

Interview with John Cissel, November 7, 1997, at the Corvallis FSL, by Max Geier. Transcription: Jeff Prater & Keesja Hoechstra.

After receiving a MS in forest planning from Penn State, John Cissel worked in several positions within the Willamette National Forest before becoming the Research Liaison based on the Blue River Ranger District. In that position, he advanced the research-management partnership, led collaborative field studies of alternative silvicultural and landscape management practices, supported implementation of Andrews Forest research projects, and was instrumental in many communications activities, especially with land managers across the Pacific Northwest. From the liaison position he moved briefly into the Forest Director position and then on to leadership of the Joint Fire Sciences program based in Boise, Idaho.

Max Geier: Please talk a little bit about your background, your personal background.

John Cissel: With the dinosaurs or pre-Andrews stuff?

Geier: Start at the beginning (Laughter).

Cissel: You mean where I grew up and that kind of stuff.

Geier: Any kind of detail you want; mainly where you're from, your academic training, and that kind of stuff.

Cissel: I grew up in a little part of Maryland that turned into metropolitan D.C. [District of Columbia]. I spent 20 years in Montgomery County, Maryland. I lived on small dairy farm that now is probably a housing development, along with all the other ones in the area, and then went to college for a couple of years. I went to college for a year at the State University of New York, and that's not what I wanted to do, so I transferred over to Michigan State, and got a B.S. in Forestry. Couldn't figure out what I wanted to do and was motivated by two things; one was trying to see how forestry was practiced, and two was finding a job. I went into a graduate program at Penn State and that led me to forest planning and operations research. Forest planning felt like that's where I could make a good way to quickly influence decisions. But, naively I thought that forest planning leads to good development. Perhaps it does in some sense, but does not always play a direct role. Then I did operations research, because the Forest Service was looking for modelers and analysts in research forestry projects. I was in a graduate program with an advisor that resulted in degrees in forest management and operations research.

When I got finished with that, I worked with the Allegheny National Forest in a forest plan prototype managing project. Then, I came out here because I always wanted to be in the Northwest. That probably goes back to the pictures of the North Cascades in *National Geographic* and big old forests in the Olympic Mountains. Some pictures of hugely-productive,

lush forests, and snow covered mountains; that lured me to the Northwest. I worked a couple summers in the mid '70's in northern Idaho, and took some trips into Washington and Oregon. I knew that this was the region where I wanted to come. I looked at the job listings for graduate-level people, and there happened to be a job open for an operations research analyst to work on a forest plan at the Richmond National Battlefield Park, I applied for it and got it. I got out here in '81. Worked a few years doing that with an expanding role of responsibilities, then, a summer position on the Willamette [National Forest] opened up in '85, and I was hired around '86 to continue forest plan modeling and outdoor work. I came over here on the provision that I get out on the district, so I came out to the Willamette system and was modeling little stuff. A person who left the agency, left the forest [Will NF] floundering for a long time in the planning process, and soon after this lateral move in my career occurred, I wanted to get out on the district and closer to the ground. The Willamette people had a lot of opportunities, lots of things happening. My end of the deal was to help the whole planning thing for a couple of years and get me into a better position. We did that and I got out on the Lowell District during the planning process. It looked like it was heading towards a conclusion and lots of people were interested in the results. I headed up a team of people who were interested in the forest-type research plan.

It allows flexibility and freedom to try different things. I wound up working on the landscape analysis sale, implementing the plan, and developing the kind of questions for the first real contact with the Andrews regarding some of the stuff we were doing, I think probably through Lynn Burditt. Lynn must have said something to Fred [Swanson] and Art [McKee]. Now, I can't remember how the connection was made. Maybe, I was presenting this stuff we were working on. We did fairly original stuff with classifying and using a landscape point-of-view, taking ecological functions of old growth forests and translating that into a landscape scale, to help influence how managers choose when and where to cut or not to cut, and identifying more significant blocks and how they are connected. We were presenting that, Fred and Art became aware of that, and they started talking to me. We set up a meeting and identified additional scenarios we might try with our team that were similar to some of the things they were interested in looking at up at the Andrews, and we agreed it was cool to go ahead with the landscape theme.

I started talking with Fred and Art and the project. I think that was simultaneous when the Andrews folk, Fred, Art, Lynn, and, who else? Gordon [Grant], I think, was pretty involved in the landscape projects. We were realizing they really needed a whole new focus to work through this body of work with the science group on the Andrews. We wanted to get our landscape focus, and I don't know to what extent exactly their advisement, but they ended up saying, "Hey we needed to do this." So, they set up the position that way and that's how I got there. There's the five-minute version of how I got to the Andrews.

Geier: Do you recall who your advisor was for your master's degree?

Cissel: Brian Turner. He's now at the Australian National University.

Geier: You didn't have experiences of this work before you met at him at that time, particularly role models?

Cissel: Not really. Ralph Henderson comes up in the discussions somewhere.

Geier: Yeah.

Cissel: He was our supervisor at one time when I was in the planning group in the [Willamette National Forest] supervisor's office in Eugene. And I never thought of him as a mentor, but I got along with him and still get along with him. I was up there yesterday, BS-ing about Penn State. He's a Penn State graduate, too, and Fred is also, BS-ing about that. He's in a position of authority on the [Willamette] forest; been around a long time. Happened to be my supervisor. So, I gained some insights on how the forest [Andrews] had developed.

Geier: Could you give me some examples of forest administration, their ideas about forest plans, and the kind of work you'd been doing? Also, how that evolved into some of your ideas on how they changed.

Cissel: Well, it's hard to say, because it's been such a synthesis of so many things. I don't know how much you're aware of the landscape stuff we've done the last 6-8 years, especially in the Augusta Creek and Blue River watersheds. Fairly unique, really unique in terms of what we have done. It's really sort of a synthesis of the various threads, and a little bit of the planning and modeling background that I had. Lots of the modeling around forest planning revolved around how timber harvest was going to take place; how much, at what rate, spatial patterns, that kind of thing. Had the sort of timber harvest scheduling over time and spacing-kind of modeling concept, and then applied that to more of an ecological point-of-view. I think of it in terms of scheduling to meet the sustained flow of timber harvest that meets sustained flow of ecosystem conditions, the objectives for those conditions. That's where I started lengthening the natural-range-of-variability and disturbance-regime kind of thinking. Some of those threads, probably some of the strongest influence there was Miles Hemstrom. Has his name come up?

Geier: Yeah, yeah.

Cissel: Miles was instrumental in that Lowell [Ranger District] project. That forest planning implementation structure was actually called "The Skunkworks." Have you heard that term before?

Geier: No.

Cissel: Pretty sure it came out the time of Tom Peter's late '80's books on reinvention and the "New Age" economy [e.g., In Search of Excellence]. What made things click for a successful corporation, the "Skunkworks" idea was a notion that may or may not be officially-sanctioned. It is people who are coming together to do something creative. Off-line. It's not a part of day-

to-day production. These people are working on something, give them resources and support and let them do their own thing. That's the way the forest plan thing was set up, the implementation team, which is why I was attracted to it. That's the kind of mode I'd like to operate in. Give me some support, let me do my own thing. And if you trust me, you could get it. I feel real fortunate as the whole plan of mine worked in the Forest Service. I've generally had that kind of flexibility and support, to be creative and bring in the resources and bring in different people. That's the way all these different projects I've been in really worked, including the forest plan stuff that was structured, and the implementation of Skunkworks, which was really structured. And the way we worked here since I've been involved in the last eight years, is very loose and unstructured. So, that may have its own frustrations, but it allows a lot of creativity to blossom.

