

An Interview with  
**Edwin H. Glaser**

in  
Jefferson City, Missouri

**06 October 1997**

interviewed by Will Sarvis  
transcribed by Teresa Jones  
edited by Renae Farris



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## PREFACE

The interview was recorded on 3M AVX60 type I (normal bias) audio cassettes, using a Marantz PMD-222 manual recorder (set on automatic recording level) and a Shure VP64 omnidirectional microphone attached to a tripod. No interference compromises the recording, and the audio quality is good throughout.

The following transcript represents a faithful rendering of the entire oral history interview. Minor stylistic alterations -- none of factual consequence -- have been made as part of a general transcription policy. Any use of brackets [ ] indicates editorial insertions not found on the original audio recordings. Parentheses ( ) are used to indicate laughter or a spoken aside evident from the speaker's intonation. Quotation marks [" "] indicate speech depicting dialogue, or words highlighted for the usual special purposes (such as indicating irony). Double dashes [--] and ellipses [ . . . ] are also used as a stylistic method in an attempt to capture nuances of dialogue or speech patterns. Words are *italicized* when emphasized in speech. Although substantial care has been taken to render this transcript as accurately as possible, any remaining errors are the responsibility of the editor, N. Renae Farris.



**[Tape meter, 001. Begin side one, tape one of three. Begin interview.]**

WS: Okay, just for the record, I'll say: my name is Will Sarvis. I'm with State Historical Society of Missouri. Today is October 6th, 1997 and I'm in Jefferson City, Missouri today with Mr. Edwin H. Glaser. We're going to talk about the Department of Conservation and land use and environmental topics. But just to get started, maybe you could give us a biographical sketch about where you were born and grew up and that kind of thing.

EG: As my wife says, I was born "almost in the Ozarks" at Sullivan, Missouri (between St. Louis and Rolla) in the corner of Franklin County on a farm, very close to where Washington, Crawford and Franklin County met. Washington and Crawford County were considered real Ozark; Franklin County, a little closer to St. Louis (the other end of the county) was considered almost urban. But [I] grew up on a farm with lots of rocks [and] creek bottom. [I was] one of four boys, [and we lived on a] general purpose farm.

[I] went to high school at Sullivan, Missouri; went through the school systems in Sullivan, Missouri.

[I] went into the Marine Corps in 1944, [and] got out in '46. [I then went to the] University Missouri at Columbia, in [what was known] *then* [as] the Forestry Department. [I] completed a Bachelors degree in Forestry in '49, and a Masters in '50. Then [I] *started* a career, *partly* in Forestry. Later on it evolved more into a general environmental career, primarily with the Department of Conservation. I'd spent -- [I have spent] actually in total about forty and a half years with the Conservation Department -- but in the 1950s, late '54 to mid-'56, I was gone at Mississippi State

University [where I] taught in their School of Forestry. It seems I had [a] ruptured disk in my back and doing field work was impossible. Wandering the hills, no way could I do it. But [after] I had surgery on my back, [I] came back with the Department. I [had] left on good terms and I guess I came back on good terms. [I] spent the rest of my career first in the Forestry Division: Eminence; Van Buren; California, Missouri; Warrenton, Missouri; and came to Jefferson City in 1959. And [I] headed the Planning Section for a good many years -- Planning Section and later Planning Division of the Missouri Department of Conservation. And then I spent four years as Assistant Director, four years as the Deputy Director, and retired to enjoy life...*more!* *Good* career. *Fun* career.

WS: Can I ask you your birthday, Mr. Glaser?

EG: 11-22-26. [November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1926.] I'm counting birthdays in decades now, not in years.

WS: I guess you would have been right around eleven years old when they created the Department of Conservation.

EG: That's *true*, and I remember it. [It] had been a political animal up to then. It kind of evolved that [it had] no consistency in programs. The "*game wardens*" were more or less in many cases political appointees beholden to the last politician that got hold of them. So the people of Missouri became fed up with this type of an operation. Many of the bright heads, the Rudolf Bennitts from the University, other people got their heads together and said, "There must be a better way." So they wrote a constitutional amendment that would create a Conservation Department (basically is what it was) that would include fish, game, and forestry. And they were very wise to include them all under one umbrella, since one kind of hangs on the other, habitat-wise, and so on. They

were able to go out (the people were) [and] get the statewide organization established. [They would] go out and get enough signatures to get the issue on the ballot, the constitutional amendment as they had written it. And it gave the agency the control management [and] restoration of the fish, wildlife and forest resources in the *state*.

**[Tape meter, 050]**

It gave them the income or the power... The income from it, the politicians couldn't touch it if it was enacted and so on. So it set up *basically* a scientifically-based department. Perhaps one of the things that really helped carry it: when it got close and it was uncertain whether it would pass or not, they were able to get the support of Tom Pendergast in Kansas City. And as I recall, the words were something like, "If it's good for the women and children, I'm for it." So the Pendergast machine got behind something that you would not think they would have any part of, because here it's taking a political organization and making it non-political.

And to this day -- and here we are in 1997 -- it's strictly a non-political organization. Employees and people that deal and work with the Department [are] all treated the same. People that apply for jobs are all treated the same. They rise and fall on their merits. It has been that way. It has survived some turmoil over the years. When the politicians decided they didn't like what was created, and typically the public had risen up-*really* risen up and beat them down. And so the department goes.

In the 1970s, the finance was an issue. First, there was a thought that they'd better finance the department, because most of the income of the department was from the sale of hunting and fishing permits and incomes from the lands and gifts, and so on.

That was the extent of their income. It was not enough to run an absolutely broad-based program. So the public went out again [and] they wrote an amendment... Well, *first*, they went out to attempt to get a sales tax ("Soda-Pop Tax" as it was called) which got Coca-Cola, Pepsi Cola, and everyone else, on their case. So that didn't fly very good. But they went out *again*, and the people of the state -- primarily with the help of the Conservation Federation of Missouri (which is a non-political *citizens* organization, not connected *to* the Conservation Department, except the citizens believe in good government) -- they wrote the petitions in such a way that it provided for a one-eighth of one percent sales tax to be paid by the citizens, which is a penny on \$8.00. The signatures were approved, it got on the ballot, [and] by a narrow margin it passed. And I don't know what the yield is now, but it's probably seventy million dollars or so a year, to be used for fish, wildlife and forestry purposes. That, along with the returns from the federal aid to fisheries, aid to forestry [and] aid to wildlife, are controlled. What have you. Plus incomes from the land, plus gifts and so on would finance this department. Now, within all the years, it stayed non-political. Education has been a strong base. Scientific management has been a strong base. Service to the public has been a strong base. That's the philosophy that the people wanted and that's what they get.

WS: I noticed in looking back in the blue book [Official Manual of the State of Missouri], of course they had a map of Missouri and the counties how that vote came down. I wonder if, in the later years as you traveled around, if you got any idea about why some of those counties were so adamant against that constitutional amendment.

[Tape meter, 100]

EG: Well, in the hill counties, of course... *Both* of them probably passed in the cities, where the greatest number of voters *were*. The promise was that the Department had made, and I think was particularly evident on the last vote, was that we could better serve the people in the metropolitan area -- who didn't live in the country, [who] didn't have an acreage out in the country and so on, who got in their car and went out for recreation, came back to the city -- we could better serve them closer to home. We could broaden our focus more into conservation education, more into services to the urban public, and so on. And the people *bought in* to it.

The hill people already have the people in the rural areas, [and] many of them already have this type of thing at their doorstep. They tend to be more independent. One of the major rumors was that, "Okay, you've got..." And the Conservation Department told them, the staff said generally, "You give us the money, [and] this is what we'll do with it. We'll acquire more public lands; we'll expand our educational program; we'll get into the non-game (the so-called non-game: the birds, and other things that you don't hunt) and fish, etc...; we will do all of *these* things."

Well, one the reactions from some of the rural people was, "Well, they're going out and buying up the whole state of Missouri." Right now I think -- and I'm guessing-I don't have current figures -- but probably ninety-three percent (or something like that) of the state is privately *owned*. Even after twenty years of "You're going to buy up the state;" and "what the Forest Service owns"; "what the Corps of Engineers owns"; "what other federal and state agency owns"; "what the cities owns"; "what the cities own in parks"; and so on. So that was one factor, "you're going to buy the whole state."

Another factor was [that] there had been a great fight over the years, starting in the '50s though the '60s and so on, over the national wild and scenic rivers (the Current River, Jack's Fork, Eleven Point River) *and a state scenic river system that really got to be a battleground with busloads of people [coming] to the legislature for hearings and so on. The wounds hadn't healed over that, so there were visions of the Conservation Department establishing a state system of wild and public rivers that the public did not want.*

Many factors: independence, anti-government, problems with people not knowing, not being able to trust government... I started the field; I went through the department, up to Deputy Director (which is the number two slot in the department). Our pledge then, and as far as I know -- I've been retired five years -- *now* is that "A promise made is a promise to be kept. And if we tell you something, we'll do it if it's within our power, and if not, we'll try to work out something. If we're unable to do it for some reason, we'll try to find another solution." So the bulk of the public bought it. With this increased funding, the pledges that were made *are* being kept.

**[Tape meter, 150]**

Right now it's relatively quiet, because there's not a lot to argue about except management decisions such as "Are you going to permit mining on the State forest land and exploratory drilling," and this type of thing. So there will always be these resource issues. But quite often with those, you're arguing with the people who supported the thing originally. It's just a matter of who's going to call the management shots and to what extent they're going to be carried out. *[pause]* The "promises made, promises

kept” and the confidence of the public is part of the picture of why the Department has succeeded.

And the other thing is when you start... If you want to go out here to the Runge Nature Center on the northwest side of Jefferson City, [you’ll] see two- and three-year-old kids in there learning about the environment, about conservation, about hunting, fishing, the out of doors, and so on -- that’s part of the secret, too. If you educate a public from the time they’re year *zero* until they’re too old to be out anymore and all they can do is read the *free* [Missouri] Conservationist magazine every month (which carries the same message), you’re building the support and you’re keeping it. That’s been the game plan and it’s worked.

WS: Now as far as the Federal presence in forestry, did that get started with the 1911 Weeks Act?

EG: It’s the U.S. Forest Service, and they really showed up into Missouri in the 1930s. It was the Clark National Forest. They established purchase units, usually in the corner of three or four counties because they could only acquire so much land in any one county. It started out [as] the Clark National Forest, then it was the Clark... And they split the management. And the Mark Twain National Forest had one office at Rolla, which was the Clark. The Mark Twain was headquartered at Springfield. At one period of time, they had *three* national forests in Missouri. They tacked on the Shawnee, and the Shawnee is headquartered in Illinois. It picked up the Poplar Bluff district and so on, but basically, that is where the National Forest came in. Part of it, probably the Weeks Act put the structure together for the National Forest to *be* established. And the big emphasis

was probably the CCC era (Civilian Conservation Corp era) when much of the land was being acquired and so on. I haven't read my history of the National Forest in recent years, so I'm not [a] real authority to speak on it *except* that there were some very, very strong conservation-minded leaders in the National Forest system *in* Missouri: the supervisor of the Clark National Forest, supervisor of the Mark Twain National Forest, the rangers on the district. I think of a supervisor by the name of Byron Grossbeck was at Rolla. I think of one [Henry W.] "Hank" Debruin [in] Springfield.<sup>1</sup> District Ranger Harold ?Nigran? at Winona.

**[Tape meter, 200]**

These were all very well-respected individuals in the Forest Service hierarchy.

