YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

CCC in Parsons, West Virginia

Personal Experience

O.H. 1049

HARRY B. MAHONEY

Interviewed

by

Hugh Earnhart and Rebecca Rogers

on

June 10, 1989

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INTERVIEWEE: HARRY B. MAHONEY

INTERVIEWER: Hugh Earnhart and Rebecca Rogers

SUBJECT: Personal Experience, National Forest Service, Cheat District, Fernow, Nursery Bottom

DATE: June 10, 1989

E: This is an interview with Harry Mahoney for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program in conjunction with the National Forest Service, on CCC, Civilian Conservation Corps, and other related matters in Parsons, West Virginia, by Hugh Earnhart and Rebecca Rogers, at Elkins, West Virginia, on June 10, 1989.

Harry, let us begin by talking about your family, and where you grew up, and types of things that you did as a youngster.

M: I was born in Pennsylvania, actually Williamsport, Pennsylvania, 1932. My father died shortly after; moved to New York City. I lived in New York, then on Long Island, back into New York City; moved to Chicago. My mother had remarried and my father was transferred with the radio industry. Moved to Chicago, suburbs of Chicago, back to Chicago, back to New York City. I worked several summers on a dude ranch in Colorado, cattle ranch in Wyoming, went into blister rust control in Idaho--my first job with the Forest Service, summer work. Blister Rust is a serious fungus disease affecting white pines. Control consisted of removing gooseberry/currant plants which serve as an obligatory alternate host for the fungus.

I went to Yale University and majored in plant science/forestry, it is a botany/forestry major. Got a masters degree in forest management there. When I left college

I went to the Forest Service on the Willamette National Forest in Oakridge, Oregon, was there for a year and a half, went into the Army, back to the Willamette National Forest, at Blue River, Oregon. My mother died about that time and my father was not doing well and I requested a transfer to the east. I was offered a job about six months later on the Monongahela National Forest. The Forest Supervisor in Oregon called up and said, "I have the job on Monongahela and, of course, you know where that is, somewhere in Pennsylvania." So I came here; came to Marlinton, actually.

E: That is not Pennsylvania.

M: Came to Marlinton, West Virginia right at the end of December in 1959. Worked at Marlinton on the Marlinton District until October of 1961. Came to Elkins, worked in timber sales, section in Elkins at the supervisors office, until January of 1966, when what used to be Region Seven, which included the Eastern National Forests, and Region Nine, which included the Lake States Forests, were merged in January of 1966. Then I went to Lakewood, Wisconsin on the Nicolet National Forest as District Ranger. I was there until July of 1967. Then came to Parsons as Ranger on the Cheat District.

E: Covered a lot of territory real quick. What is the training that you got for being a ranger? What types of things are they interested in you knowing?

M: Traditionally, (there have been changes in this in the last ten years) traditionally people worked into the ranger's position. Usually foresters became rangers and I guess that is still probably usually true. Most professional employees are foresters, although it is not a prerequisite for the job. Foresters generally in his earlier steps worked in a variety of jobs having to do with timber sales, timber stand improvement, reforestation work, national forest range resource, water projects, recreation resource, whatever happens to be in the area. Most people get considerable exposure to fire control, fisheries and wildlife work.

Generally mixed in with that are some managerial training sessions, personnel management, working with people, public relations. The last ten years or so there has been more of a trend to selecting rangers who aren't necessarily traditional foresters, maybe archaeologists, or landscape architects, or soil scientists, engineers. They would be coming from anyone of the disciplines that work in a forest.

E: Are the job descriptions changing that or is it because of what you have to deal with? The public is differ-

ent? Is there a drastic change taking place?

M: I think there is change from the point of view that our publics that are concerned with National Forests are concerned with other things then management of timber resource. There is more of an emphasis on recreation and wildlife resources, wilderness, nonconsumptive resources. Timber management continues, by the nature of things, to be a major part of national forests. Generally you are working with forest vegetation; manipulating that vegetation still involves certain principles of silvicultural mangagement by foresters. Of course, there is a definite trend to diversity in everything.

E: What is a typical day like for you as a park ranger?

R: He is not a park ranger.

E: Scratch that! Okay national forester.

M: A typical national forest is divided into four to six, or eight, ranger districts. Each one has an administrative . . . Just don't call it . . .

E: So I don't use that four letter word.

M: Right. Different department.

E: Say you start in the morning, 7:00, whatever.

M: I start in the morning and this will vary from place to place and with the size of the staff. Ranger districts on this forest are generally smaller and generally have smaller staffs than those in the far west. A typical ranger district here will have a District Ranger and two assistant rangers: One whose major responsibility is in timber management, and they also have other functions such as wildlife management. Frequently timber management and wildlife management go together. There is an assistant ranger whose primary responsibility is for other resources such as recreation, fire, range, cultural resources, and in some cases wildlife can be in that department. Most districts work so that the technicians and lower grade professional employees are working for one of these two assistant rangers. Most districts work in the manner that the assistant rangers provide day to day assignments and see that jobs are being done on a day to day basis, so that the crews and the assistant ranger may get together. At the beginning of day the days assignment would be given. It can vary.