Geier: Was there some increase in activities of that type as time goes by?

Cissel: There's a lot of lip service to it. You kind of dipped into Forest Service bureaucracy and see how it works.

Geier: Yeah.

Cissel: In the mid '80's, it was a pilot project and pilot source, and there was a lot of hoopla there, then there was Skunkworks and reinvention, and the last few years, has been creating teams, and this effort to try and keep up with the trends of the day. But the reality I've seen in the bureaucracy in the last few years, is to tighten, tighten, tighten [fiscally]. I still can't figure out the underlying thing driving that, if it's people in charge at the department [Department of Agriculture] levels, or way up above that just feel the need to bring the bureaucracy into line. But I can see it through purchasing, contracting, computer rules, and our agreements, how we move money around. All those kinds of things kept getting tighter and tighter in the last few years. So, I don't know if I would say there's been more recognition of the importance of that, but the actual reality is that the bureaucracy hasn't been there.

Geier: I was just curious to know if this isn't somewhat unique?

Cissel: Yeah, I'm not a very good indicator of the Forest Service or even the Willamette or even Blue River [Ranger District] for that matter. My position is really unique. Sort of peerless actually. I don't have a group of peers to relate to. There aren't people in this region, maybe nationally, that have a similar job to mine.

Geier: Were you aware of that when you took the job?

Cissel: Yeah, someone stationed on a ranger district that has a responsibility for coordination, implementation, or research, monitoring and education. In fact, Lynn told me when I first started, that one of the expectations was that it might take a while to get there, but that I'd develop a research-type program of my own interests. That's what I'm working towards and kind of getting there now. Most people working on districts have a target. You're supposed to

do this amount of trails or timber sale preparation, or wildlife projects or whatever. It's a project-specific focus on a year-to-year kind of production mode.

Geier: So does that kind of research includes that kind of support?

Cissel: I'm expected to go find the budget myself for the most part. There was support in terms of forest processes, things like the Blue River [Landscape Plan] project I'm trying to develop and get approved as an administrative study at the regional level. It has to be according to manuals and procedures. The regional forester has to approve it, and when that happens, it's going give me greater access to some funding. So, I've been gluing together various funds to support various projects over the years. And the philanthropy front has been building and building. I think I'm in a good position now to develop a sustained program.

Geier: Maybe you could talk a little bit about your first positions, what you saw as your priorities, and as the others saw it as an officer.

Cissel: Well, hardly anybody has used the officer part of it. Fred calls me a research liaison. I think my research position is called a "research coordinator." I think that might have some implications in the PNW terminology somewhere, so Fred prefers liaison. I just try to avoid specific titles. I'm classified as an "ecologist" in the position description lingo. I've got graduate degrees in forestry and operations research. I never did standard work in ecology [in academics]. So, forestry, ecology, and modeling, are my academic backgrounds.

Geier: When you moved into this position, which was, as you described, a lateral move for you, what were your first impressions of the needs at the district?

Cissel: At that time, things were kind of broke because our predecessor had been gone for a few months at an extremely chaotic time for the district. I don't know if you remember the Section 318 legislation [part of a Congressional appropriations bill.] Do you know about that?

Geier: Vaguely.

Cissel: There had been an injunction on timber sales in Region 6 in early '89. So, legislation was passed that lifted the injunction and provided that the national forests and BLM in western Oregon and Washington sell about 10 million board feet in about a year-and-a-half period. Language [appropriations bill (to which Section 318 was attached) to fund the agencies] was there as to how that was to be done. An advisory board was established, the logging was supposed to minimize fragmentation [old-growth forest habitat], and ecological systems of old-growth were to be maintained. People were really pushed. That's a lot of timber sales, a lot of preparation that had to be done through the advisory board. So, I was in the midst of that, the predecessor had gone, and there was a surge of research proposals were sitting there that people may or may not review, which sort of dispersed out responsibility to profs and different people, and most of them were being ignored, waiting for them to pick them up and get them going.

My first task was to pick up projects, one-by-one, getting them moving again. We built a flume. You've seen the flume out there [U.S. Geological Survey debris flow flume at Andrews Forest]. That was one of the very first projects that I worked on. I also got the "Gap Study" and Charlie Halpern's successional study [Starbright], and a mycorrhizal study. There was a whole bunch of them, including Stan Gregory's stream nutrient addition, dripping nitrogen directly into Lookout Creek. Sort of an interesting experience for most of us, because it generated public concerns. It was probably the first time any serious concerns had been expressed about what was going on the Andrews. I could talk more.

Geier: Yeah, I'd like if you could elaborate on that one.

Cissel: Well, the purpose of the project was really basic science. It was an effort to understand the trophic response to elevated productivity. Add more nitrogen, the algal communities and productivity are going to flourish, invertebrates are going to feed on that and benefit, so productivity is going to go up, and then the fish feed on the invertebrates. That's where the trophic levels enter the deal. What they were trying to do is to see how tightly these levels were linked. How quickly would an increase in production at the primary level translate all the way up through the levels? Would there, actually, be a whole lot more algae in the streams, or would you not see any difference in the algae and there'd be bigger insects? Maybe you wouldn't see that, you'd see more and bigger fish. Everyone is trying to see that. People, at least a handful of people, became alarmed, because we were dripping known pollutants into the city of Eugene's drinking water. There was concern that with elevated nitrogen you're going to potentially create an algal bloom in Blue River Reservoir and in lower Lookout Creek. So, we went through all these calculations about the worst-case scenario with EWEB [Eugene Water and Electric Board]. We eventually did the project and there weren't any negative effects whatsoever. But there was a lesson for a lot of the folks involved in the Andrews programs, that not everyone perceives people doing research as always wearing a white hat.

Geier: Was there an organized group setting the opposition?

Cissel: There were individuals that participated in groups, but it never got beyond individuals. I don't even think that the potential environmental stuff was appealed. I don't think it was appealable from what I can remember correctly. I think they sort got worn out with this and gave up, figured we were going to do it anyway, and we really had pretty good answers to their questions. I don't think it meant they liked the project, but they just sort of went away.

Geier: "We" as the [ranger] district?

Cissel: We, for me, is the Cascade/Andrews Center Team. I'm an employee of the Willamette National Forest, but one thing my position says is I report to a board of directors: one from PNW, one from OSU, one from the Willamette. I get my work direction priorities from a quarterly meeting I have with Fred, Lynn, and Art. So, formally I am an employee of the Willamette National Forest, but I really feel like I am an employee of the Andrews Cascade

Center (Cascade Center for Ecosystem Management). I work very closely with Fred and Art as well as Lynn, to make sure of our collective priorities.

Geier: The fielding of public concerns in that case, were people coming to you individually or was there kind of a group of people involved?

Cissel: It was basically Stan Gregory and his team, Linda [Ashkenas] especially, and folks from the district, that were responsible. The district has responsibility for any project that might affect the environment. That's a formal responsibility that Lynn, as line officer, has. So, we were collectively doing field trips and public meetings. We, the Willamette National Forest, wouldn't do it independently of Stan and Linda. The only reason the national forest was evaluating the project, was because Stan and Linda wanted to do it. Stan had a grant from NSF to get it done.

Geier: So, you took people up onto Lookout Creek, to show them where it was being done?

Cissel: Yes, before it was done, about where we were gonna do it. We did have a couple of follow-up meetings; it was a three-year project. So, the first year, here's the result. We took them down, showed where the site was, that it was dripping (chuckle) nitrogen into the stream.

Geier: Were there large groups coming up there or it was just a few people?

Cissel: Three to five people.

Geier: Were they representatives of -- ?