The Forest Service acquired public lands. They managed the lands that they *had* -- which as I recall runs something like maybe 1.4 million acres, and I'm guessing on that. Again, I'll haven't looked it up in recent years -- but they also had a program of assistance for private land owners that was funded through the Forestry Division of the Conservation Department where there were technical foresters in the field and scattered over the state. One of the first districts was at Kirksville up on the Iowa line, which is unique in that there's not that much forest land up there. Another was at Warrenton (one of the early ones.) But gradually, they scattered through the hill country where you have counties that are sixty, seventy, eighty percent forested, to work with the private land owners *on* forest management. By forest management, you're talking about timber culture. Everything from regeneration, to sales, to what have you. So the Forest Service

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<sup>1</sup> For an interview with Mr. Debruin, please see C3966 Missouri Environment Oral History Project, a. c. 44, 45.

had a double role really, because they made the funds available for what they call the “farmed forestry” (the private land owner assistance program) *to* the state, and it was up to the state to carry it out. One of my early positions was as a farm forester in Van Buren. I spent four years there. I spent a couple of years at California [Missouri] and a couple of years at Warrenton, working with private land owners. [It was a] good program because the land owners, the private individuals owned the bulk of the land in the State of Missouri. As they go, so goes the state as far as forest resources go. One time the state was about as I recall two-thirds forested (about thirty, thirty-one, thirty-two million acres. It’s about fifteen million acres now and as I recall about thirteen, fourteen [million acres] of it is considered commercial forest land. And with the bulk of it being owned by the private land owner -- your watersheds, your streams and everything else -- you either get the right information *to them* so they can carry it out in their programs, or you’re lost on forest management. Part of getting the right information *to* them is helping them with timber sales and so on, because they’re going to do something for a buck. And if they don’t know how, they can become the pawn (I guess you’d call it) of the timber buyer who has all the chips because he knows what he’s doing. The landowner who does this once every five years, once every ten years, or *every* year for that matter, can lose his shirt real quick when he sells timber, or [when the] timber is to be harvested. So this is one the jobs, one of the roles, that was played as education of the forest landowner.

**[Tape meter, 250]**

WS: It seems like it would be hard to persuade farmers to go in for a product with such a long term yield as opposed to an annual yield.

EG: It is. The whole thing though, if you say *farmer*... Much of the Ozarks, if you go down there, the person -- and it's more so today than in years gone by -- much of that land might be owned by absentee landowners, and there's no farming to it. You show me an open field in a county that's eighty-five percent forested, that is *one* side of the coin. The other side on your people who are farmers, the cornfield, the soybean field, the hay field and so on, is not forest. But there are things you can *do* with the part of the farm that is a forest. For instance, livestock grazing, fire protection, proper harvest, and so on. Or just the recreational value of it. And you're talking about a piece of ground *on* the farm, that you can show them how to make *more* dollars out of, in addition to what they get out of the crop.

One of the programs the Conservation Department is fostering now and pushing pretty hard -- particularly after the floods that we had in the early '90s -- is to foster the idea of forest and tree corridors along the streams, on each side of the stream, and [to] actually assist the landowner in establishing these corridors, and maybe even making a payment to them for keeping them, just because the health of the stream. It's good for the landowner; it's certainly good for the stream; and if it's good for the stream, it's good for the fish and wildlife resources -- not only the forest resources, but the fish and wildlife resources. Everybody can win. So it's that type of approach. In some parts of the state, if you go to the Bootheel now, you'll find places down there that were cleared and flat as can be and so on that have gone into cropland. They're going back into forestland. They're being cultivated, the fast growing species -- cottonwood, some of those species that are very, very fast growing -- on good agricultural land, going into the

pulp.<sup>2</sup> Grow them fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years and harvest the thing and start over. And part of this on the areas where the streams [are] can be devastating, but part of it's companies that are doing this and actually taking the agricultural land and growing forest

**[Tape meter, 300]**

on a managed basis. Some of that wood is going over to Wickliffe, Kentucky [for the Westvaco Corporation paper mill] going into pulp for paper and so on. So there are all kinds of angles to the thing.

WS: Now, when you got up into the hill country, were they planting mostly for pulp?

EG: No. There's not been a pulp industry *in* Missouri. Arkansas has them. Kentucky has it. There were moves over time in the years past to try to set up a pulp paper operation around Poplar Bluff. That never did fly, partly [due to] water quality problems and concerns, and wood supply. It's the type of operation. Right now, there's discussion in Missouri, in '97, of establishing a big chipboard operation. And that is -- if you read the papers -- controversial, because one of the questions is, "Will the private landowner use this to clear land that shouldn't be cleared?" And this happened when the cattle market was so high -- what, two decades ago? -- there were Ozark lands and hill lands, and even north Missouri lands cleared of forest cover that in no way should have ever been cleared. It was because the cord wood market was so good. So it gets to be a resource management problem. You'll find other types of forest land management where you're actually taking open land, grazing land, or what you call more or less "integrated

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<sup>2</sup> That is, very fast growing tree species are being cultivated on former farmland to be harvested for the pulpwood industry.

management” where you have a row of walnut trees and a crop between the rows or another row of walnut trees. Hammons Industries [Hammons Products Company] in [Stockton,] Missouri is the largest producer of walnut nut meats in the world. So it’s integrated management where you actually have the forestland. You can grow the walnuts -- not necessarily for walnut *trees*, you’re growing it for walnuts, which a product of the forest. It’s good for wildlife, but also that nut is big business. As you drive around central Missouri now, you’ll see them buying those nuts, and the trees are pretty well loaded with walnuts *this* year. It’s going to be a tremendous crop. So there are ways to integrate management to make it work.

**[Tape meter, 350]**

So some of it’s relatively short term, and instead of waiting for the harvest of the walnut crop where it starts producing in eight years, ten years, twelve years and so on, you grow other crops --soybeans or whatever -- in between the walnut growth until that time where you’ll have the annual income. So you can have your cake and eat it too.

**[Tape meter, 358. End of side one, tape one of three.]**

**[Tape meter, 016. Begin side two, tape one of three.]**

WS: One thing I wanted to ask you about was the rehabilitation of game species, which I guess would have started in the ‘30s. I just wondered if the Department of Conservation was involved with the Forest Service in that regard. I know back east they were doing that.

EG: My familiarity with it is really not that much. There are people around who are quite familiar with it. I would give you a name of an individual by the name of Bill Crawford.

Bill is in Columbia, [Missouri.] He's a longtime employee of the Conservation Department, and he saw pretty well some of those programs from start to finish, and is a Scientific Management.

There were several problems in Missouri. One: Before the Conservation Department was established as it's known now -- where it had the control management restoration and so on of the fish-wildlife-forest resources in the state -- the deer herd had been shot down to about *nothing*. The only way you could regenerate the deer herd was to [number] one: get laws, rules and regulations, seasons and limits to protect them. In other words, they pretty well closed the deer season. Number two was to give them a place to recover [and] *recuperate*. The Forest Service worked [on it,] and some other things that went with it were to get a handle on forest fire control, wildfire control, [and] to get a handle on livestock grazing in the forest. The free range sheep, goats, horses, mules, cows and hogs [were] eating their way through the acorns and what have you.

They had to regenerate the forest, but they also had to have some nucleus areas where this deer herd (the Virginia, the Whitetail deer) could be live-trapped and put in these areas [to be] watched very closely and protected. So there were areas established [as in] Deer Run State Forest near Ellington, in Reynolds County. A big hunk of public land there was fenced with a high fence. They had rangers that patrolled the fence to keep the locals from poaching the deer. In other words it became a game that was played. Big Spring State Park at Van Buren [Missouri] was a refuge area. Indian Trails State Forest, north and east of Salem in Dent County, was a major area, with a large fenced area.

**[Tape meter, 050]**

Meramec State Park -- and our home or the place where I grew up happened to be about three-quarters of a mile or a mile *west* of Meramec State Park -- was a *major* area where the deer had been live trapped, restocked and were protected. Before the season opened or early when the season opened, in the late '30s and early '40s, it wasn't uncommon to look out of the house where we lived and look across the valley, and be able to count twenty, twenty-five, thirty deer! A success in the program... Of course they were out eating the farmers' alfalfa [and] my dad's alfalfa. There were tracks around every corn shock that was cut in the valleys in the mornings. But the landowners around, took pride in it, and they would just literally do civil war with anybody that tried to poach one of those deer. It was their deer, and even though they were eating some of their crops, it was their deer that had come out of the Meramec State Park.

So, yes, there was a concerted program. And then it eventually evolved that seasons were opened [for] bucks only (since one buck could service many does). Then it became a buck/doe season and so on. But you need to talk to a wildlife biologist *about* some of this. It's a highly successful program.

In later years with the Department, the turkey program also was handled somewhat same way. Turkeys were live-trapped, some from outside Missouri. They were moved into areas where they could be protected. Food plots were prepared to give them the openings and the breaks in the forest canopy in these heavily timbered areas. Where they could be protected [and] where the flock could develop. And these flocks were trapped and moved elsewhere in the state. Surprisingly *enough*, some of the biggest

turkey flocks, *now*, are in north Missouri. Not in the hill counties, but in north Missouri. They *love it* there. So again, this was a successful program.

Another [program] was the river otter -- and this was in fairly recent times, '80s [and] '90s -- where the river otters were... They weren't *extinct*, but they were very low [in] population. Studies were made of sites where the river otter might make it, in the streams of Missouri. Otters were obtained from [the state of] Louisiana, [and] moved to Missouri. Sometimes it was one-way trades or two-way trades of wild turkeys for river otter, or catfish for something or another. And again by putting these animals in suitable habitats, there's been a very successful river otter restoration program. So it's a matter of habitat management, understanding the species that you're dealing with, having land owner cooperation in the areas where these animals or fish (or whatever it is) are restocked, and you can prove success in programs.

There have been a few programs that haven't gone too well. Quail populations have been a real problem, because of the change in land use where quail habitat isn't what it used to be. When you get great areas of fescue on big expanses now, where once there were fence rows and blackberry briars, and so on... There have been experiments where they have tried to bring in outside species, one being the Coturnix quail,<sup>3</sup> which was obtained and stocked in Missouri. The only problem with that was that they were migratory, and when they took off they never came back. So there *are* successes, and there are failures. There are far more successes than failures. Coturnix was one that didn't fly. In other words, they thought they had a species that might adapt to the type of

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<sup>3</sup> "Coturnix quail" is a term generally used for Japanese quail.

habitat that exists in Missouri today. That was many years ago, but the bulk of these restoration programs have been quite successful.

**[Tape meter, 100]**

WS: A while ago, you mentioned fire as being one of the problems. Did you have job fires in Missouri?

EG: Yeah. Now, I wasn't the one starting the fires. And I know that's what you're referring to, is someone [who] starts a fire and then [goes to be] hired to put it out. When I was in high school in Sullivan, Missouri, I worked on fire crews -- and that was in '42, '43, [and] '44 -- for the Conservation Department. When the fires got bad enough in Franklin, Washington, [and] Crawford counties, the Conservation Department had an agreement with the school that when they needed enough help, they could get a crew from the high school. And I was one of the crew that they would recruit from the high school. I can't remember what the pay was; I don't know if it was thirty cents an hour or fifty cents an hour. It wasn't great, but it was more than I was making if I'd have been milking the cows at home.

So the idea... I had worked on fire crews. After I got out of the University as a professional forester, I worked on fire crews. And I do remember at one stage -- it was probably 1952 or '53 -- we had been having quite a few fires in one area. I'd pick up my crew in Van Buren, and... Primarily my job was forest management with private land owners, but I *would* work on fires when the district headquarters at Ellington -- which covered part of Carter County -- when they were pretty well covered up or the district headquarters at Eminence was pretty well covered up, I'd get a crew and go fight a fire.

So I finally figured out that the reason these fires started so good and in such inaccessible places, was one of the people I was employing (a young man whose intelligence quotient wasn't very high, but he was smarter than I am) because he would start the fire, I would employ him, we would go, he'd work like the devil, we'd go put the fire out, and a couple days later we'd have *another* one. So needless to say, experience taught me there that he wasn't going to work for me anymore, and the fires stopped. (chuckles) Yes, the answer to the questions is yes. (chuckles) *Good experience* for a trusting young forester!

