

Interview with Ted Dyrness, September 11, 1996, 9:30 a.m., in Dyrness' office at the Corvallis Forestry Sciences Laboratory, by Max Geier.
Transcribed by Jeff Fourier and Marilyn Bloomquist.

*After completing his graduate training in soils at OSU, Ted Dyrness began soil survey and slope stability work as a Forest Service scientist at various locations in western Oregon, but quickly began to focus soil survey and erosion studies in the Andrews Forest. He collaborated with Jerry Franklin on many projects, including publication of *Natural Vegetation of Oregon and Washington*, which is still the go-to source book on the topic. In 1974 he joined the Forest Service research group at University of Alaska-Fairbanks and helped them begin an ecosystem science program much like the IBP teamwork he experienced at Andrews Forest. That effort spurred establishment of the Bonanza Creek LTER program. In 1990 he retired, returned to Corvallis, and continued to contribute to the Andrews Forest program.*

(Starts mid-idea without introduction or context; possible recorder issues?)

Ted Dyrness: I wish I could remember the name of the temporary technician I had working with me. Maybe Al would remember that first year in '62, when we were laying out the plots. But, I remember telling him: "You know, doggone it! It's a real privilege to be able to work in areas like this!" When we went into some of the thickets, because we had to keep a straight transect, it was arduous, and I remember him getting just ticked off. We wore hard hats just as a safety precaution for falling limbs from the old growth, and so he'd whip off his hat, throw it down, and he'd say: "It's a goddamn privilege to work here!" (Laughter). I don't think he blamed me. It was hot, and we were sweating.

Max Geier: Yeah, you get a real sense of that out there. Just from talking to people, no one has really been able to articulate what attracted them to the Andrews in that sense.

Dyrness: Yeah, in reflecting back, we all had much wider research responsibilities! We weren't hired and told: "Go work on the Andrews!" We were attracted to it. I was responsible, when hired by the station (PNW) in '59, and attached to the Alsea Basin soil vegetation survey work, for a year-and-a-half. Then they told me, "Your responsibility will be to research soil stability problems on the west side of Oregon and Washington." In the summer of '61, I went--usually with Jack Rothacher, who was my boss--on a tour through the west-side national forests [west of Cascade crest to Pacific Ocean] to ask them what their soil stability problems were, and what they felt contributed to them. This was in preparation for writing what we called a "Problem Analysis." My responsibilities were supposed to be region-wide. But at the same time, I was thoroughly up on what was going on in the Andrews, because when I first met Jack Rothacher, my boss, he was living there. He was the first really *bona fide* hydrologist that the PNW Station hired.

Geier: Do you know about when he was hired?

Dyrness: He must have been hired in 1959 or 1960. Well, you know you can get all this from records, probably. He even lived down there!

Geier: And that was about the time you met him.

Dyrness: I met him down there before we started working together, because I went down in the summer of 1955, and actually, most summers, despite the fact I was supposed to be working on the Alsea Soil Vegetation Survey in the Coast Range. I had friends, and I remember one summer, Art Wollum was hired to do soil survey work on the three small watersheds [HJA-EF]. He was a fellow graduate student with me under Chet Youngberg in the Department of Soils on campus here (OSU). I remember going and visiting him. That was way before the Blue River Reservoir was built and there was a famous swimming hole in Blue River. It was after Lookout Creek dumped into Blue River, in the main valley, which is under the water now. There was a big swimming hole called the "Lucky Boy" swimming hole. We went swimming when I visited Art. He was in that "famous" 8 foot by 30 trailer up above the ranger station (Blue River). In fact, he was the first one to live in that. It was brand new then! I said, "You know, Art, at least you have a brand-new place to live." We went swimming, and I jumped off a high log that was there by the swimming hole onto an air mattress and jammed my knee. To this day, I have had one surgery and need another! (*Laughter*) Gosh!.....And to this day I limp because I've put it off. Let's see, that must have been '59 or something like that.

Geier: Had you been up there before when you were in graduate school? You were here in '54 to 60, right?

Dyrness: Right. The first time I went to the Andrews, I remember like it was yesterday, was in connection with a field trip, one of the two-week field trips after the Soils Science Society of America's annual meeting in Davis, California, that summer. I think they now have it in the fall. But then, it was the summer of '55. I had been a grad student here (OSU) a year -- I came in fall '54 -- so I had been a grad student in soils for a year before the Davis meeting. They always encouraged grad students to go to the annual professional meetings to see what they are like. I didn't give a paper or anything, but I attended that meeting, and then, afterwards, somebody had organized this grand, glorious tour through northern California and Oregon. I think it lasted a week, maybe a week-and-a-half, with guys like Bob Tarrant, Chuck Colton, Chet Youngberg and also, people from California. For a young grad student, it was a tremendous opportunity to learn from these people in the field. At that time, there weren't that many in the field of forest soils. Stan Gessel, who recently passed away, was likely there. Chet Youngberg is now feeble and forgetful. (Indicated declining health, desire to visit.) Plus, one or two others.

Geier: Was Keith VanCleve in that group?

Dyrness: No, this was before Keith started his graduate work. We went to places like Clear Lake in northern California, looked at a lot of soils and talked to the people that were doing the real pioneer work in soil vegetation surveys in California [Wieslander?] and Bob Nelson. Most of these guys have passed away by now. Do you have Bob Tarrant on your list of people to talk to?

Geier: Yeah.

Dyrness: So we went to Crater Lake. It was great, and included the “pumi” (pumice) country on the east side, and Pringle Falls [experimental forest]. One of the last stops before we got to Corvallis where the tour ended, was to the H.J. Andrews. That was the first time I had ever seen the Andrews. I remember being really impressed. The system was really new, and I saw one of the first clear-cuts. Remember the main road into the Andrews? You go past the three small watersheds, you wind up the hill, and then there’s a Y (in the road). To the left is the concrete bridge, and further up to Carpenter Point. To the right, you go up to Lookout Ridge. Right by that Y, was one of the early clear cuts.

Geier: Uh-Huh.

Dyrness: One principle stop on that field trip was to visit this clear-cut, where we were met by Roy Silen, who was doing research for his Ph.D. thesis. He was investigating the effects of how naturally-germinated Douglas-fir seedlings survive or don’t survive; what are the factors. They were really into converting old growth forest into second growth stands, so one thing they were most interested in was regeneration of tree species. Back then, it was before they determined that maybe the best thing to do would be to just routinely plant areas; they were investigating natural regeneration. This was back before they had a lot of forest nurseries, and so he was investigating, especially, the effect of high temperatures on these exposed south slopes. He had black surfaces after slash burning. Really prime for getting high temperatures. What he did was put out these temp pills, which were little pills you could buy, which melt at a range of different temperatures. So, if you go back and say, “Well, the 120 pill is melted,” you know it was at least 120 (degrees), but maybe the 130 pill isn’t melted. That’s what he was doing.

Later on, Roy’s interests shifted quite a bit. He was the forest geneticist here at the Forest Research Lab. But his doctorate research was more horticulture-oriented. A lot of the early work was done at the same time by a fellow named Jay Gashwiler, who was investigating natural regeneration. His approach was to follow Douglas-fir seeds and see what their fate was. A large proportion of seeds scattered from the surrounding timber to a clear-cut site are consumed by different animals, especially small mammals and birds. His approach was, “What are the most important factors of limiting sufficient seed for natural regeneration?” He had a bunch of plots where he would have some

fenced-in areas which would exclude small mammals, but wouldn't exclude birds, and some that excluded everything except the seeds. It was really elaborate! He was working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. That work was reported on finally in Ecology. Subsequently, Jerry Franklin moved in with his clear-cut strips of different widths in lower elevations on the Andrews. [Experimenting with "alternative" patterns of cutting]

Geier: He would have been there in '55, wouldn't he?

Dyrness: No. He did this work in about '59 or '60; it was for his masters, I believe. But, prior to that, Jerry got started on the Andrews, because he worked for what was then called the Corvallis Research Center, the offices of which were in the basement of the old Peavy Hall. He started working for them when he was an undergrad at Oregon State.

Geier: The center was a part of OSU? Or?

Dyrness: No, it was part of the PNW Station.

Geier: Okay.

Dyrness: Back then, I worked out of the Bend Research Center, the summer of '58; it was a summer job back then. All these research centers; there was a Roseburg, Corvallis and Bend one, and each of them had a committee of interested people that would advise the centers on their research. Jerry started when he was young.