When I was on the Cheat District, we had a relatively small staff. Part of the time I was there most of our

people were working in both the timber and the other resources in areas where we were having to . . . One assistant ranger couldn't depend on having "a" crew that we usually had that particular day so we had to coordinate things a little more. But generally the people would get together in the warehouse, where the vehicles are kept, and the tools are kept; get their assignment if they didn't already have it; gather up their equipment that was needed for that particular job usually in the field. The District Ranger might or might not be present at that time. When I was ranger at Parsons it was during the period when the ranger station was not in the Nursery Bottom. It was downtown at the Post Office building. It had been in the Nursery Bottom but moved to the Post Office in 1966, and then back out into the Nursery Bottom in about 1983. While I was there the ranger's office was actually downtown. So frequently I would go directly to the office and would be making the assignments.

R: Your equipment area was still at the Nursery Bottom though.

M: The equipment area was still there. We had a warehouse; it was one of the two buildings that were taken out by the flood. It took out the bottom stories of those two buildings.

R: Were they the ones that were down at the downstream end of the Dryfork?

M: Right.

R: And there is sort of a shed like building now where one of them was?

M: There is an oil, or gashouse/oil house, and then beside that a shed building. That was built while we were there because we needed another place to keep some equipment. Then these two, essentially barns, they were two story buildings with a four vehicle garage on one side and a workroom on the other end. Upstairs was storage.

R: They were old buildings, they had been there for a while?

M: They were . . .

R: CCC buildings.

M: CCC, yes.

E: Why did they move for a period of almost twenty years? Seventeen years to be exact. Why did they move it to

the Post Office?

M: The feeling at the time was that the ranger's office should be more accessible to the people in the community. They were building a new Post Office building in Parsons. The old office, which was last used as a nursery superintendent's office, was too small to handle . . . the District organization had grown to where that wasn't an adequate facility. So while they were building the Post Office in Parsons it was decided that they would like to move the ranger's office in there and they built a second story on it and put an office there. You had more space there.

R: Go on with your day's assignments.

E: Finish telling your day. Once you get them out to . . .

M: A ranger may work in the office on those wonderful things like budgets, and personnel management, letter answering, and all those things. Or he may go out in the field and see what is going on and see what should be going on, just maintain a familiarity.

In a typical day people would come into the office to talk about problems and concerns; "can we keep going on," or they would like to go on, whatever. Typical day would involve meeting with the assistant rangers on things that they had that needed to be done during this fiscal year, and future fiscal years, scheduling. Typical middle management type of position.

E: You know, you have been in the field long enough and through training and you know what has to be done in this particular region or that particular region. How much interference do you get from the general public in carrying out that responsibility, much?

M: It depends on what we are doing really, not so much in carrying it out. If they don't like what we have done they will raise concerns. We get into the whole business of clear cutting controversy.

E: What types of things would the general public, in your experience, be concerned about that you may find counterproductive?

M: I was ranger at Parsons during a considerable portion of the "Monongahela Controversy" which I presume you are semi-familiar with. The Forest Service had changed its approach to timber management in the early 1960's. It had gone from what is called unevened aged management toward even aged management. Even aged management involves--as a part of even aged management--regenera-

tion of stands by clear cutting. Which means we would cut all the merchantable trees plus those that aren't merchantable, starting with a new stand of seedling. That is one part of even aged management but that is the most obvious part and most visible part to the public.

The public had been raised by the Forest Service on the idea of selection management, cutting individual trees when they became mature and leaving a general stand of trees up in the woods and people didn't understand why we changed. We hadn't done a very good of job of explaining to people why we were changing. That was a prime example of where people decided we must be doing bad things because we weren't doing what they had been taught was good. They did object.

Of course, we undoubtedly made mistakes in responding to that. This eventually led to a court case where we were enjoined from making timber sales in which we did other than cut "dead, large or mature" trees, which is the wording of an act back in 1897 that authorized the sale of Timber, although practicing selection cutting also involves cutting trees that aren't large or mature. So we stopped, for a period in the mid 1970's, making timber sales.

Eventually this case was appealed. The appeals court agreed with the local district court here in Elkins and said that if the law of 1897 was an anachronism the law should be changed. We would still have to live by it. That eventually led to the National Forest Management Act which went far beyond a concern about what kind of trees we cut, directed all the National Forests in the country to develope Land and Resource Management Plans and to manage resources. In accordance with those plans. This was a very far-reaching act for which we can take credit or blame or whatever.

E: It is on your doorstep anyway?

M: People learned to spell Monongahela, I will tell you that much.

E: That is right. If you need help in your area who can you call on immediately for help? What kind of power do you have?

M: As a District Ranger?

E: Yes.