Fire *was* a major problem. Stand regeneration was almost impossible when they were burning the Ozarks with great regularity. Easter Sunday was always "blow-up time." The fires would start and often the wind would be blowing a gale. Some of the larger forest fires in Missouri were Easter Sunday-type fires. But you cannot manage something if you're going to destroy the product that's already growing on the ground. The trees, we're going to fire scar them, burn them, kill them, whatever. You can't *regenerate* stands if you're going to kill the young growth that's coming up, or the plantations where you've actually gone out and planted the trees.

**[Tape meter, 150]**

This was all part of the picture. So eliminating wildfires was one of the top priorities. In the early years, the CCC camps (Civilian Conservation Corp) spent much time more or less defending some of the state parks [and] state forest areas and so on. There weren't many state forests at the time. The Forest Service spent a great amount of time. Pioneer Cooperage Company, which was a major land owner in the Ozarks, and later became Pioneer Forest owned by Leo Drey of St. Louis... T.J. Moss Tie Company... All of

these major land owners and the agencies devoted a ton of resources and time to try to eliminate the wildfire problem. You just don't eliminate it overnight. But many avenues were tried, including going out and putting out the fires when they started.

But also there were such innovations as the so-called "Showboat." It was a fan-type vehicle with a generator in the back of it, [and it had] a bunch of films on fire control and some more entertaining on wildlife management in the cab, and an operator. And you would schedule the Showboat to the rural schools, to the little community centers and so on through the Ozarks statewide. And it was a process of education about fire, the need for wildfire control and so on, and this was part of the success story over time. When there's no REA (Rural Electric [Administration]) in an area, you can see why you had to have the generator putt-putting out behind the schoolhouse. When the windows of the schoolhouse wouldn't darken, you saw why they had to have their own window darkening material when you meet in the afternoon with the school kids in these rural schools, *or* at night it was better. But it was an education process. And gradually the forest fire situation was gotten to a fairly *respectable* level. Interesting enough, one of the areas that was toughest to conquer (and they didn't conquer it completely yet) is the Lake of the Ozarks area, around Camdenton. Everybody come spring feel they have to get out and burn their few leaves out around their cabins, and [the fires] get away and away they go. [In] the hill country the incident of wildfire is way down. Now, here in 1997, you can talk about controlled burning where you actually call the shots on what you're going to burn. You have a purpose for burning, whether it's regeneration or whatever it might be, and fire can be used as a management tool in the forest. No longer

do you find people tying a kerosene-soaked gunny sack to a fox's tail and turning it loose and letting it go across country. It can string fires for miles and miles! It can string more fire before it gets cremated itself than you can put out in a few days. And this type of thing *was* done. People would ride across country in the early years, like [in the] '30s, and into the '40s and even the early '50s, [they'd] get on their mule [or] get on their horse and go across country and just drag a sack behind them to string fire to lay the chunk.

WS: I wonder why? Why would anyone do that?

EG: Now you have to clear the land, keep the land open. [The land needed to] green up early in the spring, because this was free range time. People had horses out, or people cattle and hogs out particularly, and free range was a part of it.

**[Tape meter, 200]**

Too, part of this whole picture where "your land is my land if I have hogs and cattle, and I mark them, and I turn them out in the spring and I go get them in the fall, and we want it to green up just as early in the spring as we can. We don't want burn up those acorns in the fall if we can avoid it, because the hogs can root around them most of the winter. But come spring we want to green it up again, so [we] touch it off." And it's this type of thing... It was a feeling that it was a management technique that was useful. It would really open it up, but it really wasn't useful. It was a little quick fertilization energy and it *would* green up, because you could see it through the forest and the open stands and so on, but this was just a thing that was done.

Some of the bigger fights... There was local option for *closing* the range. I can remember in the Birch Tree area of Shannon County, they closed -- and perhaps around

Ellington too, in Reynolds County -- one of the first things that closed was horses and mules, to get *them* off the range. Sheep and goats were next, but cattle and hogs became a hard sell. There were hearings on closing the range in the legislature here in Jefferson City that were just literally knock-down drag-outs, and they never could quite get the range closed to where they said, "Okay, you diehard people that still believe in free-range, the use of the range -- my land, your land and everybody else's land -- you can't do it anymore until the... I guess the crowning blow were some Bootheel legislators going home over east of Van Buren... I can't remember [whether if it was] hogs, cows or what laying in the highway, which was pretty typical, [but] they would be there at night when you drove [State] Highway 19 down through the hill country, [and on U.S.] Highway 60 [an east-west route.] But they plowed into some animals and that pretty well ended it. And they said, "Okay, enough's enough." And then they mustered forces to get the rest of the range closed. But it was a *battleground* for years and years and years! Many of the people that were running the cattle (or the hogs as the case might be) might not even be local. I remember that one of the... [There was] a big herd of cattle running on some ?Kralovec? land, east and south of Van Buren, primarily east. The person who was more or less responsible for them, he was [with] the cowboys and he *was* a cowboy. [They were] from Texas. So they were running big herds of cattle on everybody else's land! They just *died hard*. If you wanted to establish or regenerate an old field to... Say it would have been used for corn and [it was] pretty well worn out or whatever, if you planted *tree* species in there, you fenced the livestock *out*. You didn't fence the livestock

*in*; you fenced the livestock *out*. So your plantation could regenerate and grow without getting rooted up, eaten up, trampled to pieces, and so on.

**[Tape meter, 250]**

Free range was very much a part of the management and grazing in the hardwood forest of Missouri. It's still a management problem to convince landowners that you graze fields, you don't graze forest. But the range *is* closed in Missouri, officially, by acts of the legislature, but not before many battles.

WS: Would you happen to remember the year they closed it?

EG: I don't.

WS: It would be in the '50s or the '60s?

EG: It might have been [the] '60s. I would have to look back. Jerry [J.] Presley might remember. But they were quite interesting battles. It's real interesting how the side of the conservation movement operated in Missouri. Now, I joined the department in 1949. Actually in the summer of '49, I joined the Department of Conservation as a surveyor of state forest land, primarily in Shannon County. The state-owned lands had been acquired at tax sales and everything, anywhere from fifty cents an acre up to something more. It's impossible to manage something if you can't establish boundary lines around it. So that was my job. I lived at Eminence [and] got acquainted with local people. I lived at the Riverside Hotel run by Emmett Searcy and his wife. I ate in a restaurant at Eminence run by Danny Searcy. Sat on the courthouse walls [and] spit and whittled with the best of them. And then I went back to the University of Missouri and finished my Masters degree. In the meantime I got married. My wife and I went to the hill counties. We

went to Van Buren. She thought (being from north Missouri) I'd taken her to the end of the world.

But when we first got there we lived in the Rose Cliff Hotel. We could find no place to live in Van Buren. And the whole *point* of this story: there were bunch of interesting characters around the Rose Cliff Hotel. One was... Well, there were three people that primarily ran the Rose Cliff. One was Ben Davis, and Ben was a sort of philosopher, a public relations type. One was Mose Nelson. Mose sort of ran the desk and so on, [and] never said very much. Another was Pete Bradley -- and this was in 1950 -- Pete was sort of the hustler. But at the Rose Cliff Hotel, which was on the bank of the Current River in Carter County -- sort of the center of the Ozarks, [a] heavily timbered county, I think it's what, eighty-five percent forested. I can't remember what percent, but Shannon, Carter and Ripley and those counties...

**[Tape meter, 300]**

But these people were there at the hotel all the time. Well, staying in the hotel were salesmen, people from the United States Forest Service, people from the Missouri Department of Conservation, newspaper type people, I think of Thad Snow from down in the Bootheel, who had a place there. I think of the attorney who... We had to rent space there because we couldn't find an apartment, [and] the attorney in the room next to us who used to pace the floor by day and by night while we were living there -- and my wife wasn't working at the time -- and try his cases. He would practice trying his cases in the hotel. So it was a bunch of characters! But the people who stayed there at night, you could always *bet* on a great discussion of conservation and conservation matters. Ben

Davis was sort of the leader, Ben being in the hotel. Forest supervisors, researchers, wildlife biologists and what have you, and they would fight the battle of how to get better resource management in Missouri. Night after night, *day* after day, and it was really a center of -- and the Rose Cliff Hotel isn't there no more -- but it was really a center of the conservation battles in Missouri. Interesting characters, interesting group of players.

People who used to come there were such people as Leonard Hall. He lived over around Arcadia and Ironton, [and] he wrote for the St. Louis Post Dispatch, wrote a column. He owned forest land in the Ozarks. Periodically Len would come to the Ozarks to see his forest land, to discuss management, [and] to work as a forester at the time. Of course I had opportunities to work with him, [and] visit his land. But one of the things that I remember very *distinctly* was that Len liked to visit his forest land, [and] there was a very nice spring on it. Ben Davis would often go with us when we were going to check the forest, run timber sales or what have you. But come noon, Len had to have a tottie of bourbon and branch water. And the branch water came right out of the spring. And that was a ritual with him, a given when he came to Carter County. But Len was very influential, having the access of the St. Louis Post Dispatch and the distribution

**[Tape meter, 350]**

of that newspaper. He was very much a leader in the conservation *movement* in Missouri. He was a newsman. So characters galore came through that hotel. Real live characters.

WS: You were there for four years? '50 to '54?

EG: No. We were in Van Buren for four years, yes. Finally after, I don't know, two or three months we found a place to live in Van Buren. This was above the embalming room at a

funeral home. And you'd wake up in the middle of the night and hear that pump going down there: *[imitating the sound]* "pump-pump-pump-pump, pump-pump-pump-pump." So we adjusted to living above the embalming room of a funeral home. In fact, the operators of the funeral home are very good friends of our to this day and here it is almost fifty years later! (laughs) Wonderful people [and] again characters, but it's part of the experience. So we were in Van Buren for four years.

**[Tape meter, 374. End side two, tape one of three.]**

**[Tape meter, 001. Begin side one, tape two of three.]**

WS: So where'd you go after Van Buren?

EG: I'd like to tell you just a little bit about Van Buren. One of the things that my wife and I were successful in doing -- and I attribute part of my success, and I think I did have success in working forest management with private land owners -- was that my wife became the county home economics extension agent. [She] worked for the extension service of the University of Missouri. So she had contact with the people in all the communities in the county including the 4-H kids, the kids that were involved in 4-H. So we prided ourselves... And I was active in the American Legion and some other organizations -- [I] used to drag the baseball field for them. In other words, we became very much a part of the community. And we prided ourselves in knowing all the people in Carter County. I think there were only about 6,000 people in Carter County, but between the two of us we knew them all. We were part of being accepted in the county. Which, if you were accepted [and] become part of the local structure, your program is going to be more successful; I don't care what it is. So we worked hard at becoming

accepted. But between her contacts and mine we could pretty well enjoy the trust, I guess, of the people in the county.

[I] had a problem after about four years of bouncing around in a jeep on hill roads and what have you. [I] ruptured discs in my lower back, so I had a problem there not being able to do the field work in the forest -- get out and wander around the forest and bounce around in jeeps and so on. I left Van Buren to go to Mississippi State University at State College [near] Starkville, Mississippi, and taught two years in forestry school there. [I] had surgery on my back, and it got it in shape so I could get around and work again. That was in 1954.

In 1956 then, [I] came back with the Department of Conservation at California, Missouri, again working with private landowners. After about a year and a half, [I] went to Warrenton, Missouri on a district working -- Warrenton being west of St. Louis on what is now I-70 -- [I] worked with private land owners, but also managed the Warrenton Fire District. Warrenton Forest *District* is basically what it was, the state forest land that they had there -- *plus* the fire control, *plus* working with private land owners.

