ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

RICK GOLD

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STATUS OF INTERVIEWS:
OPEN FOR RESEARCH

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Interviews Conducted and Edited by:
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Senior Historian
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STATEMENT OF DONATION OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS OF RICK L. GOLD

1. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms, conditions, and restrictions set forth in this instrument, I, Rick L. Gold, (hereinafter referred to as "the Donor"), of Salt Lake City, Utah, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter referred to as "the National Archives), acting for and on behalf of the United States of America, all of my rights and title to, and interest in the information and responses (hereinafter referred to as "the Donated Materials") provided during the interviews conducted on February 3, September 28, and November 15, 1993, on June 29, 1995, and on August 13, 1996, at the Upper Colorado Regional Office in Salt Lake City, and prepared for deposit with the National Archives and Records Administration in the following format: cassette tapes and transcripts. This donation includes, but is not limited to, all copyright interests I now possess in the Donated Materials.

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Rick L. Gold

INTERVIEWER:
Bob Allen Storey

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Editorial Convention

A note on editorial conventions. In the text of these interviews, 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 also 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.

While we attempt to conform to most standard academic rules of usage (see *The Chicago Manual of Style*), we do not conform to those standards in this interview for individual's titles which then would only be capitalized in the text when they are specifically used as a title connected to a name, e.g., "Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton" as opposed to "Gale Norton, the secretary of the interior;" or "Commissioner John Keys" as opposed to "the commissioner, who was John Keys at the time." The convention in the Federal government is to capitalize titles always. Likewise formal titles of acts and offices are capitalized but abbreviated usages are not, e.g., Division of Planning as opposed to "planning;" the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992, as opposed to "the 1992 act."

The convention with acronyms is that if they are pronounced as a word then they are treated as if they are a word. If they are spelled out by the speaker then they have a hyphen between each letter. An example is the Agency for International Development's acronym: said as a word, it appears as AID but spelled out it appears as A-I-D; another example is the acronym for State Historic Preservation Officer: SHPO when said as a word, but S-H-P-O when spelled out.

Introduction

In 1988, Reclamation began to create a history program. While headquartered in Denver, the history program was developed as a bureau-wide program.

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); making the preserved data available to researchers inside and outside Reclamation.

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For additional information about Reclamation's history program see:
www.usbr.gov/history

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Oral History Interviews
Rick Gold

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Rick Gold, the assistant regional director of the Upper Colorado Region of the Bureau of Reclamation, in Salt Lake City, in the Bureau of Reclamation's offices in the Federal Building on State Street, at about eight o'clock in the morning on September 28, 1993. This is Tape 1.

Mr. Gold, could I have you discuss where you were born and raised and your education, and how you ended up at the Bureau of Reclamation?

Raised on an Irrigation Farm

Gold: Sure, Brit. I grew up in upper Snake River valley of Idaho, southeastern Idaho, as its usually referred to, in the little town of Rexburg. I grew up on a farm. Both my mother's family and my father's family were irrigation farmers. My grandfather homesteaded in that part of the country. We didn't have a large farming or ranching operation, but it was in the neighborhood of 300 acres. It was irrigated from water which came from, or at least was made available by, the Minidoka Project[1] of Reclamation, so I guess in phraseology I was kind of a "Reclamation brat." I knew what Reclamation projects were about. I knew water was secondary to my nature as I grew up as a kid. Most of my jobs growing up had to do with water in some way or another, either I was irrigating or making ditch settings or moving irrigation equipment, or overhauling equipment, or harvesting the crops that were associated with that. That's kind of the rural background that I grew up in. The little town of Rexburg probably at that time had a population of somewhere around 4,000-5,000 people. We raised potatoes and we raised alfalfa, barley, wheat, a few oats once in a while, and had a hell of a time making ends meet as farmers in the 50s and 60s. I was born in 1946, so I'm one of the first of the baby boomers. That was sort of the backdrop: rural, southeastern Idaho, very conservative kind of country.

It was always assumed, in my perspective, as well as my parents', although I never remember having any detailed discussions, but it was always assumed that I'd go to college. I was a good student when I went to college at Utah State University–strange, a land grant college for a kid that grew up on a farm–but I did, and I started in agricultural engineering. I changed majors about my freshman year, and I switched over to civil engineering. I graduated in four years at Utah State with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, and I continued and finished in 1969 with a master's in civil engineering with water resources specialty. Hydrology was what I was looking at mostly–flood hydrology, runoff, yield, the kinds of things that go to determining how much water river systems have available for consumptive use and that type of thing.

It was in my senior year that I, like most graduates, started to interview, talk about what I wanted to do and where I wanted to go to work. And I interviewed two or three different

1. The Minidoka Project, in eastern Idaho, is one of Reclamation's earliest irrigation, beginning construction in 1904. The project provides full and supplemental irrigation water to 1.1 million acres. For more information, see Eric A. Stene, "Minidoka Project," Denver: Bureau of Reclamation, 1997, www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html.

entities in 1968, I guess it would have been, one of which was the Bureau of Reclamation. Strangely enough, our current personnel officer who's here in this building today, Daren Reese is the guy who interviewed me as an "about to graduate" senior with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, and offered me a job down in Provo, Utah. I was certainly interested in the concept. I knew about Reclamation. I didn't need an introduction to what it did, because of my background. I had several other interviews, and in fact one other job offer that I seriously considered, and it was with a private consultant. It was with Bechtel, as a matter of fact, in San Francisco. They offered a little bit more money, but they also offered San Francisco, and for a kid from rural Idaho to think about picking up lock, stock, and barrel, and moving to San Francisco, was kind of threatening, didn't fit my conservative lifestyle. I, in fact, explored with Reclamation the option of continuing school, and that was very amenable to them at the time. And in fact I essentially had a verbal offer for employment one or two years from that date if I wanted to go back to school and get a master's degree–at a higher grade! So I figured I sort of had the cat by the tail, and I went back to school and got a master's degree. About a year-and-a-half later, in September of 1969, I started work with the Bureau of Reclamation in Provo, Utah, on the Central Utah Project [CUP], as a GS-9 hydraulic engineer.

The Bureau was hiring quite a few folks about that time. I think I was one of three new engineers that came to the Central Utah Projects Office that year, out of a graduating class. I think the year after, there were two, the year before, obviously, a few. So I was among the ranks of a number of young, fresh-out-of-college engineers that were going to work for the Bureau in the late 60s. That's sort of the story of how I got started.

Decision to go College

I think the interesting part for me was, when I reflect as a grown man back on my upbringing and the decisions that were made about *should* you go to college, *where* should you go to college, *what* should you study, its almost ironic to me that I don't recall those being significant decisions. They were like they were just assumed. It was assumed I would go to college; engineering was my chosen field. I was a good student and was always interested in those kinds of things and did well in math and science and it was a natural. Going to Utah State was probably a two-fold issue: our family was not well-to-do by any means, from a rural perspective, but the ethic was certainly there, and all the way through junior high school and high school I was saving for that day when I would go to college. And probably not too different from many farm kids, I saved in a different manner. My savings walked around in the corral and out in the pasture while I was going to high school and junior high. When I finished, I had seven or eight head of registered Hereford cattle; that was my college fund. So as I went to college, I sold the calves and sold the cows, and when I finally finished college, I didn't have the cows anymore, but I had a degree in engineering. So that was kind of a tradeoff, and it was a fairly painless way for farmers to put their kids through school, I'm sure.

And I worked half-time *all* the time that I went to school, whatever kind of a job I could find. The first one I found was hauling hay up in Smithfield, Utah, which was probably one of the only things I thought I could do at the time, because that's what I'd done all my life. As time went on, I worked at the Utah Water Research Laboratory, and I worked in the

Civil Engineering Department. I even tried my hand at selling men's clothing in a clothing store in Logan, Utah–all kinds of things. So working my way through college was just a real part of what I assumed had to be done in order to make ends meet and get the education. It was extremely important for me. I did well in college, and so it was the fact that those things were just second nature that in retrospect I find interesting, because I hear a lot of people talk about, "Well, I really had a tough decision on what to major in and whether I should go to college and which school I to go to." I don't have those recollections of that being frustrating at all. It was just assumed, and I just did all those things. Utah State was not only one of the better engineering schools in the Intermountain West at the time, 1964, when I started, it was also quite close. It was within 175 miles of my home, even though it was across a state line. It was just the right thing to do, and there was not controversy, it just happened that way.

Graduate School

When I got to the point of finishing with a bachelor's degree, there was some purposeful thought on my part about, "Was this enough?" And like most students, I was kind of tired of school, but I also recognized that I was still learning a lot. And I was enjoying it more the junior and senior years, certainly more than freshman and sophomore year. And I was intrigued by graduate school when the Bureau rather gave me the opportunity to say, "Hey, you've got a job if you'll just go ahead and go to school and get a master's degree. We'll still hire you, you don't have to worry about being unemployed. You can go back to graduate school and we'll in fact give you a raise between now and then, just because you've gone to graduate school." So that worked out really well for me, and that's one decision that I look back on and think it was very opportune, the fact that I do have a master's degree. It placed me in probably a much more competitive position among those many new engineers that were coming into the Bureau than others who were coming in at the same time.

Storey: Did you do a thesis?

Gold: Actually, at Utah State at the time, it was called a Plan "B" Report. Its published, its probably a hundred-page document, so its thesis-*like*, although it didn't have the kind of detailed specificity that maybe a thesis would go through. I had a major professor. The Plan "B" concept allowed me to write that report called a Plan "B" Report, and do additional classwork, which I found attractive. I did that Plan "B" Report on linear programming, strangely enough, computer technology for optimization of water resources in the state of Utah. And it had to do with the allocation of water in the state of Utah–where is the water, and how should it be allocated, and to whom, and going through some, at the time at least, state-of-the-art optimization techniques using mathematics and the then Univac 1108 computer, which by today's standards is a dinosaur, obviously. But that's what it was about. Practical use of that, I look back at it and think, well, philosophically, if you look back at the technical work–and I had a research assistantship at Utah State University on which I worked on this specific research project–looking back on it, the conceptual ideas that came out of that modeling were valuable, but they were probably no more . . . clandestine or secretive than the same kinds of things that are generally applied hydrologic knowledge in the West and certainly in the Bureau of Reclamation than had been for years. It's the basics of how do you decide where the water should go. It was applying mathematical techniques to that, and it was of course that side of it that made it research worthy. How did you come up

with well-founded scientific conclusions in a mathematical way to the kinds of things that probably in our history, Reclamation's history, had been done, because everybody knew it was the right thing to do.

Storey: Its interesting that a lot of managers in Reclamation now were very interested in computers back then. You mentioned that all of this was just sort of assumed, that you were going to go off to college and so on. Was it also just sort of assumed that you were or were not going to go back to the farm?

Thoughts on Returning to Farming After College

Gold: That's a different story for me because my dad had worked so hard throughout his life, part of his message to me was, "You can do better than this. You don't *need* to come back and farm. You should figure out a way to make a better living than I've made without working nearly so hard." A couple of things that are noteworthy in my life to help make that decision. Being rural and in that agricultural setting, I was active in the 4-H and ultimately in the Future Farmers of America when I was in high school. And one of the projects that I took on as a junior in high school, I believe it was, was an economic study of our farming operation, trying to run 300 acres and forty or fifty cows, and tried to put pencil to paper on what it cost, what the inputs were, how much labor went in, how much profit came out. At the end of that study, which was a one-year project for me, I think our bottom-line conclusion is, my dad and I were making thirty-five cents an hour for the time we were putting in, let alone the investment that we had. And it was one of the turning points in my dad's life, even, to say, "You know, that really isn't much. There's a lot of people out there making more than thirty-five cents an hour, if you're talking about how do you make a living." A couple of other things happened in my junior-senior year and as I was going to college. My father had a heart attack. He died at fifty-three with his second heart attack, in fact the first year I started working with the Bureau. During those years of college and my final years of high school, his health was not as good, obviously, as he would have liked it to have been. He was not able to work as hard. Match that with some of the economic realities that we were beginning to look at, *his* message to me was, "You can come back to the farm, but you'll just kill yourself and you won't make any money anyway."

And there was another bit of a subtlety, and that is I have allergies that are pretty bad. In the spring of the year I didn't do much farmwork. It gave me some culinary skills because (chuckles) I grew up the cook for the first cutting of hay while my mother worked in the field. But in any case, it also gave me other reasons not to naturally gravitate back to the farm and get out there and suffer from asthma and hay fever, which I do. That, again, was another incentive. And he was always behind that. Of course I'd had allergies as a kid, and he said, "You know, you don't really want to come back here and spend the rest of your life fighting your health."

And so those were the kinds of inputs that convinced him and convinced me that it really didn't make a whole lot of sense for me to go back to the farm. First of all, and probably foremost at that point in time, we really weren't making any money, although I didn't know it growing up. We certainly were a long ways from being wealthy. We were trying very hard to make ends meet, and we did a lot of things like a lot of people did, obviously. I

don't think that's a singular situation, but rural America, certainly in southeastern Idaho, was struggling for its economic life. And we sold eggs and we sold milk and anything that we could figure out to get a little cash flow to get you from one potato crop to the next and to avoid that year when it hailed the potatoes out, and you didn't have any income, and you still had seed in the ground. The P-C-A [Production Credit Association] was your best friend. You went to them in the beginning of the year and you said, "Well, I don't have any money," and they loaned you some and you went out and spent it all and put it in the ground, and bet on the come, and you hoped like hell that the crops came up and the weather held and you were able to pay the loan off at the end of the year.

And so it was kind of a . . . I think in looking back at it, certainly compared to the kind of lifestyle I *now* live, it was really touch and go. It's the biggest gamble that I'm aware of, farming. You have to have a lot of faith and a lot of hard work to make it go.

Storey: You said the P-C-A, I believe?

Gold: Production Credit Association, the Federal Land Bank–all those people that loan money to farmers on a year-to-year basis, because that's the way it worked. You had to have operating capital, and you didn't have it. You had to go to the bank and say, "Well, I'd like to put in a crop, how much will you loan me?" And they'd loan you your operating capital, and then you could go out and try and grow a crop.

Storey: Do you remember anything about the relations between your dad and yourself and either the water district or Reclamation?

Family's Relationship with the Water District

Gold: Not so much Reclamation, but certainly the water district, and as I mentioned, it was, as I recall–and I've always wanted to go back and take a closer look at what the water situation was in my own farm situation–but we didn't deal directly, at least not to my knowledge as a kid growing up, with the Bureau. We had water in Palisades [Dam], which, as I know now, has to be Reclamation water. So its almost as if we had purchased storage rights, or had somehow acquired the right to use, from Reclamation, storage water in Palisades. We also had a lot of direct water rights in the state of Idaho, and most of our dealings were with our district, and maybe that's the way it would even be today, that the Bureau of Reclamation would be more transparent to a young kid growing up. But my father was deeply involved in water rights, he was the president of the Texas Slough Irrigation Canal Company for a number of years.

Storey: I'm sorry, I didn't catch the name. S-L-O-U-G-H?

Gold: Uh-huh. Many of the drainage channels and ultimate receivers of irrigation drainage in that part of the country were called sloughs–strange, interesting. But anyway, that was the irrigation company that we received our water from, came down our ditches, all open ditches in that part of the country, and flood irrigation. And my father was intimately involved with that district for years. He was the secretary-treasurer, he was the president, he dealt with the watermasters that ran the Snake River. The south fork of the Snake River was the supply

source for our water, and we had direct flow rights, and we also had Palisades [Dam] water.[2] So to the extent that there was a connection, obviously that was it. Palisades was a Reclamation facility under the Minidoka Project, but as a kid growing up, the Bureau of Reclamation was never in the forefront, but certainly Palisades was. It was the water supply and where it came from was the focus, not the entity. In fact, even though I was aware of the Bureau of Reclamation when I was in college, it was not something I had to research, what did the Bureau of Reclamation do. They weren't an extremely visible part of my childhood. And I would guess, other than probably some meetings that my father would go to where Reclamation people would be present, he may have known some of those people, but I certainly didn't. Of course growing up, going to college, and then not going back to the farm, that didn't give me a personal relationship with any of the Reclamation players. So I didn't have that linkage.

Storey: How about the kids or anything in school and so on, from Reclamation families?

No Direct Personal Relationship with Reclamation Growing Up

Gold: None that I recall. I think later in my life, in fact the year my father died, which was the year I had already started with Reclamation, it became obvious to me, because I in fact tried to relocate to try to go back to the farm. My mother was there alone, I'm the youngest of two children, my sister's ten years my elder. At that point in time, I gave serious thought, and in fact was within the Reclamation family at that point in time, but I called the project construction engineer, Robby Robison, who was then the construction engineer at the infamous Teton Dam.[3] Teton Dam is about fifteen miles from Rexburg, Idaho, and I called Robby then in 1970, and I said, "Robby, are you hiring anybody? I'd really like to move up and live close enough that I can keep track of my mother and the farm. If you've got any openings for a GS-9 hydraulic engineers or civil engineers, I'd sure be willing to move up." He didn't. He didn't have any opportunities, and as time went by the next three to six months, my mother decided she didn't really want to stay on the farm, and she sold the farm. But to that extent, there obviously were some folks who were living in my part of the world in Rexburg, Idaho, at that time, the construction of Teton Dam, that were Reclamation people. I would guess that during my childhood, however, because Palisades Dam was probably forty or fifty miles from home, that's where the government camp was. Those kids would not have gone to my high school or my grade school. I don't believe there were any other children whose parents were Reclamation employees that I grew up with–at least it wasn't part of my knowledge.

Storey: Were you aware of any of the issues or problems within the Texas Slough Irrigation District? Were there tensions over watering rights, water use, anything like that?

Water Rights Issues in Southeastern Idaho

2. Palisades Dam is located on the Snake River 55 miles southeast of Idaho Falls, Idaho. Palisades, a major feature of the Minidoka Project, is an earthfill structure 270 feet high, with a crest length of 2,100 feet.

3. Teton Dam was planned as the major feature of the Teton Basin Project in eastern Idaho. On June 5, 1976, shortly after construction was completed, the dam suffered a catastrophic failure, causing over billion dollars worth of property damage and 11 casualties. For more information, see Andrew H. Gahan and William D. Rowley, *The Bureau of Reclamation: From Developing to Managing Water, 1945-2000*, Volume 2 (Denver: Bureau of Reclamation, United States Department of the Interior, 2012), 820-832.

Gold: All the time. I think the adage that whiskey was for drinking and water for fighting–or however that goes (Storey chuckles: That's the way it goes.) I think that's just the epitome of life. We had constant disagreements over whose turn it was on the ditch. We had the dubious honor of being last on the ditch. We were the last turnout on the canal. And so we *always* had to fight for our share. Because of that, we often irrigated at night, start a set of water at ten o'clock at night and get up at five the next morning and change it, because that's when you got water, because you were on the end of the ditch. There were often times when putting your shovel over your shoulder and starting up the ditch and finding who had their boards in the ditch and convincing them that it really was your turn and to take their boards out of the ditch was a routine part of life.

Because my father was involved in leadership in that district, he got involved all the way *up* the ditch, because people would call and say, "John Q. Farmer is doing it again! He's got his gates open and his waste ditches running and I can't get any water!" And so there was always that internal ditch management kind of controversy. Although I never personally witnessed it, my father told me of numerous stories that he had seen of fist fights and people getting banged over the head with shovels for taking too much or taking water out of turn or whatever. So it was *always* controversial. I think beyond that, there were the issues that were probably broader issues of whose rights were current, whose right was being called out, the priority system, the adjudicated process on the South Fork of the Snake River. We had pretty old rights, 1898, as I recall, were our direct stream flow rights. And whenever the watermaster got down to where he was calling out our direct flow rights, then obviously we made the call on Palisades water. And so there was always that debate of which among the canal companies–and of course the Texas Slough Irrigation Canal Company was only one of many in that valley–among them who got the water, and whose headgates were too high or too low, and who was getting an inappropriate share of the flow of the Snake River. Those kind of controversies were always, oh, certainly not the only topic of discussion, but a major topic of discussion all the time.

Storey: I told Mr. Robison yesterday that the earliest conversation I ever remember was my dad talking to a rancher friend who was having trouble getting his water, and he was getting ready to go to court, and he was very hot about it.

Gold: Uh-huh, there's no question that there were lots of lawsuits, there was lots of threats and discontent and meetings where farmers among themselves would argue about the water on the ditch, and also one ditch versus another, "Did you get all the water you'd ordered? Did you get it at the right time?" So it was a constant and a very vital part of making life work for you, to make sure that the water supply was there when you needed it. I mean, its what you were betting on.

Storey: In the old days, the ditch riders literally rode the bank of the ditch, and they would pick up instructions on a little card for when water was to be delivered and all that sort of thing. What was the system that you all used?

Distributing Water for the Farm

Gold: I don't recall any of those card systems, although I've seen them in my career. I've been

associated with several canals where the ditch rider went by and picked up the card on the box, particularly in Montana. But in *our* country, it seemed to me to be a bit more *in*formal than that. It was as though there was a particular flow that the canal company was entitled to, and at the headworks, the ditch rider turned that in and that was it. That's what you got. So it didn't appear to me that the ditch rider was making substantive changes on a day-to-day basis, certainly. He was making a heading adjustment, and we're talking about probably a thirty-mile canal or something like that, so he was making a heading adjustment. And that was pretty constant for the year, unless things substantively changed, unless you had a difference in priority. In other words, the river fell to a point where you could no longer divert your direct flow of water, and then of course there would be adjustments. But in terms of ordering water on a rotation basis, I don't think it existed. It was more for us, and maybe that was a matter of physical juxtaposition than anything else. But being on the end of the ditch, I never perceived that we spent much time worrying about whether it was our turn or not. It was worrying about when was the water in the ditch, and that's how you determined when you had to irrigate, is just by your knowledge of when the water was going to be in the ditch. And of course that drove us toward that night irrigation process, because over time, you realized that most of the time, that's when you had good water supply. So you just turned your attention to doing that kind of irrigation. I don't ever recall that we were extremely water-short. I think most of the time we had sufficient water supplies to do the irrigations that we needed. There were a few times when circumstances occurred–some of that would be, obviously, when you had ditch failures, when ditches would wash out, and then the whole company would get together with trucks and go patch the canal, get it back in service. But in general I'd say that that part of the country is pretty water-rich, and we had the water; getting it through the canals, making sure the canals were clean and operable, was probably the bigger battle, rather than "no, there's not absolutely enough water, and so you have to rotate, or you have to be on a call system." It wasn't administered[that way].

Storey: What was the name of the ditch, do you remember?

Gold: It was named the Texas Slough Irrigation Canal. I think locally, it was just "the canal." I mean, we didn't go through the formality, but I know my brother-in-law who lived four miles from us lived on *another* canal, and his water came through the Liberty Park Canal, and, I think, Liberty Park Irrigation Canal *Company*. So it was probably a foreshortened term, but to me, locally, as a kid, it was just "the canal." It was the only one, that's where you got your water. But I know that that was the name of the company because of my dad's involvement with leadership of that canal company.

Storey: So each canal company had a ditch rider?

Gold: Yeah, they did. Again, because I believe the water*master*–the watermaster must have been a state employee. I don't have any personal knowledge of that, but he must have been, because of the water adjudication, must have been a state engineer employed in the state of Idaho–made the setting, said, "Here's what you're entitled to," and then the ditches themselves were responsible for carrying the water to all their users.

Storey: And the ditch rider was . . .

Gold: Uh-huh. And it wasn't a cowboy on a horse in our country, it was more likely one of the farmers, or a part-time employee, or maybe even a volunteer, who drove his pickup truck to the various . . .

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. SEPTEMBER 28, 1993.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. SEPTEMBER 28, 1993.

Storey: Now, when was it you actually went to Reclamation then?

Starting with Reclamation

Gold: I started to work for Reclamation in September of 1969. Finished graduate school that summer, and I probably had maybe a week between finishing graduate school, moved from Logan to Provo, and went to work.

Storey: And what was your first job? Were you on rotation, or . . .

Gold: Actually, I wasn't. Because I had a master's degree at the time, I started as a GS-9. Because of that advanced degree, it wasn't part of a normal rotation engineering program, so I started as a hydraulic engineer. My first assignments were dealing with the Central Utah Project's municipal and industrial supply. Things like–I was working on the Jordan Aqueduct prior to it being built. We were sizing, we were trying to determine water supplies for various parts of the Salt Lake Valley and Utah Valley, Utah County. It was probably a year-and-a-half after I started that I became quite interested in not being too narrow in the Bureau and I crafted for myself–with the permission of the personnel officer and the projects manager, obviously–a rotation program. But it wasn't the formal Bureau of Reclamation engineering rotation program, but I tried to get some experience in some other areas other than the one I was working in, which was planning. I tried to get inside some of what *else* was going on in the Central Utah Project Office.

Storey: So this was all planning for the C-U-P.

Gold: Correct. It was under construction–I think construction began in '67, if memory serves me correct, but in '69 we were still doing the specifications and some of the last layouts, and particularly some of the later features that have been built in the last ten years like the Jordan Aqueduct.[4] Those facilities weren't complete. We knew in general what the project *plan* was, to deliver water, but in terms of pipe sizing and all that stuff, it was being done while construction of some of the other facilities was ongoing.

Storey: When you moved into your rotation program, what did you do in that?

Rotation Program in the Provo Office

Gold: As I recall, I spent a little bit of time in the Operations and Maintenance [O&M] area,

4. The Central Utah Project was constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Central Utah Water Conservancy District in central and eastern Utah to allow the state of Utah to develop its allocation of Colorado River water. Construction of the Jordan Aqueduct began in 1971 for the purpose of supplying CUP water for irrigation and municipal and industrial purposes to the communities in the Salt Lake Valley.

because planning was quite separate. And so I spent some time in the Provo Office, trying to get some knowledge about what the other sides of the Bureau in Provo were doing; what the people who operated and maintained existing facilities were doing. I spent a little time in construction. As I recall, I also spent a little bit of time in the computer business, which was then just beginning, actually, in the Bureau. We had some engineers who had some interest, as you pointed out, that were trying to get computer centers set up and help engineers have some tools through the computer network to facilitate their work. Some of my work, because I had a computer background in college, some of the work I was trying to do with municipal and industrial supplies was computer based. I was trying to do some analysis, consumptive use studies and that type of thing, on the computer. So it was only a method on my part to try and broaden my understanding of how what *I* was doing fit with the rest of the organization. And I think it was completed in like six to nine months or something like that. So much less formal than some of the current rotation programs where engineers have formal assignments out in other locations and spend up to a year in a rotation program.

Storey: But I gather a rotation program is at least partially designed to let a person find an area that they're particularly interested in. (Gold: Correct.) When you come in with an M-A, you've sort of specialized already.

Gold: Correct. And that's why the Bureau, and I think rightly so, didn't take a master's candidate and say, "Well, now go to rotation and find out where you want to work." You'd already specialized for a year, so they wanted to put me to work and make me start earning some salary.

Storey: Who did you work with?

Gold: Oh, gosh, my first supervisor was a fellow by the name of Gale Moore [phonetic spelling]. Gale was the supervisor of the Hydrology Branch. There were some people who probably are still in Provo. Since then, they've stayed and I've moved on, but my first "roommate" if you will, in Provo, was a fellow by the name of Marv Bird. Marv was an engineering technician. Of course Daren Reese was the personnel officer, and he's still with us. Wayne Cook, who I have chased around the Bureau for years, was involved in that branch. Fred Barnes, Bob White–he was one of the old hands at water rights–he was in that Hydrology Branch in the Planning Division. Some interesting fellows, Dean McCoy, an engineering technician that used to do all of our outside work, installation of rain gauges and kind of a jack-of-all-trades guy that could do anything. Ron Pierce [phonetic spelling], who happens to work here in the building still, Ron was in land classification and hydrology from time-to-time, has been around the Bureau–his career and mine have been fairly parallel. Palmer DeLong [phonetic spelling] was the project manager in the Provo Office when I started. And let's see, Lynne Ludlow [phonetic spelling] was the manager of the Central Utah Water Conservancy District at the time. Its twenty-five years ago, a lot of folks.

Storey: Did you ever see the chief engineer in the project office?

Gold: No. I don't recall. I remember lots of exposure to Palmer DeLong, the project manager, but in terms of outside folks, keep in mind I was in the projects office probably three-and-a-half years, was my first assignment. I don't remember too much about regional folks, but certainly

the chief engineer was not part of my repertoire (chuckles) as a GS-9 hydraulic engineer.

Storey: What did you do after you finished your rotation?

Gold: I continued to work in the Hydrology Branch in that municipal and industrial area of Central Utah Project. We were doing also a few additional studies at Utah State. I had a continued linkage of the Bureau and Utah State, had some research work going on. So I was working on a Jordan River modeling study, in addition to the Central Utah work. In the three-and-a-half years, that's probably most of it. I got involved in setting up a weather station network in the Utah Lake area; did, in fact, some interviews and contacts with basic industry in the Salt Lake Valley, trying to determine consumptive uses, how much water they took in versus how much they took out, return flow estimates of consumptive use. That was real interesting in terms of putting together some kind of a data base that would help us look at quantities of water and return flow, again headed toward the sizing of facilities that we were about to construct in this valley to provide Central Utah water to Salt Lake.

Storey: And then you moved on to . . .

Moved to Durango

Gold: Let's see, in February of '73 I moved to Durango, Colorado. In fact, many of the folks–at about that time, Central Utah was sort of in a slump in terms of funding, and in fact I believe shortly after I left, they actually closed the Provo Office for one year, I think it was. It became a Field Division of the Salt Lake City Office. But in that process there was lots of concern about jobs and were you going to have a job, were we going to close the office. A number of folks from Provo saw the opportunities . . . To give a little backdrop to that, in 1968, the C-R-B-P Act [Colorado River Basin Project Act][5] was passed, which authorized the Dolores, the Animas-La Plata, the San Miguel, and a couple of other projects in southwest Colorado, and Durango became the projects office, which was then destined to build those three projects. And so they were staffing-up. This region was staffing-up the Durango Office in order to build the project. At the same time, there was sort of a flutter in the construction and we weren't sure we were going to have enough money to keep the Central Utah Project going, and so many people from Provo actually migrated to Durango, Colorado. The projects manager, who was at the time the chief of planning in Provo, Ed Wiscombe [phonetic spelling], moved to Durango as the projects manager, and he began to take with him those people that he knew from Provo, so he would reach into Provo and say, "How about a job? Come to Durango!" And there were a number of folks who moved, including myself, who moved from Provo to Durango over the time period from probably 1970 up until 1974 or '5–there was a transition period there. People like Wayne Cook, Glade Barney [phonetic spelling], myself, land classifiers, sort of the "front end" of the planning team, went to Durango and said, "Okay, now here are these three authorized

5. The Colorado River Basin Projects Act of 1968 was last major Reclamation authorization passed by Congress. The act authorized the construction of the Central Arizona Project, Navajo Steam Generation Plant, along with five smaller projects in Colorado: Animas-La Plata, Dolores, Dallas Creek, West Divide, and San Miguel, and the Unitah Unit of the Central Utah Project. For More information, see "Colorado River Basin Project Act," in United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, *Federal Reclamation and Related Laws Annotated*, Volume IV of Four Volumes, Louis D. Mauro and Richard K. Pelz, editors (Denver: United States Government Printing Office, 1989), 2395-2424.

projects. Let's get them ready to be built." And of course the outgrowth of that was 1976 when we began construction on the Dolores Project.

So during those years, '73 through '75, I was in Durango two-and-a-half years. I was the chief of the Hydrology Branch then in that projects office. My planning chief was Wayne Cook, who I'd worked with in Provo. I went at that point in time in my career from being a hydrologist, someone who was doing the on-the-ground technical work in hydrology, to becoming a supervisor. So with about three-and-a-half years of experience in the Bureau, I then began supervising up to, I think, thirteen people at one time I had in that branch. That was a big change for me in what I was doing. Instead of applying much of the technical skill and knowledge that I'd learned in my college years, I moved with thirteen folks to almost exclusive supervisory role. I had hydrologic technicians, hydrologic engineers, C-Es [civil engineers] and C-E techs, and we were about the business of doing design data collection primarily on the Dolores Project. So we were running reservoir operation studies, sizing facilities, sediment studies–the whole nine yards.

But it really was a transition for me out of the technical realm into the supervisory ranks. And I've often looked back and said, "I sweat blood for five years to get an advanced degree in civil engineering and hydrology and then practiced it for three-and-a-half [years], and then became a supervisor, for which I had no training. (laughs) I think that's a bit of a pitfall in Reclamation. I think it still is. The fact that we don't focus. "We" is the collective "we"–academia as well as the Bureau–don't focus enough on providing skills to its employees to allow them to be better equipped to become supervisors and managers. I think that's a real down side. We sort of throw young, bright, up-and-coming engineers out there and say, "Okay, now you *are* one, you're a supervisor. Now figure out how to do this." And there was nothing in my bag of tricks that I'd learned at college or anything else, aside from a few humanities classes (chuckles) that would even give me the soft side of education that had anything to do with human relations and how do you deal with people. How could you become a good supervisor? The skills I had learned were the hard sciences and they didn't apply very well.

Storey: What kind of skills do you believe people should be trained in to be effective supervisors?