Geier: He didn't even have his masters by then, did he?

Dyrness: But of course, you're going to talk to him, and he's going to remember this a lot better than I do. He was working for the Corvallis Research Center and was sent out to the H.J. Andrews to make periodic stream measurements. They had these three gauged watersheds with recorders, and nobody locally at Blue River really worried much about it, so they kind of did that [monitoring] from Corvallis. There are old pictures of Jerry measuring stream velocity, but that didn't end up being Jerry's main interest. He was doing this as a job, and he never did go far into stream hydrology as an academic pursuit.

Geier: He was up there doing that already in the late '50s?

Dyrness: Yeah, we started working together, really hand-in-glove, on the vegetation on the Andrews, in '63, and that was after he had done these strip clear-cuts. Up until '62, my interaction with the Andrews was on a periodic basis. It wasn't until the summer of '62 that I spent most of a field season at the Andrews. The reason for it; we knew that starting in the winter of '62/'63, the treatments were to be applied on the small watersheds [WS 1-3 at HJA]. My concern was that nobody knew much about upstream

[areas] from the gauging stations on these watersheds. They were kind of being viewed as “black boxes,” although Art Wollum did some soils work. Art was never a soil mapper before that, and his efforts, although useful, didn’t really produce a definitive soil map for the watershed. But outside of his work, there was nothing done upstream, really.

I thought we needed to really get set for the revegetation following the logging of those watersheds, so I had gotten hot on establishing these transects and putting plots along the transects on the areas to be logged in Watershed 3, which has three clear-cut patches. On Watershed 3, the idea was to first put in roads -- two roads -- and then follow the effects on water quality. Then, after that, clear-cut harvest, about 25% of Watershed 3. Then, Watershed 1 would be totally clear-cut, and Watershed 2 would be left as the control [not cut]. The treatment was slated to start, but what happened was that the clearing method in Watershed 1 was this Wyssen Skyline crane, which had not been used very much in the U.S. up until then. It was a Swiss system, and they had used it with small logs. Generally speaking, you don’t have much timber the size of old-growth Douglas-fir in Switzerland! So, the system was always breaking down. They’d break cables. It’s a system that has the donkey, the power source, at the top, and then stretched a raised cable to the landing at the bottom of Watershed 1. What would happen is the brakes would fail and they, I think, broke more than one. Hell, more than one a day, runaway trains of logs, going into the landing, and everybody is running for their life. (Laughing). So the logging on Watershed 1 took ‘63, ‘64, ‘65. It was really frustrating for us, because we had expected to be able to go back the next year after the logging was done, but it was so dangerous, we couldn’t even go close to the watershed. They started on the north slope, and the routes of these skylines slowly worked their way south. Finally, the logging was done and the slash burned -- I believe by the Fall of ‘66 or ‘67. That is all in the records.

Geier: Who was the administrator -- the official -- who would have made the decision to do the logging in the three watersheds, then to actually do the logging?

Dyrness: I was sitting here this morning trying to think, because there wasn’t a full-time hydrologist in the Station and until they hired Jack Rothacher. These watersheds were gauged way back in the early ‘50s, and they must of gotten people to visit from, maybe Coweeta, other Forest Service watershed study areas, to help set them up. There must have been somebody in the Station, but my memory is not good enough to say who.

Geier: I’m trying to figure. I was talking to Roy Silen yesterday, and I think he was talking about the Oregon Fish and Wildlife about who was working up there in ‘54. I wonder if they were -- ?

Dyrness: No. Fisheries work would have been different from this. This was a classic, paired-watershed approach. With a paired-watershed approach, you have a control watershed and a treated watershed, side-by-side, then measure stream flow for a period of several years to calibrate the control and the to-be-treated watershed. Then

you treat the watershed and assess the treatment's effects. This was the approach used at Coweeta [Georgia] and subsequent to that, at Hubbard Brook [New Hampshire]. I think the earliest was at Wagon Wheel Canyon and Frasier Experimental Forest in Colorado.

Geier: So, do you know who was involved in doing that at Coweeta?

Dyrness: A fellow by the name of Wayne Swank worked in Coweeta. He has been there forever. I bet you, Jerry will be more knowledgeable than me on the origins; who installed the flumes and the measurement capability of each watershed. Maybe Wayne would be the guy to talk to; the name Hoover sticks in the back of my mind, but I can't remember his first name. When Jack [Rothacher] came aboard in '59 or 60, whenever he came aboard at the Station, he was the one that said, "O.K. We have enough calibration as of '62, we can treat the watersheds, and we'll be able to tell what the treatment effects are." It was probably Jack who said what the treatments will be.

Geier: That's Jack Rothacher?

Dyrness: Yeah, Yeah.

Geier: Actually, that's one of the things I'm trying to get at here. Maybe we could back up here and have you talk about how you found yourself doing summer work out here?

Dyrness: Yeah, that goes back to the summer of '51.

Geier: You mentioned that you were in a chicken coop up in the shadow of Mt. Rainer?

Dyrness: Yeah. Packwood, Washington. Summer of '51.

Geier: How did you wind up there?

Dyrness: My best buddy through junior high and high school was this guy by the name of Ed Snider. Ed had an uncle that was an early settler in Packwood [Wash.]. His name was also Snider. There's a Snider Mountain named for them in Packwood. He had a little ranch right outside of Packwood, and he'd left his land to several of the Sniders, one of whom was Ed's dad. Well, Ed's dad kind of bought out the others. So, we'd finished our freshmen year of college and thought it would be a neat lark to go out to this ranch and live on the ranch for the summer. What we did was, we knew the guy in charge of transportation for U.S. Gypsum Company, and they routinely bought cars in Chicago and shipped them to salesmen in other areas in the U.S., but mainly to the West. They would let you deliver these new cars, and they would even give you some gas money.

So, we got a new Chevy and started out, and of course, we wanted to hit all the national parks on our way. We went to Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain National Park, and so on. When we were near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, we were on this gravel road because of construction or something, and a guy came out of this bend in the road, and whacked into us! We were over as far as we could go without going over a thousand foot drop below us. It's very mountainous, and he side-swiped us! This kind of ruined the aesthetics of the car. (Chuckles) It drove all right, and I think we called the police, but to make a long story short, we cut our trip a little short, because we were thinking of going to Glacier (National Park) on the way through, and we didn't go. We stopped at Coeur d'Alene [Idaho] because his dad had left a car there for repair, an old black Buick from the 40's. Ed picked up the Buick and I drove the other car, and we went to Packwood.

Lo-and-behold, the neighbor had rented out the house to some old rodeo "buck-a-roo". I remember he had a lot of saddles and stuff. We couldn't get into the house, so that was why we ended up in this chicken coop! Well, this coop had gaps this wide between the boards, but we made it livable. We had two cots, we had a camp stove and a little stove to cook on. Then we took the car down to Seattle. [Laughing] I remember walking into this place, "Hey Sam, your new car is here!" Well, we had a little problem, and the whole side was caved in. I think we had to even go in the other door to get into the driver's seat. Yeah, one of the most embarrassing things (Laughs). But then, we had that old Buick and that quit, because the spark plug fell out, and it over heated. Really, it was a terrific place for two young guys. We never had one job; we changed jobs all summer. First, it was haying for this Seattle dentist who had kind of a ranch out there, a summer place. And neither of us had worked on a farm. We were driving this tractor and raking the hay and stuff. And we tried to make square corners. We didn't know what we were doing, but it was great, though. He got a baler to come in and bale it. That was a little bit of income to keep the "wolf from the door," so we could eat. Then we went to the lumber mill, a community kind of a lumber mill that I think, is still going. I remember, I got a job there, and they said, "What's your social security number?" and I said, "I don't have any social security number." So, I had to get it in Olympia, Washington. I never had one, now kids get their social security cards the day they are born. The government has to have that number, but I didn't get a number until then.