In 1959, [I] then came to Jefferson City as a state forest supervisor (well, actually [I was] State Fire Control Supervisor.) And then shortly after that, I moved over to State Forest Supervisor and Nursery Supervisor, and stayed in the Forestry Division until 1964. Then I took on the role in establishing a planning section, what's now a planning division for the Conservation Department, primarily to... Well, there were several things: liaison with other agencies, State and Federal; got involved in writing the first state recreation plan to qualify the state for land and water conservation funds. Many things. But

eventually the role evolved *mostly* into coordinating planning in the Department of Conservation. [I] spent twenty years in the thing. The group grew from two of us up to many. One of the big roles was coordinating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on water resource development projects in Missouri. everything from Clarence Cannon Dam and Reservoir, Smithville [Reservoir], Lake Truman, the Meramec Basin proposals for many dams and the big fight being over Meramec Park Lake, the proposed water valley dam on the Eleven Point River (which we finally got knocked in the head and killed with the help of a Bootheel legislator \_\_\_\_\_+ in Washington.)

**[Tape meter, 050]**

So a lot of it was coordination with the Corp of Engineers, and working to get rid of the projects that were no good. And if projects were to be built, our goal was to get the maximum value for the fish, wildlife and forestry resources.

I spent twenty years at that and then became Assistant Director, supervising planning, fiscal, personnel, engineering operations, and some of the operations of some other units. Then I became Deputy Director of the total department after four years. Then I started like doing a little of everything.

[It was a] good career, interesting career. [I] met a lot of... I'd call them "dyed in the wool" conservationists, very practical people. Wonderful people to deal with. That's pretty well my story of conservation as I saw it and knew it. And I'm still enjoying [it.] It's fun *now* to go back to areas that... I can take you back and drive to the first half-mile of boundary line ever ran for the state. It's right off [State] Highway 19. I'll bet you today I can walk directly -- well, we've got the boundary lines *painted* now on the state

forest land -- but I can walk to the first half-mile corner I ever found and was able to prove it as an old geological or a G.L.O. [General Land Office] corner because I found the old stumps of witness trees.<sup>4</sup> And I could walk back there today, and here it is almost fifty years later. So it is fun to go back now and see areas that you knew were bare where they're making maybe their second harvest of timber or third harvest, thinnings and so on. Areas that have been harvested many times. And even go see some of the private lands I had the opportunity to work on where the landowner *bought* the idea of management, and they or their heirs are still managing. And so yeah, it is possible to get resource management if you don't get too excited about wanting results today or tomorrow. You have to wait to see the results.

Missouri has a good conservation *program* overall. There's good rapport. It hasn't always been so, but there's *really* good rapport between the state agencies in Missouri involved in land management and the federal agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. And that in many states doesn't happen. Soil Conservation Service, Fish and Wildlife Service. So on the federal agencies, people are always amazed when they come to Missouri [and see] how well *we* in the state got along with the federal agencies, even though we might do battle over ideas and so on. When the chips were down there was cooperation. There has been and there still is.

WS: One thing I want to ask you: back when you were surveying, did you every have a problem with old land boundaries where people had one idea of where their land ran and then other ideas... And of course the state has to get a clear title when they buy land.

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<sup>4</sup> A witness tree is one which is marked to be used as a reference point in land surveys.

EG: Yes, well, the state... Much of the land that was acquired was acquired many times at tax sales.

WS: Oh, during the Depression?

EG: [Often buying at] fifty cents an acre, it started acquiring some of it in the '30s and so on. A lot of it in the '40s or early '50s. Land that was being acquired for fifty cents an acre, two dollars an acre, three dollars an acre -- the question was how much did you want to invest in it.

It was a problem when the farmer said or the person who had all the irregular shaped field in corn or oats or whatever you might have it in, swore that that fence was always the line and the fence went fifteen different directions [and] none of them straight. And when you ran the boundary line and the corner came out right in the center of the field, it became a major problem.

**[Tape meter, 100]**

In the Ozarks, the foresters had the legend of the Karkhagne. Of course, it made section corners disappear. But the landowners had the ability to have portable corners. And the portable corners were the bucket of rocks that you just moved it where you wanted the corner to be. Yes, there was a lot of this in the Ozarks. The lines that I would run were not official lines. So what you would do is get the county surveyor to say, "Okay, is this right or is it wrong?" In many cases, the old witness trees that had been set to identify the corners, that you could measure to actually *pinpoint* it, were gone. So then it became up to the county. If you wanted a registered survey, an official survey, you would have to get an official surveyor to do it unless the county surveyor would agree with you. In

many cases, depending on the landowner, you would say, "Okay, we're fifteen feet apart. Do you want pay half of the cost of rerunning the line with the surveyor, or do you want to just agree that the corner is halfway between where you say it is and [where] we say it is or what?" If couldn't prove the corner -- and in many cases you can't prove the corners. So it could be agreed. If it was agreed, the county surveyor could sanctify the thing [and] put it on the records and it became official.

Now, when the mineral drilling started in the Ozarks, *then* it became more and more critical to know, because a little bit of land -- it doesn't have to be a very wide corridor -- could be the difference between somebody owning a mint and someone owning *nothing*. So then it became more critical. And the other thing that became more critical was in later years... In *recent* years, as lands became more valuable, [as] the price per acre went up, then an official survey became more and more critical.

But basically, the attempt in the early years -- and in many cases, the lines were excellent. You know, they were just right on the mark, but the corners had been hacked and moved and everything, and proving them was the other thing. But in some cases the landowner *knew* (or his pappy knew or whoever it was) where the line actually *was*, then we would often lease it to them to sign an agreement to prove that the state owned it, [but] let them farm it as long as they were on the little rock farm in the hills and [their farming practices were] kind of to our liking. You know, you weren't going to *abuse* the land. When they abandoned it, [the state would] let it regenerate the forest. Again, patience was part of it. Portable corners were part of it.

The other thing that worked over time: the state tended to what we call “block in” areas. In other words, you would acquire a 40 [acre piece of land], and an 80 [acre] and a 160 [acre] and another piece in there, and there would be a 40 [acre] interior [section of land where] the person didn’t want to sell -- and the state of Missouri Conservation Department only deals with willing sellers [and] negotiated sales and so on. But eventually that land would come up for sale. *Then* you’d buy it; *then* you solved any boundary problems that you have. So patience is part of it.

**[Tape meter, 150]**

I can recall where we’ve actually had cemeteries on the state land that had been acquired, the people having had no claim to them. [There were also] churches [and] schoolhouses and other things. Usually the state cooperated with the locals and just worked it out and deeded them the piece of property that they needed. So it was in the Ozarks [where there] were real problems.

In north Missouri it was not nearly as bad, but in more and more recent years, say, starting in the early ‘70s and so on, where you were acquiring community lake sites, you were acquiring stream access sites, wildlife areas and so on, you’d hire a local registered surveyor who could actually put the lines down where they need to be absolutely recordable. Because if you’re going to build a lake, you sure don’t want half of it off on or you don’t an *acre* of it off on somebody else. [If] you’re going to build a stream access, you sure in the heck want it to be where you think it is. There’s no way to manage land unless you know *where* it is! For instance: is that cow on the state land or on the private land? Is that fire on the state land or the private land? Is that timber that’s

coming off that acreage out there -- who owns it? And there's a lot of timber that came off of Grandmaw's... I don't know if you're familiar with the term "Grandma's Forty" or "Grandma's Tract." It's called "Grandmawing." It's timber stealing. And if you ask them where it came from -- the logger would bring a load of logs in or stave bolts or hickory blocks or whatever it might be to the mill -- [and you ask them,] "Well, where it come from?" [Their reply would be,] "Well, it came off of Grandmaw's property." That's called "Grandmawing." And grandmawing was a big problem. One of the jobs of the state Conservation Department when they had this land was to get -- and the Forest Service, too, and the larger private landowners [such as] Pioneer Forest [and T.J.] Moss Tie Company, what have you -- would not only get the lines surveyed, but get them painted. Moss Tie Company painted with a *red* paint (and this was an agreement just between us); Pioneer Forest painted with an *orange* paint (orange or white as I recall); the Conservation Department painted their boundaries with blue. Just bark blaze -- not all the way into the tree -- but just bark blaze them and paint them, and paint the line right down through the forest, and then post either "State Forest Land" or "U.S. Forest Service" or "Pioneer Forest" periodically [for] whatever it was. But [you did this] to identify the land. Timber stealing was a big business. In other words, if you don't have to pay for your timber, that's all profit. And then [you] slip out and cut a few trees, trees that are near the line -- and the person may really know where the line is, but if the line isn't run, [it is] real simple to go over a hundred yards and cut another swath up through there off the state land. *This* became part of it. It's the basis for management. If you don't know where it is, you can't manage it.

**[Tape meter, 200]**

WS: Somehow I get a feeling this whole thing with the land boundaries being in question and the free range have some sort of relationship, maybe culturally in the highlands.

EG: Well, a lot of the people in the Ozarks came from Kentucky and Tennessee and what have you, and they were free spirits. And if you only own... And I can really see where many of these people came from. Here's land that [was] worthless; it was cut over at the turn of the century when the big mills operated in Missouri.

Down at Grandin at one time, I think it was the largest single mill in the *world*. They railroad logged the country; had the tracks around the pond; they'd dump the car [loads] in; they had the commissary cars; they had whole *bit*.

So this is all part of the culture. They said, "The land is cut off. It's pretty well worn out. I own ten acres out here. I have a family to support. How in in the heck am I going to support them? I'm going to go get me some hogs; I'm going to mark them and turn them loose, and kind of know where they are. And in the fall I'll round them up, [and] I'll get some cattle and do the same thing." So it's part of a way of making a living.

**[Tape meter, 215. Telephone interruption; tape recorder off.]**

WS: When it came to that timber thieving and all, was that more common in the Ozarks than north Missouri?

EG: Very much so, for the reason that in north Missouri your property [boundary] tends to be much better defined. Often farms and so on. In the Ozarks, where you have great expanses of forest land and very few open lands, often the lands *aren't* well defined.

You've got so-called "squatters" on the land who just go out there and set up business, particularly on property owned by absentee owners and so on. So yeah, you get quite a bit of that. Interestingly enough, the University of Missouri at Columbia had a lot of the old school land scattered around the south end of the state -- 320 acres here, 40 there, 160 and so on -- the Conservation Department acquired from the University of Missouri (and I can't even remember when it is, perhaps in the early '70s, maybe earlier than that) some, as I remember, 11,000 acres of land scattered over the south end of the state. Some of it in Ripley County, some in Butler County, some over in southwestern Missouri. Some of the more interesting things we found were squatters and people that had been living on this University of Missouri land for *years and years* and raised families! So one our initial problems in the Conservation Department was to get the squatters off the land. It was home!

WS: They'd built homes?

**[Tape meter, 250]**

EG: They had homes; they were farming it; they'd raise their kids there and everything else. So the university had a few problems in that they didn't -- and I shouldn't be talking about my alma mater like that -- but the university had some problems in that they did not *know* where their properties were. Some of the land from the standpoint of forest resources, you know, is quite manageable as timberland. But we [at] the Conservation Department had to virtually start over in the management of the land because it had been more or less *mined* for every resource value that was there by people who didn't even

own it. Certainly the university got nothing out of it for all the timber that was cut and stolen, the livestock that was ruined and everything else.

So yeah, public agencies had problems *too*, **if** they didn't have someone looking after their property all the time.

WS: So was there kind of an agreement for the Department of Conservation to manage University of Missouri lands?

EG: We acquired it. We had purchased it in \_\_\_\_\_ title from the University. I won't even tell you what we *paid* for it, but it was pretty dirt cheap.