Cissel: -- There were two local citizens. One, who was at the time on the ONRC [Oregon Natural Resources Council] Board of Directors. Another local citizen had been involved with the forest [Willamette] for a long time, had helped start a group called the McKenzie Guardians, which really is no longer an active group. In fact, he kind of dropped out of the scene as well. And then, a third person, who had worked in the [Forest Service] Washington office in hydrology. He may have even been a national director (or assistant director) pretty high up in the Forest Service, but he retired in Eugene. And he didn't support the project. It didn't matter what we said. He wasn't going to change his perspective on that. But then, there were a couple people from EWEB that were really supportive of the project. It was kind of an interesting political situation, because they're the guardians of the water through EWEB. They were telling us face-to-face when we talked with them, that they were supportive and thought we'd generate good information. They'd come out, and they would answer questions that the public folks might have. There could have been a couple other people involved in this stuff, but we don't really think it would have an effect on the water. In the worst-case scenario, it's barely measurable. By the time it gets to intake facilities, it's going to hardly be detectable. It's not going to cost us any money or any problems to deal with this. But they would never give us any money or give us a letter or say anything formally, like we support this project. So, they were guardians of the

water quality in the McKenzie. They were protecting their own political rear-ends on how we would interpret it. They always participated and were generally supportive.

Geier: That strategy, from your perspective, was to bring people out and show them what was going to be done, and give an opportunity to show them respect and to hear their feelings?

Cissel: We went beyond that, because we did a lot of work to address their concerns, either in terms of analysis ahead of time to show them what the worst-case scenarios could be, what was the relative magnitude, and we went to additional expense to establish additional monitoring sites and to monitor additional variables, to provide them a higher level of comfort, that we weren't affecting the reservoir or the watershed. We did beef up the monitoring a little bit with more factors beyond what were integral to the study itself, in response to those comments. I think that did help sway some of their concerns. So, they did in some respect make the project better by having that level of involvement. I think the key thing for a lot of us up here, was that it was just a little bit of a wake-up call. Just because we're doing research, we can't just ignore NEPA, the Endangered Species Act, or public concerns.

Geier: What you were saying is that kind of issue reached the public?

Cissel: Yeah. Well, there really hasn't been a lot of activity [logging] on the Andrews since the early '70's. Since I've been here in the last eight years, I think we've cut about ¾ of an acre. Not very much harvest activity, and this is the other significant project in the last eight years.

Geier: Would you say there is much awareness in the local communities around here in the issues of the Andrews?

Cissel: I'd say anybody that's been there any length of time is dimly aware that it exists. People that are a little more aware and pay attention to what goes on in terms of forest management activities, would certainly be aware it exists. The number of people that have any sense of its scale or scope or relevance to forests or the region, is very small.

Geier: Lynn Burditt was saying there was a study in '94 that studied the entire [McKenzie] Valley population, I was curious of what your perception is of your interactions between district staff and people in that region?

Cissel: I live in Eugene. Again, I work in multiple bases. I go up more in the summer field season, and I spend 3, 4 days in the Blue River, the Andrews area. Up here in the summer time, 2, 3 times a month. The rest of the time I'm in Eugene or I'm off giving presentations or somewhere else. In the winter time, I'd flip-flop, so I spend more time up here and less time in Blue River, in this facility, because this is where all the science people are who work up here.

Geier: Maybe you could talk a little about your perception of the role and purpose of the experimental forest at the time you started working there. Had you had much experience prior to working at the Andrews with experimental forests?

Cissel: No, not at all. I was certainly aware of the Andrew's existence and its general role. I didn't really have a good sense of scope, breadth, depth of the Andrews program, even though I'd been on the Willamette National Forest for three years prior to that. I sort of generally knew, but not really. What was the question again?

Geier: At the time you started working there, how did you perceive the purpose of the experimental forest?

Cissel: I can't really remember. It's hard for me to put that in context eight years ago, but I probably didn't have a whole lot of preconceived ideas, to tell you the truth. The Andrews is so different from other experimental forests in terms of the breadth and scope of the program, and the interaction with a broad segment of managers and policy-makers. It's certainly unmatched in the region, as far as I can tell; it's unmatched in the West. So, I just didn't have any sense of that, of the breadth and scope of that, before I came. I'm struggling because I don't remember having any real strong emotions about the role of the experimental forest. One of the things that was kind of interesting, was the way the job got going when I got there. The way the initial position description was put together, was that I was going to do the lead the Blue River Landscape Project, which is what I'm doing now. Eight years ago, right after this, I was selected for the position, and there was a spotted owl habitat conservation plan that came out with interim directions, that said the Blue River watershed was going to be in a Habitat Conservation Area where no manipulative activities were going to occur. So, as soon as I got the position, I was supposed to develop this landscape project which would involve timber harvest, but there was not going to be any timber harvest in the area. So, I had to basically start from scratch in terms of building a program. I remember the forest supervisor telling me, it was in the first couple of weeks after I got the job, in a laughing kind of way, "Well the good thing is you have this job – now what you going to do? Is there going to be any work load for you?" In retrospect, that was just a laughable kind of question, but, basically, I had to create a program.

The Cascade Center was something we created that first year. So, I looked around and said, "Well, okay, here's this regional network of sites called the Long-Term Ecosystem Productivity [LTEP], they're looking for sites, and it seems to me that we have the Andrews here and we have this hub. We ought to have a site." So, I went out and found a site and got the research team. This is related to the Andrews program but it's really another research program. It gets confused because it's called the "LTEP," which is awfully similar to "LTER." But about these LTEP sites, I said, "That looks like a program of research that's gonna have some stability and funding for a while." That's what I was looking for initially after my project just disappeared from under my feet, so let's get something together. So, we got this LTEP site. We said, "Let's start a "young stand thinning and diversity" project," because the forest seemed really interested in supporting that, and there were other people involved from up here. So, we built that project up. You know, once again, it was a major study that had a fair amount of funding coming to it.

Support for the research program in the Andrews, had some projects which were on track by then, so we said, "Well, let's see what we can do with this landscape project, maybe not in Blue River, because we got this habitat conservation area there." So, we looked at Augusta Creek, which you may have heard of before. Augusta Creek was a place where we said, "Well, let's start trying to develop some new concepts at Augusta Creek."

At the same time, the Forest Service had nationally initiated a program called "New Perspectives." I don't know if you heard that before or not. It was a very short-lived program and one of those continuing buzzword evolutions, but it was one of the Forest Service's initiatives to reform itself. Somewhere along the way, I think it was the Ouachita National Forest, the Chief [Forest Service] went down there with Senator [Dale] Bumpers, or some senator from Arkansas that had some seniority, and they talked about how we should manage that national forest. They came back and designated it a demonstration forest. When I saw that I started thinking, "Well, you know, we've got the Andrews and all this stuff going on here. Then we've got these other research projects scattered all over the place, then we have got the LTEP, the young stand thinning and diversity study, and we've got Augusta Creek. The whole district is involved in significant ways in terms of developing and applying ecosystems information."

Maybe we are a "Demonstration District," or "Blue River Demonstration District." I remember we were coming back from a field trip in Augusta Creek; myself and Fred and Art and Stan, and maybe Gordon. We were talking about some of this stuff, where we should be going. This idea of "demonstration district" sort of hit people, and we said "Well, that sounds kind of cool." There might be some handle to that we can grab. So, we went back and I remember we started talking about it to Lynn, who said, "You know that's kind of interesting, lots of implications there." That afternoon I happened to be going to the FSL [Forestry Sciences Lab - Corvallis] and I went into Rolf's [Anderson] office (he was still in there), and described this to him. He said, "Well, that's sort of interesting." Mike Kerrick walked into his office; he was the forest supervisor at the time. I got up and went to the map, gave the same kind of promo and pitched it to Mike, and he felt that was really cool, too. So, I started writing it up. Fred and I together were working on this description of the demonstration district. Then I hit a snag. Somebody said, "demonstration district," that sounds like, "You're gonna maybe not cut as much timber or something. It doesn't seem like a good idea." The connotation of "demonstration district" was too much for somebody along the way.