So, what we did was pinch-hit for guys that had to be off work. We worked on the green chain, I worked on a trim saw and we were milling cedar, western red cedar. The trim saw happened to be right next to the head rig. I didn't think to put ear plugs in or anything like that, and I suffer from "tinnitus," this ringing. Well, that's probably not the sole cause of it, but it is probably one cause. I didn't know what I was doing on this trim saw. It was just a bare revolving blade that you pulled, and I was always afraid that I was going to cut off my hand or something. This was before OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration], and they wanted to cut out all the knots and make clear cedar lumber. It was my job to cut it to predetermined lengths, and we had these "dogs" that would come (laughing) down. I didn't know what I was doing, so finally, it went past a grader down the flow. I was finally getting boards back, with them saying,

“What the hell are you doing up there?” Acknowledging my incompetence, you know. We worked a little in that sawmill, and then, there was a forest fire. We were in Packwood, which is about 10-12 miles from Randall, and we heard that they were hiring people to work on this forest fire at Randall. So, we walked, we tried to hitch a ride, but I don’t think we were very successful. I remember walking all night to get to Randall, and they signed us on. I had those “engineer boots” on, those black boots.

Geier: Yeah.

Dyrness: Well, I had a pair of those on. No change of socks. So off we go. I was shipped out to this fire, and we were there for, oh, 10 days, at least. My feet were a mess! I got what was called, “scalding.” It feels like you are walking on hot coals, because you sweat, your feet sweat, and overheat. There’s nothing to soak them. Oh man, blisters and stuff! I got a break, and remember taking off my boots and hanging up my socks to dry them out, and going to the fire boss. I said, “Gee, you know, I’m not a quitter, but I can barely walk.” I can remember him putting an arm around my shoulder and saying, “Son, we all want to go home but (laughter) until this fire is out. We can’t!!!” Finally, they called in the National Guard, and I remember these guys from West Virginia and recent arrivals from western Washington, and all the talk of “the last piece of tail.” (Laughing). Well, I’m just this naive little guy, and well, it was a really interesting experience.

Later, once my feet had recovered and we got back to camp, we had a friend that was a fire lookout right next to the Goat Rocks Wilderness Area, some of the nicest areas in the Washington Cascades. So, we hiked up to see him, and lived with him in his lookout for a period of days, played cards and swapped tall tales. This was just after the White Pass had been constructed [Hwy. 12]. We looked out his window and that’s the only time that I saw this, not one scar on that landscape. It was just terrific, and that’s when I thought to myself, when I get done with college, I’m going to head for the Northwest. Although I went to a liberal arts college and majored in botany, and studied as much as I could about forests, I knew I would have to go to graduate school. I was thinking that a program like Yale, at that time, had a graduate program in forestry just designed for people like me. But, I didn’t want to go east. I wanted to go someplace in the Pacific Northwest. So, my major professor at Wheaton College in Illinois had been good buddies with Chet Youngberg, because Chet was a graduate of Wheaton and they had been really good buddies. He said, “Chet has just recently gone to Oregon State, and he’s looking for graduate students.” Chet put in some time with Weyerhaeuser before he went to Oregon State [University]. He did his graduate work at the University of Wisconsin under S.A. Wilde, who was called, “The Mad Russian.” If you wanted to pick out just one guy in the U.S. who is the “father” of forest soils, it would be S.A. Wilde. A lot of people that went to other places in forest soils, came from his program at the University of Wisconsin.

Chet would always tell these stories, by the thousands, and his graduate students felt, "Well, I'm kind of a second generation Wilde person." (Laughs) You know how that goes in graduate studies. He said this guy at Wheaton, named Doc Leady, said, "I'm going to send you to Oregon State." And I'm going, "Great!" I'd had this summer at Washington, but the furthest we got into Oregon that summer was Portland. This guy we had met in Packwood came down to Vancouver, Washington. There was a relative that lived there, and then, we went over to Jantzen Beach [amusement park]. That was back when Jantzen Beach had the ferris wheel and all that stuff. That's the furthest we ended up getting. And I remember people we'd meet at Mt. Rainer National Park, when we explored the park, saying, "Oh! You think this is great? Oregon is better!" (Laughter)

Geier: So, the connection with Chet Youngberg at O.S.U., was that your professor at Wheaton College, and he was his student?

Dyrness: In fact, Chet was one of his students. Chet had gone through the war, largely as a flight instructor in San Diego. When Chet went to Wheaton, he was an older student, so he kind of budded with Doc, who was at the time a young professor. They got to be really, really close.

Geier: Just one other thing. When you were out here in 1951, was that when you were starting out as an ancient history major, and then, you switched to botany?

Dyrness: (Laughter.)

Geier: Had you already done that switch, or were you thinking about it?

Dyrness: No. I was just in the midst of making that decision in the summer of '51. And then, it all sort of fits together in retrospect. Although what I did when I started at Wheaton was, I thought, "Gee, I'm no scientist." And of course, I'd take the....What do you call these tests you can take in the...?

Geier: "Aptitude tests"?

Dyrness: Yeah, something like that. Myers-Briggs. Have you taken that? I would come out "intuitive." My thought processes are not "typical" for a scientist. When I started Wheaton, I said, one of the requirements for a liberal arts degree is laboratory science. I sat down and said, "What's the most "Mickey-Mouse" laboratory science that I can take, and get it out of the way as a freshman?" You know, thinking very logically. (Laughter) And I thought, "Ah, Botany!" Well, of course, when I got there, this guy Leady was a charismatic teacher, and it's not just botany, but more about ecology. Very often what happens is it's not the subject so much as, it's the guy that teaches it.

Geier: Sure.

Dyrness: And how he turns you on or off. That summer of '51 reinforced that I ought to major in botany, and then maybe go to graduate school. I was thinking more in terms of general forestry. Chet was in forest soils, but in '54 when I came out here, this was the "flowering" of the age of specialization. Everyone is specializing, so I should specialize, a particular field of forestry, and forest soils looked good to me. Although in my graduate work at Oregon State, I always had as my second major, ecology. So, I was always aiming towards plant/soil relationships, rather than just soils with pedagogical interests.

Geier: I was going to ask you about that. Have you ever thought about how or why you evolved as you did in your interests, ecology as a minor?

Dyrness: Well, in high school, when I lived with my folks, my dad was a college administrator, a high pressure job, Vice President, Director of Admissions, Registrar.

Geier: What school was that?

Dyrness: Wheaton. And he said I've got to get away! I've got to get away where I'm out of the reach of the phone.

(Interruption: Enter new person [Steve Acker]. Ted Dyrness introduces Max Geier to Steve Acker, explains that Acker is in charge of long-term forest plots in Oregon, Washington and in Southern California, and Acker joins interview.)

Geier: What's the area you cover? All of Oregon and Washington?

Steve Acker: Well, the network of plots is mostly in western Oregon and Washington, and there are some in Sequoia National Park, in California, and a few in the Rockies. I could give you a manuscript, if you're interested.

Geier: Sure.

Dyrness: (Brings Acker up-to-date on the interview Geier is doing and the question about the origins of Dyrness interest and entry into ecology.)

Geier: Where were we, now?

Dyrness: It is kind of interesting to think about. My dad said I've got to have a place to get away. We visited northern Wisconsin. Eventually, he got a couple of lots near a lake in Northern Wisconsin. When I was a junior in high school, my grandfather and I went up there and built a cabin. Really very primitive. It was a two-room cabin with an outhouse, stuff like that. I really got involved with the forest. I remember I made a trail out in back, and a place for a log where I could sit. We were interested in identifying species; it was formerly all white pine. But back in the late 1800's, early 1900's, it got all cut off. Back then, they thought they could maybe make it agricultural. They'd hoped it

would grow back with birch and aspen, that sort of thing. I think that's really the genesis, although at the same time, I was kind of an unusual kid, for a guy especially, as I was interested in gardening too. I designed flower borders and that was kind of a part of it. I think lately, this was a kind of a direct heritage from my mom, who was really interested in her surroundings and flowers, but she wasn't the kind that joined the Audubon Society. Just being aware of the birds and everything. My dad was into things more like fishing and going out on the lake and sitting. Not any fancy fishing. He would even hold the line by hand - part of this Norwegian heritage, you know, a "wheat fishermen." Not a real sportsman! (Laughing) He liked to get away and have a chance to unwind.

Geier: Just growing up in Wheaton, Illinois is what kind of led you in that direction?

Dyrness: Early on, I said, "Gee, I don't like it here. I need mountains. I need wide open spaces." I decided it [Midwest] had attractions as far as lakes go, but it's glacial, plain terrain, with ice-locked lakes. I remember later in college, when we would go for Spring Break trips, my buddies and I would not go to the beaches. We'd go to the Smokey Mountains [Great Smokey] National Park, camp, and wake up with snow all around us.

Geier: Do you remember when you started at O.S.U., who else was working with Chet Youngberg, in terms of graduate students?