WS: Well, one state agency to another, I guess, right? (chuckles)

EG: It wasn't gratis. I shouldn't even talk about it, but we made *really* a good buy from the standpoint of the land value alone. Some were isolated tracts -- forty acres here, sixty acres there -- [and] some was inaccessible, landlocked. In other words, [there were] no roads to it. So the Department divested itself of that over a period of time. In other words, studied what could be managed and what couldn't, and what should be gotten rid of and so on. And got rid of the other land. [The Conservation Department sold it] to local owners who actually had... Or maybe even [sold it to] somebody that had been using it for years. The property values, as they started rising, people became more aware (people, agencies and everybody else) that there was no fifty cent an acre land to be bought out here anymore. You were more likely to pay \$60, \$100, \$150, \$200, \$300 an acre, something like that. Then you started worrying about your resources, but these were old school grant lands that had been given to the University years and years and

years ago. Presumably, the revenues from these lands would help finance the educational systems in the state of Missouri. Another experience...

**[Tape meter, 300]**

WS: Did you ever have many people in the highlands involved with the ginseng trade, or morel mushrooms, or anything sort of...?

EG: There are, and I'm not up on it. One of the persons that would be a good resource --he lives here in Jefferson City -- is a person by the name of John [E.] Wylie. John worked for the Department for probably forty years too, and he is probably a lot more knowledgeable in that area than I am. Yeah, there were some people that actually hunted the ginseng for the roots and so on. Some people tried to grow the mushrooms on the timbers and this type of thing. I don't know how successful [it was], I'm not up on it.

WS: Did you ever have illegal whiskey stills on D.O.C. land?

EG: Not that I know of. I never ran into any, not to say there weren't some there. There could well have been, but no, I'm not up on that.

WS: I'm just aware in some places they like to put those things on public land so they have to...

EG: I would think that maybe because the Forest Service had larger contiguous ownerships that possibly there may have been [some on their lands.] I would think that maybe someone who might even have more knowledge of that would be Jerry Presley. I think Jerry could probably speak to it being a native of the hill country and being involved in district foresters on some of the district including Eminence, and then working up through the thing. I think he would probably have a lot more knowledge.

WS: Well, when did *minerals* become a more recognized or sought after resource in Missouri?

EG: Well, the Lead Belt sort of petered out in the Ozarks... Well, it didn't, but they started making the scientific surveys and they found the mineral belt pretty well down through the state, I want to say in the late '50s and into the '60s. The companies were all out because of the Pea Ridge Mine near Sullivan which was high grade iron ore -- although it

**[Tape meter, 350]**

was a very, very *deep* mine -- over east of the Meramec River. Some of the lead mines to the south, there into the north end of Reynolds County and so on... The mineral companies *galore*, from all over, started wanting to explore lands for minerals. One of the mines was on the old Pioneer Forest, some of the minerals, and there was just a *belt* down through there that was public land that were right in this belt, where there was a possibility of mineral deposits. If I understand right the oceans engulfed that area at one time. The bays and the backwaters, where the minerals might be, and over geologic time, there were the changes and so on. So many, many companies from all over the world wanted to explore in the Ozarks. The Conservation Department actually leased mineral rights on thousands and thousands of acres of the Ozark's state forest land -- exploratory rights *only*. We had very tight environmental controls on how the lands would be explored [and] how the holes would be treated when the exploration was done and so on. So we had thousands of acres leased where actually it was income *to* the Department. No one to my knowledge ever executed -- there might have been one -- but no one to my knowledge actually *executed* a mineral lease to where they had actually a mining lease.

**[Tape meter, 389. End side one, tape two of three.]**

**[Tape meter, 006. Begin side two, tape two of three.]**

WS: So the exploratory efforts didn't pay off?

EG: Well, you don't know what they found [in the explorations.] They never tell you. Now, a lot of the exploration cores are with the geologic surveys at Rolla, of course. They have a tremendous resource down there of mineral cores from the mineral explorations in the Ozarks. And you don't learn... It's industry [and] corporations, and you don't learn anything from them. The only time you're for sure is when they show up with their money and say, "Boy, we'd like to mine." "Okay, now if we can work out something." But the Conservation Department was -- and I handled that lease program for years and years -- it was *very* precise about who was going to do what, and what rights were granted and how the land was going to be treated and so on, and we really never had any problems. Now the recent problems that have cropped up in the Ozarks -- and I'm not really up on it -- were lands that had been acquired pretty well in the upper reaches of Current River, lands "where the Nature Conservancy had been involved" and so on, and the public had the general feeling that these should be "preserved." The Conservation Department has the authority to the management of its lands. But it pays attention to the public too. So in other words, you can cram it down their throat and pay the price, or you can try to work it out. So that is a real problem. The U.S. Forest Service (federal agency) has a similar problem in the headwaters or in the Current River or in the Eleven Point watershed, where some of the companies want to drill or [do] exploratory [work.] So this is a big fight now. Right at this time, as far as I know the decision hasn't actually been made. The environmental statements have been written and so on.

WS: I understand when the Forest Service gets involved without the Bureau of Land Management handling...

EG: The Bureau of Land Management handles a lot of the leasing and so on, yes. The Forest Service has the surface rights. But the Bureau of Land Management -- and I'm not for sure if the Geologic Survey (and I'm talking out of my field now) -- but other federal agencies get involved with it. So it becomes... They actually can't drill the land because the Forest Service owns the surface rights. It's once they get through the surface, then somebody else \_\_\_\_+... So the monkey is really on the Forest Service's back.

WS: I wonder how the state's leasing program of minerals compared to the BLM's program? Or contrasted, maybe?

EG: You would need to visit... If you want to get in that field, I would suggest you visit with the State Forester, who is Marvin Brown at the Conservation Department. He'd be pretty well up on it. I'm not for sure who's handling that now, who's handling the whole program, although I suspect it is probably somebody on his staff that's handling that program since the state forest land [is] in the hills and so on.

WS: Yeah, I'm aware that sometimes with the Forest Service acquisitions people will sell them the surface rights, but *reserve* the mineral rights.

EG: That's true.

WS: Do you ever have that with the state lands?

**[Tape meter, 050]**

EG: Yes, there's some of the state lands that don't have the below ground rights. It could present a problem, but as far as I know it never has. Over the years, the Conservation

Department has worked to clear up a lot of those places where the mineral rights were held by someone else. You might have to pay some extra money to get them, or somehow else legally clear them up just to be darn sure something doesn't crop up over time. The Ozark lands were *worthless* at one time. The forest had been cut off; they'd been denuded; rocks [were] sticking through the ground; they weren't good for pasture; they weren't good for *anything*. But lo and behold, a few years later they found some pretty high grade lead deposits, iron deposits, and so on. And lands that were worth *nothing* all of a sudden became worth a whole lot. So yeah, over time you can end up... The horse can be running one way and all of a sudden you find out he's turned and gone the other! From no value to lots of value. So as a state agency what you try to do is foresee it [and] get the mineral rights if you can. Otherwise, try to clear them up somehow even if it does cost you a little money.

WS: You've mentioned this Eleven Point River a couple of times, and I think your first reference to it involved a scenic river situation. Maybe you could explain that.

EG: Well, actually there were two forces at work. The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act -- I want to say it came into being in 1964 or something, the Ozarks National Wild and Scenic River was established.<sup>5</sup> The Eleven Point River and the Ozark National Scenic Riverways is a special breed of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers. Congressman [Richard] Ichord was the one who finally was able to balance all the forces -- he was from Texas County -- and he was finally the one that was able to kind of balance

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<sup>5</sup> Meaning the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. Mr. Glaser is correct in that it was created in 1964. However, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was not passed until a few years later.

everything out and get that established. The Eleven Point River is an outstanding scenic river. The Corp of Engineers wanted to put a dam right on the Arkansas line. It would have flooded a lot of the Eleven Point and its valley. So that was a knock-down, drag-out fight for a long time. Without reading my history... I can't remember, but right at the end of a congressional session one time, one of the Bootheel congressmen and some of them got their heads together [and] slipped it in a bill and got it declared a national wild and scenic river to be administered by the U.S. Forest Service, which it is. The National Forest administers the Eleven Point River. And it's a matter of damming the river versus a free-flowing stream. There was much controversy over it. Some people favored the dam, [and] some people favored the free-flowing status of the stream. The latter prevailed, and Forest Service is administering the Eleven Point River as a wild and scenic river. So it's a resource use choice that has to be made by the people through their elected officials. It's no different than any other law or rule, but here they're actually mandating that, yes, this river is going to be managed in this way under whatever the law might be, by this agency, and we choose to keep it free-flowing.

**[Tape meter, 100]**

The same is true on the Meramec Park Lake, a dam over near Sullivan. How are you going to manage the Meramec River? Is it going to be a free-flowing stream or are you going to let the Corp of Engineers dam it? So that was a knock-down, drag-out. In fact, when I was a kid \_\_\_\_\_ in the early '30s, they were proposing to dam the Meramec River. It went on from there through the '40s, the '50s, the '60s, the '70s, [and] I can't remember when it was finally solved. At it finally "tubed" or torpedoed damming the

Meramec River. It killed the Meramec Park Lake. Now, there was to be a dam on the Bourbeuse River over near Union, which is a drainage tributary of the Meramec River. There was to be some headwaters dams and so on. So it was a knock-down, drag-out fight for years. The pro-dam people had a fellow by the name of Jim Gamble who was their spokesman and mouthpiece and so on for years. He was a good friend of mine. We fought all the time -- but he was still a good friend of mine -- over resource use. But his job was to get Meramec Park Lake projects into place. And much land was acquired for the Meramec Park Lake Dam. Eventually, Congress killed it and the [some of the] lands then were to go to the state, some went to the parks, some to be put up for sale, some to private land owners, and so on. The Conservation Department acquired some; the Missouri State Park System acquired quite a bit of land that was actually acquired for the Meramec Park Lake Dam, which would have been in the bottom of the lake now.

So it's resource use choices and none of which are never easy. You have competing interests, you have competing values of people who [were] proponents of the Meramec Park Lake Dam. They spoke of flood control; they spoke of this tremendous lake resource of the Lake of the Ozarks, and so on. The opponents spoke of resources going under water, the use of the free-flowing streams and what have you. And they didn't speak kindly to each other. In fact, I was at some meetings where you were *really* almost scared you're not going to get out of there with your life. They felt that strongly! But it was settled. You can go now [and] I could introduce you to some people that would argue as strongly as ever that the Meramec Park Lake Dam should be built.

Only one of the problems: when they drilled the abutments where they were going to put the thing, they found some cave systems. See, it isn't too far from Meramec... It's up the river six or seven miles from Meramec Caverns. All limestone abutment. Not very far below it is Fishers Cave, which is a limestone cave in Meramec State Park. So they had some real problems where they were going to put the dam. You could almost see it down about St. Louis now, when it washed out, but you know, that's neither here nor there.

WS: Well, back on that Eleven Point River, would that happen to have been Congressman [William Dean "Bill"] Burlison?

EG: Burlison! Yeah, Burlison...

WS: He was the one? He came after Paul Jones then?

EG: I don't remember if Burlison was the one. I'll tell you, at the Conservation Department, I think they would have they records in the planning division. They should have the records on the Eleven Point and that controversy. And I can't remember if it was Burlison. I know Ichord was involved in the Current River, because that was part of his district.

**[Tape meter, 150]**

WS: Well, it kind of amazes me... This is a broad question, but here you've got Truman Lake, you've got Lake of the Ozarks, you've got the Bull Shoals thing. These are all established lakes. And then sometimes of the same era and sometimes of a later era, you have the defeated Eleven Point, the defeated Meramec... How is it that some got dammed and some didn't?