Skills Needed to be an Effective Supervisor

Gold: I think there's a real need to have what people loosely just call "people skills." But to me, the heart of that is communication skills. I think the ability to listen, and most engineers don't understand that at all, they have reverse psychology. They think if you talk long enough and loud enough, you win the day. I prefer to think that you have two ears and one mouth, and you should use them in that proportion. But that's certainly my personal view. One of the things we lack most as engineers is the ability to truly communicate, to listen to what somebody is saying, to reflect on that and then act in accordance. Obviously, to be able to give people feedback, to communicate direction, orders if necessary, but certainly vehicles, skills, abilities, which allow either one-on-one or group dynamics to function in such a way that the ideas of management are appropriately transmitted and received by employees. And I think that's what we really miss.

I think a good deal more understanding of human behavior, some of the things that maybe as freshmen in college you got, Sociology 101 or Psychology 101, or however it was captured. The engineering curriculum probably allowed for the bare minimum, because there was so much technical you had to get past in four years of education that you sort of squeaked by with one class that *maybe* told you something about human behavior. My sense is that it isn't nearly enough. We would all be better served if we had a better understanding how human beings interact, because *that* becomes the business when you become a supervisor. The business is, "How do people interact? What makes them tick? How do *my* skills and abilities or lack thereof interface with *your* skills and abilities or lack thereof and allow us to get the job done?" There's not much focus on that in Reclamation.

I think that some of that could certainly be improved *outside* academia. I also believe that academia could improve its preparation. But the big argument is, you have so much technically to learn. What it means, then, is an engineering curriculum becomes a six-year program, because most of them now are crammed into five. And so that's the argument. And I understand the argument, and I guess what I think *could* happen is an agency, like Reclamation particularly–maybe particularly in its past, it may get better because of the mix of skills we won't have so damned many engineers–but when we're a hundred percent engineering organization, we *could* have, and probably *should* have spent a good deal of time taking those "best of the best" engineers and making better people out of them in terms of their ability to deal with their peers and their subordinates and the hierarchy, given them some skill that compared on some level with the kind of technical skill that they had, so they could at least talk to each other.

I allude to the fact that that may get better, because I think we have in our future a much different mix. It won't be just engineers in this organization, it will be other kinds of people. My fear is it'll be, because of our history, it'll be a litany of technical kinds of people. We'll have the best biologists, or the best water quality specialists, and they, like engineers, will be so schooled in their technical specialty and not so schooled in communication and human behavior kinds of things. So its probably still an area that needs to be focused on, because my sense, if I look at *my* career, I think the biggest pitfalls that the Bureau has fallen into have been pitfalls of effective management and supervision. We've done an *excellent* job in technical arenas, but we have not done as good a job as possible in is managing and supervising to get to the right place. Once we start on a goal, my perspective is we can solve any technical problem that comes along. We can grow alfalfa on this *carpet*. We have the skill. Should we? That's another question, and it doesn't have anything to do with agronomy and water supply. (laughs)

Storey: Yes. What about other things? Communication is vitally important, I certainly agree with that. I think, for instance, of areas like personnel and budgeting and various other things like that. Which ones do you think can be formally transmitted to a potential supervisor or to a new supervisor?

Value of Department's Manager Training Program in Preparing Managers

Gold: Of those you mentioned, and I'll just use those as examples, I think they all can and they all should. I'll give you *my* example: When I feel like I really made the transition to management

was when I attended the Department's [of the Interior] Manager Training Program in 1981-82. I spent a year in Washington, and had the distinct opportunity to have an extremely good training officer, Frank Pecarich, who sort of took me under his wing and said, "Hey, Rick, this is the way the world works." And [he] gave me a chance to look at it, and then to look at myself and say, "Gee, if I'm going to do well, what do I need to do different. What skills do I need to look beyond my history, my formal education, and where I had been, to look to where I wanted to be?" And what I then did is I think a pretty objective process of saying, "Rick, what you need is, you need some better knowledge of personnel practices. You need some better knowledge of the budget process. You need some better understanding of other agencies and how they work. You need some better understanding of politics versus careerism in federal service. How do Schedule "C" appointees work out with the G-Sers like myself?"

I spent a whole year in doing formal training as well as assignments that gave me a great deal more of that background. For instance, I took the two-week O-P-M [Office of Personnel Management] course in position classification. I probably have as much formal training in position classification as any position classifier in the Bureau of Reclamation. Now that doesn't make me a classifier. I wouldn't purport to be one, but I have a much, much, much better understanding of the personnel system: why it exists, how it works, the kinds of things that happen, the kinds of frustrations that *that* particular function has with dealing with people like me when we write P-Ds [position descriptions] and when we think, "Yeah, that must be a GS-12," and we've really written a GS-5 position, and vice versa.

"Its Critical for Managers to Understand a Broad Spectrum of Things"

I thought, and I still believe, that its critical for managers to understand the broad spectrum of the kinds of things that you deal with. And in *my* twenty-five years, and particularly the last half of that, I haven't dealt with many engineering problems, I haven't dealt with many hydrology problems. I deal with people problems, and that's what our managers do, they don't deal with the technical issues. I think you have to be well-enough schooled in the technical issues, as I put it, at least, that you can't get the wool pulled over your eyes. You have to know enough about what's going on that you don't just get snowed. *But*, the real skill of management is figuring out where you want to be, and figuring out how to get the staff and the organization to move in that direction, and that doesn't come without understanding personnel practices; budget you mentioned. I personally believe, and have been preaching since I was the projects manager in Durango, that every supervisor needs to understand the federal budget process, how it affects *them*. They need to be accountable for budgeting, for determining how much money they need, and for monitoring it, to be able to tell you, at least in some gross terms, how much of what they thought they needed have they spent. They need to be fiscally accountable. They need to understand what their data says. They need to understand how the systems work. Not to the point of becoming a technician, but to the point of becoming knowledgeable about the basics. And *I* believe in Reclamation, certainly two or three or four years ago, virtually *no* managers had that ability. I think we're making some strides, but I believe we're making them a bit too late, but better late than never. I think its going to be the key to our future. I think that understanding the financial realities of the operation of the federal government to be critical to survival in the federal government. If you can't figure it out, you might as well forget it. You need to go back and get that basic

skill. If that means formal training–and there are some good ones, O-P-M [Office of Personnel Management] has a great class on budget formulation, budget execution–which I took, by the way, when I was in my manager program–and they kind of lay it out for you. And you don't become an accountant, but you certainly become knowledgeable enough to understand the importance, and that's the key.

You need to have that knowledge, *I* believe, from where *I* sit, at least, coming up through what we call the program side of the organization–planning–that I need good understandings of all the administrative side of the house. I need to know what property is about. I need to know what procurement is about. I need to know what personnel's about, A-D-P, computer business, finance, budgeting. I don't think there's any area that you can totally ignore, because if you ignore it, you leave a big void in your ability to deal with issues that will be yours, or *should* be yours, and you need to have enough understanding to be able to pull the organization together as a whole, and move it where it wants to go. Without that, first of all, you never pull the organization together, you've always got a fragmented process. Extremely important.

Storey: In terms of training Reclamation managers, they have done away with the one-year managers' program now at the Departmental level. Do you think that was a good idea? Or do you feel that's really a program that could benefit Reclamation?

Manager Training Program Extremely Valuable

Gold: As a graduate of that program, for *me* that program was *extremely* valuable. There's no question in my mind I wouldn't be where I am today as assistant regional director without it. But a lot of that is because of what that program did to *me.* I also think a lot of it has to do with the candidate's attitude and the staff's attitude during that year. If you send the wrong candidate, you don't have a successful program. If you send the right candidate and they don't find the right support network, the right kind of staff support, "guidance," if you will, pushes and shoves in the right direction, you don't get a successful program. It might even be that there's a good deal of luck involved in that, "Can you line up the right assignments? Can you get into the right training classes?" For me, if it were *my* cut, based on my *own* experience, I would think its an extremely valuable program for the Bureau. I think there are other ways to get some of that information. And I believe the biggest drawback that that program specifically had was the time commitment. You had to be committed to moving to Washington for a year, ten months, and that kept a lot of people from doing that.

I think it also provided a bit of incentive by sort of testing your metal: Did you *really* want to be in the program? You had to have some commitment rather than just, "Well, I'd really like to, as long as . . ." and then there's the litany of "so long as I can stay here, keep my fishing license, don't have to worry about selling my house, my wife can still do . . ." You know, fill in all the blanks. Sometimes you can make training too easy. Its sort of like working while you're in college. If Daddy just gives you 10,000 bucks a year and says, "Go to college," and you just go spend the money, you *probably* don't get near as good an education if Daddy says, "There's the school, you're on your own," and you have to go out, you really have to get a job, you have to earn your keep. When you spend that keep over at the Registrar's Office, it means a whole lot more to you, because you're invested. I think

management training is a bit like that. You need to be invested; you need to be *serious* about increasing your knowledge base–not just, "Hey, that sounds like fun! Let me take *this* course." That's the biggest drawback *I* see in some of the current courses that are sort of "stay where you are, do your own thing, and oh, by the way, we'll train you as a manager." Personally, I'm not sure those programs will work as well. They might. For some people, they might work better. For *me*, my fear would be that I would have stayed in the job that I was doing, and I would have got some training, but I'd never have made some of the mental transformations that I made when *I* went to Washington.

Another thing that may be real silly, but its my perspective that when I left the job I had and went to Washington, its sort of like cutting off your retreat mechanism. They filled my job. When I went to Washington, I didn't have a job to go back to, because they filled it, it was somebody else doing that job. Now that does a couple of things, but one of the things that I think most importantly it tells you that you have made a transition. You're out there, you need to figure out what you're going to be. And once you finish the program, you've got to go out and compete to get a job, because the one you had is gone. I think one of the biggest tragedies we have is that sometimes we allowed people to graduate from that program and come back, right into the same job they left, and in my experience at least, that usually didn't work, because we had then an employee in his existing job that had some training, and there was never much motivation to move beyond that.

Finding the Right Managerial Candidate

I think another real travesty is picking the wrong candidates, and I've seen a few of those happen where for whatever reasons, and I know there's a lot of them, good and bad, but you picked somebody because either the pressure was there, or you needed to do something with this employee. He wasn't quite fitting, he was a square peg in a round hole, so let's get him some training. Instead of dealing with some of the *real* issues that were there, we tried to avoid the conflicts, retrain, regroup, reshape, and hope that our problem went away, and most of the time it didn't.

I also think the Bureau did some disservice by sending to that manager development program some candidates that they had no intention of making mainstream managers out of. That's sort of a dishonesty to the organization. If you put your hand over your heart and you say, "Yes, we are going to take biologists, archaeologists, landscape architects, computer science specialists"–you name it–what I'm saying here is nonengineers–if you're going to put your hand over your heart, send those people out to become managers, then you'd better damn well be prepared to bring them back after a year and make managers out them! And the organization hasn't quite had that ethic. It likes to *feel* like its training a broader cadre, but when you look at it in many cases, mainstream managers are like myself, they're engineers. Some of that makes sense, but *all* that doesn't make sense. Some of our better managers are not engineers, but the organizational ethic says most of them *should* be. And that's a culture thing, it'll come. And maybe you have to start someplace, maybe you have to get some training of these nonengineers, but I think particularly early-on we sent some nonengineers out into the Departmental Manager Training Program, when they came back they weren't managers, and they weren't *made* managers, and weren't given management opportunities. And that hurts the program, because now you've got all these people out there that say, "Oh

yeah, humbug, it doesn't work. Look at me, I went out and I did all the right things, jumped through the hoops, but I'm not a manager." It's a mixed bag, because some of those candidates thought it was a magic brass ring too. But it has to be a two-way street, you have to pick the right kinds of candidates . . .

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. SEPTEMBER 28, 1993.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. SEPTEMBER 28, 1993.

Storey: This is Tape 2 of an interview by Brit Storey with Rick Gold in Salt Lake City, Utah, September 28, 1993.

Gold: You have to pick the right candidate, and then the candidate has to do the right job to become the manager. *Picking* the candidate, I think is probably an area where we as an organization don't show enough strength. Its almost as though–and maybe its just because of the experiences I've been in–its almost as though we have a quota to fill. "You have to pick two." So we go, "Well, let's see . . ." And in two days or less we decided, "Here's our candidates." To me, that sets you up for some potential for problems. I mean, you should have a better process than, "Gee, by October first we have to find the candidates." If that's as much emphasis as you put into it, [and] that's sort of my sense in many cases, then you're not doing justice to the candidate. You ought to pick those candidates for a Departmental Manager Training Program, or a Bureau Manager Training, whatever management [training] program you have, you ought to pick them as though you were picking them for the management position. If you're not, you're not doing them a service, increasing their expectations. I think a better approach to screening and selecting the right candidates would help all those programs. In *my* case, I felt like the Assessment Center process, which is the method by which the Bureau screened its candidates for the Department Manager Training Program, I felt that process was very good, because it helped managers, if they used the process, select the right kinds of candidates. Obviously, it has its failures, but at least there was some purposeful attempt to pick people who were your future managers. That's what the agency ought to be doing. It ought not to be picking candidates to get them trained. It ought to be picking candidates who are going to be their future managers, and then specifically designing training programs to fill their voids, what don't they have that they need?

Reclamation's Restructured Manager Training Program

I think the restructuring of the managers program is–its new, first of all, and it has some promise. I think it may be too easy, it may lack that commitment, "Are you really willing to go for ten months and pay some price, personally, to get the training, to move on?" But by the same token it may then attract a broader cadre, it may allow people to stay in their present job and get the training. I guess the proof will be in the pudding. If the program tends to create people who come back to their present job and don't make a transition, then has the training been as valuable to the organization as it could have been? I'd say it certainly will be of value to the individual. Whether its of as much value as it *could* be is another question. Remains to be seen.

Storey: I've seen, in my personal experience at Reclamation, a few people who were put through various management programs, and then no job offers were made, they just sat there. They

ended up going to other agencies. (Gold: Right.) Seems like that's a problem.

Gold: I think some of that's the culture. I see that too, and we have some examples right here in this region. And I think if the agency truly believes that no matter what we do, we can't make this person into a manager that we'll accept, then for God's sake don't spend the money and train the person and increase their expectations. Deal with them up front and say, "Look, we don't think it'll work." Don't train them and say, "Gee, I don't know why nobody will hire you." Because we have that option to hire them, and we don't as well. So it's a real dilemma, I think.

Storey: I'm interested in pursuing this issue of technical expertise. You mentioned that its an engineering organization, but you also mentioned that the issues become people issues rather than technical issues when you become a supervisor, and subsequently maybe a manager. For instance, how much technical expertise do you have to have to manage a branch, a division, say, that's full of engineers? We have a branch in Denver that is run by an archeologist which has an engineering section and a recreation and cultural resources section under him. What are your perspectives on that?

Value of Technical Expertise for Managers

Gold: Personally I believe that the farther from the technical specialist that a manager is, the less technical knowledge the manager needs. In other words, assuming sort of the ideal circumstance, maybe, of how supervision *should* be, then the technical engineer, the design engineer, the person who is physically designing, the journeyman level, if you will, that supervisor of that person probably needs to have a fairly high degree of technical knowledge about design. The same way if he's a fishery biologist or if she's an archaeologist. So the first level supervisor needs to know enough about that technical specialty to provide not only supervision, but review, critique, acceptability, approval, of the technical product. Now it *can* happen through peer evaluation. In other words, you can have *two* GS-12 fishery biologists and one reviews the other's work; that works. But typically that happens between the technician and the first-line supervisor.

When you move to the second-line supervisor, if that's a branch, say the branch chief is the first-line supervisor. When you get to the division chief level, you need certainly less technical expertise, and in fact in my view, you need some, but you may also not only be supervising that branch of design engineers, but you may be supervising a branch of archaeologists or fishery biologists. Certainly conceivable in today's organization. And so if you're so closely tied to one specialty, you can't do justice to the other branches that you may be supervising. And you just keep magnifying that. By the time, I believe, you get to an assistant regional director's position, a regional director's position, an assistant commissioner's position, you don't need to be a design engineer anymore, you don't need to be a fishery biologist anymore, but you need to have enough understanding of *all* the disciplines that you supervise, and when you get to be the regional director, you supervise all the disciplines. So you need to have enough understanding of all the disciplines to know how they work, to have a basic understanding of how all the parts fit together, but certainly you don't need to be an engineer, in my view.

I think any technical background that will provide some of the process kinds of knowledge–and that's one of the things for me personally, that I have always felt was a compelling value that engineering happened to teach me. I'm not sure if biology would have taught it to someone else, or accounting would have taught it to someone else, but the process of engineering–not the substance of it, but the process of it–has helped me as a manager, because it taught me the logic of, "How do you find out what you know? How do you get focused on what you don't know? How do you look at the options? How do you make a decision? And how do you implement a decision?" It's the *process* to me that becomes more important. And if you have folks who understand that basic process concept, no matter where they got it, to me that's the strength that you need in upper management, because you don't need to be a design engineer.

In the first place, if you've done your job right, you have a very qualified first-line supervisor who *is* a design engineer, who knows that specialty, and you don't get inordinate errors coming out of that function, because they get stopped right there at the first line. That's not to say you don't get mistakes, because we all make mistakes. An inordinate number–you don't get incapable people just producing the product for the agency, because you have a first-line supervisor. If that first-line supervisor has the responsibility–sometimes they don't–but if they do, that's where the technical decisions get corrected and you get the best thinking, the synergy of the organization in solving technical problems. You move up to the next level, you start to get synergy of a broader aspect of the problem–not just planning but also O&M at the higher level. When you get to the R-D's [regional director] slot, you have the need to be able to look at all the aspects–administrative, program, finance–and say how does *all* that fit. And if you're just a one specialist kind of person, you don't do that, you don't do a good job of it, and so you ignore part of your organization. Human behavior, from my experience, says if there are vacuums, they will be filled. If you've got a manager that doesn't know anything about computers, refuses to learn, isn't interested, pretty soon you have a computer guru grow up in your organization who's running the show, because the boss doesn't want to know about it. And that fragments the organization; now you have two leaders. You have this guy trying to go over there, and this guy trying to go over here. They're never brought together. So that's kind of the concept that I see in terms of less technical, the higher you go in the organization, more responsibility, the lower you go.

Storey: You said earlier that people problems become the major issue. Could you talk further about what people problems are?

People Problems

Gold: I think (sigh) they range in my mind from, and maybe "problems" is the wrong term on *this* side of the spectrum, maybe they're people opportunities: how you get where you want to go through people, because *that's* the only job I have. I don't do much, what many would call productive work. I get *my* work done as an assistant regional director, through people. So my issues are, "How do I motivate them? How do I get them going in a direction I want them to go? How do I change course? How do I provide input? How do *I* manage the people?" So on one side of that equation is a problem that I own, how do *I* get the people going in the right direction from my perspective, from their perspective, from our collective perspective. That's a problem, one sense of it, because its an opportunity to interact with the minds and the

processes of ten or fifteen folks. That's a problem for me, and it's the gut issue of management at my level.

I think on the *other* side of the spectrum, are maybe what more traditionally would be called "problems": E-E-O [equal employment opportunity] complaints, employee grievances, congressionals, union grievances; that whole perspective of difficult circumstances that need a resolution. The manager's job is to get in the middle, sort out the details, what should or shouldn't be done, and implement a solution. But to me, they're on one continuum. There's not a set of skills that you use to solve difficulties, controversies, and another set of skills you use to motivate, provide direction, in terms of accomplishing your mission. They are many times the very same skills. Its how you deal with *people* that you're dealing with, how do you understand what they would like to do, what they think is right to do. How do you meld that with what the agency's views are, where the agency wants to go, and move forward with some degree of consensus and buy-in from all the parties? It doesn't matter whether you're trying to solve a grievance or implement a new initiative, you still need to get to some modicum of consensus of where we're going. And it really uses many of the same skills.

Storey: What you've been talking about to me in this people problems question is people internally in Reclamation. Do people problems also extend outside Reclamation, in your perspective?

Dealing with People Issues Outside Reclamation

Gold: No question. I think that many of our issues, particularly in the future and today deal with how we either resolve conflicts with outside organizations, or, by the same token, how we get constituents or partners or other stake-holders to respond to the kinds of direction that we're trying to provide. If we're trying to move toward more water conservation, how do we motivate irrigation districts and cities and users of all kinds to embrace our ideas and our directions is the same issue. And I would characterize that our areas of controversy, which will require better and better skills, are increasing. We're going to have *more* controversy.

In our history, we were, I believe, pretty singularly focused on developing water resources, and the United States was pretty singularly behind us as a nation in the 40s and 50s and 60s, up until the late 60s when I believe there was a shift. But until that time, there wasn't much controversy. Everybody liked it, it was the right thing to do, let's go out and develop some water supplies. So there wasn't much controversy in the overall direction. Today that's not the case. I think there's *lots* of controversy, and certainly in the direction of water resource development. How you manage is also filled with controversy: things like, which I'm currently involved in, the Glen Canyon E-I-S [environmental impact statement] is a *hugely* public process that is *full* of controversy with many, many, many separate views of how the world, specifically how the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River, should be operated, for what benefits, to what goals, to what level is it to be preserved, is it to be used. How do the varying laws that affect it interact? How do you resolve conflicts which obviously exist, in terms of land ownership, between the tribes and the United States, water ownership between the tribes, the United States, and the seven basin states?[6] All of those things bring people into conflict across a table, whether they're employees, or whether they're

6. The seven basin states of the Colorado River basin are Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and California.

opponents, or whether they're in fact sponsors, cooperators, or simply stake-holders, people who *must* be at the various tables of Reclamation in order to solve problems and go forward.

And to me, that's the byword of where Reclamation is heading. We're heading into an era where our skills in being able to resolve water resource related issues, conflicts, situations, will be the test of whether the Bureau of Reclamation has a new mission or not. And its our acceptability that'll be the answer. If we're not accepted, if we can't do a good job of sorting out the issues and coming again to some modicum of consensus, then we won't have a role. It'll be someone else who rises as the facilitator, the leader, the mediator, the middleman, the honest broker. It'll be that entity, person, organization, what-have-you, that will meet the challenge. And to me, that's where we have to come from. We have to get real good at that. And we're starting, in my view, from a place where not many of us, collectively in the Bureau, have all that many skills in getting to that point. And it's the people skills, again, its how good as managers are we? How good as supervisors are we? Because it's the same set of skills. If you're dealing with environmental groups, fishermen, water users, Indian tribes, all in the same room. They're all folks, they're all people, and those human behavior kind of skills are what'll be critical.

Storey: Before we started off on this track, we had been discussing your career, and I think we had just moved you to Durango. What did you do in Durango? You were a branch chief, you said? (Gold: Uh-huh.) Working on just the Dolores Project, is that what I understood?

Working in Other Project Offices

Gold: Primarily the Dolores Project, but we were also working on the Animas-La Plata Project, and to some extent the San Miguel Project. They were all authorized for construction in the same act, the '68 C-R-B-P Act. I was there about three-and-a-half years. Time flies, I tell you, but most of the work was involved with doing the hydrology aspects of those three projects, and the product was the definite plan report on the Dolores Project. The other two projects came later, and of course were in varying degrees of study and investigation during the time I was there.

Storey: And then did you stay in Durango?

Gold: No, in July of '75 I moved to Billings, Montana. I became the regional hydrologist then. I moved up a step, got a promotion, went to Billings, left Durango and changed the world I operated in. Obviously, the circumstances, the rivers went the wrong way, and all that other stuff when I moved to the then Upper Missouri Regional Office. Again I was a supervisor, I had a branch of about ten folks in a Planning Division. But when I went up there, the primary focus, the primary activity I got involved in was the International Joint Commission Study of the Garrison Diversion Unit, the U.S.-Canadian study, one of the first of many studies of the Garrison Diversion Unit.[7] So I spent probably three or four years pretty deeply embroiled in

7. Plans for the Garrison Unit called for diverting water from Lake Sakakawea, formed by Garrison Dam on the Missouri River, to provide water for irrigating almost one million acres and supplying municipal and industrial purposes. "In the Garrison Diversion case, Canada opposed a U.S. project to divert waters from the Missouri watershed for irrigation purposes across the divide into the Hudson Bay drainage basin. Canadian concerns related to the project's possible effects on the Souris and Red Rivers, including the potential for the transfer of foreign fish
(continued...)

that particular international study of Garrison, reformulation, if you will. A lot of computer modeling on consumptive uses, water supply, where did the water go, but also a pretty good taste into the biological aspects of interbasin transfer of fishes and fish diseases and fish eggs and a whole bunch of different *kinds* of controversies on an international scale.

It was during that time, and I spent until 1981 in that job as chief of hydrology, until I went on the Departmental Manager Training Program. So roughly six years I spent in that technical position. That's the longest I'd ever spent in any position thus far in my career, and toward the end of that I think is where my transformation started to come in that I, again, was dealing with the people side of supervising, dealing with a planning program, and had been at it just over ten years, started in '69. In about '79 I started to reflect on where I was going and decided that I was really interested in moving up the chain of command into the management arena, and I felt like I had developed some skill there that was serving me well and I was getting some recognition for it. And it was at that point that I applied for the Department's Manager Training Program, was selected, and went to Washington in the '81-'82 timeframe, manager program.

Storey: You've already mentioned that you mapped out a program for yourself during that year with some assistance from the training officer and so on. What was the program like for you?

Department's Manager Training Program

Gold: For me it was a real personal transition to–and I think it had something to do with the transitions of recognizing that I was leaving a technical field completely, what I had had my training in, hydrology. Being the chief of hydrology in a regional office, there was only one job above me in the pecking order, and that was the chief of hydrology in Denver, in the old D-700. And I didn't aspire to that job, so I essentially was leaving the technical specialty I had and realized that I was moving toward management kinds of positions. I did a pretty good self-evaluation of the skills I had and the voids that existed. I mentioned I specifically focused on budget, personnel, and some of the internal workings of the federal government on a broader scale, between agencies and between the careerist and the political folks. I also had an *extremely* good assignment on Capitol Hill. I worked for Representative Douglas Bereuter from Nebraska, on his personal staff. I ended up writing a couple of bills, one of which was the Ground Water Recharge Demonstration Bill. I wrote the first bill. It ultimately passed several years after I left, in essentially its same form. It's the program that we now have in the seventeen western states to demonstrate ground water recharge. An extremely good experience for me to broaden my horizon of the difference between executive form of government, executive branch government functions, and legislative.

7. (...continued)
species, parasites and diseases. By developing a common view of the facts and by collegially assessing the risk of potential damage, the Commission produced a binationally credible study of the proposal and a basis for meeting commitments under the Boundary Waters Treaty. In its 1977 report, pursuant to a reference from the two governments, the Commission recommended against building those portions of the project that could affect water flowing into Canada. It also recommended that further construction not be undertaken until the risk of biota transfer was eliminated or until the two countries agreed that this was no longer a matter of concern;" see "Garrison Unit," in "The IJC and the 21st Century," www.ijc.org/php/publications/html/21ste.htm (Accessed September 2014). For more information, see Wm. Joe Simonds, "Jamestown Dam and Reservoir Unit: Garrison Diversion Unit, Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program," Denver: Bureau of Reclamation, 1996, www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html.

Again, I mention, some degree of luck, because the way Mr. Pecarich "forced," I think is the right word, forced the candidates to deal with it is, "If you want an assignment, go get one. And Capitol Hill is *that* way." [I] took my resumé in hand and opened the congressional staffing book and found out those congressmen who had something to do with water issues and went knocking door-to-door at the A-A's [administrative assistants] and said, "Here's who I am, and here's the skills I have, and I'd like to spend six weeks with you at no cost to you, and I'll do whatever you want me to do." And that's what I had to offer. What I wanted in return was a good, purposeful training assignment where I could get in, get my feet wet, do some substantive work on Capitol Hill. And it just so happened as I walked into Douglas Bereuter's office, his A-A, Helen Schramek said, "You know, just last week we lost our natural resource guy and we're looking to replace him, but boy do we have some work we'd like done." And the next Monday I pulled my chair up beside a typewriter on about this much work space and went to work, and it was really an *excellent* assignment for me, and I spent six weeks on the Hill. While I was there, it was during the springtime and I attended all the appropriations hearings for the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation and got to fill in that side of what was going on on Capitol Hill with committees and appropriations, so it was a real double-barreled kind of activity.

I also structured myself into a number of assignments with the Corps of Engineers, with the Department of Energy, with the Fish and Wildlife Service, with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for then Water and Land, Gary Carrothers. I shadowed the commissioner for a couple of weeks, I worked in the Office of Water Policy, as it was just being formed during those years, with Tom Barr [who] came in with Dr. Carrothers as assistant secretary. I had some real good what I consider to be different kinds of assignments. I purposely did not have a rotation assignment in the Bureau of Reclamation while I was in Washington. There were offers, "Why don't you come and work in planning for a few months, because we could really use you." And I said, "Yes, but I couldn't really use you. I have plenty of that." (chuckles) And so I did things that for me meant much more than getting another year of experience. Its like the old adage, "Do you have thirty years of experience, or do you have one year of experience thirty times?" I didn't want one year of experience thirty times, so I purposefully branched out. I took a number of O-P-M courses. I took some privately-offered training from the American Management Association. It was forty weeks of luxury for me. It was a training program that was pretty carefully designed, it was flexible because you never knew one day to the next when something would have to change, but it was very productive, did a lot to me personally, as well as giving me a lot of skills. But it really helped me make the transition.

Searching for the "Right" Job

When I finished the program, I came back to Billings. I came back as an assistant planning officer, which admittedly was a position created for me because I didn't have a job. (laughs) And it was a holding position. It was the expectation, the agreement between myself and the regional director, that I would do what needed to be done in the region as an assistant planning officer and I would find myself a job. I would apply until I got a job that I wanted. I took a little longer than I expected, and it certainly helped me to get the rose-colored glasses off. I think one of the down sides of going to Washington is it's a high visibility job, the sun rises and sets right off one shoulder and down the other. When you

come back from Washington, you think you've got the world by the tail. It took me fourteen months to get a job. I applied for, I think, thirteen different GS-14 positions. I targeted myself to get a projects manager's job. I wanted to make the move to a broader whole kind of management job. I was looking for a smaller projects office that I could move into and manage the whole program. I was a bridesmaid a couple of times, but I never got selected. I started looking at chief of water and land in a couple of places. I applied for those jobs, didn't get those either. I was offered a couple of planning officer's jobs, which I declined. I did not want to stay in planning, I did not want to go to Washington and turn around and come back and become a planner again. So I declined to do that. I think it was the thirteenth application I'd filed in the fourteen months that was for the projects manager in Durango–strangely enough–and I got that job. Cliff Barrett,[8] the regional director here in Salt Lake City, hired me in October of 1983 to go back to Durango, a place I had already lived, so I pretty well knew the circumstances, but to go back and be the projects manager.

At that time, we were moving forward for the construction of the Animas-La Plata Project. Unfortunately for the Bureau at that time, it was also the time when cost-sharing became the byword. And the administration said it wasn't going to build Animas-La Plata unless the cost-sharing agreement was signed, and I fell heir to sorting that whole issue out with project sponsors. It was a Department-led team, but I was on that negotiating team for cost-sharing. We spent about three years negotiating the cost-sharing agreement, and ultimately an Indian water rights settlement with the two Colorado Ute Tribes.[9] Many, many of the skills that I'd learned in Washington, and the confidence I gained in myself, were extremely useful as I was the projects manager in Durango. I was there until January of '88, so I was there (Storey: Five years or so) five years as the projects manager. It was a great job.

Storey: Well, I think what we need to do is stop. We're getting to the end of our time, and we can pick up there. And I have a few, I think, fairly brief questions to tie up some things that came up in the previous discussion.

Family Homestead in Rexburg

You mentioned that your grandfather homesteaded up in the area of Rexburg. Do you happen to remember when?

Gold: No, I don't specifically remember the dates, but I'm *relatively* sure it was in the late 1880s, but I'm not absolutely certain.

8. Clifford I. Barrett was assistant commissioner of Planning and Operations (1977-1981), regional director of Reclamation's Upper Colorado Region (1981-1989), and served briefly as acting commissioner in 1985. Mr. Barrett also participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Clifford (Cliff) I. Barrett, *Oral History Interviews*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, in 1996, in Salt Lake City, Utah, edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2009, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

9. The Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement of 1988 authorized the secretary of the Interior to supply water to the Ute Mountain and Southern Ute Indian tribes from the Animas-La Plata and Dolores projects. For more information, see "Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement," in United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, *Federal Reclamation and Related Laws Annotated (Preliminary)*, Volume V of Five Volumes 1983-1998, Donald L. Walker, editor (Denver: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 2625-33.

Storey: Okay, and the name of your grandfather and grandmother?

Gold: My grandfather's name was Lewis Lafayette Gold. He went by the initials L-L. And my grandmother's name was Bertha Moyer. Moyer was her maiden name. They're both now deceased.

Storey: I have an Aunt Bertha–"Aunt Bert" as it were, from Idaho, from Shoshone. You mentioned that . . .

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. SEPTEMBER 28, 1993.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 2, TAPE 2. SEPTEMBER 28, 1993.

Storey: What did that do for your understanding of Reclamation and management as opposed to staff positions?