M: I am no longer a District Ranger, but I was. The District Ranger is administrative head of that ranger district. We have a staff in our supervisor's office

organization, in Elkins, which includes a number of specialists in soils, and soil management, landscape architecture, hydrology, fishery, wildlife, archaeology, engineering, and personnel. Those people are available to provide assistance needed. That would be the first source of assistance. The Ranger can also contract people outside of the Forest Service, although that would be done generally through the Supervisors Office.

E: I am saying that if you have a pollution problem in a stream or you have a recreational problem somewhere, how far and how reaching are those powers for that ranger to immediately take control of that situation before it gets out of hand? Does he have to go to the superintendent and beg for his assistance, that type of thing? Or can he immediately begin to muster troops?

M: For most day to day things if someone had violated a permit, a contract or a regulation, for instance, a district ranger can either order the person to stop doing that, or if it was a criminal type thing that would warrant an arrest, he could make an arrest. It would depend on the magnitude of what was going on and of the urgency to take immediate action.

E: The reason I asked because when I was growing up I was in the Boy Scouts and that type of thing. When we went to a park or to any public . . . We knew how to build a campfire, we knew how to conduct ourselves, we never had a problem. I don't want to say we raised two or three generations of idiots in this country but we have people who have no respect for themselves let alone for anything else. They just think that that is theirs and they may do what they want, when they want. Look at our forest problem with fires last year in Yellowstone and so forth. I am sure that when, at least what I have read, that some of that was down right carelessness. That should never have taken place. Can that ranger, whether he is in the other branch of service or yours, can they respond with enough gusto and enough pressure to keep control of the situation?

M: Sure. In theory anyway the ranger and his subordinates can issue a violation notice to somebody that is violating a regulation, which is of course a law. If he can identify a violation of a law, he can issue a violation notice which is similar to a traffic ticket. Or if a timber sales operator is violating the terms of a contract, he can order the timber sales operator to stop doing what he is doing or to shut down; or to shut down just because the ground was wet. It may not be something the timber sales operator was necessarily doing wrong. If he's cutting trees that are not to be cut, he can get into that sort of thing, probably

getting assistance from our law enforcement people here although he may have a trained law enforcement officer on the district too. Depends on the district. If it's something such as forest fires a typical district will have trained personnel and will be ready to take action on a typical fire that occurs on that district. If it is something that looks like it is going to be bigger than that he can call on other districts for assistance. If need be he could call people from anywhere in the United States, although generally the district ranger probably won't do that.

R: To follow on the line of questioning, in my experience the period when you were ranger was when recreation really, particularly recreation outside of the native population, was on the rise. Did that change your . . . Wasn't it that period when . . . Like Otter Creek over down by the mountain kind of thing, did that change the job description and your attitude towards the way the whole operation worked or any of that?

M: During the 1970's we did get considerable pressure from people who were interested in having wilderness set aside. Of course, the original Wilderness Act was passed in 1964, which took some areas that the Forest Service was already managing as primitive, and made them wilderness, and directed other areas to be studied to see whether they should be included in the system. Most of those wildernesses were in the west, because that is where most of the lands that really met the criteria of wilderness were located. There was considerable public outcry in the early 1970's for wilderness in the east, with one of the areas the public identified as being desirable for wilderness being Otter Creek. We weren't fully responsive to that idea. We were also directed by the Multiple Use Act to manage National Forest for all the resources. There were considerable other resources in Otter Creek other than wilderness. We thought that we could manage the area to provide that type of recreation experience without totally eliminating all the other resource uses. The Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975 did designate Otter Creek and Dolly Sods as wildernesses.

R: Is Dolly Sods in the Cheat ranger district too?

M: No, it is on the Potomac District. Since then we went through . . . The Forest Service initiated a couple of roadless areas review and evaluations referred to as RARE I and RARE II. RARE II is the last one, and eventually led to designation of Cranberry and Laurel Fork, North and South. The Forest Service had recommended Laurel Forks, North and South, not to be designated wilderness, but they had recommended Seneca Creek area in the Potomac District to be designated wilder-

ness. Congress chose not to designate Seneca Creek but to designate Laurel Fork, North and South. That is another example of a place where public concerns, or concerns by part of the public anyway, changed our management.

R: Did that affect . . . In your office were there lots of to's and fro's and people showing up?

M: We spent a considerable amount of time meeting the public, in public meetings or responding by mail, or having show-me trips, field visits, discussing the situation, one way or another. Once the Wilderness was designated it added a little different realm of things. It didn't necessarily increase the job capacity but it did introduce a little more complexity, because there are different rules and regulations and different things that are permitted in the Wilderness than are permitted other places.

R: Did it bring new people on staff, or any of that kind of . . .

M: Not really. We don't, and I don't think they do yet, dedicate say a whole man year to managing the Wilderness per se. It tends to take care of itself. We probably would have been maintaining the trails anyway, or it might be maintained . . .

R: But you built those trails. Those trails weren't there.

M: No, they were already there.

