." And so she arranged the appointment.

I took Pink Gudemuth (?) and a guy from Trout Unlimited that had been hired by Otto Teller, Salzman, with me. And we went over to the offices, the executive office building. And they just raised hell. Nixon had announced NEPA, it was the environmental decade, and, "If you do this, the damn, the president is gonna be embarrassed, and it's gonna be a terrible showdown." They did a wonderful job of really scaring Chuck.

The result was that Chuck got busy and called a meeting of all the conservationist for the following Tuesday which happened to be George Washington's birthday day. And Sail (?) and a lot of people and Nixon met with the group—that's in this picture in here with the conservationists—at which time Nixon went around the table and saying, "What's your issue?"

"Well, the wilderness reviews, we're trying to get them done." People had water, grazing land, all the other things, but that was mine. "They were supposed to be completed, and we need your support in seeing that the park service does this."

He pointed to one of the guys seated on the, "See that that gets done."

It went around the room, and Nixon was beautiful. Stuff happened, including ultimately firing the director of the National Park Service that said Brandborg, Alderson and Frome got him canned.

But in the meantime, they went ahead and sought this bill on a house floor fight (?). It had come out of the committee. I went to John Dingell, the guy that's still there, oldest surviving member of the Congress, said, "John, we got a three alarm fire."

He said, "Well, I'll get you some office space."

So we got office space in the House office building, I think the Longworth, I'm not sure. So we set up office, and we brought in 30 citizen lobbyists. Brock Evans was there. Everybody had a sheet for the congressman—435 sheets. If he was good, give him encouragement. Had a battery (?) phone, call him out. "Hey, he's wrong, get the heat on him." We defeated, after—we had several days—we defeated the damn bill.

MK: The timber supply bill?

SB: It went down.

MK: The mandated bill.

SB: So that's when Chuck—I keep thinking of...Look at that damn thing. Now that's a little digression.

MK: So what, you know, jumping to modern times, so Wilderness Act was passed in '64, there were additions made throughout the US, obviously a lot of additions made in Canada. It seems...

SB: In Alaska.

MK: In Alaska, yes. It seems like a lot of the talk nowadays, especially around here in Montana, the train of thought is, "Well, we haven't had wilderness designated in a long time. Well, we better just make compromises to wilderness or make compromises to other public lands management. Give the timber industry some of what they want, give the motorized recreation crowd a little bit of what they want. And we'll just get these so-called quid pro quo wilderness bills passed such as Senator Tester's Forest Jobs and Recreation Act. Based on your experience, really working on wilderness policy for what, 55, 60 years now, what do you feel about this modern push for quid pro quo wilderness and what do you think that will do to the wilderness system another 50 years from now if that's truly an approach that people decide is worthy of pursuing?

SB: Well, that kind of compromise comes from development interests. That is the modern version of the Sagebrush Rebellion, people who don't want any effective protection of land to interfere with their exploitative commercial activities. It's always been there; it will always be with us. But the drift of people into that kind of illogical compromise does jeopardize wilderness because as you know we have only so much roadless land left here and in Alaska.

After we'd invested heavily in Alaska, getting the national interest land language—took a great part of the resources of the Wilderness Society and its staff. And its staff had grown and we had a crew. And we had these cooperators that we'd trained, some from all over the country. They

were very skillful lobbyists. And we'd had a program to train people, bringing them into Washington. That was sort of the forum program. So you could apply a pressure.

People in the state of naive lack of experience drift into this logic, and they are the prey of the compromising interests. The insidious fact of life is the lumber industry, the mining industry, you name the rest, want a development. They are the instigators of this kind of movement. They have been defeated repeatedly. They will continue to be defeated if the public interest is adequately represented by the myriad good people that we have if we do one thing: let people see the clear choices. It's no different than in Pinchot's day or my dad's day. If you let the people see this is in the public interest and this is a violation of the laws and the long term public land of values that should be owned and shared by the people of this country.

So I see the Tester bill as something that will not survive because it does violate every precept that's given us our basic laws for the national forests, the parks, the refuges, and the BLM. We have good, organic legislation. And this brings us into a period when those precepts, those administrative procedures are overwritten, as you well know, by any member of Congress who says, "Ah, I'm going to proscribe for the Beaverhead and Kaniksu. What should happen? These are national forests. I'm going to tell and I'm going to involve these naive people with a cabal of industry instigators, the best lawyers that we can hire from the exploitive interests to develop language that will go through congress." Well, the people must rise. And the people will rise if we just do our job as citizen advocates.

MK: It's interesting, I've heard some of the folks supporting this Tester bill look back at the work that you've done and Zahniser and you mentioned Brock Evans and sort of refer to all you folks as "old school" and, "No, there's a new way of doing things." But what strikes me is it's pretty old school to say that politicians and those who curry political favors, special interest groups, should be the ones that dictate our public lands management. Isn't that the way public lands were originally managed and why we had to have things such as NEPA and your father who was instrumental in passage of the National Forest Management Act? So it's almost as if these people with the quid pro quo wilderness strategy, they don't really want to take us forward. In some ways, they want to take us back to a time when there was this iron triangle with more industry and special interest and the politicians who leaned very heavily on the agency to get done what they wanted to do, sort of to hell with the land or what other people thought. What's your thoughts about that?