I can't remember who it was or what happened, but the Forest Service was setting up this New Perspectives program at that time. They established a coordinator in both the regional office [Region 6] and [Pacific Northwest Research] station level in Portland, and they came out for a visit. They recognized our history as a place that was innovating and developing new practices. So, we laid out this same kind of thing for them and what we were thinking about a "demonstration district." At that stage they were trying to figure out what structure the region should have for this New Perspectives program, and we said, "This is kind of what we were thinking, but maybe of a different title than demonstration district."

We must have spent hours filling out different kinds of names and titles, and finally we hit upon Cascades Center. The “Center” label came from Steve McDonald, the PNW New Perspectives manager there. He was a fairly quiet kind of guy, but he said, “Well, I think that’s got potential.” At that time, the Blue Mountains Natural Resource Institute in northeastern Oregon and the Olympic [Natural Resources] Center up in Washington were developing, and it was obvious that they were going to be major players on the scene. The “Olympic Center” was sort of Jerry Franklin’s brain child. I think Steve saw the “Cascade Center” somehow as giving us panache, and we could compete in the marketing of the funding realm with the some of the other centers. In retrospect, it was an unfortunate choice of words, because “center” to most people, implies a particular building or place. The Cascade Center really developed into a program of activities, a program of work. It’s not really a place, as we have activities spread all over the place. The Andrews is one place. There’s a boundary on a map, there’s a set of buildings. That’s how we got to Cascade Center. We were looking for a better handle to describe our full sweep of research management studies; case studies, demonstration areas, education programs, than the Andrews program. The Andrews program is really that research component focused on this specific spot. We had stuff spread out all over the forest that were much broader programmatically than just the research program. I think that’s where we came around to realizing that we ought to be talking about and thinking about our whole scope of activities in that broader context, and thinking about it as an adaptive management program. And that’s the way we’ve been trying to describe our full suite of activities [Cascade Center] since ‘91.

Geier: Was there in any input into that planning, from say industry, to try and assuage these concerns about cutting or eliminating the funding?

Cissel: Not really. Well, do you mean that one about the demonstration district?

Geier: Yeah, that you were talking about, because it [resonated] at least to the supervisor level. Mike [Kerrick] sounded sympathetic, at least.

Cissel: He was still wanting us to do it. There was just a little blip. That really doesn’t deserve a whole lot. We just continued on with what we wanted to do and stopped calling it a demonstration district, and started calling it the Cascade Center. So really it didn’t effect anything we wanted to do. That was just sort of a little blip there. Industry really wasn’t involved directly in how we set things up.

Geier: In general, there wasn’t really any major concern about designating this as an adaptive management district or program?

Cissel: No, I don’t think so. I think people saw the forest was still thriving on a pretty healthy budget. If we were trying to start that now, that be a different story. Unfortunately, it’s a much different place now. People were generally pretty supportive. There were some folks on the forest that would say, “You know, you guys are just going to be competing for funding down the line,” but that was a pretty small minority.

Geier: I wanted to get your perception when you started out in the position. From what you said earlier, it sounded like the reputation and accomplishments of people at the Andrews, hadn't really hit home that much. You had some contact, through Lynn, with Fred and Art, but in terms of what had been happening at the Andrews, it wasn't having much impact on you?

Cissel: I just sort of took it as a given. I'd been to symposiums and listened to Jerry or Tom Spies or Fred or Stan, or somebody else talk. Those were the kind of people you'd see. Back in the '80's, there was a lot of focus on old-growth-wildlife-habitat relationships, and spotted owls. Those were the things that were talked about a lot. I just probably didn't think about it a lot. I certainly wasn't driven to or attracted to the Andrews because of the personalities or individuals.

Geier: Can you recall your first impressions of the Andrews or the people that work there, when you began working for the district, and the relationship of district personnel with the scientists at the Andrews?

Cissel: At that time, the headquarters site was just a collection of old trailers. So, one of the first visual images you get is, well, for a place that thinks it's really doing a lot of really great work, it sure looks like a dump. Because it did. That took me back when I first got there, was somebody showing me where my office would be if I wanted to have an office up there, and in back of this old tick- and mouse-ridden trailer. It seemed just kind of odd. So, the facilities have totally changed in the last eight years – for the better. One of the impressions that probably anybody would get [at least I certainly got] was that, to the degree that things were organized, it's not real apparent. There's a lot of chaos. It's not as chaotic as it first appears. But it's a very different mode of operation than standard National Forest operations are. Much less focus on priorities. People have a lot more freedom to split out and do their own things. The assumption is by supporting this broad sweep of projects and programs, and trying to have good relationships and information sharing, that good things are going to result in a collaborative way. I think to a significant extent that's true. The converse of that is there's also a lot of wasted energy and relatively unfocused efforts that may not ever result in anything. So, that is kind of a converse side of the way things are orchestrated here. When you first come on the scene, you see these isolated pieces of activity. After a while, you get a bigger picture and you see how there is a little bit of a method to the madness. But that is, I still perceive as the way, our basic style of operating, so at our monthly meetings, we exchange some information and work on our relationships by BS-ing afterwards. That's kind of what we're doing. But we rarely say, "Okay, here's a pressing need and here's some options and let's sort through and find the best options, and this looks like the best option, so you go do it. And then we're gonna have something produced by this amount of time, and here's the product." Which might be more the way a National Forest might operate. That's not the way we operate here.

Geier: I'm curious about your position title, "Research Liaison." When you first started working at the district, was that more of an issue of opportunities as opposed to a problem of people not communicating?

Cissel: Well there was some of that. One of the attitudes I ran into quite a bit at the district, was we have our program of work, we have our priorities, we have our targets, and we'll try to do some of this research stuff for them, when we can fit it in. We ran into some problems with that right away, because Lynn even had some of that attitude. For the flume project and Charlie Halpern's project, she was saying, "Well, let's work on that, as long as it doesn't conflict with anything, and we'll see if we can make it happen." It didn't take us too long to figure out we can't operate that way. We can't be telling somebody, "Yes, we're going to support this project," and then string them along for six months, then don't find the time and don't get it done. Meanwhile they've gone out, got a grant, hired somebody, and collected some data, and then we don't do it? We have to decide up front if we are going to be committed, and then we've got to do it all the way through, as if it's one of our targets like everything else. We started focusing on it's not them or us trying to do their work from a National Forest point-of-view, but that this, the Andrews, the Cascade Center program, is one of the district's primary programs and objectives. It is an integral part of our collective body at work. Lynn was very supportive of that, and worked on trying to establish that mentality. I don't think we'll ever be a hundred percent successful at that, but we've been pretty successful. As a matter of fact, it's the first time I've thought about it in a few years. By and large, I think people do see that what we're doing is integral to the district's program of work. Part of it is something as simple as, you call up the Blue River [Ranger District] trying to talk to somebody, but they answer "Blue River Cascade Center." That's just a small change we made to make it more visible as an integral part of our work.

Geier: When you talk about the organization of the Andrews Group and implementing their decisions and also providing other models for the National Forest system, would you say your role is to keep those two kind of parallel to the Blue River District? In other words, to make sure that what's happening at the LTER meetings feeds into the decision process at the district level?