Shadow Assignments

Gold: Candidly, it wasn't a very good assignment. I personally believe that sometime shadow assignments aren't very good, because they're not structured. It means you do whatever the person you're shadowing does. I shadowed Commissioner Bob Broadbent.[10] Bob was a different kind of commissioner. I think he was the pharmacist-commissioner that Reclamation had. He didn't have a bunch of technical background, which was good and bad. As a result, from *my* perspective–and I don't want it to sound critical–but a lot of it has to do with which weeks, what is he doing while you're shadowing him? And most of the political stuff, unfortunately, was off limits. He went to the secretary's meeting, I didn't get to go. That's understandable, but I think it would have helped, from a training perspective, to have been allowed to go, but I understand the political realities of what that was about, and I didn't go. I think it gave me a better understanding of how much information a commissioner has, when it finally gets filtered up, how decisions were made. Some of that was frightening, compared to my own comfort level of decision making at the time, but that had helped. That said, "Well, this is the *kinds* of decisions that get made," and yeah, you *don't* have all the plans and profiles and specs sitting on the commissioner's desk on which he can make those decisions. It has to get boiled down into something that's manageable, because he's trying to manage an organization with 7,000 folks in it, and you just don't do that with much detail. You don't have that time. So that was of great value to me. I think it was less than my expectation. My expectation was you really get to see how things work. It was probably beneficial from the fact that I realized that it didn't work the way I thought it did. The commissioner didn't make all the decisions. He wasn't involved in every minute of his day, making significant, earth-shattering decisions of huge consequence. He sort of had a day like many of the rest of our managers do–some of which was destined to work on paperwork and the rest was fighting the fire of the moment. And many times the staff has dealt with the issues and the decisions are pretty well made when you get to the Commissioner's Office level and its, "This is what we're going to do. Does anybody have a problem? Okay, let's get on with it." That's helpful to understand that that's the way it worked.

10. Robert N. Broadbent served as commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation under the Reagan administration from 1981 to 1984.

I think in general my year in Washington helped me understand that Washington Office process more than the two weeks I shadowed the commissioner. Again, its maybe a bias, but I think in many cases because the trainee doesn't know enough about what *is* going on in that office, its very hard to perceive even what you observe in terms of what does it mean, what happened two weeks ago that set this meeting up. You weren't aware of that, you're just aware of the here and now. Bob Broadbent was a very easy guy to get along with. He was very open to questions, and I asked him a lot of questions, and he was very forthright. But it was a very different kind of experience, and not one that I rated "this is one of the best things I did on my training program."

Storey: You mentioned Robby Robison at Teton Dam. Robison is not a real common name. Is he related to Roland Robison?

Gold: I think he is. I think they're cousins or something like that.

Storey: Oh, okay. Last question for today: Are you familiar with Wilkinson's *Crossing the Next Meridian*[11] and the water parts of it? (Gold: Yes.) What do you think of it?

Crossing the Next Meridian

Gold: On its surface–and I read the book, and I heard him speak a couple of weeks ago–on its surface Charles comes across as very critical, I think, of the traditions that many people in the Bureau of Reclamation have believed in. And I think it's the same with *Cadillac Desert*[12] and some of the other valuable perspectives they provide, valuable perspectives on the here and now, the reality of here and now. If there's one thing that all those books teach me is that "then" is not "now." We can't go back to the forties when the United States was foursquare behind building reservoirs and dams. It isn't there and it won't be again, I don't believe, not in my lifetime. I thought the book was good, I always believed that a different perspective is of immense value to managers, a book that is controversial, that sort of hits you in the pit of the stomach and says, "I challenge what you've been thinking," because it forces you to look at the reality of what you've been thinking. I think the agency needs to do more of that. The agency needs to come to grips with the 90s.

The agency needs to stop talking exclusively to its past constituents. Water users do not rule the world, contrary to popular opinion in the Bureau of Reclamation. They are a significant stake-holder, but they are not the only stake-holder. I feel like in my experiences in Glen Canyon, we have learned that, and we have demonstrated that it can be done. You don't have to throw the baby out with the bath water, but you have to be willing to take the views of people like [Marc] Reisner and Wilkinson and others and look at them on their face, evaluate the sanity, the logic, the perspective, and bring it home. You can't take *their* words and bring it home, but you can put all that together. The bright people that we have in Reclamation need to be thinking about what does that all mean, and what are we going to do about it. Because we may not choose to do exactly the things that people like Wilkinson and Reisner suggest, but certainly their ideas cannot be rejected out of hand. We have to deal

11. Charles F. Wilkinson, *Crossing the Next Meridian: Land, Water, and the Future of the West* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1992).
12. Marc P. Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993).

with the realities, because they're good at, in *my* view, providing us a perspective of reality that oftentimes we have the blinders on, we don't see it. We're too busy carrying out our traditional role, and we can carry out our traditional role until someone stops us from doing that, and they will, they'll end us as an agency. Its far more prudent for us to look at those realities, the current situation, and its not static, we can't look at *Cadillac Desert* or *Crossing the Next Meridian* and then never look back. We have to get tapped into what's happening this year and next year and the year after that, with the politics, the deficit, where the next administration might come from, what the leading issues of the day are. We have to tune our agency to solving contemporary problems–not historic problems. We solved the historic problem really well I think. Now its contemporary time and we can't survive without moving purposefully into the nineties and beyond, if we're going to survive. Its just an absolute necessity that managers in this organization understand that, look at all the perspectives, don't backlash and say those guys are a bunch of nuts, because they're not. They have a valued perspective and we need to look at it and recognize what we can do and what we should do, and then get on with the business of managing the water resources of the West.

Storey: Thank you. Do we have your permission for Reclamation researchers and outside researchers to use the tapes and the transcripts from this interview for research purposes?

Gold: You sure do, Brit.

Storey: Good, thank you.

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 2. SEPTEMBER 28, 1993.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. NOVEMBER 15, 1993.

Storey: This is Brit Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Rick Gold, assistant regional director of the Upper Colorado Region in Salt Lake City. It is November 15, 1993, at about eight o'clock in the morning, in a conference room in Building 67 on the Denver Federal Center. This is Tape 1.

Mr. Gold, the last time we were interviewing, we stopped at about the time you went to the Animas-La Plata Project. Could you pick up the story there please?

Animas-La Plata Project

Gold: Well, Brit, my exposure with the Animas-La Plata Project really started in about 1973, after that project was authorized for construction in 1968. But in 1973 I moved to Durango, Colorado, for the first time. I spent about two-and-a-half years there as the chief of the Hydrology Branch in the Planning Division, and our task was to bring three Colorado River participating storage projects to a definite plan report stage. In other words, to do the final planning on those projects, after their authorization for construction in 1968. I only spent about two-and-a-half years there, as I said, in that life, but in my career it was a rather significant move. It was the first time I had moved from a primarily technical position as an engineer, a hydrologist for the Bureau of Reclamation, to that of a supervisor. And at that point in time my first supervisory job, I had thirteen employees working for me. And that was also the last time I had done much technical work. So a young kid out of college with about

three-and-a-half years of Reclamation experience on C-U-P [Central Utah Project], I then got in the middle of supervising and what became the rest of my career in supervision and management. But that was a brief exposure to Animas-La Plata, two-and-a-half years' worth.

And then through a circuitous route, I arrived *back* in Durango to do more work on the Animas-La Plata Project in 1983. In the first stint, Animas-La Plata was really a secondary task. We worked on the Dolores Project more so than Animas.[13] So as I came back to Durango in 1983, I was the projects manager, and Animas-La Plata is, I think, an interesting page for Reclamation's history in that at that point in time, the project had completed all its National Environmental Policy Act compliance. It had a definite plan report, but lo and behold, as Reclamation began to request funds for construction, beginning in 1981, I believe, the administration, the Congress subsequently required Reclamation to do additional cost-sharing. So at the beginning of the cost-sharing here Reclamation came upon us, and upon me as the projects manager of Animas-La Plata in about 1983, '84, somewhere in that vintage. We worked diligently for about two-and-a-half years to develop a cost-sharing agreement for Animas-La Plata. Many folks, myself included, thought that when the administration came out and said, "You're going to have to go find significant cost-sharing for Animas-La Plata," even though it was authorized without such a concept, many felt that the project would in fact die of its own weight, because there would not be sufficient support to gain any substantial cost-sharing from the sponsors. The Secretary's Office actually headed the negotiating process. There were, through the course of that negotiation, several folks from the Department–notably among them was Mike Clinton. I think the final entity to be at the table was the lead negotiator was Wayne Marchant, when he was in the assistant secretary for Water and Lands Office, when he was the principal deputy. But in any case, those folks from the Department, as well as some departmental staff, worked with Reclamation and also with the many other folks who were interested in seeing the project complete, principally among them, obviously, was the state of Colorado, state of New Mexico, the local water districts.

And so it was an interesting process of trying to take a project which had legislative language authorizing that the Congress complete it. That language indicated that the project would be completed, as near as possible, concurrent with the construction of the Central Arizona Project [CAP], which by that time was well underway. A lot of political turmoil because the United States had come back and said, "Only if you cost-share this project would the United States support it." There were a number of philosophies that were carried through that cost-sharing, and a number of angles that were attempted in order to raise substantial cash. One of the linchpins of the idea was what was called a "buy-down" at the time. It came out of the idea of realizing that the project's benefit-cost ratio was, let me say, marginal. It was at least one-to-one by the nearest of margins when the project was

13. The Animas-La Plata Project was originally designed to store water on the Animas River along the Colorado-New Mexico border, and divert it to farms in the La Plata River basin. In 1980 the project was redirected to serve the water needs on two Ute Indian reservations in southern Colorado. For more information, see Jedidiah S. Rogers, "Animas-La Plata Project," Denver: Bureau of Reclamation, 2013; located in the Dolores and San Juan river basins in southwestern Colorado, the Dolores Project is a multipurpose project providing water for irrigation, municipal and industrial purposes, recreation, fish and wildlife enhancement, and power production for customers in the northeast Dove Creek area, central Montezuma Valley area, and the Towaoc area in the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Reservation, see Garritt Voggesser, "The Dolores Project," Denver: Bureau of Reclamation, 2001, www.usbr.gov/history/projhist.html.

authorized. And over time, and with increased interest rates and less and less enthusiasm for irrigation subsidies, the administration's support for the project at one-to-one benefit-cost ratio was less than enthusiastic.

So when we first started the cost-sharing concept, one of the first principles was, if you looked at this project based on *current* interest rates, mid-1980s interest rates, you found that this project had a benefit-cost ratio of about point six to one [.6:1]. And so the theory behind where the Secretary's Office was coming [from] was that the sponsors had to buy down the benefit-cost ratio to where it was one-to-one, to where the federal investment then would match the total benefits. It was a little bit of what I think later became known as "smoke and mirrors." But in any case, that was the philosophy of finding out *if* there was sufficient local support to build the project, and that was to find some folks to foot the cost. That came in a number of fashions: it was hard cash by the state of Colorado, ended up being something like $40 million; it came in terms of a payment for municipal-industrial water that was up front, concurrent with construction, rather than a repayment contract, forcing those entities to go out and bond on the open market and raise the money, give the money to Reclamation to build the facilities. Those are the kinds of things that were looked at, as well as cash contributions, but going around with your hat in your hand to southwest Colorado, northwest New Mexico, looking for enough cash to make a difference in a $500 million project was tough sledding.

Colorado Ute Tribes Settlement

But in any case, the whole package was rolled into one sometime around 1986. And during those years another important concept came into play with Animas-La Plata, and that is because from the time it was formulated it had water set aside, allocated, within the project, for Indians, the project became the heart of an Indian water rights settlement. The Colorado Ute tribes, the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute, had, I believe, in 1972, through the federal government, went to court to seek an adjudication of their Winters Doctrine rights.[14] That court case had remained essentially dormant for that ten years, '72 'til the mid-80s, and at this point in time, many folks thought this was the right time to try and mesh an Indian water rights settlement with this cost-sharing agreement, and let the weight of those two issues carry Animas-La Plata to construction.

And so not only was cost-sharing on the table and being rigorously negotiated, but an Indian water rights settlement was also being crafted, which would provide as part of the settlement that the Animas La-Plata Project would be built by a date certain. And those are really at the heart of the project as it now stands. The project is to deliver water to the tribes by the year 2000, although it hasn't begun construction yet. But an Indian water rights settlement encompassed more than Animas-La Plata, it encompassed all of the tributaries to the San Juan River in Colorado. It was a Colorado Indian water rights settlement only, with the two Ute tribes. So it settled water rights on the Mancos River and the La Plata River, the

14. "The federal reserved water rights doctrine was established by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1908 in *Winters v.United States*. In this case, the U.S. Supreme Court found that an Indian reservation (in the case, the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation) may reserve water for future use in an amount necessary to fulfill the purpose of the reservation, with a priority dating from the treaty that established the reservation. This doctrine establishes that when the federal government created Indian reservations, water rights were reserved in sufficient quantity to meet the purposes for which the reservation was established." Source: http://www.blm.gov/nstc/WaterLaws/fedreservedwater.html (Accessed December 2011).

Animas River, the Pine River, the Florida River, many of the other small tributary streams, and it was a major water rights settlement involving the state engineer; the two tribes, obviously, were heavily involved, as were their attorneys. And it made for a very complex time between about 1984-85 and when the final legislation was passed, codifying the Indian water rights settlement, the 1988 Act, Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement Act, and it actually gave the substance to the settlement, as well as the cost-sharing agreement at the time.

Cost Sharing and the Animas-La Plata Project

One other thing that came about in that time was sort of the last-ditch effort to find an agreeable cost-sharing ratio, because the dollars that were available, even though they were substantial, in the neighborhood of $40 million from the state of Colorado, didn't make much of a dent in a $500 million project. And so the target was to find some thirty, thirty-five, forty percent of the costs that could be declared non-federal in terms of meeting this buy-down threshold. And so quite late in the negotiating process, the project was divided into two parts, a Phase One and a Phase Two, if you will, and the federal government agreed to fund, through a cost-shared agreement, all of Phase One. And the non-federal sponsors agreed to non-federally fund all of Phase Two, without any federal dollars involved. So carving up the project into two financial parts was sort of the step that allowed the project to move forward under the administration's criteria. Again, the cry of "foul" and "smoke and mirrors" in that you left the last part to be built by someone else and yet took credit as though it were being fully costed by the non-federal entities. But in any case, the federal obligation was reduced by about that thirty or thirty-five percent from its original. And so the project ended up being, as I recall the numbers, about $133 million in Phase Two, which the sponsors agreed would be non-federally financed; that included one of the principal reservoirs, much of what we would call the "tail end," the extremities of the major supply works–canals, laterals, and what-not. While the Phase One facilities included the main pumping plant and the main reservoir, and the heart of the main canal and distribution system, would be cost-shared.

Storey: Can you put names on the reservoirs and canals?

Gold: Sure. The main reservoir was Ridges Basin Reservoir. Its an off-stream reservoir, its fed from a pumping plant called the Durango Pumping Plant near Durango, Colorado, on the Animas River. The Dry Side Canal is the main canal leading between the two basins, the Animas [River] basin and the La Plata [River] basin, hence the name Animas-La Plata Project. Took water from the river basin that had the water, the Animas River, and put it in the river basin where the land was, the La Plata River basin. But in any case, the phasing of this project was fairly controversial as you might expect, because it meant that the federal government was essentially stepping back from any financial responsibility for the final phase. And the unique, if not ironic part of this whole financial division was that the main facilities that were deferred to Phase Two were facilities which actually delivered the Indian water to the Indian lands.

A strange happenstance, if you will, and probably a circumstance that has caused the project a good deal of frustration in that as we tried to move it forward as the heart of an Indian rights water settlement. Those folks who were not involved saw that while it promised

things to the Indians, it delivered few of them–at least to their reservation lands. What the Indians saw in this issue, putting it in the time perspective of the mid-80s, was an opportunity to have their water supply stored off-stream in Ridges Basin Reservoir, for use as they saw fit. And at this point in time, there were many ideas that the water-starved states of California and Nevada would somehow be able to reach out and buy and have transported for their use downstream, water supplies from the upper [Colorado River] basin.[15] There were lots of schemes and there were lots of problems with those schemes, but the Indians believed, and I think it was a good strategy on their part, that if anyone could make that work in the basin, it would be the tribes. So what the tribes saw there was an opportunity to potentially have their water in storage, have it available, be able to work on the legal processes that would allow them to sell it to cities like San Diego, Las Vegas and elsewhere in the Southwest, and be able to turn a handsome profit and fill their coffers and allow them to build the rest of those facilities down the road. So that was the logic that put together the cost-sharing package and the Indian water rights settlement that got us to about 1988 when the law was passed, and again Reclamation, with all those things in hand, started to move forward to construct Animas-La Plata.

Strangely enough, as that process then again gained momentum and the state of Colorado appropriated its money and it was placed in a trust account for the construction of the project, there was again a lot of concern and upheaval on the part of the local environmental groups. It was not a large number of folks, but it was certainly a vocal number of folks. Again, the charges that we had somehow played games with the Indian tribes, that it was really the non-Indians, some of which were their attorneys, that were trying to manage what the tribes got for their own personal gain. There were also cries of "foul" relative to the environmental consequences, keeping in mind that this project's E-I-S [environmental impact statement] was completed in 1980. We were ready to begin construction, it was now '88 or '89, we had a document that was nearing ten years old. But in any case, all the hoops appeared to have been jumped through, and Reclamation was again ready to begin construction, and in fact had a construction start in hand from the commissioner of Reclamation, and in fact did hold the ground breaking ceremony, only to be sued some two months after that by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund on the adequacy of the environmental document which was now ten or eleven years old. And its been rather that story since then that we have been headed for a lawsuit, we have been briefing the court, we have been trying to reach some closure on whether or not this project could be completed with a NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] document that was in excess of ten years old. As part of a temporary injunction that would have stopped construction, we actually agreed to withhold construction until we supplemented our current draft NEPA document.

Reviewing the NEPA Process for Animas-La Plata

So we're right now in the process of doing that. A draft was placed on the street, a draft supplement to the environmental impact statement, lots of comments were received on whether or not we could even supplement that ten-year-old document, or rather should have gone back to square one, revisited the very heart issue of should we build the project. It was

15. The upper basin of the Colorado River refers to the states of Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico and was established by the 1922 Colorado River Compact that divided the waters of the Colorado River between the states of the upper and lower basin (Arizona, Nevada, and California).

our contention that the real argument was what's changed since 1980 that the base issue of should you build the project was well beyond us. It had been answered in 1980; it had been answered again in 1986 with the cost-sharing agreement; it had been answered again in 1988 with the Indian water rights settlement. You didn't need to go back and ask the threshold question, "Should you build the project?" Politically those decisions were very important to the Clinton administration as they sat in the Department and Commissioner Beard in his hearings was significantly questioned on his purported position, what was he going to do about the Animas-La Plata Project. As a result of that, the decision *was* made to move forward and produce a final environmental impact statement, not to go back and redraft and re-ask the initial questions, but to finalize the NEPA process. Its my guess, and I think it's a real good one, that as soon as that final environmental statement is filed, we'll be in a lawsuit again, over the adequacy of that document. So the saga of Animas-La Plata is by no means over, I don't think. It's a project which time sort of captured, from 1968 when it was the right thing to do as part of the Colorado River Storage Project [Colorado River Projects Act] to develop the waters of Colorado and New Mexico for the tribes and the local irrigators, the 1993 version looks much different. Its high cost, continues to carry significant subsidy, it has its detractors from an environmental impact standpoint, it has some local detractors from a "is it the right thing to do economically?" And whether or not it ever gets built I think is an open question at this point in time.

Its part of the changing Bureau of Reclamation. When Dan Beard comes out with his *Blueprint For Reform* and says, "We will not initiate irrigation projects," many people say, "Well, what about Animas-La Plata?" And when asked pointedly by the Colorado delegation, Dan Beard often says, "We will build Animas-La Plata." Whether that happens or not I think is a matter for the future to look at the political realities of probably two years from now when our NEPA document is complete, and subsequent, if there's a legal challenge, how far that goes. Its not going to be a clean process, no matter what happens.

Its been an interesting project to watch, its been an interesting politic to observe how the '68 Act was passed. The '68 Act was passed primarily, in *my* interpretation, to seek the authorization of the Central Arizona Project. In getting that project authorized, Mr. [Morris] Udall from Arizona at the time had to compromise with Wayne Aspenall of Colorado, and the truth of the matter is, there were five Colorado Projects that were authorized to be built concurrently with the Central Arizona Project, and Animas-La Plata was one of those. It was the political trade-off that allowed the politics of C-A-P to move forward. Of those five, only two have ever been completed: Dallas Creek and Dolores. Animas-La Plata sort of is perched on the verge, and the other two, San Miguel and West Divide, will undoubtedly will never be built. But in any case, Animas-La Plata is sort of caught in that time warp between the '56 momentum of the Colorado River Storage Project Act, the '68 participating projects like C-A-P, and 1993's realities of federal deficit and subsidies and all of that. I think there are lots of questions that remain to be answered, a lot of politics yet to be played. By simply not building Animas-La Plata, the whole question of what is your trust responsibility and what do you owe the Indian tribes of Colorado is on the horizon and looms large. The Colorado Ute tribes both look to the north, they look to what happened to the Utah Utes who recently, through Public Law 102-575[16] achieved a significant settlement out of that piece of legislation,

16. Public Law 102-575 is the Reclamation Projects and Authorization Adjustment Act of 1992. Title V of the act is the Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement.

some $250 million of settlement, plus development funds, and they are now looking to the north and saying, "Why can't we have a deal like that?" And I'm sure the saga is not over, it is probably just beginning. But as you look at the reality of building Animas-La Plata, you look at if not that project, then *what* settlement? An interesting story and one I've been involved with now probably twenty years.

Storey: What else would happen, what are the other consequences if the project wasn't built, besides the Indians having to look at another avenue for settling their claims?

Consequences of Not Constructing Animas-La Plata

Gold: I think there are obviously the issues of what will happen to the irrigated lands, some of them needing a supplemental supply, some of them being dry farm lands at this point. And I would guess that that impact is fairly small. Life will go on in southern Colorado, they'll continue to grow pinto beans and they will continue to grow high elevation alfalfa where they can, and they'll continue to get by with the water supplies they have, and more than likely the political machinery would not be significant enough to force that to be a very big issue, because of the subsidy. Subsidy is not a good word in the 90s, with the deficit where it is. The municipal supplies, primarily for the city of Durango and its environs, and for the cit[ies] of Farmington, Bloomfield, and Aztec in New Mexico is a bit more critical, and those cities will have to find additional supplies. Whether they can do that more cheaply would be a real debate. I doubt that seriously. More than likely, they would simply go off and do their thing, try and find water supplies.

One of the things that drives that is, because of the water rights and cost-sharing agreement, they were essentially being forced to up-front that money anyway. It was not the typical "you may repay over forty years" with what in 1968 would have been a very cheap interest rate, but in 1993, if we began construction, that interest rate would not be . . . You know, it would be a market interest rate, eight percent or seven percent or so. And so there's not much financial incentive to them to continue to stay with the project, other than the fact that the project was about ready to be constructed and if they had to go back and design [and] engineer their own facilities, it would take them some more time. But that's my guess of what would happen. The key issue will be what happens to the tribes. We have two Indian tribes that have a substantial claim, its never been a quantified claim, it was not even quantified in the settlement. It was simply settled, they would accept as settlement of their claims, project water coming from the Animas-La Plata Project. And so that will be the key question in terms of ongoing issues. There's a large quantity of water in the neighborhood of 80,000 acre feet from the project. About half of the water supply of that project was destined for those two tribes. That will be an unresolved issue that will just have to play out.

Storey: So maybe fifty percent of the project's water was then designated for municipal use and irrigation and supplemental irrigation use?

Gold: Correct, for non-Indians, fifty percent was needed.

Storey: And that's about 80,000 acre feet also?

Gold: Uh-huh, its about an even split, not exactly. Its close.

Storey: And the project was going to be around $500 million, back when you were the project manager. What are the current estimates, do you happen to know?

Gold: Its not gone up much since then. That was the cost numbers in 1986 when the cost-sharing agreement was put together. Its probably nearing $600 million now, if you look at *all* of it. But keep in mind about a third of it was destined for this Phase Two idea, which meant it was not going to be built by the federal government. So the federal costs were reduced from something like $535 million, I believe is the number, down to $300 [million] and change–$311 [million] I believe is the right number. And so that's the part that's escalated that's maybe near $400 million now.

Storey: You mentioned a Phase Two reservoir, but you didn't name it.

Gold: Southern Ute Reservoir was named for the land it would lie on, on the Southern Ute Indian Reservation, just off-stream of the La Plata River.

Storey: Now, if I'm remembering correctly, we did not really talk about your first Animas-La Plata stint in the last interview. You mentioned that you spent most of your time on the Dolores Project. Could you go further into your first stint at the Animas-La Plata Office, please?

Dolores Project

Gold: It was quite short as I mentioned, two-and-a-half years, but that was the time in which Reclamation actually was on the verge of producing the definite plan report for the Dolores Project. Actually three projects we were working on rather simultaneously, and they were all part of the '68 Act: Animas-La Plata, which we talked about, Dolores, and San Miguel. The Dolores Project was the first of the three that we worked on seriously, and I look back at the historical meaning of that: had we worked on the Animas-La Plata Project first, would it now be nearing completion, and the Dolores Project in controversy? But in any case, we chose the Dolores because it seemed easier, more straightforward, something we could complete the planning on and get the project into construction, and then move on to the other two. That was sort of the order in which we attacked them, if you will–a small staff of about fifty folks in Durango, which I was a part of. So the Dolores Project was put together during about 1970, and I believe that definite plan report is dated 1977, so about that six-or seven-year period. I was there from '73 to '75, and mostly the activity we were involved in was the water supply issues of the Dolores Project, sizing what's now become McPhee Reservoir, doing the flood studies, the water supply, crop requirement studies for the irrigated land. All of that process went fairly smoothly, we completed that definite plan report, the environmental statement, and the project went into construction in 1977. The only glitch that the Dolores Project ran into was in 1977 it ended up on the Carter administration's "hit list," and it was a rather brief stint on the "hit list,"[17] because it was ready for construction. It had the political

17. Jimmy Carter served as President of the United States from 1977 until 1981. Within a few weeks of the beginning of the administration, an internal discussion document accidently fell into the hands of a reporter. The document proposed cancellation of a number of water projects considered environmentally or economically unsound. This proposal came to be known as Jimmy Carter's "hit list." This happened while Commissioner Daniel P. Beard worked in the Carter administration,
(continued...)

motivation of the state of Colorado, and it was quite immediately decided that it was where it needed to be, it passed the tests that had been recently reformulated to take out the highly saline lands, and even though its continued to have significant subsidies, as all irrigation projects did in those days, it seemed to pass muster and we went on with construction.

Storey: When you say it was easier, could you define that for me?

Gold: My sense, Brit, is that it was less complex from a lands perspective. It was certainly, in terms of being more compact, more all in one place. It was quite a lot less hydrologically complex, all the water supply came from the Dolores River. There was an existing irrigation project that diverted water from the Dolores to where the lands were. There were closely associated *new* lands that could be irrigated. And I would say that the politics, even, of–and I should say the 1970 politics of southwest Colorado, the politics of Cortez and Montezuma County where the Dolores Project is centered–were significantly different from the politics of La Plata County in Durango, Colorado, where the Animas-La Plata . . .

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. NOVEMBER 15, 1993.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. NOVEMBER 15, 1993.

Gold: Durango was a bit of a tourist town in 1973. It had a narrow gauge railroad, it had a burgeoning ski industry at Purgatory, sort of starting to take off in terms of its allure as a tourist destination in both summer and winter. And as a result, there were lots of "nonlocals" they call them–people who were moving in, and they didn't bring with them the agricultural ethic that if you built a water project, that was great. They in fact had some differing views that you certainly needed to have the free-flowing river and to build a dam was terrible. It would sort of be like trying to build a dam in Aspen, a 1973 Aspen maybe, but in any case, a very different political climate than going to Cortez, Colorado, that was ninety-nine percent rural agricultural. There wasn't a tourist market there, even though Mesa Verde [National Park] was on its doorstep. It was not a tourist destination, it was a farming community and always had been. And if you were going to increase water supply, that was the right thing to do, and you just had full support of the county in that part of the state was just a hundred percent behind providing water supply. I'd guess there was a large factor in someone saying, "Let's tackle Dolores first, because we can get it done. We can get that one on the books and then we can work on Animas-La Plata. Its going to be tougher." Two tribes involved in the Animas-La Plata, one tribe involved in the Dolores, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Their lands were on the southern end of the project, fairly well defined. The concepts just came together easier on the Dolores Project.

Storey: Okay. You mentioned the San Miguel was the third one. I don't think I'd heard about that before.

San Miguel Project

17. (...continued)
and he discussed his perspective on the issue in his Reclamation oral history interviews and in "The Passage of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, 1991-1992: The Role of George Miller," an Oral History interview by Malca Chall, 1996 for the Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California.

Gold: San Miguel Project is a bit smaller project.[18] With all the difficulties of justifying the Dolores and Animas-La Plata, from a purely economics perspective, San Miguel was much, much worse. The concept had Soltado Dam on the San Miguel River, which is a tributary to the Dolores [River], and it had a *significant* pump lift to get the water to the high bench lands near Redlands, Colorado, and Norwood, Colorado. The acreage was much smaller, but the pump lift was much greater, and therefore more costly. And it was a very complex economic project to put together. There was *strong* support from the locals, but they were few in numbers. These were very, *very* small communities, compared to Cortez, almost to the point of being unincorporated, although they were. But in any case, a much smaller political base. A project that tried to do too much because of the location of the solid water supply. The San Miguel River was in a deep entrenched canyon, and to get that water to the land, you had to build a reservoir on the main stem, and then you had to lift it, pump it a long distance to get it to the lands. So the economics were very poor. The only way the project showed *any* signs of being viable, was–and at that time, again, in those early 70s–the mining, the oil shale, the oil boom was the best industrial thing that had happened to the West. And there was a lot of–what shall we say–optimism that any day now things would turn really good in that part of the world and we would have large communities, and we would have need for industrial water to fire oil shale and uranium is also a very rich industry, had been in that part of the country. And it had gone through lots of boom and bust kind of scenarios, and I think, to some extent at least, San Miguel sort of held the hope that another boom was coming, and so many of these ideas, "yeah, we'll need a large amount of municipal water because" . . . And fill in whatever scenario made sense. Large towns will come to develop the oil and the uranium, or we'll need process water. But the truth was, those were real speculative options, and the only way you could make the project look acceptable was to have a large block of municipal and industrial water in it. And most of us knew that that didn't pass the straight face test very well. As a result of that, we put a plan together, but it didn't materialize into anything the agency could support. And so it was, again, even though it was third in the series, we could never make a viable project of the San Miguel. We essentially prepared what's called a concluding report and put it on the shelf.

Storey: Was that a project that Reclamation had been told by Congress to investigate? (Gold: Yes.) In '68?

Gold: Yes, it was part of the '68 authorization.

Storey: So am I correct in thinking then there were seven Colorado Projects proposed there? Or did I miss something? Did I say seven? I meant six.

Gold: I think there were five, and maybe I've mis-spoken, its been too long since I've referred to the legislation. But Animas-La Plata, Dolores, San Miguel, Dallas Creek . . . I have the numbers mixed. I'm going to need to get that for you, because its been too long since I looked at all of them. West Divide, and . . . Maybe those were the only five, maybe I'm thinking of another act. There were several acts, and we had several other participating projects, but I think those are the five, and two of those were not built, San Miguel and West

18. As planned, the San Miguel Project was a multipurpose project to develop the waters of the San Miguel River, providing 28,000 acre feet of irrigation water for 19,000 acres of land and 14,000 acre feet of for industrial and municipal uses in Montrose and San Miguel counties of southwestern Colorado.

Divide.

Storey: Okay, now, the Animas-La Plata Office is in Durango, as I recall. (Gold: Right.) But it wasn't just an office for the Animas-La Plata Project. (Gold: Correct.) Its really sort of an area office–am I getting the right idea here?

Durango Projects Office Responsibilities

Gold: Under today's terminology of *Blueprint for Reform*, it is in fact an area office, and always has been. Its been called the Durango Projects–plural–Project*s* Office. It has a number of existing projects that we haven't talked about, things that were built in the 40s and the 30s: the Florida Project, the Pine River Project, the Hammond Project, the Mancos Project. Those were all operating. Navajo Dam was built in 1963 and its operated out of the Durango Office. So it is an area office that encompasses the geographic area of the San Juan River drainage. So that's the way it works. It's a hydrologically-defined basin. All of these projects fall within its geographic area. All of our projects offices in Upper Colorado are in fact–have been for years–area offices, if you will. Grand Junction takes care of the Colorado River drainage. Our Utah Projects Office takes care of the Great Basin and the lower end of the Colorado River, so we have that concept already in place.

Storey: Okay, but when you were there your first time, it was known as the Animas-La Plata Project [Office]?

Gold: No, it was the Durango Projects Office.

Storey: Okay, so I've been misnaming it.

Gold: It has always had responsibility for all those projects.

Storey: And you mentioned there were about fifty people there. Who were they? Who was the project manager?