SB: I think your summary is right on target from the time of Pinchot. He fought the lumber barons, he fought corporate influence. We fight it today. Some people today within the liberal sector are calling it corporate communism. It isn't much short of that because it espouses that fact that money making enterprise should dominate anything else, that the public's ownership of these lands should not prevail, that we will take from the lands whatever we can profit from. So people that drift into this are right back into the trap that clever forces, big media investment, big campaigns to seduce good people, take us to with illogical sacrifice of what belongs to the public.



And I guess your depiction of the proponents, say, of the Tester bill is accurate, “Oh it’s that old illogical group, those old-timers that want to defend the wild country of Montana.” Well that is not too new either because your traditional opponents of the public interests seek to polarize, to show that the advocates of the public interest is the extremist side. And of course one thing we have is people. If we apprise people and (inaudible). If we have the people, we have the power. And we have to lead those people, give them direction, and show them above all else what they can do and empower them, and turn them loose on the world.

MK: So your father, Guy Brandborg, got his start in the Forest Service in 1914 and then in 1935 he moved you and your family to the Bitterroot Valley because from ‘35 to ‘55 he was a supervisor of the Bitterroot National Forest. So what were some of your early memories of the Bitterroot Valley during the ‘30s?

SB: Well, as a ten-year-old in ‘35, the use of the river bottoms which were quarter of a mile from our house. The braiding of the river in many channels and a place to roam around and look at the beaver and the muskrat and the ducks. A great influence of two parents that loved nature, dogs, horses, the community of wonderful animals that we can be exposed to, in the domestic areas and then in the wild. But really loving the outdoors and the pack trips into the wilderness in the years before I was ten living in Grangeville. Pack trips into the Hells Canyon, Seven Devils country of the Snake River with my sister and mother week or two at a time. Camping on the Clearwater, family camp trip when the great holocaust fire broke out, the Pekin (?) Fire on the lower Selway and the lower Lochsa that took that out where you now see the recovery of the land and the conifers coming back. We were camped there when my dad was pulled to that fire, so my mother took us home and it continued for about a month when he was watching that thing take off. Of course, nobody could really touch it. They brought in hundreds of people, much like our current conflagrations when we get a truly bad fire season. Continuation of those back country experiences with my dad riding from the Burnt Fork east of Stevensville to the headwaters of the east fork in the Pintlers, going over the west side from Lost Horse Creek when they were building the road over into the Selway by way of Wahoo Mountain, Indian Lake, Moose Creek, up the Selway to White Cap back over coming out on White Cap, Boulder Creek in the Bitterroots. These were great times for me and it was early, early exposure to the wild country.

MK: Was there a lot of wildlife in those times? I know in other parts of the country in the ‘30s and ‘40s there actually...a lot of the wildlife was wiped out. How were wildlife populations here?

SB: The wildlife was there. The populations were good; they’d recovered. There was no...just what the normal encounter—a little bunch of elk or mule deer. The trapping in the creeks was still pretty active. Fur had gone up and down, but nice beaver populations, et cetera. So that was very invaluable experience and you know background. Of course, ultimately I fell into the influence of a fine parasitologist at the Rocky Mountain Lab who took me and a half a dozen of my male cronies on field trips on the weekend. I got exposed to a team of wildlife biologists

that had come up under Dr. Philip Wright to do some sampling of Columbian ground squirrels on the east side of the valley. I think it was a study of the reproductive development of these ground squirrels at different elevations, so we were harvesting ground squirrels at 5500 feet, 6500 feet, you know. I don't know whether it got published, but I got exposed to this bunch of wildlife with half a dozen graduate students. Good fun. I made the great decision as you did, would I be a political activist, and I was about to after two years become a political scientist, or a biologist. I took the pleasant course of being a biologist.

Then through the years, I started working for the game departments. So that is how I drifted in without using the word wilderness. It would certainly be used in that time, but the occasion of Robert Marshall coming through. He'd walked from the Selway River, up over the divide, White Cap Creek, into Boulder Creek, some 40 odd miles in a day. He was here reconnoitering this part of the country and sat at this table. My mother had cooked dinner, and he and my dad had a great animated conversation. I knew it was hot and heavy. I don't think I was tracking very much. Similarly the time Pinchot on his trip, and I'm not sure it's in the Big Burn book, was in '37 he came back.

MK: One of his last trips?

SB: I think it was his last trip. He, I think, had a black sedan—I think it was a Packard—and a black driver. He and my dad had been up to look at some of his early experimental cuts on Lick Creek, halfway between Darby and Hamilton here. They had gotten wet, and I remember him standing in front of the fireplace warming his tail feathers. I don't remember much. Had I known then what I know now, I would have been more alert, had I had a little maturity to do that. So those events stand out. Mainly watching my dad advocate land use and as I said Fred Swanson has done a beautiful job of researching coming into this valley and traveling to different Forest Service offices, the university library. What this guy did to talk land use planning, elevate the working force, identify with the small mill owners, try to give them sustained supplies of good timber, mostly ponderosa then, doug [Douglas] fir, to hold those little mills and how he resisted the pressures from the regional offices to greatly expand his cut. How he resisted the regional offices, Axel Lindh, demands on him to play toward the big corporations that brought the big mills that ultimately put the little mills out of business and did the major clear cutting to give us our tragic period of over-cutting, clear cutting, and the tremendous damage that was inflicted on the Bitterroot.