Cissel: Yeah, exactly. That's one of my roles, and why I'm so schizophrenic, because I have to operate in both cultures and make the connections. There's lots of folks up here that tend to see me as a down-to-earth, pragmatic, get-it-done kind of person, because that's the role I have to play a lot of times. If it's something directly related to the landscape stuff or with just trying to support other projects, that's the kind of role I had to play. The district, lots of times, sees me as this airy research person coming in with ideas and concepts, not really connected with how you get stuff done. That's the role I try to play; bring both sides closer together with what's reality here.

Geier: Yeah, that's pretty tough. You mentioned the position was kind of open for a while, you're predecessor. Was it the same the role that person was playing?

Cissel: Well somewhat. I don't really know for sure. He was a silviculturist, and fairly focused on silviculture on the Andrews. You know, he was not quite as focused on maybe the broader program, but, Lynn or Fred can give you a better perspective than I could.

Geier: Uh -

Cissel: Or Art.

Geier: I've actually talked to Lynn about it. I haven't talked to Art, and I should probably see him. One of other questions I was curious about, as a forest manager when you first started working there, how would you characterize your perception of the conditions of the Andrews Forest, in terms of the way it had been managed up until that point, and potential areas of concern as it related to the rest of the district?

Cissel: You're not talking about the people at the facilities, but the actual ecosystems?

Geier: Yeah, right.

Cissel: Well, it looked like it had suffered abuses in the fifties, but it had been managed with a pretty light touch for the last 20 years, and compared to many places on the Willamette National Forest, it had a relative wealth of old-growth forest. It had some nice old-growth forest. The Andrews as a place is a nice place, but there's an awful lot of nice places in the western Oregon Cascades. I don't really see it as all that uniquely of a distinctive place. It's what's been done there that makes it distinctive. I don't know if that's what you're asking.

Geier: Yeah, that's good. I was curious coming in there as a forest manager if you found any problems that needed to be addressed or to be managed in comparison to other places you managed on before at Willamette Forest?

Cissel: No, it was a little disconcerting that there weren't clear objectives for the management of the place. But I've gotten used to that and it fits with the overall style pretty well – multiple things hopefully building together and interacting without much top-down kind of structure to it. From a National Forest Service point-of-view, people would ordinarily think, "Well, okay if we've got some objectives for this piece of ground, some management objectives for the long-term and short-term, and we want to make sure everything here is headed towards something." In a broad sense, the experimental research nature of the Andrews is the objective for the place. But in terms of the management type objective for pieces of the Andrews, they were trying to maintain as many options and much flexibility for research, and we don't know what direction it's going to go. What kind of options are going to make sense 5 or 10 years from now? Just try to maintain as many options as possible. People would come up to me on the district and say, "Can I do pre-commercial thinning in this plantation?" Or, "Can I do pruning?" I would try to go through and say, "Let's see, what do we want this place to look like over time so I can try and see if that makes sense, whether or not we want to do that?" Usually, we didn't have any idea what this place would look like over time, because we were managing this whole establishment to maximize research flexibility and opportunities for the long-term. I don't know if that makes any sense or not.

Geier: Yeah, it struck me when I was at your presentation on landscape planning, that you have this experimental forest in the middle of this district. You talk about long-term planning. I was wondering if this experimental forest, which you say has as a higher proportion of old-growth, has an influence on what you can do on other parts of the district [Blue River]?

Cissel: I think it does a little bit, because, especially since there hasn't been much manipulative activity in the last 25 years, the Andrews, in some sense, it functions as kind of a reserve, which both sets up opportunities for a landscape-scale monitoring standpoint in terms of being able to compare with what's happening in other parts of the watershed to the Andrews. And also, I think in some people minds, there's a pretty good size area where there isn't really much disturbance that can function as a refuge for some species, like the spotted owl.

Geier: You mentioned at the outset you've been involved with LTER for about eight years now. I'm curious in terms of how you make your decisions, how you resolve issues that you encounter on a regular basis. What functions does the LTER meeting serve in your view for dealing with issues as they come up?

Cissel: When I first started coming to those [LTER meetings], I felt that one of the purposes to go was to try and help make decisions about various things around management of the Andrews, or research projects or whatever. But I fairly quickly realized that that's not the way the group works. So, I usually think of the group as a way just to sort of share information. You know, float things out there. People have the chance to reflect on them, and get back if they have any input or thoughts about it. That's kind of the way Fred, Art, and Lynn all look at these, so when we have tough issues that actually need a decision of some kind at some point-of-time, that decision will usually get made. Fred, Art, Lynn, and I meet quarterly, and I put that agenda together and facilitate that meeting, and I also put together things I think we need to make decisions about. We either make the decisions or decide who needs to talk to whom to gather enough information and make sure all viewpoints are considered and figure it out.

Geier: That's the level of decision that would be made at with consideration, we'd be getting at the sharing at the LTER meetings?

Cissel: Yeah, at least that'd usually be a part of it. If it's of any import to a wider group, we're gonna get it out, generally at one of these Friday meetings. If there are people who aren't there who need to hear about it, then it's in the written notes from the meeting. We sort of rely on people who aren't there to read those notes, because it's a big community of people, and probably only 20 percent or so are actually here on any given Friday. As far as I can tell, that is about as structured as we get in our decision processes. The four of us have been working together for about eight years, and you know Art and Fred actually go back a lot longer. We kind of know who needs to be involved and when it's okay for one of us to make a decision without the other one being involved. We've got pretty good sense of that.

Geier: Is eight years a long time to be in a position like this?

Cissel: Actually, when I moved at the position from Lowell [Ranger District] to Blue River, [Ranger District] it was a promotion for me. But eight years in the old Forest Service concept, would have been a long time. But in the last ten years, there's been quite a bit of change. People have stayed in place a lot longer. It has a lot to do with the downsizing, reduction of budgets, RIFs [reductions in force], and all that stuff. People are less inclined to move around to a new job every two or three years. For me, personally, this is the only kind of job I could stay in for this long, because there's so much change and so many new things built into it. If there were similar job openings year-after-year, I would have quit a long time ago.

Geier: You mentioned earlier on you've been able to build your own research program.

Cissel: Oh yeah. I've got a lot of flexibility and dealing with new and interesting projects and people all the time. That sort of fits my desires.

End Side A, Tape 1 (of 1)

Begin Side B, Tape 1 (of 1)

Cissel: Do you actually transcribe these tapes word-by-word, or do you actually have somebody else do it?

Geier: Well, it's about half-and-half right now for stuff like this. I'll probably have someone else transcribe it for me. When I do group interviews it's a lot easier if I do it myself, because I can track the interview. Yeah, that's the most time-consuming part of the process, actually. Then I take that and I put it on the database where I can search the information system. What I was starting to ask is, as you worked with scientists with this group here, you identified management issues in the Blue River District and at the Andrews, especially on the Blue River District. To what extent did the scientists at the Andrews test [management questions?]

Cissel: Well, it's a tough question to answer for a couple of reasons. One is that management questions and needs at that time were in such a period of disarray and change because the objectives were changing, and you get a lawsuit and injunctions that say you can't cut anything. And then with Section 318 saying you must cut 10 billion board feet in two years, then another injunction and another plan. Tremendous uncertainty and upheaval in 1990s, and right in the midst of it. I think there were a significant number of people in the Andrews group that were committed then, and are still committed to working on things relevant to managers and policy makers and society; beyond just sort of "how the system works" kinds of questions. And there's a significant number of people that are sort of interested in that kind of stuff, but really would just as soon work on their research and don't want to be bothered by a whole lot, which is cool.