Dyrness: Well, I was his second graduate student, so there wasn't a great many of them. His first graduate student was a guy by the name of Jerry Lowery. The last I heard about Jerry, he had ended up in the pulp and paper industry in southern Canada. But, Jerry was doing a masters and his research had to do with soils of the Tillamook Burn. I remember once or twice I went with him to his sites, and helped him dig soil pits and that sort of thing. That was back when the Tillamook Burn [research] was still just getting going. They still were felling the snags and kind of watching over the reforestation progress.

Geier: Did you do any studies up there yourself? When you were a graduate student?

Dyrness: No I didn't. When I first started to work with this program, I didn't even have an assistantship. But I remember Chet telling me, he said, "Well, come along anyway, and we'll get you an assistantship as soon as we can, but meanwhile, there is plenty of work that you can do in the lab." I remember that I started to work for 75 cents an hour in the lab, doing soil analysis, just helping out in there.

Geier: Hmm.

Dyrness: But, it wasn't very long after that I got an assistantship. Because, back then, most of the guys had assistantships, and you'd get free tuition, and things like that. I remember my first room was \$25 a month! I ate in a boarding house, Mrs. Workman's

boarding house on 7th Street. It was a very high-tone boarding house. Linen napkins and everything. Retired professors ate there. And I think that was about \$35 a month. Three meals a day and really good food, too! (Laughter.)

Geier: Yeah, a good deal. When you started working for the Forest Service, was that the year before you graduated? In 1959, what led you into that position?

Dyrness: Well, the year I graduated, or when I was getting ready to graduate, I often think that.....I filled out the paperwork for a federal job, maybe a GS-7, or something like that. I had quite a few inquiries. One was from Reclamation Service, which, is irrigation dams and investigating irrigation soils. I wasn't much interested in that. But also, I really had a firm offer to go to Grand Rapids, Minnesota, and work on wetlands soils. I almost took that. I was kind of interested in that. That would be with the Lakes State Forestry Experiment Station [U.S. Forest Service]. Prior to making my decision, I went to the coast and back, and I remember thinking: "Ah, I just can't leave this area." In the back of my mind was the idea, that staying here makes you a little more provincial. But, you can get a wider experience. I remember saying: "No, I like the Coast Range, I like the Cascades, I like Central Oregon, and I like Washington. I can't leave."

The only other offer was from the PNW Experiment Station. The first assignment was to the Alsea Soil Vegetation Survey. And so, I started that in the summer of '59. I wasn't through with my thesis, but it was just a matter of polishing it. At the outset, I had done my Ph.D. work in Central Oregon, and I thought: "The best position I could get would be somewhere in Bend." I had worked the summer of '58 out of Bend, so I knew the guys over there. There was a meeting in the fall of '59, or somewhere in there, a meeting in Klamath Falls. That's just when they were just setting up the Winema National Forest and settled with a lot of the Klamath Indians. I was invited to this meeting for input on soil vegetation. I took the bus, the Greyhound Bus, to Klamath Falls, stayed overnight and attended the meeting. When I got back, I was in trouble. I was a "west-sider. I shouldn't have gone to that meeting. You know, I wasn't in "Big" trouble, over it.

Geier: Oh, you mean PNW Station was upset.

Dyrness: Yeah. That was the first inkling that I would get a west-side sort of assignment, when the survey was done.

Geier: Okay.

Dyrness: And that's sort of the way it worked out, which in retrospect, was good.

Geier: So, you had gone down to that Klamath Falls meeting because of the graduate work you were doing, right?

Dyrness: Yeah, and I was called in as kind of a consultant, because I think they were thinking of doing some station [PNW] survey work or something.

Geier: So somebody at Alsea was concerned that they were trying to recruit you away?

Dyrness: I don't know. It's just one of those jealousies that crop up among the different groups within the station. I don't know.

Geier: So, that's when you had a sensed that there might be a home for you in Oregon?

Dyrness: Yeah. I can't remember exactly when, but before I finished up on the "soil vegetation survey," it was made plain to me that I'd be working out of Corvallis with Jack. They said, "Well, we really are in trouble as far as....."
(Tape side ends in mid-sentence here – pick up subject in next paragraph on other side.)

End of Side A, Tape 1 (of 2)

Begin Side B, Tape 1 (of 2)

Dyrness: Looking back, this wasn't my first love, forest soils. Like I say, it's always been more ecology and plant relationships. And as a credit to Jack, he would allow me to put in those permanent plots on Watersheds 1 and 3. Then Jerry and I started this plant community classification work on the Andrews, starting in '63, and that extended for 3 or 4 years. Just grabbed extra days in the field season, where we'd get together out on the Andrews and do this reconnaissance classification work. That was pretty much it.

Geier: Between that summer trip you took in 1955, and this, did you get involved much with the Andrews on any sites at all? Were you there with other people who were working there at that time, at all?

Dyrness: Outside of a few social things, no. I visited Art Wollum at the Andrews, and I think I had my little brother along, as he was with me the summer of '60. I took him around on weekends to show him the state. He was telling me yesterday on the phone from California, after I said, we're doing a history of the Andrews Forest, and he said, "That's interesting. It is a special place!" I said, "You remember that?" Isn't that funny?

Geier: So, he still remembered that.

Dyrness: Yeah! In '60. That must have been summer of '60. And that was when the trailer was new, Art was allowed to live in the trailer that whole summer. And the summer of '61, that's when Jack and I spent most of the summer traveling around the region. That's when Jack, between '60 and '61, he moved to Corvallis. Actually, Jack lived out of Philomath on Woods Creek. When we went down that time, the summer of '60, Bill and I not only visited Art, we stayed with Jack, and I remember we did a little fishing in Lookout Creek, which was still open to fishing. Great trout fishing. Then, I

think we were at Jack's house for a barbecue, as Jack and Jean have always been really gracious hosts. But I don't think then I really knew I would be working for Jack that next year, because I was still working on the Alsea project, the summer of '59, and extending through winter of '60 to '61. Then, we worked on the "problem analysis." [Stated before]

Geier: Were there major changes down there between 1955 -- the first summer you were there -- and 1962-'63, when you were?

Dyrness: It wasn't major. Back then, there weren't a lot of people working there. I remember, it is one of the clearest memories that I've got. We were looking around down there and saying, "Gee whiz. We've got all kinds of research problems here, staring us in the face, but we don't have enough bodies! We don't have enough guys. How can we stimulate people to come down here and work?" What really took care of that was the advent of the International Biological Program, which got started in '68? Up until then, Jerry [Franklin] and I had not much to do with NSF [National Science Foundation]. Prior to that, we were just starting to get proposals to review from NSF. We were just getting on their radar screen, that there are these guys interested in forest ecology in Oregon, and might be good reviewers. Then we heard about this "gang-busters" program NSF was going to start, the International Biological Program. I remember Jerry said, "You know, we gotta get on-board! If we don't, we'll just miss the boat! We gotta get on-board! Sure, we don't know much about this "Systems Ecology" stuff, but we can learn."

Geier: (Inaudible recording)

Dyrness: Yeah. We started working together. I remember the time it started. I just happened to be down with, with, who's the Dean of Forestry?

Geier: George Brown?

Dyrness: George Brown. George and I were down there digging pits and describing soils on Watersheds 2 and 3. Couldn't get in on Watershed 1, because of the logging under the way. It was '63, summer of '63. And Jerry [Franklin] just happened to be down there. He had cone-counts or something he had to do. He said, "Let's have dinner together tonight." So, we went to one of the cafes down there and had dinner. We started talking, "Gee, you know, a lot of things are staring us in the face. And one of the things is, we really don't know much about the plant groupings down there. We need to get a study classifying the forest community." The previous summer the soil survey was done by Freeman Stevens, Leroy Myers, and Dan Ariktoni. That was the summer of '62. They were living in a trailer close to ours up above the ranger station for a couple/three weeks that summer. I was so busy, as ordinarily I would have gone out with them, but I was so busy putting up the plots, I just couldn't do it. I used to talk to them in the evening. "What are you finding, how's it going, what series are you coming up with?"

and so on. Jerry and I, in the summer of '63 said, "We've gotten to know at least something about soils. But we've got to get this vegetation classified." We decided we'd do this reconnaissance study in, kind of our spare time, and we did that for a year or two. Then finally, Jack came to us and said, "You guys got to have a study plan. You can't bootleg it anymore. It's got to be an official study listed." And they [USFS] were bears for detail back then. Before you could set up a study, you had to have these approved problem analyses that said, this is a problem worth researching. And then every study had to have a study plan in the file. I think it has gotten a lot looser since then, but the policy was you had to draw up a study plan back then before you could begin your study.