MK: So your father, in his years as a supervisor of the Bitterroot Forest, was a tremendous advocate for sustainable logging, the smaller mills and...?

SB: That was his heart and fulfillment. Use the good lands to raise timber, recognize the wilderness, and establish it. He was a part of that. Great commitment to this principle that the working people in the woods if they knew the facts, the working people for the Forest Service if they knew the facts. Constantly preaching land use planning, constantly coming down on the idea that you had to nurture these everyday working folks and recognizing they had great

intellectual capacity if they had information. The same thing that we are all about today. We could do great things for Montana for the wilderness if the good people just get the knowledge. You and I share that responsibility.

MK: If your father's vision for sustainable forest management as he practiced and led on the Bitterroot Forest from '35 to '55, if that would have been applied in the future on the Bitterroot and here in the Northern Rockies and around the west, how would things have been different? Would we have seen the high cut levels and the timber wars that we saw in the '70s and '80s, or would there have been a sort of a balance that was achieved?

SB: I think the balance would have been achieved. The Forest Service capitulated to the pressures of Congress and Bill Worf tells the interesting story. Bill, having spent his life in the Forest Service watching the cuts be pushed way up, watching employees, the Forest Service ranger being elevated in the hierarchy of the bureaucracy, if he got the cut out. Bill tells that in beautiful form, and he did hand that paper out. So ask him for it. He asked the former chief, Dick McArdle, Dick, what the hell happened when we just took that cut way up there and every ranger was being measured by how much cut he could get out. Then that was my dad's era as he completed the last years. Axel Lindh, there is this regional forester saying get her out and play to the big industry, the big corporations, the big mills. My dad resisting. McArdle said to Worf, after retirement, "Dick I wasn't running the Forest Service, the timber boys were running the Forest Service." That quote was priceless, and you should get it directly from Worf.

MK: So after your father left the Forest Service in '55, then?

SB: Right.

MK: So in his retirement, he still stayed real active on forest issues and especially here in the Bitterroot. Didn't he, with the clear cutting and the terracing that went on in the '60s and '70s? Tell me about that.

SB: Well, he went through a period after he lost my mother of some inactivity, then connecting with a lovely woman, my stepmother, Ruth. But he was watching. He cared deeply and of course he had friends in the Forest Service, former rangers, and the old timers. Come the period of the clear cutting he saw what was happening and he felt, foresaw the devastating impacts on the land, the resource. He happened to make the friendship of Dale Burke, who was then stated editor of the *Missoulian*. Dale had come out of a logging family, his dad, his folks, brothers, and Dale was interested in the Bitterroot story. Came up, interviewed my dad, but more importantly interviewed all the mill owners—the little mill owners, the guys who are working in the woods a long time, loggers—to document the fact that this was devastation. That this practice and these roads being built all over the national forest high yield lands. High yield but many in sites where you inflict irreparable loss to the watershed by logging, the roads, the silt, all of this. Dale got that story, built a series of stories in the *Missoulian*.

MK: In the early '70s, then this was?

SB: Late '60s, we have the book here. You better get the book, and they are scarce. A guy by the name of Jim Risser in the *Des Moines Register*, picked up that story. He came out, and he went through the same thing. My dad had an old Ford Falcon—dilapidated—and he would drive these people that came from the media all over hell. Had an old pilot, a navy pilot who would fly them. They'd have steak and good whiskey, and it got to be a beat for the news people. The turning of the newspapers, the majors, they each had environmental writers, and there was a fraternity of these guys. Anyway, the word spread. You go out to the Bitterroot and you can see the devastation. This same thing had warmed up in West Virginia...

MK: On the Monongahela.

SB: On the Monongahela. It so it was getting some stuff. But if you want to have fun and go on a trip. Anyway, (unintelligible) *New York Times*, *LA Times*, *Denver Post*, *Reader's Digest*, *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, *Chicago Tribune*, all of these people traipsed in, followed by the major ABC, CBS, and NBC. They all had these damn trips, and the old guy showed them on the ground. It was a great time. That caused Metcalf to show logical concern. He asked Arnold Bolle, then Dean of the College of Forestry, the School of Forestry, to do a verifying study.

MK: At the University of Montana?