R: Oh, they were? But they weren't signed.

M: They were signed. With wilderness the trend is to take down signs that we had up, not to have as much signing. We had already put the trail shelters in back in the 1960's. They will probably be eventually be taken out, not being fully compatible with wilderness. The trails were being maintained before. We would use power saws to maintain the trail, now we can't use power saws to maintain the trail in wilderness. We now do that sort of thing with handwork. Really what the wilderness did was prohibit us from making timber sales. We didn't have that.

R: At Otter Creek wasn't there some sort of coal or something?

M: There was coal. The coal was owned by the Otter Creek Coal Company. They eventually proposed a mining plan after this area was designated wilderness. The Wilderness Act itself doesn't specifically prohibit mining.

Under the terms of their reservation, the company had to present an operating plan. The Forest Service would have to approve it. We really didn't know how much coal was there.

Prior to the time of the designated Wilderness the company had come in with a proposal to do some core drilling. We had permitted that to begin. Nobody knew how much coal was there. They proposed to drill five holes and started to work on the first one. We were taken to court by the WV Highlands Conservancy to prohibit us from permitting that to happen. The court eventually agreed to let the company take in their drilling equipment by horse, even though it wasn't Wilderness, because they felt that constructing the kinds of roads to get to the drill sites would diminish wilderness value. The company did develop a stretcher arrangement between two horses walking single file to carry the drilling equipment in. They did drill their five holes. The eventual plan was to come back and pave some of the five holes to determine where else core drills would have to be placed. They did not do any further core drilling.

After the area was designated Wilderness, in the last six or eight years, they proposed a mining plan which would have been very disruptive to wilderness management. The Forest Service claimed that they did not have valid existing rights under the Surface Mine Reclamation Act to disturb the surface. The case eventually went to court and the Department of Justice eventually purchased the coal in Otter Creek for $9 million.

R: The Department of Justice bought it?

M: Right. From a contingency fund they had.

E: What the hell they going to do with it?

M: Well, they gave it to us. Their court case was that . . . The company took us to court to claim that we were depriving them of their property without just compensation. That settlement was negotiated for. The Department of Justice would compensate the company out of this contingency fund that they had for that purpose.

E: I know where I am going to go if I need some extra loot. I wonder if they got another contingency fund.

M: That has been one effect of the Wilderness Acts. The act that designated Cranberry Wilderness specifically provided that the Forest Service would purchase the coal in the Cranberry Wilderness. We did that for

another $13 million or $14 million. Wilderness is an expensive resource. It happens that most of Otter Creek, Dolly Sods, and Cranberry wilderness were all in areas that did have deposits of coal which were not owned by the government originally.

E: When you sell timber or any other mineral off of the public or federal land, whatever term you want to use, and that is done without lawsuits and public interference or whatever it happens to be, where does that money go?

M: The receipts go to the Treasury, except that twenty-five percent of the receipts, including the cost of the road as a return to us, twenty-five percent goes to the states for distribution to the counties in proportion to the acreage of the national forest in each of the counties. That is to be used exclusively for schools and roads. In West Virginia that is divided eighty percent for schools and twenty percent for roads. The original intent of the act was due to the fact that at the time that act passed most counties operated the schools and maintained the roads. So it was in effect a payment in lieu of taxes, although not specifically.

E: That is the way it operated.

M: There is another act passed in 1976 called the Payments In Lieu of Taxes Act which specifically provides for the payment of $.75 an acre to the local county government to be used for whatever purpose, for any government purpose subject to appropriation of Congress. That act included a provision that the $.75 an acre would be reduced by the amount of the twenty-five percent fund payments from the year before. However, in West Virginia, since the county government does not operate either the schools or maintain the roads, they get the full amount.

E: You do not directly get any benefit to your district?

M: There is a special act called the Knutson-Vandenberg Act, KV, which permits the Forest Service to withhold a portion of the timber sale receipts to be spent back on sale areas for sale area improvement. That was originally intended for replanting or doing reforestation work and timber stand improvement work, but the authorization was expanded. Authority to use that money was expanded to include any resources in the last ten years or so. So, it could be used for recreation improvement, or fishery improvement, or wildlife habitat improvement, or range improvement work. As long as it was within the sale area, we are not permitted to take the money from a timber sale area and just spend it all someplace else, although the money is all pooled

and we can spend it on any area, any sale area, where KV money was collected. You don't have to keep track of sale area by sale area when you balance out the books exactly. We did have to do that at one time.

R: How much of the Forest Service land does the Forest Service own the mineral rights as well? When it was originally purchased, it was really just purchasing the above ground right, wasn't it, for most of the Forest?

M: Of course the original National Forests were set aside out of public domain land out west and the mineral situation was considerably different, from the west and here. In the east, since the West Law was passed in 1911, government has been authorized to purchase lands for National Forest purposes. The original intent was to purchase surface for protection of navigable streams. This gradually evolved into management of timber; purchase of land for timber production; purchase land for other purposes. Each National Forest would be different. I'm not sure . . .