Geier: Yeah.

Dyrness: So, once again, it was a credit to Jack to recognize that what we were doing was worthwhile, and I should have been working on soil erosion. And Jerry should have been working on just higher elevation, upper-slope silviculture. That was his assignment. But, during that first lot, it was kind of a pioneer effort in vegetation classification. How to do it? What kind of units to come up with? Figuring out seral relationships, successional relationships among the groupings. Subsequent to that, the Forest Service had a lot of area ecologists that had done this same thing for the national forests. But I think that ours was an early effort, and both of us had done that. I had done that for my Ph.D. research in Central Oregon, coming up with forest communities [classification/vegetation]. And Jerry did his Ph.D. in Forest Ecology.

Geier: You are kind of getting at one of my questions there, which was: Who decides what kinds of things are studied? From what you're saying, it sounds like, people out in the field, just looked at the area, realized what was happening, and made a decision. "Well, this is what we should do....." And then Jack Rothacher was willing to back you up on that. That's kind of interesting.

Dyrness: Yes! Here we had the "problem analysis" of soil studies related to forest management [traditional economic-centered silviculture]. Looking back on it, it would have been a mistake to follow that. That's what I mean about being grass-roots oriented. At the same time, I was doing studies about the impact of different logging methods on soil conditions, which was more in line with my research assignment. I just investigated high-lead, tractor, sky-line, and balloon logging. That salved my conscience a little, that I was doing something along the lines of my research assignment. Then, I begin to get interested in road-side soil stability and treatments to forestall erosion on newly constructed roadsides. This was also more in line with my research assignment, so it wasn't a case that we were always off somewhere in left field.

Geier: Sure.

Dyrness: But here again, I was drawn back to the Andrews.

Geier: Okay.

Dyrness: All of my plots were on the Andrews, as far as the roadside erosion studies go. I did have some vegetation plots. One plot was in the Coast Range, one was at Cougar Reservoir. We were working together with the SCS [Soil Conservation Service] Plant and Trails Center to identify species, especially legumes, which would be suitable at rather high elevations and low soil-fertility levels – which would be suitable to put in a grass-legume mix for roadside seeding. And then we had two areas on the Andrews where we tried out different treatments, ranging from no treatment, the control, to just straw mulch, to seeding mixtures, plus straw mulch, and I think we had seeding mixtures without mulch. And we immediately realized we needed mulch. We were monitoring soil erosion with a method where we had 100 posts set in concrete both at the top and the bottom of back slopes, which supposedly, didn't move. And then we pulled on a cable, stretched to a pre-determined tension so the tension would be the same. Because otherwise it could be some increment more [due to the line sagging]. Then we'd measure down [from the reference line to the soil surface] at periodic intervals and see what the change was. It was a slope profile measurement. But, it never really caught on! Nobody ever did it except us. (Laughing) You can imagine you might have difficulties. But see, the old "buggaboos" in measuring surface erosion was how do you do it without changing what you're measuring? People have tried radioactive isotopes to measure it by getting radioactive particles to move, and a guy in Wenatchee did that here a while ago, with some success, and we were thinking about that idea. But, it's a problem. Of course, the flood of '64, really indicated to us what our major problem was, rather than rainfall causing surface erosion, the main problem was mass soil movement—slides and slumps.

Geier: What actually attracted you to the Andrews? Was it the infra-structure, or the accessibility of the place, or was it something else?

Dyrness: Well, partly, it was the infrastructure. From the standpoint that we didn't have any official, fancy labs or anything like that. But, at least we had somebody that could help us down there. Because, starting with Jack, we always had somebody stationed down there. After Jack, it was Dick Fredriksen. After Dick Fredriksen, it was Al Levno. After Al Levno, it was Ross Mersereau. In these kinds of studies, you need somebody to help you. The reason that people needed to be there, of course, was to maintain the streamflow measurements and to be there for storm flow samples. Because, early on we woke up to the fact that we only needed to really sample the streams during flood events. Otherwise it was normal flow, and we could characterize that kind of flow. But for flood events we would want to have somebody out there. Since Jack lived there and knew the area intimately, he was in favor of working there, and also, this was a field laboratory for the effects of the floods, like the '64 flood. And after treating the watersheds, we had questions come up. For example, the first summer after the slash

burning in Watershed 1, we were struck by how much dry ravel was occurring on these steep slopes.

Geier: Hmm.

Dyrness: Because, before vegetation was established, you could go out on 80% slopes and just sit there and watch miniature landslides caused by the wind! One particle would start moving, and then another, and pretty soon you've got this cascade effect. So, we would go out there and find logs on the contour, just filled up with soil behind them. We thought, "Boy, this is appreciable! Maybe we should measure how much this is." So, Jack and I and Al and Ross, got our heads together and came up with an idea of plywood boxes held up by steel fence posts with U-bolts, and then, a control area above the box down to the lip of the box, with plastic to facilitate movement [soils] right into the box, instead of getting hung up on something. It worked pretty well. We found out that only a little vegetation would break the chain. You wouldn't have to have more than 5% to 10% cover, and it would break the chain absolutely so that it would not occur. And, 80% slopes were a lot worse than 60%! And, 60% was about the minimal slope you got much of this occurring. We had to study that. That's how things happened. You just would go out and observe, and say, "We ought to look into this and find out what's happening."

Geier: Did the structure of the road system, at all have an impact on your accessibility to the sites and your analysis?

Dyrness: Yes, as far as looking at roadside erosion and so on. One thing that really appeared after the '64 flood was how many events were really connected with roads. Much more so than logging *per se*. Roads seemed to be the main "bugaboo" in causing the mass-soil movements and stream events where the whole channel would let go. That was a real eye-opener. That was the Christmas week flood of 1964. That was the first time that we lost the Watershed 3 gauging station. This time was like *déjà vu*, when we lost it again [in February 1996].

Geier: And those are the only two times that happened?

Dyrness: Yeah. Those were the only two times it happened. It's been interesting to compare the two events. Both were rain-on-snow at low-elevation type things. And, it could have been easily much worse. We were looking at the records of this past one, and if the rainfall would have continued only one more day, what would have happened? It would have been catastrophic. We got off easy. It was bad enough, but we got off easy.

Geier: Are you speaking about the watershed, or?

Dyrness: Oh, for the whole area.

Geier: Yeah.

Dyrness: Because by then, the soils are saturated, the streams are full already, and a cascade effect! Man, oh man! It just would have wiped out highways and everything.

Geier: It was impressive up there.

Dyrness: Yeah.

Geier: How would you describe your level of interaction with forest managers at Blue River [Ranger District] at that time?

Dyrness: At that time? It was interesting! Our interactions with them were mainly for basic accommodations, housing, and to try to keep them at bay as far as logging in the Andrews. I wasn't so much involved in this, because I was not the project leader. Jack was fighting those battles. He would have to go to Blue River and be present for their 10-year planning sessions. I think 5-year, 10-year plans; any good organization would have these plans. He would have to sit down there, and they would say, "Jack, don't you realize, we've got to get "X"-million board feet off this district every year, and we can't find that many logs, if the Andrews doesn't do their fair share." [Tapping on papers]

In this write-up [document provided interviewees by Geier], you are entirely correct in saying we had the attitude, right from year "one, that I was involved down there. You know, '63 and '62, that if it wasn't for a research purpose, a purely research purpose, we weren't going to allow any logging. Jack would have to fight these battles and come back really worn out, saying, "Jiminy. I don't know if we can hold 'em off." Undoubtedly, Jerry is going to be more up on this, but that was the interaction. It was interaction for space. To begin with, do you know where our lab was? It was in a trailer! We got a lab trailer kind of custom built, because we had a certain amount of things that we had to do with the water samples, like preliminary analysis we needed lab space for. Subsequent to that, I don't know what year, but early on, they added on to the ranger station down there, built more in back--a daylight basement-type thing, and the ranger station is on that slope. When they designed that addition, we got our "oar in" and said, "We'd like a little lab down there, as well as office space." And that is what eventually occurred.

Geier: That's at the Blue River Ranger Station?

Dyrness: Yeah. The district ranger station.

Geier: When was that?