EG: Well, you stop to think, the Lake of the Ozarks is a Union Electric power dam. Private resource. It went through an era in the late '30s, '40s, and particularly after World War Two, where the Corps of Engineers were really riding high. Water development, flood control and this type of thing, they could get the money to do it; they had the political forces to do it. Truman Dam hinged on the support of the State Water Resources Board. The chairman happened to be an astute politician. [He knew] some of the congressmen and so on, and they could walk into Washington and pretty well get what they wanted: the development down the Norfolk, Bull Shoals on the White River, Table Rock, and so on. The only thing down there before was a little power dam, Forsyth Dam, the power dam at Branson. So it was there before, and then they built these huge series of dams in north Arkansas -- they swung into Missouri and on down in to Arkansas again -- to control the White River. Part of it was power, part of it was flood control, part of it was recreation, but it was an attitude at the time that they could get it done. And they could. They had the political muscle and they had the money and so on. Now we as a resource agency often were trapped between the politicians who wanted it, including the governor maybe, and defending the fish, wildlife and forest resources. Which we did as best we could, but it took a four member commission to actually establish the policies -- two Republicans and two Democrats -- and generally the state [was] pretty strict. Meramec Park Lake, as I said, started in the '30s, went into the '40s, the '50s and so on, and so resource values changed over time. And people's perspective of resource values changed. Clarence Cannon Lake up south of Paris, that's one that is a pump storage for water supply, flood control and so on; it was one that got blessings. Smithville Lake up

by Kansas City got blessings, but a lot more got killed in that project. They had a dam up on the Grand River -- I can't remember the name of it -- but it was a knock-down, drag-out for *years*. But with we, the resource related agencies, finally prevailed on the Congress that you do better to build small structures up in the high watersheds and stop your flooding there and keep your good agricultural land instead of putting it under water.

**[Tape meter, 200]**

So it was a change over time in the thinking of people, and the people elect politicians. [They] elect their congressmen, or their senators or representatives. And many of these [damming projects] were fought over decades, the Grand River projects and so on. So attitudes changed. Money priorities became different. But now after the '93 flood, you heard that, "Boy, if we'd have had those dams, we'd have stopped it." You read the paper today [about] the dams up in the Dakotas and so on, and how much flooding... And they *do* prevent some flooding, but the question is how many do you need? Are you better to move the people in Cedar City across the river here up on the hill, and let the dern thing flood? Or do you build another dam upstream to keep Cedar City from flooding? Do you [construct a] levee? Do you squeeze that river tighter, or do you take the levees out and let her go across the bottoms when she floods? And these were resource issues that have been fought and they'll be fought again. [They'll] never go away.

WS: I guess in any given individual case, then, it would partly matter on the local population that might stand to lose land and all kinds factors.

EG: Not only that, but it also hinges on what the thinking of the country is at the time [and] how much money there's around, federal money. It would partially hinge on what the attitude of the administrative agency -- whether it's the Bureau of Reclamation in the West or the Corps of Engineers -- what their attitude is toward resource use and so on at the time -- resource preservation, resource management. I just heard something today, that Senator [Christopher "Kit"] Bond... Evidently some money wasn't gotten for a levee here across the river to protect an area across the river [which includes] the airport, sewage plant and so on. [It was to have been] study money, but the Corps of Engineers had gotten money for studying how to protect a lot of other areas in the state and the nation. So this goes on all the time. One of the problems for a resource agency like the Conservation Department, a fish, wildlife and forestry agency, is to somehow stay on top of this and get its licks in at an appropriate time [in order] to kind of ride the fence sometimes when the governor and the legislature are promoting something real strongly and you disagree. You know, it's [recognizing] when to stand up and be counted and when to shush up and be quiet. So this goes on all the time, but one of the roles of an agency like the Conservation Department is to be an advocate for the fish, wildlife and forest resources. That's the challenge. So you have to figure out a way to politely do it without making everybody mad at you. And it was no fun. I spent years doing that. I remember going to Memphis and battling with the Corps of Engineers, and E.B. Gee and other landowners from the Bootheel; going to Atlanta and battling with them; going to Truman; going to Sullivan, my hometown, and think I'm going to get lanced before I get out of there on the Meramec Park Lake hearing. It's fun, but you [have to know] when to

push and when to back off, when you have the commission behind you, when you have the policy, when you don't have the policies. It's like business. It's like anything else. It's fun.

**[Tape meter, 250]**

WS: Would you say during your observation, has the D.O.C. become more of an active political player than they were say, in the beginning, the '30s or '40s or...?

EG: They were political in the '30s and '40s trying to establish their authority. If you read the history -- and there is a history of the Conservation Department -- you'll find the old pork barrelers were after them all the time. They were trying to establish their authority, but one of the first things they did: the director had on his staff a fellow by the name of Carl [R.] Noren. His role was to do water liaison with the Corps of Engineers, basically to get [the Conservation Department] involved, deal us in at the table at the earliest time possible on water resource issues and to make that known to the governor's office, to the legislature and whatever have you. In other words, you could say it was lobbying; you could say it's just getting information to them. But yeah, the department's been involved in this for years and years. It's the only way to represent your resources; you've got to be at the table.

WS: A moment ago, you mentioned the E.B. Gee. I wonder what kind of battles you had with those Bootheel landowners.

EG: Well, there are several things: the St. John's Bayou - New Madrid Floodway Project, there were not necessarily battles, but that land was almost -- for the most part, except for a few wildlife areas that we had down there -- all privately owned. But anytime the Feds

or anyone else is going to build a project, you're going to affect the fish, wildlife or the forest resources, which put us at the table. *Then* if you're going to drain lands, it means you're going to widen the ditches. If you widen the ditches, the forest resources there are going to go, or whatever's along those ditches, the wildlife habitat. You're going to straighten them and going to take all the oxbows out and so on, so you're going to affect the fish resources. So it was a matter of them wanting to drain the land to get better flood protection and so on, to build a block down in the New Madrid area to keep the Mississippi River from backing up to flood stage, to get water out the St. John's to drain it out and so on. So we had to deal with those owners, and those landowners down there... The Bootheel has always been politically astute, and that's putting it mildly. They knew their way to Washington.

**[Tape meter, 300]**

So it was a matter of you getting to know -- which I did and many other people did -- the players personally and be able to sit at the table and negotiate and talk with them. We often could make our point. The Corps of Engineers was going to be the implementers usually if these things came about. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were sort of our counterparts at the federal level, so a lot of times we'd have to work through them to say, "This is what it is; this is the way we see it. You sell *our* idea." It was just a matter of negotiating, study, and so on. So, yeah, it's always fun to deal with the "haves," and they're the ones that you primarily deal with. And many of them were very good friends of mine. I consider them good friends and have for years, although you sit around a table all day and argue and fuss and fight and try to find the -- you can call it the art of

compromise or what have you -- find the middle ground where everybody can live with [it] *if* the project's going to go. Some of these projects have never gone. They've been on the books for years, and they've been studied and restudied and studied and studied. Part of it's money (federal dollars,) part of it's the need for local matching, part of it's the resource damage that would be done. But if they -- *they* being the locals -- can get a project like that, of course it's money in their pocket and it's better protected and so on. But who's going to pay for it? And our role was to represent the fish, wildlife and forest resources.

WS: Well, with my familiarity of the Bootheel -- which isn't *that* familiar -- I think of someone like E.B. Gee and Harry Brown as being a big landowner, and then someone like Mr. [James V.] Conran down there being more of a political player, but I wondered... Maybe you can offer a perspective on that.

EG: I really can't. We in the Conservation Department bought quite a bit of land from Mr. Gee, among others.

WS: Oh, yeah?

**[Tape meter, 350]**

EG: Oh, yeah, and negotiated sales. Conran was both a landowner and politically astute. I can't comment. A fellow by the name of Riley was a big player in it.<sup>6</sup> He used to be on the State Highway Commission; he was a major landowner down there. There were just quite a number of those people that... And most of them [were] real interesting. They

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<sup>6</sup> Probably referring to Albert C. Riley of New Madrid, who served on the Missouri State Highway Commission in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

were duck hunters; they were fishermen and what have you; but they were cotton farmers; they were watermelon farmers; they were raising soybeans [and] rice and what have you, so they had an interest, too. And they knew their way to Washington.

WS: Were there any people in the black community down there that you dealt with, that had enough land to maybe figure into that?

EG: No, not much. My only real dealings with that -- and it really wasn't in the St. John's Bayou... The Conservation Department owned some land and...

**[Tape meter, 377. End of side two, tape two of three.]**

**[Tape meter, 001. Begin side one, tape three of three.]**

WS: ...I'm trying to think where that is even. Do you know which county?

EG: Off in New Madrid County [and] kind of going south from Charleston, south of Sikeston and so on. The St. John's Bayou. Then it goes into the New Madrid [County] and empties into the Mississippi [River]. But there was a black landowner in there somewhere that the Department tried -- and I didn't have anything of the negotiating to do with them) -- trying to acquire lands just to block in a state wildlife area that we happened to own on part of that system, the old St. John's, which is a drainage system. Part of it comes south and north and makes a big loop and then goes [and] empties at New Madrid. Some of it comes from the northeast and flows in a southwesterly direction and then south and empties into the Mississippi. So it's just part of that big old Bootheel area down there. *Good* land! Fertile land.

WS: Well, when it comes to this political situation, I wonder, when you think back on the General Assembly, if you could identify legislators that tended to be perhaps more

knowledgeable or more sympathetic with the Department of Conservation, that you would regard as sort of legislative allies. And then enemies also, if you'd like to talk about that.

EG: Well, it depended on the era. Someone like Jerry Presley could talk to you a lot better of this. We had people from the hill counties that were excellent, [such as Donald D.] "Danny" Searcy. He was great. He understood us; he knew it; he knew the hill people; he knew the resource. "Dick" Ichord; he was over here. He was the Speaker of the [Missouri] House of Representatives. He went to Congress for a good long while. [He was] very knowledgeable and good. He would listen, but he also understood that he had people that he needed to -- his constituents -- that he needed to take care of. As I recall, [Carl] C.P. Turley was in the legislature for years and years, and he understood the hill people, the hill country. [He served] as prosecuting attorney in Carter County for a good many years. Always had a cigarette in his mouth that he... He *always* had one, but he was very effective in the court. Later years, there was a fellow by the name of Ferial Findley from Poplar Bluff; he used to live in Van Buren. He completed a career with the highway patrol. He lived over there. He had been down every country road in Carter County and every other county. He was a captain before he retired from the highway patrol in Poplar Bluff, and then he became a legislator for a number of terms. So there are people, and the same was true in north Missouri. There were some people in the early years -- and I can't recall the names -- but if you would look at the *history*, and I think

maybe I have the history of the Conservation Department<sup>7</sup> -- some of them were strictly “pork barrel-ers” that their whole role... Shockley. A fellow by the name of Shockley was one of them.<sup>8</sup> Some others, their whole role, their whole way of life was to get rid of that non-political Conservation Department. So it varied over time, and one of the things that you have to do -- or we always felt in government that you had to do -- you need to know the legislature; you need to know every one of them. If you didn’t know them, your local people in the community needed to know them. You had to be available to answer their constituents and answer *their* questions on a non-political basis, and you needed to treat them right. And that’s the sort of the philosophy we operated under, and they still operate under, and it’s effective.

**[Tape meter, 050]**

We’ve had people that have run, [whose] reason for running was to eliminate those “terrible people.” And after one term... We’ve had one or two from north Missouri, when their constituents had pounded their ears enough in their own districts, they kind of get the message. The Conservation Department isn’t doing it, but that’s where an agency like the Conservation Federation that actually has the citizen contact after the citizen agencies, that’s where they are really effective.

WS: Because they can get political?

EG: Yes, they can. They don’t have to get political. They just say, “Well, Joe, he’s going to

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<sup>7</sup> Probably referring to The First 50 Years by James F. Keefe. (Jefferson City, MO: Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri, 1987.)