Durango Office Staff

Gold: Before the planning staff–and that caused the fifty people to be there when a planning staff moved in. Before that it was an operation and maintenance office. It had four or five operating projects, as I've mentioned, and the staff was probably ten or fifteen. When the planning staff moved there, it went to fifty, but prior to that time Bob Tyner was the projects manager. He was the first projects manager I knew of. He was not the projects manager when I moved there, but I did meet Bob, he was still active in the local community and in the water business. When I moved there the projects manager was a fellow by the name of Ed Wiscombe, and Ed moved from Provo, strangely enough, as many of us did. Its where *I* moved from, is Provo. Ed Wiscombe was the chief of the Planning Division in Provo for a number of years, and about the time that the '68 Act passed in the early 70s, we, the region, were talking about getting ready to staff up and do the planning for these three projects. We were also at a point where the Central Utah Project had just begun construction in about '67, and so it was on its way. There was also some difficulties with funding, and there were some

numbers of people kinds of problems, and some reorganizations that were taking place there, and so there was a risk that people might be losing their jobs, and in fact I think as I left in 1973, the reduction in force was eminent, it was coming within the next few months.

But in any case, Mr. Wiscombe left and went from Provo to Durango, just to be the projects manager, and he rather immediately hired as his chief of planning, Wayne Cook. Wayne Cook was also in Provo. Wayne was the chief of the Hydrology Branch in Provo. And it was rather a cascading issue, as often happens, in that people move to a distant location, and then they look back and take the people that they want to help them do a new job and they attract those people to the new location. And I would say there were probably maybe fifteen or so who moved from Provo to Durango, planners, to work on these three projects. Let me just give you some of the names that come to mind: land classifiers, Laurel Chapel, Ed Breckenridge; economists, Glade Barney, Gary Reynolds; some hydrologists, including myself, Jim Riley, and Errol Jensen; land classifier Ron Pierce. There were probably a few more, but those were the immediate names that come to mind. But in any case, you see the story of people who moved to Durango, began to like it and say, "Gee, why don't you come help us? We got a promotion." Most of those people moved for promotions, which is typical in Reclamation, and so we had sort of a contingent of folks who used to work in Provo who moved to Durango to plan these three projects. Interesting office, small town. I think La Plata County had 12,000 folks when I moved there in 1973. The city of Durango was maybe 5,000-6,000 of those, surrounded by its rural area. Just beginning to boom in terms of a tourist attraction. Interesting place.

Storey: What was Wiscombe like?

Gold: Ed Wiscombe was a projects manager that I probably learned more from than most of the managers that I've ever worked for. Ed was one of the toughest task masters when it came to being well prepared. You never went to a public meeting with Ed without a dress rehearsal. He always had that dress rehearsal, and if you didn't know your stuff, you were roundly criticized. But when you got to the meeting, he was one hundred percent in your court, no matter what mistakes you made–very supportive in the public, but he wanted you to be prepared. He was a critic, he wanted things well understood, he wanted you to do your homework so that you could think on your feet, be a credit to Reclamation as you stood before the public and tried to explain what it was you were doing. Once we were in that public meeting, we were all on the same team, you never heard any criticism from Ed. In fact, I've seen him defend people that he knew were dead wrong, but he would defend them to the end, but you'd better wait 'til you got back to the office, because it wasn't going to be fun! (laughter) But he never showed that to the public. Ed was a rather reclusive guy. We didn't see much of him off the job. Kept to himself. Friendly chap. Rather heavy-set. Probably in his early fifties when he moved there. But when the social side of what went on in a small town in a Reclamation office, Ed was never part of that. He was the projects manager. He, I don't think, ever took much of an active role in any of the community affairs. You just never saw Ed–Saturdays and Sundays and after work he was someplace else, he just wasn't a visible part of the community. And that's a bit rare in a town that small.

Working with the Water District

We had a good office, a lot of hard work. We were doing work on the Dolores Project, which is about forty-five miles away to Cortez, where most of the water district meetings were held, and so we had cars of us who would go to meetings with the water district, and often those meetings would last 'til midnight, eleven o'clock, and then we'd get in the car and drive back to Durango, all seasons of the year. So we had our share of road stories and this meeting and that meeting, and we had some interesting characters on the other end of that, water district fellows, one in particular named Doc Merritt. I don't even remember his first name. He was a doctor in Cortez, the president of the old irrigation company, the Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company [MVIC]. That company built the first diversion works in about 1890 in that valley, put a hand-dug tunnel from the Dolores River to the San Juan River drainage where Cortez and the project lands lie. Doc Merritt was a doctor. He was very, very outspoken. He would take on the Bureau at the drop of a hat. He was a tough negotiator, and they were in a power position. They owned virtually all the water rights, and so the success of the project came from Reclamation negotiating a way that the Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company would limit the amount of water that it took, received project water, and allowed Reclamation to store anything over a certain amount in a reservoir which we were going to build. They held the rights, but obviously they didn't have a reservoir, so even though they held the rights, they couldn't divert them, they went on downstream.

So it was a tough negotiation. As a result of that, I think the Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company came out of that project with a very, very good deal. They managed to negotiate plenty of water for the Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company–not that the rates were different than anyone else was getting, but certainly the quantities of water that they carved our for themselves were more than adequate. I remember one situation where Wayne Cook, who was my boss at the time, he was the chief of planning and I was the chief of his Hydrology Branch. He and I and a number of other staffers were in Cortez one night, and we were in a particularly argusome meeting with Doc Merritt and the M-V-I-C board, and during the pitch of the argument, Doc Merritt turned to Mr. Cook, who was probably then in his mid-thirties I would guess, and he said something along the lines of, "I don't have to take that kind of stuff from you. You're just wet behind the ears, you young whipper snapper!" (chuckles) It sort of was the tone of the way Doc Merritt dealt with those of us who were admittedly young and whipper snappers and wet behind the ears. We'd been with Reclamation ten or fifteen years and we were trying to tell these folks who had farmed in Montezuma Valley all their lives and had been managing irrigation systems since the 1890s how this thing was going to work. And there was a lot of animosity, a lot of feeling that they had the knowledge and we didn't. So it was an interesting time to try and convince folks that you knew what was going on technically, and that what you had to offer was in their best benefit and they in fact ought to support what you were doing.

Storey: Were there any other people on the water district that you remember that stand out?

Southern Colorado Irrigators

Gold: Oh, there were stories not so much about the Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company, but the southwest part of the country. Felix Sparks, who was then the director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, I'm sure books have been written about Felix Sparks in the state

of Colorado. Felix was a thunderous kind of fellow who played hardball politics and knew what water was worth and wasn't ashamed to tell anybody about it, and pound on the table if he needed to. There was more than one occasion when Felix would come to town and let his views be known about what should and what shouldn't be. He was the director of the Water Conservation Board for years and years and years. I didn't know Felix well, but I remember a few meetings where his presence simply dominated the meeting. The meeting was held and Felix was it.

The folks who were long-term supporters of water development, and certainly the heartbeat of Animas-La Plata, people like Sam Maynes, who's an attorney in Durango. Fred Kroeger. Fred was probably the guts of the political movement. Fred was the president of the Southwest Water Conservation District for more years than I know. He was there when I was there the first time, and he's still there. Fred and Sam were sort of a dynamic duo. Sam Maynes the attorney, and Fred Kroeger the president of the board. They wielded *much* authority in terms of the water business in Southwest Colorado. If you had a water question, those were the two guys that would have the answer. You could ask anybody else, but when you finally were finished, you would ask Fred and Sam (chuckles) because they would have the final say. Fred Kroeger is a gentleman in the true sense of the word, a mild-mannered fellow that spoke no evil of anyone. He was a friend to everybody who he came in contact with, he was supportive, he was knowledgeable about the water business, his family had been in the retail business in Durango for years–in fact, still owns Kroeger's True Value Hardware Store in Durango, Colorado. A businessman, a principal in his business, in the hardware business.

Sam Maynes is a water attorney, been there for years and years. A thunderous personality, warm-hearted once you got past the veneer, but a harsh and sometimes bitterly critical lawyer. I always liked both those guys, got along well with them. I remember Sam Maynes telling me the second time I went to Durango in 1983, he said, again, as we got reacquainted, "Well, you're one of those S-O-Bs. You come back and bring the federal bureaucracy. But the truth of the matter is, you're now *our* S-O-B!" (laughter) So he sort of pounded the stake in the ground and said, "You get to carry our mail now." I think that was his message about where my allegiances needed to be directed. But by that time I had a few wars under my belt and was fairly comfortable with him saying that to me, not that it meant the end-all, be-all, but it in any case, that was just the kind of a guy Sam was.

Storey: That was when you went back?

Gold: Uh-huh, as a projects manager.

Storey: That raises a very interesting issue, though, within Reclamation, I think, and that is, who's the constituents, and how do you balance your loyalties to the agency and the United States government and the public interest, against the constituencies? Could I get you to address that issue for me?

Balancing Loyalties

Gold: I think it's a real critical issue too, Brit. First of all, I think the historical perspective is a

critical one to understand. It was very easy to balance the needs of the constituency, and the needs of the United States from 1902 until about 1968, because they were the same. They weren't different. The United States was certainly a proponent of the irrigation subsidy. I mean, it got debated, but in the West, where most of Reclamation's people grew up, it was a given that water, water storage, water supply, water projects, were the right thing to do. Its how you stabilized the country we were living in. And so it wasn't debated in those circles, it was the given. If you were on the side of a water project, you were on the side of angels. And so the culture that the Reclamation managers, the Reclamation employees, the Reclamation hierarchy grew up in, didn't have a different agenda than the states, counties, and cities that they were dealing with in the seventeen western states. Yeah, debates existed, but they existed in almost another world, and certainly it wasn't a place that many of us growing up, and growing up as managers, dealt with. So there wasn't much conflict.

I think that what changed all that is simply the reality–and I call it that, its what happened to me–in the 60s through the 70s, primarily. I think there was a significant change in the way the United States as a nation, and certainly as the West, as part of that nation, felt. There was a difference, there were things that began to be more important. I've always equated that in my own mind to maybe the prosperity, the achievement of some of the basic achievements, some of the basic needs. Our standard of living was at a point where most folks were fed and most folks had drinking water. There was a chicken in every pot. We got to the point where almost everyone had a similar level of existence. There weren't any–or not many, at least–basic needs that were unmet.

And so we moved to a higher level of needs and desires, more aesthetics, if you will, more quality. We had enough quantity, we had enough to eat–now let's talk about what we're eating. I think that's the 60s and 70s movement. And I grew up as a kid in those, I graduated from high school in 1964. When the Beatles sang on Ed Sullivan, it was a major change. And if they'd done that ten years earlier, no one would have seen them, because TV wasn't around. But now in the 60s and 70s we had the information and we had lots of people involved in change. And the 60s movement was ample evidence, maybe not on the score of was irrigation the right thing to do, but certainly on what was going on in the United States. It was a revolution, if you will, and I think it transcended. It transcended in my mind to the kinds of pieces of legislation that passed the United States Congress between, oh, about 1969–and obviously they didn't pass on that date, they were worked on from '68, '67, '66, Vietnam War–bingo! 1970 we had a National Environmental Policy Act. This country had made a statement, not about quantity–go out and find water quantity–but about quality of the environment. And so for those 60s and 70s and that time of change, that's when Reclamation's mission started to change.

In 1993 we have a blueprint, but we had drawings all over the place, if you'd look for them, from about 1960. I think that's what happened then is most of us who are and were the managers and employees of Reclamation, grew up prior to that time, and if nothing else, that time, being the 60s and 70s, tended to confuse us a bit, but it didn't confuse the underlying ethic that building water projects was the right thing to do. Yeah, there were some critics, and you started to hear them, but they were sort of in the distance. And the farther away from Washington, D.C., or Denver, Colorado, or Salt Lake City, or whatever metropolitan area you're in, the farther away you were, the less you heard those things. And

if you *did* hear them, they were easily squashed. "Those guys don't know what they're talking about, they've never held a shovel, they don't know about agriculture, they don't know how important irrigation is to the West," and the bumper stickers that said, "Don't criticize farmers with your mouth full," or something like that, were the target issue, because people in rural America were saying, "Those people who are talking that we can start to hear just don't know." But what was not recognized is that there were more of "them" (chuckles) than there were of "us" farmers. If you looked at the demographic trends, you'll see that rural agricultural people were on the decline percentage-wise in *huge* numbers. Forty percent of the folks used to live on the farm, and now its two or something like that.

But in any case, to me that's what happened, and I think because of the projects office concept, because Reclamation had a tendency to take its best and its brightest technical people and make them its managers. Then it had people that really understood what water was about, they had the ethic, we moved them out to the rural communities like Durango and Cortez and Grand Junction, and all the other towns throughout the seventeen western states, we moved them into the middle of the agricultural communities because that's what we were trying to do, we were trying to build agriculture projects. And then the 60s and the 70s came, and now we've had twenty years of sort of trying to figure out, "Well, now that we're out here, what are we going to do?" Because we can sell the local guy, we can make Fred Kroeger and Sam Maynes happy, but when we take this package to Washington and say, a-la Animas-La Plata, "Let's build a $500 million water project with subsidies to the tune of ninety percent," the United States Congress, and many of those vocal opponents [said no.]

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. NOVEMBER 15, 1993.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. NOVEMBER 15, 1993.

Storey: This is Tape 2 of an interview by Brit Storey with Rick Gold on November 15, 1993.

Why Reclamation Appeared to be Trapped

Gold: So we simply didn't understand why what seemed so right at the local level didn't make any sense at all at the national level. But I think our own culture determined that that's the kind of reality we were going to have to face. This wasn't a country that was nested in the farm kitchens of the seventeen western states any more. It was an information society, what went on in Washington, D.C., went on *in* the kitchen in the seventeen western states. The information age moved it all to front and center, and there were folks in increasing numbers who were moving to rural America, who didn't want anything to do with being a farmer. They moved there because they liked the great outdoors, the air was clean, it was a rural lifestyle, they could safely send their kids to school, and they didn't want additional federal subsidies. They didn't want their taxes to go up, they didn't want the deficit to climb. And so that reality is sort of the backdrop for, I think, the reason why so many Reclamation managers appear to be trapped. And I say "appear to be," because some of them aren't as trapped as they think they are, but its very difficult to stand up in rural America's Rotary Club as the projects manager and say, "We aren't going to do this anymore (chuckles) because Washington doesn't think it makes any sense."

And the truth of the matter is, there are a growing number of us that understand that we

aren't going to do it anymore, and that are willing to stand up in the Rotary Clubs of America and say, "No, sorry, we understand, but the United States is not committed to continued subsidy to agriculture." I think on the other side of that, there will be reactions. Potentially, the very basis of that agricultural society can be changed. If we take away all of the subsidy, and I'm not saying that's bad, I think that's just different. If we were to go in and simply take every contract that Reclamation has and say, "We're going to modify it, and you guys are going to have to pay the full cost of water, or we're going to stop delivering it," in some places, folks wouldn't bat an eye, they'd just start paying it–I mean, after the political struggle was over. In other places, they would say, "We can't raise alfalfa and pay $300 an acre foot for water," and so they would stop. And that would have some chain reaction: stop growing alfalfa, and maybe we'd start growing less beef, and we'd start importing more beef from Australia or some other place, or we'd start growing it where it was cheaper. And all those would be simply adjustments to that sort of monolithic idea that irrigation and the West make sense. And *maybe*–and I think that's the biggest question–maybe that would work, and the population centers would remain. I would guess there would be a few that wouldn't.

There would be a few small towns in the West that would simply go away. There's not enough service, recreation, tourism, electronic, manufacturing–there's not enough business to keep them alive if you take the agriculture business out. And that assumes that the agriculture business goes away. It might not totally go away either, it might change. You might see some different kinds of things related to dryland agriculture, but in any case, those decisions would be very disrupting to the people who are there. Strangely enough, the people who are there are the people who are in power, to a large extent. It's the old money, the people who got there because they invested in the resources, whether it be grazing or mining or agriculture. All of those things having a subsidy. Terrible word, but the truth, that's how we got them there, we lured them there with a subsidy, and if you take the subsidy away, they have a choice of either remaining under *different* economic conditions, or leaving, going somewhere else. And its that turmoil that I think a lot of people are so a'feared of. Its that same turmoil that's going on in this organization. Its not *what* we're going to become, it's the turmoil of getting there that has us all scared to death. Will there be an Upper Colorado Regional Office? Not, "What is it going to be?" If we knew what it was going to be, and it was going to be half the size it is–apply that to any office–but it would be easier to deal with. Its what we don't know that bothers us.

Changing Reclamation Culture to Reflect New Societal Values

But I think what you're seeing now in Reclamation–and I sort of believe it's a long-term issue–but less and less and less of our managers are captured. We still have managers who are captured, who are out there who don't dare say "no" to the irrigation district. But we have a growing number of managers who maybe don't say "no," they say, "Well, wait, you have to look at it this way." And you start to see the education process grow from inside Reclamation back to some of those irrigators, and you have to start challenging their basic understandings of how things work. I believe there's still lots of political constituencies out there, who truly believe–I'll use Colorado as an example–that if you can get your senator or your representative to say it, it will happen. In other words, if the local projects manager says, "You are never going to build the San Miguel Project," and they think if they can get Ben Nighthorse Campbell to say, "Oh yes it will!" that it'll happen, that the power is still there,

that the power that passed the '56 Act[19] and the '68 Act is still alive and well in the United States Congress. And I don't believe that. I can count votes and it doesn't happen. When those kinds of tough decisions about continued irrigation subsidies come straight up in front of the decision-making bodies of this nation, whether it be the executive, the legislative, or the judicial, the answers come out very different than they did in the 50s–very, very different. And we've gone through thirty years of trying to educate all of us and I think we're educating many of us. And the truth of the matter is, those we can't educate, over time, we will not have anymore. Its sort of a critical mass question.

I was part of a strategic planning effort ten years ago in the Bureau of Reclamation, and at that time, there were consultants who advised us that if you want to make a change, you have to have some critical mass that's in favor of the change. You can have the right idea, but if its not supported by a large enough number of the people in your organization, it won't happen. And I think that's the problem that Reclamation has today. We've had too many people who honestly believe that things will go back to the way they were. I'm not among them, we aren't going back. We're not going to build those large dams anymore. I think that's the right answer. We *want* to, we'd really *like* to, we really *know how*. That doesn't make it so. And it's the same thing with being captured by a local constituency. Its harder, because if you're in Denver, Colorado, and you say, "no," there are lots of other people who would agree with you. But if you're in Grand Junction, Colorado, and you say "no," you have to look real hard to find people who would agree with you, because they don't *want* to believe with you. They want it the way it was, because it was good. And so it's a real human transition problem that the organization has to overcome.

Storey: One of the questions that comes up repeatedly is Don Glaser and the commissioner and Bill McDonald are sitting in rooms with employees, has to do with all of this, it has to do with *who* is our new constituency going to be? What we're doing is, we're abandoning our old constituency and we don't have a new constituency. That means the doom of the Bureau of Reclamation. What are your perspectives on that issue?

Identifying a New Constituency

Gold: Its very difficult to identify a new constituency if you look to the model of the old constituency. There is no group out there called "new constituency," or "non-irrigator" or "anti-subsidy." The other side of the folks who have been our constituency for all these many years does not exist. It is not *a* constituency. I think you touched upon it earlier, and I wanted to get back to it. One of the things that we in Reclamation, certainly *I* in Reclamation, and I've heard a lot of people say it, have always felt, and its very strange, but we're not federal employees. I've never considered myself a federal employee. I work for the Bureau of Reclamation. And its *that* issue that I think is part of the problem. I didn't come up through the organization–the organization didn't believe–certainly didn't teach, if it *did* believe–that my charge in 1969 when I became an employee of the Bureau of Reclamation, was to uphold the honor of the United States and to be an advocate of the general public. It was not a public position, I was not an employee of the United States. I worked for the

19. The 1956 act referred to here is the Colorado River Storage Project, which authorized the construction of Glen Canyon Dam, Flaming Gorge Dam, Navajo Dam, and the Curecanti Unit, later renamed the Wayne Aspinall Unit. The act authorized the first stage of development of the Colorado River in the upper basin to allow the upper basin states to utilize their water allotments under the 1922 Colorado River Compact.

Bureau of Reclamation, and we were much, much, much more pointed than that. Our constituency was narrow, our goal was clear, and we didn't worry about "the rest" of the United States. And I think because of that, many of us didn't come to the job with that feeling that we had an obligation to be the advocate of the United States, the general public. We felt we had the obligation to get the job done, and it was a well-defined job. We went out and we built water projects. *Now*, the counter-side of that, however, is that we *are*. Our new constituency *is* the public, the public at large, like many other, I would guess, federal organizations have been for a long time. There was a different kind of mentality that said, "You've got to look at *all* the needs of *all* the publics, and do the balancing act." As I say that, I'm not sure that every other agency doesn't have a similar kind of problem, because I think if you look at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, they're not trying to balance, they're trying to maximize their niche, fish and wildlife. If you look at the National Park Service, they have a much broader-based constituency, but they aren't too concerned about balancing parks versus mining versus timber versus agriculture. They're worried about parks.

I believe that *our* future–and I sort of feel like we're on the cutting edge, because we have a unique opportunity to become the advocate of the general public. Whether that fits for the Bureau of Reclamation, to be the balancing advocate for the United States, I don't know. I'd like to believe there's a niche there. In fact, I firmly believe there is. I think we're already putting it into play in a number of areas, like the Grand Canyon for instance, where we take on a particularly thorny issue that has something to do with water. But the truth of how we're approaching it is that we don't have a narrow constituency, we have a broad constituency. Everyone who's concerned with the water and the power and the Grand Canyon and the ecosystem and the fish and wildlife, Indian culture and everything else, is at that table, and we're trying to say, "Given all of this, what's the best thing for the United States to do?" And that's a very different kind of problem than, "What's the best thing we can do to get our irrigation project built?" And it's a very difficult transition for managers to take on this role of this honest broker, which I think is where the future will lie for us, because without that role of being the honest broker in water situations, there isn't a constituency. We can't go and become the advocate of fish and wildlife–we've got one of those–or river rafting. We've got to be the advocate for fair play and credibility and openness, balance, and almost an arbitration agent, someone that will get all the facts on the table, look at them in light of political reality, what's the future, where are we going, what's the best thing to do for all of these resources which the United States has responsibility for, and make a decision. Because without that, no decisions get made, and that's what I see happening in the water business. Because there's no one to broker the idea, and turn it into a decision, no decision gets made, and we have this continual gridlock over issues. So to me, that's the kind of issue we're facing in finding the new constituency. We're looking sometimes in the wrong places. You can't go find the American River's environmental group. They aren't going to be our constituency. The point is, we're going to have to find *all* of those entities that have an interest in water, and we're going to have to be the advocate for *all* of them, and give all of them a seat at the table, and sort out a balancing act to get the United States to make the right decisions. And there's a real challenge.

Storey: Interjecting my personal thoughts, I guess a little bit here, which I try to avoid. In the past, our "constituency," quote unquote, has been a very well-defined, very much a *pro*-agency group in most instances. This blueprint that I think I hear you talking about means that

Reclamation becomes more of a facilitator and it may be that we don't have any really strong pro-agency constituency, except in the sense of, "Well, these folks let us come to the table and voice our concerns and our issues were factored in, but we still don't like the end result," and it may be everybody's going to be saying that.

Reclamation's Role as Facilitators

Gold: I think that's exactly the model that I've seen work, however, in the Grand Canyon experience. When we started the process, most people said, "Reclamation can't even come close to this, they're too tied to water development and they will simply slam dunk this deal." Our own agency shot itself in the foot–not from the people who were leading the effort, we had it, even others–how can I say this delicately?–outside the program responsible areas. The classic example I'm going to use here is suggesting, in fact giving a task, to people in this building to design a dam for below Glen Canyon Dam. And it wasn't the people who were in the middle of dealing with the Glen Canyon E-I-S, it was another region that said, "Let's design a dam!" And that was the knee-jerk reaction of an agency of dam builders. If there's a problem, the solution is, build a dam. But what we found is that when we sat at the table and said, "Let's all reason together," and its an ugly process, but it's a real one, we even had some of our own peers who were saying, "You shouldn't be sitting at that table with those people. Just go tell them that the answer is building a re-regulation dam. Just tell them that, and we'll just go to Congress and make it happen." Same old mentality–if you can get your congressman to say it, it'll happen.

What I've found in the last three-and-a-half years is that by being patient and bringing those people to the table, listening to them until they haven't anything else to say, factoring in their information, and truly being the honest broker, showing them that we're willing, certainly, to argue for balance, for compromise, for some middle ground that makes everybody sort of happy, what I've seen is a turnaround in the view of those people to where they're saying, "Gees, if you guys hadn't been doing this the way you're doing it, we wouldn't be anywhere. We'd be quartered off in our own corners, suing each other. But because you're there, because you're dealing with the issues, we're at the table, we all understand, we're gaining some education from each other, we're beginning to trust each other, we're beginning to put the real issues on the table, and we'll admit, if everyone else will, that we don't need *all* of this, we can do pretty well with half of this. If everyone can sort of gain that trust, and everyone is willing to take half of this, then we can all shake our heads in the affirmative, and we'll have arrived at a balanced solution." And I'm seeing coming out of this Glen Canyon effort, and I think several others that the Bureau is doing, some significant support for an agency role as a facilitator. I think you've hit it right on the head. At the managers' meeting, that was one of my perspectives, that's what we're going to become. We're going to become the broker, the facilitator, the person that says, "Let's look at all the issues and let's try to pull together a solution we can all support. Its not a solution we would all independently choose, but the world doesn't do business that way anymore."

So figure it out, take the time, do the public involvement, do the sharing, build the trust, and then really balance. I mean, you can't take all this data and then go in the closet and do what you'd have done in the 50s, that won't work, we know that won't work. But if you do it right and you do it honestly, people will come back and say, "You guys did a good job there.

Will you do that job again, because here's this other issue, and we need somebody to step into the middle of it, catch all the spears (chuckles) and come out of it with a balanced solution." And it's a very different role. I preface that with, "Is that the role Reclamation wants?" I think we're rather uniquely suited, simply because of where we've been. We've had a different driving force previously, but because of what's happened to us through the 60s and 70s and 80s now, we have what I call some of our middle managers who have some experience in dealing with the conflicting views. They haven't been necessarily the people who have got us there on tough issues like Animas-La Plata–that started in 1968–but having dealt with that for twenty or thirty years, you sort of gain a much broader appreciation for the realities. And if you bring the realities home to your personal style, you then have a great deal of skill that you can use to solve any of those kinds of problems, if you just can get focused on, "Where are you trying to go? Are you trying to maximize water supply? Are you trying to balance, be an honest broker and find a common solution?" To me that's where the future lies. If we can't do that, then we're not going to, in my mind, find another constituency like irrigators. They aren't out there.

Storey: Well, I did not mean to interrupt your discussion of Sam Maynes, but when you raised this issue of allegiances, I felt it was very important to probe that further. Did you want to say any more about Sam Maynes? He sounds like a very interesting person.

Sam Maynes

Gold: He is. He's a very personable fellow once you get to know him. He's got a hard crust on the outside. He can posture with the best of them. (chuckles) He uniquely, and has been criticized for it, is part of the state water development "power group," if you will, for lack of a better term, in southwest Colorado. He's also tribal attorney for the Southern Ute Tribe, and some would say he has major conflicts of interest because of that. He's fought those critics for years. Sam is one of the folks, relative to Animas-La Plata–and I think Mr. Kroeger falls in this same category maybe John Murphy who is the president of the Animas-La Plata Water Conservancy District–those three folks have really been the life blood of the support. And some of us who look at the support that remains to build the project realize that there is sort of a changing of the guard–not purposeful–but purely humanistic. There will come a day when those three gentlemen no longer exist. They cannot live forever, and many of us have speculated that were the three of them not to be present, the political climate for the project would just change radically. Its as though they're carrying seventy-five percent of the momentum in three individuals. And what the political climate would be without their personal involvement, I think would be very, very different than it is today. They're key people, have been in the fight for fifty years, all three of them, since the time of authorization and beyond. Community leaders, but leaders maybe of a community that doesn't exist any more in reality. The powerbase is still there, but without them personally, would the powerbase look very different? My thinking is that it would look very, very different.

Storey: But there's an old principle, I guess, a business principle that ten percent of the people do ninety percent of the work. Ten percent of the companies provide ninety percent of the orders and so on. (Gold: Exactly right.) Sounds like that's true in water development also.

Gold: Absolutely. There are always the strong leaders, you can pick them out. Its not everyone,

it's a few.

Storey: Yeah. When you left the Durango Projects Office the first time, where did you go?

Garrison Diversion International Study

Gold: That was in 1975, and I moved to Billings, Montana, changed venues, went from the Upper Colorado Region to the Upper Missouri Region at the time, and became the chief of the Hydrology Branch in a regional office this time, and immediately went to work on the Garrison Diversion Unit as a part of the International Joint Committee study of Garrison. It was a three-year effort that [was] very interesting. It was all about could the United States and Canada agree that an irrigation project built in the United States with its return flows going to Canada was okay. That's what it was all about. Garrison Diversion Unit, I'm sure chapters have been written, again, about Garrison–one of the highlights, lowlights, however you view it.

Storey: I wish there had been. Actually, that's one of the reasons I need to do this (laughter) because people *haven't* written! But go ahead.

Gold: "Dr. Strangelove Builds a Canal." That was the title of an article that appeared in *Audubon* magazine, which I have, by the way, if you're interested. You've probably seen that one, all about the then projects manager Warren Jamison, projects manager for Reclamation, Missouri-Souris Projects Office, Bismarck, North Dakota. My role was a fairly technical one. I was part of a water quantity study team dealing with the amounts of water and return flows that were to be derived from the Garrison Diversion Unit, involved in modeling and computations of quantities and qualities of return flow. The return flows do go from that part of the world, North Dakota, north to Canada, to the Hudson Bay drainage. And there were lots of questions about the quality of that water, as well as the fish and the rest of the bioda that were associated with it. As a result of that, there was a monstrous fish screen that was constructed. I'm not sure it was ever operated, but there's a 2,000 cubic foot per second fish screen sitting on the McClusky Canal in that part of the world that was primarily to protect Canada. But in the end, I think after those three years and more meetings that we'd all like to admit, we filed the reports, and I don't think the controversy ended, it continued. There was another round of International Joint Commission studies on Garrison. There was the Garrison reformulation that Don Glazer, by the way, was in the midst of when he was in Washington, because he came from there. Reformulated the project. I lost track of it about that point in time. I was in Billings from '75 until 1981, and most of my time was taken up with Garrison and International Joint Commission efforts. But again, there were lots of projects up there that we were dealing with on the Milk River and Yellowtail [Dam][20] and some nitrogen super-saturation questions. So there's lots of technical problems we can get into.

My tour in Billings was probably the longest term that I had a given specific job. I was the chief of that Hydrology Branch from '75 to '81, about six years. That was the longest assignment I'd had thus far. I sort of went through a metamorphosis at that time, trying to

20. Yellowtail Dam, a multipurpose facility on the Bighorn River, is a key feature of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program in south central Montana providing irrigation water, flood control benefits, recreation, and power generation.

decide what did I want to do. Did I want to stay in Reclamation? Maybe a midlife crisis (chuckles), I don't know how you characterize it. But in any case, the decision I made after some introspection was that I really wanted to move higher up in the organization. I thought I could be of help, I thought I had some people skills that could be applied, and so I opted to apply for, and I was ultimately selected for the Department's Manager Training Program. When I left Billings in 1981, I went to Washington, and I was in Washington for a year. Strangely enough, I came *back* to Billings after that for another year after my assignment. It was kind of a turning point in my career from being a supervisor and a hydrologist, even though not a practicing technician, if you will, since my days in Provo, but to try and become a manager in the organization, to try and go to Washington and . . .

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. NOVEMBER 15, 1995.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 2, TAPE 2. NOVEMBER 15, 1995.

Gold: . . . projects offices, and [I] had a fair breadth of experience because of the International Joint Commission work, and wanted to go to Washington and learn a bit more about that level of our organization. It was a significant year, it was ten months. I graduated in '82 after ten months in Washington. I lived in Washington during that period of time, and the ten months of experience was probably worth, to me, five years of experience in the Bureau. It gave me a whole different outlook on the Bureau, on federal government, the perspectives which we've just been talking about who's your constituency.

Training in Washington, D.C.

I went in in '81 at the beginning of the first Reagan administration. Commissioner [Robert N.] Broadbent was the commissioner. I had, in a staff capacity, a fellow who certainly was one of the most able teachers that I ever ran across in Reclamation. He's no longer with Reclamation, Frank Pecarich. Frank was the chief of the Employee Development Branch in Washington, the top trainer. One of Frank's principal rules was to take those of us who were in the Departmental development program and sort of tuck us under his wing if we would allow that, and guide us through the maze of Washington, and try to help us put together a training program for a year that would do us the most good. And that was a very successful relationship from my perspective. The other candidate in the same class was Ephraim Escalante who works in this office. Ephraim and I were on the program during the same timeframe.

Storey: I know Ephraim.

Gold: My effort was in earnest, because I was really looking at it as sort of a life change, a way to get myself ready to do more and better for the organization. The Assessment Center process that we were going through in that point in time was extremely valuable to me. Larry Hancock,[21] strangely enough, was one of my reviewers on the Assessment Center. That would have been in 1980 or '81. In any case, the Assessment Center taught me a lot about my own strengths and weaknesses. It also helped me move to a planning process in deciding

21. Over his career with the Bureau of Reclamation Lawrence F. Hancock served as regional director of the Mid Pacific Region (1989-1991), deputy commissioner (1991-1994), and regional director of the Lower Colorado Region (1994-1995).

what kinds of things to do in a one-year training program; strange because it probably wasn't a very typical training program. I had had plenty of planning, I'd been a planner my whole career, which now was thirteen years or so old–my career–and I'd been a hydrologist and an engineer and a supervisor. What I believed I needed and what was demonstrated through the assessment program and some self-evaluation was I didn't know much about budget, and I didn't know much about personnel, and I felt that those two elements were critical to me becoming a better manager. And so I spent quite a bit of time in the ten months in those fields, doing some assignments. I probably have as much position classification formal training as most of the classifiers in the Bureau now (chuckles), as a result of that, which I never use, but it does give me significant insight into the way the personnel system works.