SB: At the University of Montana. That was done. That verified and that laid down the facts. The Forest Service did a parallel study that was led by Bill Worf, incidentally. They found serious impacts. So, that gave the ground for Humphrey put together as the National Forest Management Act, as we know it today. That, of course, as Arnold Bolle said after the Act in the years after I had come back to Montana, '87-'88. We came back late '86. If the Forest Service would follow that Act, we would have no problems. The Forest Service kept less than full compliance, and that led, of course, to what we know now are the appeals; the recourse to the judicial system by environmental people who had had enough of the devastation of clear cuts and poor land management. So, in a way, that was the culmination of his long effort. It was the culmination of his life. He died as Carter came into office. His last weeks were developing a question / answer page, two pages for the *Missoulian*. In the weeks before his death, I sat at this same table. He was over in the chair suffering from terminal prostate cancer. I would read the question, and then read the answer, and he would improve on the answer. Then when he went over the hill, the editorial team of the *Missoulian* paid tribute to him. Actually, he got in the hospital and was still lobbying this damn major. Calling all over hell, had the nurses answering the phones. It was quite a demonstration till he just really faded out. Never quit fighting. That's something I haven't made record of before, but it was an accomplishment.

He gave incentive to these fine media people, and I found, as you found, that good media people can share the conservation mission. They need a cause. The good ones we get, all they want is objective information and we can give them hard facts and they will deliver. That was

my experience in Washington. Whether it was the pipeline, the wilderness cause, the good men and women in the media teams went to the Wilderness Society. We even had a Dutch lunch once a month for them, and they drift in and out. But it might be on wilderness, might be on Alaska, it might be on toxics, but they could get the dope. They thus would call me and say, "What do you know about this toxic thing?"

I would say, "Nothing, and if you call Mary over at this other outfit, she will give you the ins and outs."

"Well, what will you say?"

Well, I'd say, "It's horrible, but fill it in so it makes me look like a real intellect, patch up my comments."

They would do this for me. So the Wilderness Society got quite a bit of coverage just for being good to these guys. A lot of our contemporaries today don't have time, well, they'll play the media, but they don't have time for people. That was our forte. We knew to...

MK: Your father seemed to recognize the importance of getting these media out on the ground to see with their own two eyes what he was talking about. Again, a lot of what was happening in the Bitterroot during the '60s and early '70s, it was the clear cutting, but it was also the road building and the terracing of these hillsides. Essentially just sending heavy equipment up and putting in like rows of corn, but growing trees that way.

SB: Terraces like the hills of China, demonstrably terrible things to do to the land. He took them singly, in groups. He took them to the old mill owners; he took them to the lumberjacks; he took them to the progressive Forest Service people. They got testimonials that built their case. It was exciting for them, and they were hooked in on the issue. The old thing, you give them a piece of the action, and they are with you through. So this thing built, and Humphrey, the Senate hearings, my dad went on back to the Senate hearings his last months. It culminated as a great achievement. I think we have that in people today, if we, again from our point of view, do what we must do to keep them informed and really focused on what's happening to our country and our lands.

MK: Well talk about a great achievement. Here we have a father / son team. Your father serving as a supervisor, really as one of the early supervisors, sort of a progressive understudy of Pinchot and all about sustainable forest management. One could argue that he is as responsible as anyone for calling attention to the management of our forests, or the mismanagement that led to the National Forest Management Act, which is one of our key environmental laws. Yourself, another Brandborg responsible for the Wilderness Act, not only passing, doing a lot of the legwork for that, but just ensuring that the legacy of the Wilderness Act was fulfilled with future editions to wilderness during the 60s and 70s. So that's quite an accomplishment from a couple of family members there. An accomplishment of national, and I would even say, global

significance considering that a lot of the rest of the world has looked at our management of our public lands and some of these public participation requirements, and requirements for science based management. Setting aside parks and wilderness areas were its sort of a model. We are very lucky to have the Brandborgs here in western Montana.

SB: His role was unique. He cared about our world, our nation. He had a deep commitment to democratic principles. Then that of course goes back to the same tired phrase, making democracy work. One of my enemies one time, opponents said, the only thing Brandy wants to do is run around the country making democracy work. I thought bingo, that's. But I worked not in the way Zelizer (?) did in crafting with his inimitable prose. That language of the Wilderness Act which is a unique piece of writing, nothing like it. I don't know who's capable of that in a modern period. He was no legislator; he was no lawyer, but he sat and spun this out with the reflections that it gives on philosophy and the high purpose of preservation and the natural world and all of that.

I was more or less an activist implementer. I didn't spend a lot of time writing as the executive director to fill the pages of the Living Wilderness. I wrote the Wilderness Act handbook. I did certain things. Most of the time, I was too damn busy fighting the war. We had these dozens of wilderness areas coming through the legislative process into the Congress, mobilizing those people, working the grass roots development projects, getting people involved, the working sessions that were weekend long, dragging in teams of people into Washington to expose them to the bureaucracy and the legislative process, all of that stuff. But as a role, I took this laborious process of reaching into the good people as my main mission.

Then there were the reoccurring fights in the Congress: the Timber Swap Bill, bills like the Dewar (?) Bill which preceded me, but National Timber Supply Act where you had to mobilize people to say no, in the same way that people are saying no to the Tester Bill today. Just offensive fights. One from the senator in Oregon that would have exchanged the National Forest timberlands that were inundated by dams for private land, letting the lumber companies gain great advantage. So I put my efforts sort of into the category of dogged persistence. The one thing the old boy showed me was resilience. He would take a severe criticism from the governor or the lumber companies that kind of stuff that you put up with and respond to so well, that would cause him twenty minutes of reflection. He might feel bad about that for 20 minutes and then he'd look at you and say, "Hey, what do you think we should do?"