<sup>8</sup> Perhaps referring to Tom A. Shockley, who served in the Missouri House of Representatives from 1935-1939 and 1949 to 1953.

ruin everything we worked for since 1934 and we got in 1936, and here he's going to destroy it. [He's] trying to destroy [it.] Now what are you going to do about it? You elected him; what are you going to do about it?" And so usually after one term is.... We treat them no different, that's [the way it has] always been. We're there to serve the people, and whoever the legislator is that happens to be representing the people. They're always not the most friendly characters in the world, but we still give them the same service. You have to.

WS: I would guess with something like the Conservation Federation, they would maybe get more adamant or exclusive in that regard whereas maybe a Conservation Department employee would want to back off.

EG: Our role is to explain the resources, fish, wildlife, and forestry. Now if the four member commission wants to take them on, which they do sometimes, or one [commissioner]... I don't know if you know John Powell at Rolla. Are you familiar with him?

WS: I've just heard the name, saw his picture, that's all.

EG: Well you probably saw him in the St. Louis Post Dispatch. He was their favorite whipping boy, but John's very outspoken. A wonderful land manager, but John was on the commission for twelve years. [He] had been a chairman of the State Republican Committee for years. A land owner, a resource manager, *really* a fine person, but boy, he doesn't mince any words! He believes very much in landowner rights and so on, so he was always... He had a way of... (chuckling) You can forget the Post Dispatch! They were beating him to death on something, and he would fire a letter back! (laughs) But commissioners could do that, but the employees can't. Now, he might get his

information from the employees, but he's the one that can do it since he was appointed and confirmed by the Senate in [a] six year term. (chuckling) All that sort of thing.

WS: Well, I wonder what would happen when you had the DNR [Department of Natural Resources] come along, and if there was any kind of agency rivalry there or cooperation? How did that work?

EG: Well, the DNR was a rather loose agency. Our main dealings over the years were state parks, and the joint management system from the trout parks, where [they] actually had hatcheries in the state parks, and so on. So it sort of evolved from there. Pretty soon it was water quality, air, soil and water districts, the state geologists and so on. In other words, it's something that evolved over time and finally put under a big umbrella. The biggest argument over the years was... There have been moves over time to unite under one roof, [the] State Parks and the Conservation Department. Because in many states, they have fish, wildlife, forestry, parks, historic sites and everything. The problem is that the Parks are not a constitutional agency. They tend to be a more political agency for that reason. They do not have their own source of income, although they get some income from the parks and so on. So who would be in charge? Who could spend what money for what? Who would appoint directors and all this sort of thing? So there were many, many problems. They were never able to get them together and there were several runs at it.

**[Tape meter, 100]**

The outcome of the whole thing -- and I don't know how many times it's been voted on -- was the Parks and Soils Tax. Funding was always one of the problems for state parks.

Since the legislature never would ante up adequate funds to run the park system, and run a park system like Missouri thought it deserved, they made the pitch at “Okay, let’s get the funding for the parks,” which was the birth of the one-tenth of one percent sales tax. [It is] unlike the one-eighth of one percent sales tax that the Conservation Department has, [because] there’s no sunset clause on [the one-eighth of one percent sales tax]. The one-tenth of one percent sales tax, half of which goes to Soil and Water Conservation, half of which goes to State Parks -- and I think yields about \$40 million a year now -- there’s a ten-year sunset clause on it. I *think* it’s been voted on originally and two times since as I recall. But the legislature will never come up with the vote to renew it. So the Conservation Federation has to organize -- and some of these things make strange bedfellows -- get with the state Farm Bureau. People like the Sierra Club cooperating with the Farm Bureau [is] unheard of, except the Soil and Water part of it yields \$20 million or so a year and it goes out here on the land. The Parks benefit; they get \$20-some million a year. I don’t even know what the amount of money it is now, but they get many millions a year. So they unite and go out in all the congressional districts, get the signatures, [and] put it on the ballot. And the citizens vote about seven out of ten for it every time. It’s really interesting, but the legislature won’t touch it. That’s a long answer. In other words, funding has been part of the problem for of the Parks for *years*. So, that’s kind of a roundabout way in Missouri of solving the soil erosion and soil management problem. Missouri *was* one of the top states in the nation in soil loss from erosion. So this puts money there, but it also puts money into the park system. It solves two problems. I’ve stood over at the state fair as an employee of the Conservation

Department on my own time (on leave time) and collected signatures to put that park and soil thing on the ballot, just because the legislature won't do it! And many other employees of the Conservation Department have done the same thing. So, there's still cooperation. [For example, there is cooperation with] the trout hatcheries. The Department of Conservation manages the trout streams in the state parks and operates its hatcheries and so on. So, yes, we cooperate on fire control and many other things, [like] trail construction where it leaves their lands and enters ours.

WS: Well, talking about this soil erosion, I'm trying to think of that federal program where they had let the farmers put the land and forest... What is that, Federal...?

**[Tape meter, 150]**

EG: Well, they used to call it Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP), but I am *not* up on that at all. Again, you would probably do well to talk to someone in the Conservation Department. Now, there has been on the books of State Forestry Act since, I want to say the early 1940s or maybe it was '46 and so on -- I don't remember when -- where taxes on land [that was] classified as privately owned forest land could be deferred until time of harvest to encourage forest management. This developed years and years and years ago, and has been through many cycles. It's still active. There's privately owned forest land that's classified as forest crop land, but there's also state lands [that] can be classified. And it makes some payment into the county in lieu of taxes and so on. So there have been many programs tried over the years to encourage forest management. That's an answer to your question "what are you going to do while you wait twenty years, twenty-five years for a timber harvest? Are you going to pay taxes, or are you going to do

something else with the land?" There have been many programs of that type that have developed and have been tried and been successful in encouraging private land ownership of protected and managed [forest lands.]

WS: Did you and your department every have much interaction with Mr. Drey and the Pioneer [Forest]?

EG: Leo Drey? Yeah. When I was at Van Buren in the early 1950s, Leo used to come by. Leo's a good friend of mine. He would come by the office and visit with me about lands and so on. The next thing I'd [know], I'd wake up and find out... And Leo never... He'd make a wonderful poker player; he never tipped his hand. He was a good business man. But the next thing I'd know, he would *own* some of the land. He'd just casually asked about fire problems, grazing problems, whatever. So he acquired a lot of Ozark land. He had his own staff of foresters. I'm not so sure that J. Milford Nichols wasn't one of his foresters at one time. I can't remember, but he seemed to me he might have been. Maybe not. I know a fellow by the name of Lee Paulsell was, but Lee is deceased now. But he [Drey] bought a lot of the Pioneer Cooperage Company land, which had a staff of foresters. Ed Woods was the chief forester, Charlie Kirk was one the foresters for the Pioneer \_\_\_\_\_, so he became the forester for Leo. So he ran a managed forest land operation. I don't know how many acres he owns now, but it's a lot. Big blocks of land in the Current River and some of the other watersheds. [He] managed generally conservatively, but ran timber sales and managed the land. Some of it had mineral rights on it that were out when he got it, so when he acquired some of it for the mineral (I

know) and some of the mines that operated on him... [He is] a good businessman. So yeah, I had a lot of dealings with Leo over the years.

**[Tape meter, 200]**

His wife, Kay Drey, has been re-elected in St. Louis. Everything to do with radiation and so on around the airports and what have you, and she has done her homework well over the years. Out at the Busch area [August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area] at Weldon Spring, the old [Mallinckrodt Chemical Company ordnance] plants -- anything to do with the resources in the field that might [have anything to do with] radiation contamination and what have you, she's quite an authority and a real, *real* activist in the St. Louis area. [She] gives them *all* fits! And does her homework well!

WS: Well, another organization you mentioned, the T.J. Moss Tie Company, now their land is more southeast of Pioneer Forest \_\_\_\_?

EG: Well, they were south of them. A lot of the Moss Tie Company land was I think west-southwest of Eminence, and they managed primarily for railroad ties, of course. That was their business. They were in the *tie* business, so they didn't need a tree that big. They needed a tree just big enough to cut railroad ties. They had a fellow that watched after their land. He was actually the County Surveyor in Shannon County for a number of years. One of them by the name [of] Vernon Moss watched after their land for years and then they ran a lot of timber sales. They managed on a small... They were interested in railroad ties, as I said, and the side of lumber that came off the logs. So they established their boundaries; tried to protect the land from fire; they did not do intensive management. And these lands later... I can't even remember the history of it, but after

Moss got out of the business, I want to say someone else, some other company (and I want to say it was a company in Oklahoma, I don't know) acquired some of the land. But the State of Missouri has acquired some of it since. So Moss Tie is no more. And again, I can't remember the history. I guess I'm getting too old to remember such things. But they blocked in a lot of their lands, bordered state lands, or to the south they bordered Pioneer Cooperage, Pioneer Forest and Leo Drey. So they were particularly in Shannon County. And the Forest Service was to the south of them. So there were some big blocks of land in Shannon, Carter, and over into Reynolds County. If you take the Conservation Department lands, the Forest Service lands, the Pioneer Cooperage Company lands that became Pioneer Forest, and T.J. Moss Tie Company lands, there were some big ownerships in there.

**[Tape meter, 250]**

WS: Well, suddenly it makes sense how the Department of Conservation ended up with that video of [the] T.J. Moss [Tie Company] and the old historic footage? Have you seen that? Black-and-white footage from the turn of the century of them making railroad ties? I can't think of the name of it right now.

EG: I can't either, but yes.

WS: Re-mastered or reproduced on video by the Department of Conservation. [It was] amazing footage of it.<sup>9</sup>

EG: Yeah.

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<sup>9</sup> Probably referring to Stamp of Character: From Trees to Tracks, produced by the Missouri Department of Conservation in 1995.

WS: A little while ago, you mentioned the Sierra Club. I wondered if the Department of Conservation had much interaction with these kinds of so-called environmental groups like Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy?

EG: It depends on who you... Sometimes it's a unit of the Department. Audubon certainly [interacted] with the Wildlife Division (what is now the Natural History Division). The Sierra Club was often involved in land use, water use -- this type of issue. Organizations, whatever they might be, would always \_\_\_\_\_ department of that type. And part of it's a professional relationship with these [groups] -- the Prairie Foundation, whoever it might be -- but also part of it could be adversarial or it could be a cooperative relationship, too. So it can go two ways. They have been sort of the life blood of the department, and when the chips are down, when the politicians gather, you might be doing battle with one of these organizations off on the side. And this is where the Conservation Federation of Missouri comes in. They are an affiliation of the so-called conservation clubs in the state. And it might be anything from the Society of the American Foresters to the land owners, to the trout fishermen, to the fox hunters, to the hikers, to you name it, the quail hunters and so on. So when the chips are down, you'll find them all on the same side of the fence. When someone is -- whatever the cause might be -- taking on a major resource issue in Missouri, you can pretty well find them lined up if it's going to be destructive to the resources of Missouri. It's just the way it works! And so you might do battle with them on a single issue, but you never burn all the ramps and the fences you need to communicate. I have lots of good friends -- or I consider them good friends -- over the years in the organizations where we did battle, but yet when I got ready to retire, I looked

out in the room and there a bunch of them were. You know, it's just the way it works. Because sometimes you're with them and sometimes you're against them. But if it's a resource issue important to the state, you can almost bet they're all lined up on the same side of the fence. And then you go do battle.

**[Tape meter, 300]**

And it's just how issues are viewed. And everybody doesn't agree. It's sort of like a marriage; you know, it's compromise. You make your point, but you don't make it to the point where you're going to end up with a divorce. (chuckles)

WS: Well, I would guess that if you had all these groups organized or just gathered on one side of the fence, on the other side would most likely be a corporate mining interest? Or a private...?