R: Is there a lot of land that the Forest Service in the Monongahela still doesn't own the mineral rights?

M: Right. In the earlier acquisition anyway, if it was known that coal was present the government did not acquire it. Then the vendor, in general, tended to reserve the coal or had already sold the coal to somebody else.

R: Those weren't leases those were actual sales. It wasn't like a ninety-nine year lease or something like that.

M: It varied all over. Generally they were outright sales of the minerals. If the person who sold us the surface had already sold the minerals to somebody else we were . . . The government had no other rights than what were in the deed that that person had created beforehand. Where the vendor who sold us the surface was reserving the coal, there were certain Secretary of Agriculture regulations put into the deed which required mineral owner under operating his reservation to do some things to protect our surface. That wouldn't have been the case had he already sold the minerals to somebody else. Some of those were fifty year reservations. Some were perpetual reservations and in some cases the owner had no desire to retain the coal and the government bought that. In the early, early days, the view of the government was that we shouldn't be spending funds to buy coal because we weren't really in the coal business; we were in surface management. That has changed.

R: How much of your job at the ranger district related to Fernow, or probably not much to the nursery, but to either of them? Did you interface with those guys much?

M: To some extent. The Fernow Experimental Forest is on the Cheat district. An experimental forest is not necessarily on National Forest land but a number of them are. That particular one happens to be on the Cheat District. The National Forest Administration branch of the Forest Service is responsible for the construction and maintenance of roads, and for fire control, and management of those things not directly related to research. In effect, the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station handled all of the timber activities that were going on on the Fernow. There are still coordinations of things they do; they should not be affecting the Parsons water supply, for instance, which is under a special use permit administered by the District Ranger but the water supply is located on the Fernow. We had trails going into the Otter Creek Wilderness from the road at the boundary of the Fernow. Those activities called for a coordination activity rather than direction from us to them or from them to us.

R: How about the nursery? When the nursery was in the Department of Natural Resources did you do anything with that?

M: The nursery was originally, of course, the Forest Service nursery. The Forest Service operated it until 1951, I guess it was, when it was turned over to the State of West Virginia. The buildings were Forest Service buildings that the State used under a special use permit. Any significant changes to those buildings would have to be coordinated with us. The State was also responsible for maintenance of the buildings. Jim Grafton, while I was Ranger, was the Assistant Ranger responsible for special use permit administration. He worked more closely with the nursery than I did. The Nursery Superintendent lived in a house across from the office, which was a Forest Service house. That was part of the permit. We would inspect the buildings and the site at least annually to determine what maintenance needs were high priority and coordinate with the nursery to see that they got done.

R: Did you ever do any . . . Were there ever any problems with soil or any of that? Was the EPA around when you were there? Did anyone ever come by and say, "We've got to record EDT in the creek,"?

M: I don't ever recall any problems that way. The nursery did have to operate the same as the Fernow. If either

one was using pesticides, they had to submit a pesticide use proposal which actually went through the supervisor's office; then, in the case of this forest, it had to go to the Regional Office for approval. The nursery handled their own pesticide management except to get approval for us.

R: So you didn't buy trees from them or do any of that sort of thing. Were you in the tree buying business?

M: We, in a very small way, were in the tree buying business. We did do some planting while I was there. The Forest Service does relatively little planting now.

R: What kind of planting do you do, or did you do? Was it all conifers?

M: At that time we were planting primarily conifers. Generally we were planting white pine in stands that were later going to be cut in order to convert poor quality hardwood stands to better quality pine stand. It can be a productive crop on lands where hardwoods don't grow very well. The nursery also raised some hardwoods.

E: What were most the trees the nursery was growing?

R: In those days it was the state.

M: The state produced them, sold some to us, most of them going to small farmers under . . .

E: Soil Conservation Acts.

M: ACP programs. Some went to companies. Like Westvako purchased trees. They have programs to help the landowners with planting those trees, and also planted trees on their own land. Surface miners were required to revegetate their land at one time were planting quite a few. The Surface Mine Law, which leaned toward planting grasses rather than trees in order to get an immediate cover, actually discouraged tree planting on surface mines.

R: The stuff that came from the Sandy Oliver report station period, you guys managed a lot of that. Did you find that they did a good job with what they chose and where they put it?

M: The trees were planted on national forest land from the 1920's up into the 1950's.

R: Yes, right.

M: Oh yes, we had some fine stands. The Cheat District

didn't have a lot of plantation. It had some of the early plantations up on Canaan Mountain which were planted back in the late 1920's. Some of that came from the Gladwin Nursery rather than the Parsons Nursery. Clover Run plantation was on the Cheat District which is considered to be one of the fastest growing white pine plantations in the country. Most of the plantations on the Cheat District were relatively small. The Greenbrier District has lots of areas; the Potomac District also has big plantations. By the 1950's most of those planting areas had been planted. The large areas that were plantable had already been planted and there wasn't really much opportunity to do a lot of planting.