Another half hour you had a strategy and you were getting back at them. Resilience—that's what we got to bring to our people is resilience. "Resilience and this damnable, oh, we're tired, we're burned out has to be countered by getting together with your friends, the men and women who make this movement and in effect countering it with just the fellowship, the knowledge of the commitment to the public good, and the fact that we're coming out swinging in the next round. As our presidential campaign number one advocate these days, Mrs. Palin says, "Reload." But reload with democratic principles, we're not going to be harmful to people, we're just going to build people's ideals and show them how to meet them. So there's the

difference. That was his resilience was incomparable, and I don't want you to get ulcers or something here. We gotta just let go of it and laugh at it, get with our old friends and go out into the wilderness or go watch the ducks fly through this country at this time of year and then come back and whack it. That's what we got going for us.

MK: So you've been in this valley for 75 years looking out at these hills. It's late March right now and we got a nice spring snowstorm. The peaks of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness adorned with fresh snow. You know it's the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness because of the work that you did and your father did before you. As you look out your front window and look out into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and reflect on your really 70 years of activism and advocacy, what is Stewart Brandborg's legacy? What do you feel it is or what do you hope that it is?

SB: I think the Matthew Taylors and the Larry Scotts and the Larry Campbells, you name them, those men and women who have risen to do it, I marvel at that and I'm so damned glad we have a dedicated. Yet I know the battle will never end. It's from one week to the next. We must continue to mobilize people; we must bring out their idealism and their commitment to the public good. But much of my time from this particular perch looking out those windows to that range, I must say I'm worried about Matt Taylor and how he's doing and what he has thought up lately or what that damn Larry is doing. He's working as hard as Matt...

MK: He's got a pack of wolves around his place...literally.

SB: That's right. He's about to be devoured. We are going to be one down. So, the ones across the state, the Georges and the Pauls, how to keep them into a circle. That's my passion and we are now caught up with that. Of course, I was glad I was here. I was glad I was able to contribute a little to this thing. I was delighted with these people who have emerged, and I guess I find peace of mind in saying that you're here. That we got these people and all we need to do is bring them together to let them see how powerful they can be in giving direction to this nation of ours.

MK: So after you left the Wilderness Society in 1976, what did you work on then?

SB: Well, I was adrift for some months. I terminated with a year's salary imposed by me on them. In that first summer I joined the Carter campaign and worked at the Carter headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, under a lady who was given the campaign responsibility, Jane Yarn (?), a resident of Atlanta. She was friends with the Carters, she and her husband. I took the names that I had from the Wilderness Society Wilderness Committees in all the states, some 2,500, (I took) that file with me. They were my main access in saying, we don't have any money but we can send you the position papers on all of these environmental issues. We have enough to give you copies, would you spread those among all your friends to build support for Carter? And we did, in this small office, maybe 8 to 12 volunteers, and bedlam in the campaign. I never will see a campaign take off without appreciation of the chaos that prevails in that setting.

But everybody's thinking, well, maybe I can get a job, and certainly I was thinking about getting a job. I didn't know quite where. Came back after the election and the big celebration in the large hotel in Atlanta, got into the period of transition. That was when all of these campaigners and other people across the nation descended on Washington to get the key positions that were available. In that period Frank Church asked me to help Cecil Andrus, then Governor of Idaho, appeal for the job of Secretary [of the Interior]. I'd been one I think of five people that had caused Carter to meet with, to fly a small plane down with several national leaders, I was no longer one. One of the names in the box for possible appointment at secretarial level was me, and guess what, one of my compatriots from those national organizations blackballed me! (laughs)

So Church calls and says Andrus needs to talk to somebody and went up to Church's office. Andrus said that he was real anxious to be secretary, but what did I want out of this, what was I after? Repeated question, what was I after.

I said, "Well, I have this experience and I'm interested in Fish and Wildlife, National Parks, the refuge programs, all of these things."

"Well, what are you really after? Are you interested in the secretary's positions?"

I said, "No I hadn't envisioned that." I don't know why not, but I hadn't.

"Well, will you help me get around the opposition from the animal rights people who are recognizing that this predator control program has gone on in the state of Idaho and they're hard after me, and some of them are close to Carter?"

Indeed I had access to a wonderful guy by the name Regenstein. I want to say Hugh...No it's not quite. He wrote a book on animal rights. Well, he had been with Cleveland Amory and Cleveland Amory was an animal rights guy, mobilized money with tremendous media capabilities to haul the burros out of the Grand Canyon rather than slaughtering them, over the country. Had a column in *The Saturday Review* or maybe *The Nation*, anyway a writer of impact. He had hired Regenstein and Regenstein's folks ran the big, big department store in Atlanta and they of course had known the Carters through their gubernatorial period. Lou Regenstein—Lou was my buddy, so I said, "Lou, why don't we get with you and get his guy to sort out his thoughts." Well, that happened. I don't know exactly what went on, but Lou satisfied himself that this guy, as secretary of the interior would not be injurious.

