Wayne O. Deason

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS: WAYNE O. DEASON

October 22, 1993 and February 8, 1994

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STATUS OF INTERVIEWS: OPEN FOR RESEARCH

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Interviews Conducted by:
Brit Allan Storey
Senior Historian
Bureau of Reclamation

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Oral History Program
Bureau of Reclamation

Wayne O. Deason. ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS. Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interview conducted by Brit Allan Story, Senior Historian, Bureau of Reclamation, October 22, 1993, and February 8, 1994, in Building 67 on the Denver Federal Center. Transcription by Barbara Heginbottom Jardee, Jardee Transcription, Tucson, Arizona. Edited by Brit Allan Storey. Repository for the record copy of the interview transcript is the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland.

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Date: May 17, 1996 Signed: Wayne O. Deason
Wayne O. Deason

INTERVIEWER: Brit Allan Storey
Brit Allan Storey

Having determined that the materials donated above by Wayne O. Deason are appropriate for preservation as evidence of the United States Government's organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and transactions, and considering it to be in the public interest to accept these materials for deposit with the National Archives and Records Administration, I accept this gift on behalf of the United States of America, subject to the terms, conditions, and restrictions set forth in the above instrument.

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Archivist of the United States

INTRODUCTION

In 1988 Reclamation hired a senior historian to create a history program. Though headquartered in Denver, the history program was developed as a bureau-wide program.

Over the years, the history program has developed and enlarged, and one component of Reclamation's history program is its oral history activity. The primary objectives of Reclamation's oral history activities are: preservation of historical data not normally available through Reclamation records (supplementing already available data on the whole range of Reclamation's history); and making the preserved data available to researchers inside and outside Reclamation.

The senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation developed and directs the oral history activity, and questions, comments, and suggestions may be addressed to the senior historian.

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BRIEF CHRONOLOGY

1940 – Born in Duncan, Oklahoma
1961 – Discharged U.S. Navy
1965 – B.S. from Colorado State University
1968 – Ms. In fisheries biology at Colorado State University
1970 – Ph.D. in microbiology at Colorado State University
1970-1971 – Worked for McDonnell Douglass Astronautics Company
1971-1979 – Branch Chief in the regional environmental office, Boulder City
1979 – Enters Department of the Interior Managerial Development Program, Washington, D.C.
– Moves to Office of Water Research and Technology
– Back to Reclamation in the Office of Policy and Management
1983-1988 – Director, Office of Environmental Affairs
1988 – Moves to Denver as Manager, Environmental Services, on the staff of the Assistant Commissioner-Resources Management
– Senior Environmental Advisor to Assistant Commissioner-Resources Management
– Deputy Director, Office of Policy
1991 – Founder of C.A.S.T. for Kids
2004 – retired while Acting Director, Office of Policy
March 18, 2007 – Died in Marana, Arizona

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS:
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This is Brit Allan Storey, Senior Historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Wayne Deason, environmental advisor to the assistant commissioner for resources management, at ten o'clock in the morning, on October 22, 1993, in a conference room in Building 67, on the Denver Federal Center. This is tape one.

Early Life and Education

Storey: Mr. Deason, would you tell me where you were born and raised, about your education, and how you ended up at the Bureau of Reclamation, please?

Deason: Well, I was born in Duncan, Oklahoma, 1940, one of two sons—the youngest—from a family who was in construction. My father was a construction worker. And we moved from state to state all of my young life. It was not at all unusual for me to attend grade school, particularly, in two or three different states a year—which I always thought hurt my education, but yet I ended up with a Ph.D.

Well, nevertheless, construction workers. I guess we ended up pretty much in Boulder, Colorado—settled down there finally. I finished high school there, started going with my current wife—my only wife—who was in the same class. Went into the Navy following graduation from high school. I didn't want to have anything to do with

college. I didn't like school, period. After college, I worked in construction back in Boulder.

Storey: You mean after the Navy?

Decides to Go to College

Deason: After the Navy, I'm sorry. After the Navy. And one particular bad winter, where it was negative ten degrees for two weeks in a row, I decided, "There has to be a better life than this!" And so I started inquiring into college. I selected a college, Mesa Junior College at that time, in Grand Junction. [I] finished there and went to Colorado State University. [I] finished there with a bachelor's of Science in 1965, the degree was in fishery biology. And then a master's in fishery biology in '68, same school. And then I switched over to the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and became a microbiologist, particularly as relates to water environments—same school—and finished there in December of 1970.

Works for McDonnell Douglas Astronautics Company in St. Louis

During the time that I was working on my bachelor's and master's degree, I also worked with the Fish and Wildlife Service. I worked particularly with a man named Phil Sharpe. He comes into play after I went to work for McDonnell Douglas Astronautics Company in St. Louis, after I graduated with

my Ph.D. [I] worked there as a research physiologist, microbiologist, in the Manned Space Flight Program.

Asked to Move to the Bureau of Reclamation in Boulder City

As it turns out, Phil Sharpe, my old ex-boss, called me one day and invited me back West to work for the Bureau of Reclamation with him. He left the Fish and Wildlife Service, and was working for the Bureau of Reclamation as well. So in '71—the end of '71—I left McDonnell Douglas and drove with my family to Boulder City, Nevada. And that's where I started working with the Bureau of Reclamation.

Becomes Branch Chief in Regional Environmental Office

I was in the regional environmental office, Phil was the regional environmental officer. I became the branch chief of two branches in the Environmental Office. I was the branch chief for the . . . what was it called? Operations and, I can't even remember what it was it was so long ago now, but it was the one that dealt with data collection and research for material that goes into the environmental impact statements. I was in that position until August of 1979.

Enters Department of the Interior Managerial Development Program

At that time we moved to Washington, D.C., and I was to take part in the Department Managerial Development Program—[a] ten-month training program in Washington—for upward-inclined management people. [I] took various assignments as a part of that particular program: Corps of Engineers, Geological Survey, Department of Energy, Congress, et cetera, et cetera. One of the jobs that I took—one of the assignments that I had—was with an organization called the Office of Water Research and Technology, and it dealt with funding various states to do water research. And I was the only person in the office that had a biological background, the rest of them were pretty much engineers, but yet they did have biological proposals that would come in needing review. So I was immediately the senior biologist in that particular function.

Decides to Stay in Washington, D.C.

As it turns out, when I finished my program, we liked Washington so much that we decided rather than coming back to Boulder City, we wanted to stay there. And so I talked with our personnel folks, and they said that they would try to find a position for me back in Washington, when we completed the program so that we could stay back there.

Moves to the Office of Water Research and Technology

Turns out that none could be found, so

I did the very bad thing of jumping ship. I left the Bureau of Reclamation and went back to the Office of Water Research and Technology. They were lobbying after me for a long time and they finally got me. And I was with them for, oh gosh, I guess a year-and-a-half before there was an administration change.

James Watt Abolishes the Office of Water Research and Technology

And the administration was the new Reagan administration that came in. With him, was a man named James Watt, and good old Watt had a real problem with the Office of Water Research and Technology. Apparently something had happened between O-W-R-T [Office of Water Research and Technology] and Jim Watt when he used to be in the Department a number of years ago, prior to his becoming the Secretary.

The first thing he did was to abolish the Office of Water Research and Technology. So the folks at the Bureau of Reclamation by that time had located a position that they could put me in, and they came to me and said, "Would you like to come back to the Bureau of Reclamation?" I said, "Is rice white? Yeah, you bet, I need a job."

Returns to the Bureau of Reclamation's Office of Policy and Management

So, I went into a new office called the Office of Policy and Management, run by Carl Rowe. I became the policy analyst. My title was Senior Policy Analyst. And the job entailed everything that you could possibly think of when you deal with policy, review, develop[ment], what have you. We were an office of the commissioner. I still had an environmental background, but I didn't really plan to go back into the environmental field. I wanted to go out into some other kind of an area.

Replaces Al Jonez as Director of the Office of Environmental Affairs

Well as it turns out, the Director of the Office of Environmental Affairs—who at that time was Al Jonez, the second of the people in that office—the first environmental director for the Bureau of Reclamation was Woody Seaman, Elwood Seaman. Al Jonez left—actually Al left the Boulder City Office to go back to Washington, to work for Woody. And then when Woody retired, Al moved into his position.

As it turns out again, Al wanted to go back West, so some kind of a "deal," shall we say, was cut between the then-Commissioner Broadbent and Al to give him a job back here in Denver, where he was the head of the Salinity Control Program. And he came back here—that left a position open in Washington—the senior position of the Director of the Office of Environmental

Affairs. Broadbent thought I should take that, and I applied for it and got it. So I was the head of the Environmental Program in Washington from February, I think third, 1983, until we had our reorganization in 1988, where I was transferred to the Denver office.

Really Liked the Office of Environmental Affairs

But the office back in Washington was a good office, really a good office, I worked directly for the commissioner. [I] had a good staff: Larry Roberts, Steve Speck, had a young woman named Lois Thompson, and a couple of good secretaries. We were very productive, got a lot done, had a lot of responsibility, did a lot of travel—all of us did—we all shared the same functions. I was the leader of the office but we were pretty much equal in there as far as the work load was concerned. I really miss the people, they were really quality people. They had everything they needed to go on and be managers of their own office, except the only thing they didn't really have was the supervisory experience as far as people [are concerned].

So I developed a training program for them—worked with personnel—where I would give them the responsibility of running my Denver office, because as it turns out, I was located in Washington, but I also had the Denver Office of Environmental Affairs. The staff out here worked for me, it was kind of a

branch, but it was located in Denver. They handled the technical aspects, and my office in Washington handled the policy aspects.

Worked with Personnel Office for Staff Development in the Office of Environmental Affairs

So I worked a deal with the personnel office where Steve and Larry would each—over a one-year period—be the director/manager, of the Denver office and that would give them the supervisory experience that they needed—that I felt they needed before they go and run their own office somewhere. They were delighted, Personnel thought it was a great idea. As matter of fact, the person I worked with, Lois, "My gosh," she said, "this is enlightened management. I'm so surprised the Bureau of Reclamation . . . . Enlightened management," she kept going. It was really great.

The commissioner didn't like it at all, and that was the time when Bob Olson was the acting commissioner, because Broadbent had left. A new commissioner hadn't come on, so Bob, who was the assistant commissioner for planning and operations at that time became the acting commissioner. And he didn't like it—asked me to do away with it—because he just didn't like the concept of it. I don't know why [I] never figured that out. I didn't do away with it, I kept it going—he never said anything. But anyway, [it] gave the guys a pretty good

handle on supervising an office, delegating your budget and managing a staff.

Office of Environmental Affairs Broken up in 1988

We broke the office up, unfortunately, in 1988. Larry went to the Office of Service Management. Is that right? O-S-M. (Storey: Office of Surface Mining.) Surface Mining, yeah. Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation. And Steve stayed in the Department with the Office of Environmental Project Review—later to become the Office of Environmental Affairs for the Department. Those were really good days, I really enjoyed that. I was able to influence a commissioner—whichever commissioner I worked for at that particular time—I could influence the commissioners.

Review of Environmental Statements and Quality Control of Them in Washington, D.C.

We had environmental impact statements that would come in that were bad, lacking data. It was an open-door policy between the commissioner and me—I could go in and talk to him. I guess I don't take pride in stopping projects, but I certainly had some input in stopping some projects that I thought were bad for the environment.

I'm not a preservationist. I guess when it comes down to philosophy, I'm a conservationist rather than a preservationist. I believe that we've got a lot of resources out

there that we can use but we just have to use them wisely. But when it comes to things like endangered species, I will go over to the side of preservation. But basically I'm a conservationist, and I think that was one of the reasons that I was able to work with commissioners well, because I wasn't some wild-eyed, radical environmentalist. I did have a very definite conservation philosophy.

Moves to Denver as Manager of Environmental Services During Reorganization in 1988

Anyway, we left there in '88. My wife gave up very good business. We came back here, to Denver, where I became the manager of Environmental Services, which was supposed to have been a position very similar to what I had in Washington. But as it turns out, it was not at all arranged well. In Washington, I worked directly for the commissioner. Administratively, at the latter days, I reported to the assistant commissioner for nothing more than administrative purposes, but I still answered to the commissioner. When I moved to Denver, I worked for Terry Lynott, who worked for Ray Willms, who worked for Bill McDonald, who worked for Joe Hall, who then got to the commissioner.

Change in Bureau's Environmental Program Due to Reorganization in 1988

So even though I was supposed to have the same responsibilities and authority,

[it] very quickly eroded. And I think anyone in the Bureau who has any recollection of the way the Environmental Program used to be in the Bureau, would also tell you that the Environmental Program has not been the same since: quality control suffers, a lot of going around the normal chain of command to get projects done. It's just not as good a program as it was back in those days.

Today? Well we'll go back to when we first came out here to Denver. We came out here to Denver as a result of the '88 reorganization. But the '88 reorganization was predicated on the "1987 Assessment Report" which said that the Bureau of Reclamation needs to take a new direction. And it identified about fifteen major points that the Bureau of Reclamation did as they functioned. And prior to the '87 "Assessment Report," environment was ranked somewhere about—it was either fifth or sixth in priority of the fifteen elements—which was fairly high in itself but not high enough.

In the '87 "Assessment Report," environment was moved up from either the fifth or the sixth to number two—which made me feel really good. It followed O&M [operations and maintenance]—O&M of our projects—which only made sense: we were winding down the construction program, we need to go into the operation and maintenance phase. So, environment and O&M fit very closely together anyway, because we're O&Ming our projects, we have to do some

environmental work as well—that goes right along with the O&M.

Begins Development of Environmental Program Initiatives in Denver after 1988

But I was unsatisfied, dissatisfied, because even though environment was number two, I wasn't seeing anything being done as a result of that. And we waited for quite a period of time, waiting to receive direction from senior management to say, "Okay, Deason, take your environmental program and move it this way."

So, frustrated because we didn't receive any direction, I called my staff in one day and said, "We can't wait any longer, we've been given the direction, Congress is looking at us, our environmental friends are looking at us and they're seeing us as the same old Bureau." I said, "So I'm going to direct each one of you to do something." [To] John Crossman, who was my right-hand person at that time, I said, "I want you to go out and develop a wetlands program." [To] Bill Karsell, who was also on my staff at the time, I said, "I want you to go out and start developing a Fish and Wildlife program." And of course, we talked about what these programs were, but nevertheless, I gave them authority to go out and start the process. Lynn Almer, Environmental Education, and I started dividing these things up among my staff and said, "Now we have not been given direction by senior management to do this.

We may be criticized, but if anyone is criticized, I will take the criticism. I'll take the risk myself."

Environmental Initiatives Are Criticized

So I gave them the authority to go out and start putting programs together, and I just kind of sat back—they were so happy to do it—you just couldn't believe the papers just flew everywhere. Well, it didn't take too long before traditional managers in the Bureau of Reclamation, who had been with the Bureau for many, many years, said, "What is going on? We are not an environmental organization, we are an engineering organization." And so I started taking some heat—quite of bit of heat—but it's one of those things, once you start the momentum, and so many people in the Bureau of Reclamation wanted to do things that were environment[al], it was hard to turn off.

Well, as a matter of fact, it has not been turned off—we're still doing it. And now that we have a commissioner and his senior staff who is very interested in doing things in the environment—it won't be turned off. Besides that, we've got so many friends that we've made in the environmental community, they wouldn't let us turn it off now.

Environmental Services Office Is Disbanded

But nevertheless, I took a lot of heat.

As a result of it, from what I've been able to observe, and people that I've talked to, I am right now an office of one. I work by myself, I work directly for Bill McDonald, who is the assistant commissioner. Programs that I used to have, wetlands, fish and wildlife enhancement, hazardous waste, etcetera—these programs were given to traditional wildlife management. And the reason, as I have been told, that they were given to them, is that they can control them. Because the people who took them were inclined to think like the overlying managers—did not want the environment to raise its head the way I wanted it to be raised—and so they took it and managed it.

Several of those people have since retired, which makes it better for the environment—doesn't affect me at all. I'm actually liking my job, I really enjoy my job. I work directly for Bill [McDonald], and Bill was one of the people who, at first, didn't really want to get involved with an environmental program. But I'm finding that Bill is the type of person that he will do what his senior management will tell him to do, and he'll do it very well.