Geier: Who did you find yourself working with most closely through that stuff you mentioned? Fred and Art and Stan?

Cissel: Stan and Gordon [Grant]. We had a tremendous amount of involvement in the science group once we got the Augusta Creek project. Field trips and camp outs, and there was a broad range of people involved, including Steve Garman. There were a lot of different people involved in that. Andy Hanson when he first got here, was involved quite a bit; he was real interested in working with managers. He's at Montana State [University] now. There are a fair number of people up here who loved to interact with managers, and want their stuff to be known. I think there are probably multiple motivations.

Geier: Maybe you could talk a little bit about logistical concerns that affected the district and something like, things like trends of increasing numbers of people coming out there. How does that effect your role out there, or your concerns?

Cissel: Well, I get lots of different kinds of things. Lots of times people are looking for information, or looking how to get something done. People are looking for data about how to help them find [research] sites, particularly on the kind of research projects that maybe we don't have the sites on the Andrews for one reason or another. People want to do something, so want to know if they need a permit, or what's the deal with the keys [gates/access]. As a site, the facility itself has grown up. You know, Greg Downing and other folks working up there, had an increasing need to use district facilities for purchasing and procurement and personnel kinds of things. People will want us to produce a GIS product for them, so I've had a GIS person working for me since I've been there. We try to provide that service to people from time-to-time, even though the GIS operation up here is a lot more sophisticated. Sometimes we have things that district they don't have. So, for the most part the people at the district are used to taking care of those things, and I don't have to play much of a role. More so in the earlier years when I was here, I would be directly involved, but I think most people would just go to people they need to actually get the job done for them, rather than going through me. So, I think it's pretty smooth.

Like I say, things have grown in the last few years. More people and more things. The district in general has gotten more used to working directly working with people. Greg comes in or someone comes in looking for data, and they may send it to me or send them directly to whomever. If they got a question about streams, maybe I'll know the answer, but probably a hydrologist in the district can help better.

Geier: So, after eight years they just became more comfortable working with each other it sounds like. Have people in the district been fairly constant? What's the turnover like?

Cissel: There's been quite a bit of downsizing. I think for a few years when I got here, there were maybe 80 employees, and now we're down to 40 or 45. There's been quite a bit of shrinkage. In just this last year, there's been turnover in some key positions. But, there are some threads of continuity. I'm not sure if I really understand your question, entirely.

Geier: I was going to ask you if there are people who have been there long-term over that 8-year period, who have found it easy to deal with scientists at the Andrews without any

problems, and if people have become accustomed to going there. One component of that question is the complexity of the number of people working on the Andrews and who are real enmeshed with it. It's not just the scientists involved in different disciplines and graduate students. How does that kind of complexity affect the job?

Cissel: To a significant extent the Andrews runs on its own. Most of the crews are graduate students working up there – OSU employees or some other university or PNW employees. And that's not entirely true. Sometimes the PNW employees need to use a computer for paychecks, that kind of stuff. So, they'll come down and use that. Right now, I have a crew of two working on the lichen monitoring project. They are staying up at the Andrews, but they are Forest Service employees, and they come down to the district to participate in a district function. They are hired through the district and the district expects them to behave as district employees, and they'll either be staying up at the Andrews or working at the Andrews, so we kind of work through that case-by-case. The safety issue is big. Prime case of the complexities is trying to think about IT [Information Technology]. Here's the Blue River District, trying to keep track of its employees, radio call-ins, check-in procedures, and all that. There are 40 permanent and 30-40 summer employees. And there's the Andrews, a whole other group of 60-80 people there in the summer time. They are employed by OSU, U of W, PNW, and there's somebody from UC-Santa Barbara or Oklahoma University. Who's responsible there for basic safety and check in procedures? A very laissez-faire situation up to now, increasing incidences on safety, the abduction this summer and all that, can be kind of problematic for the [Willamette] forest to say, "Hey, we're going to be responsible for the 60-80 people who are employed by the [Andrews] forest."

Geier: How do scientists select sites off the Andrews, and what impact does that have on what you were trying to do? That includes the problem of integrating research efforts with management.

Cissel: We used to get more of somebody from the district coming in and saying, "That fellow is slacking out here." "How does that relate to my pruning project?" "Oh shit, what pruning project?" It's kind of overwhelming because we don't have an all-inclusive, up-to-the-minute data base, for every project. What spatial and temporal dimensions, what things are being sampled for another study going on? You know, that would be a full-time job for somebody.

Geier: I was going to ask that. Is there any kind of check-in procedure like that there?

Cissel: Periodically. The last time I did it was about 2 and 1/2 years ago. I put it together working with my GIS person at the district. The data base had a map location for every study underway. Some people in the district were clamoring for that, saying, "Well, we've got to know that so we can make sure we're not conflicting." Nobody ever used it. So, I spent all this time and energy putting this together, and it's just a set of maps sitting in people's piles somewhere. (Laughter) You know, we're just not organized enough so that when someone says, "Oh, I want to do a project here, then go to the data base, and pop, pop, pop, everything

that's going on in that area comes up." It doesn't work that easily. Consequently, if people don't do it, they come to me or Jim [Mayo], and ask.

Geier: Would that be a common source of potential conflict? What would be the most likely areas of potential conflict between OSU researchers or other researchers with management on district land?

Cissel: Well, that's a potential source. It's something that's done for an activity affecting a research project because of ignorance. I can't think of an example that's actually been a problem. I could think of a couple examples where it could have been a problem, but I found out about it and headed it off. Somebody came to me and said, "Well, this what we're going to do and I just want you to know," and I said, "Okay, well, time out." I think with those kinds of things, the general reaction would tend to be more like, "Well, my God, that sounds stupid. Why did we let that happen?" But probably, no long-term hard feelings. People probably see that more as we got huge diverse programs. And we're not 100% organized about everything, and shit happens. That's the kind of reaction I think for the most part.

The most conflicting kind of stuff comes around things like NEPA requirements and Endangered Species Act requirements. Lynn and the forest [Will. N.F.] perceive that one of the roles she's legally bound to have, is making projects that affect the environment go through the same kinds of procedures to insure they're in compliance with the laws, as other activities on the district are. People in the Andrews may perceive it as, "Hey, we're going to do this real minor project here, and we're going to upgrade our meteorological station, so we need to build this little hundred-foot road." "Well, hell, hundred-foot road on the Andrews, that's totally insignificant, how could that be significant to anything? You know, we've got, hundreds of miles of road out here." "We're gonna cut down four trees, and why do we have to wait for your biologists to come out here and do a survey for spotted owls and every other species." Botanists come out here and check the plants, and archeologists come out here and check for cultural artifacts. Then, do a NEPA process of public comment on this little teeny project. So, we've had some rubs over that sort of stuff.

Geier: How is that usually resolved?

Cissel: Case-by-case. Try to get with it and try to do the minimum as quickly as we can, with a minimum delay. Try to get something as detailed as possible. We've had a couple blows on that where it's taken too long from somebody's perspective, and a lot of paper work and the process hasn't been concluded yet. But, relatively minor I'd say, and we really haven't lost any sleep over those kind of things.

Geier: I was going to ask you if there was any response to that.

Cissel: There hasn't been anything significant that, I'd really call it noteworthy.

Geier: What is your perception about the significant accomplishments at Blue River District since you've been there? I'm thinking of the area, the district in general, not just the Andrews.

Cissel: Accomplishments at the Blue River District?

Geier: That you were involved in.

Cissel: Well, I'm (chuckle) highly-biased. First, I think the Augusta Creek Project is far and away the most significant thing that has happened.

Geier: Why?