So the next thing we knew the weeks passed and Andrus was on the phone with me. He wasn't sensitive to the fact there was a two hour time difference, so I'd be snoozing off at 11:30 or something and the damn phone would ring. It would be Andrus and this happened a couple times a week over a month's period. "How's it going?" "What's happening?" "What do you know?" I would report whatever I knew, which I don't think it was anything but just little progress snippets. Lou, in his inimitable way, had taken care of it. The next thing we knew



Carter had the pattern of flying down the new secretarial appointees to be down with him in his hometown and they'd had a conference.

The next thing we knew Cecil was back in Boise. I didn't know about that, but I got an early Sunday call. It was a cold, cold day in Maryland and I had a big fireplace and the fire, and the kids had music on. We were having a nice Sunday and it was Cecil and he said, "Hey, Brandy we got it, we're in, and I just finished a night of celebrating. I'm here at the governor's mansion, sitting on the bed, but I wanted to let you know we're in."

I said, "Well, what could be better?"

He said, "Now what do we want to talk about."

I said, well one of those...I think I mentioned Bureau of Land Management as well as Fish and Wildlife and National Parks System. "Well," I said, "now remember Cecil I've had to contend with the oil industry, and I've had to contend with lumber, and I've got a little baggage."

"Don't worry about that," and that's the last I heard of Cecil until I cornered him one day at a house Interior Committee meeting.

He was up and he went to the boy's bathroom and I followed him in and said, "Cecil, what the hell are you doing for me, a job obviously you haven't given me."

He finally rustled around and got me in as an assistant to the assistant secretary for Fish and Wildlife, Robert Hearst, who was a well meaning person but wasn't on my level of hope for these causes. From there I went over to the secretary of the National Parks Service. That's another story that someday we'll talk about because I got a parks service director whose assistant director just hated public process and hated citizens. I got to him about using the citizenry and he bought into it. I held a conference up at Harper's Ferry with the citizen's groups and Fromm (?) was there, Michael Fromm. The park service director said, "What I'm realizing after these months is if we don't have a partnership, if I don't work with you guys and you don't work with me and we don't trust each other, the park service can't go where it should in serving the national parks." Fromm was sitting there with a file. He was great at taking old letters where he'd written a director and said, here's a problem what will you do about it? He'd bring those in and confront the guy.

Well, Fromm took the pile and threw it on the floor and said, "As long as we've got a director that talks in those terms, I'm with him and from here on we've got a new day." The overnight (?) ended with our setting up plans for continuity, working together and that was followed very closely by the director going out to meet his regional directors.

The Parks Service is I think today, I hope not but I fear... the regional directors are building their own machines to maintain office. If somebody wants to do something that's injurious to the

system, it's subject to the political pressures. The Parks Service then, the director faces the unknowns of these directors and their political sensitivities, their old prejudices, and maybe their resentment of his presence.

I worked with a director in designing a weekend conference, I think it was in St. Louis, not quite sure, saying, "You go to those five guys,"—I think it was five—"and you tell them what you told the citizens." But first of all play the fact that they've spent their lives with the national park system because they loved it, they're dedicated. "I want you guys to separate in two teams and list the issues and problems you face." This was a two or three day conference.

He came back to Washington saying, brought the staff together, and said, "We did this, we had remarkable success." One of his lines was, "The reason you don't trust me is because I haven't trusted you, and from this point let's go together and make the Parks Service what we want it to be." He was delighted. I guess 15, 20 people, it was called the Heroes (?) of the Parks Service, they had a nice conference. He said, "Brandy and I are going to do this right here too, we need the same thing." About the third time he said "Brandy and I", I thought, well, I've arrived someplace, but it's a chance to put good, trust-building stuff into the bureaucracy.

I'd had a great friend there that was retired from the federal aviation who believed in staff building. He'd consulted with me and the stuff I said to the director I'm sure. I think that was a Tuesday, and Thursday Bill Wayland the director was terminated by Cecil Andrus and his ruthless staff. So another grand scheme that really was taking off was deflated. We went to the director Russ Dickenson who played the old games of the old standard National Parks Service—every man for himself said the elephant as he danced among the chickens, free private enterprise all the way.

So that's the only tape recording, that's the only story. I think that you've got it there, so if we hire somebody to type that, let's do it.

MK: Okay.

MK: So you came back to the Bitterroot Valley in 1986 after almost 20 years in Washington D.C.?

SB: Thirty-two.

MK: Oh, 32 years. Shortly after you came back you huddled up with some of the local people here and formed a group that is still around and doing great work today called Friends of the Bitterroot. Tell me a little bit about who were the people who formed it, why did you form it, and what have you folks worked on.