But I can remember back in the days when I had my staff here, there was a . . . . Here's an indication of how bad it was: There was a closed door, late-night meeting none of my staff or I were invited to. It was the typical front-office staff with a person from lower staff—not a manager—but a staff

person involved. Let me just go back and clarify this. We had an assistant commissioner, a deputy assistant commissioner, and a director of program operations—or whatever that's called in there—Lynott, and a Junior staff person in a closed-door meeting. And the assistant commissioner, I guess thought that the information would be safe, that he talked about in this meeting. Well as it turns out, this staff person talked to my office the next day about the meeting he had the night before, where one of the quotes that he gave me—of course this is all hearsay—was that the assistant commissioner said, "We've got to stop this Deason/Crossman environmental shit." And he did, he did, he broke my office up and gave it to people with his kind of thinking—and I was pretty bitter, pretty bitter.

Becomes Senior Environmental Advisor to the Assistant Commissioner-Resources Management

But now, I can see that there is an active environmental program, I have come to know my immediate boss a lot better, and I'm working very well with him. He's a heck of a worker, real good worker—and he supports what I do. And what do I do? I call myself the Protocol Officer for the Bureau of Reclamation, and that's kind of a tenuous position to be in. But I go out and deal a lot with our environmental groups—I know a lot of people through the years that I've been working with the Bureau of Reclamation in environment and I know a lot of people. And

the Bureau likes for me to get involved with these people and let them know what the Bureau of Reclamation is doing.

In the past Reclamation Never Publicized its Work Because the Congress Took Care of its Needs Without the Support of Publicity

For a long time, the Bureau did a lot of good environmental work, but they never publicized it, never wanted to publicize it, even though, for a long time, I wanted them to. We grew up in a time [when] I guess the early days of the Bureau of Reclamation didn't need to publicize itself in anything it did, because Congress took care of it. Some sugar daddy wanted a project, he just gave the Bureau money and said, "Here, do it, don't worry about advertising it, we'll take care of you." And they did that for a long time, until all of a sudden the big projects were built, money was running out, and here was the good old Bureau of Reclamation with the management who came about as a result of those early days when they didn't have to manage people, or market themselves. We're getting rid of that kind of person now, we have to be smarter managers.

So now, today, we are pushing what we do. I like to think that I'm helping that in some way. We're selling ourselves to not only our traditional water-user people, but we're selling ourselves to the environmental people as well—people we should have been selling ourselves to a long time ago, but upper

management would just not allow that to happen.

So anyway, I'm the Protocol Officer for the Bureau of Reclamation. My title is Senior Environmental Advisor, and in that title I can provide advice to any senior manager in the Bureau of Reclamation, as they want it. A lot of people don't want it. It's not that they don't want it, they just go around it, they don't need it because they've got their own staff and they just don't want to take the time to deal with Denver—which is another fault of moving out here.

Why He Opposed Moving the Commissioner's Environmental Staff to Denver in 1988

I'm going to hop around: during the time of that move, one of the things that I tried to argue against moving, was my staff. I thought that the environmental staff needs to stay in Washington, D.C., because that's where all of the environmental organizations were located. But the commissioner at the time, Dale Duvall, and the assistant secretary, Jim Zeigler, they wanted everyone to move to Denver. So they moved me out, broke the staff up, lost all those good people. And then as soon as I got out here, they said, "God, we shouldn't have moved Deason, he should be back in Washington." Well it was too late at that time.

So about that time, the new administration comes in, Dennis Underwood

becomes the commissioner—and I told Dennis right away, "You're really going to find out very shortly that you don't have any environmental people in Washington, and you need them." And it wasn't, gosh, just a couple of months after he became commissioner, that he put out a call for—put out a vacancy notice—for an environmental person. Didn't want to staff-up [to the levels in] the office that he had before, but he certainly recognized that there was a need for an environmental person. He hired Judy Troast—very good person, get along with her very well.

Anyway, can't remember what I was talking about now. (Storey: You were hopping around.) Yeah, just hopping around. (Storey: The reorganization and the impact that it had on the environmental program.) I think we could have done more. I think the Bureau would be much stronger in the environmental program right now had we stayed in Washington. Because that's where all the national organizations are located. All of your major national environmental organizations are headquartered in Washington. I deal a lot with the Washington people, so I travel a lot—I get around quite a bit. But it's mostly flying back and forth to Washington to meet with these people, because they're all back there.

The very first task that I gave my office in ~~Washington~~ [Denver] to do was to develop the NEPA [National Environmental Protection Act] handbook. We didn't have

any kind of a NEPA handbook at that particular time, all we had was CEQ [Council on Environmental Quality] regulations and departmental guidelines.

I thought, "Boy wouldn't it be something if we had a book? I could just lay it out, cookbook fashion, what you have to do in order to write an environmental impact statement." And [I] had a lot of meetings with regional environmental officers. Some of them said, "Yeah, it'd probably be a good book." Some of them said, "I'll never use it." And as it turns out, after we actually got the thing published, the people who said, "We'll never use it," were the first to say, "Don't change it, it's great." And so I've always taken quite a bit of pride in that NEPA handbook. Now we've had, I guess we're going into the third edition of that first one, because of all the changes that we've undertaken. That first book went out wide. It's absolutely all over the world. I had requests from Turkey, from England, from you-name-it. So that book is just really everywhere—very popular book.

Commissioner Dale Duvall Recognized Values for Water Other than Irrigation

One of the other things that I took a certain pride in was finally under Duvall, we had a commissioner who started recognizing that there are other values for water out there than for irrigation. And he also thought that it was valuable to have other constituents to

come into Washington, talk to him and develop a relationship around environmental groups.

Commissioner Duvall Was Willing to Expand Reclamation's Constituencies Beyond the Traditional Ones

And keying on that, one day I said, "Gosh Dale, let me have a guy named Carl Sullivan," who was the Director of the American Fishery Society at that time, before his death, "let me have him come in and talk to you about what American Fishery Society does and the things that we can do with American Fishery Society."

And he said, "Well, yeah go ahead and do it. But I'm kind of busy. I don't want to [give] him any more than a half-hour of my schedule because it's a busy time of the year." So I called Sulley [Sullivan] and he came in and spent an hour-and-a-half with him, even though he had only programmed a half-hour, because he could see the things that this particular organization could do for the Bureau of Reclamation.

Development of Bureau Fishery Policy

When Sulley left, I said, "Why don't you empower me to develop a Bureau of Reclamation fishery policy?" This is just unheard of in the Bureau. And he said, "Yeah, go ahead and do that. I'd like to see what it comes out like. I'd like to see what it

says." So I got back to the office, I was just absolutely floating, because nothing like this had ever happened at the Bureau before—I was just floating.

So I got back to the office, I called my technical people here in Denver, George Wallen, was running the office for me at that time—and told him about the meeting. I said, "Drum up a good fishery policy for me. Use your technical people, Jay Hokenstrom, in particular." He was a good writer. And so Jay put together a fishery policy and that week FAXed to me. I made just a couple of modifications to it, presented it to the commissioner and he liked it. He said, "Let's send it out." And so we put a cover letter on it and sent it out—a new Bureau of Reclamation policy.

You can't believe the change in attitude of our own biologists within the Bureau. At that time we had at least two hundred biologists. They just couldn't believe that the Bureau of Reclamation would put out a policy like that. That was the first real sign that there was a change.

Commissioner Robert Broadbent's Attitude Toward Environmental Issues

I looked at that opportunity that we took advantage of and I go back to the previous commissioner, Bob Broadbent—and I like Bob, but I remember one meeting I was sitting in with him and we were talking about

a fish hatchery—the Jones Hole Fish Hatchery—that Fish and Wildlife Service was looking at the possibility of closing.

The way the fish hatchery law was written, it said that the fish from the hatchery would have to be used for mitigation and enhancement purposes. We were talking about enhancement and placing fish here for mitigation—placing fish there for mitigation and developing this project and that'll destroy a certain amount of stream segments so we'll have to place some more fish for mitigation. And I said, "Bob, we were talking about mitigation all the time but remember, that law says `and enhancement.'" And this was back in the days when we didn't deal with enhancement issues, particularly for environmental purposes. It was, you know, mitigation, it was the most. Bob looked at me with the coldest, steely-grey eyes you could ever imagine and said, "Wayne, enhancement is nothing more than mitigation plus one fish."

So I sat back in my chair and said, "Yes, sir."

And so the difference between Bob Broadbent then, and his environmental values, and Dale Duvall and his environmental values, was a real breath of fresh of air. . . .

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. OCTOBER 22, 1993.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. OCTOBER 22, 1993.

Commissioner Duvall Attends the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

Deason: Anyway, he [Dale Duvall] was the first commissioner I was ever able to take to the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, which still is the largest of the conservation/environmental organization meetings of the year. It's an annual meeting. I told Dale that it was in Quebec, Canada—Quebec City. I invited him to go with me and he said, "Hm, I've never been up that part of the world. I'll go up and meet your friends."

So I went up early, and he came up the next day. At the banquet and there's a humongous head table, must have probably fifty people. And they go down and introduce every person who's at the head table. And to be able to see the Commissioner of Reclamation being set at the head table and being introduced to all those wildlife interests was really, really something. I had people coming up afterwards, after Dale had even gone, and said, "My gosh, how in the world did you ever get the Commissioner of Reclamation to come to the North American? What a coup, what a coup!"

I said, "He's just interested in it, and the Bureau's changing." He was the first person to really change—to help start the changing process of the Bureau. I didn't know if it would get any better, but he gave me my Fishery Policy, and he started working

with environmental organizations. I had Larry Yond [phonetic], who happened to be the Director of the Wildlife Management Institute, come in and talk to him as well. I could see that Dale really had an interest in doing things that were environmental in nature as well.

Dennis Underwood Becomes Commissioner

So when the administration changed, Dale left and we got the new guy, Dennis Underwood, in. I didn't know where I would stand with him, because Dennis came out of California, operating the state water board, or whatever it was—a real "water buffalo"—real old-line person. The first week that he came to the Denver office, I called up and made an appointment with him. My first question after I introduced myself was, "I'm the senior environmental person for the Bureau of Reclamation, I really need to know where you fit as far as your environmental philosophy is concerned." And I was very impressed with what he said, and he was an environmental person.

Daniel Beard as Commissioner

Once you become the director, once you have the reins in your hand of an organization, you can change quite a bit—it's just like our commissioner now, Dan Beard—beats up on the Bureau of Reclamation when he's not in the Bureau of Reclamation, but when you're in the Bureau

of Reclamation and you're in the driver's seat, you say, "My gosh, there's a lot of responsibilities out there. I can't jump into these quick decisions, I need to sit down and reflect on what some of these things are." Dennis was the same way.

And where Dale was with the environment, Dennis multiplied it manyfold, which was just really positive. He really wanted strong interaction with the environmental community, and he was the one that really got me going out meeting with environmental groups. So it was very positive, very positive.

Storey: Did you have access to Mr. Underwood?

Deason: Yes, for quite a while I did. A matter of fact (laughs), there's a little more friction coming in here with that question. There was quite a period of time when Dennis would fly into Denver, that I would go out to the airport and pick him up. And a lot of the senior, senior, senior managers did not like that. They wanted to "talk business" with him. So I was rapidly told that from now on when the commissioner comes into town, some other senior manager, PMC/EMC [Permanent Management Committee/Executive Management Committee—these are various names for the committee of managers from Reclamation, generally deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners, and

regional directors][1] member will be the person who picks him up, not the environmental person, so a little friction there.

Commissioner Underwood Is Isolated from Reclamation's Staff

But I did have access to him and I used it for quite a bit. I would talk to him, he'd call me at home, we'd talk issues. I felt that I was able to accomplish quite a bit with him. I think over a period of time however—how do you say this— I guess his group that he trusted a great deal was the EMC and he had to because those are the people he dealt with to help him manage his organization. And over a period of time, they were able to encapsulate him—and ideas that you would want to get in to Dennis, through your respective EMC contact, sometimes would not get into him at all.

I know for a fact, that things that he

1. Note that in the text of these interviews, as opposed to headings, information in parentheses, ( ), is actually on the tape. Information in brackets, [ ], has been added to the tape either by the editor to clarify meaning or at the request of the interviewee in order to correct, enlarge, or clarify the interview as it was originally spoken. Words have sometimes been struck out by editor or interviewee in order to clarify meaning or eliminate repetition. In the case of strikeouts, that material has been printed at 50% density to aid in reading the interviews but assuring that the struckout material is readable.

The transcriber and editor have removed some extraneous words such as false starts and repetitions without indicating their removal. The meaning of the interview has not been changed by this editing.

wanted to get out to his people, likewise, never got out to his people. The EMC became a buffer. They were able to, I think, control a lot of what he did, and they got their own points across. I think that's nothing new, that happens all through history—you got to be careful who you're with because your best friends can surround you and kind of filter out what you may be wanting to hear.

Development of Commissioner Underwood's "Strategic Plan"

I think that really happened to Dennis, and I think where it really came out strong was during the strategic plan. He had given his EMC members the charge of getting that strategic plan and the implementation plans completed by the time he left the Bureau. And well down the road he said, "Alright, now, what's the status of the strategic plan and implementation plans?"

The status was not very much—at which I understand he was quite mad, because he thought that they were doing his wishes, but they were not doing his wishes. And he knew that now it was too late to do the implementation plans, so he had to fall back on doing nothing more than the strategic plan—and hopefully, he could start doing the implementation plans before he left. But as you know, the implementation plans never really have gotten completed—a couple have, but only a couple out of twenty-six. And now they're on hold.

So he was able to finish his strategic plan, but he was never able to finish the implementation plans and that was the order that he had given—and that just got filtered out. We would sit back here and talk to the EMC members about, "Well where should we go now on developing the implementation plans that goes with the commissioner's strategic plan philosophy?"

And it's, "Well, we'll get around to telling you whenever we feel that there's a need to. Just hang on. Have your team meetings but there's no big push on it." Until all of a sudden, the commissioner realized that it wasn't getting done and then there was a deadline. And the deadline came in December. Of course elections were held the month prior to that, so there was a real push to get these implementation plans complete—but they were never completed. So he just got himself too surrounded with other powerful people in the Bureau of Reclamation. A lot of those powerful people have gone—good management strategy here, I need to take a look at that.

Storey: Are you willing to discuss the people who tried to insulate the environmental program away from the commissioner?

Agenda 21, the Earth Summit, and Reclamation

Deason: Well, I attended a meeting that I conducted in July of this year [1993]—end of July—it was back in Washington. It was the meeting

around the Earth Summit, which we called Agenda 21, the Earth Summit, which took place in Rio last summer. What we were doing in our committee—I'm a member of the USCID, U.S. Committee on Irrigation and Drainage, the Chairman of the environmental committee—what we wanted to do is to take the Agenda 21 report, look at Chapter XVIII in that report, which dealt with freshwater resources, and develop a report around how the United States water resource community would deal with Chapter XVIII of the Agenda 21 Report. Very successful workshop, I might add.

Our dinner speaker was Larry Hancock. He came in place of Betsy [Elizabeth] Rieke, who was the assistant secretary, she couldn't make it. So Larry, who is the principal deputy commissioner in Washington—he was there, as well, when Dennis was commissioner, and one of the people who surrounded him—Larry was also regional director [Mid-Pacific Region, Sacramento, California] during part of that time.

Larry gave the keynote dinner address that evening, and it was a good talk, really good talk. We were sitting at a table at the end of the discussion and he opened the discussion to a question and answer period. One of the people at my table asked Larry a question—I won't get it exactly right but you can paraphrase it—"Is this environmental thing that the Bureau of Reclamation is doing,

is it something that's going to last, or is it a flash in the pan?" And Larry says, "Oh, no, not a flash in the pan at all. This is something that is going to last. We managers in the Bureau of Reclamation are very much in favor of doing what's right for environmental values." And then he says, "And I'll tell you"—he's pointing his finger at the audience—"we senior managers in the Bureau of Reclamation have wanted to do an environmental program, a good, solid environmental program, for a long time. But do you know who stopped us? Middle managers, and they're in this room right now."