Cissel: Well, we really pioneered a different way of thinking about how landscape should be planned to meet multiple integrated, ecological and commercial objectives. We not only pioneered the concept, we took it to a level which showed the linkage from the concept at the landscape scale to project implementation. We were able to link a different way of thinking about and planning management for a large landscape, and put it in a spatial and temporal context for people that resulted in specific objectives people could implement at a project level. I think that's real significant. It's going to take a while yet for that to play out, because it is a different approach and it's not the approach that is embodied in the Northwest Forest Plan. I don't know if Fred's talked at all about that or not. But, you've got the matrix, forest, reserves, and a corridors-kind-of-conservation-biology-driven approach of the Northwest Forest Plan. We've really developed an ecosystem-dynamics approach based on historical disturbance patterns and landscapes structures, which has some very different implications for how these ecosystems are going to develop over time. It results in a different way of managing the land.

Meanwhile, we've got the Northwest Forest Plan with "matrix" and "riparian reserves" all over the landscape. We've spent years now developing and implementing this alternative [disturbance-based] approach. And through the landscape study we're really going to implement it and monitor over time to really be able to say anything with substance about the consequences. Augusta Creek is really where we developed all those concepts. That was a really fertile time for integrating diverging or different threads of research interests as well as management interests. I think that's really significant and the lessons we're going learn out of actually monitoring what's happening on the ground in the Blue River Watershed, are going to be really important for the next public policy spasm that comes around and the windows and doors open again, for changing the way we are doing things. I'm already seeing some cracks in the Northwest Forest Plan opening up various places in the region. People are just up against the wall for a variety of issues, whether it's listed coho salmon or municipal water quality in the Salem watershed. These things push people to say, "We've got to come up with something better in the matrix riparian reserves." In the approach we developed for the matrix riparian reserves, we said, "Okay, we're going to set aside these lands and manage these lands intensively for timber." And we're taking a broader perspective, "Let's look at the function of the whole landscape and manage it on a more integrated basis, so we're not really managing any place with maximum timber production as a primary goal."

Geier: You've mentioned the Augusta Creek project several times. Please talk about how that project originated and evolved. It sounds like it became a model in the timber planning process.

Cissel: It took us years to get the Augusta Creek project and landscape plan tuned up to the point where we felt pretty good about it. Then we took those concepts and developed the landscape plan for the Blue River watershed, which is about three times the size of Augusta Creek, in two weeks. So, Augusta Creek is where all this stuff really developed.

Geier: Who was working with you at Augusta Creek?

Cissel: Well, dozens of people. The landscape work we did at Blue River prior to my arrival and the Lowell "Skunkworks" project I was talking about, were really in sort of a mitigation mode, maintaining some options in the short-term, by identifying more significant blocks of old forest, and harvesting it somewhere else. It really didn't establish any broader objectives for what rates should we be harvesting and at what intensity we should be harvesting. It was more of a spatial pattern, to maintain some sort of options approach. We got thinking about this shortly after I got to Blue River, and said, "Well, we've got to do something with the landscapes." My job, my mission here, was to develop a landscape project. It's right here in my job description, and we started thinking, "Let's step back and be a little bit more objective-driven from a broader perspective, then think about how do we set objectives for landscape pattern and structure over a long period of time." So, we said, "One way we can do that is using historical patterns as a guide. Let's get a fire history study together which will examine historical patterns by looking at the rates and intensity and spatial patterns of past fire regimes, because fire has been the major disturbance agent that's really set-up landscape patterns." Distribution of habitat is really what we were talking about in landscape patterns; it's the distribution of habitat types available.

There were three of us, really, that got that project started with the fire history; it was Miles [Hemstrom], Fred, and myself. Then Jane Kertis is the ecologist here with the Willamette (and Siuslaw National Forest), who was working with Miles at that time and had a background of fire history. She became very involved in setting up the field study and doing the subsequent analysis of fire history data, once the fire history data were compiled. Then I would get the information, and would make a stab at translating it into a landscape management strategy, then describe it. Maybe I'd work with some people at the Blue River District that had the information and expertise to give me piece of the story, and I would try to put the story together. Then I'd take it around and show it to people, whether it was one person or many. We had many meetings and presentations up here in Corvallis. In Friday afternoon meetings after our monthly meetings here, we'd look at it and get people's comments, like, "Oh, that's interesting, but you really need to...How about this? You haven't thought through this...." Some of that was at the broad conceptual level, where people were saying, "Well, the historical pattern model is cool, but here's another concept..." So, we would debate the merits of those concepts. We actually took those some of the concepts and developed them into landscape

strategies, and then modeled them out over time, compared them [alternative future scenarios of landscape change]. A variety of work has gone into this over time. As I mentioned earlier, we had field trips and overnight campouts, and we'd sit around the campfire and discuss the use of fire history data and how it would fit in with landslides and habitats of this species or that species, and about carbon cycles and storage of carbon and lots of different concepts and ideas. That's kind of the mode we operated in. There's been a change in some of the players, maybe some of the same principle people you're dealing with now were involved in a lot of those early discussions and reviews and commenting on in reviews. I'd could give you a list of names.

One indicator is that we got a publication on the Augusta plan published [PNW Station General Technical Report], with about 15 authors; the primary people up here, with names I've already mentioned, Fred, Gordon, Stan, Steve, and Dede Olson. I do not know if you know Dede, but she's at PNW, an amphibian specialist. Linda Ashkenas, and there's three or four people with the district. Matt Hunter, I don't know if you've met Matt or not. He's a grad student up here involved in a bunch of other work. And Cindy McCain and Jane. Cindy works with Jane as the two ecologists for the Willamette and Siuslaw National Forests. They've both been instrumental. When I would put something together, and say, "Well, I want to bounce it off somebody," I could always go talk to Jane and Cindy, and they'd give me some feedback. I thought, if I'd get enough ideas crystallized on what the next iteration should look like, I'd take it back and put the plan together again. The plan consists of a map of different zones representing different ways things are done, forming a landscape mixing some reserves and different rotation ages and retention levels and spatial patterns, where timber harvest and prescribed fire were done. Then I would actually map out more specific blocks in the ground, project patterns out over time, basically showing how these activities would occur. We would have these maps of landscape structure over time. Then we eventually developed this for several scenarios, and compared the scenarios in terms of spotted owl habitat or woodpecker habitat or whatever. That's kind of what the document of the Augusta Creek landscape plan paper is, the results of comparing those two scenarios. [Northwest Forest Plan and the disturbance-history-based plan]

Geier: When did that come out in publication?

Cissel: Well it's been in press, sitting in Portland for about six months now. It's supposedly got a '97 date on it. So, it's in press.

Geier: Do you have a draft copy that I can get?

Cissel: Yeah, sure. Fred's got it.

Geier: Okay, I'll check with him.

Cissel: I'm sure Gordon and Steve and several other people up here, have it too. We finally got to the point where it was pretty well tuned up, pretty close to getting towards prime time. The

district was ready to do a timber sale down there, and was using the guidelines in the paper. The problem is that it's a different strategy than the Northwest Forest Plan, with riparian reserves and pretty intensive timber management in the matrix. We got to the point where we said, "Well, what are we going to implement with this timber sale?" Wildlife biologists and others are trying to evaluate this timber sale and they're saying, "Well, if it's going to be implemented in the context of this broader landscape plan, then I think this about the risk to the species. But, if it's going to be implemented in the context of matrix and riparian reserves [of Northwest Forest Plan], then I think this about the project." We had to come to a fundamental decision. We ended up getting in a discussion with the forest supervisor, and eventually the regional forester [John Lowe], and Tom Tuchmann. I don't know if you know that name, but he's the White House Rep [Tuchman] for the Northwest Forest Plan, and he was supposed to provide the White House connection to the plan here. We presented this to him, and he said, "This is really cool, this is great I'm glad you guys are working on this. Should have been working on this a long time ago, in fact it's so good. You should go ahead on this and implement it full speed ahead and monitor. But, do it in the AMA [Central Cascades Adaptive Management Area]. Or, if you want, amend it in the Northwest Forest Plan, so Augusta Creek in the AMA."