Dyrness: I can't remember. Around '64 or something like that. It was fairly early on because we didn't have to use that lab. I don't know what happened to that lab trailer, eventually. Al would probably know, or some of the other guys. You were wise to have the interaction, because we didn't have any interaction! Those guys would show mild courtesy and interest in what we were doing. But I remember, this was in '68 or '69, something like that, maybe '70. One of our roadside plots was on that road going up to the Watershed 1 landing. Now it's all reforested. But we had roadside plots up there below the road to Watershed 1 landing. We were working out there one time and the district ranger showed up. Boy, the district ranger! He was just up there driving around doing an inspection. He was by himself. I can't even remember now who it was. But, he wasn't that interested. I remember feeling very disappointed! You know, this is a good "show-me" thing, these different treatments. We had the Blue River mix that they were using, and we had found some that were better than that. But he wasn't much interested.

Geier: He wasn't "involved" in it then?

Dyrness: Yeah, they thought, "These guys are in their ivory tower. We got [to get the cut out]." They were just out there to "get the cut out." They had their hands full, just to do that. We did get cooperation, such as burning the slash on Watershed 1. When I go to the LTER meetings -- like last Friday -- and I look around, there are at least three people from the district. There's the district ranger -- I forget her name [Lynn Burditt] -- and John Cissel, and the other guy--[the] silviculturist -- and there they are at our meeting. Well, that would have been so far out in left field that it was just mind-boggling, about the progress made. It had to be a special kind of a guy, and [Steve] Eubanks was the first one. I was up in Alaska during this time, but that was one shock to my system when I came down from Alaska, and started to sit in on these meetings. [LTER meetings]

Geier: When did you come back from up there? That was what year?

Dyrness: In Fall of '90.

Geier: Fall of 1990.

Dyrness: Yeah. But, early on, I didn't get really involved, not until later, in '91, 92, because I had heart surgery, stuff like that first. But, after that [I did more]. So, that was a shock. Another shock was to go to the administrative site [HJA EF], which was when I left for Alaska [in 1970s], only a shed for a snowmobile, that, and the climate station. That was all that was there. None of this! [Modern campus of today -- mostly built]

Geier: Yeah. That's quite a phenomenal place up there right now.

Dyrness: Yeah, I could imagine people stumbling on this place, the general public, saying, “What is going on?” You’d have to stumble on it. If you don’t know where it is located, you’d probably never find it.

Geier: I heard so much talking about the trailers. When I went up there, I was actually kind of shocked, how extensively developed it was, with all the research going on.

Dyrness: Yeah.

Geier: But you left to go to Alaska about the time that change took place [IBP program and start of facilities planning], but as long as you were there, up until, was it '74?

Dyrness: I left spring of '74.

Geier: Up until that time, the involvement with the district and national forest [Blue River RD and Willamette NF] was minimal?

Dyrness: We had, oh, what’s his name?

Geier: [Willamette National Forest Supervisor Mike] Kerrick?

Dyrness: Yeah! Kerrick. He was one of the good ones. We had good ones that would be more helpful. Even when the district ranger lived right next to our person. Their houses are right next door to each other. So, it wasn’t that it was un-neighborly. Mostly it was that we were ignored.

Geier: Did you put any plots in on National Forest land that was logged, in other words, off-the-Andrews sites? In that period, did you work at all with the district to do that? Did anybody ask you to do that?

Dyrness: No. I must have worked with the district when I put in this vegetation plot I was telling you about, when we were trying out different species with the SCS cooperation. Then, we’d work with them a little on the shoreline of Blue River Reservoir when that was first built and filled. The problem being, on a reservoir like that where the water is drawn up and down, there’s a lot of siltation and bank-cutting that goes on. It would be really nice to have vegetation you could plant that could withstand periodic inundation and yet remain viable. That was the “Holy Grail” that we were looking for with the SCS cooperation. To this day I don’t think we’ve found it. I don’t know if anyone is even (laughs) working on that idea anymore, but we worried about it. My involvement would be to charge down from Corvallis and leave the contact with the district, more to the people that were living down there, like Al or Ross or Dick. I’d never get much involved with it. Although, once we did start the IBP, I think that that’s when the breakthrough was made. We increased the level of involvement many-fold!

We would have meetings down there in their conference room, and invite their participation.

Geier: Well that sounds like a productive decade.

Dyrness: Yeah, Jerry's right. If we hadn't gotten "on-board" with the IBP, I shudder. I think that he deserves all the credit in the world! To realize that, "Yes, we gotta get out of our comfort zone and get on-board." And that very year we made this decision and started our involvement, the Forest Service put on a national training session at Madison, Wisconsin, on "systems ecology." Jerry said, "We've gotta go to that and find out what this is all about!" (Laughs) Yeah, we were completely naïve, but I went to the whole thing. Jerry just came for the second week, and was astounded. It was kind of boring, with just lectures, and he said, "You guys have been putting up with this stuff?" (Laughs) "You've been putting up with this for a whole week and not had a mutiny or anything?" But the Forest Service got employees and people from universities, and a lot of it was centered on computer-modeling systems. We were naïve back then, I'll tell you. But early on, we were going to grow an entire ecosystem, and that was what we were always striving for. We'd go, "You know, we don't know much at all about these systems. How limiting is soil moisture to our communities in the Andrews? Or, how are nutrients cycled through this system? Or how long do leaves stay on the trees? We don't even know that." These kind of things. When I look back at it, that's what modeling accomplishes. You don't get all these sophisticated models up and running with a lot of predictive capacity. What you do is you find out your stupidity. That's when we started saying, "We've gotta get these long-term Forest Service plots that they'd established just to track tree growth, when's the volume put on, and how fast is it put on, and spacing." What we were thinking was [an ecological approach] what we called, early on, "reference stands," based on the classification Jerry and I had made of the forest communities. We said, let's get really good representatives of the different communities, representing the whole spectrum of productivities, moisture variability, etc., and then measure these on a long-term basis. That started the Long Term Ecological Reserve [LTER] concept.

Geier: In the work that you were doing at that point, did you get a sense in 1968 that this was going to take off? You left for Alaska about that time, and as I recall, [PNW Station Director] Bob Buckman had to push you to go to Alaska?

Dyrness: I wondered what had happened. (Laughs) Go to Alaska.

Geier: Did you get a sense that you were leaving something behind that was just getting ready to take off?

Dyrness: Yes. I did. But, I left with a little missionary zeal that we could do similar things there, too. Which, I didn't have to, because a lot of guys up there were already converted, like Keith [Van Cleve]. Keith was coming down and sitting in on a lot of our

coniferous biome meetings. He was on board. As I told you before, the coniferous biome threw a bone or two Alaska's way – little studies they could do up there. But in the main, we were getting shut out, so that's when we decided to do our own program.

Geier: You'd invested at least 12 years of more than 14 years of your professional life in the Forest Service, in the Andrews program and research plots you put in in the early '60s. Did you maintain active contact with people you'd worked with down here, while you were in Alaska?

Dyrness: Well, it was very hard. Very hard. Jerry and I talked a lot, back-and-forth. He kept me apprised of what was happening on the plots that Charlie Halpern, his grad student, was going to take on, and I said, "Great." That's hard to leave your babies behind. When Charlie did the analyses, he used my plots and used my experimental design, and you want to get at least a junior authorship on it.

Geier: Probably shouldn't take too much longer here, but I wanted to get back to this, because you raised it last year when I was talking to you [for Alaska Forest Service history/science project], and you raised it this year, or earlier today. You mentioned last time, that in making the move to Alaska, you were afraid of becoming a bit too provincial here, and in discussing why you decided to take the position here, instead of the one in Minnesota, you were concerned about this, perhaps, being provincial, also. That is an interesting theme you're working with there. What is your sense of this group here being, kind of outside the mainstream of what was going on? And I'm not sure if that's really what's going on, but why don't you explain what you're talking about there?

Dyrness: I'm not sure what?

Geier: Is there something about living in Oregon that -- [interrupted by loud laughter]?

Dyrness: Yeah, you know.

Geier: I've wondered that myself.

Dyrness: Yeah. Oregon in the '50s, I think it was provincial and conservative. I think it was more a feeling of rising to a new challenge, a new adventure, and as I told you before, I had always been interested in Alaska. What kid isn't, really? I remember distinctly, because during the time I was making my decision whether to go to Alaska or not, Jerry of course, was in Washington, D.C.

Geier: NSF?