And I'm looking around the room, looking at these Bureau of Reclamation middle managers: there's Sammy Guy, who's the head of the International Program—he has nothing to do with the environment, never would, never will—and there's nothing negative on that, he's just not in the place to influence the environment. There's Rick Gold, who is the assistant regional director in Salt Lake City, and a good environmental person. There's Patrick Mangan, senior biologist under Jay Hokenstrom's staff, a good environmental person. And there's me. And I'm saying, "Middle managers are in this room and they're the ones who have stopped senior management from doing an environmental program?!" I could've picked up my glass of water and thrown it at him. It really, really angered me. I looked over at Rick Gold and Rick's eyebrows kind of raised up, and I looked at Sammy and he says (in a stage

whisper), "What's he talking about?"

I said, "I don't have the vaguest idea. But there's no one in this room he's talking about," but yet that's what he's saying up there, . . . "and they're in this room." And if there's been anyone who is anti-, anti-environmental movement in the Bureau of Reclamation, it's been Larry Hancock.

Darrell Webber, was a long-time construction, engineering and research assistant commissioner. He was not a bad environmental person, but it just wasn't his forte—he was into building dams and canals. Joe Hall [deputy commissioner in Denver]: I got along very well with Joe, but to give you an example where he really came from—I had Harvey Nelson, who was the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Services North America Waterfowl Management Program. I had him in to talk to Joe, introduced Joe to him and tell him about all the good opportunities that the Bureau of Reclamation could have getting involved with the management plan and in setting up joint ventures with the Fish and Wildlife Service. And we had a real good tie with these particular folks, and had a good opportunity to do a lot of joint venturing. In the meeting with Joe, Joe just readily admits right up front, he says, "What I want to do is to build that one last dam." Wrong time, wrong person to be talking to about wanting to "go out there and build that one last dam."

So we've got this overlying

management philosophy that will not go over to the environmental side. And of course Joe's gone. And as I say, I worked very well with Joe and he supported me but he wasn't one that was really keen on the environment.

Regional Directors and Their Environmental Stances

We've got some people today who are. . . . Well, who were around at that time—and still in senior level positions—we've got Roger Patterson. When Roger was the regional director of the Great Plains Region, he told me he wanted to be known as the Bureau of Reclamation's environmental regional director. And he did a lot of good work to prove that.

But he also had to compete with John Keys, who was in the Pacific Northwest Region. And John, an avid, avid fisherman, avid angler—boy, he did a lot of work to improve fishery habitat on the streams that he controlled. He's pretty much old line when it comes to taking care of his irrigators, but he was also a good environmental person.

When Larry Hancock, who was not a good environmental person, and regional director of California, left California to become the principal deputy ~~assistant~~ commissioner in Washington, Roger was transferred from Great Plains regional director to regional director in Mid-Pacific. Very smart move, very smart move, and it's

really paying off, because Roger is becoming known as a real quality environmental regional director.

The person who replaced Roger, was a project manager under Roger. And that guy's name is Neil Stessman. Neil, now says he wants to be known as the environmental regional director for the Bureau of Reclamation. He now, because of the reorganization, has the largest region: it goes from Canada to Mexico, it's the Great Plains. But so in that he has mountains, plains and desert—you name it, he's got it.

Today, if I try to find out environmental information to try to convince them that they should be doing something for the environment, his [Stessman's] region is absolutely the easiest to work with, because he really, truly wants to be doing things that are right for the environment. And it's not just because he wants to be known as that, he really wants to be an environmental regional director. I really think he's got a real changed ethic from being one who was riding on his Caterpillars, attending meetings, to one now who wants to go out and count birds. It's really a marvelous change—good for the Bureau, and he's got some good people. He's got some really good people who also have that same philosophy. I have a group of coordinators I call it, one from each region, so whenever I need to pass on information or request information, I go to just this one person, rather than having to track down any

number of people.

Jerry Jacobs is the one that I deal with in Great Plains Region. And any time I put out a request for information, his is always the most complete, his is always the first back—a real, real pleasure to deal with. The others I generally have to either wait until after the time that I wanted the information back to me, or have to pick up the phone and call and say, "Where is it? When is it going to get here?" It's almost like I have to beg them for the information. That doesn't mean that they're not doing things [in the] environment, it's just that they have a different objective, I guess, than what Neil has.

Let's see, I guess I'm about the last of the old-time environmental people. All the regional environmental officers—the original environmental officers—have either left or died. George Wallen, is the only other senior person in the Bureau who was around at the time I was around. He's not doing environment today, he's got a different job. Doug James is the regional environmental officer now in the Pacific Northwest and Doug took that job from Dick Woodward. So not very many of us around, of the original crew.

I know that, as I said earlier, I really didn't even want to get back into the environmental arena. And while I was working on the DMDP [Departmental Management Development Program], the

regional director who sent me from Boulder City, to go to Washington, for the DMDP program was Manny Lopez, Manuel Lopez, a wonderful person. When I left Boulder City to go to Washington, Manny retired and Gene Hines came in and took his place.

Gene was a good regional director as well, we got along very well. But one time during the closing days of my training program he approached me in the hall back in Washington—he was back there—and he said, "I'd really like to offer you a job, Wayne. I'd like for you to go ahead and just terminate this and come on back and be my regional environmental officer." Phil Sharpe had left, he had gone on to another position as assistant regional director in Salt Lake City, which left that vacancy.

I said, "Well Gene, you know I really like being back here. I like the program, I like the training, I'm not finished with the training. I actually want to stay back here, I'd like to just stay back here in the Washington Office."

And he said, "Okay, I respect your decision." And he left. And later I found out that he was pissed. (nervous laugh) He really wanted me to come back and be the regional environmental officer. As I found out, he was so mad that rather then filling that position—which is a traditionally biological position—rather than filling that with a biologist, he hired an engineer.

As it turns out, the engineer he hired was a pretty good environmentalist. But I always thought that was kind of funny. (laughs) [I] didn't want to make him mad, because as it turned out, I ended up working for him a little bit back in Washington, because he came back as assistant commissioner for planning and operations for a while. But we got along.

The only person that <u>really</u> got angry at me for stopping his project, was the regional director in Lower Missouri Region. His name was Bill Martin, Billy Martin. He had a project called the Narrows Project. And he wanted this EIS [environmental impact statement] filed in a desperate way. As it turns out, the Narrows Project EIS was the first draft environmental impact statement filed by the Department of the Interior after the passage of NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act of 1969], DES80-1—I think that's what it was. The project's <u>still</u> not built today so that tells you what the project was like.

He wanted that EIS filed in the worst way, and told me to file it. And I said, "I can't, it's got too many inadequacies." And so we hemmed and hawed on that for quite a while, and then he says, "All right, we're going to sit down with the commissioner and we're going to get this worked out." And I said, "That's fine." So we sat down with the commissioner.

Storey: That would have been Broadbent?

Deason: Well, it was during the transition between Broadbent and Duvall. It was acting commissioner Bob Olson, (Storey: Uh-huh.) And acting commissioner Bob Olson, let me tell you, an electrical engineer. If I'm going to have trouble with engineers, it's going to be the electricals, because their environmental values are way off the wall. They're just almost non-existent. So I thought it was going to be a rough meeting—I knew it was going to be a rough meeting—because it was with Bob, electrical engineer, and his friend, Billy Martin.

As it turns out, Darrell Mach, who was the head of Planning back in Washington, also agreed with me. So the four of us sat down: Olson, Martin, Mach and me. We presented our respective points. And at the end of the meeting, the commissioner said, "We're not going to file this statement, it's just too inadequate." And Bill was absolutely red-faced mad. He wouldn't even look at me, he wouldn't speak to me for I don't know how long.

I can't remember who . . . . I guess Gene Hines was still the assistant commissioner for planning and operations. He left, Terry Lynott came in as the assistant commissioner for planning and operations. I was thinking of another story just as I thought of that.

So, anyway, we did the '88 reorganization. Terry came out here as the assistant commissioner for (Storey: resources management.) Resources Management, new position. That didn't work out for Terry, so he was removed from his position, and who comes in? Billy Martin. Who am I working for? Billy Martin. Who did I have a big, big run-in with in Washington? Billy Martin.

I thought, "Oh my gosh, is my life going to be miserable." But that guy, who was a real dinosaur, as far as the environment was concerned, did an amazing transition. We got along great. He did environmental things great. Before he left, we got along very well, I was very surprised. He sure had an opportunity to get back at me, but he didn't.

Commissioner Duvall Directs That Deason Be Acting in the Absence of the Assistant Commissioner for Planning and Operations

Brings up another story—what I was thinking about a while ago—when Terry was the assistant commissioner for planning and operations, he traveled a lot. And so he used to have people acting in his place. The people that worked for Terry was Jim Cook, who was the head of O&M; Darrell Mach, who was the head of Planning; Ben Radecki, who was the head of Power back there; and me. Darrell and Jim were SES [Senior Executive Service], they were senior people to Ben Radecki and me, we were 15s[GS-15s].

But the commissioner, who was Dale Duvall, liked the way I “acted” [served as acting head of the office in the absence of Mr. Lynott] for Terry more than the other people. And so a note came out from the commissioner to the Washington staff, and to the Bureau of Reclamation that said, "Henceforth and from now on whenever Terry Lynott is on travel, Wayne Deason will automatically be his Acting."

That did not set well. I know that as far as Jim Cook is concerned, it lost me a friend, because we got along very well up until that time. And Darrell Mach was highly angry at it. Ben really could care less, because he didn't “act” very much for Terry anyway—so the three of us used to “act” quite a bit—and then it just came down to me. And so I had nothing to do with the letter, nothing to do with the letter, it's just that they liked my style better than those other two. (Storey: Uh-huh.) So it really created quite a problem.

Storey: Even when you aren't trying . . .

Deason: Even when I'm not trying to get in trouble! (laughs)

Storey: . . . it comes around and gets you in the back, doesn't it?

Deason: Yeah. And even today, I don't see Jim very much, but when I do, it's a strained situation, it's just strained.

Storey: Jim . . . Cook?

Deason: Jim Cook, a strained relationship. I didn't cause it. Well, I caused it, but (chuckles) it wasn't my fault.

Storey: How do you spell Cook?

Deason: C-O-O-K, "C," double "O," "K."

Storey: Okay.

Deason: Jim was a heck of a nice guy. Very strong leader, very strong-willed person. Had people at his heart, he really liked the people. He would take care of his people. He was a good manager, good supervisor, very bright. He was one of these people who took care of his people at the same time he got the product out as well. His fault was that he swore worse than a sailor. That's what caused the problem. He was really coarse, really coarse. I mean you take someone as high level and professional as he was, put him in a meeting with his equals, and my gosh, the room would be blue when you got out of there. Which was really too bad. But that's just, you know, Jim's nature.

Storey: Is he still with Reclamation?

Deason: No, he transferred over to the Bureau of Mines at the time of the reorganization—so he became a senior executive with Bureau of Mines. He's been there ever since. Would he come back? I don't know. I'm kind of

waiting to see myself, because I know that Dan Beard knows Cook very well. And I know that Cook would like to come back—and Cook could be vindictive—I really think so. So I could get myself into trouble just by being here—I would hope not, but that's the way it is.

Storey: Now let's see, if I'm remembering correctly, you came to Reclamation in '81?

Deason: In '71.

How Reclamation's Approach to Environmental Issues Has Changed since 1971 When Deason Came to Reclamation

Storey: In '71, okay. That was two years after the passage of NEPA (Deason: Um-hmm.) in '69. (Deason: Um-hmm.) Could you discuss your perception of how Reclamation's approach to environmental issues has evolved between that time when you first came to Reclamation and now?

Deason: Yeah. Well, NEPA was passed December of '69 so we say that it was passed in '69. But it actually didn't take effect until 1970. I think that I was really fortunate in that I worked for Phil Sharpe. Phil was [what] I would call a nine-nine [99%] manager. He's just really a good, quality person, good thinker. And this was at a time when I started working for him again with the Bureau of Reclamation, where NEPA was so new we still didn't know how to deal with it, it was such a mammoth act, such

a powerful act. We still didn't know how to deal with it.

I can remember seeing final environmental impact statements that were four, five, six pages long. Totally inadequate, but that's the way we dealt with the environment back in those days—we didn't know how to deal with it.

The regional director who was in place when I came to work with the Bureau of Reclamation, was Ed[ward A.] Lundberg and he was the one who recruited Phil Sharpe for that position. Which was a real smart move. The regional director prior to Ed Lumburg, was Arleigh West [retired 1970], and Arly West was a typical Bureau of Reclamation regional director at the time that NEPA was passed. "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead, nothing is going to stop me, get out of my way. Get on my Caterpillar and we're going to dig canals." When I came to work for the Bureau of Reclamation, there were a lot of people who were still old line under that typical type of thinking, and it was tough, it was tough.

Many a time, you could have a meeting where your own people, you know, your own Reclamation colleagues would point at you and talk about you—against you—in an open meeting, about here are these people who are stopping us from doing our jobs. It was pretty tough back in those days, but they started leaving, and every time

one of those persons would leave, they would replace him with someone who had a more contemporary thought.

Early days was really bad. But our region was the region that helped formulate the policies, the environmental policies for the Bureau of Reclamation. And as a matter of fact, it helped formulate how NEPA would be applied throughout the government. And I think a lot of it was because of Sharpe. He was very strong, good writer, good thinker, he got his thoughts out to the environmental community, and a lot of that type of thinking was adopted. I know that a lot of policies in the Bureau of Reclamation came as a result of Phil being around. He was able to really impact the way things were done in the Bureau of Reclamation.

So I was really privileged to work for him and later, he always told me, he said, "Wayne, you're going to end up back in Washington, running this program someday." I'd say, "God, Phil, give me a break. I don't even want to be a regional environmental officer, let alone run the whole environmental program." He was right, I actually ended up back in Washington, running the whole environmental program. (laughs)

Environmental Program Has Gone Downhill since Reorganization in 1988

But there's a heck of a change between when I first started working and where we are

today. There's some unfortunate stuff in there. When we had a strong Washington Office, we had a better environmental program than I think we have today. I think it's gone down, because there's just not the control.

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. OCTOBER 22, 1993.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. OCTOBER 22, 1993.

Tape two of an interview by Brit Allan Storey with Wayne Deason on October 22, 1993.

Storey: There's no one to . . . .

Deason: There's no one to counter them and say, "Hey, you've left out a very important component of the program, of your impact statement." They just file it anyway. So there's been quite a change between when I first started and the '88 reorganization. And now it seems to me there's another change between '88 and where we are now, and it's not for the best.

Storey: You seem to be saying that this office that you were recruited for was a new office. Is that the case?

Deason: The one here?

Storey: No, the one in Lower Colorado, the Office of the Environment.

How Regional Director Edward Lundberg Recruited Phil Sharpe as Region 3's First Environmental Officer

Deason: Yeah, Phil came in . . . . There's a story behind that too. Ed Lundberg called Phil Sharpe. Phil Sharpe worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service out of Minneapolis-St. Paul. He was the director of that particular region's Fishery Management Program. Ed called him, said, "Would you like to come and work for the Bureau of Reclamation as my regional environmental officer?" And like any good-blooded Fish and Wildlife person, it was not only "no," it was "Hell, no! I'll never work for the Bureau of Reclamation."

And I actually said that at one time myself. "Work for the Bureau of Reclamation?! The Corps of Engineers?! Give me a break! They're our mortal enemies!"

Well, Ed called him again, said, "Phil, I'm traveling. I'm going from my field office to the regional office and I have to go through Minneapolis-St. Paul, can I stop off and just interview you?" And Phil said, "Oh, well, okay, yeah, come ahead. You're going to waste your time, but come ahead." Well, he was traveling and he was going from his Field Office to his head office alright, but it was from Phoenix, Arizona. He was in Phoenix, calling Phil, and Ed wanted Phil so much because of what he'd heard about him, that he went from Phoenix to Minneapolis-St. Paul to his regional office in Boulder City. (chuckles) So he picked up Phil. And Phil started with an office of just a couple of

people to assist him.