R: Did they ever underplant the stuff that had been planted or change it from pine to hardwood?

M: From hardwood to pine.

R: From hardwood to pine?

M: From hardwood to a mixed hardwood conifer stand. The intent never was to come up with a pure conifer stand altogether. They have a mixture in there. It would take an awful lot of work to make a complete conversion from one type to another. To go from pure hardware to pure pine would take a lot of effort, and a lot of expenditure of money.

R: Is there much spruce left anywhere? Was much of it planted? I mean just out of personal curiosity I was wondering if . . .

M: Spruce, there is quite a bit of spruce planted on the Greenbrier District. Most of the spruce grows at higher elevations.

R: Right.

M: Above about 3,000 feet. A lot of the spruce that was planted was Norway spruce, other than the native red spruce, but Norway spruce grows faster, and very well. There's a lot of good pine planted also.

E: What's the percentage of tree survival that you plant? I'm sure you never went out and counted them.

M: We do go out and count them. Part of our job is going out. When the plantation is put in there are what are called "stake rows" established. We go out and follow those particular . . . You know you planted twenty trees here and eighteen of them survived; you have ninety percent survival. It would generally range, unless there were severe climatic problems, droughts of

some sort, about seventy to ninety percent survival.

E: Without any kind of rapid grow and any of that kind of . . . ?

M: Generally they didn't. It was very rare when we did things like fertilizing trees. If you are starting with bare land planting, where competition is not a severe problem, seventy-nine percent won't get through to be mature trees. If you planted a lot more trees, plant 700 or 1000 trees per acre you are only going to have a final crop of fifty to seventy-five 100 years from now. Obviously a lot of those trees aren't going to make it, or are going to be cut in between times. As far as surviving for the first five years or so, becoming established . . . Clover Run plantation was planted with yellow poplar and white pine. The white pine outgrew the yellow poplar. It is hard to find a yellow poplar tree in a plantation.

E: The work that the CCC did, how much of that type of work was in the mode of what we would consider today the proper wilderness forest station, so forth?

M: Kind of a contradiction in terms there.

E: The work that the CCC did is what kind of value to your type of program, the work that they did in the 1930's?

M: Tremendous value really. Most of our recreation areas are still old CCC areas. They have had . . . After about twenty-five years they need some renovation. Places like Stuart Recreation Area and Horseshoe Recreation Area on the Cheat District were put in by the CCC. Some renovation was done during the Accelerated Public Works program in the early 1960's, which was about twenty-five years. We're getting to the point now where, after another twenty-five years, we're going to have to do some more improvements. Still basically, the basic structures that were there are still being used. It's just been renovation of what they did rather than do construction to build a new campground--all of this was due to the CCC. All of the current areas were put in by the CCC. The ones they put in are mostly still being used.

Of course, the trees that they planted fifty years ago are now becoming fifty year old trees so they're getting to the point where they're harvestable trees, now. We don't get into a significant timber harvest until the timber is fifty to seventy years old so we're just getting to where we are going into that. The trails that were constructed, the roads that were built are essentially all still being used, and are a major part of our National Forest program.

E: I guess, you know, it varied from one CCC district to another. Sometimes you hear major criticism about it was wasteful spending, it falls in the same category as the PWA and that type of thing. Then you come into other districts and you see this reverse and obviously it must be true in this area, then. Whoever was planning. . .

R: They have thirteen camps.

E: Yes.

R: I sure hope they got it.

E: Yes, but whoever was doing the planning that type of thing, really had some feel for that immediate area plus the future.

M: Yes. I wasn't around during the CCC and I'm sure there were things done that weren't of lasting benefit. The things I see that are left here now from CCC are essentially the mainstay of a lot of our programs, so we are still benefiting.

E: What kind of interference or anything do you get from the Corps of Engineers? Or is it just the opposite of that?

M: We get very little. I can't think of anything where they have interfered with us.

E: Is there good, close cooperation with them?

M: No, they don't do an awful, they aren't doing an awful lot in this area. They have proposed during the 1960's and early 1970's, were proposing to construct the Rowlesburg Reservoir and we were working closely with them on the future management of recreation associated with the reservoir. This was to be on the Cheat River, it would have backed the water up to the outskirts of Parsons. The project wasn't carried out. They are still . . . Since the flood we've reviewed studies of flood control opportunities; they proposed a reservoir near Petersburg in Grant County on which we were working with them. Royal Glen Reservoir at Petersburg was assumed to be going to be built when the National Recreation Area was created. That was one of the attractions that was assumed to be a reason for establishment, this National Recreation Area.

R: That is not on the book anymore is it? I mean it didn't get built.

M: It didn't get built and I think the Corps decided that the costs are too great, although I am not 100 percent

sure about that.

E: Is there still a need for water conservation in this area?