SB: I was relatively inactive for a year or two. I became aware of the work that John Grove and a guy that had been director of the Fish and Game Department, Wes Woodjord (?), Jerry Nichols,

Doris Milner, to name just a few, I think Les Pengelly, of the University of Montana, College of Forestry, then Forestry School, had worked on in facing the forest practice issue. Highly trained, seasoned people, Doris Milner, long time former president of the Wilderness Association, when Cecil Garland and the others, Warren Creek(?), were making it a fire-eating activist outfit for wilderness, unequaled at state level for wilderness, unique. The people I was trying to remember as part of that inner circle, Florence and Ken Baldwin, they brought...

MK: From Bozeman?

SB: From Bozeman...brought that together. And somebody said that Florence was still standing, surviving. And the name we were looking for earlier was Chuck Colson in the Nixon staff. He was a main leader and got caught and went to prison, subsequently worked as a missionary in our prisons, still doing that. I don't know if Chuck and I would agree on everything. We just did some hand signaling, she's gonna go take a nap, I can't blame her, for putting up with me all these... (laughs)

So I came back and I began to watch, here my dad had labored on this blah, blah, and the damn Forest Service was still logging 30 million board feet, 32 million board feet, they were doing some clear cutting. Clear cutting can be allowed under the law. One of the things we lost with the new law was the historic...

MK: With the National Forest Management Act?

SB: Yeah, from the old organic act, no clear cutting. That was lost and I attribute that to Brock. I haven't talked to Brock about that, but Brock worked hard for the National Forest Management Act as it went through. I think he was in the mix and I was out of the mix when it finally went through, I was phasing out of the Wilderness Society, it was '76, and caught up in the internal adjustments to my life.

So I came back, this stuff was happening and I learned of this group and I went to them. It was Jerry Nichols, Doris Milner, and John Grove, and maybe one other person, and I said, "I worry that you don't have a group of citizens, the industry defining you as just a bunch of dissidents, and I think we need a citizen group." Subsequently, I called some meetings and I just rounded up people and we had 25, 30 people show up for a series of meetings. That group, with work, who put together the laws of the bylaws and incorporation, probably John Grove was instrumental, a retired forester, great commitment, had been in Alaska and the Bitterroot to Helena, a lot of experience, and Friends of the Bitterroot came into being.

MK: This would have been '87, '88?

SB: This would have been '88 I think. Yeah, because I was inactive for a year or so, maybe '89. Then they began to really just expand that very fine technical work with the expense involved of getting the expertise of scientists for the appeals. No easy undertaking but doggedly

observing Forest Service practices, and of course today, the requirements of the National Forest Management Act and the awareness that yes, FOB [Friends of the Bitterroot] is watching and if you do damage to the land and they can prove it, it will be stopped by court action. Here Friends of the Bitterroot went over to the Big Hole and in a historic decision taken to the highest levels of the Forest Service, taken to court, went to the hearing in Great Falls, Forest Service was turned away from some high country cuts in the lodge pole of upper meadow creek. That was a precedent setting case that the head office focused on and just poured all kinds of resources into the effort, attorneys of course from the justice department arguing, and it was a victory for FOB.

Well much that FOB has done through the years, and increasingly a relatively small number of people in the brain trust that runs the organization. I get after the organization saying, we got to have more meetings to mobilize more people, because eight or ten guiding the ship ain't enough. They're aware of that, but nonetheless have maintained this vigilance and today the cut on the national forest is about 6 million acre feet, including firewood, post and poles. Of course they stand for sustainable logging in a good way from the productive lands.

They have taken a terrible onslaught of misinformation, people running the newspapers, polarizing the Darby lumber community, being told that these people are willing to sacrifice anything to have more wilderness, to shut them down. Abusive misrepresentations that have been heaped on the organization, and the general awareness of people in this valley, that FOB is the ultimate extreme outfit. Had it been on the scene earlier and had the political circumstances, had the corporate world not been so dominate of the national forest policy, maybe we would still have good supplies of fiber in the Darby Bitterroot area. Well they cut out, the big corporations came. In that period they got the cut up to more than 100 million board feet. The West Fork, the East Fork, all the prime pine, through the Doug fir, and then of course lodge pole has become valuable and it was involved. But the FOB stood valiantly and put a stop to some of the worst of it, most of the worst of it.

MK: It strikes me, the image that Friends of the Bitterroot has among, especially maybe some of the more conservative, people in the Bitterroot Valley compared to at least what I've been able to experience over my time here in western Montana. The Friends of the Bitterroot people I've met are very salt of the earth. You know your family's history in this valley goes back quite a long time with you and your father. People like Floyd Wood, who are instrumental in that organization, his family came out to the valley in a covered wagon in the late 1800s. He's spent a lot of his time in the '50s doing a lot of logging around here. Someone like Larry Campbell who lives very simply up Rye Creek, grows most of his own food. It's funny when we hear how Friends of the Bitterroot is a wealthy organization or they've got deep pockets or they really don't care about this valley. It strikes me how different that is than the reality of knowing some of you folks. How frustrating is that? How do you deal with that? Because a lot of the people who are leveling these criticisms, they've maybe only been here a little while.

SB: That is almost the culture of the Bitterroot at this point. FOB is the extremist entity that stops, has killed logging. That's the short line of it. And I think it goes back to that word we used earlier, that you demonstrate and that we all got to maintain resilience. But these people have been pounded.