By the time I got to that office, there were probably a half-dozen of us. And I came in as a general biologist, GS-11. And I was there for about a year, I think it was, something like that, before the office got up to around fourteen, and Phil recognized that we needed to split it up, because it was getting too much for him to manage, with all the EISes we were doing, because we were really busy back in those days. So he wanted to create two branches. He had two branches: one that was environmental engineering. That was run by Wes Hirschi—he was the new person. Wes later went on to be the assistant regional director in Salt Lake City—he's retired now. And I was to be the chief of the "biological sciences and study branch"—something like that. And Wes left to become the assistant regional director, and Gary Frey took over from planning to be the head of the technical branch.

And that office today still has about the same number of people. And it's a good office, but their work program is running out too. So Phil Sharpe ran that office. The first regional environmental officer in Sacramento was a guy named Bruce Kimsey. And Phil's management style and Bruce's management style were just absolutely opposite. Phil was "get in, roll your sleeves up, tackle the problem and go for it and do good." And Bruce was, "I will provide you guidance, but don't give me any work. And I will tell you

where you're wrong. I may not necessarily tell you how you're right." Totally, totally different. Didn't work out very well, unfortunately. Well, Bruce was a very well-known environmental person, but he passed away, and he was replaced by Rod . . . . No, there was another guy before Rod Hall came in here. But anyway, the other, let's see, Pacific Northwest Region, the original one there was Dick Woodworth. He was the ex-director of Idaho Game and Fish—good person. And then Lee Denson was in what was Upper Missouri at that time. Harold Sersland was in Upper Colorado. Al Hill was in Amarillo. We had a regional office down there, and then Dick Eagan was from Kansas Game and Fish, who ran the Lower Missouri Region. And every one of those people are gone now. Most of them, they're still . . . . Let's see, only one of them has passed away—I mean, they're not that old. Only one has died, the rest are just out doing other jobs.

Storey: Gary Frey went to Western Area Power Administration?

Deason: Gary, yeah, he went to Western—ran their environmental program in Golden for several years, and then left and went to Resolution Trust to become the environmental person for Resolution Trust down in Denver. I understand that didn't work out very well, and now he's working for Argonne Labs.

Storey: Which region had the first environmental office, do you know?

One Regional Environmental Officer Was Forced to Sit at His Desk in the Hall Early in the Environmental Movement

Deason: No, I don't. I think they pretty much were all told that they will have an Environmental office, by the Commissioner [Ellis L. Armstrong]. And of the seven regions, the region that you did not want to be in at that directive, was Amarillo, Southwest Region. Al Hill, fortunately, was a good old bronc rider biologist, and he was a rodeo cowboy and a biologist—many busted bones. Good guy, though—man, he was a good guy! But his regional director [Leon W. Hill left in 1972]—I can't remember his name—did not want ANY environmental people in his region. But the commissioner said, "Thou shalt have an environmental officer, and it will be under the regional director, will report to no one but the regional director." It had to be that way—just had to be. And Al's desk and office was outside, in the hallway of his regional director, because he wouldn't give him an office. He just couldn't stand the thought of having an environmental person in his region, so he set him up in the ~~office~~ [hallway]. The old regional office down there was in a building—I think it was owned by the Johnsons, like in President [Lyndon B. Johnson] and some very influential people in Texas. So it was a highly visible office in the hallway. (laughter)

Storey: Who was that regional director?

Deason: I can't remember who that was, but he wasn't an "enlightened person," shall we say. He didn't last long. He, I think, left about the time Arleigh West left. Get rid of the regional directors who had that kind of philosophy and attitude. The last regional director down there was Gene Hines. Is that right? I think so.

Evolution of the Environmental Program in Reclamation in the Earlier Years

Storey: Tell me more about the evolution of the environmental program. Do you remember any of those meetings where people were pointing at the environmentalists?

Deason: Oh man, I remember . . . . Yeah, I do. I remember particularly the retirement party . . . . This is not one of those meetings, but it's the same thing that happened. [Someone] whom I thought, I should say, was a very good friend at the time, was retiring. He was the regional engineer or something or other, it was a long time ago, and we had a big retirement party for him. And it was in the Boulder City Park. It was a beautiful day, it wasn't too hot, because it's the desert.

Everyone showed up, the whole office, there were a couple of hundred people there. And we all passed around the gag gifts and told stories and as you do, you kind of fry the person who is retiring.

Then we gave Bob an opportunity to

say something as well. It was the last event of the day, and then everyone was going home. So he stood up there and he started reminiscing about the good old days of the Bureau of Reclamation and building dams and he said, "I could go out with my cats [Caterpillars]"—talking about his team, he directed it—"I could go out with my cat and if I wanted to put a canal through the desert, I'd just tell them to go from here to over there, and it'd be done, and there would be no questions about it, until <u>those</u> guys came in." And that's where he's pointing _____, (Storey: Pointing the finger.) "<u>those</u> guys over there." And all 200 heads (makes cranking noise) turned around and they're looking at this little bitty cluster of environmental people in the audience.

It was really funny, because there were a lot of those people in the audience who also believed the same way Bob did—"<u>those</u> guys." Back in that early time, we were "bastard children," we called ourselves, because we were considered to be turncoats by the environmental community where we came out of, and we were not accepted by the engineers who were in the organization that we went into.

So we were really a little bitty group. You had to kind of stick to yourself. It was kind of a rough time back in there. Anyway, it was interesting. But that didn't last long, and it came around. Matter of fact, the first time . . . .

Storey: When did it come around by?

Deason: Well, you know, it just started slowly, slowly leaving—just like when Bob retired, he was replaced with Wes Hirschi. Wes Hirschi later became the branch chief, engineering support branch in our environmental division. So see, we had this turnaround of guys with this different kind of thinking. So you get this person out who doesn't like to do anything for the environment, with a person who's starting to see that, "By golly, you know, we should start taking care of the environment and doing environmental things for the Bureau of Reclamation program."

So it started turning around, oh, I would say, gee, I would say around '75, in that area, it really started making big strides. Even when I took over in Washington in '83, it wasn't perfect yet, and it still isn't, but through the years, from the time I started working with the Bureau, until today, you can only take it a little bit at a time, a little bit at a time. Every year, you can see just a little bit of improvement, little bit of improvement. But over the years, that adds up to quite a bit of improvement, but it's still not total. The very first time, when I first worked for the Bureau, when Phil first brought me out, hired on, he said, "I'm going to start taking you around and introducing you to people."

And we're heading down the sidewalk and he says, "Okay, here's a guy coming down the sidewalk I want you to meet. His

name is Sten Freeland," S-T-E-N Freeland. And he is the person, he was the 230 Branch Chief, and he's the person who's responsible for water releases and studies and activities associated with the Lower Colorado River. And so he introduced me to Sten and we talked for a while and very cordial, and we left. And Sten went into the building and Phil and I continued down the sidewalk, and he stopped—Phil stopped and I stopped and he looked back to where Sten went into the building and he said, "Boy, he is changing! I'm surprised he even said anything to you. He's been one of those people that just won't have anything to do with the environment, and you represent the environment. This is a really good sign!"

So that started turning—that started turning right there with Sten. And as it turns out, Sten and I got along great. We even did some cooperative writing on some environmental reports together. And he was very helpful, very useful. Something some of these people who are smart enough to see that things were changing, back in those days, recognized it, get on with it, we have a job to do.

Bureau of Reclamation people, I look back on it, and I look at the Bureau of Reclamation people, being the type of people that if you say, "Let's get this job done," they will do it. And if you can, as a manager, supervisor, if you can convince your people that that's the important job to do, it'll get

done. And if in the middle of the stream, middle of the course, you say, "Time out! We've got to change plans. We're going to go over here and get this job done," and it's 180 degrees opposite, they're going to go over there and they're going to get this job done too, because they're really committed, dedicated, can-do people—always have been. So these people recognized that there was a change, and so they just rolled up their sleeves and changed with it—for the most part.

There are still people in the Bureau who won't change. And I've encountered some people in the elevators. It really surprises me when these are young people. I remember riding up in the elevator with—I don't even know who they were—but they were a couple of young guys, young engineers, and they were talking about having to take care of some kind of an environmental value, and it just really bugged them. And I thought, "Good grief, these guys are young! They shouldn't be thinking like this! They should have changed that kind of an attitude a long time ago." I just don't possibly see how it could have been the Bureau of Reclamation that made them think that way—they just must have had that in their upbringing. Strange. Strange.

Staffing by Reclamation for Environmental Issues

Storey: How many folks do you suppose there were, who were doing environmental work—that

was their primary responsibility, when you came to Reclamation?

Deason: Boy, that'd be hard. We had a half-dozen or so in our office. We also had a project office in Yuma, and the Arizona Projects Office, and they all did environmental type work. Yuma was two people. Arizona Projects Office was half-dozen at the most, and that was probably pretty traditional throughout the Bureau of Reclamation—small staffs to do a lot of work. Well, I should say small staffs to do the work that they thought was correct at the time.

As it turned out, going back from the days of four- or five-page full-blown environmental impact statements, they got 900, 1,000, 1,200 pages long, and that took a lot of staff. But we got up to probably a couple hundred people, bureau-wide, who were involved with NEPA in some way, either out doing field studies, or writing documents. We're less than that now, by quite a bit. I don't know where we stand right now. But as you go into a new program like NEPA, a new act, you recognize that you don't have the disciplines that you need to do what's required in NEPA. So you need to hire archaeologists, historians, botanists, and paleontologists—whatever it is you need, you have to take on that staff.

So we took on a lot of staff because of that, and it was in <u>our</u> region . . . . as a matter of fact, it was Phil Sharpe who convinced the Bureau of Reclamation that it should have an

archaeologist, and have a senior archaeologist. They were going to, at first, locate the senior archaeologist in Phoenix, because that's where the big CAP [Central Arizona Project] program was going, and there was just so much to do down there for an archaeologist. But it was again Phil who said, "No, he should be located in Denver," because that still had the service center kind of philosophy, and that senior archaeologist could go out to all the regions and service their needs and whatever it was. So Ward Weekly was hired. Do you remember Ward?

Storey: Sure. He probably came to Reclamation about '74?

Deason: Yeah, right about in there.

Storey: Most of us were hired around '74, who have CRM [cultural resources management] backgrounds.

Deason: Yeah. Yeah, he came to the Denver office, had a earring. (laughs) Back in those days, men didn't wear earrings. Ward had an earring! Great! I loved it! It was a stud. And he fit right in. He was really able to get along with the people. He was a good person—later died of colon cancer. He worked for me at that time. He was on my Denver staff when I was in Washington. Good person.

The environmental program has really changed a lot through the years, has gotten a

lot bigger, much stronger. But then there are a lot of laws that are required to take care of historical and archaeological properties.

Storey: What other areas of activity do you think of in terms of environmental issues?

Deason: Gosh, I don't know. I'm blank.

Storey: I think I'm asking the wrong question. What laws and groups of laws (Deason: That made a change . . . .) have come in over the years, that changed the nature of the environmental program for Reclamation?

Deason: Well, there are several. Probably the strongest that has come in is the Endangered Species Act. Actually, it has more clout than NEPA. NEPA says, "You will do an environmental impact statement on your projects. You will present data in a factual way so the decision-makers can make their decision whether or not to build a project, what alternative to choose, etcetera. Endangered Species Act is much stronger than NEPA. It can stop projects. People can stop projects using Endangered Species Act. It's a very, very strong Act. I always liken NEPA to being a bus. NEPA is the bus, and it drives down this road and it picks up all these other passengers, and all these other passengers are the other acts that NEPA needs to talk about in the process of being written: Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, acts that deal with wetlands, acts that deal with archaeological resources, Fish and

Wildlife Coordination Act—all these other acts that deal with environmental values, NEPA addresses and carries with it. So there are a lot of strong acts. Of course, after NEPA was passed, several of the states decided they would pass their own acts as well. California, to date, still has probably the strongest of all the state acts, of those who have state acts. It's just as strong as NEPA—in some places, even stronger. So when we write impact statements in California, we also have to take into account the standards of the state. We don't have to, but it's prudent to do that.

But the Endangered Species Act is so strong, and there's a lot of legislation even today that deals with biodiversity. And biodiversity can even be stronger if some of these bills are made law. They could even be stronger than the Endangered Species Act. I don't know where the Endangered Species Act will go. Every time it comes up for renewal it's made stronger, not weaker.

NEPA will be around for a long time. Every time someone tries to make a charge at NEPA, it's readily bashed, or squashed. If you were a congressman and some of your constituents said, "You do what you want to do, do anything you can to do away with NEPA or to do away with the Endangered Species Act," you'd be cutting your throat, because there are so many people out there who like these Acts, you just can't do it.

I remember when Reagan first came in office, Broadbent came in, Broadbent hired his people to assist him in the Washington office. Hal Furman, a young lawyer—I don't know where he came from, I don't know if it was straight from school or not—but he came in. Very bright, very bright person. He came in under Broadbent and Hal approached me one time. "Look," he said, "Reagan's a new president, we've been told that the White House wants to identify all the acts that impede progress. Why don't you put together a paper for me to do away with the Endangered Species Act? I just know we could go over there, we'll get that eliminated." And I looked at him and I thought, "Gol-lee, what have you been smoking? No way!" And it didn't take long before he dropped that idea as well. That's a very strong act. There are a lot of strong acts that we deal with.

Central Arizona Project and Other Projects Worked on While in Boulder City

Storey: What were some of the specific projects you were involved in down in Lower Colorado?

Deason: Well, the biggest activity of Lower Colorado was the Central Arizona Project. And what I did was to work with universities to get information where information was lacking. Or with Fish and Wildlife Service or the state game and fish agencies. I had a staff that actually went out and did physical research—did it as well.

So our main task was to collect the information that would go into an environmental impact statement. The other branch chief had the responsibility of taking the information we gave him and writing it into the environmental impact statement. So we collected the information and they took over from there.

At the time that I was down in Boulder City, that was in the heyday, the early stages of Central Arizona Project. It's basically built out now, but boy, it was really busy down there. All the projects associated with C-A-P we dealt with. What were there? Five, seven dams? Something like that. Several of them have been eliminated, which was for good reason, but most of them have been built out. Canals built. The Project is so old now they've even had to go back in and O&M the canals (chuckles). So that was a while back.

Did a lot of work along the river. Colorado River front work and levee system. There were a lot of meanders, oxbows in the river, that our engineers wanted to take and straighten out, make into a straighter shoot to get the water through faster. A lot of problems with that, as you can imagine, because in the desert you don't have very much vegetation; what vegetation you do have is associated with riverways and waterways. And if you go down and talk about straightening out rivers, you're going to impact the vegetation that's there, so a lot of

people were very much opposed to the work that we were talking about doing, as well as the biologists—we didn't want to do it either.

Storey: What kind of studies did you do?

Deason: I was the Bureau of Reclamation's token microbiologist. And my particular work involved things that dealt with microbiology: collecting water samples for microanalysis to see what kind of organisms were there around swimming beaches or wherever you needed microbiological analyses.

I was even farmed-out to Denver one time on the Fry-Ark [Fryingpan-Arkansas] Project when they were building the Twin Lakes pumping-storage facility. The water was funny-colored, the bottom was funny-colored. They thought it probably could be due to some kind of microbial action. So they hired me to come up and spend several weeks up doing water analyses. And it was, there was a lot of ferrocasillas [phonetic spelling] in there, which are organisms that can take steel and eat right through it in a quick period of time. So as a result of my studies, they changed a lot of the piping from steel to PVC.

So I was the Bureau's token microbiologist. [I] had a research trailer set up at the Parker Dam yard. [I] spent a lot of time collecting water samples in the Lake Havasu area for just water quality, the water as it passes going on down to Yuma, as well

as water quality that goes from the Colorado River, the Bill Williams Arm, up into the yet-to-be-constructed tunnel that would take water from the Colorado River and pump it into Phoenix.

Storey: Any other projects?

Deason: All over the region: Virgin River.

Storey: What was going on with the Virgin River?

Deason: Well, that was the time when [we] were talking about building a dam across the Virgin River. That was the old Dixie Project. We had a Dixie Project Office, located in St. George, Utah. The problem with the dam was that it would impact a little fish, the woundfin [phonetic spelling]. Woundfin was one of these endemic fishes, been around for ever and ever. The dam would flatten the water out, would take the silt out, that these fish required, and change the habitat to a point where it probably would cause the extinction of the fish.