M: Not . . . I don't know what you mean by water conservation. The big issue on dams versus not building dams has to be whether we will have dams or free flowing streams. The two camps are whether we provide flood protection or provide free flowing streams for recreation.

R: Does the recreation seem to be leaning more toward free flowing streams rather than lakes, and boats, and motels?

M: The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act did provide for a system of free flowing streams. The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service is now part of the Park Service. It did identify a number of streams to be evaluated for potential inclusion in that system.

R: Nothing has been designated on that though, has it?

M: No streams on this Forest have been included in the Wild and Scenic River System. The Forest Service did study the Greenbrier River, and the East and West Forks of the Greenbrier. The Park Service studied the Gauley River and Cranberry. Those were actually what are called 5(a) study rivers which means that they were identified in the Wild, and Scenic Rivers Act to be studied specifically for potential inclusion. These other rivers are called Nationwide Rivers Inventory Rivers which don't have the force of the law for the study. Congress did designate part of the Gauley River as a National Recreation Area but it doesn't involve National Forest.

R: To change the subject a lot, did you ever know anything about Carlton Perkins who was the superintendent who put together the Parsons nursery?

M: No.

R: Did he ever wander through your life? He went to the University of Maine.

M: He was the one on the horse in the pictures.

R: I haven't seen his picture.

M: We have pictures of all the former Forest Supervisors.

R: But you don't know much about him? He was the person who switched it from Gladwin to Parsons and I wondered

if . . . That was an incredible gearing up. That was the first time they hired a professional nursery man. Sandy Oliver came in and production went up to way over a million trees a year from being less than, I think, 500,000.

M: I don't know much about him. I remember some from McKim's history of the Monongahela; there were some public relations problems about that time.

R: After him, yes.

M: Succeeded him.

R: Is there anybody around us other than McKim that I can ask about?

M: I don't know of anybody.

R: The other person I wanted to ask you about was the predecessor, the guy named Johnson, who was the person who started the Gladwin Nursery. He retired here in Elkins. He went to Yale. He continued running the Glandwin Nursery on up into the 1940's and then he gave . . . I don't know whether he bought part of it. Does the Forest Service sell land?

M: No.

R: Anyway he gave part of the land to the VFW here for a military cemetery.

M: Okay, that is a different piece of land.

R: Okay, but I don't think he ever lived in Gladwin; I think he just went down there and watched what somebody or other else ran it I think.

M: The land he gave there was out on Craven's Run which is out on Harpertown Road. You go out past the college and then take the first road to the right.

R: It was my understanding that the cemetery was in Gladwin. In fact somebody told me did I know that there was a military cemetery in Gladwin.

M: There is Little Arlington Cemetery out there, just outside of town, not in Gladwin though.

E: They call it Little Arlington? Why?

M: Because it is a military cemetery. Arlington cemetery was in Arlington, this one was designated as Little Arlington.

R: Locally it's known as Little Arlington.

M: Locally. There is a sign that . . .

E: It has no official . . .

M: There is a sign out there that says "Little Arlington."

R: Locally it is official. Anyway, back to Gladwin, do you know anything about him and Gladwin?

M: Not much.

R: A continuation of that Gladwin Nursery?

M: No, he operated a florist shop here in Elkins, there next to Elkins Tire. Evidently he set the Hartmans up into business and Dee Dee White, who now operates Hartmans Florist Shop, knew him well and she has quite a few tales to tell about him.

R: Would she know anything about Gladwin?

M: She might.

R: She might know somebody?

M: She might. She knew him and, of course, he kind of adopted her. Her parents--he hired her father to work in his florist shop. One day he said, "Well, why don't you take the florist shop?" He more or less gave it to them. He probably had to pay something, but I think it was more of an idea setting them up in business. He just wanted to help out the Hartmans. He would cuss and swear and carry on, walk around town in his undershirt, things like that, stir up the local populace.

R: The ex-head of the forest.

E: What kind of economics does the Forestry Service bring to this valley, to this area, other than the immediate you, your assistants and some staff?

M: Aside from the share of timber receipts that goes to schools . . . Economic contributions through providing a supply of timber has traditionally been our major economic contribution to the local area, to have a dependable supply of timber be available on a continuing basis to support a timber industry in the area. We have been doing that, probably will continue to do that, at least at a certain level. The Forest undoubtedly contributes to tourism potential in the area, contributes that way, both in terms of providing recreation areas where people can come to, but also in terms of hunting, fishing opportunities, come to the

area for those purposes. In a sense we are also competing with potential private recreation areas. That has frequently been a complaint. The Government comes in. There used to be free camping, and it wasn't economical. Local people developed a commercial campground. We have a charge for most of our developed camping opportunities.

E: Does that reduce the bickering at all?

M: I think so. I haven't heard a lot of bickering. We also support local agricultural industries. They are leasing grazing land. That is something, because the National Forest is here there is less of a need for some of the public services that the state or local government would have to provide, in terms of roads and fire control and all of that sort of thing that we do.