I consider myself a founder because I did go to that scientific circle and say hey, and I did call the first meetings. Of course, nobody does it with "I" you always have... those were the priceless people, the components, and they did a job. We had logging hauls, dozens of logging trucks come up to Darby and rally and raise hell with this guy that's still up there in Libby. So the organization was castigated every way possible and industry, of course, pouring the high octane fuel on those criticisms just as they were. Tough people, resilient people, the John Groves, the Jerry Nichols, the Larry Campbells suffering abuse to their property. Larry Campbell's and Howie Wolf's experience with the garbage being dumped at their gates...

MK: Or bullet holes.

SB: The bullet holes. In the instance of the Brandborg's, our son's lovely handbuilt log home that was the product of our summers coming back here for vacation, healing (?) logs, lodge pole on the sixty acres in Tin Cup. Riding my bike workout, taking the swing off the little road over by Dan's cabin coming around the circle, and there the place was gone except for a couple little smokes. We were sure that was set fire by the redneck element.

At one point when one of the mills closed up in Darby, going back to the forest controversy for the National Forest Management Act, one of the logging mills had a grand sign up, strung between the girders, "Brandborg and Burke closed this mill." So they, and they do to this day, in the planning within the year when they were, no the last two years, they were attacking the growth policy. I am in their crosshairs literally at the mass meetings, saying "This guy closed the mills. He got his wilderness, and now he wants our private property rights." They've mixed the generations (laughs).

MK: The ironic thing is your father 75 years ago was advocating for sustainable management of the forest when he was a supervisor.

SB: Yeah, and he ignored what happened at Darby. He was working for the working man. He was a best friend of a lot of the little mill workers and they knew that he was fighting the big companies that wanted to...because they were "get the big companies they can do a more efficient job of turning that stuff into board feet and fiber."

That was the wonderful thing in this Swanson book, it tells that, his resistance to that. The good thing about the Swanson book is he's dug it out of the files, tireless guy. You know, exchange, (?), write my dad, do this, do that. Then the regional forester Pete Hanson down there and other Swedes, snuff-chewing Swedes like my dad. The impatience that my dad suffered with these guys that were, "Hey, we found lodge pole! Let's have a big mill down here in Missoula.

Let's go for it." His saying, "I value these little mills." Of course, he was gone when they got into full swing after '55.

That's when McArlow said, "Bill, I wasn't running the forest service, the timber boys were."

MK: So what do you think the future holds for Friends of the Bitterroot?

SB: It will continue. It needs very badly the rejuvenation of new blood. It is largely older people, not many events in a year's period, a summer picnic or something. Future holds big challenge of keeping it alive, much like the Bitterrooters for Planning, of which I'm the president, it depends on me. I don't have, I have failed to build process into these two organizations and I was president of Bitterroot...FOB for the first two years. I have failed in building working circles within the group, that is, delegations to build people to take over. In a way that is what we're seeing in Missoula with (?) from our organization and you name them. How we develop people to succeed us if we fall into a stump hole. That is my perplexity as I say, yeah, I can do it today. I should be, I've got a war going on with planning and the collapse of good government in this county. Meeting with about 20 people, sometimes 25, sometimes 18, every two weeks to say what are we doing to contend with the crazies, the tea party element? What are we gonna do? How are we going to keep good people working? FOB I think has four or five hundred members. A lot of those memberships, BFP (Bitterrooters for Planning) has 350. You know 70 percent don't kick in any money but they stay on the list, and they'll show up if you want them to go to a hearing. I think you come right down to the rub.

MK: Well maybe this spring would be a good time for Friends of the Bitterroot to have that picnic at Lake Como again?

SB: That's good, but picnics is just a step in the right direction. You've got to start saying, who will do some damn work to make this function? Who will come to the meeting? You see our affliction, as with the Tester Bill, the issue. We get together and we strategize. Failure of organizations to stop when we had the 20 people, well hey how'd this meeting go, what are the pluses of this meeting? What are the minuses? What would we have liked to have done better? But then at the next stage, how are you feeling about each other? How *you* feeling? Is there concern about the old rivalries? We have no processes for taking care of ourselves. We have little process for taking care of the organizations except the strong among us coming in and butting heads on policy direction.

We never stop. We never stop and say, "Where are you and I on the Tester Bill?" I guess that brings us to the conclusion of the tape. But what are we going to do to keep the Tester campaign fired? There ain't nobody that I'm talking to except you and Larry and an occasional somebody within our circle. We need to focus on how we build people into this. Then how do we go on for continuity to have a statewide organization that takes care of people, that builds up cells in every community, teams? The process for taking care of people is absent from most cause organizations, thus they get into horrible fights. Witness the ones we know about,

witness the withdrawal of people like Howie. I mean, people saying, I don't talk to him, I don't talk to her, we did something back in '06 we didn't like. No process for saying, hey, we're in this boat together and the waves are high, and we're taking on a little water. Let's get together and bail and put the sails up (laughs).

MK: Yeah, teamwork.

[End of Interview]