EG: It depends on what the issue is. It could be a border use issue, it could be dams and levees, it could be... You name it. It could be a politician just wanting to wipe out one of these programs of the Conservation Department. If you read the early history (and there is an early history of the Conservation Department), if you read The First 50 Years, you'll find that there have been *many* of these battles. But you'll also find that when they got ready to pass the one-eighth of one percent sales tax to try to fund it -- or the one-tenth -- you'll find them lined up and sometimes strange bedfellows among them. But that's where you get seventy percent of the vote, too. Or when you end up with Tom Pendergast -- a Kansas City politician deluxe -- who says, "If it's good for the women and children, then I'm for it! And my organization is for it." And more or less, I guess from there on it went on to say, "Get out there and tell all of those dern people to vote for

it, too!” So it’s strange bedfellows, but it’s still... The Missouri Department of Conservation is generally considered if not in the best in the nation, [then] to be one of the best because of the non-political aspects, the professional organization and the funding. I think you can talk to a lot of people that will tell you the same thing.

WS: Well, it seems to me in Missouri, compared to a lot of states, the state agencies namely would historically be the Department of Conservation, and then later the DNR, seem to have a lot more of a visible presence compared to the federal, because you know, you have a huge, huge national forest.

**[Tape meter, 350]**

EG: Well, the federal agencies, one of the things... Now I worked over forty years in Missouri. I was born here, raised here, worked over forty years for an agency. In years gone by, the [U.S.] Forest Service people would come here from an upper peninsula someplace (of Michigan), and you could bet they’d be here three years and [then] they might be someplace else. The same was true of [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers] district engineers. One time, as I recall, we dealt with district engineers at Rock Island, in St. Louis, Memphis, Little Rock, Tulsa, Kansas City, Omaha. These are army colonels or army whatever it might be, and they’re there about three years and then on to a new assignment. The [U.S.] Soil Conservation Service did not operate quite like that. They’ve changed the name to Resource Conservation Management Agency (or whatever it is now.)<sup>10</sup> Their people tended to stay longer. The [U.S.] Fish and Wildlife Service, their presence was through the federal aid structure which aided the state agency and a

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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service.

few field people with most of their people being on like at Swan Lake, on the refuges, or down at Mingo or someplace. So, the people in a state agency tend to come and stay.

Many cases they're from the area, whereas the feds come and go. It's less so now; they don't move them as much as they did, but they tend to come and go.

**[Tape meter, 389. End side one, tape three of three.]**

**[Tape meter, 004. Begin side two, tape three of three]**

WS: Something we were talking about quite a while ago when you were establishing the land boundaries. I know that Forest Service in the early days used to... It wasn't eminent domain and they weren't taking land, but they would put the title under condemnation in order to establish a clear title, and they called it "friendly condemnation." Did you all get involved with anything like that?

EG: The only time is if it was agreeable between the seller and the buyer. You might do what's called a "clear title" just to be dern sure who owned what. Particularly if you were going to build something of great value, i.e. a lake on a piece of property, or going to construct a road on a piece of property, just to be sure who owned it. Sometimes titles were not clear, particularly if there had been heirs that disappeared. The Conservation Department, as far as I know, never in all the years... I think one time they threatened to go through condemnation, but it did not. And I think it was to -- I can't even remember it -- acquire land for a lake of something, the last little piece that was needed. But the only time that you would do anything like that would be to be dern sure that the title was clear. But if you can't negotiate the sale, you wait a few years [until] conditions change. Or you go [to another location.] That isn't the only site in the world you might need for a

particular thing. A good example -- and there was no condemnation involved -- for years and years and years, the Department of Conservation tried to acquire Columbia Bottoms up there at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi River in north St. Louis. They finally got it done this year. They were working on that thirty years ago. So patience sometimes pays off, and it was a matter of political scene at any one time, and getting the right players in line and so on. So usually, unless it was -- back to your condemnation question -- it had to be a very unusual situation before *any* [of] it was even talked about. Usually you can clear a title one way or another without...

WS: Before you retired, was there any talk of this buying the bottomlands in general along the Missouri or Mississippi Rivers?

EG: That had been a goal. One of the things that the one-eighth of one percent sales tax did was give the department enough resources to acquire lands. One of the best ways to be a player at the table on every stream in Missouri (and I mean every stream) is to own one acre or a thousand acres or something else. And when the negotiations start, whatever the use of that river or whatever's going to happen to it, landowners become a player at the table. It's just a given fact! They're going to have to deal with you at some point. And I don't care whether it's a highway, or whether it's a river, or whatever it is, they're going to deal with you because you're a landowner. So when you're a player at the table, you're more likely to get a package that you want or at *least* be able to speak for the resource. You don't always win. So if you look around the state, you'll find the Conservation Department owns land on many streams in the state. So it's good from the standpoint of the resource manager.

**[Tape meter, 050]**

WS: Well, I wonder... Maybe I was mistaken, but I sort of had the impression that maybe since the Department of Conservation wanted to buy some of these lands, that their philosophy, perhaps on this serious flooding we had just a few years back, would have gone along the lines of not building levees and allowing this land to flood when you get those big rains.

EG: That's true, but if you check, this was a real opportunity to acquire lands. The floods gave an opportunity [in] that lands became available, some of which we had negotiated for and had never been able to acquire, some of which the Department had the resources to acquire *now* because they had acquired many other things earlier in "the design for conservation" program or so on where we had certain goals to acquire sites here and there: in wetland areas, waterfowl areas, natural areas and so on. So there *might* have been resources that could be used. Now studies had been made with the Corps of Engineers over the years to mitigate, to offset losses from, say, the channelization work on the Missouri River, and that's quite an interesting story in itself. How many miles of the Missouri River were lost, where the old oxbows and things are gone, the Corps offset; and you [say,] "Okay, how are you going to it?" Well, Congress is going to have to approve some kind of a program and appropriate the money. So that was underway long before the floods. Owning a piece of the world that the river can spread out on *or* bottomlands that can be managed as wetland areas and so on has always been in the works.

WS: Is that right?

EG: Years, years.

WG: The flood was a catalyst perhaps in some ways?

EG: The flood made lands available that wouldn't have been available before. It gave them a chance to accelerate the program! So when it happens again, maybe you can help alleviate some of the problems just because you own some of that land where the river *can* spread. So it's been in the mill. The Department is unique in [that] it has pretty good thinkers -- has *had* for years pretty good thinkers. What do you need to do to bless the resources, is the question. One of the things you need to do is to own public lands, well-spaced over the state, a certain amount of riparian lands and upland lands and so on. So some lands down here where the Osage hits the Missouri River, that was something that had been looked at for years and years. Well, the flood finally gave them the opportunity to go ahead and acquire it. There's some on down the river that was acquired since then, but they have been on the books for years, that this is what we need to do. In many cases they wouldn't come together, but when you get a couple of floods in a row and all of a sudden, lo and behold!

WS: (chuckles) I guess the Department of Conservation would be one of the few entities wanting to buy such land after...

EG: Well, if you look at it from the standpoint... Actually, you might be doing the landowner a favor, because if there's sand on there yea deep or oxbows or washouts and so on... But it's land for the purposes for the Department of Conservation, lands that serves its purpose (fish wildlife, forestry) [and] can be managed for that purpose. One of the things the Department did years ago when they were shifting entities, the Department got

authority from the legislature to acquire the unclaimed lands in Missouri and Mississippi River islands. Well, islands tend to build and islands tend to wash away. So they went out there and we spent a lot of time just acquiring [the islands], just putting the claim [on them], and putting them on the books, and identifying that, “yeah, these are public lands.” [There are] little islands and some are sandbars; some are here this year and gone tomorrow, but some will stay. So you have to be an opportunist.

**[Tape meter, 100]**

The other thing you have to have [is] continuity in a program. That’s one advantage of the Department. It started out in 1936, and progressively it has had an ongoing program, where it doesn’t start this year and you get a new political director and then go off someplace else in the next election. So continuity in a program is important.

WS: A little while ago you mentioned the Prairie Foundation. I just wondered if the Department of Conservation got involved with reclaiming the tall grass?

EG: Yes, and you would need to visit with some of the people probably in our wildlife division. They have gotten into the native grass program in a lot of department areas, but also in working with the Prairie Foundation. The Prairie Foundation has acquired lands. The Department has an agreement with them where they actually do the management on the areas. Also the Department has programs that work with private landowners on the prairie lands, or former prairie lands. In many cases they had been converted to something less desirable, either row crop or grasses that were not the native grasses. So the department has a program to work with these people who want to cooperate and work on the native grass. They also have cooperative programs with the University of

Missouri to -- as I recall -- fund research in the values of the native grasses as compared to fescue or whatever it is. They've funded some of these programs for a number of years and cooperatively produced studies and so on using the University [of Missouri] data where they've actually studied the livestock, the productivity, the economics of it and so on. We could say it and it might not mean much, but the University people involved in crops, animal husbandry and so on, if they say it and publish it, it has a lot more credibility.

WS: I wonder if the University of Missouri there at Columbia has been sort of the central institution of higher education in the interaction with the Department of Conservation?

EG: Yeah, on a lot of it, because they're the land grant university, and they've had the schools: the fisheries, and wildlife-forestry curriculums for years and years and years at the University of Missouri. So yeah, from that standpoint, the extension foresters over there and many others... But the Department has agreements with other universities: Southwest, Truman, Southeast and so on, over at Warrensburg where people in our educational section have taught courses over there, for credit courses. And these people, most of them have Masters degrees and what have you, and they teach summer courses for credit with all the universities pretty well statewide. Education has been a *landmark* decision that was made very early in the life of the department, and it's never wavered. If kept educating them, starting as kids, they're your voters in not very many years. You either educate them and try to continue to educate them, or you've lost the fight. And teachers... If you can get your... I don't care if it's people at the journalism school at the University of Missouri or wherever it is, if you can get the people there

knowledgeable in the resources so when they write an article, when they get out and work for a paper or a magazine or write an article that it has a little sense in it from the standpoint of the scientific side, well, it's critical!

**[Tape meter, 150]**

So teachers reach thousands of kids in the classroom. I forget how many kids they're reaching through the education unit [of the Department of Conservation] out there. I want to say 450,000 or so. In the classroom, in the newspapers and stuff. They go in there regularly, teachers that are trained in the conservation fields. So you take an educational advisor to work with teachers who work with thousands of students, and that's how you make the message grow. You give it to them from the time they're this high until they're ready for the grave. And it's the conservation message in a form that hopefully they can understand.

WS: Well, sir! I've kept you a long time! And we've covered a lot of territory. (chuckling) I didn't realize it was so late! I don't want to leave out anything, though. If you can think of something I haven't asked you that you think is important... I don't want to ask you anything like "What was the most controversial issue?" because I'm sure there were a lot of dog fights over the years.

EG: Yes, there were, and probably some of the bigger ones were what you're going to do with your water resources and river basins.

WS: Is that right?

EG: Yeah, because you had so many players in it. You had the landowners, you had the navigation interests, you had the water interests, you had the federal agencies, you name it! And the politicians. And they were probably as controversial as anything.

WS: That's interesting as a topic.

EG: They were fun! I thoroughly enjoyed negotiating. Absolutely, thoroughly enjoyed it. And the thing you've got to remember, you don't lose your cool. You go in as well organized as you can be and as knowledgeable as you can be, and you win some and you lose some, but it's always fun.

WS: When the Department of Conservation recruits employees, do they tell them they need to be diplomats? (laughing) Is that a job requirement?

EG: Well, usually one of the things you look for is a person -- education is a part of it, but you also look for personality and many things. It depends on the job of the individual. But we always had a saying that "the public giveth, and the public can taketh away." And if the public is paying the bill, by dern you treat them right. They only impression *many* of the public has is of the one employee they met. They may never meet another one! Do you take the [Missouri] Conservationist?

WS: Yes.

EG: You ever notice the letters in there that come from some kid or some adult? That's the attitude we try to foster. It always has been. You're either a part of the community and you get along with people, or you can do much damage to a program.

WS: Well, any closing remarks?

EG: None.

WS: (chuckles) Okay.

**[Tape meter, 198. End side two, tape three of three. End of interview.]**