We also found some very rare snails that were in some of the pools by the Virgin River. So it was really environmental issues, environmental problems, that caused it—primarily the woundfin. I know they're still talking about doing some kind of a Virgin River Project. I'm not sure what it is, even to what scale. But I'm sure it's not the one we were talking about a long time ago, because the woundfin is still there.

Storey: Any others?

Makes Arrangements for Float Trip Through Grand Canyon to Develop Interagency Cooperation

Deason: Ohhh, did work in the Grand Canyon. I used to do a lot of coordination even in the region—basically what my job is today. I remember putting together the first float trip down the Grand Canyon where we decided to get together the senior people from Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, regional directors from both the Upper Basin and Lower Basin regions, state game and fish directors, and just stick a boat in the water and float down it for about seven, eight days, nine days, ten days, something like that, and just talk about where each one of our organizations were going, how we could cooperate and help each other. Boy, that was a great trip! Great trip.

Manny Lopez, who was the regional director I mentioned a while ago, at that time . . . . I remember going through Marble Canyon, which is very polished—very polished, steep, steep walls.

That was where we were going to put a dam one time. You can still see where they had gone in and done the drilling to check the quality of the rocks so they could butt a dam up against the canyon. And it was the dam that . . . . Was it Sierra Club? I guess it was the Sierra Club, long time ago, took a big

stance about building any more dams in the Grand Canyon. And it was the Marble Canyon site that the big fight was over. And we're floating through there, and it's just as quiet as it can be. And Manny, who is a real outdoorsman and a hiker, and he loves to hike, and he's hiked the rim of the canyon quite a few times—this is the first time he'd seen it from underneath, from the river side. He's looking up at that and, "My gosh," he says, "how could anyone ever want to put a dam in this beautiful canyon?!" (chuckles)

For a regional director of the Bureau of Reclamation to say that! I mean, that's all they ever wanted to do, was dam rivers. He was quite an enlightened person. Of course, that never happened. No dam was ever built there—doubt if it ever will be, certainly hope not.

Storey: Did you do any projects that weren't NEPA related?

Deason: A little environmental education. Used to go talk to schools, show slides, did talks for Park Service—a lot of community service. We did a lot of community service. The things that we were interested in were environmental things, and a lot of people have an interest in environmental things. They want to see pictures of flowers, deer, fish, and all this; and they want to have a person who is knowledgeable on these subjects to talk to them about it. So we used to go around and do quite a few talks to schools and Rotary and

churches and you-name-it, who'd request someone from the Bureau of Reclamation to come and give them talks, and to try to educate them. So we did quite a bit of public service.

I can't think of anything more. Our job was really environment, environmental impact statements, and we were really busy. I mean, that was a time when our office was producing three or four EISes at the same time—big ones, major, major dams. And we don't do that today.

Storey: How long would it take you to produce an environmental statement from beginning to end?

Deason: Oh boy. Depending on the complexity of it, depending on how much data were available, it would take . . .

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. OCTOBER 22, 1993.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 2, TAPE 2. OCTOBER 22, 1993.

Deason: . . . a year-and-a-half. Lots of scoping issues. We had to get out and talk to the public—which we still do. I don't know if scoping is any more difficult today than it was back there, but a lot of people were very concerned about what we were doing with the environment. That's when the environmental movement was really coming on.

Obviously, NEPA was passed. Today, if someone would introduce a bill like NEPA,

I doubt if it would get passed, because it has so many teeth in it. It would just be very difficult to do. But it got passed back then, so there was a real strong environmental movement. So everything the Bureau of Reclamation did was under scrutiny, as it should be, and it still is today. That hasn't changed. (Storey: Uh-huh.) That hasn't changed at all. But we just had bigger projects.

That was back in the days when you were building dams. Today, we're digging canals—we're not building dams today. So you see a lot more people—you saw a lot more people, a lot more activity associated with your meetings, your public hearings, because you were building such big projects and it had such a major impact on the environment. And people were concerned about the environment.

Storey: Well, I'd like to keep on, but it's almost twelve. Time does fly!

Deason: It is twelve!

Storey: There are a lot of things I'd like to talk to you about later, and maybe we can do a second interview. (Deason: Yeah.) In the meantime, I'd like to ask you if it's alright to open the tapes and transcripts from this interview for research by Reclamation employees and people from outside Reclamation.

Deason: I've always gotten myself in trouble, why stop

now? Yeah, you can do that.

Storey: Okay, thank you.

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 2. OCTOBER 22, 1993.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. FEBRUARY 8, 1994.

This is Brit Storey interviewing Wayne Deason on February 8, 1994, at about one o'clock in the afternoon, in Building 67 of the Denver Federal Center. This is tape one.

Would Environmental Laws Pass Now (1994) If Proposed?

Storey: Wayne, last time, we were discussing the differences between the environmental movement when it started up—like NEPA and those sorts of things—and now. I think you had just commented that you felt that a lot of the legislation wouldn't pass nowadays, because they would understand the implications of it better. Would you like to add anything to that discussion?

Deason: Well, I still have that belief. I think the congressional leaders of today would look at what's going on in the United States: the fact that the Endangered Species Act and NEPA compliance, and all the other acts that are associated with NEPA are so strong that it has a tendency to impede progress. I think that's what the leaders would say. We in the environmental area, we don't totally agree with that, because we think we can't get along without all the other species that are here on Earth right along with us. We're one of those

species, and by protecting other species, we're protecting ourselves.

But, at the same time, some of these strong laws do have problems, do cause problems. I think the perfect example of that is, we have just gone through the fires of Los Angeles this last year, '93, and one particular area was in kangaroo rat habitat. The kangaroo rat in California is an endangered species, so the residents who had built houses in this particular area wanted to put firebreaks in the areas around their houses, but because the kangaroo rat habitat was there, they were not allowed to do that. And as a result, when we had the big fires, it just wiped all those houses out. So you can see situations like that where Endangered Species has caused some kind of harm. When we look at the spotted owl situation, where we're talking about the existence of an owl or the existence of hundreds of jobs for timber people in the Pacific Northwest.

So today we're more keenly aware of the fact that our economy is not what it used to be back in 1970 as well. So when you add all these factors up, it would just be more difficult today to pass laws that had such strong teeth in it.

Storey: What about special applications to Reclamation? For instance, maybe an anadromous fish on the Columbia and those sorts of things.

Deason: We're starting to pay the price for the affluence of the Bureau of Reclamation as well. It's not just the Pacific Northwest, but it's practically everywhere we have operating projects. At one time we were constructing and building like crazy all over the West, for the betterment of our society—that's what society wanted.

Today the societal boundaries have changed to such a degree that they're seeing that it's more important, or at least as important, to have other benefits associated with water than just the dams to irrigate crops. And a lot of these are subsidized crops at that. Pacific Northwest: of course the Grand Coulee Dam is a Bureau Dam, and it's the dam way up the ~~Snake~~ [Columbia] River, and it impedes the migration of the salmon. It's the last barrier. No salmon can go above that dam, because it was built in the late 30s and it had no fish ~~barriers~~ [ladders], no provisions for being able to bypass fish so that they could go on. Of course many dams have been built since then—some with fish ladders, fish escapement devices, but never have been really successful. And now we've got species that are being eliminated because they can't spawn.

And so we're having to take a look at how can we go back and retrofit, if it's at all possible, the dams to allow these species to reproduce themselves. And it's causing a real heartache. People who control the dams on the river are having to go back in and juggle

figures and see how they can release 500,000 acre feet of water during the spawning season to take care of these critters. And of course that's because of the Endangered Species Act. We didn't take care of those back in the days when the dams were built, so we're having to pay the price today.

And today they also recognize that there's a monetary value to the species that's in question, and here it's the salmon. You've got five or six species of salmon that are really being wiped out. And they bring in a very high economic value. They provide jobs for fishermen, the fish are shipped out of the United States and all over the world because of the value of the meat. I'm not sure what they're running today, but close to six dollars a pound for a chunk of salmon. And when you have millions of salmon, that's a lot of money. But of course the salmon are dying because they can't go up and spawn.

We have the same situation on just about every project that the Bureau of Reclamation operates. It's either releasing enough water below the dams or the canal structures to provide habitat for fish or wildlife, or for just vegetation purposes by itself. Vegetation is important. And recreation benefits. So we're having to go back in and reanalyze well after the facilities have been constructed and in operation, to find out how we can take care of what's important to America today.

How Are Environmental Issues Going to Play out Against Water Rights Law?

Storey: I know Commissioner Beard is quite interested in a lot of these issues also. (Deason: Yeah.) But it seems as if there's a fundamental conflict with western water right law. What do you see going on in this area?

Deason: Well, Beard, first of all, he is concerned about it. I don't call him an environmentalist—what I do say though, is he recognizes that there's more value to water than just what we've used water for in the past. And he also recognizes that when those laws were established, it was at a time when we thought we had plenty of water, we would never run out of water. And now we know that we are running out of water.

The laws that were developed in those days, prior appropriation and riparian laws—to me, anyway, they don't seem to fit in today's standards. And something's going to have to happen where these states are going to have to get together and come up with some new laws on how to deal with who gets what water, and the beneficial values of the water.

We're going to be in a situation where it's going to be years and years before these things are resolved, water law issue is going to be resolved. And how is it going to be resolved? I don't have any idea. Now that we are so many hundreds of years—or not in the

hundreds of years, but close to it—down the road, based on the old laws, we're finding that they're not working by today's standards. So we have to go back in and change them. Well, you're going to change them, and some state's going to benefit, some state's not going to benefit. So the state that doesn't benefit is going to be very strong, very vocal, against having the laws changed.

And ~~I don't know how it's going to end up.~~ I honestly don't know how it's going to end up. It's going to be one heck of a struggle, and it's going to have to be something that takes place. It's just got to take place, we've got to change our laws.

Storey: Are there any other environmental issues that are particularly important to Reclamation right now that you're aware of?

Effects of Wetlands Destruction

Deason: Yeah, I think—I don't know if it's an environmental issue, but I know some things we need to do. We've helped [development] by removing a lot of wetlands throughout the U.S. There are very definite things that we could do to go back in and help restore those wetlands. That's fish and wildlife habitat. We destroyed a lot of habitat in the West. There are places where we have created it, but we've also destroyed more than we've created. And I know under this commissioner, one of the things that he would like to do is to be able to go back in and look at our projects,

each one of our operating projects, and determine what we need to do by today's standards in order to improve the existing conditions. We've got to take into account the fact that we've got contracts with a lot of people, but we can take care of those contracts and at the same time recognize that there are other uses for that water and try to do something about that.

Habitat is one of the key issues that I think is going to be facing the Bureau—if it's not already facing it. We've destroyed so much habitat that's going to take us a long time to put it back. But we've got to make also the conscious decision that we're going to put it back. Beard has really started doing that. I think Underwood, before Beard, recognized that we needed to do something, but he just didn't seem to make the decisions to go out and do it, because he was pretty much tied-in to the old water community. I think as long as we have people tied into the water community, the old water community, we're just not going to have the change that's needed. Beard is willing to stick his neck on the line to make those changes. And I don't know how long Beard is going to be around, but I'm certain the next commissioner who comes in—be he Democrat or Republican—be she Democrat or Republican—they're going to have to be cognizant of what's going on as well, as far as destruction and demise of habitat is concerned. They're going to have to go in and do something about it. It's going to be a matter of getting together with the water

districts too, because we're not going to be able to do it by ourselves.

A lot of water districts are recognizing that they also have helped and caused the problem, and they're willing to do something about it too. So it's a matter of getting the Federal government together with the private industry, the non-governmental organizations, and come to some kind of a compromise on what's needed to go back in and rebuild some of the things that were taken away in the past.

Storey: The problem focuses on the fact that among the best habitat in the West is the riverine habitat? Is that it? And of course that's where we do our work, for the major part.

Deason: That's true. You go to the eastern states, or the southern states where they've got lots of rain every year—forty inches or so of rain—lots of big rivers. Well, out here in the West, we don't have the luxury of all that vegetation. And what vegetation we did have, we changed it by a great deal, on rip-rapping our canals, our river banks, and removing vegetation.

We had to get rid of the vegetation so we could have the water. And now (chuckles) we're finding we need to go back in and put the vegetation there, because without the vegetation you don't have the species, and species are an important element of the West as well.

Storey: Are you aware of any projects Reclamation is engaged in to restore habitat?

Reclamation Projects to Restore Habitat

Deason: Yeah. As a matter of fact we are members of the joint venture, which is the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, which is being run by the Fish and Wildlife Service. That is an effort to try to restore duck populations back to what they were in the 50s. Tremendous decline in the species and numbers of ducks, and that's directly associated with the loss of habitat—primarily wetland habitat. So we're working with them, as well as on our own lands, to try to, in certain areas where we can, restore wetland habitat for ducks.

We're working with other organizations such as National Audubon Society, to look at restoring habitat for neotropical migrants, the songbirds. We've taken a lot of prairie farmland and what we're trying to do now is convert it back to native prairie, and hope to restore some of the neotropical migrant habitat to what it was in its former days. I don't know if we'll ever be able to do it totally, but we'll certainly make some kind of an impact. And it's projects like that that really show that the Bureau of Reclamation is concerned about loss of habitat, and is willing to do something about it.

We're active supporters and members

of the Partners in Flight program, which is a program that looks at nothing but the problem of the demise of neotropical migrants. And it is big, and the disappearance of these birds, all of our songbirds, millions and millions a year, is the result of the loss of habitat. And so we're trying to do something about that.

It's not just the birds: we're also working with improving aquatic habitat for fish—endangered species, primarily. I think it's the endangered species that really makes us go out and look and see what things we can do, because we know that the Endangered Species Act is so powerful that if we don't do it ourselves, we'll probably be forced to. I think today we have enough people in the Bureau that recognize the importance of endangered species that are doing it for humanitarian reasons, rather than being forced to do it.

Storey: Of course it isn't just from this end, for instance, for the neotropical birds. It's all aspects of the migration path.

Deason: That's right. So we've got people—not in the Bureau of Reclamation—but we're a member of the Partners in Flight program, and in that regard we have members in Latin American countries trying to work with those folks and teach them what they need to do to preserve habitat in their countries as well—Caribbean and Mexico—and then the birds will fly up through, over the Caribbean, primarily, and then they'll spread out throughout the United

States. And when they get to the United States, they need some habitat, and there's not very much habitat there any more.

So what we're trying to do is work with all of our partners, and there are a lot of partners in the Partners in Flight program who are concerned about the disappearance of those birds and are trying to develop habitat and do what they can to restore the habitat to conditions that was close to what it used to be. We realize that we'll never be there, but we've got to do something more to improve the habitat conditions that we have today.

Storey: Are you aware of any partnerships with our traditional constituents, the water districts, the irrigation districts?

Deason: Yeah. As a matter of fact, we're even working with some districts now—I would say progressive districts—who recognize the value of habitat as well. And they look at it from a different point of view.

They certainly recognize that having a nice wetland will create good habitat for ducks and/or other organisms. But they also know that a good wetland will take dirty water and clean it. And they'll be able to use that clean water, while at the same time they've developed this important wetland habitat. So it's a win-win situation, and we're finding that more irrigation companies/districts are looking at this type of problem-solver than they ever have been

before. I think they recognize that they've got to do something as well, that if they don't do anything, that there's going to be a vocal majority that's going to force them to do something. So the progressive districts are stepping out, starting to take the lead on this.

Storey: What are some of those progressive districts?

Deason: You recall John Crossman, who used to work for me? (Storey: Yeah!) He left me and went to work for Eastern Municipal Water District, which is outside Hemet, California. And I would say that of the progressive water districts, that is the most progressive I've seen. They're willing to cough up millions of dollars of their own money to take a very large area and design and develop a large wetland complex to clean water.

It provides a unique habitat for the critters that are there, and it also provides a mechanism of then being able to use clean water. And they cycle this water all the time. They have water going out to irrigate crops and going to various businesses, and water that comes back then, is not clean water, but it goes to the wetland and it's helped cleaned up by that. As a matter of fact, they've been working on this for about three years. And I was just talking with John Crossman this morning, and he said that next week is a dedication on the opening of this brand new wetland. They've just completed the thing, so they're pretty excited about that.