Dyrness: NSF. He was their program leader for ecosystem analysis. And incidentally, that's when he was worried about getting enough proposals to make the program viable. Proposals were just not coming in. And so, he was thumping the country.

Geier: Had he just gone there then?

Dyrness: Yeah. He'd been there for a few months. I'd been back there to visit him. I remember calling him up, and I said, "Jerry, they want me to go to Fairbanks." I knew what he was going to say. He knew already, as Jerry always has his ear to the ground. I remember he said, "Well, sometimes, you just have to go and rise to the challenge." And I said, "Well, Jerry, if I went there, I wouldn't view it as a real long-term thing, because, I'd like to come back." And he really encouraged me to take it. What happened really, I didn't have that option. That's when things started to get tight [fiscal in USFS], and so, Jerry, I think remembers that I didn't want to come back. I don't think that's the way it was. Although, I've got to admit, that once you get there, and start having fun.....

Geier: He came back here about '76, didn't he?

Dyrness: Yeah. When he came back, he said, "Well, I'm going to try to make room for you in this project here." And I said, "Great." But the station didn't work it out, as far as positions, and we getting pretty involved up there. But, it wasn't so much opportunity for professional development that I went there for, so much as I just wanted to see Alaska.

Geier: Yeah, you mentioned you'd wanted to go there ever since you were a little boy.

Dyrness: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Once again, I'm not too much of a scientist, really. I'm too impetuous. [Laughs]

Geier: I'm not so sure that isn't what makes a good scientist, but – (Laughs).

Dyrness: Well, Jerry's that way too. What we always say about Jerry, "He's an idea man." Boy, spark these ideas, but somebody needs to come and pick up after him. He's not a detail man. You generally envision scientists paying attention to details in a laboratory, and Jerry's never done that. I think on any kind of a test like Myers-Briggs, he'd come out like me, that kind of a person – almost artistic. I remember when I first took an aptitude test, I might have told you this before, I used to score on "outdoors" high, which you could imagine, and artistic. The only job I could think of was "landscape architect." (Laughs)

Geier: Well, in a sense, that's what you got involved in, I guess.

Dyrness: My daughter took one of these tests last summer when she was home working as an intern on the [Albany, Oregon] *Democrat Herald*. She will be finishing up her master's in journalism at [U.C.] Berkeley this year. She took one of these tests, and when you finish the test, in the back of the book it tells you what career you're heading for, and the heading was journalist. Geez, she's the kind of person that needs to be at the center of things, to know what's going on. She enters the room and says, "What's going on?" You know, that type of thing. I thought that was pretty scary. (Laughs)

Geier: That's an interesting theme you raised – these attributes of an artist. Do you get a sense that the attributes of a scientist changed between 1950 and the 1980s? Also, what people are attracted into the field? Also, the group dynamic that you've got going here.

Dyrness: Yeah.

Geier: If you can get away from the lone-scientist theme, what happened at the Andrews sounds like room was made for people with that kind of leaning [artistic/collaborative].

Dyrness: But see, if you sat around and said, "We need people to work on soil hydrology. We need more input on tree growth, stem-sectioning, that sort of thing, and we need more information on nutrient cycling and soil chemistry." We all listed these, so we were all primed for the IBP to come to pass, and suddenly, we had money. We had people.

Geier: Once you got that, access to that kind of funding, did you consciously go out and try to attract people into the group there?

Dyrness: No, the way it works is that once a nucleus is established, and they know that there's at least a small amount of funding, people are attracted in. I remember a time that Jerry and I presented a seminar one evening at the University of Oregon with mostly geologists. Alan Kayes was there. Fred [Swanson] was there. And that's the first time Fred had ever heard of what we were doing. Fred, from the start was very enthused, "Oh, gee, this is neat! You get to work in biology and silviculture, geography, whatever!" People are either cut out for that or they're not. We had another guy, he just retired, and he was on Jerry's project. He was kind of an ecologist interested in the way plants respond to their environment. Jerry never could get him to cooperate with us. He just wasn't cut out for it. Some people, it sparks them, and some people just really just prefer to work alone. It's not that they're introverts or extroverts, or anything like that.

Geier: Who was that?

Dyrness: Minore was his name. Don Minore. Good guy. But Don never did much work on the Andrews. He worked southwestern Oregon, and he worked on huckleberries. Good ecologist. I have all the respect in the world for him. And a nice guy. But, you know, as Jerry said, "Well, there's some people that aren't cut out for it."

Geier: It sounds like there's this core group of people that get together, and that sort of leads to a self-selecting group of people who pick up their work, and you invite them to get involved with this group? [Andrews and ecosystem science/interdisciplinary work].

Dyrness: Yeah, that's what we did in Alaska, too. There's been all kinds of criticism against Keith, maybe Les, and maybe me, saying that we "cut-out" people [excluded]. No! We didn't! We said, "We always let you know. If you want to cooperate in LTER, come to our planning meetings. We're going to start work on our proposal next week. If you're interested, come. You're more than welcome. We expect you to have ideas of how you can cooperate and contribute." It's tough, maybe my head's in the clouds, and maybe some people were intimidated or think they would not be welcome. But, for example, we had people come forward that wanted to study mosses. Great. We don't know anything about mosses. Study mosses. I can think of other examples where we went out and recruited. We needed somebody to do soils work on the reference stands. We went to Chet [Youngberg - OSU] and said, "Who do you got?" Randy [Brown] did it, and did a good job. Except for the fact, doggone it, he never even acknowledged there was a soil survey already done on the Andrews. I think, because the soils were never officially coordinated into the National Cooperative Soil Survey Program. That was a puzzlement to me. He wrote a thesis, a master's thesis on the soils, and that's a case where we went out and recruited a guy, and he fit in well with the crew. There are long-term cooperators in this, and there's guys that weave in-and-out.

Geier: Yeah, that's one thing I was interested in for this study.

Dyrness: I think this group is good because it really always held to a schedule, "We're gonna get together once a month!" Come hell or high water, we're gonna get together. And that's good. Not everybody attends, but the core group's there, and people ask what's going on. There's certain structure we have, but boy, over the years, the structure has been minimal. You know Fred's the leader here, but outside of one or two guys, he doesn't supervise them. He has to do it by just getting cooperation. Voluntary. He's not got any official pie to head over them. Sometimes, it's too bad he doesn't.

Geier: I'm not sure how much time we've got here, but we should probably get out of Steve's [Acker, who shares Dyrness' office] hair in a little bit.

Dyrness: Yeah, we've got to go.

Steve Acker: No problem. [Laughs]

Geier: I just want to ask you a couple of things here. You mentioned last year about how a group of you were working down there on the Andrews, and just started talking to each other. Who else besides you? You mentioned several other people already, but was there a kind of a jelling point that you can recall, where you all kind of came together? I've got records of Jerry trying to organize, in the mid-70s, a group of researchers, and they all got together at the Hoh River, someplace like that. [Franklin organized 1-2 week group research events called "scientific pulses," including those on the Hoh River in Olympic NP, in late 1970s, an idea exercised elsewhere in Oregon and Washington.]

Dyrness: Yeah.

Geier: I was just wondering if there was some kind of a jelling point on the Andrews, where people who were actually there on site, sat down and started talking a little more?

Dyrness: I think that would have been, up until IBP, you can almost count the number of people that worked there on a regular basis, on your fingers of one hand. We'd bring in people, like Jerry brought in Will Moir, a graduate student/friend to help us. But it was pretty much Dick Fredriksen, Al Levno, Ross Mersereau, Jack Rothacher, Jerry [Franklin], and I [Ted Dyrness]. On a regular basis, that was about it.

Geier: And you were all pretty much aware of each other's work on an ongoing basis?

Dyrness: Yeah. What it boiled down to was Jack's project [watersheds] and Jerry's [Various, regeneration, vegetation, forest ecology.] Really.

Geier: Hmm.

Dyrness: And Jerry, as I say, would bring in some of his friends. We got Francis Herman to do stem sectioning work in the area. I remember him being down there. See, we're pretty limited in that expertise. Our expertise was hydrology, soils, but as far as other areas, we needed guys like Fred. See, Fred's interests more or less coincided with the beginning of IBP. It wasn't until we got the IBP, that we really had that much of a real interdisciplinary team. That was when Dennis Harr started working there [hydrology, precipitation dynamics, rain/snow, etc.], and George Carroll from University of Oregon, for tree lichens, as we started climbing trees, and expert help in biometrics with guys like Scott Overton. You could look at some of those early IBP proposals, and they'll give you a flavor, but that's when we started. And of course, anything like that kind of starts and builds. I don't recall, maybe Jerry can recall a real turning point to it. Also, intermixed with early stages of IBP, was this feud with the University of Washington.