Working on the Hill

Probably the best assignment I had, at the encouragement of Frank Pecarich, was a congressional assignment where I spent six weeks on the personal staff of Congressman Doug Bereuter from Nebraska. He's a Republican from Nebraska. And that was totally by accident. The process of getting it was a learning one. I took my resumé and looked up all the congressmen in the book that were on our appropriations committee and took my resumé and went to the Hill and said, "Here's who I am and I'd like to work with you if you have some work you'd like done." And after about five or six congressmen on the House side, I bumped into Doug Bereuter's administrative assistant, Helen Schramer, and Helen said to me, "Gee, our natural resource guy just left last week, and Doug really has this legislation he'd like to draft. What do you think?" And I said, "When can I start?" And I spent six weeks in a corner with about this much, two foot by two foot, writing space and my own typewriter on someone else's desk, working on legislative initiatives for Doug Bereuter. As a result of that, I was the principal author of what was then HR-71, which turned out to be the Bureau of Reclamation Ground Water Resource Research and Recharge Demonstration Project,[22] and a couple of others: Prairie Bend, the re-authorization; a couple of pieces of legislation that I worked on. Those never passed in exactly the form that I put them together, but substantially.

But it gave me some really, really important insights in that particularly in the Ground Water Recharge Program I had the opportunity to go back to Reclamation–keep in mind I was a Reclamation employee, I was on the Department Training Program–I then went down from Capitol Hill and met with some of Reclamation's employees. And it was a different world. I was no longer part of the family and all of the suspicion of the Legislative Branch was alive and well, and people would barely talk to me. I found that not only very interesting, but instructive, about the dilemmas between the branches of government, and weren't we all

22. "The High Plains States Groundwater Demonstration Program studied the potential for artificial groundwater recharge in the 17 Western States and demonstrate artificial recharge technologies under a variety of hydrogeologic conditions. Demonstration sites are located in areas having a high probability of physical, chemical, and economic feasibility for recharge. The High Plains States Groundwater Demonstration Program Act of 1983 (Public Law [P.L.] 98-434) was enacted on September 28, 1984. Reclamation, USGS, and EPA carried out the High Plains States Groundwater Demonstration Program cooperatively. Although not specified in the authorizing legislation, coordination has also been carried out with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and State fish and game agencies to assure that any adverse impacts to fish and wildlife resources will be mitigated and that opportunities to enhance wetlands and wildlife resources are developed, where practical, as part of the groundwater recharge demonstration projects." See "High Plains States Groundwater Recharge Demonstration Program Projects," www.usbr.gov/projects/Projects.jps? (Accessed September 2014).

really part of the same team (chuckles) and realized there were lots of obstacles to that. But as a result of that, I learned a lot. I also had assignments associated with that concept of how different we are. I worked with the Corps of Engineers for two or three weeks, I worked with Fish and Wildlife Service, I worked in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Water and Land at the time, I worked in the Office of Water Policy, and I did everything I could to broaden my *own* horizon about how the federal government worked–not how Reclamation worked, but how the federal government worked. And it was a piece of my education that I couldn't have achieved any other way, I don't believe. In any case, the six weeks on the Hill were excellent. While I was there I tied that to my budget needs and I attended all of the congressional hearings on the Bureau's budget and the Corps of Engineers' budget, Western Area Power Administration's budget. It was just an excellent opportunity for me to get a view of government from the legislative branch, and kind of tie the whole thing together what was government like.

On a personal note, while I was in Washington I recognized early on that what it meant was I had forty weekends, I was there for ten months. And the other rude awakening I had is that when I went to high school, American history was just something you put up with, and in Washington I realized I wanted to know more about (chuckles) the world I was living in, and so I started to read American history and Civil War history and all that stuff. So it was, on that score also, a significant transformation and a step back in my life to realize that I really didn't know it all, didn't know any of it. A real growth experience. In that ten months I probably grew more as an individual and professionally than any other time. And I place a lot of credit on that program, and not the program per se, but the way the program was handled by Frank Pecarich. He was rigorous, he was honest, and he said, "Here's what you do good, and here's what you don't do good." I had enough courage to admit that he was right and went out and tried to build some strength and get some training where I needed it. It was a great program. I would guess that few of our candidates have the same kind of experience I had, but mine was extremely good. Tended to prepare me for coming back and moving back into management positions, which I did rather quickly.

Prepared for a Managerial Position

It only took me thirteen months to get the rose-colored glasses off and become the projects manager in Durango. That's the second time I worked in Durango. That was my first management assignment. Rose-colored glasses: as a candidate in the Departmental Manager Training Program, one had very high visibility, one met with the commissioner, the assistant secretary, I had my picture taken with the infamous James Watt at the graduation ceremony, the secretary of interior.[23] And virtually anything you wanted to do in that training program at that time was okay–free-wheeling, full rein, whatever you want to do, you can do. High visibility in the Department and the Bureau. And so when I finished, I figured that obviously any one of twenty-five or thirty people would be asking me to come and be their next whatever (chuckles) and they didn't! And it was ugly. But Frank Pecarich helped me through that too, because there is a necessary period of adjustment when you come back to reality, after having that kind of high visibility, anything-you-want-is-okay, into the real world of how the Executive Branch and the Bureau of Reclamation functions. I left Washington and went back to Billings and became an assistant planning officer back in the same office I had

23. James G. Watt was the secretary of the interior for the Reagan administration from 1981 to 1983.

left, although I was an assistant to the planning division chief, sort of a position that was constructed for me, a holding position, because I knew I didn't want to go back to the same job I had. I wanted a management position. It was a matter of hanging around until I found one, which I assumed would be any day. It took thirteen months. I applied for thirteen positions and it was earthshaking not to get the first one. (laughs) It was *terrible* not to get the second one!

Storey: I've watched other people go through this.

Gold: Yes. The thirteenth one, it was okay, I figured at that point I had had the rose-colored glasses off, I knew what reality was, and on the fourteenth one, I was selected as the projects manager in Durango, by Cliff Barrett, who was the regional director at the time. But it was healthy. It was an opportunity to realize that the world *really* wasn't rotating around me, it was sort of the other way around. Its just one of those things I think you have to go through, and some people go through it easily and some don't. So anyway, it was an excellent process and really helped me broaden my skills and gain some humility about being a manager, kind of setting my sights on the future. One of the highlights of my career I will continue to say, and that's been over ten years now.

Storey: In that thirteen-month period, did you go through a phase of thinking that Reclamation was rejecting you for some reason, or that you ought to be looking elsewhere, or anything like that?

Committed to Reclamation

Gold: All of those things. I think several things, some of which maybe eased the pain for me on the inside. Several things were happening. First of all, I had a very deep commitment to Reclamation, as I think many of us do. We're a really family kind of organization. Thinking of going someplace else was really not normal, and it was like, "I belong to Reclamation and they belong to me," and its like a marriage and you never think of divorce. But in any case, that was inherent in my makeup. I had a lot of loyalty to the organization. Secondly, I was sincerely trying to change my spots. I had been a planner, I had been a hydrologist, and I didn't want my next job to be a planner or hydrologist. I wanted to move out of the supervision mode and into the management mode, and my sights were on a projects manager job, where I could sort of try my wings, to try running my own office, and those were pretty high sights, admittedly, for a guy with thirteen years who'd been nothing but a planner, to put him in charge of a total function. But I applied for a bunch of them. I also applied for chief of O&M positions. I didn't know anything about O&M, other than what I might have gained as a planner, but I was bound and determined not to be a planner. As I came back from Washington, I could have gone immediately into a regional planning officer's job, strangely enough, in Amarillo, Texas. I didn't want to be a planner, so I didn't do that. I said, "No, I don't want to do that." So some of it was of my own making, saying, "No, I can afford to be picky, I'm going to do the right thing for me." And I'm glad I did, it worked out fine. But frustration, yeah, when you're the bridesmaid three or four times, its like, "Hm, how come? Is it the way I hold my mouth? What's going on here?" I thought I was better than that. You hear all the excuses, and you understand that sometimes even though you don't think so, it's the best qualified person who does get the job (laughter) and its not you. And that sometimes

other factors come into play, why people get jobs. Sometimes there are agency needs that have to be met, and people get moved around to solve problems, and out of problems. And so those things, after thirteen applications, you realize those kind of things happen.

One of the last experiences I had before I left Washington, was I happened to have lunch with Commissioner Broadbent in the cafeteria, rather happenstance. I was setting at the table and he brought his tray and said, "Can I join you?" "Yeah." So we had lunch and of course I knew him well at that point in time and was working in his office, and he said, "Well, what do you want to do when you leave?" and I told him my aspirations. He said, "Well, when you pick out the job you want, just let me know." It just scared the hell out of me. Because at that point I realized that he was trying to tell me that he could make anything happen with some of his political leverage, he was willing to do that. And I wasn't at all comfortable with that idea. Not because I didn't want the advantage, but because I didn't think I needed it in the first place, and I realized that there would be some baggage that went with getting your job through political processes. But it was a real eye-opener. I never took him up on it, but it was one of those rose-colored glasses kinds of things that you ended up carrying with you back home where nobody cared, except to get their job done.

Storey: You mentioned earlier that budget and personnel were two of the areas that you were particularly interested in dealing with, but I didn't hear anything specifically dealing with those two areas of training.

Budget and Personnel Training

Gold: I did take the O-P-M class on position classification, two weeks, more than I needed. In the assignments that I took with particularly Fish and Wildlife Service, I looked closely at the personnel processes, and the linkage between the career civil servant and the political civil servant in the Fish and Wildlife Service. I also did an assignment in the Personnel Office in Washington, with Bill Spillers, who was then the chief of personnel located in Washington. On the budget side, I worked in Reclamation's budget shop for three weeks during the time we were preparing budget justifications–sort of got my feet wet on the mechanisms and the processes and what not. I mentioned the hearings, which is an obvious side of the budget process that I wasn't familiar with, so those were the areas of technical training that I was looking for. And over the course of the ten months, through formal course work and some assignments, I felt like I did a pretty good job of gaining the right kind of experience to carry me through. As a result, I think my strength in understanding the way the budget works and in encouraging the rest of Reclamation's managers to understand the budget is a critical link, and we're still not there, but we keep moving in that direction to learn it more.

Storey: Well, according to my watch, we have just a few minutes before I need to let you go on to your next meeting. Let me ask about the training program sort of in general for management supervision in Reclamation. I have watched people go through the experience you went through, I've also watched people go through the training process, and just leave because they became so frustrated with what was going on. Do you think that there is some sort of a problem? Or do you think that this is all natural? What are your perspectives on the way the training program functions for Reclamation?

The Way the Training Program Functions

Gold: Some of its natural. I think you build up in people who are trained, where significant dollars are spent, and there's an expectation, naturally. The problem with that is that a lot could be done for reality check, and its what happened, I think, to a large extent with my relationship with Frank Pacarich. I don't see much of that today. What needs to happen in my view is that we should never simply, routinely, or haphazardly, if you will, select a candidate and send them off to a significant training program–I'm not saying training course, but training program–without having them under someone's wing. I think that's a mistake. I think they need good counsel, they need solid counsel, they need realistic counsel, on why they're going, what are their expectations, what do they want, what does the agency want, and I think if there were more of that, there'd be a lot less frustration. In general, I think we make some bad decisions about the kinds of people we send to training programs. And I mean that in a very honest sense of the word, because some people are sincerely interested in becoming career managers. And some people are interested in training. Some people go to be going, some people go because they think they can get a higher grade, and those are some of the wrong reasons to go, I think. I mean, to me its almost a need to select for those training programs as though you were selecting your next manager. I think Assessment Centers are a very good way of only sending the right kind of candidates.

I see that today we have a cadre of programs, and I think we have fifty or sixty people in those various and sundry programs, and I don't think any of them get the kind of coaching and "nurturing," if you will, that will help them understand where they're going, to give them realistic expectations, and to help them through the rough spots. And that's the other side, is when you come back and you can't immediately get a job, somebody needs to help you see the rest of the issue, to help you with the transition back to reality, to say, "Yeah, you . . ." Its like college graduates. You know, "I've been trained, I'm here, why don't you want me?" That's not the issue. Its that hiring for positions is sometimes more complex than that. It has to be the right match. And so there's a lot we can do as an agency in support of the right candidates, that I think would really help our training programs. The best thing we could do is to have mentors, trainers, whatever you want to call them, but someone who'll build a personal relationship with that candidate, and help to sort out what was going on in their mind as it was being trained, and as their future is being formulated. Its just an opportunity that you miss, to the detriment of the agency, and to the detriment of the candidate, if you don't have the right people coaching and guiding.

Storey: Good. Well, thank you. I'd like to ask you now whether or not it would be acceptable for Reclamation researchers and outside researchers to use the tapes and transcripts from this interview.

Gold: Absolutely.

Storey: Good, thank you.

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 2. NOVEMBER 15, 1993.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. JUNE 29, 1995.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Rick Gold, the assistant regional director in the Upper Colorado Region of the Bureau of Reclamation, on June 29, 1995, at about one o'clock in the afternoon in the Bureau of Reclamation regional offices in Salt Lake City, Utah. This is tape one.

In Billings, as planning officer and the chief of hydrology, you were involved in a number of projects. You've mentioned, for instance, Garrison Diversion and the technical aspects of that. Could you talk about that, please?

International Joint Committee Study

Gold: Garrison has had a long history in Reclamation, and I sort of came in in the middle. My first activities were being assigned to the Reclamation team working on the International Joint Committee study. It was really trying to work out the international issues on Garrison Diversion. There were a number of technical committees that were developed, they were all bilateral and had an equal number of American and Canadian participants. We met on a relatively frequent basis, once a month, once every other month, and tried to essentially resolve some of the outstanding international issues about water-quality impacts of the Garrison Diversion Unit on Canada, and the biological impacts.

Most of my activity, from a technical perspective, because I was a hydrologist by trade, were focused on how much quantity of water was going to end up being returned to Canadian river systems. The diversions were largely from the Missouri River, so they were not directly affecting Canada, but the return flows, most of them, went back to Canada. So there was a question about all kinds of things, from flooding to changing the flow patterns of rivers, and, of course, closely associated with that what was the quality of that water. And then because the flow quantities were involved, exotic species of fish, fish eggs, parasites, all kinds of things that the Canadian scientists and environmental groups were concerned about with relationship to the building of this monstrous Reclamation project in North Dakota.

I spent probably three years involved in that activity, along with a number of other people from Reclamation. The strange part about it all, I think, was that there was lots of good solid technical interplay between the two countries. We learned a lot about each other and had some long-lasting friendships developed from that across the northern border. But probably the most troublesome part is even after that major effort was undertaken and proposed solutions were there, it still didn't signal the end of controversy for the Garrison Diversion Unit. Folks who stayed involved in that region as time went on obviously went through reformulation of the Garrison Diversion Unit and breaking out the Indian portions, and lots of controversy that continued across the international boundary, but also among the states, as to what kind of a project should Garrison Diversion Unit actually be.

It was sort of a metamorphosis. It was one of these large geographical, large water quantity distribution projects that actually provided irrigation water to lots of acreage throughout North Dakota. The history of it says it was done, because the United States built the main stem reservoirs, there was a need to sort of pay back, if you will, the states for the land that they gave up. They gave up all their rich bottomlands along the Missouri, and the payoff for them was to receive irrigation in the plains. But as time went on, it became more

controversial, not only related to its physical attributes, but the economic attributes of subsidy, which is at the heart of the whole Reclamation issue, whether or not subsidy is good or bad, or should be tolerated or should be funded, or how its viewed based on the contemporary values that people in the United States hold.

There were several other projects aside from Garrison while I was in Billings, that I was involved in technically, and some of them were sort of on the fringe of maybe the new thinking in the Bureau, some of the planning projects. As I became assistant planning officer, there were a few: Lake Andes Wagner in South Dakota, Pollock-Herried. They tended to be projects that were less grandiose, smaller scale, in the first place. There were no 300,000-acre projects out there being thought about. But they also started to bring in some of the needs, unmet needs, of Native Americans. And I think over the history we saw more and more of that happen as the United States through the Bureau of Reclamation in concert with its states, tried to move any kind of water development project through a funding mechanism, to say, "Okay, we've sort of decided what to do, now let's go get it funded and build it."

Native American Water Issues Becoming More Prominent

But the questions were continually asked, "Well, why should we continue to subsidize agriculture in the West?" And if there are subsidies, then they have to stand on their own, they have to meet a broad array of United States needs. And the Native American issues, I think, became more and more prominent. I think, looking back across probably the seventies, eighties, and now the nineties, that's just been an increasing thing throughout those twenty-five years, that now most of what we're dealing with has an Indian linkage because its sort of the perception that assistance to Native American tribes is a very high priority in the United States. And again, it's a value shift.

There are lots of frustrations in that, and I think tribes are growing immensely in their ability to interface with the United States Government. Of course, some things like the Indian Self-Determination Act and the whole idea of trust and what is our obligation, what kind of long-term obligations has the United States obtained or earned or sort of acquired as a result of its previous activities. Its making of treaties, its signing of water rights settlements, and how good are those commitments that the tribes sought and at least obtained from the United States, when it comes to them reaping the benefits, the rewards of those agreements.

I think there's a whole issue out there of commitment. Is the word that the United States provides to tribes relative to treaties and agreements, is it worth it? Can the United States be trusted? I think we hear that time and time again, and that's one of the reasons for increased emphasis on making sure that the needs, as determined by the tribes, are met. Early history would tell me that most of the time, the United States met the needs of the tribes as determined by the United States, not as determined by the tribes. So there's a new way of thinking, and I think that's affected planning–planning for any kind of activity, greatly, in the last decade or two.

Storey: Who was the regional director while you were in Billings, or the regional directors?

GP Regional Directors

Gold: Yes, directors. The first regional director in Billings was a gentleman named Bob McPhail, who, two years later in 1977, rather became the architect of the Western Area Power Administration [WAPA], and later became its administrator, left Reclamation and became Western's administrator and then subsequently went to work for one of its largest customers, Basin Electric, I think it was.

Storey: Up in Bismarck?

Gold: In Bismarck, and Bob still lives in Bismarck. But Bob was there a year or so, maybe two, when I first started in Billings in '75. Bill Lloyd followed him. Bill was then subsequently regional director in Boise, and I believe retired from Boise.

Subsequent to that, we had an acting regional director, which may be a record, for twenty-two months. His name was Joe Marcotte. Joe, I believe, later did get the job of regional director. Then when the Upper Missouri Region, which it was called then rather than Great Plains as it is now, when the Upper Missouri Region was merged with the Lower Missouri Region, headquartered in Denver, Mr. Marcotte, I believe, was transferred to Washington, worked there for a year or two and then subsequently retired and left the Bureau.[24] I think he actually went to some water district in California. Mendecino County? Something like that. So those were sort of the trilogy of regional directors in my tenure in Billings, which spanned, I guess, altogether seven years, from '75 to '83.

Storey: What were they like? What was their management style?

Gold: Mixed bag, obviously, as you took a look at any three individuals, as I'm sure you could say about any other three individuals.

McPhail was, from my perspective at least, a real entrepreneur, looking for something new, more aggressive in his management style in terms of change. Of course, that led him to looking at the organization of Western and the Organic Act of the Department of Energy.[25] He was a pretty politically connected fellow, one that seemed to be in the right place at the right time, took advantage of those kinds of situations. I never worked directly for either McPhail or Bill Lloyd, but I had close association with Bill Lloyd because he also was involved in the International Joint Commission studies, and so we were operating on some kind of a peer level there.

Bill was probably unique among some directors because he came out of the power function. He was a power person, hydropower. He was extremely mild-mannered, soft-spoken, a gentleman's gentleman. I believe he probably relied far more on staff than Bob McPhail did. He was a more participative kind of manager. I liked Bill a lot. He was easy

24. In 1985 the Lower Missouri Region in Denver, Colorado, merged with the Upper Missouri Region, in Billings Montana, to form the Missouri Basin Region. In 1988 the Southwest Region, in Amarillo, Texas, was closed and its responsibilities a portion of its went to the Missouri Basin Region, which became the Great Plains Region, while the rest were transferred to the Upper Colorado Region.

25. In 1977 Congress passed the Department of Energy Organization Act that created the Department of Energy. One aspect of the act removed the Bureau of Reclamation's responsibility of the marketing of electricity from Reclamation powerplants to the newly established Western Area Power Administration, see "Department of Energy Organization Act," in USDOI, BOR, *Federal Reclamation and Related Laws Annotated*, Volume IV, 3048-75.

to work with. McPhail, on the other hand, I think I would characterize as more separate, almost a regal leadership attitude, rather than a down-home leadership attitude, which Bill Lloyd is probably characterized as.

Joe Marcotte was the assistant director, acted for a long time. Joe, I believe, would be classified more of a traditional Reclamation manager. He was probably in the middle, from a style perspective, between McPhail and Lloyd, and liked the limelight a little bit, I guess you could say. My sense would be he had a pretty good-sized ego. Was small in stature compared to McPhail, who was a very tall man, and Bill Lloyd, who was a large-boned, kind of raw individual. Joe was shorter of stature and, I guess my reaction is, tended to have a management style that tried to overcome that. I liked Joe, I liked them all, worked well with all of them.

Joe had an unfortunate end, I guess I'd call it, to his career, because he was asked to be the acting regional director for a long, long time, and that's a burden on anyone when you don't have the title but you have the responsibility. Tried to do that job and virtually upon getting the job, finally, through whatever machinations that took, which I wasn't privy to, the regions were combined, and I'm sure [he] felt–he and I had a number of discussions about him feeling that he really got the short end of the stick. He had been the good soldier, and yet when combining the regions came about, he was the guy who drew the short straw and did not get to become the regional director; Bill Martin did[26]. That was after I left Billings. But in any case, Joe went to Washington and ultimately became real bitter about his treatment by the Bureau, did not leave with a good taste in his mouth, I'm sure, for the Bureau of Reclamation. He would be an interesting interview. (laughter)

Storey: If I could find him.

Gold: Has he disappeared? I don't know.

Storey: Yes. I've never run across anybody who's mentioned him before.

Gold: Is that right? Last I heard, he was out in California, some irrigation district.

Storey: Maybe Roger knows where he is.

Gold: Interesting guys, all three.

Storey: Who were the commissioners at that time?

Gil Stamm and Keith Higginson

26. Bill E. Martin was regional director of the Mid Pacific Region from 1974 to 1980. He became regional director of the Lower Missouri Region in 1980 and remained in that position when the region merged with the Upper Missouri Region to form the Missouri Basin Region in 1985. In 1988, Mr. Martin became assistant commissioner for Resource Management until 1990 and participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See Billy E. Martin, *Oral History Interviews*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, from 1994 to 1996, in Sacramento, California, edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2010, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

Gold: Boy, you're going to put me on the spot now.

Storey: Well, you don't have to remember; I've got a list. (laughter) Let's see, we're talking '75 to '80. Gil Stamm and Keith Higginson.

Gold: Didn't know Gil, and don't think I ever met him. Keith Higginson I did meet.[27] But again, from that kind of location in the organization at that time, one didn't have much communication with the commissioner. I think that's different now. That would be an interesting sidetrack to take. Now I would guess that many people at the level I was operating at then have considerably more personal interaction with the commissioner. The information society allows that now. You can get on my computer today and write a message to Dan Beard if you want, and I've done so. Many of the staff here do that, and they get answers from Dan Beard, and that's different. I don't know as I've ever met anyone who wrote a note to Floyd Dominy or to Gil Stamm, for that matter.

It's a different culture. The structure is different. The attention paid to the hierarchy, the regalness of the office of commissioner, and even regional director, for that matter, I think, is healthier, because its more open to employees and new ideas instead of the dictator-kind of approach. But in those days, I didn't have too much involvement at all with commissioners, and when you were dealing with the regional director, that was about as high as you got. That's my sense.

Storey: Tell me about your move to the Durango Projects Office, in '83, wasn't it?

Gold: It was.

Storey: How did that come about?

Becoming Projects Manager in Durango

Gold: It was actually a long search on my part, after completing the Departmental Manager Training Program. What I tried to do in that ten months was really make a purposeful move from what I had considered my past to have been, rather technical, planning-based. That's where I grew up in this organization, from '69 to 1980, so I had like ten or twelve years of being a planner and a hydrologist. When I went off to management school, charm school, as its been called, I wanted to broaden, and I specifically wanted to do that. I did not want to simply go to the departmental training program and come back and be a hydrologist and a planner. That caused some problems, not during the program, because I think I had a very successful year in Washington and learned lots of things that have helped me throughout the rest of my career, but in then coming home and saying, "Okay, now that I have all these newfound skills, all I need is a place to exercise them." And so I started to look.

27. Gilbert G. Stamm served as commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation under the Nixon/Ford administrations from 1973 to 1977. R. Keith Higginson served as commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation under the Carter administration from 1977 to 1981 and participated in Reclamation's oral history program. See R. Keith Higginson, *Oral History Interviews*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interviews conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, March 22, 1995 and April 19, 1995, in Boise, Idaho, edited by Brit Allan Storey, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

The first job that came open to me and I could have had was the regional planning officer in Amarillo, Texas. It was a position vacated at the time, and the regional director called me up and said, "Hey, how would you like the job?" I said I wasn't really interested, that wasn't where I was headed. I didn't want to just come back and start the last half of my career in the same rut.

So I purposefully set out to find a job that I felt would give me more exposure to the operation and maintenance side of our organization, with some independent management authorities. And to me that translated into either a projects manager or a projects superintendent, which we typically called projects managers who only had O&M at the time. In other words, if you only had the operation and maintenance function, you were typically called a projects superintendent. On the other hand, if you had planning, construction, and operation and maintenance, you were called a projects manager, for whatever reason.

But anyway, I started looking. So I started applying for jobs that would fit my sense of where I wanted my career to go, and it took me around thirteen, fourteen months to finally land the job in Durango, and I applied for about that many. About one a month, I think, was the average. I applied for thirteen or fourteen different positions before getting the position in Durango, and I think that was, while frustrating, it was healthy for me. I think one of the things I've recognized since is that people who just have completed major training programs with high visibility have extremely rose-colored glasses on when they finish, and they believe that the sun rises and sets all within their purview, that they are the center of the universe, and that that's just the way it works, and folks ought to just be bowing down to them to give them the job, and that's not the truth. But that's sort of what high-visibility training programs tell us.

Politics in Reclamation

In any case, it was a good transition period for me, a good reality check in terms of what was my value to the organization, how well I competed with others of my peers for the kinds of jobs that I wanted. I also learned that you have to compete on several levels. You have to compete on a technical level, you have to know the business. And unfortunately, that–I shouldn't say "unfortunately"–that is probably the least important factor. The other places you have to compete is, you have to compete politically, and that's not Republican or Democratic, but that's just "small p" politics; where are you with the politic of the Bureau of Reclamation. Then you have to compete personally, and that is, who is the selecting official, do you know them or do you know someone they know and trust?

So there's at least these three levels that you have to get in tune with in order to be selected in this organization. I think that's changing a little bit, but its still a huge factor, and I don't think there's anything wrong with it. I think it's a process that most folks don't understand about the world we live in, that just because you have all the right technical skills lined up, it doesn't immediately mean you get the job. If you can't walk and chew gum at the same time, maybe you're not going to get that job, no matter how smart you are. If, as opposed to knowing someone or knowing someone who knows someone they trust who knows you, if you have a reputation that someone out there is carrying for you, that people call, they have your application, they say, "Gee, Joe, what do you think of Rick Gold? What kind of employee would he be?" Many people think if they put your name on a reference list,

that the answer is always, "Great, hire him." That's not true, either. But that's a hard lesson sometimes for people to understand, that when the trust relationship develops among the management cadre and you call someone you trust who knows the candidate, they give you a straight answer. They say, "Don't hire that guy, he doesn't know," or, "He can't get along with people," or "He'll get you in trouble with your water districts."

Unless you know what kind of a report you're being given, you can think that you're getting a good one, and you can be getting a bad one, and you may not even know why. You have to go back and sort of fix that and say, "Well, how come you think that about me?" Sometimes you find that, "Well, its because I heard someone said you said you said," and, "No, that wasn't me." It could be that subtle. Or it can be that, "You know, you really have messed up a time or two in your life, and its time you realized that and say, 'Aha!'" Maybe you put that on your résumé next time, and say "Yeah, I know this is a weakness, but here's what I'm going to do to fix it." So there's all kinds of things that I learned.

The politics of the situation, I think, is really important, and that sort of has to do with being in the right place at the right time and wanting to do the thing that someone needs done. And I don't think you control that all the time. Sometimes things aren't meant to be. When I was in Washington, I had a pretty close working relationship with then–what was he called at the time? Dave Houston.[28] Dave was the special assistant to the commissioner, I guess, to Bob Broadbent, when I was in Washington.

Storey: They were in the Assistant Secretary's Office.

Gold: Yes, after that.

Storey: After that, okay.

Gold: Dave said to me when I was about to finish the program, he said, "Gee, if you're interested in a job, I'd be real happy to look at your application." Well, what I found out is that Dave said that to more people than me, and so people got to thinking. In fact, I heard from one selecting official, one regional director who had my application for one of these jobs I thought would be a good fit for me, and he called me up and he said, "Well, I'd really like to offer you this job, but Dave Houston tells me you're going to Sacramento, which is where he was going." I said, "Wait a minute, I didn't know this." (laughter) So the politics were playing in the background. He apparently had expressed his interest in me to somebody, and so I sort of got taken off the list, because, well, Dave was going to do that. So people don't want to get tangled up in the politics of who goes where, and so you can get set aside for reasons that you aren't even aware of.

Anyway, that was an interesting process to me, to learn kind of the inside politics. I'm sure from what I know of it, its exactly the thing that if its used in the wrong ways becomes what we all call "the good old-boy network." If it is used in the right way, it becomes an excellent way to gain solid information about the qualifications of candidates. But if it becomes, "Oh yeah, I know him, so he must be okay," then you can get into traps, and that's

28. Along with being a special assistant to the commissioner, David G. Houston was the regional director of the Mid-Pacific Region in Sacramento, California from 1983 to 1989.

why I think women and minorities in our organization have found it a hell of a time breaking in to management in this organization, because the good old boys tended to rely almost exclusively on the good recommendation from someone they knew. So there was a group of "in-ies" and a group of "out-ies," and if you weren't an "in-ie," you couldn't get the job. I suppose that happens to some extent all the time, everywhere. But one of the biggest pieces of management information I gained in the training program was after the training program was over, and that was my own perception of how you get a job, because it has little to do–it has least to do with the technical skills you possess. It has a lot to do with who you know and where you are in that political scheme of things.

Storey: I've had a lot of people tell me that by the time you become a division chief, the technical skills aren't what's important, it's the management skills, the personnel skills, various other things.

Importance of Management Skills

Gold: I agree with that, and I think, unfortunately, sometimes we equate going to the training class with having the skill, and there's a big difference. I mean, you can list all the human resources classes you've attended, and you can still act like Attila the Hun, and all of those classes don't add up to one skill. They may add up to lots of knowledge, but if you never apply it, if people you deal with never perceive that you even have a hint of understanding–and there's lots of training classes that that happens in, where you're given the knowledge and you don't use it. I don't like to do business that way. So its really hard to tell. That's the value, in my view, of either knowing the person, having been able to watch them operate. What kind of skills do they have? How do they take what they know and generate the behavior? You can observe that. In my view, you can even observe that in an interview, so I would never hire anybody for a critical position without an interview, never. End of story.

Storey: I agree with that one for sure. (laughter)

Gold: But if you can observe it for two weeks or a month, or they've worked for you, its much better, because now you see them not just in this kind of interview setting, but you see them on a bad hair day, and how do they really operate when somebody gets in their face. You can tell. The next best bet is to find someone who has observed them, who you trust. You say, "Okay, this person worked in . . .," and this is, I think, typically the way it goes. You look at somebody's application, they used to work in Billings. "Gee, they worked in Billings between 1970," and you say, "Aha, Fred Hunt worked in that office then." So you don't call people on their reference list. You pick up the phone and call the people you know and trust who worked with them, and you say "What do you think?" And that's where you get the real scoop.

Storey: You mentioned that you were looking for certain types of things, management independence, and various other things. Do you remember any of the other positions that you applied for?

Applying for Other Positions

Gold: I still have the file. I ought to review that. There were a number. I applied for the project

superintendent of the Rio Grande Project in El Paso. I applied for the project manager of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Office in Pueblo. I applied for the Central Valley Projects office manager. Where else? Those were the jobs I thought would be the best fit for me. I also decided that if I couldn't–you know, this is a process that took place over a year, year and a half, if I couldn't get exactly what I wanted, then I started thinking about accepting something that was like half the loaf. "I don't want to become a planning officer, so maybe what I ought to think about is becoming an O&M chief," since that was the major lacking point. I was a planner, if I had planning and operations, then I'd have the bulk of this kind of resource management theme that we're working toward. So I did, in fact, apply for the O&M chief, division chief in Amarillo, the O&M chief–where else?