And then there are other districts looking at ways that they can help improve the situation. But then there are other districts who are saying, "Don't even talk to me about doing anything environmental." They're scared to death that someone's going to go on their districts and recognize a problem and cause a problem, for them, that they don't want to deal with. There are a lot of those folks.

Storey: A lot of that, I think, has to do with personalities. You get the right mix of personalities in a group. Is there a mix, besides John Crossman, for instance, in his district, that is doing this? (Deason: Yeah.) Do you happen to know names?

Deason: I could tell you some first names, but that's not going to do you any good. I'm trying to remember John's boss who is the General Manager for Eastern. . . . Andy Salangi. He's an older engineer, comes out of the old engineering school, but yet he recognizes that things have got to change. And it was a combination of getting Andy and John together that they started toying with this idea about what they could do to improve the situation. And Andy is progressive enough that he recognizes that something has to be done. And of course John, he's a pusher for the environment, and he wants to get something done too. So as a result of them working together, putting their various people, resources, together, they came up with this plan.

And inside the Bureau of Reclamation, we worked with them here for a while. There were people from the Bureau who weren't too enamored by it, because it took away from . . . . (chuckles) It smacked of being "too liberal," let's put it that way. It wasn't traditional Reclamation planning. But nevertheless, the job got done. And as long as we have people like Andy who is "old line," yet progressive, we'll be able to do more. And there are a lot of other good people out there who want to do something.

Storey: Is Eastern a very traditional water user? They supply irrigation? I heard you mentioned businesses. (Deason: Yeah.) Are they urban also? (Deason: Yeah, urban.) Is that feeding into their concerns here?

Deason: Yeah, it is. I don't have any papers of land that they actually supply water to. I know that, when I was talking about the kangaroo rat issue a while ago, they lost 23,000 acres of area that they supply water to, because of that fire. And I know that they were running out of water. They only have a limited amount of water that they can supply. So they're kind of forced into the situation of, "Where can we get more water? We've got a lot of dirty water, we need to get more clean water. Well, let's clean it ourselves! Well, how can we do it?"

Well, John Crossman came on the scene and they started talking about wetlands and the fact that you can get a lot of clean

water out of wetlands, while at the same time providing habitat. So that just clicked with them, and they opened their eyes and said, "Man, this is great!" So it was Andy and his group that went back to Washington and lobbied pretty strong to get some federal funds to get this thing started, and then they picked it up and took it. And there are people like that, all over the West—it's just a matter of finding them.

And I think that in this day and age when the Bureau is really declining, we have a lot less money than we used to. I think the other water districts, servicing districts, are going to realize that the only way they're going to get water is to take what they have and protect it, clean it, take better care of it, monitor it, guard it. They're not going to be able to go out and just dump it on the land willy-nilly, they've got to be able to take what they can. It's a precious resource, and I think they're recognizing that they've got to protect it.

Storey: Water conservation, I guess, is different than environmental concerns. Is that right?

Water Conservation Makes Water Available for New Uses

Deason: Well, it is. They're separate, yet they fit together very well. Our commissioner's number one priority, Dan Beard's number one priority, is water conservation. Well, you can conserve water, a great deal of water, by

doing any number of mechanisms.

At the same time, once you conserve that water, you can also do other things with it, once the water gets conserved. And what the commissioner says is, “Let's don't waste all this water growing subsidized crops when we have other uses of the water, such as in-stream flow needs, and we can provide it for fish, we can provide it to municipalities, we can sell it and actually make a profit on it and the money goes back into the treasury.” As it is right now, we've designed all these canals, all these districts are designed for a certain amount of irrigation and a certain amount of drainage. But they're based on the state-of-the-art at the time that they were designed, and at a time when there was a plentiful supply of water.

Now we're at the point where we're running out of water. It's being recognized worldwide that the world is running out of [fresh]water, so we've got to do something with it. I guess we need to be a good example for the world. If we can clean up our water and take care of our situation, then the rest of the world should too.

Beard, when he came into office, was highly opposed to organizations such as the U.S. Committee on Irrigation and Drainage, the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage, International Commission on Large Dams, and all these things that were associated with building dams and providing

water, because of the way that he saw them operate in the past. And I think now he's getting his eyes opened to the fact that some of these old-line, traditional, professional organizations have really come about themselves.

He's very interested now in being able to provide a service to countries ~~who are~~ trying to develop a higher standard of living. He recognizes that the Bureau of Reclamation has done a lot in the past, but in doing a lot in the past, they've made a lot of mistakes. And as the commissioner, he's willing to go out and say to these countries who want to develop their resources, "Look, folks, we are the world's pre-eminent dam-building organization, and in doing that, we've made a lot of mistakes. We would like to be able to help you in planning and designing for your future, but let us also show you our past errors so that you don't make those too. And that way you'll be able to conserve your water as well." So he's coming along.

Storey: So water conservation is one of the ways that we can find, in effect, "new" water for environmental purposes, and other new uses.

Deason: Sure. Most of the canals that the Bureau has are dirt-lined, and you lose a lot of water in the banks—it's just lost. And if you can go back into these very large canals, such as the All-American Canal in ~~Arizona,~~ California and line those canals, you conserve hundreds of thousands of gallons of water that could be

put to beneficial uses somewhere else. If it's not put to use, then don't use it at all—hold it behind the dam that's being used to store that water.

Storey: I was surprised the first time I looked at statistics and saw that you often lose fifty percent of your water before it gets delivered.

Deason: A lot. A major amount of loss, just behind dams—an incredible amount of loss. But at the same time, you look at these earth-lined canals, and they do lose a lot of water—a lot of them seep. At lot of the seepage has provided ponds and pools of water outside the area of the canal, where it was always dry in the past. And now, we've developed wetlands. (laughs) Some of those wetlands have endangered species. So you're now faced with a problem. It's certainly a solvable problem, because if you line the canal, you need to keep water along the side of some of these areas for endangered species, you can always put some kind of turnout—which we have done, to provide water for these wetlands. And you still have a great savings of water.

Storey: Can we take a little break?

Deason: Yeah. (tape turned off and on)

Variations in Regional Treatment of Environmental Issues

Storey: As we mentioned earlier, different

personalities and mixes of people have different effects on programs. Could you characterize the way the regions are dealing with environmental issues? Is there a lot of variation? And if so, why do you think it varies that way?

Deason: Now I'm talking with a lozenge in my mouth! (laughs) (Storey: Uh-huh.) Yeah, the regions are quite different. Roger Patterson, who is the regional director in Mid-Pacific in Sacramento always wanted to be known as the Bureau's environmental regional director. And he was always willing to step out and do things that other regional directors weren't willing to do. I think a lot of it was because of his age. He's our youngest regional director. I'm not even sure he's an engineer—maybe he is, but he just seems to come from a different school than most of the traditional, old-line, Bureau of Reclamation engineers. When he was the regional director of Great Plains Region up in Billings, that's where he really took the lead on doing things for the environment.

He brought along with him a person named Neil Stessman, who is <u>now</u> the regional director in Great Plains. Roger, as I say, is now the Mid-Pacific regional director. But, by bringing Neil in, I think he's done a good job, because Neil was, what I would at one time consider one of the old-line Bureau of Reclamation engineers. [As a] project manager, the job was to go out and build the project and that was it—didn't care about the

environment. But now Neil, seeing Roger's wisdom, I guess, has also wanted to become known as the Bureau of Reclamation environmental regional director. So there's competition between Neil in Great Plains and Roger in Mid-Pacific, as to who's going to be the environmental regional director. I think that's kind of funny.

John Keys, who's a regional director in the Pacific Northwest Region has been pretty much a traditional regional director, as far as water interests are concerned. He seems to be more concerned about doing what has been done in the past, though he does have a good mix of some really significant fishery development issues in his region. He's done a very good job on it. But there's still . . . . It's really kind of funny to see him taking the side of the traditional irrigator, as opposed to environment, in some areas. And in other areas, he'll take the side of the environment. I'm not sure where he stands in the eyes of this present administration with Dan Beard. That's yet to be seen. I get along with John very well, and I do with Roger and Neil.

We just lost the regional director in the northern Colorado [River] region (officially the Upper Colorado Region). That was Roland Robison. And Roland was . . . . well, he was at one time the state director for BLM [Bureau of Land Management] in Utah, and a solicitor—he's a lawyer by training. And while he was a real good guy, of all the

regions, the five regions that we have, I thought his was the weakest as far as environment was concerned. It wasn't that because he didn't have good people—he had real good people who wanted to do some real significant things for environmental purposes. He just didn't take the leadership in turning his region into an environmental region—which was unfortunate.

Boulder City, Nevada—Lower Colorado Region—is being run by Bob Towles. Bob's been in that position for, oh, a couple of years now. I've got no real problems with Bob. I had Bob on some teams that I've run in the past. He's a real doer. He's, I think, a real good public servant, recognizing that when every administration comes to power, they're going to have a different agenda than the past administration. Being a good public servant, you're going to do what the administration that's in power wants you to do. He has some good people, he has some good programs. He's done some good work with endangered species. He's got a lot of problems. Because of a lot of past sins that have taken place in that region, he's got a lot of problems to deal with, but he seems to be up to doing it. I don't know how long he'll be there—he's well beyond retirement age. I think he has forty years, and he's in his sixties. Real good guy. He's told Beard that, "I'll be around and doing this job for you as long as you want. If you want me to leave and replace me with one of your own people, that's fine." He'll be just there until

the new commissioner wants to move on to some other line of management.

I guess that covers the regions . . . .

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. FEBRUARY 8, 1994.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. FEBRUARY 8, 1994.

Rephotographing Project on the Colorado River

Storey: . . . some more. And that's where you started, I believe, with Reclamation. (Deason: Uh-huh.) You once told me about a project, studying photographs of the river. What were you trying to do there? What was the project about?

Deason: Back in the early days of NEPA compliance, as far as that goes, we had a regional environmental officer there named Phil Sharpe. And I worked for Phil when I was a graduate student, and Phil was the Project Manager for the Yellowstone Fisheries Management Project with the Fish and Wildlife Service, and he picked me up as a crew chief. And then I graduated, left. Phil left Fish and Wildlife Service and went to work for the Bureau of Reclamation in the [Lower] ~~Upper~~ Colorado Region, as the regional environmental officer, and they <u>really</u> got a jewel when they did that. And then Phil picked <u>me</u> up, because he knew I wanted to get out of the place I was working in St. Louis, and he hired me to become his general biologist, heading up a branch under him.

And what we did in my branch was to look at the data that we had available to us as we'd write impact statements, and if we didn't have enough, it was my job to go out and get it, and then we put it into impact statements. Phil came up with the idea of doing an intensive survey: vegetation, history, the biota of the lower Colorado River from Hoover Dam down to the Mexican border—very progressive thinking. It involved a lot of people. [We] contracted with Arizona State University in Phoenix, primarily with a guy named Dr. Bob Omar, who ran the program. And one of the things that I was involved with, with Bob, was looking at historical photographs, and seeing what was there back in the 1800s and early 1900s before Bureau of Reclamation's presence on the river; and then comparing it with what "damage," if you will, had been done to date. And of course that was in the 70s.

And so we traveled all up and down the river, many, many times, carrying these old photographs with us. And we traveled coast-to-coast and country-to-country, I'll tell you, to get those photographs, to acquire those photographs. And we would go and we would try to stand in the footsteps of the person who took those photographs back in 1900 or whenever it was, so we could make good comparison photographs. So that was the study that we did, and it was a great study. All those photographs are now in the Arizona State University archives, located in Phoenix.

Storey: I think the last time I talked to you about this, you were concerned about where the data had gone.

Deason: Yeah, I think most of it did end up with Bob. I know that he's used it in any number of publications. The photographs themselves were the things that I was really concerned about. I still maintain a box of some photographs here in this building. I need to do something with them, but I don't know what, but I know the complete set is down at Arizona State. But they're prize photographs, really prize photographs, took a long time to do.

Storey: What did you learn?

Deason: Well, we learned that there were a lot of places along the lower Colorado River that we really eliminated habitat. We could show it very easily. But we also showed that there were places along the Colorado River today that have wetlands that at one time didn't. And when people would come to us, such as game and fish departments or Fish and Wildlife Service or something and said, "Your dams have caused major problems in this particular area," we were able to whip out the pictures and show them that, well, we either did or we didn't. And a lot of times, we didn't.

So it was just good to have good baseline knowledge about what happened down there. We used aerial photographs, as

well as very old photographs taken by some highly reputable people—used their reports and we'd publish those in various articles in various journals.

Storey: Did you do any other major studies like that? Were you involved in anything like that anywhere else?

Deason: Well, yeah. We were able to continue that—not just at Hoover Dam, but above Hoover Dam as well. We started some early studies to see what kind of impacts the creation of Glen Canyon Dam had on the river. And so we hired some different people—I wasn't involved with this—but to take the historical development or change of the river from Hoover Dam on up to Glen Canyon Dam. And we were able to show some real significant changes there.

Of course a lot of that led to a lot of people looking at how Glen Canyon Dam did radically change the environment below that dam. And today, as you may or may not know, we have an EIS that's out on the street looking at how we're going to operate Glen Canyon Dam to try to ameliorate the effects of Glen Canyon Dam on the river. Recreation's impacted, vegetation's impacted, all forms of wildlife are impacted. Of course the fish are very much impacted. The dams on the river have eliminated some species—there's no question of that, and we recognize that. But we also have some species that are in trouble that we'd like to be

able to work on to not have them die out—several fish species, in particular, and a few bird species. So we're trying to do what we can to find out the damages that we've done and to see if there's a way we can take care of those damages and take care of the problems.

It's a real interesting dilemma, because we are working with organizations that want to protect the fishery, the trout fishery, the sport fishery, which is non-native. And we have organizations that say, "Nope, we don't care about the non-native species, we want you to work only with the native species." And we have organizations that say, "We only want recreation use in this canyon for so many days." And we have other people that say, "No, we're recreationists, we've got to have this, we've got to have it changed. It needs to be much longer than it is now." We've got people who want to do nothing but oar through the canyon with their boats, and others that say, "No, we don't care if it's oars or if it's motors." So it's really a conflict down there. We've got the very strong Native American interests that are down there. A lot of that river bottom is owned by the Park Service which is holding it in trust with the Indian tribes, or it is Indian tribal land and they have their own, very definite, feelings about how we should be operating Glen Canyon Dam to take care of their interests. At the same time, the Park Service is saying, "No, no, no, we need it for our interests." So it's a big, big problem, and it's taken a couple

of years to get to where we are now—about three years to get . . . . No, it's more than that—probably maybe five years, so it's been about six years just getting to where we are now, to get an EIS out on the street.

Storey: Because of the multiplicity of public interests?

Deason: Yeah, very much so. And that's not unusual. We have the Arkansas River here in Colorado. The trout fishermen want releases to be held fairly low during the spawning time of the year, and the recreationists want it high because they want to put their boats in the water and go through it. So we've got all these balances. At the same time, we've got irrigators downstream who want the water as well for their crops—but they don't want it released too early or too late, they want it just right. So you've got all these various interests who want something from us, and we're just right here in the middle, trying to take care of everyone's concerns. It's <u>really</u> difficult.

Storey: Would you characterize it as a no-win situation for Reclamation?

Deason: No, I don't. And the reason I say that is because we've shown in the past that we can make it. We're the Federal organization that should be able to solve the problems of the public. That's what we should be doing. And we've seen in the past where we've been able to do that. It's just that some challenges are greater than others. And some of these

challenges (chuckles), I don't know how we're going to get out of! or how we're going to make them any better. But we're doing what we can, as we can.

But we've had some real successes in the past where we've had releases that were so low that they weren't doing the fish any good. And we've had a lot of people say, "Let's change those." We've had farmers who say, "Don't change them because we need the water." And through the process of getting everyone around the table, negotiating, finding out what everyone's interests and their needs were, we've been able to resolve a lot of issues that a lot of people thought would not be resolved. And that's a continuing thing. We're doing it all over the Reclamation West now, and I'm sure that we'll continue to do so.

Reclamation Compliance with NEPA over the Years

Storey: You mentioned earlier that your lower Colorado study was triggered by NEPA and your need to have baseline data. Let's talk for a little while about Reclamation and NEPA compliance. How would you characterize the history of Reclamation's approach to NEPA compliance from '69 on?