R: You actually do policing? You don't have a guy who rides around in a . . . ?

M: We have law enforcement officers and a special agent.

R: They are not in a permanent car?

E: Incognito.

M: We have a special agent that spends all of her time on law enforcement related work. We don't have cars with . . .

R: You are not like the Park Service who has the guy that drives around?

M: We don't use sirens and we don't carry guns. Our special agent can carry a gun but our law enforcement officers don't. Our recreation area supervisors don't. We don't carry on all the law enforcement that would be done out on state roads. The state and county law enforcement officials still have full authority to enforce state laws on a national forest state conservation officers.

E: What do you think is the future of land management? Do you think it will stay basically the same as it is or do you think there are some real drastic changes that got to come down the pipe?

M: I don't know. I would expect to either have a trend toward emphasis on the nonconsumptive resources. I think there is, on the other hand, an increased awareness of the value of some of these consumptive resources, too, during the period of the preparation of the forest plan, the groups interested in nonconsumptive resources recognize an opportunity to get their

oar in the water. Consumptive resource people assumed that everything was going to be just as it was before and didn't bother to participate. People in West Virginia, and in this area, are beginning to see some economic benefits from timber in particular and in mineral resources. I think they recognize those values more than they did over the past ten to twenty years. I don't know how that will all sugar down politically. I hope it continues to be at some sort of balance, not leaning one way or the other.

R: Do you think there is antagonism? There was, between the two groups.

M: Oh sure.

R: Is it still as strong as it was?

M: I don't think so. I think the timber industry, for instance, is recognizing the legitimacy of these other uses more, recognize that they exist and that they are going to have to live with those other uses. I think the organized groups that see consumption as being not appropriate for national forest management are going to . . . I don't see them softening their position.

R: Yes.

E: Is it possible that West Virginia, which has been characteristically short on cash in comparison to wealth in all the rest of the other states, can suddenly, in the 21st Century, say, "Holy smoke, we got some natural resources. We can turn this into a national camping state. We can turn it into a recreational state that there is no rival anywhere else east of the Mississippi River," and they can just descend in here.

R: No, West Virginia can get its share. It needs better interregional highways to do it. They can get their share of that. I don't think the state can afford to base their whole economy on tourism, which is primarily a minimum wage type industry. I don't think that is an economic base. I think they are going to have to depend on other diversification. I think the tourism industry is a good part of that but it is not . . . I don't think the state can afford to say this area should be managed primarily as a playground.

E: I have heard comments made that way at different times. I just wondered how far that thinking has really gone in the state.

M: It depends on who you are talking to. The same in terms of highways, for instance, the same thing that would be dividing the highways to benefit both produc-

tion type industries and the tourism industry.

E: Right now most people go down a turnpike, down toward Virginia and Washington D.C. by Breezewood. If they would ever get a superhighway diagonally cut across this state, you know from say Steubenville-Pittsburgh area and cut right straight across, for them Breezewood would become a ghost town in nothing flat. Right now you have to avoid the state in a sense. When you are going south towards Atlanta, you skirt.

M: You don't want to cross over those mountains if you can help it.

R: A lot of people come down (Interstate) 70. I am surprised when we go to North Carolina or someplace like that the number of people with Ontario plates that come down (Interstate) 79 through West Virginia.

M: Go on down, pick up (Interstate) 77 and then head off. (Interstate) 77 got completed there through to that Virginia section and the turnpike has been upgraded to four lanes. I-64 has been connected. I think eventually corridor H will have to be built through here to at least get people from Washington, D.C., to maximize what they can get out of Washington, D.C.

R: The Parsons site wasn't really very active as a Forest Service site at all.

M: No. Not during my period. We lived there, we lived in the Nursery Bottom for about eleven years.

R: Did you use the bunkhouse or any of those buildings?

M: They were used not by us to any extent although we did have people in there. The Nursery Bottom was an interesting little exercise in inter agency coordination because we did have the Nursery and we had the District and the Fernow. We had the Department of Natural Resources. They had a building down there, the wildlife manager's headquarters.

R: Where did he live? You mean he didn't live in the Nursery.

M: They had a warehouse building and an oil house. Also, the road construction/maintenance branch of the Forest Service, which actually worked out of Elkins, responsible to the Forest Engineer rather than the District Ranger. They had a warehouse down there. The Soil Conservation Service maintained a small building there.

R: Then did the Fernow have somebody living there?

M: The Fernow had Bill Wendell living there.

R: He lived in that little house.

M: Little house across from the Ranger's residence. The Nursery Superintendent was there. We had a gas line going across the Nursery Bottom under special use, power lines; t.v. cable came into . . . That's kind of interesting story, a sideline. When we moved in there, we just had a roof antenna for the t.v. and Dave McCurdy, the superintendent, moved in. They thought that there ought to be cable down into the bottom, which seemed nice, but the cable company didn't want to bring cable down to serve three or four people, running a long cable in there.

END OF INTERVIEW