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. JUNE 29, 1995.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. JUNE 29, 1995.

Gold: Let's see. The O&M chief in Amarillo. The O&M chief in Boise. Central Snake projects manager's job in Boise. That's sort of a cross-section of the kinds of jobs. And when I finally applied for the projects manager Durango, I obviously had worked in that office before and so I knew those issues pretty well, while having been the project hydrologist there ten years earlier.

I also had some linkages with the Upper Colorado Region because I had worked in Upper Colorado before. While I was an employee of the Upper Missouri Region, Daren Reese was the personnel officer here, then, and had been in Montana and was now back in Salt Lake City. Actually, Daren hired me when I came to work for the Bureau in 1969, so there was a personal linkage with the personnel officer.

Frank Knell, who was then an assistant regional director for administration in the Upper Colorado Region, I knew Frank because he had been in personnel and I had worked with him while I was both in Provo and in Durango the first time. Cliff Barrett. While I didn't know Cliff extremely well, Cliff was the regional director who hired me in that Durango job, I'd had some association with Cliff, and I believe Cliff was looking for something different in Durango. He was looking, and this has been typical of his style as long as I've known him, he was sort of looking for new blood, looking for somebody not to just go in and do the same thing all the time. He didn't want a thirty-year veteran who had one year of experience thirty times. His philosophy was broader than that.

I interviewed for the job in Durango with three people–with Cliff, with Frank Knell, and with Wes Hirschi, who was the newly-named assistant regional director. Wes and I did not know each other. Wes was a regional engineer who had just moved to Salt Lake City. So those three folks interviewed me for the job. That was an interesting experience, the first sort of multi-interview I had had. It was kind of intimidating. I think I had enough strong views about what I wanted to do independently, in terms of managing a program, that they were intrigued by it. They had recently gone through some issues in that office where, from my perspective at least, the previous projects manager had gotten them in a little bit over their heads, and they had to kind of go in and salvage a problem that wasn't handled very well from a public perception. So they were looking for some new blood, and I just convinced them that it was the kind of job I wanted and that I could handle, and I was really pleased

when I got the opportunity to do it.

It was the kind of a job that wasn't too big for a novice manager, which is what I was. After I got the rose-colored glasses off, I was okay with, "Yeah, but you can't go in and manage the Central Arizona Project. You can't bite this whole elephant. Take something that's more manageable and kind of get your feet wet."

Issues in Durango

We had fifty people at Durango. That was the staff, fifty, fifty-five, that I supervised. We had five ongoing projects that were built and operating, one in the transition, that's the Dolores Project. It was being built, but hadn't been finished, hadn't been completed and turned over for operation and maintenance. And then we had this monster called Animas LaPlata, that was still on the table, that we were still trying to get to a place where we could begin construction. So that was one of the first tasks I sort of inherited, was sorting out a cost-sharing agreement and an Indian water rights settlement for the Animas LaPlata Project, from 1983 to 1986. That was a big part of my job as projects manager, in addition to running what I considered to be a relatively small office, but it was broad-based. It had operation and maintenance; it had planning; it had some construction associated with it, so it gave me a chance to be independent.

Another thing that gave me a chance to be independent is how far it was from Salt Lake City to Durango. That's another, I think, critical link. If you want to be independent, get as far away from headquarters as you can. Its strange, but its true. That's always been the case in this region. The office and the program that we supervise most is the one in Provo, because its fifty miles away. The one we supervised the least then was Durango; it was the farthest away. Now its El Paso, and we just pay more attention to Durango than we do El Paso. So its one of those sort of organizational cultural things, I believe. The manager who is farthest away from the regional director gets the least attention.

Storey: Which can be good or bad.

Gold: Yes, and usually is good or bad, depending on the manager. If you have a quality manager, you really want to let them handle as much of the program as they can, but sometimes you can take a quality manager, micro-manage them, and they become a very bad manager because they know you're going to second-guess them. So you're right. It has pluses and minuses.

The experience there really gave me confidence in my ability to do all of it. For the first time, here I am, I would have been–'83, let's see, I started in '69, so fourteen years, fifteen years into my career, for the first time I really had a whole program. When you work as staff to an organization, you only see that piece. If you're a planning officer, you never get to talk about operation and maintenance, or administration, or computers, or budgeting. You're fragmented, you're a vertical portion of an organization, and when you become the projects manager, you are all of the organization, responsible for all of it. That was a big step, it's a frightening step, and particularly when I recognized the kind of interface responsibilities I had with the public as well as the water users. I essentially became the eyes and the ears and the

alter ego of the regional director in my little part of the world, and that carries some pretty substantial burdens. When someone comes pounding on the desk, you know, they want a piece of your hide. So you have to figure out how to make that work and not just say, "Oh, gee, not my problem, go talk to the regional director."

I think I did a good job of that. I think it was a good learning experience for me, it gave me lots of confidence in how to do things. It was just the right match for me. I wouldn't be a bit afraid now of any job in the Bureau. I think my confidence level is not unhealthy. I think there are lots of challenges out there, but I think most of them I would be capable of handling because of sort of that "right" beginning. I didn't get in over my head, I got the job that was tailored to the kinds of skills I had and I was able to develop my skills, rather than find out which ones I did or didn't have.

Storey: You had Bridges Basin, Animas LaPlata. What was your responsibility as project manager for that?

Project Manager Responsibilities

Gold: Actually, it was all of it. At the time, from '83 to '88, and certainly through '86, the Indian water rights settlement and the cost-sharing agreement were drafted, negotiated, written, finessed, politicked, all the way from the local public groups to the tribes, the states involved–New Mexico and Colorado, the Department [of the Interior] Solicitor's Office, Justice Department–because it was, in fact, an Indian rights settlement.

In the local area that was my job, was to see that those things got done. Now, again, that was only part of my job, because Animas LaPlata, while it was large politically, the number of staff we had assigned to it wasn't all that large. We had five or six people working on it to do those kinds of things, but we also had the Dolores Project under construction over in Cortez, which we were trying to make a transition to operation and maintenance. We had the four or five operating projects, and of course all those water districts, and things like the Reclamation Reform Act were landing in the middle of all those projects.

What became obvious to me was the role of the projects manager was to provide leadership to the federal government's stance as it related to the other entities: the states, the tribes, the publics. So there was an awful lot of facilitation, discussion, trying to sell the ideas that we thought were important, to cost-sharing and to water rights settlements, to a group of folks who, when they read the law that authorized this project, didn't see any of that. And they were right. But our job was to go sell them on the fact that unless we figured out how to do this within the administration's current philosophies of cost-sharing and water rights settlements, that it wasn't going anywhere. We could have all the authority we wanted, and we still couldn't build the project. So we had to package the project in such a manner that the United States felt more comfortable with the level of subsidy, and that's a big job.

Storey: Where was the dividing line between regional responsibility and project manager responsibility in these kinds of activities?

Dividing Responsibilities between the Region and the Project Office

Gold: Cliff Barrett and I have, in fact, and had at the time, an extremely good working relationship, and I credit him with crafting that line to allow me to do that job. He had enough confidence in me to give me the job, and he did. His message to me was, "Here it is, here's the area, here are the big problems. You go take care of them, and if you need me, you call me. If I don't hear from you, I'll assume everything's fine." He made his staff available.

My response to that was to keep him briefed. I'd pick up the phone once a month. I'd come to Salt Lake and take an hour, sit down with Cliff and say, "Okay, here's what's going on, here's what I think is about to happen," or, "Here's what just happened, and here's what we did with it, and here's where I think we ought to go." Essentially, Cliff left that in my hands. I often sought his counsel. "Hey, gee, this is a tough nut. What do you think about . . .? What do you think I should do? Here's my first reaction. How do you think that will play?" So he was my mentor from a teaching perspective. Cliff had served a lot of time in Washington and understood the politics of the Department and the Bureau in Washington very well, and I think, just gave me the opportunity to do the job, and he had confidence enough in me that through some coaching, he could get me on the right direction and know that I was going to carry it out.

From a pure oversight perspective, very little. It was my job to do. I think I convinced him that I was going to keep him informed. I wasn't going to do something crazy, that if it was more than I felt comfortable with, I was going to get some advice. I've often called my staff and his staff together. People like Harl Noble, who was the planning officer, and Wayne Cook, who was the O&M chief, Wes Taylor, who was the budget chief. And I would sit down with those folks, either together or one on one, and say, "Hey, help me out with this. Here's what I'm thinking. Does this fit?"

So I always tried to have a team approach to this problem-solving, not my own approach, but it was my responsibility to get those approaches formulated and then to articulate those approaches to the public and the other constituencies. I think I learned how to do that well, and I gained, I think, a lot of respect within Reclamation by doing that and keeping everybody on the same page. But it was, I'm sure, a risk, particularly in the early years of that, to Cliff. But to his credit, he allowed me to do it, he allowed me to develop the skills.

Storey: Did he typically do that with all of his project managers and supervisors?

Cliff Barrett's Managerial Style

Gold: I think that's his style. I think when he had thorny problems that he wasn't comfortable with the overall direction, then he would have a tendency not to jump in himself, but to put one of his staff people sort of in the loop, over your shoulder, and he had staff people that he relied upon a great deal. Wayne Cook was one of those people he had a lot of faith in. One of the advantages is Cook and I had worked together before, so we had a good working relationship. So when I had a question, I was already there. I was already saying, "Wayne, here's what I think is going on. What do you think is going on?"

So we were always together, and I think as a result of that, the message Cliff got was a

comfortable message that staff knew where I was going; staff was relatively okay with it. And if I had a departure, where I was going to take departure from staff, I would get staff and Cliff together and say, "Here's where I'm going and why." Then Cliff backed me.

I'd say it was more typical of him to provide that autonomy than it would have been for him to micro-manage. I never did see Cliff as a micro-manager. He was very technically competent, he knew the issues, but he wasn't sort of "the doer." Some managers are; they want to get in and write the letters and make the decisions. Cliff was pretty politic. He provided a good visibility for the organization. He was a shy-mannered kind of a guy. In fact, a lot of people thought he was stuck-up, arrogant. I've had people tell me that. "How do you stand to work for Barrett? He's so arrogant. He won't even speak to me in the hall." And I've said, "Wait a minute, maybe you're missing something. The reason he doesn't speak to you in the hall is he's shy." And I honestly believe that that's true. Cliff had to work hard at developing and exercising his outward attitudes toward people. Lots of times, you know, people would pass him in the hall and they wouldn't get eye contact. It wouldn't be, "Hey, how are you doing today?" It would just be–because he wasn't comfortable with that sort of personal, "How's your family? Did you buy a new horse yet?" kind of stuff. He wasn't there. And I know a lot of people didn't feel as warmly toward him as they would have done, had they known him. But the more I got to know him–and we had some heart-to-hearts about a lot of things relative to that Durango program, and he and I became very close friends, and still are.

I credit him with the right kind of a touch. He knew the technical business. His role was in the upper end of the political spectrum and he knew how to make that work well, and he left the rest of it to me.

Storey: I believe you mentioned, for instance, repayment contracts. Who signed the repayment contracts when they finally got finished?

Gold: The director, but that's culture.

Storey: The regional director.

Gold: And at even that, after they were approved by Washington. Our hierarchy was such that that was just the way things happened.

Storey: But he left you alone. That's very stressful for the manager who permits that, also.

Gold: Yes, it is. Take repayment contracts, for instance. I was the principal negotiator on the Animas LaPlata District's repayment contract. I had a team of four, including myself–two members of my own staff at Durango, and one member of Cliff's staff, his repayment contractor. Not the branch chief. It was Rosemary Williams, in fact, who was a repayment specialist, and so the four of us did the negotiating, and I was the lead negotiator. We'd purposely set it up that way, we minimized the reviews by doing that, and it worked very well.

I think that's the secret, from my perspective, of any kind of field location, is you have to deal with a region and a mentality within a region that says you're part of the team. If

you're something else, you know, if you're viewed as, "Well, that's just the Corps of Engineers' office out there, and we don't know them and they're not part of us," if you get the "we" versus "us," it doesn't work. I always tried to cultivate that we're all on the same page. Yeah, I had a different role, but if we didn't all have it together, then it wasn't going to happen. And I think that's a successful way to get at it.

New Role of Area Managers

I fear a little bit in our current direction, that we tend to pull that apart a little bit. I believe I understand why Dan Beard has moved us toward more emphasis on area managers. And I don't object to that, but I think in putting more emphasis on the area manager, that's sort of a pendulum philosophy. Yes, you may need to do that to get us to shift, but the real answer is back in the middle, whereas if you just went up to where you wanted to be, your real answer is going to fall back off.

So I think what we're seeing right now is an overemphasis on the autonomous role of the area manager, and I don't think you can survive it, because you will alienate region versus area management staff, and it will be a "them" versus "us." If you press that to the limit, you will eliminate the function of the regional office. That's just a pragmatic answer from the organization perspective that I have. Some would suggest that's a good idea. I don't believe it's a good idea. I think it's a better idea to clearly define the role of the regional offices. I think its due.

I think we have to push the "doing" nature of the jobs to the field level. You can't day-to-day manage activities in El Paso, Texas, from Salt Lake City. You can, however, provide direction, overall philosophy, guidance, parameters, if you will, criteria, sideboards, however you want to characterize that, and feedback. In other words, "Here's what I'd like you to do. Go do it." And then at least periodically say, "Well, yes, we were trying to get to there, and we really got to here, and let's talk about the difference. Why didn't we get all the way to our joint expectation?" And then say, "Great. Now let's go out and do better," and that kind of stuff.

I think that allows the area manager and the field person the ability to build skill, build credibility. You don't go in and you know, rip them a new one, take them all out of there, fire them all, demote them, put somebody else in, because you've just destroyed all the credibility that was there. Make good selections, get good people, make sure they understand the job, and then let them do it.

But I think when you lose the level, the sort of regional perspective, I think you will fragment the Bureau if you do that. You will effectively have twenty-six regions, and I don't think that's very workable when it comes to articulating some kind of uniform philosophy. Not necessarily policy, but philosophy.

But if I had been Dan Beard[29] and I was trying to refocus our activities in the Bureau at

29. Daniel P. Beard was commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation during the Clinton administration from 1993 to 1995. Mr, Beard also participated in Reclamation's oral history program; see Daniel P. Beard, *Oral History Interview*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interview conducted by Brit Allan Storey, (continued...)

the field level, I would not have been able to fashion a better approach to force the organization to look at the area manager level. I think we're going to have to come back from that a little bit, and, very candidly, I would guess 75 percent of those area managers out there will feel more comfortable when they come back a little bit, when they have some of the senior thinkers in the organization helping them with guidance, philosophy. Right now, they've sort of been fed to the wolves. We've taken some folks who were good folks, but, like I was, with the rose-colored glasses or even before, when I just was naive, and we've sort of said, "Well, go. Its your problem. Go, sell water conservation and water spreading, and R-R-A [Reclamation Reform Act],[30] and all these other great and wonderful ideas." They, in many cases, don't have the skills. They may have the knowledge, but they don't have the skills to do that efficiently. And if regional folks, which is where we tend to have some of our more seasoned management expertise, if they could become coaches to those people and help them, then we'll all be better off.

But if the view of those senior thinkers is that they've been carved out of this organization, there isn't a place for them in this organization and they aren't contributing to this organization, then they'll stop doing so, and some of those naive area managers are going in the tank out there. They're going to make some big-time mistakes. That's just the way the world works. I mean, if you aren't willing to go out and take some risks, if you don't know anything, you've got to try the water. Once in a while, you're going to make a mistake. I think we can do a better, efficient job by taking advantage of the whole organization instead of just one part of it.

Storey: Let's see. You were down there for five years. What caused you to decide to change?

Moving on from Durango

Gold: A couple of things. Finished a job–thought we'd finished a job. Had a water rights settlement signed, accepted. Had a cost-sharing agreement in place. Had the repayment contracts executed. We were ready to begin to build the Animas LaPlata Project. It was a 500 million dollar project. I wasn't a construction engineer. We had a project that was winding down in Montrose–Dallas Creek Project. Max Stodolski was the construction engineer, construction was his background. He could handle a 500 million dollar project, knew what he was doing.

My strategy discussions with Cliff Barrett said we had a couple of choices. We could either bring in a construction manager, project construction engineer, we call them P-C-Es, set up two separate offices in Durango–mine, the projects office, and one to build the project, called the construction office. We could try to merge those offices somehow. Those were really the choices we had.

I was, after that length of time, interested in moving up in the organization. I'd been a

29. (...continued)
senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, from 1993 to1995, in Washington, D.C., edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2009, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

30. In 1982 Congress passed the Reclamation Reform Act (RRA), which raised the minimum acreage allowed to receive project water from 160 acres to 960 acres, removed the residency requirement, and placed a limit on the leasing of lands receiving government water. With the RRA, Congress recognized that agriculture had become more mechanized and industrialized and that 160 acres was too small for successful farming in the modern world.

projects manager around five and a half years, I guess, from October of '83 to January of '88. It had been really good for me. I was ready for a new challenge. The job I wanted was an assistant regional director job. This region, at the time, was one of only two regions that only had one assistant regional director. The other three regions had two, and I was working my politics on Cliff Barrett to establish a second assistant regional director. The way we were aligned, one of those assistant regional directors was primarily focused on our construction program, which was large in those years, and I believed strongly that we needed an assistant regional director for resource management, for the program, the O&M and planning program.

I think Cliff philosophically agreed with me; at least he told me he did. But the politics of doing that were not easy for him, for two reasons. First of all, he had to add a position, which starting in about '88, '87, he had to cash some chips to do that, even though he was simply moving his region to a par with other regions. He also felt like it was working pretty well, and it was. So out of my own personal desire to move up in the organization, try a different level of management, I told him that's what I would like to do. Moving to Salt Lake made a lot of sense to me personally, as well. My children lived in Logan, so if I moved to Salt Lake, I could be a lot closer to my kids and my grandkids.

We played with that philosophy. "Here are my career goals, Cliff. What are your goals for me, Cliff?" And we went through that for, oh, the better part of a year, I guess, '87, '88. Two events happened. One, Cliff's planning officer retired, Harl Noble. Two, we got to the serious point of closing our Montrose Construction Office. We were done building things on Dallas Creek. So here are two sets of immediate circumstances: my career objective and my personal interest. Cliff and I sat down, and I said to Cliff, "Hey, how about this?" And it took. What I proposed to Cliff is that I become his planning officer, as a precursor to move into the front office. I said, "I'll move to Salt Lake City, laterally, take the job as regional planning officer. Maybe I can pick that up and you won't miss a beat, because I'm a planner. By nature, I am. And as long as you're still of a mind that your philosophy will lead us toward this second assistant regional director"

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. JUNE 29, 1995.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. JUNE 29, 1995.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey with Rick Gold, on June 29, 1995.

So you would apply for the job of . . .

Gold: Told him I would apply for the job of assistant regional director if and when he decided it was the right time to advertise such a job. And as a precursor to that, from a practical perspective, I would fill his planning officer job, which was the same grade as I was in Durango. The way I saw the whole situation, that would allow him to move Mr. Stodolski to Durango from Montrose, and Mr. Stodolski, who was the construction engineer he needed, could go ahead and build the Animas LaPlata Project. And all of it just made a huge amount of sense to everybody. So that's how that whole transition for me occurred, and I moved to Salt Lake.

1988 Bureau of Reclamation Reorganization

One of the other things that was looming in 1988 when I moved here, the Bureau of Reclamation was, in fact, reorganizing its planning function. You've probably heard a lot about that in your interviews. We consolidated virtually all of our regional planning functions into Denver, and there was a dirty job of taking about sixty people who were planners in the Upper Colorado Region, both Salt Lake City as well as some of our field offices, and transferring their function to Denver, which meant sending them a letter that said, "If you'd like to follow your job, it will be in Denver next Monday." That's a dirty job when you have to go to people and tell them you've just moved them. People weren't very happy with that.

My own sense is that's one of the reasons that Harl Noble retired, is that he didn't want to deal with that, and I don't blame him. If I were ready to retire, I would not choose to go out after flogging my friends in the square. So he retired, and, of course, that left that job to somebody, and I believe Cliff's view was I could do that. I had demonstrated I had the ability to manage those kinds of people issues. So he had confidence that I could come in and handle that transition, which I did. We went from a staff in Salt Lake City, a staff of thirty-six, I believe, to seventeen, or something like that. So we cut the staff in half. Of course, that was not fun nor pretty, but it was one of those jobs that I could do, and so I did. And because all of those things sort of went together, that's why I moved to Salt Lake when I did.

It was interesting, because subsequent to that discussion, my move, and the reorganization of planning, Cliff chose–that's not the right spin. Cliff never chose to fill that second assistant regional director job. Cliff, in the alternative, chose to retire, and did. I don't know if you've interviewed Cliff, but he subsequently went to work for the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association, left the Bureau, went to work for them, and Roland Robison[31] became the regional director after Cliff.

Roland and I developed a good working relationship, and it was actually around the issue of how are we going to complete an E-I-S [Environmental Impact Statement] on Glen Canyon Dam, that Roland made the decision to create a second assistant regional director, a job which he advertised, I applied for, and was the successful candidate. That happened in May of 1990. So the current plan went together from my perspective, although in a slightly different manner than it was originally anticipated, it still got done.

Storey: You mentioned you lateraled up from the project office. What was the project manager's grade at that time?

Gold: Fourteen, same as it is today.

Storey: Is that typical across Reclamation, or do you know?

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31. Roland Robison became regional director of the Upper Colorado Region in 1989 and served in that position until 1993. Mr. Robison also participated in Reclamation's oral history program; see Roland Robison, *Oral History Interview*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interview conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, September 27, 1993, in Salt Lake City, edited by Brit Allan Storey, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

Gold: I think its typical. It was at a time we had 13s and 14s in the projects manager/projects superintendent ranks, and in some cases the superintendents, because they were O&M only, usually were 13s, and the projects managers, where the scope of effort was broader, were 14s.

In going to Durango, one of the concerns that I had, legitimate concerns, and had talked it over with Cliff and personnel as well was, was that job a 14. Did it, upon scrutiny, continue to support the 14 grade? Because I was 13 in Billings. The answer to that question then, in 1983, was, "We think it will continue to support a 14," which told me it was one of those just barely, but you know, "We'll say it's a 14."

I believe that a lot of the grade-determining characteristics of those jobs is actually imparted by the incumbent. If you become a projects manager or area manager–and by the way, in my view, those terms are interchangeable in the Upper Colorado Region and have been as long as I've been associated with the region. There was no philosophical change in this region to implement the area manager concept. When I was a projects manager, it is exactly the same function as the area manager function, and always was. In some regions, projects managers managed a project, but that was never the case in this region. Every projects manager had four or five projects and everything else that went on in their geographical area. The P-Ds even said you were responsible for a geographical area. That's sort of an aside.

But I think I know where you're headed. Let me continue. I think the incumbent brings a lot to the grade-determining characteristics. I believe that some of the best jobs, but also the most challenging and the toughest jobs in the organization, are in the field, because of that interface, the old "rubber meets the road" question. Not all managers do as well. I would suggest to you that under the most complex conditions, some of the best managers perform at a much higher level than some of the simplest issues with some of the least competent managers.

So what is the classification grade? What you're really saying is, what is it worth? What is that job worth? That's what classification is all about. What do we pay people to do these jobs? If you have sort of low-level competence in easy jobs, that shouldn't pay as much. If you have high level of competence in highly complex jobs, that should pay a lot more, and our problem is we like to say, "No, projects managers are 14," or, "Now maybe they ought to be 15." I understand that, it again is part of our culture.

I would rather see us think about the concept of sort of the grade-banded. Let's talk about managers, and let's call them all area managers, and then let's pay them what they're worth. Maybe that band is a $20,000-a-year band, that we can take the less complex, and they don't earn as much, or maybe the lesser performers, and don't pay them as much. I don't have a solid recommendation there, but I think there's an error in suggesting that because we have rewritten some P-Ds, there are twenty-six people in the Bureau of Reclamation who should be upgraded. I don't believe that's right. I think that's going to cause us problems down the road.

The norm, I think, over the years, was the fourteen levels, where those projects managers ended up. But even within that, we had some that were 13s and we had some that were, in fact, senior execs. Dennis Schroeder is in the Senior Executive Service, and he is the projects manager at C-A-P. So we have them all over the place.

One of the concerns I have about the current move to evaluate and potentially upgrade all area managers from their norm of grade 14 to a grade 15 is not that they don't have tough jobs and that they deserve that kind of pay or reward, but the organization, I believe, will also react to that kind of a message. For instance, if I were currently in a projects office working for an area manager, I was a 13 and they were a 14 and that had been going on for twenty years, and you give them a raise, I would guess that I, along with every one of my peers, is going to be saying, "Aha! If that works for my manager, it must work for me, and since my manager is now a 15, I must be a 14." And that's what will happen, in my view, in this organization. If we take a whole category of employees and upgrade them, the net effect is everybody else, over time–it may take us ten years, but over time, and enough desk audits, we will all come up a notch.

I think when we get there, assuming that I'm right, and we look back, it will make a mockery out of everything we have done to cut the number of higher-graded employees in the Bureau. And I'm not saying that's right or wrong. I'm assuming someone who made the decision that we would cut higher-graded employees did that for a good and valid reason, and if we go through this drill and look back, we will have said, "Well yeah, we did it, and then we turned around and undid it." So management went both ways on this thing, and that's part of the problem that I see in this current trend.

Storey: When you went from being the planning officer to being the assistant regional director, was that a promotion?

Becoming Assistant Regional Director

Gold: It was. I was a 14 as the planning officer. I applied for the job of assistant regional director and got that job, and it was a 15. I don't know how many candidates there were for the job; I wouldn't guess a number. I know among those in sort of the final consideration Wayne Cook and I were two, because we talked about it a lot because we'd been friends for twenty years. The unique part was, we were peers at the time. I was the planning officer, and Wayne was the chief of O&M. We both applied, we both wanted the job, we both knew what that future job was. And by the way, a lot of that future job was crafted around managing the Glen Canyon E-I-S.

We decided, among the two of us, Mr. Cook and I, that since we were both candidates, one of us was going to get this job and one of us wasn't. We could either let that become some kind of a stumbling block or we could just acknowledge that neither one of us got to control that. I didn't get to decide, nor did he, and after the dust settled, one of us had to work for the other one. So we sort of made our peace and said, "Hey, we can live with this, whichever way it goes."

I'm sure that in making the selection, Roland sought a lot of input. He told me he did.

He talked to a lot of people about what he should do, given these candidates. And you need to understand that Roland came to the Bureau from outside; he was a B-L-M [Bureau of Land Management] product. Understands resources, resource management, came to the Bureau and yet hadn't been here, didn't know all of us for his thirty years, but, I believe, respected the views of the people he knew and trusted. So he was talking to those people who did know us, and by "us" I'm saying among the "us" that he was trying to make a decision, and I don't know how many that was, but Cook and I at least were in that package.

I know that he interviewed me a couple of times, and, of course, didn't need to, because I was working for him and we had lots of chances to, "What do you think about . . ." and, "Where do you think we should go?" and, "What would you do if . . ." So there were plenty of opportunities to do that kind of stuff. He and I talked on numerous occasions about the philosophical approach to that E-I-S. What should we be doing? How should we be managing it? Where are we going? How are we going to get there? I'm sure there were significant differences in my views about how that E-I-S would be managed, and Wayne Cook's. Again, there may have been other players; those just happened to be the only two in this office and probably the biggest focus.

I felt like–and it's the way I made the pitch–I felt like we had to manage this E-I-S as the new Bureau. And I told Roland pointedly, "I don't want that job if you want that E-I-S to be managed like the old Bureau would do it, so just take me off the list, its not something I want to do." So I sort of hooked my approach to, "We've got to be more participative, more open, deal with our publics, do public involvement, do education. We've got to go out create that consensus among stakeholders, and if that's the job you want, then pick me for it." And I would guess–never had the postmortem with Roland then, but I don't think I need to–I would guess that Wayne's views were sort of opposite, "Let's control it, let's keep it within the federal family, let's do the E-I-S and get on with it."

Storey: Send it out for comment.

Gold: Yes. I think that was a deciding factor. I hope it was, because that's what we did, and if he didn't want it to happen, "he," Roland, he made the wrong choice, because I told him that's the way I was only interested in doing it. He seemed genuinely happy with the products as we moved that process along.

But I do think there was a point where he really had at least two choices in managers, both of whom I'm sure he respected. He respected me and he respected Wayne. Wayne's my senior a couple of years, maybe five years of service, he's a little older than I am, but we were both seasoned managers in this organization, people he worked with well. So he was, I believe, looking at, well, how does this new Bureau play into what we're trying to do here, in terms of resource allocation at Glen Canyon Dam. I felt, and when he made the choice, which happened and he selected me, it was a strong signal that he wanted us to move in that direction as an agency.

I also believe–and I talked to Wayne about this afterwards–Wayne struggled in not getting the job not so much because he didn't get a job, but it meant to him that the agency was moving in a different direction. It was sort of like the parting point between Wayne and

Wayne's views of how this should happen, and the agency. And the agency, instead of following the track, and that was the track Wayne was on, the agency went the other way, and Wayne sort of felt, I'm sure, almost betrayed by his agency. I would guess that it played fairly significantly in his decision to leave the Bureau, which he did. He took early retirement and went to work for the Upper Colorado River Commission.

He talked to me a lot after the decision was made, about it was the right choice for him to retired, the Upper Colorado River Commission job was a great job. He ended up taking his retirement and they matched his pay. They kept him right on the payroll and they took his retirement, so it was a great financial advantage. Every time I talked to Wayne, I was convinced that he was convincing himself, "This is the right thing for me to do." And inherent in all that, even in his own words, were he didn't fit as well where the new Bureau was going, and he would not be comfortable moving in that other direction, and so this was a better fit for him.

But I always viewed that as sort of like a turning point for this region, certainly for me and for the Bureau. If the reverse situation had come down, there were some of those same thoughts going through my mind. "If Roland chooses to stay the course with the traditional Bureau approach to things, what I want the agency to do is go over there, and so I'm going to find myself realizing that the agency is going to keep going here, and then I'm going to be that person that says, 'Well, can I stay or not? Do I have to go find a job that fits where I think we're going?'" Those were honest thoughts in my mind. I never had to get there; I never had to bite the bullet and say, "Okay, Roland selected Cook, now what are you going to do, Rick? Are you going to go find a job with somebody else to do something more in line with your ideology, or not?" But it was a turning point, I think, for this region.

Storey: Do you see it going on elsewhere in Reclamation?

Reclamation's Transition

Gold: Yes, in a number of places. Not universally. But I wouldn't expect it to, universally. The old "How do you turn a battleship" paradigm, I think, fits. You don't turn it all at once. It's got a lot of forward momentum, and you maybe horse it around a little bit, but it takes a long time. The "critical mass" message. If you have an organization with three-thousand people in it and they're all going in this direction and you decide to go at right angles, you have to get rid of about, and I've hear the term, 60 percent of the mass that's going in one direction before you can change its course. Buyouts are doing that to us. We've lost fifteen-hundred employees out of eight thousand, in a couple of years. Its one of the reasons that I think we're changing course, is because people who aren't comfortable with that changed course are saying, "I've got some options and I think I'll play them out."

Storey: But the old-line engineer types don't like where Reclamation's going.

Gold: No question about that.

Storey: The retirees really hate the way Reclamation's going.

Gold: Absolutely. I don't blame them. The problem I have with them, and I think it's a philosophical one, certainly not a personal one, because they all earned a great deal of pride in the work that we, including me, helped accomplish, and it was good. If there's a mistake Dan Beard makes, its he bad-mouths it. That's terrible. We did great things with engineering facilities, structures. What we've done in the last ninety-two years is great, wonderful work. Don't just throw it away.

Now that we've got it, what's next? That's the real question. My philosophical problem with folks who want to do more of that old stuff, whatever it was–build dams–is that its not reality-based in the politics, in the values of this society. There is no more support, enthusiasm for large civil works projects. There may be someday again, but there is not now. We've got enough. There is no support, political will, for additional subsidies to a narrow constituency. Irrigated agriculture won't work. So what we have to do is look at more of the broad things that can be supported, and in my view, you start saying "Well, Dan Beard put us right on course." Its water conservation, its transfer of ag water to M&I, its Native American assistance, its better use of the resources we have, that's the kind of stuff there is broad support for.

The Subsidy Question

I think the subsidy question is sort of a hoax, because I think there's room, as long as there is federal government and a need to do the right thing. From a resource perspective, there's room for subsidy. It's a different subsidy. You don't subsidize the agricultural guy to grow alfalfa. You subsidize the urban water user to put in a low-flow shower head. Subsidy? Sure, same thing. You don't give this one ag irrigator a $10,000-a-year subsidy. You give you and me a $10 subsidy, and all of a sudden, as a nation, with that subsidy, which is nothing more than an incentive, with that incentive, we apply the practice, and the net result is stretch the resource, get more good out of the resource.

So I think the subsidy is just sort of a scapegoat. In fact, I think we're already getting there. If you look at our current programs, things like wastewater treatment, water conservation, we are threading into those new initiatives, not 90 percent subsidies like we did for agriculture, but certainly 25 percent subsidies. Hey, that's a subsidy. We're going to fund, without repayment, half or 25 percent of those new programs. Well, that's what we did with agriculture. Fifty years ago we said, "We will fund, without repayment, 90 percent of this investment," and it was a great deal. It got us towns like Salt Lake City, Ogden, Phoenix, Fresno. That's why they're there. You can argue that they shouldn't be. You can read *Cadillac Desert*, and it will tell you that to.