Deason: Well, when we first started, we started just like everyone else did. We were a construction organization like the Corps of Engineers. BLM had construction to do, Fish & Wildlife Service had construction to do, a

lot of people had construction to do, and they were all faced with this law. And because it was so new, no one knew how to deal with it. So everyone was tackling it by themselves. And the Bureau of Reclamation in the early days, I can remember seeing full-blown impact statements that were five, six, seven pages long. And we said, "No, no, no, no, this is not right. You can't fully describe what's going to happen to an environmental situation in just that few pages." And other organizations were finding the same thing.

So as NEPA developed, as the Council on Environmental Quality became stronger and started putting out better guidance on what was needed, the degree to which people wrote the EISes changed radically. It got to a point where it was changing so radically that it would be nothing to see an EIS that would be volumes—hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of pages.

Well, an EIS is a document that's supposed to be written so that people can look at it, read it, and come to some kind of a determination on the impact that a particular project will have on the environment. When you had a thousand-page document, and you gave it to someone—particularly a private citizen—and said, "You've got thirty days to review this and get your comments back to us." Well, these people have jobs, and they have a life after a job too. They don't want to spend all their time doing that. It just got to the point where the EISes were becoming

encyclopedic.

So CEQ [Council on Environmental Quality] came out with another edict that said EISes shouldn't be any longer than 300 pages. Gosh, we didn't know how we could live with that! Our EISes were so big, we just didn't know how we could get all that information in there, in only 300 pages. Somebody forced us to do it, and as a result it became a very much more workable document, and everyone liked it a lot better. We still pretty much follow that same principle today.

In the Bureau of Reclamation we have a good program where we've had a lot of quality control. Our regional environmental officer was responsible for all the EISes that were written. Of course it was the regional director who was ultimately responsible, but the regional environmental officer was hired for that purpose. And in order for that EIS to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency, it had to go through a series of reviews. One of those review processes was a technical review in the Denver Office, and the other was a policy review back in Washington. It was during that time, those review periods, that we had the possibility of changing the documents to make them even better, and conform with the other documents that were being produced by the other regions.

So by the time the statement got back to Washington to be filed, all the statements

looked basically alike, and they also included all the information that was appropriate, because we had people who were experts in those particular areas, and knowledgeable about the projects, that when the statement was done, we absolutely made sure that all the appropriate information was in there.

During the '88 reorganization, when my office was broken up back in Washington and moved out here, we lost that piece of quality control that we don't have today, and I don't think we can get it back, because today the regional directors are responsible for doing their own NEPA compliance. It doesn't go through the Denver Office or a Washington office for review for consistency or quality. So they leave the region and they go directly back to Washington for filing with EPA. That's not bad—it's just that we don't have the quality control that we once did. We're also finding that the regions, in an effort to get a project built/completed, will do things to an EIS that they wouldn't be allowed to do in the earlier days.

Storey: With the centralized review and approval process?

Deason: Right. It's more of a—unfortunately, in some cases, it's more of a, "We have a project we want to build. Now give us the NEPA compliance that will allow us to build it the way we want to build it." Which is not the intent of NEPA. That's just the way it is today.

Storey: What is the intent of NEPA?

Deason: Well, the intent of NEPA is to make sure any government organization which his going to spend Federal taxpayer dollars, makes a full disclosure on what impacts that construction will have on the environment—and that includes all aspects of the environment. That's the intent.

Storey: And then design?

Deason: Yeah. And then, you see, what you do is, in your NEPA document, is to lay out a set of options—any number of ways that you can build a particular project, and rate those options by the degree by which the environment will be impacted, and yet have the project constructed. And what I was saying earlier, is now the options are not being considered as much as they should be.

Storey: Various alternatives.

Deason: The various alternatives, you're right. (tape turned off and on)

How the Environmental Laws Interact with One Another and NEPA

Storey: Continue on with that. (Deason: Okay.) I'm interested in exploring, Wayne, the way all of the complex of environmental laws that were passed between about '66 and about '75 or '76—how did all of those work and interreact with one another, and with NEPA?

Deason: As those laws were being developed, that's one of the reasons that the NEPA [EISes] started growing to encyclopedic proportions. We didn't have those laws, for the most part, prior to '69—a few of them we did—and we were taking care of those individually. But when NEPA came along, they said, "Let's look at everything that's out there." So later you've got endangered species, you have wetland issues, you have prime farmland issues that you've got to deal with, air quality, water quality—just a whole range—archaeological, historical, cultural resources— many things out there that NEPA forces you to take a look at.

And I don't know if I said it before, but I think I always likened NEPA to a bus. And it's just a big bus, and it opens the door, and all these other laws jump in, and the bus just carries them right on down the road. NEPA is a very powerful law in its own right, but by being tied to other laws that are also powerful, such as the Endangered Species Act, and the water quality—all these very powerful laws—make NEPA an even stronger law. So all these laws are very definitely related to NEPA, as they should be, because it's through the disclosure process that all the potential problems of the project are to come out.

Storey: And so it needs all to be covered under NEPA?

Deason: Absolutely.

Storey: Now, when you got to Washington and you began to head the office, what would you characterize the major strengths and the major weaknesses of Reclamation's environmental program as being?

Deason: Well I think probably the major strength is that there was someone in Washington who had a staff who knew the Bureau of Reclamation and knew NEPA, and we were only a phone call away from any problem that the regions were having. And we used to get—heavens, it was nothing to get phone calls personally from regional directors, wanting your own personal assistance on particular problems that they were having with some of their projects.

The staff that I had were in constant contact with the regions, and what I would do is assign my staff to a particular part of the country, and then they would deal with the issues and the problems that they were assigned to. So they had a good grasp of the geology, they had a good grasp of that portion of Reclamation, and so the first thing that the regional contact would do, when he found out that they were going to have to write an EIS, was to call the Washington Office, their contact, and say, "You ought to be aware that our regional director wants us to put together an EIS. Would you like to be on the planning team?" So the Washington people would or would not be on the planning team. But nevertheless, if they <u>were</u> on the planning team or were <u>not</u>, they were still aware of

what was going on in the regions. And they were a fully-integrated, workable component of that planning team, so that by the time the EIS got back to Washington for filing with EPA, we were well aware of the project itself. We were well aware of the expected problems, and could handle it better.

Today we don't have that kind of mechanism. I don't know really how many kind of weak points we had back there—I was in that office for quite a while—as far as I know. Maybe I'm a little jaundiced, I don't know. I thought it was just about a near-perfect office. (laughs) And I know that I had regional environmental officers tell me that that office in Washington made their jobs easier, because a lot of times they would have project managers that they would deal with who would say, "We want this EIS designed in this way, and written in this way," and the regional environmental officer would say, "No, we can't do it, because it'll be stopped back in Washington if it were, so let's do it the way I want to do it." And they'd say, "Well, I don't believe you. I'll call the office myself. So we'd get phone calls from people out in the regions who wanted to get those EISes written, and we would, for the most part, verify/substantiate what the regional environmental officers told the project officers too. So it made for a better process.

It really made a better process. Sooner or later, most everyone came to realize that we did have a good process.

There were times when I would hear about some regional director wanting to do a project that I thought was going to really cause the Bureau of Reclamation a lot of negative press, because it just didn't make sense. I could easily walk up and say, “Mr. Commissioner, you ought to be aware . . . .” And let him know that some of these projects . . . . And let him intervene, which he would certainly do. So it was nice to have the ear of the commissioner.

Storey: Now what kind of staff size are we talking, (Deason: Oh, small.) in composition?

Deason: I had three professional people work for me, and a secretary. And we covered all the Bureau's EISes. And that was back in the time when the Bureau was very active, doing a lot of construction, a lot of projects. It was nothing for each of us—and I included myself on that staff of review team—that each one of us would have three EISes that we would review on our desk at the same time. It's a lot of work.

Storey: And I've forgotten the dates when you were heading the Environmental Review Office.

Deason: Oh, February of '83 to about July of '88.

Storey: Okay. And it was a staff of three (Deason: Basically three.) and a secretary and yourself, throughout?

Deason: Uh-huh. We would pick up a temporary

employee here and there, depending on the workload, but that was pretty much it. It was pretty much the same people. As a matter of fact, when I went into that office, it was all the same people. Very very competent staff of people.

Storey: What happened to them in the reorganization in '88?

Deason: Well, Larry Roberts went over to the Office of Surface Mining, became the division director. Had a division of about 200 people under him. He's still a very high person in the government, so he's done very well for himself.

Steve Speck went into the Department at the Office of Environmental Project Review, and dealt primarily with hazardous waste materials, but since then has also been promoted.

The secretary went over to work with Federal Bank. I've lost total contact with her. I don't know what she's done. Then I was placed out here, moved out here in Denver.

Storey: Do you remember any of the big projects that came up while you were heading that office? (Deason: Oh, gee.) Especially the problem projects, or anything where it went really smoothly?

Deason: Really smoothly? Oh gee, there's so many projects I can't even think of them. A lot of

projects associated with Central Arizona Project we dealt with. But that was a Project that, although it had a lot of problems, everything went well because it was a region that was committed to doing what was right for the environment. Of course when you have big projects, there are always big problems. But nevertheless, that was a good region. Mid-Pacific [Region], projects associated with American River and the Sacramento River, always big. I can't lay my hands on something that specific.

The Commissioners and Environmental Issues

Storey: Well, instead, let's talk about people. The commissioners and . . . . Let's see, we didn't have deputies then. (Deason: No.) And the assistant commissioners with whom you dealt. Where did they come down on environmental issues? How would you characterize them?

Keith Higginson as Commissioner

Deason: When I started in Washington, before I was actually the Director of the Office of Environmental Affairs, we had Higginson. Keith Higginson was the ~~regional director~~ [commissioner]. He was by himself. He had one other political appointee with him, and that was it. So it was kind of interesting to contrast his situation with other commissioners who have come on in the past, because they generally hired several political appointees to assist them.

Keith was a traditional water person. First of all, let's take care of our constituent group. Our constituent group was, of course, water districts. Keith currently is the Director of Idaho Water Resources Department, something like that. He's a good man.

Bob Broadbent as Commissioner

Following him was Bob Broadbent. Bob came out of Boulder City, Nevada, ran the Las Vegas . . . . What was he? He was the water person in Las Vegas. There are a couple of water groups in Las Vegas. One of them was the Las Vegas Valley Water Commission, and the other one was the Lower Colorado Water something-or-other that took care of getting water out of the Colorado River and taking it to the Southern Nevada area. Anyway, he was a water person. He was very much traditional. For a person who did not have a really water background, he really took the side of the traditional water users, it seemed, more than more equitable use of water—by that, using water for other resources. Very powerful person. He came in in the Reagan administration, brought any number of people in with him. One of them was David Houston. Dave went off to be the regional director in Mid-Pacific. Not a bad regional director, but also one who was more traditional in water interests than contemporary interests.

Bob Olson as Acting Commissioner

The person who replaced Broadbent was Bob Olson. Bob Olson was an electrical engineer at the Bureau. He was not the commissioner, though he was Acting commissioner for eighteen months because after awhile Bob Broadbent was made the assistant secretary for water and science, and yet he never left the Bureau alone. (laughs) So he had two jobs, basically. He wouldn't give up the power of the Bureau. So while he was assistant secretary for water and science, he also made sure that he ran the Bureau the way that he wanted it run. And so rather than putting in a full-time Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, he made an acting person—that's Bob Olson. Bob is a good person, but . . . . Well, he wasn't a friend of the environment. I got along with Bob well, but he just wasn't really an environmental person.

Storey: Was Broadbent an environmental person?

Deason: No. No, I think I mentioned before, I'm not sure, I was the token environmentalist in our staff meetings. I think I said before that I got my definition of what humiliation was once when we were behind closed doors and we were talking about the Jones Hole Fish Hatchery which the Fish and Wildlife Service ran. It was a fish hatchery that was built for mitigation purposes and enhancement purposes for the work that was done under the Central Utah Project. And Fish and Wildlife Service had been talking about getting rid of

the hatchery, just doing away with it, in an effort to streamline funding. And the commissioner was talking about it, how we'd get rid of that as well, help them get rid of it, saying something to the effect that right now the hatchery does supply fish for mitigation, but I'm not sure we need that any more. And I piped up and I said, "Well, you know, it does provide fish for mitigation, but the law says that we also need the hatchery because it's to supply fish for enhancement purposes as well. He turned and looked at me, and said, "Wayne, enhancement is nothing more than mitigation plus one fish." Which is just one of those stories that tells you where he stands as far as the environment is concerned. I got my definition of enhancement at that particular time. We didn't get along great. I don't know, it's just one of those situations. We were friendly, but never really got along real great.

Then after Olson finally left and went to private industry, Bob Broadbent did finally get a commissioner, and that was Dale Duvall. And Dale was not an engineer, like Bob Broadbent was not an engineer. I think Dale was also a person that Bob could . . . .

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. FEBRUARY 8, 1994
BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. FEBRUARY 8, 1994.

This is tape two of Brit Storey interviewing Wayne Deason on February 8, 1994.

Storey: We were talking about Dale Duvall.

Dale Duvall as Commissioner

Deason: Yeah, and even though Dale was brought in as the commissioner, Bob Broadbent still ran the Bureau of Reclamation. But one of the things that Dale had was, since he wasn't an engineer tied to the Bureau of Reclamation or knowledge of the Bureau of Reclamation, he was able to look at the Bureau with a different set of glasses, recognizing that there are other benefits out there that we should be taking care of, other constituent groups that we should be taking care of—not just traditional water users. And he was the first commissioner that was ever able to recognize the environmental component of the Bureau of Reclamation, and was the only one who ever took an interest in doing things, <u>really</u> doing things, for the environment. It was under Dale that I was able to get our Fishery Policy for the Bureau of Reclamation put in place, and start talking, earnestly talking, to conservation and fish and wildlife groups as partners, rather than as enemies.

Dennis Underwood as Commissioner

So I hated to see Dale go. And I thought that once Dale left, we'd get another traditional engineer in place, then it would just be a step backwards for me. But we brought in Dennis Underwood. And Dennis Underwood was a noted water buffalo out of California, very protective of water resources, and I thought my days were numbered. But as it turns out, Dennis actually took Dale's

ideas a step further, wanted to partner with environmental groups, recognized that things had changed, that the Bureau was not the Bureau of the old days, but it's the Bureau of the future, and he wanted to help it grow in that particular direction, came out with his Strategic Plan, which elevated and recognized various environmental components that the Bureau just didn't want to recognize in the past: fish and wildlife, water quality, hazardous waste, wetlands, riparian values, endangered species—things that people just tried to hide or get around in the past, Dennis wanted them brought out in the open, and have our constituent groups brought in and sit down and talk with us and find out how we can better take care of these situations. So he was really a breath of fresh air.

Commissioner Underwood Is Isolated from the Staff by Senior Management

I think the problem that he had was that he allowed his senior managers to surround him. While he was telling his senior managers what he wanted done, the senior managers weren't passing it on to the troops to get it done—which was too bad. ~~Dale~~ [Dennis] left, a little disappointed that he wasn't able to get the implementation plans for his Strategic Plan done. (Storey: You mean Dennis?) I'm sorry, Dennis left, yeah. And I'm sure that he recognizes that the fault lay in the fact that he was putting too much trust in the senior managers, and the senior managers just weren't willing to invest the

time of getting those implementation plans done.

Dan Beard as Commissioner

So Dennis left, now we've got Dan Beard in. Dan comes off the Hill, very knowledgeable of the Bureau of Reclamation program—in fact, when I was in the Department Managerial Development Program in '79 and '80, back in Washington, the reason I went back to Washington, Dan was on Guy Martin's staff as his principal deputy assistant secretary. That's where I first met Dan in '79. (Storey: Under the Carter administration?) Under the Carter administration, yeah. So Dan left when there was a change of administrations, went up on the Hill, worked with George Miller, became head of the staff, and all those years, from the time he left until the time he took over as Commissioner of Reclamation, he kept up with what the commissioner was doing, because George Miller was interested in what Reclamation was doing.