That was the only thing I have been surprised about in this interview; you haven't asked about the Adaptive Management Area [AMA]. That's a fairly significant evolution in our program of activities. We said, "We are not going to amend the Northwest Forest Plan to include Augusta Creek in an AMA. That will take too long, too much hassle. We can develop this same strategy for the Blue River watershed, which is in the AMA, which includes the Andrews, which has this long history of data sets, and which has a variety of long term projects. It's a better place for monitoring, and we can implement it without all these hassles and all these questions because we've got more flexibility in the AMA to do different things." So, that's how we got to the Blue River Project from Augusta Creek. So now the district [Blue River] has sold one sale and is getting ready to sell another sale implementing the guidelines of the landscape project. We have multiple monitoring projects under way. That's what we've set up. That's what I'm trying to set-up specifically, and putting the energy into getting this thing established as an administrative study, to get the resources to really get the monitoring done at multiple scales. There are going to be plenty of other places where matrix and riparian reserves are being applied so we can compare to them. There's the wilderness areas where nothing is really happening. There's the Andrews, which is kind of a reserve and compare it at a certain scale. Then, at the larger scale we can compare it to the industrial landscapes. Remote sensing data can give us a broad look, at least at how habitats are developed and distributed across large parts of the watershed.

Geier: The Augusta Creek study set the stage for the Blue River Landscape Management Plan, and took just two weeks to work up?

Cissel: In terms of developing the basics of the landscape plan itself. Augusta Creek took years. It was an on-again, off-again effort. They would go for 6 months without doing much. It was pretty much me working on it in my spare time. It wasn't like going to work for 60% of your time on Augusta. I had basic stuff to keep going, and then fit in work on Augusta as best I could. I

interacted with as many people as I could to get feedback or get it tuned up, but it was pretty much me. There weren't any resources or any team assigned to this thing until we got ready to do the final analysis of scenarios. Then we pulled together this team of the authors of this paper that you'll eventually see. We went to Blue River, and we had the advantage that the watershed analysis was completed. "Watershed analysis" is the basic compilation of data that all watersheds have had analysis done under the Northwest Forest Plan. That's one component of the forest plan that is supposed to be completed before further management activities. We had that advantage. Basic data were already compiled. We put together a team of people for two weeks, but it wasn't two weeks non-stop. It was a day here, day there, kind of thing. The team was composed of three people from the ranger district, two people from up here, and then myself. We crafted the basics of the landscape plan in two weeks because all the thinking-process work we did in Augusta, and that's really helped in developing the Blue River plan.

Geier: Do you see this as a good model for going forward in other areas?

Cissel: I think the potential is there and that it has yet to be seen, now that the public policy debates are to play out. It's still an open question for me if national forests are even going to be cutting timber. If they're not going to be cutting trees, then the landscape patterns will be pretty well-set by past cutting. It would be a case of don't do anything and let it grow. That might be how things go and this won't be relevant, at least, on national forests in the short-term. It may be more relevant in some other places, some other country, or some other situation. But, there's a lot of interest in this now, both nationally and internationally. Actually, we talk about it with a lot of groups of people. People in other countries working with similar concepts have been real interested in trying to track this and use some of this information. There has been a lot of conceptual work on using historical information, and not a lot of actual application set in an operational context. This is something we've done and demonstrated in an operational context.

I'm hoping it's something that can be replicated in other places. For example, usually I talk about this with other managers. I've been talking about it 2 or 3 dozen times a year for 6, going on 7 years. The usual reaction I get from managers is, "Good thing, glad you are working on it. It's not helpful to me because I have to deal with riparian reserves and matrixes. Those are in the Northwest Plan, that's the plan I have to deal with." Last week I went and talked to the Detroit Ranger District. After I was done describing it, the ranger turned to me and said, "Can you come up here and help us do this?" I said, "Well that's interesting. "What watershed are you talking about?" He said, "Well, the whole district." I described some of the problems we ran into in trying to implement it, and the problems of zoning for matrix and riparian reserves. He said, "I understand that, and that's going to be something we're going to have to deal with, but, if we don't do something ecologically-oriented across the watershed, we aren't going to do anything because of the issues we've got: water quality in the Salem municipal watershed, blah, blah, blah." To me, what I'm starting to see is there are some cracks starting to appear in that matrix and riparian reserve strategy in the Northwest Forest Plan. Sooner or later, there's going to have to be some changes or adjustments. I want us to be in position when that sooner or later arrives, we have not only the concepts and the applications represented in on-the-

ground demonstrations, but also some actual empirical data that says we need the data to get what you are doing. That's the thrust of what we're trying to do, so we'll be ready for the opportunity when it arrives.

Geier: Do you have any connection with state forestry or private forestry in developing these kinds of plans?

Cissel: Only in an information sharing and feedback kind of mode. The Augusta and Blue River plans have been developed in pretty much all federal ownerships. There has been an interesting change over time, where in the early '90's industry folks would come up and just see something as simple as a green-tree retention harvest unit and shake their heads. And some of them did a lot more than shake their heads. We've seen some people, some leaders, some timber industry leaders, get livid in front of a group of 60-80 people, and say pretty derogatory stuff about people because we were leaving these green trees, that they saw as a tremendous waste of resources, economically irresponsibility, etc., etc. A couple of years later some of those same folks or similar folks were coming up and saying, "I kind of understand why you do this on federal land, but you sure as hell shouldn't be telling anybody to do it on private land." Couple of years ago we were contacted by some of these timber industry lobbying groups. Some of the people locally you see in the paper, Chris West, or some of those kinds of folks. They were doing a Congressional staffers tour, and they wanted to come out and see what we were doing here about the landscape project. So, the whole context has shifted so radically in a few years. I think the reason they wanted to do that was just to try and impress upon those folks not that this is the best way in the world to manage a landscape, but to give them a sense of the scope of the things that are being considered and integrated from an ecological point-of-view when coming up with those kinds of plans. I'm not quite sure what to think about all that, but its kind of remarkable to me how that's changed in a relatively short amount of time.

Geier: It strikes me that you were talking about the potential for the national forests to get out of the timber business. I guess the state is just considering right now, legislation to make the state forests basically for timber production?

Cissel: I understand the motivations for people that are trying to stop cutting trees on federal lands. But, I think it would be a real shame if the only options available were either cut it all or leave it all. If there aren't any in-between options out there, we've really have lost it all. All those places where we're saying, "Cut it all," we've given up a hell of a lot ecologically, biological diversity, habitat. I think about that a lot. I think that trying to find some better options for managing land, involving timber harvest from an ecological point-of-view is a valuable thing to be doing. I'm just trusting that our political processes aren't going to leave us in the boat where those are the only two options are to cut it all or leave it all.

Geier: What you are saying is that the political processes haven't impeded you from developing a strategy at least?

Cissel: Not from implementing it in the AMA. If it hadn't been for the political processes, we probably would have implemented Augusta Creek a couple years ago. I think we are able to develop, implement, and evaluate it within the confines of the Blue River watershed and in the AMA for now. We'll see how big those cracks open up here in the next few years.

Geier: Well I should probably let you get back to work here, it's been a long time.

End of Interview