Storey: Or you can read *Overtapped Oasis*, and he changes his perspectives a lot, too.

Gold: But in any case, the subsidy issue, I think, is a legitimate way to get at government providing for broad-based contemporary values, and in 1935, broad-based public value was to develop the West and irrigate. It was a broad-based value, "Go out and settle the West. Let's get some people out here. Overcome the Depression. Increase our gross national product." All of a sudden, all those things made sense. In 1995, they don't make much sense, but other things do.

So I think its happening on a broader base than just here. I think where it happens is not in the policy-making arena, although that helps. What happens is when you take individual resource allocation problems like Glen Canyon Dam's E-I-S and you apply the principles, and then the agency makes an affirmative decision in conformance with its written policy, and you say, "Aha! We are going to give up a big chunk of hydropower for the benefit of the environment." And we say it because its worth it, it's the right thing to do.

I think we're doing some of that on a broader scale than just here, certainly. I think Glen Canyon was sort of a bellwether. What we were getting there, I see it happening in the Pacific Northwest with the salmon issue. Its not resolved, and its heading in some of those directions. And there will be fights. I think its happening out in California, the C-V-P [Central Valley Project] stuff, the Bay-Delta Accords,[32] some of those kind of things. I believe we will see it throughout. Then when the right time for those major decisions comes in our future, we have a different ethic about how to manage. And that's the difference. When we get that ethic, when we sit down, first of all we don't just sit down with the water user, but the environmental group, and the Indian tribe, and the state, and the city managers, "Okay, now what shall we do?" And they argue a lot among themselves, and we facilitate, and at the end, we say, "Well, okay, now to balance this out," because we always did that, we always balanced it out. But we only had two people at the table. It was easy to balance. Now you've got twenty-five people at the table, its not so easy to balance.

Storey: We've got water recreationists and flat water recreationists and stream fishermen and lake fishermen.

Gold: Endangered fisheries and trout fisheries and exotics. Its never ending. We don't have majorities anymore. We have a plethora of pluralities.

Storey: I would have thought that an assistant regional director's job would have been a S-E-S [Senior Executive Service] position.

Senior Executive Service

Gold: Never has been in the Bureau. The directors, to my knowledge, of course, were I believe, 16, and maybe even 15s, fifteen years ago. Of course, the S-E-S itself is a rather recent phenomenon.

Storey: [Jimmy] Carter administration.

Gold: There's been talk about that. And by the way, the other thing that I'm seeing in our reorganizations and I think every region is moving toward, in fact, there is only one region now that has more than one, and we're no longer assistants.

32. Referring to the delta of the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers–often referred to as the Bay-Delta. This is located on the northeast quadrant of San Francisco Bay (San Pablo Bay). The water from the Delta exits to San Pablo Bay through the Carquinez Straits. "The Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) is a part of California's overall water management portfolio. It is being developed as a 50-year habitat conservation plan with the goals of restoring the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta ecosystem and securing California water supplies. The BDCP would secure California's water supply by building new water delivery infrastructure and operating the system to improve the ecological health of the Delta. The BDCP also would restore or protect approximately 150,000 acres of habitat to address the Delta's environmental challenges." See baydeltaconservationplan.com (Accessed June 2014).

Storey: Deputies.

Gold: We're now deputies. If I wanted to argue real hard when my turn at a desk audit comes, I'll say, "Well, wait a minute, I got a new job, too." When there were three assistant regional directors–myself, Wes Hirschi, and Ed Fowler–my responsibility was for planning and O&M, Mr. Hirschi's responsibility was for construction, Mr. Fowler's position was responsible for administration. Now I'm the deputy, and all those functions are within my purview. I don't have a part of the program, I have all of the program, just like Charley [Calhoun] does.

Storey: When did that change take place?

Gold: Let's see. Officially, I went under a P-D called a deputy about three months ago.

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Gold: Our organization isn't complete. On July 1 we will make the transition and start operating under our new organization, which means all the employees will have sort of this new position description. We're going from eight divisions to two, that kind of thing. And between July and October, then all the gory details get worked out in terms of cost codes, mail codes, all new P-Ds, and everything else. So its been a transitional process for us over the last year.

Storey: How many layers of the hierarchy are going to be eliminated under your new reorganization, this region?

The Region's Reorganization

Gold: I think that's strangely a matter of how you decide how many there were in the first place. I think we've played some real interesting games in the Bureau by, for instance, Beard's suggesting that he eliminated a whole layer. I don't think that's very factual. It makes good P-R, but its not very factual.

Previously we had a regional director, we had assistant regional directors, we had division chiefs, and we had branch chiefs in this regional office. Under our new organization, we have–here's the game–a regional director and a deputy regional director. Notice that's still on one [level]. (laughter). A division level and a group level. So to the extent you're comfortable with me saying that a regional director and a deputy regional director are in the same box on the organizational chart and are not two layers, then that is one layer. We've eliminated a layer. Previously, you would have had to have said the regional director and three assistant regional directors, each responsible for a part of the organization, were one layer. My logic says, yeah, makes as good a story as any.

In truth, not much is different. The kicker in all this is what Charley and I feel comfortable with, at least what he and I talk about being comfortable with, is that we are really sharing the job of regional director, because my job is as broad as his. My function is the same width as his function. There is no other part of the function of this region that the regional director has authority over that the deputy does not have authority over.

So its that one level of management I think you can make the argument for. Is it a solid argument? Maybe not. Is there a chain of command? Probably not, either. When employees want to come to the front office, the Office of the Regional Director, they talk to me or Charley. They don't talk to me and then Charley; its not chain of command at this point. We actually split up the supervision. I supervise some, he supervises some. Its not a hierarchical kind of thing; we just divide the workload.

So the thing that is different is the number of supervisors. We talked about the layer, how many layers are eliminated. The numbers are certainly different. We had a regional director, three assistants, thirteen, I think, thirteen divisions, roughly, and then branches. Each division had three or four or five branches, in the old organization. In the new organization, we have the regional director, the deputy, two divisions, and a total of thirteen branches. So the number of supervisory employees is considerably smaller. Likewise, the grades of some people who were supervisors and are no longer supervisors, are now not justified on the basis of the supervisory grade of members you've got, they're based on the technical content. We've created some new concepts in this region like functional coordinators, specialists, where they are program managers more than they are supervisors.

If we're not careful and some of this grade business gets out of hand, we could undo what we've done. The best thing we've done, I think, is align ourselves much more closely with our new budget structure, if we ever get that going, wherein resource management is half our organization. Administrative services is the other half, and I think that's helpful.

One could suggest that in the previous organization, the assistant regional director for planning and O&M was really the division chief for resource management, and you could play that game. I'm not so caught up in it, because I have a personal belief that, firstly, our recommendation was we not reorganize so soon, that we figure out what we're going to do, that we reformulate the way we do business and the role of the offices, and we leave reorganization to last. We were essentially instructed by the powers-that-be, commissioner, Don Glaser, whoever, that, no, we're going to do this the other way around. We're going to reorganize first. I think a lot of people are kind of still scratching their heads and saying, "Okay, now we're reorganized, now what are we going to do?" And we've still got a lot of this, "What is our role? What is our role vis-a-vis the field offices versus Denver versus Washington?" And some of that stuff hasn't been sorted out. So there's still a lot of transition time, from my perspective.

Storey: What kinds of major activities were you involved in as regional planning officer from '88 to '90?

Regional Planner Activities, 1988-90

Gold: A lot of it was that reorganization. Took us about a year to figure out a new structure, get the functions straightened out between Denver, ourselves in the regional office, and our field offices.

Storey: The reorganization in '88?

Gold: Yes, the planning reorganization. And of course, whenever you're taking 50 percent of the staff and uprooting them, a lot of them terminated. They didn't go to Denver, a lot of them mad about it in the first place, and didn't care in the second. You know, there was just a lot of turmoil, a lot of personal and personnel issues to deal with.

Along those same time frames, we revamped the way of the policy for new planning starts. We were involved with Denver in some of the planning instruction rewrite that never went anywhere, some effort that was sort of activity-trapped. I was involved in the early phases of even the Glen Canyon effort, the Glen Canyon studies, because they were in this office. We had staff that was working on them. Because the region's function was not–well, let me say it a different way. Because the projects offices had the direct "doing" responsibility for the planning program, we weren't really formulating plans. We were a review organization, an oversight organization, type of thing.

It was a transition for me, because I moved from being a totally responsible manager to a staff position, and it was kind of hard to get used to. As a result of that, however, I think I had a lot to bring to the regional office about how organizations should work, because I had a broader picture. As the planning officer, when I sat in a staff meeting, I wanted to know what kinds of things were going on relative to budgeting and space and vehicles and safety program. I was interested in how the regional office worked, because I knew how the projects office worked, and yet I was only assigned a vertical slice of the regional office. So I sort of had my nose in a lot of things. I'm sure that didn't make a whole lot of people happy, but I have a hunch it was the right thing to do, because the regional director thought it worked out well enough. He thought it was the right kind of stuff.

But it was a different job, real different job. Had it not been for the sort of career objective I had, had I moved to that job as with an eye on staying there, I would have betrayed my own management development program and my desire to find a projects manager job that broadened my horizon. It was one of those sort of temporary, "Okay, I'll take a step back, because I can see I can get around this rock if I do it." Rather than just keep banging against a rock, I took the lateral, met some needs of the organization, kept my eye on the target and kept working to get the organization to set up the job that I would have a shot at.

Storey: How was Roland Robison as a regional director? What was his style?

Regional Director Roland Robison

Gold: Roland does a great job. Roland and I had a good working relationship. Roland was different from most managers that I had worked with or for in Reclamation, in that he was not a subject-matter specialist. He didn't know much about Reclamation's program. Roland was an attorney. We don't have many of those running around the halls of the Bureau of Reclamation. He didn't practice much law, to his credit, which he could have done. He was an extremely valuable director from the human relations perspective. His strong suit was his connection with every employee in this building and in this organization. He liked to go talk to them, find out what was going on. He did things like an ice cream social on the anniversary of his appointment. He served ice cream cones out in the front office. He brought us together in

a lot more friendly, collegial kind of atmosphere. Of course, that was a need, if you compare his style with Cliff's style, who was right before him.

Cliff was more straight up and down sideboards, hierarchy-oriented, chain of command, perceived as more rigid. Roland was the opposite. Roland came in in cowboy boots and Levis, was relaxed, comfortable. Roland had been in the political world as well, with the state, with his time in Washington. He was very adept at pretty high-level connections, the political frontier. I learned a lot from him about those kinds of things.

The one thing that he helped me with a lot was sort of his sense of political direction, his anticipation of, "When we see this happening in Washington or in this political party, or when that senator does this, it probably means something like this is happening over here." He had good insights into the kind of cause-and-effect relationships that occurred in politics, that I hadn't been exposed to.

The other real advantage that I found personally, working for Roland–and again, this may sound silly to you–but he was not interested in doing the technical stuff at all. I played more of a role, I believe, of *de facto* regional director, because if he had a problem that we were trying to solve, it was mine. It was like, "Rick, I don't know anything about this. Here." And so I would sit down with the staff, most of the time with him involved, and we'd work through and come to a solution, and that was it. Roland wasn't there saying, "Well, I don't like that, that's not the way I would do it." He was supportive, he trusted my ability to formulate solutions and make decisions, and he was very comfortable with me playing that role for him.

That was a little bit troubling when Wes was here, because Wes was the senior assistant regional director, and I was the junior. Roland had such a gentlemanly fashion, though. He knew, and we talked. I didn't have a hell of a lot of expertise in the construction business. So he would do the same thing to Wes relative to construction. He'd just kind of say, "Wes, you run the construction show, and, Rick, you run the resource management show." And it worked out well for me because it gave me a chance then to sort of be on top of that whole program. He ran interference for us politically, and that was good and he enjoyed that. He didn't want to sit in a meeting for two hours and talk about the nuts and bolts of repayment contracts or resource management plans or hydrology. He just wasn't interested in that stuff. His mannerisms we all tuned up on. Thirty minutes into an interview–I don't know if you've interviewed Roland–but if he didn't get up and walk around and maybe leave during the interview, you were lucky. (laughter)

Storey: No, he never did that.

Gold: That was his style. When he'd given you thirty minutes, he'd start getting nervous, and when he'd given you an hour, he was out of his chair, looking out the window, and you knew he was done. He'd had enough of that. But that's just training, you know. We all got accustomed to that and we packaged the stuff he needed to know on the front end and he got it. Usually we tried to meet not in his office, so he could walk out the door and go back to his office, and we'd finish up the technical stuff. That works for me.

I think understanding the style of the person you work for is extremely important, fitting your skills with their style. And unless you want to take a baseball bat and go in and change their style, and most of us who work for somebody don't like to do that. There are a few examples of people who tried to do that.

Storey: Well, I'd like to keep going. I've been itching to ask you about the development of the Glen Canyon environmental statement, but we're really out of time for today. I appreciate you spending time with me.

I'd like to ask you now whether or not you're willing for researchers both inside and outside Reclamation to use these tapes and the resulting transcripts for research purposes.

Gold: Sure.

Storey. Good. Thank you.

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 2. JUNE 29, 1995.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. AUGUST 14, 1996.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Rick Gold, the assistant regional director in the Upper Colorado Region in Salt Lake City, Utah, in his office on August 14, 1996, at about ten o'clock in the morning. This is tape one.

Last time when we talked, Mr. Gold, you talked about the process that they went through to select you for A-R-D [assistant regional director], and your interest in doing the Glen Canyon environment statement and the approach. You had talked about that and we had gotten you selected as assistant regional director, but we didn't talk about what happened afterwards when you were actually implementing the environmental process. And I'd like to see, first of all, was that your primary thing that you were doing, or were there lots of other responsibilities in addition to that?

Glen Canyon Studies

Gold: There were lots of other responsibilities. They didn't get much attention for a while. (laughter)

The primary focus of the job, probably at least for the first three years, was the Glen Canyon studies. We had a huge public process to get off the ground, get started, make progress, try and reach some kind of team dynamic that was as stable as we could make it and move toward some solutions. We had pending legislation. We had congressmen, power customers, environmental groups, Native American tribes, other federal agencies, state agencies, sort of at our throat, because they knew we had something to do in terms of writing this NEPA document, and yet we hadn't aggressively started that process.

So my task was to essentially lead that effort, and it involved early on series of public meetings that were somewhat structured and yet lots of free-flowing maybe nervous paranoia is the best way to describe the public attitude. They knew we were trying to do something.

They weren't sure where we were going. They weren't sure we could do it. They weren't sure their views would be taken into consideration, and most of all, they didn't have a vision of what the final outcome might be. So it was a major challenge in terms of trying to hold meetings with folks who had vastly different views. Probably the biggest single challenge was an educational challenge, to get people who historically hadn't even talked to each other to get in the same room and talk about major issues like tradeoffs between power generation, peaking capacity, and environmental concerns.

It took up a lot of time. What I found it to be is a very high stress kind of situation. It took a lot out of a lot of folks, because we were holding meetings monthly, bimonthly, something like that, as often as we could get people to turn and think about things and come back and start talking about what was important, what were the obvious alternatives that we ought to look at. So we did an awful lot of public education trying to get people to not talk at each other but to talk to each other, to listen, to understand, to interact rather than just posture, stake out the political ground that they wanted to defend and fold their arms and sit back and say, "Try to get through this." And so there were a lot of frustrations in that first three years, primarily.

But there were other jobs. I mean, I was, in fact, an assistant regional director. We, at the time, had three. We had myself, primarily responsible for Glen Canyon but also the planning and operation and maintenance side of the regional office. We had Wes Hirshi, who was primarily responsible for the construction side of the region. And we had Ed Fowler, who was the assistant regional director for administration. So in addition to a regional director at that time, Roland Robison, there were three of us who divided up the program in terms of its functional components.

Storey: And, again, you became an A-R-D when?

Gold: In May of 1990 is when I became the assistant regional director. But 90 percent of the work in the first three years was probably focused at Glen Canyon. It was essentially a full-time job. We obviously had some staff. We ultimately hired Lee McQuivey to try to manage that Glen Canyon process. He supervised not only our NEPA manager, but he supervised our Glen Canyon Environmental Studies manager, Dave Wegner. NEPA manager, I think when we started, was Tim Randall, who was duty stationed in Denver. Later it became Gordy Lind, who was duty stationed in Salt Lake City.

We had some unique opportunities. We had close working relationships with a number of folks through this meetings process. But one of the neat things we did is we had a National Park Service employee duty stationed within our office here in Salt Lake City. So we had some unique approaches at trying to make ourselves, whom we considered the major water and power operator, and the National Park Service, the land manager, in as close a partnership as we could get them from a federal perspective. And I think that helped a lot.

Getting to a Draft Environmental Statement

Where do we go from here? Probably the defining time element was when we filed the draft environmental statement, having gone through the public processes, the scoping, the

determination of alternatives. We finally got to a document, a draft environmental statement. Lots of conflict in getting there, but I think the longer we worked at it, the more educated the people got. We started to form some honest relationships. You know, people didn't love each other, but they began to trust each other, and that was the key dynamic.

We started to have people that were talking about what they thought their needs were as opposed to what their wants were. And we finally got down to some common ground and used data to lay out virtually all of the realistic options. And I think that helped a lot when people could see that we had options all the way from tearing down Glen Canyon Dam, on one end, to going to increased power production and higher rates of peaking power on the other extreme. Neither of those extremes, obviously, was seriously considered, but they were kind of on the board and they stuck and people realized that we were actually looking at, "Well, so what if you did?" And you get past a lot of the emotional rhetoric and the, "You guys are just trying to manipulate," when you actually write down factually what options are and what happens if you do this option, that option, and all the shades of gray in between.

We finally ended up with nine alternatives that we evaluated. We discarded those end points. We did not seriously consider taking down Glen Canyon Dam, nor did we consider adding more powerplants and making the situation worse. One of the other fundamental things that we did during that time frame was to establish interim flows. That occurred in November of 1991, where we realized that it was important to send the signal that things were going to change, that we knew enough about the physical system that we were going to operate Glen Canyon Dam differently until we decided on its final operating criteria, if you will. So in November of '91 we transitioned through a series of research flows to a more limited operation of the peaking power operation. And I think that showed a lot of people who were dealing with that we had our sights set on some kind of a balanced response to this major problem.

We actually implemented those flows, essentially set aside the historic operation. That was a painful economic decision that we made for the power customers. They would have preferred us to let the status quo remain until we got to a final solution. But I think it helped us by demonstrating that we were going to make a change. People got serious at that point and realized that we weren't just going to go through the motions and in the end say, "Well, its just fine the way it is. Thank you very much." So we gained a lot of credibility as an agency when we did that.

Storey: Now, why were we doing this?

Changing Public Values Drove Writing the New Glen Canyon EIS

Gold: I think we were doing it, in general, to satisfy sort of a growing sentiment, public sentiment, that values in the United States had changed, that in 1956 when Glen Canyon Dam was authorized, there was no question that running a peaking power hydroplant on the Colorado River was the right thing to do, and it was a strongly held public value that it was the right thing to do.

In 1989 that public value had changed, and there were other things, primarily

environmental sensitivity kinds of things, concern for some endangered fish, concern for some beach erosion, concern for some trout fisheries, some general ecological health in the Grand Canyon. And it was our job to figure out if there wasn't a middle ground that didn't give up all of the benefit of having a hydropower plant in that location but yet operating in a more environmentally sensitive manner. It was a balancing act, and I think as it worked out it did a very good job of balancing. It was a difficult and arduous process, not from the mechanics of how do you do that, because virtually anybody in two hours could have sit down and written a set of operating criteria that would have been very close to what we ultimately arrived at. But you couldn't have sold it in the next ten years of your life. The process is what generated the product that is salable and is still today surviving as a preferred alternative.

Storey: You mentioned that you had both extremes of the spectrum of possibilities, and those were discarded fairly quickly. How long did it take for people to buy into discarding those extremes? For instance, I would think the power companies would say, "Hey, we like the idea of more powerplants."

Gold: Not only the power companies, the Bureau of Reclamation liked that idea very much. In fact, one of the ways that all other things being equal, there is a grand engineering solution to the problem at Glen Canyon. And its very simple. You just build an afterbay. You go downstream of Glen Canyon Dam and build an afterbay dam so that out of Glen Canyon Dam you can continue to run peaking power operations, store the flow in the afterbay, and below the afterbay you put out constant flows, whatever anybody would like to have. And all you have to have is a little bit of capacity down there to store water.

Storey: You might say that was sort of a traditional Reclamation solution.

Gold: Absolutely. And, in fact, we've mentioned we have a number of facilities in Reclamation where afterbay dams exist. Yellowtail, for one, in Montana. The Aspenall Unit here in Colorado has Crystal Dam, which is an afterbay. It allows you the luxury of just exactly that kind of operation. Had Glen Canyon Dam been fitted with an afterbay in 1956, we probably could have avoided a great deal of this dilemma. But trying to fit Glen Canyon Dam with an afterbay, which meant you have to place it in the Grand Canyon National Recreation Area within feet almost of the Grand Canyon National Park was a political impossibility. That doesn't mean there weren't a whole lot of people who thought that was still the right answer and, by God, let's just go get it done.

Storey: Are we talking the fifties or are we talking the nineties here?

Breaking Traditional Thinking within Reclamation

Gold: I think we're talking the nineties. We're talking about people you mentioned in the power community. I believe that the Bureau of Reclamation was actually more adamant that the right solution was go get congressional authority to build an afterbay. I think that that was just traditional thinking. We actually had an unnamed region who proposed to the Denver Office that they design such an afterbay, which would have been a facility in the Upper Colorado Region, but we didn't propose that. Some other region proposed that, and there was a design prepared.

I learned about that design, just to give you an example of how well that Reclamation process worked, I learned of that design on a float trip with a group of environmentalists. I was, in fact, nailed to the wall with that design, because I wasn't aware it was going on. When those folks said, "The Bureau of Reclamation is just going to do the traditional approach and build a dam, aren't they, Mr. Gold?"

And I said, "No, I don't think that makes any sense. I don't think we're entertaining that idea." And lo and behold, from the hip pocket came, "Well, then how do you explain this?" And they handed me the Reclamation design, which had been prepared by our Denver Office that was contemporary. And I was shocked. And it caused just a little bit of a ruckus, as you might expect. Anyway, the point of that whole matter is there were lots of folks in Reclamation who thought that a traditional solution was the only answer. I got more fan mail than you might expect from within the Bureau of people saying, "Aren't you an engineer? Don't you understand what you're trying to do here, that the right solution is to build an afterbay?"

I looked at all those things and was a little struck by what I considered, at least, and its just my view, of sort of the political naivety of some of those people who would honestly, and felt strongly that what the Bureau ought to do is go to the United States Congress and ask to build a dam in the Grand Canyon as a solution to this problem. It didn't pass the straight-face test for me. I couldn't have sold it. There were a lot of people who agreed with me, thankfully, and so that's how quickly we discarded them. It was more or less our own ability for Reclamation to kind of get past the traditional solution and start looking at, "Well, in the nineties, how do you solve this kind of problem?" And you don't go build a dam.

So it was a big challenge, and I think it was within Reclamation where a lot of that challenge occurred. It was one of those sort of precursors to accepting the job. When I talked to Roland Robinson about taking the job, I didn't believe it was a traditional job. I believed it was directly tied to the new mission of the Bureau. I told Roland that and I said, "If you want me to take the job on, it will only be as a new mission job. We will either make or break the Bureau's new mission based on our success in implementing the Glen Canyon E-I-S. If we fail to get there, than we aren't the new Bureau, and we can pack it in."

So I always viewed it as sort of a moral testing ground of whether we really could be other than a major dam builder, and this very experience we just chatted about proved to me there was a large critical mass within Reclamation that thought the only answer was to build a dam. It wouldn't have flown, I'm convinced. I think we gained credibility when we admitted that, yeah, it was out there, but it wasn't real. We could no more propose that than we could propose tearing down the dam.

Storey: And this three-year process, though, how long before people began to buy in? How long before they began to understand that we were trying to make a change?

Creating Consensus on the Glen Canyon Study

Gold: I was trying to remember off the top of my head when the draft E-I-S was published, and I can't, strangely enough. We filed the final in '95. So that must mean either early '94 or late

'93 we published the draft. I think virtually all of that time between 1989, when the secretary declared that we would prepare an E-I-S, until we got to the draft, which would have been three or four years of active process, we didn't have the trust. It wasn't until we really put out that final document that the trust started coming together. It wasn't a black-white situation.

Most of the early years of that effort when the trust did not exist, it was more like a battle to get people to understand, listen, gain some rapport with each other, than it was pulling together a working group and getting about to dealing with a balancing of natural resource issues. So most of that time, I'd say, the three years at least, was a trust-building exercise. And sometimes you just have to wear that out. You just have to get people in the same room and talk to them long enough that they start to understand that you're just people and you're not ghosts and demons and, you know, everybody's not out to run havoc over everybody else. But their first initial posturing was exactly that. It was who's tougher here? Who's got more strength? Who's congressman is bigger? Mine or yours? It was an interesting process.

Storey: You mentioned that there were large numbers of people involved, large numbers of interests involved, I think would be what I should say.

Gold: Right.

Storey: My suspicion, however, would be that most of those had one or two issues that they wanted resolved and that there was a more limited group of very major players with lots of issues that they were interested in. And I'm wondering about these meetings. How many people typically came, and typically who were the people at the table?

Gold: We had eleven cooperating agencies on this E-I-S in the C-E-Q [Council of Environmental Quality] vernacular of what is a cooperating agency. So they were officially cooperators. When we started off meeting of the cooperators, we would have forty people in the room. As an adjunct to that, we had what we called an interested parties meeting. That was usually a night meeting following the cooperating agencies meeting, and we did that to give time to the people who weren't official. But we knew they were important, they were concerned, the environmental groups and whatnot, and we would actually replay most of the decisions, discussions, in a more public forum.

As the trust built in ultimately about three years, we did away with the interested parties meetings because we ended up talking to ourselves, meaning that the same people were in the room for both meetings. So we finally said, "Hey, folks, since you're all here, this is working quite well. Does anybody really want us to come back and say this stuff all one more time?" And they, being the cooperators as well as the interested parties, says, "No, this is working fine for us." The interested parties became an audience to the cooperating agencies meeting. We did our business. If they had questions they would interject. We gave them time, you know, "Do any of the members of the public who are here have anything to say about what we are talking about? Any points that we didn't cover?"

So it transitioned to where the group stayed about forty, thirty to forty people. There were lots of people on the periphery that were interested, a lot of letter-writing campaign.

For instance, we took 17,000 comments on public scoping. We took 33,000 comments on the draft E-I-S. But you're right. There were some key players, our cooperators–Arizona Game and Fish and the Fish and Wildlife Service and B-I-A [Bureau of Indian Affairs] and the Park Service and Western [Area Power Administration]. Five Indian tribes or representatives of groups of tribes. So it was that sort of key groups.

Outside those cooperators were the environmental groups, the Sierra Club, America Outdoors, America Rivers, the River Guides Association, Fly Casters, folks primarily interested in the trout fishery below Glen Canyon Dam. They were there sort of as our oversight, overseer from the public. They represented the public. But also in that group then were an awful lot of power customers, individual power companies, from a broad perspective, who were there to make sure that we didn't go too far.

A Balancing Process

So there was this balancing process not only in our official discussions among cooperating agencies, but certainly among the participants. But, you're right, there were a smaller number, probably more in the neighborhood of twenty entities that were really following our every move. They were on our mailing list. We sent them all the information. I think we went hugely in the right direction, but much farther than most Reclamation E-I-S processes in the public arena. And I think that's the thing that gave us a product that we still have that's been retained, that looks like it can be implemented without litigation, I should say. We still don't have a record of decision. We're getting close to one. We had a G-A-O [General Accounting Office] audit at the end that was mandated by legislation. We hope to have a record of decision this fall, the fall of '96.

Storey: And who will make that decision?

Gold: Bruce Babbitt, secretary of the interior, if he's allowed to. If he's not, it will be some secretary of the interior. There's a lot of debate over that right now. Where's the political advantage to have him sign it or to keep him from signing it, depending on which side of the table you're on. And that's playing today.

But the basic concept of what is the preferred alternative has stuck. It hasn't changed appreciably, which, to me, says there was pretty good consensus. It may not have made everyone 100 percent happy, but they knew enough about why we did what we did that they're okay with it. They think it's a good product.

Storey: And nobody's going to sue us?

Gold: Nobody's going to sue us.

Storey: Why not?

Gold: Because they were at the table. We seriously took their input, looked at their problems. When they said, "Ouch, that's too far. Either you cut too much power or you didn't help the fish enough or you didn't help the recreation industry enough." We looked at that and tried to

say, "Well, okay, what if we did this?" And the middle ground kind of balancing act that we did, like I said, no one came out the winner, but everyone came out understanding why we made the decisions we made and felt that they could accept the balanced solution. I just think it's a product of good public process.

Storey: But everybody isn't happy?

No Vocal Majority of Views Exists

Gold: Oh, no. No. Everybody's not happy, and I think that's fair to say on any topic in the United States today. I mean, we don't have the kind of vocal majority of views that used to prevail in the fifties and sixties when these projects were conceived. There weren't, other than a few minor, certainly much quieter protestors to the mainstream kinds of things that the United States did. They just weren't there. It was out of the seventies and eighties and certainly into the nineties, which, in my view, changes us from our major concerns over environment, which was the seventies and eighties to the nineties, which carries that message even further to the fact that no one even wants to be represented anymore. That's the kind of thing that we're finding in our government processes anymore. It used to be that okay, let the Sierra Club represent all the environmentalists. Well, that doesn't work anymore, because all the environmentalists don't want to be represented by Sierra Club. They want to be there themselves.

So a representative form of government is certainly not the way public processes go. That's why you have mailing lists that have 300 names on them anymore, because people don't want to learn from someone who represents them. They want to learn directly. They want to be firsthand, and if they've got an issue they want to come to the table and tell you about it. We saw that very, very vocally in the relationship between the B-I-A and the tribes. One might suggest early on, well, B-I-A represented the tribes. You talk to the tribes, you find that isn't the case. They don't want to be represented by B-I-A, and they refused to be represented by B-I-A. B-I-A can be at the table, but the tribes better be at the table, too.

Storey: Did you run into any religious issues with the Native Americans?

Native American Cultural Issues Related to the Glen Canyon EIS

Gold: Oh, sure. Yeah. Its part of the cultural thing. And I don't know that they would call them "religious" and set them aside. I think they call them part of their culture. Part of the thing that they protect is their feeling about the water, the land, and the sky, and that's their personalization of how they feel about the natural resources. In Anglo culture, yeah, that's a religious kind of thing, but its just the culture. But its important. I mean, we talked about sacred sites, historic sites, archeological as well as other kinds of things like places that they gather. For the Hopis, for instance, the Hopi salt mines is a virtual shrine. It is a place where young Hopi men make pilgrimage to receive insight into their Hopi life. They bring back resources, salt. That is part of their ritual of society.

Yeah, there were an awful lot of those kind of things, and one of the things that makes them most difficult to deal with, they're legitimate, they're straight-up kinds of concerns, and

yet the people themselves are very protective of those historic meanings, messages, places. Its much like other religions where there are things that can't be talked about. "Its so sacred that I can't tell you about it. Its very important to me." And the dilemma we've found ourselves in is issues very important to the Native Americans, and yet they didn't want to tell us where it was, what it was, how to protect it, how to avoid it. It was just one of those things.

What we ended up doing and I think the right answer is admit that they have concern and that they need assistance to protect that culture, that way of life, and let them decide what needs protected and how it needs protected and how to characterize it. Don't have us go figure that out for them. Get them involved in that process. And we did a lot of that.

Storey: But how do you deal with an issue like that? Do you just let them say, "We don't want you to do X?"

Gold: There's a potential for those kinds of issues to be kind of show stoppers, that they're like you can't violate. I think what we've found is that the tribes, when they realized that we were sincere about taking their point of view and letting them decide what needed to be done, they are as reasonable folks as the rest of us. They just wanted to be at the table. And if we could demonstrate to them we are willing to protect their needs . . .

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. AUGUST 14, 1996.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. AUGUST 14, 1996.

Gold: As they saw everyone else's wants turn to needs, they got down to what did they really need to protect their culture, their shrines. And so I don't think anyone viewed what they were suggesting as outlandish. Now, I can see the potential there. One of the things that I think we had the advantage of is we were one of the first major E-I-S processes that included the Native Americans to such an extent. So they were pleased that we had our hand out to them saying, "Look, join us. Let us do this in a sensitive manner." And they came to us honestly and said, "Here's how we think you should do it." I think that's a position that could be exploited, but I don't think we found that in the Native American folks that we dealt with.

Storey: What about environmentalists? I think my understanding is there was a lot of concern about effects on the Grand Canyon.

Environmentalists and the Grand Canyon

Gold: Effects on the Grand Canyon in general from an ecosystem prospective, environmentalists is, in my mind, a very broad group. They're viewed as a very single point, but they're not. They're as broad as you want to view them. We had lots of folks telling us about their environmental ethic, and all those folks weren't from the Sierra Club and America[n] Rivers [Conservancy]. Some of those folks were from the Dixie Escalante Power Company, who have lived on the land and with the land and have great affinity for the land and water resources of the Southwest, and said, "Hey, we're environmentalists, too."