So it's hard to pull any kind of wool over the eyes of Dan Beard, because he's so familiar with Bureau of Reclamation programs. Makes it real interesting. He's a Ph.D. economist by training. (Storey: He's a geographer.) Geographer?! Is that right? I thought he was an economist, well, it doesn't matter. Anyway, he's non-traditional as far as the Bureau of Reclamation is concerned. You don't dare call him “Doctor,” he doesn't like

that at all, even though he has his Ph.D. He's kind of an interesting person. He has his own mission to fulfill, and I'm not sure exactly if that's George Miller's mission or someone else's mission. But anyway, he has his own mission to fulfill, and he's going to take the Bureau of Reclamation down a road it hasn't been taken before, and we're all feeling that right now.

Storey: Is it going to be good for the environmental issues?

Deason: Oh, I think it will definitely be good for the environmental issues. You know, as I said before, I don't think he's an environmentalist, but he recognizes that water could be used for other purposes than irrigating crops. And if those purposes are for instream flow values, or for creating wetland habitat, so be it. It's just [that he recognizes] that there's a greater use out there for water, other than for growing crops—particularly subsidized crops. He recognizes too, that there's a tremendous value on water that the Bureau has not recognized in the past, or if they have recognized it, they're not willing to do anything about it. So he's willing to sell water and conserve water, use water for different purposes. So he's quite a different person.

He's not at all afraid to make decisions. Underwood would not make decisions. Dale Duvall wouldn't—wouldn't/couldn't—make decisions. Bob Broadbent would certainly make decisions,

but his decisions were primarily on the side of irrigation, typical water interests. But boy, Dan Beard likes to make decisions, and it's interesting to look at his letters. He sends letters to Bureau people that say, "I am going to do this, and I want it done by such-and-such a time." Whereas some of our past managers would say, "We need to take a closer look at such-and-such and consider such-and-such, and maybe we'll get it done by such-and-such." That's not Dan Beard's *modus operandi*—as you know.

The Regional Environmental Officers

Storey: Yeah. Well, you have covered the commissioners pretty well that you have worked with. Now while you were in the Washington Office, from, what, about '80, '81 on, you must have also worked a lot with regional environmental officers and regional directors. Is there some way to characterize them? Have there been patterns in the way they reacted to environmental issues? Have those patterns changed over time and so on? And are there names you would like to name, one way and another?

Deason: Well, there have been some . . . . As far as the regional environmental officers are concerned, I think most of our regional environmental officers seem to come out of the same mold, and that is that they were there to protect the environment—do what we could to protect the environment, while at the same time recognizing that the Bureau of

Reclamation had projects to build. So their intent was to take care of the environment, and also allow the development of projects. Don't really have any complaints about regional environmental officers. They've been pretty good.

Regional Directors and Environmental Issues

Regional directors? Most of the Regional directors I guess I worked with have gone. There are a few still around. Bill Plummer, who was regional director in Upper Colorado Region, and also Lower Colorado Region, was very traditional, very traditional in his outlook on values of water. It was for irrigation purposes (chuckles) and for municipal purposes—not for the environment. Bill later became the head of the Arizona Water Department, or something of that nature. Now he's a private consultant. I got along with Bill, and he was certainly a typical engineer.

I'm trying to think of some other regional directors. We had, well, in Phoenix/Boulder City we were really blessed with some good regional directors. They were engineers and they certainly recognized that there was a strong environmental component that had to be taken care of. I worked for Ed Lundberg—he was the first regional director I was under. He was the person who was responsible for hiring Phil Sharpe—very strong environmental regional environmental officer.

Next was Manny Lopez, and Manny was an engineer, but at the same time he was a heck of an outdoorsman—loved to hike, loved to crawl around through the canyon walls of the Grand Canyon—would confided that he couldn't understand why anyone would want to put a dam on this beautiful river. That's heresy, for a Reclamation engineer.

Replacing him was Gene Hines. Gene Hines was the regional director who sent me back to Washington to be under the [DMP] program. And later he came back as assistant commissioner for planning and operations. I had some run-ins with Gene. But he was a good guy.

Assistant Commissioner-Resources Management

Later, I guess it was Terry Lynott who took over for Gene Hines as assistant director. Terry—I'm not even sure what happened to Terry, but he wasn't back there (chuckles) very long. He didn't like Washington, traveled a whole lot, and got to a point where the commissioner made me acting assistant commissioner whenever Terry would leave, which caused some heartburn with other people back there who were senior to me. But Terry became the assistant commissioner of planning and operations, was in that position for a year, year-and-a-half, before the reorganization took place. We moved here to Denver, and he was the assistant commissioner here, but it was a different title

now, it was resources management. And he was there for, I don't think he was there quite a year, and the reorganization came through for his particular position and he lost his position, down-graded really.

Another one of the old regional directors came in, that was Billy Martin, who was the regional director out of Lower Missouri. And while a regional director in Lower Missouri, I had some run-ins with him, he was not an environmental person at all. And I think I mentioned on one of the previous tapes, that I helped stop one of his projects, which he didn't appreciate. And then later, as it turns out, I come to work for him as the head environmental person here in Denver. I thought my days were numbered on that—but not at all. As a matter of fact, he made a heck of a transition from being an old-line engineer to a person who recognized a value for the environment. So we got along fine after I actually started working for him.

Regional Directors Continued

Joe Marcotte was one of the regional directors in, what was it at that time, Upper Missouri Region, in Billings. And Joe was a very traditional, linear, very traditional manager for irrigation and works rather than for the environment. I guess it's just in their training. Back in the glory days of the Bureau, particularly in the 50s, I'd say, when the Bureau used to run somewhere around 17,000 employees because of all the projects

they were building—it was build, build, build. And nothing should get in your way.

I remember meeting Arleigh West, who was the regional director prior to Ed Lundberg of the Lower Colorado. He retired an old man, and boy, he was really anti-environmental. Anything that stood in the way of him building a project . . . . Oh! It was not nice. It was not nice. I got along with the guy. I mean, when he was retired, I got along with him, and he knew that I was an environmental person at the time. But to have to work for him, as an environmental person, would have been a nightmare, because he just would not adapt.

Bill Lloyd was the regional director in Pacific Northwest prior to John Keys. As a matter of fact, John Keys was Bill Lloyd's assistant regional director. Bill was a good guy, real good guy. Bill was a heck of a fly fisherman, as is John Keys today. And Bill was one of those people who recognized the importance of the environment. I don't know if it was because he was an avid outdoorsman or what, but he took care of the environment. Of course if you'd talked to environmental people in these people's regions, they would have some complaints—there's no question about that. But at the same time, they also did some good things.

Storey: You mentioned the evolution of the way Reclamation approached the NEPA process. Do you think that there was a characteristic

evolution of managers as they approached the environment? Or is it just really a matter of personality?

Deason: I think it's a matter of personality. I always thought that perhaps if we got rid of a lot of the older engineers in the Bureau of Reclamation and replaced them with younger engineers, then these younger people would recognize more of the environmental values and would design their projects around that. But I've seen (laughs) a lot of younger engineers who just have absolutely no concern for the environment—just build a project, and that's it. Or design a part and that's it. So I think it's just really personality. I think that engineering folks who grow up in a home where the out-of-doors is appreciated probably have a better appreciation themselves of the outdoors, and all that it implies, than someone who has not been raised in that kind of family.

How the Reorganization in 1988 Worked out and How Quality Control in Environmental Issues Was Lost

Storey: One of the things that I'm interested in is the reorganization. You talked to me in the previous interviews about being involved in the process. Of course I was brought on in the fall of '88, into a division that had some environmental responsibilities—or at least felt it did. And I sensed all along that there was something wrong. Do you have any comment on that?—that something wasn't working the

way it was intended to work?

Deason: Yeah, well, there's always been a strong distrust for the Denver Office, the old E&R [Engineering and Research] Center. And when the '88 reorganization was taking the policy people out of Washington and putting them in Denver, it just made a stronger distrust yet, because not only now would the regions have to deal with technical reviews, but they'd have to deal with policy reviews from the same office.

And also, they've lost quite a bit of quality control because of the Washington Office being abolished, that that component of the Washington Office [was] being abolished. We had, at one time, when I was back in Washington, there was one person who was responsible for the environmental program in the Bureau—that was me. Then when we moved out here, the environmental aspect of the Bureau, the senior aspect of the Bureau was divided among many people, and it was easy for the regions to shop around with an environmental problem they wanted addressed. They could shop around to any number of people, until they finally found a person who'd give them the right answer. Then they would say, “Well, Denver told us we could to it this way,” and that's all that was needed.

So we lost a lot of quality control, had a lot of problems with EISes. I'm not sure how that's going to be resolved. I'm no longer

in the business. So I've been out of that for a couple of years. I'm not sure what's going on EPA-wise any more, but I can't imagine that it's a good . . . . The same way with the other disciplines that were responsible for the EISes. Denver became an organization where we were to provide information but not reviews. It's hard to do that. You've got to have some kind of a review mechanism, I think, to make sure that what our regions are saying is in line with current law. Because, from what I've seen, the regions really don't care, unfortunately.

Storey: So what we lost was a disinterested oversight. Is that what I'm hearing? Or is it something else?

Deason: Yeah, what we had in Washington was—I keep harping on this—was quality control. But I think it was very important. We knew what needed to be in an EIS, because we'd looked at many EISes. We knew how they should be written, we knew how the alternatives should be presented, how fair they should be, how honest they should be, how up-front they should be.

And when we came to Denver, we lost that central span of control, whereas now it can be written in about any way, and who's going to review it? because we no longer have the control over what goes into an EIS. It's really pretty much up to the regions, and it has been that way for a while—since that reorganization. So you see EISes that are just

across the board, as far as the kind of materials that they've included, it's really just pretty much the responsibility of the regions. Is it bad? I don't know if it's bad or not. I know that they're putting out some EISes that are not good, but I know on the other hand, there are some EISes that are going out that are pretty good. Should there be an office that does nothing but control what the others are doing? I hate to use the word "control"—I'd like to have an office, say, that can provide guidance and assistance when it's needed. But it doesn't seem to be that the guidance and assistance is ever needed any more.

Storey: Okay. Let's see, what have I not asked you that I should have asked you?

Deason: Gosh, I don't know.

Storey: Tell me about the reorganization when your office was disbanded here in Denver.

Environmental Services Office Disbanded in Denver

Deason: (chuckles) Well, in the '88 reorganization, based on the '87 reports that were written, the environmental aspect of the Bureau of Reclamation was elevated from a number six position out of fifteen up to number two in importance. And so I thought that we would be getting directions from senior management to say, "Okay, Wayne, we've got it moved up to number two position. Now let's go out

there and go forth and do good." And we waited, and we waited, and we waited, and we got no direction.

And I thought, "Something's wrong here." So since the commissioner says it's moved up to number two, and we're not treating it as though it's number two, let's make it number two. So in my office, my staff, I had a staff meeting one day and I started making assignments. You know, "You go out and start looking at wetlands and see what we can do, working with the regions and outside interests." Another person's going out looking at environmental education. Another person's going out and dealing with fish and wildlife initiatives. And someone else is going out and dealing with hazardous waste. And I said, "I'll take the risk. I've given you the assignments to do all these new initiatives. I'll take the risk and you go out and do the work."

And it didn't take too long before people started complaining about how the Bureau of Reclamation doesn't need to be involved in these fish and wildlife initiatives; the Bureau of Reclamation doesn't need to be involved in wetlands initiatives; we've got other things that we should be taking care of, such as canals and dams, and painting gates, and concrete and the whole works. That went on for quite a while. There were quite a few powerful people in the Bureau of Reclamation who didn't like that new initiative as well. And with the advent of new senior

management in the Bureau who also didn't like it, I think that it was just a matter of time. The risk that I took (laughs) was about to be spent.

And so I almost really hate to use the names, even though I probably have in the past. But some of our chief planners—let's put it that way—didn't like the new initiatives, and they were able to convince the assistant commissioners that these new initiatives didn't fit in with the Bureau of Reclamation. And so in order to stop the new initiatives from taking place, one way to do it was to break up my office. And that's what happened. I lost all my people, and all my programs, and I became an office of one who served at the whims of the assistant commissioner for resources management, which I still do to this day. I work <u>well</u> for the guy, we get along well, but I'm not able to do the things that I used to be able to do. I don't know if that'll change.

Storey: But haven't some of those programs continued?

Deason: Oh yeah! Heavens yes, heavens yes. You know, it's one of those things that John Crossman and I have talked any number of times about, that some of these days, these people who stopped us from doing the programs—they didn't stop us—who <u>slowed down</u>—let's put it that way—slowed down the initiative of the programs that I started some day will be bitten by the fact that they

tried to stop those programs. And that's what's coming to pass now. We could have had all kinds of organizations out there on behalf of the Bureau of Reclamation, helping us get money for construction and projects, or new projects, but we opted to go to traditional water constituents rather than our new environmental constituents, and as a result, the environmental constituents haven't been able to perform for us the way they could have, had we gotten involved in more environmental programs earlier on.

I think that the assistant commissioner for resources management today is in trouble with Dan Beard, because of the fact that he drug his feet so long on doing things for the environment, because, as I say, while Dan is not an environmentalist, he recognizes that there are other values of water than what we've had in the past. That's all I was trying to do, is to say we've got values, we've got water that could be used for other purposes, and my interest is in fish and wildlife and vegetation and preparing issues. Let's go out there and try to find ways that we can use water for those interests as well. And as a result of that, as a result of my office being broken up, I think that's one of the reasons that the assistant commissioner stays in trouble with this commissioner.

Storey: What goes around comes around.

Deason: What goes around comes around.

Storey: Anything else we ought to talk about?

Deason: I don't think so, I'm about talked out.

Storey: Okay. Well, I appreciate your talking to me. I'd like to ask you if Reclamation researchers and researchers from outside Reclamation can use the tapes and any resulting transcripts for research purposes.

Deason: I don't care. They can if they want.

Storey: Good, I appreciate it. Thank you.

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. FEBRUARY 8, 1994.
END OF INTERVIEWS.

OBITUARY

RECLAMATION
Managing Water in the West
The *Centerline*
Spring 2007
Denver Office

Obituaries

Wayne Deason

Wayne Deason

Wayne Deason passed away Sunday night, March 18. A "Celebration of Wayne's Life" was held Friday, April 13, 2007, at 11:00 a.m. at the Green Mountain United Methodist Church, 12755 W Cedar Drive, Lakewood, CO 80228. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, memorial donations be made to TMC Hospice, 5301 E. Grant Road, Tucson, AZ 85712 or C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation, 227 S.W. 41st Street, Renton, WA 98057.

Wayne passed away at home in Marana, Arizona, surrounded by family, after a long struggle with cancer. He was born in Duncan, Oklahoma, the son of Lester and Gertrude Deason. He is survived by Kathy, his wife of 45 years; his children, Jennifer and Matthew Deason, and Kristen Adcock; son-in-law, Jesse Adcock; three grandsons, Donovan, Connor, and Aidan Adcock; and his brother, Cliff Deason. Upon receiving an honorable discharge from the U.S. Navy in 1961, he married his high school sweetheart, Kathy Brown. In 1962, he began his higher education studies, earning a bachelor of science and master of science degrees, and a Ph.D. with a specialty in aquatic bacteriology from Colorado State University. In 1970, he moved to St. Louis, Missouri to work as a research physiologist for McDonnell Douglas Astronautics. He began a 32-year career with the Bureau of Reclamation when he moved to Boulder City, Nevada in 1972, where he was responsible for biological studies in the Lower Colorado River Region. He transferred to Washington, DC in 1979 and was promoted to Senior Environmental Specialist. In 1988, he moved to Denver, Colorado, where he continued his role in environmental leadership. He became Deputy Director for the Office of Policy and was acting Director of that office when he retired in 2004. During his professional career, Wayne received many honors and awards. Wayne was very interested in his Scottish heritage and for many years was active in the St. Andrew Society of Colorado, serving as Chieftain in 1994-1995 and 1998-1999. In 1991, Wayne co-founded C.A.S.T. for Kids (www.castforkids.org), a nonprofit organization that joins volunteers who love to fish and disabled, disadvantaged, or terminally ill children for a day of fishing. A memorial service honoring Wayne was held at St. Marks United Methodist Church in Tucson on March 29, 2007.