I think the spectrum is broad. I think you have folks, unfortunately, who are sort of

main-streaming the environmental movement, but there's really another agenda there as well, and its, "How do I gain memberships? How do it get people to donate to my cause?" Using the politic of the issue to demonstrate to a broader American public that they are, in fact, the defenders of the environment. Some of those people, from time to time, learn some lessons about credibility, when they sat in meetings or part of a discussion agreed that the approach was reasonable and then went outside of the meeting into the public arena of media and criticized and used, for what I call for propaganda purposes, a decision to rally sort of external support. I characterized it as a purely financial–they needed an issue and so they picked one and said, "Gee, if it were a perfect world, this wouldn't have happened." Even though they were part of making it happen from a balanced perspective. That didn't sell well to their potential constituents, and so they took another line. I think they lost credibility over that.

I think the thing that happened, from my perspective, is a lot of people got a lot of education, and they got education on how power systems work, on what power costs, on how humpback chubs work, how the ecosystem of the Grand Canyon works, how Native American issues are interrelated with sediment and beach erosion. Those are just some examples, but when the broad spectrum of education took place, there became less and less room for single-issued extremism. You couldn't get away anymore with talking about how the power cost increases would bankrupt little old ladies on Social Security. You couldn't get away with that, because it wasn't true. Nor could you get away with criticizing the operation of Glen Canyon Dam characterizing it as if thirteen bulldozers per hour were run down the Grand Canyon moving these mountains of sediment. Because it wasn't true.

So when you get the facts on the table and you get people to understand what are the processes and what's really going on, then the extremism doesn't have much ground, and so you don't have to deal with as much of it. When you see it, a lot of people know its just hype. Its just rhetoric. And so it loses. Nobody pays attention to it. It still sells in places where people are uneducated, and you'd be surprised how many cards and letters we got that were in response to a campaign. I mean, you know, "My local Sierra Club has told me to write you a letter and tell you that . . ." and then you'd get the hyperbole. Its like, well, your local Sierra Club knows better, but whatever. (laughter)

We got those letters. I mean, I don't want to pick on the Sierra Club, from the Sierra Club folks. We also got them from power customers who were being hyped into hysteria. Its like, "Oh, my God! If they do this, your world will end." It's a Chicken Little phenomenon. We had people that continually stirred the pot, because it served their purpose. It had little to do with what we were doing and the kind of balanced decision making that was going on in the room where those same representatives sat. They may not have been happy with it. They may have felt they could make some gain in some other arena, by exploiting the lack of understanding that was outside the room.

Storey: Characterize, if you would, the recommended alternative that has not yet been adapted.

The Preferred Alternative in the Final EIS

Gold: The recommended alternative, technically called the preferred alternative in the final

environmental impact statement, is very, very close to those interim operations that we set back in '91. To characterize it, it removed much of the fluctuating flow that we historically operated Glen Canyon to produce. It limited the maximum flow, it limited the minimum flow, and it limited the rate at which flows could change. It added some beach and resultant habitat maintenance flows, some flows specifically designed to do something for beaches and riparian habitat. It talked about an occasional spike flow, which is what we experienced here in March of this year, the first test of that, where we went above powerplant capacity for a short period of time and essentially moved the sand around, built some beaches. You can't ask that sand to jump up out of that water and come up on the beach. You have to put that water up on the beach to get that sand up on the beach. So it brings that idea, that once in ten years you'll have a flood down there. You'll create one to move some sand.

It brings an idea, which is already in place, effectively, of adaptive management, where folks that are concerned are going to keep monitoring what's going on in the Grand Canyon, and learn from the data they collect and potentially adjust the operation of Glen Canyon Dam to make it better. That implies, to me, make it better in what ever direction it needs to be made better. If we can generate a little more hydropower and not damage the environment, we ought to make it better. If we can generate a little more benefit for endangered fish and not harm the hydropower resource or others, we ought to make it better. We ought to do that. It's a long term, a decade look, kind of thing. Let's look at how we're going to operate collect some scientific data and then make decisions on what should we do about this. So adaptive management, I think, has been with us for a long time. It hasn't had a name, but its no different than any other feedback loop. You do something, you collect the data, and then you say, "Well, could we do it differently?" So it just creates a feedback loop.

The preferred alternative is in the final, it is, I think, essentially ready for implementation, and the implementation won't be seen in the resource. If you are in the Grand Canyon, you won't be able to tell the day we change. There are only a couple of minor modifications to flow limits between the interim flows, which we've been operating under since November of '91, and the preferred alternative. One of those is the maximum flow is increased in the preferred alternative from 20,000 to 25,000 C-F-S [cubic feet per second]. Its not that you operate there. Its that you have the ability to operate there.

The other thing that was changed is the up-ramp rate, the rate at which flows can be increased, changed from 1,500 C-F-S per hour to 4,000 C-F-S per hour. And that changed because as we learned more about the Grand Canyon, we realized there was no environmental damage from up-ramping, as you call it. The damage occurs on down-ramping. So the down-ramping limit is left the same and the up-ramping limit is relaxed, and that allows the hydropower to have more flexibility in meeting load without damaging the environment.

So those are the two minor adjustments. There are some other things that are dealt with, the timing. When would you have the spring spike? Would it be when the reservoirs were empty or when they were full? There is some minor adjustment in that. But essentially that's the plan, and it looks very much like interim flows, which is what we've had in place going on five years now.

Storey: And have those been successful, do you think?

Gold: Yeah. The scientific evidenced would demonstrate that there is much more environmental health, that beaches are more stable. The biological response is hard to gauge, because biological responses typically take a long time to measure. Have you more endangered fish in the canyon than you used to? I don't know. We're taking data. We're collecting data. Maybe in ten years we'll know.

The hydropower resource has been restricted. There are costs of that, but they don't seem to be breaking anyone's back. We had some rate increases, but we haven't had one in the last two or three years. I don't know that any little old ladies have gone bankrupt. But it's a compromise. So, yeah, there are costs on all sides. But I think it's a decision that will stick, and I think the secretary is eager to sign the record of decision.

Storey: But somebody doesn't want him to.

Gold: Well, that's that political arena. I mean, it's the silly season. Between now and November all kinds of things happen that probably wouldn't if it were February.

Storey: Because this is an election year.

Gold: Sure. And it's a posturing thing. Who gets the bennies?

Storey: What about the large flows that we released this spring? Does that look like that worked out the way it had been planned, the way it was thought it was going to work out?

Flooding the Grand Canyon

Gold: Early visual data said yes it did. I think we were a little overly optimistic in declaring victory one week after we'd conducted an experiment, because we hadn't even collected all of the data. But we moved sand. We could see visually, "Yep, there's a beach where there wasn't a beach before." We're probably within a few months of looking from a scientific perspective about did we get everything out of it we planned to get? There are critics that said, "No, the flow was too low." "No, the flow was too high." But it was a test. So with the adaptive management concept you say, "Well, okay, once we know what we've learned, once we look at the data, honor the data, if the flow was too low, some consideration ought to be given to make it higher. If it was too high, we ought to consider making it lower. If it was too short, we ought to consider making it longer."

So those are the kinds of things that I think are really the great benefit of the collaborative process we've begun is if we keep that going we have some honest brokering of what's going on in the system, and let's think about it. Maybe you can't make every adjustment for the benefit of the fish, but that's not what balancing is about. You look at what can you do without too much impact.

Storey: I take it the flows that you've been talking about, the up-ramping, the down-ramping, the maximum flows, the minimum flows and so on, are from power operations, not when we have

a spill situation.

Gold: That's correct. That's correct. I think everyone realizes that to the extent that the Colorado River is still a river, there are times when you can't control it, no matter what you have in place. When you have horrendous floods like the '83 to '86 period, you can't just hold the water. It has to go over the spillway, and under those conditions there's not much you can do about it but hang on. I think there are some discussions. I guess the key point of your question is does this have anything to do with water operations?

By necessity, we try to make all the water that leaves Lake Powell go through a turbine. That only makes sense. If the water is going to leave the dam and go down the river, it ought to generate power as it goes. The key question is timing. And, you know, the quantity of water that goes through the turbines doesn't change on an annual basis, between the historic operation and the current operation. The water still has to go downstream. What changes is when does it go downstream. Does it go downstream during the peak energy demand period of every day, like now, ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, all the way up to about three o'clock in the afternoon, or does it go through that powerplant at night when the demand is low? And power is still bought and sold in both of those markets, but it's a very different price. You can buy power in the middle of the night for about one-tenth of what you can buy power in the middle of the day, and that's purely an economic issue. The demand is higher in the middle of the day.

So that's what this has all been about. So effectively, yes, it is the flow that goes through the powerplant, and there are some things that you just can't control. When you get into major flood releases, you can't control it. You're just going to have to open the gates. Everything is going to run full bore and you're going to get the water out of the system. There are other times when you're going to have major draw-downs and drought conditions could rule.

This whole process of the Glen Canyon E-I-S was designed purposefully to fit within what's called "the law of the river."[33] In other words, we didn't go in and reallocate water, we didn't change what one state gets, what other states get. We didn't change the way that the water system, per se, operates, although there is some impacts on it. We talked about what can we do to minimize low-frequency flooding, in essence, not have Glen Canyon spill a little bit quite so often. Put on some splash boards, increase the storage capability, that kind of thing. So there are some minor adjustments. But in the grand scheme of things, a river that runs, oh, a minimum of 8.23 million acre feet a year through Glen Canyon Dam, we didn't change the water system much.

Storey: What else should we talk about, about the environmental statement process for Glen Canyon?

GAO Audit for the Glen Canyon EIS

33. The "law of the river" refers to the laws and regulations governing the operation of the Colorado River, including the 1922 Colorado River Compact, the Boulder Canyon Act of 1928, and the 1963 Supreme Court ruling in *Arizona v. California*.

Gold: Oh, we've probably pretty well covered it, Brit. I think one of the things that we could touch on is this G-A-O audit I mentioned. Its mandated in a piece of legislation. In my mind, it was designed in 1989 and '90, when the legislation was crafted, to provide a third-party review of what was then believed–I want to emphasize then–what was then believed to be the Bureau's inability to do a credible job of balancing the issues. So the General Accounting Office was placed in the law to do a review, an audit, if you will, of the benefits and the costs of the new operation for Glen Canyon. And I think it was done so that some third parties could have another lick at this issue and say, "Well, gee, the Bureau has just said the status quo was fine. What about the environmental costs?" And somebody could have added those all up and said, "Gee, look what they've done."

I believe there were both sides probably saying the same thing, that if the Bureau got crazy and allocated the way Glen Canyon is operated exclusively to the preservation of endangered fish, than we could in the G-A-O audit add up all the costs of the power systems. So everybody was saying, "Ah, yeah, these guys have got to do it, but once they're done, boy, do we want another shot at them." And so G-A-O was thrown in the mix. G-A-O is between a rock and a hard place, because by everyone's admission Reclamation did a good job. And so now they have a legislated audit to perform that is going to show that we did a good job, and so the net result is there aren't a whole lot of people who think that this audit is even necessary.

So what? Once you get it and it says they did a good job, look at the money, time, and effort you've wasted doing the audit. I think had half the folks in the world thought we did a terrible job, what you'd have seen is a rehash of the issues in the G-A-O audit. But that isn't going to happen. But it has kept us, simply on a timing perspective, from signing the record of decision. G-A-O has been involved for about a year now, and they're telling us soon we'll have an audit report. But its one of those kind of bureaucratic approaches that was placed in legislation, and at the time there was enough suspicion that someone said, "Yeah, but we've got to have an independent third party look at things." And I think as a result, now that we've accomplished the task, there's just not a whole lot for this third party to–there's not much value that they can add, and they understand that.

Storey: So did the process pretty much terminate? That isn't what I want to say. Did your involvement drop off a lot when the draft was published, or how did that work?

Gold: Yeah. My personal involvement. I continued to chair the cooperating agencies meetings until the final E-I-S was filed in March of '95. At that point, it was sort of a, okay, the E-I-S is done until the record of decision is signed. So we stopped having what we called cooperating agencies meetings. Cooperating agency is a term of art that is part of NEPA, and since NEPA was done, we no longer had a need for that.

Transitional Work Group

Now, what we realized in going into that is that we had a good collaborative effort, and we didn't want to throw the baby out with the bath water. Part of this adaptive management program that I mentioned that we intend to implement with the preferred alternative has some committee structure. It has a federal advisory committee that's going to be set up and a

technical work group. What we decided to do in order to keep the right people talking to each other is to form what we called a transitional work group. Transitional, between the E-I-S and the federal advisory committee. And it was essentially a continuation of all those people that had invested and were at the table and were concerned about our issues.

We were wide open. We said, "If you want to be part of it, put your name on a list and we'll invite you to all the meetings." And we've got a modest group of the same thirty or forty people, and they meet about quarterly in the form of a transitional work group, and we used that group to educate, to keep the information flowing. Here's what's happening. Here's what's going on in the canyon. Because we continue to monitor the resources. We conducted the spike flow. There's a lot of information about what we're doing. And so we use that vehicle to keep sort of the public side of this thing going so it doesn't just fall into a black hole and all of a sudden the Bureau of Reclamation is doing things that nobody knows about. We don't believe that works after this kind of an investment. So we've tried to build continuity in this transitional work group.

I've stepped down as chairman of that group. Bruce Moore has stepped in, and we're in the middle of that transition. Personally, you know, I think after going on seven years of this effort, you kind of get stale. I think you need something else. Its time to sort of end that chapter in the book and let some other chapter and pick up and where does it go with the adaptive management process. Next year and the year after that is sort of another story to be told. Because the Glen Canyon Dam is in this region, I obviously, as long as I'm in this region and in management roles, am not divorcing myself from it, but the activity level is slacked off. That's a welcome change. It consumed a big chunk of my life for four or five years, and its fun to go on to some other things.

Storey: I take it this region has transitioned from a group of assistant regional directors to a single deputy regional director.

Dan Beard's Reorganization Affect on the Region

Gold: We have.

Storey: When did that happen?

Gold: Part of Dan Beard's approach to reorganization, I think, essentially got all of the regions moving in some different directions about the traditional way we were organized, add to that the ideas of downsizing, flattening, and the fifteen-to-one supervisory ratios, I think all regions have moved in those directions.[34] To my knowledge, only one region today has two assistant regional directors. The other four have deputy regional directors. Along with that is the area manager concept, the strengthening that Dan tried to do in terms of his relationship with the area managers and others.

In this region, not only have we essentially done away with three assistant regional

34. Reclamation published Commissioner Daniel P. Beard's *Blueprint for Reform: The Commissioner's Plan for Reinventing Reclamation* in 1993 as one of the vehicles for his reorganization of Reclamation in 1993-1994. Another of the vehicles was the "Commissioner's CPORT team report–"Report of the Commissioner's Program and Organization Review Team" which Reclamation also published in 1993.

directors and created one deputy regional director, we have also taken twelve divisions that used to reside in the Salt Lake City Office of the regional office, and combined them into two divisions. That reorganization has been our approach at the flattening, reducing the number of supervisors. I think that's fairly typical of what's happened in the rest of Reclamation. I think everyone is maybe on a different time line, a different concept, and maybe a different level of implementation.

The dilemmas that I think we have to deal with is there's a lot of recognition these days that that harsh elimination of middle management has a price, that we've got folks that are overstretched now. There aren't middle managers to share the workload with, and so some managers are hugely burdened and hugely stressed, and there are a lot of things that aren't getting done from a management perspective. Wouldn't shock me to see some mid-course correction in the future. Back away from, maybe, the strict approach and go to something a little more workable in terms of the management ranks, because we truly are extremely thin.

Storey: How long did the reorganization take in this region?

Gold: Let me take you a step back, because I was one of the members of a strategic planning group in the Bureau in 1985.

Storey: That's a good place to start.

Assessment '87

Gold: At least my vernacular goes that back far. I think there have been attempts at reorganization. I can't even remember the name of it now, the '87 document.

Storey: Reassessment?

Gold: Reassessment '87[35] and its follow-up documents. In this region, our most recent–I think we started about '94. We started about 1994 with a plan to downsize, flatten, and we're not done yet. We're still toying with it, trying to adjust to it. I think reorganizations are funny, because they take a long time. People think you just write them on paper and they're done. But there's a lot of adjustment and accommodation, and there are sometimes needs for tweaking. But there's also sometimes a reluctance because, "We've just reorganized. Isn't it ever going to end?" And the truth to that question is, no, its not. Its going to keep playing with it.

But we've been relatively successful, probably more successful on our program side than on our administrative side, to making some purposeful changes in the way we do business. But its not over. We still have some things to do. You get to a point where, from a management perspective, you'd like to see the turmoil die down. You'd like to see some of

35. In 1987 the Bureau of Reclamation released *Assessment '87: A New Direction for the Bureau of Reclamation*. The document announced that "the era of constructing large federally financed water projects is drawing to a close," and that "the bureau's mission must change from one based on effective and environmentally sensitive resource management." Reclamation would accomplish these goals by: improving operations of existing facilities; implementing a larger cost-sharing process; working closer with other federal, state, and local agencies on water resource issues; becoming more involved in the day-to-day operations of water projects, enforcing federal regulations, and asserting a visible presence.

the thrashing around stopped and get people more focused on the job than the way the job is structured. Sometimes its appropriate to take a deep breath and just leave it alone for a while and see if it will work better. Give it a chance, that kind of thing. There's still some things we need to do.

Storey: Did *Assessment '87* have any effect on this region?

Gold: Yeah, I think *Assessment '87* was the beginning of a changed mission. While it wasn't focused on organization, per se, it was certainly focused on what was important, if you read the words. I think if you read the words and then looked at our action in response to the words, it was hard to see that we did much with *Assessment '87*.

The most obvious change to me, and it was because of where I came from, was the change in our planning program. It was in 1988 that we centralized planning coming out of *Assessment '87*, and we took all of the field planners that were in the regional offices and the area offices, and that amounted to about sixty folks in this region, and we moved them to Denver. That changed in a fundamental way the manner in which we did that planning business. The real dilemma for me is while some regions changed radically, some regions didn't change at all. And I think that was a dilemma for the Bureau of Reclamation. We had several Bureaus of Reclamation during that time line.

Our focus became how do we use that Denver planning organization. I think matrix team was the buzz word de jour, so we were using that matrix team to get our job done. And it worked fine for us. We had a good relationship with Denver, where team leaders would go to Denver and set up teams to do planning studies. I think we worked at it and because of that had a good working relationship. Other regions didn't do that at all. They just kept their planners and went about their business.

Storey: And that then caused problems in terms of the reorganization that took place in Denver, I gather.

Gold: Yeah. Yeah. No question. Because I think Denver sort of reorganized based on the anticipation that the work would come to Denver. When only some regions were on that page, Denver ended up with more staff than it could financially support. I think that was sort of the beginning of, "Now what are we going to do?" Which resulted in Denver having to make some radical adjustments in terms of its size.

Storey: From your point of view, that reorganization worked fairly well with Denver being the center of planning?

Gold: Yeah. It worked fine for us. We didn't have much problem. I mean, it was different, but different isn't necessarily bad. I think there's lots of parallels. We complain about it. A lot of people complain about it, but some of the people who complain have a centralized planning function. Its just centralized in Sacramento or Boise. Its not centralized in Denver. And today, if centralization means all in one place, with the communications ability we have, if you want to, you can communicate with people anywhere. Yeah, you need some people on the ground. I would never agree that you can just do away with the ground-level folks. But our

approach was put the team leader on the ground. If you have need for teams to go to a specific site, put them on an airplane. They'll do that if they're in Salt Lake City and have to go to Durango, Colorado. Its not much different to put them on a plane from Denver to go to Durango, Colorado. In fact, it might be easier.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. AUGUST 14, 1996.
BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. AUGUST 14, 1996.

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey with Rick Gold on August 14, 1996.

"All the Regions Didn't Play"

Gold: I think part of the reason for the expensive question comes from the fact that all the regions didn't play. If you staff up to do a centralized function for all the regions and only get work from two out of five, then those two have to pay the freight for all the overhead that can't be direct charged to that work that didn't come from those other three regions. Yeah, it was a little more expensive.

I think what we did from a team perspective is we monitored costs. Through appropriate management processes, we didn't let extra time be charged. What we couldn't control is the overhead question, and I think that became sort of the bugaboo of Denver. While direct charging made good sense and you could certainly pay a GS-12 from Denver the same kind of wages and benefits you can pay a GS-12 from Provo; yeah, you had extra travel, that was true, but you also had more streamlined processes and you had all the people in one place and there were some economies of having one focal point.

We also, at the same time, you may recall, streamlined our planning process, where we eliminated some levels of review, which saved us some time. We had the one-stop shopping, you know, get it right and done the first time. That made sense. It worked for us, because we tried to manage the process. The thing that, I think, got out of hand for many people was the overhead concept where Denver's overhead got to be 175 or 200 percent and people started to choke on that.

A lot of people in my view, though–this is sort of on the side–a lot of people who grouse about overhead don't even understand what their own overhead is, because I've never looked at a situation where I could honestly say that the Denver overhead was hugely out of line. It costs money to have an office and to have people available to do things. We always figure 100 percent overhead. I mean, its just rule of thumb. So people that will tell you, "Well, our overhead is 38 percent," they're just subsidizing it someplace else, and they don't know where it is. So it just wasn't a straight-up kind of response. There were some politics going on, obviously, within the Bureau and who gets to decide, all of that stuff. But we made it work, and it would have continued to work.

Storey: As you began to free up time away from the Glen Canyon environmental statement, what were you then spending more of your time on?

Focused on the Reorganization

Gold: Well, one of the things, as the assistant R-D, reorganization. I spent a lot of time on the reorganization process. But one of the things that I've always felt is that I have some good organizational skills and some management skills. In virtually ignoring your role as an assistant regional director, assisting in the directing of a region and focusing on a single project, you don't do much leadership, much coaching, much managing of the way the business of the region gets done. So that's been my primary focus, and I think its badly needed in lots of places in the Bureau. I think that if you look at what managers do most of in the Bureau, it is not manage. It is special projects, give speeches, put out fires, you know. It is not managing people, and I think that's a problem. I think we have an extreme leadership deficit in the Bureau. We need managers to manage their organizations and lead their people. It's a task that I'm getting more and more into. I think its something that we need attention to.

Reclamation Needs a Centralized Focus

Unfortunately, I think one of Dan Beard's initiatives to focus on the area manager, while on its surface was a good idea, it left out a whole bunch of this organization, that those managers who aren't area managers weren't part of his grand scheme. Now, he accomplished what he set out to do, and for that he's a wizard. He changed our focus. But we now have the need to bring the Bureau of Reclamation together as a corporate entity. We say those words often, and it doesn't mean anything. But we need to have a more cohesive view of where is Reclamation going. We need to have a more centered focus. We need to have a place where managers of the Bureau gain common themes, talk about common problems, and move in common directions.

I established, largely with my initiative, a meeting among the deputy regional directors here about a year and a half ago. Its been very helpful to, at least someplace, start a discussion about, well, what's important. What's going on in your world? Where do we have the same kinds of problems? And I think we've kind of lost that. I go back ten years, even five years, maybe, and you could find the central focus of the planning program, you could find the central focus of the O&M program, construction program in the Bureau. You say, "Okay, who's in charge? Who's the headquarters level person?" And you could say, "Ah, that's Bob Lankey. Ah, that's . . ." You could find that person. You can't find that person today. The person doesn't exist today. It just isn't there. There is no central focus for a number of our functions. What's happened instead, and it will work, if we give it legitimacy, is we form ad hoc groups.

Storey: Excuse me?

Gold: We form ad hoc groups. If we want to talk about the construction business, we form a group, a ad hoc groups of construction engineers. We formed the C-F-O counsel to give us a focus on Bureauwide administration process. We formed the budget group for O&M. There's no head of it. Its just a group. So we've moved from sort of a structured organizational centered focus to when there's a problem, we'll form a team. That's the way we'll get some central focus. And that works okay, but one of the things we miss is lots of times those teams don't have corporate agenda. They have individual agendas. So teams work sometimes and sometimes they don't because they get off track, because everybody has their own thing they're trying to accomplish.

But we're really missing that, and I think one of the roles that I can play, and Charley [Calhoun][36] and I have had a lot of discussion, I have some skills in this arena, and for this region I think I can provide a very critical and sort of missing link as to what should we be doing, what is our focus, where are we going. And by we I don't mean Charley and me. I mean the 940 employees that make up the Upper Colorado Region. We need collectively some direction. The regional director needs to provide that, and I think that's a skill that I can bring to my job as the deputy regional director. We all adjust to our strengths and weaknesses, and I'm challenged by it. I like it.

I'd like to have more time to spend managing. I still don't get as much. While its not Glen Canyon every day, its still Glen Canyon, you know, two days a week, and its Animus-LaPlata three other days a week, and it's the Rio Grande silvery minnow[37], and its drought and its fire fighting, because fires are burning. So we don't get time to say, "Ah, ha, every third Wednesday I'm going to focus on management." That doesn't show up on my calendar. I don't think it shows up on many of our managers' calendar. And I think that's unfair. Its unfair to our organization. We need our best minds looking at how is the Bureau of Reclamation managed and where is it going and how's it going to get there. That's kind of my challenge after Glen Canyon.

Storey: When did you become the deputy regional director?

Deputy Regional Director Responsibilities

Gold: We changed the title, and that's basically all we did, and I think it's basically all anybody did. We changed the title when our reorganization was put in place, and I think that would be like early '95. Its kind of funny, because it is a different job. Previously, I was assisting in the management of a portion of the region's program as an assistant regional director, and there were three of us. And now I share the responsibility for managing all of the program. So I went from trying to help work on planing and operations to where I now cover construction, planning, operation, administration, finance, you know, the whole nine yards.

Everything that Charley deals with as the regional director, I help him deal with as the deputy, the alter-ego concept. You know, that's probably worn out and trite, but I think it works, to some extent, because of our personalities. Charley has strengths and I have strengths, and I think we make a pretty good team. Because of that, the work kind of gets divided up according to comfort and time and ability and preference, and the net effect is I think we have a pretty good balance.

Storey: How have you split the work up?

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36. Charles A. Calhoun was regional director of the Upper Colorado Region from 1994 to 2000. Mr. Calhoun also participated in Reclamation's oral history program, see Charles (Charley) A. Calhoun, *Oral History Interview*, Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation Oral History Interview conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, from 1994 to 2009, in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Denver, Colorado, edited by Brit Allan Storey, 2010, www.usbr.gov/history/oralhist.html.

37. The silvery minnow was listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act in 1994. The full name of the lawsuit was *Rio Grande Silvery Minnow et al v. Martinez*. For an overview of the silvery minnow issue, see Susan Kelly and Summer McKean, "The Rio Grande Silvery Minnow: Eleven Years of Litigation," The Utton Center, 2011, www.ittoncenter.unm.edu/pdf.

Gold: Its not split along any particular lines. I think there are areas where Charley has more background than I do. Charley deals more in the Rio Grande basin, because that's where he came from. He used to be our projects manager in Albuquerque. I probably have more experience in the Colorado River basin. So there's some sort of geographic–but it doesn't keep us from both doing both.

Time is probably the biggest element that helps you divide it up. Who has time to take on this next one, and who's going to jump in the middle of that one? Part of the other dilemma is supervisory. Charley supervises all of the area managers. I supervise the regional office staff. That gives a little bit of definition. But its truly pretty loose. We talk a lot one on one. We spend some time together, and that's critical. We've tried to tell folks that we're team managing. If you can't find Charley, deal with me. If you can't find me, deal with Charley.

Charley is always the regional director, and I understand his role and I understand my role. That's the secret to making a deputy situation work. You have to have a deputy that understands his role, and its not to be the regional director. I'm convinced that if you do that and the deputy supports, always trying to support what the R-D wants to do, then it works. If Charley and I have disagreements, its sort of like being a parent. You know, if Charley and I have disagreements, we need to go up in a room and solve them. And when we come back, we still have a regional director, and I know that. (laughter)

So it works. And I think our staff is getting pretty comfortable with that to where they know that we're both on the same page.

Storey: But the kind of thing you're describing, it would seem to me, pretty much requires that you think the way that Charley thinks and that you arrive at the same kinds of conclusions Charley Calhoon would arrive at and so on. And there's got to breakdown in that.

Gold: There is. I take it in a subtlety different way, Brit. I think I need to understand how Charley thinks. I don't need to think like Charley. I need to understand how Charley thinks, because I can sit in a particular situation and say, "No, I know this is the way I would choose." But I have to say, "Now how would Charley choose?" And I feel like after we've worked together as long as we have that I know that. I know where he'll be. And sometimes its not where I'd be.

My job is not to replace my judgment for his. My job is to understand what his judgment would be. If in that understanding, then there's a conflict, then I just need to not call that one. If I know that Charley's over there and I'm over there, then the key is not for me to tell people, "Go over here where Rick was in the first place." Its hang on, we need Charley in the room, because he's the regional director. I think he will be in a different place. And I need to be wise enough to say, "Charley won't agree with me on this one. So let's either get Charley in, or"–and this has happened. I'll say, "Well, its not my choice. I wouldn't make the decision this way. But Charley and I have talked enough about it that I know Charley would make the decision this way." And so I'll make the decision the way Charley would make it. And that works.

Storey: By the time people rise in Reclamation–let me put this differently. There aren't any dummies in Reclamation management. I figured this out a long time ago. (laughter) How long do you think it would take a deputy to adjust, probably, to a new regional director situation or a new deputy to adjust to a regional director? What kind of time frames do you think we're talking about?

Learning and Understanding Personal Styles

Gold: I think it requires a year for me, and that's really all I can talk about, and it requires a year for me to learn enough about the other manager's style and underpinnings, and that's really what we're talking about. Where does the basis for decision come? Because I can't memorize all the decisions, I have to sort of understand what underpins the decisions. What kinds of processes does this manager go through to arrive at his or her decisions? I think that takes me about a year to get comfortable, and I think it doesn't matter whether I'm getting used to Charley or, as an R-D, I'm getting used to a new deputy. And I think you just have to muddle through.

What it means to me is that the first year is critical that communication is crisp and clean and that you're talking and that you're listening to each other. If that doesn't happen, then it takes longer, if there is some sheltering going on. And sometimes that happens, I would admit that there are people who no matter how long you put them in the same room can't make it work. The Bureau ought to recognize that if that happens, and I think it probably has in a place or two.

I think you're right. Most of us can figure that out. I think a lot of it has to do with understanding your role. Are you the R-D or are you the deputy? There's a difference, and if you don't understand it, you ought to go figure it out. Because there's a difference. I'm perfectly comfortable with that. I think my role as deputy is very different than my role would be as regional director. I would act differently. That doesn't mean I would think differently, because I don't think you change that overnight–someone waves the wand and you are one suddenly. But I think you act differently. You have to know what role the organization needs you to play, and you play it with all of your innate skills, abilities, processes. But you play it differently, depending on which role they're paying you to play.

So I think it takes some time. You're right on target. You can't just walk in and immediately have that rapport with someone else. I think its also a two-way street. The two new people, both have to work at making it work. If just one does, it will only be a partial success. If they both do, they'll become a strong team. And that happens in every twosome that gets together and tries to figure that out.

Storey: I've had deputies say to me, "Well, everybody knows that they can come and talk to me when X isn't around, and my decision is his decision." What you've just said adds a new wrinkle to this, and that wrinkle is that you're not necessarily making your own decision, you're making what you think X's decision should be, would be. That's interesting.

The Deputy and the Regional Director have to Support Each Other

Gold: I think it has some subtleties, because one of the things you can't allow to happen is people to decision shop. They can't go to Charley and Charley says no and they come to Rick and Rick says yes, and then they pick the one they want. If we know Charley is going to say no, then Rick out to say, "Well, here's my thoughts on it. But the decision is as Charley would make it. It's a no."

The other thing that happens that's a little bit of a subtlety is if a situation has come up, "Hey, we haven't talked about it. I don't know where you are, Charley, on this one. But in your absence, I decided yes." The first time Charley says, "Well, I'm going to overturn you because the real answer is no." The real answer is no, then I have lost credibility. They'll stop coming to me. So even if I have to make a decision that I don't know where he's going to be and I make a mistake, he has to back me up. He has to say, "Yeah, you're entitled to mistakes. I make mistakes. Wrong decision from my perspective, but right decision because you made one, and we will live with it."

The R-D can't go out the back door in the deputy's business. He has to have enough confidence that 90 percent of the time, 50 percent of the time, whatever the range is, the deputy's going to make the right decision and we'll live with it. Then after that decision, if the R-D and the deputy want to go have a beer and say, "You know that decision you made on . . . let's talk about that. I wasn't comfortable with that one." Get the stuff going. Find out what about it was uncomfortable. What can I learn from that process that makes me a better deputy to this guy? Because that's really the problem. If you've made the wrong decision, you just didn't understand the regional director very well. So you need an opportunity to learn.

Storey: Good. Well, I know you have to leave for an appointment. I'd like to ask whether you're willing for the information on these tapes and the resulting transcripts to be used by researchers?

Gold: I sure am, Brit.

Storey: Good. Thank you very much.

Gold: You bet.

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. AUGUST 14, 1996.
END OF INTERVIEWS.