Geier: Hmm.

Dyrness: They wanted to capture the major share of the funding for Cedar River, Finley Lake, their sites up there [Washington state], and we wanted the major share to be for the Andrews. That would be the intensive study type. The concept of IBP was that you had an intensive study site and then you have satellite sites. Those satellite sites would maybe be in Alaska or someplace like Cedar River. But there was a big kind of power struggle.

End of Side B, Tape 1 (of 2)

Begin Side A, Tape 2 (of 2)

Dyrness: [tape begins mid-sentence]...the block [funding/tasks] wasn't big enough for both of them, that type of thing. Although, I must say, they reached an accommodation. But early on, Dick [Waring] was really influential in what we were studying.

Geier: So the IBP was kind of a selling point, but also provided the funding, kind of a structure it would have actually imposed on the group that was working out there?

Dyrness: Yeah, that was the watershed-type thing.

Geier: Am I in your way [speaking to Acker]?

Acker: I was just going to get a copy of that paper I was telling you about.

Geier: Okay [banging in background]. This is probably the last point I wanted to address today. I'll be talking to Jerry Franklin and then I'll probably be coming back to you to revisit some of these themes, but I wanted to get your sense of how people viewed the purpose of an experimental forest in the period.

Dyrness: How they viewed what?

Geier: The purpose of experimental forests in the period of, about '70 to '74. We talked about that in relation to the earlier period, I think.

Acker: Here. [Paper he had been looking for]

Dyrness: What's that?

Acker: Oh, it's the paper I was mentioning earlier.

Dyrness: Oh, great. That would be good background for him [Geier], as far as where the permanent plots and things are.

Geier: Yeah. Thanks. [Brief conversation between Dryness and Acker concerning vacation plans, office schedules, etc.]

Dyrness: Take care [to Acker]. He's a good guy and a really outstanding example of this new generation that's come along. He's really sharp as far as technical competence. He's probably a lot better than we were.

Geier: I was trying to get a sense of how, what you think perceptions were in the period about the time the IBP was established, and shortly after that, about the purpose of research was for the Andrews itself, and how people viewed that?

Dyrness: The view towards experimental forests?

Geier: Yeah. As opposed to that earlier period.

Dyrness: Early on, the Forest Service went through a stage when experimental forests were big. That's when the Wind River was established, Pringle Falls, and H.J. Andrews. Then, in the late '50s, early '60s, the emphasis was on labs, "We're getting real scientific now. We're gonna have labs." They put the labs on the university campuses. And I think that turned into the idea, "Well, the experimental forests aren't really important anymore." So, a lot of people had to fight tooth-and-nail to preserve the experimental forests we've got today. Because the people who got them running, they may be at the Washington D.C. level, maybe at the headquarters at the station [PNW], so that's a thing of the past. We're beyond experimental forests. We fought the same thing on research natural areas. They said, "Why have these things when we're not using them?" That's why we needed a program like the IBP, or LTER, today. We needed that to give us some kind of funds to attract people to work in these areas. And that's why we, Jerry, had the brilliant idea of putting out this publication [sound of papers shifting—pause].

Geier: That's the *Guide to Research Natural Areas* in Oregon and Washington [USFS Publication, Sarah Greene, Jerry Franklin, et. al., 1986].

Dyrness: Yeah. Because we said, people at the universities don't know about these places. What they offer in terms of research opportunities, where they are, and who administers them, so we needed to get this guidebook out. That's been a good deal.

Geier: That came out in 1972? [Early incarnation of what became 1986 guide.]

Dyrness: Then we followed that up with this with another publication]. We asked, what would a good, well-rounded system of natural areas look like in the Pacific Northwest?

Geier: This is the one that laid out a grid of cells?

Dyrness: All the cells we were going to fill. Yeah. And that's what I was working on just before I transferred to Alaska.

Geier: Just before this came your way, and about the time IBP was established, which as you pointed out, kind of saves the experimental forest idea, I've heard Fred Swanson mention there was a letter written proposing to disestablish the Andrews? Are you familiar with that?

Dyrness: Yeah! Yeah. Yeah.

Geier: He wasn't sure if that was a rumor, as he'd never seen the letter, but he said that Jerry told him about it.

Dyrness: I think that you'd have to ask Jerry about that. Because, that's how far it went, that they were really proposing to disestablish or de-activate the Andrews. You know, come on! Hello?! I think we're past that now. We've got millions of dollars of research there, and it's an international gem. [Internationally-recognized scientific research site.]

Geier: Yeah.

Dyrness: It's an international gem.

Geier: From talking to Art McKee, it sounds now it's more about who gets credit for it.

Dyrness: Yeah.

Geier: And who gets to control it.

Dyrness: Yeah. Yeah.

Geier: Instead of getting rid of it.

Dyrness: And you know, that's why it's such an ironic thing. We were ignored. Sure, "You guys can go out and have fun, but you're really not doing anything." And now, everyone wants to take the credit for it? Like I say, it was very grass-roots. Really grass-roots. Guys like [OSU College of Forestry Dean] George Brown and the director of the [PNW] station, they don't even know what's going on [at the HJA EF]. To a certain extent, Fred's probably glad about that. You know, "Keep out of my hair and we'll do our thing." But it's not top-down. It's just purely bottom up. It's bottom-up.

Geier: Roy Silen related a similar thing relating to your perception of the experimental forests. Silen was talking about when he was there in the early '50s, how the snows would come down and they'd get closed in, he'd get involved in this social circle of dinners around the local community, and there was kind of a sense that it was pretty isolated. He said nobody really knew what was going on up on the forest [PNW Station or Region 6], but there was a sense of close interaction with the local residents there.

Dyrness: Uh-huh.

Geier: I was just wondering if you had any sense of how that evolved, from the period you were there, from the late '50s through the early '70s? Did that continue or dissipate?

Dyrness: That community [dynamics – HJA and locals] in Blue River?

Geier: Yeah. In other words, how did people that lived around Blue River perceive or interact with people who were working on the experimental forest, or at all?

Dyrness: There wasn't very much. Principally, the concerns were, did it contribute to the accommodations there, the motel industry.

Geier: But did people previously stay in motels? I'm trying to remember if there are any in Blue River.

Dyrness: There's one or two down near McKenzie Bridge. If you're going east on the highway, to the north of the highway, there's a restaurant and motel nearby. They are used on occasion. I remember, we had an LTER meeting a couple of years before I moved back [from Alaska], that involved bringing people from across the West, and we stayed in a motel there. There were meetings like that. There was just not the capacity for an administrative site.

Geier: Did you make use of the restaurants then?

Dyrness: Oh yeah, we used to always make use of the restaurants. This kind of question, you ought to ask Al [Levno]. He'd have a lot better feel for it.

Geier: Yeah. Because he was living on site there, too.

Dyrness: He was living there on site, and Art [McKee], too. He would know. Art still knows a lot of the people there, but I don't. I think the community [locals] really doesn't know what's going on, or the gem the HJA is. Although, from time-to-time, recently, they've tried to invite community members up for a "show-me" trip. It kind of blew up around them and they didn't know what was going on. There may even be some Forest Service people down there [Blue River] who didn't know, but now, everybody knows. I remember the distinct feeling that we were just irrelevant, as far as they were concerned.

Geier: Last year, you mentioned something (more in relation to Alaska) about up there, that you had pretty easy access to the Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest. You'd drive

up there, 15-20 miles outside of town, and you would come back in the evening. Then, down here, you almost have to go down there and spend the day or evening.

Dyrness: Oh yeah, we always used to spend a week at a time. We'd go down Monday morning and stay in the trailer until maybe Friday night. I remember what I used to do in order to keep track of what's going on at home, by the phone booth.

Geier: Did you pretty frequently run into other researchers during those trips, or were you usually there by yourself?

Dyrness: What would happen was, especially after IBP, we were bulging at the seams in the little 8 x 30 foot trailer. I remember, we had technicians going out to these reference stands, and one of the ways to measure moisture stress in vegetation is to use a pressure bomb, which is a pressure chamber you put a twig in and exert pressure, and the pressure needed to exude some sap out of this twig, is directly proportional to the tension it's under, so it's a measure of moisture stress. One of the primary times to do this is pre-dawn. It's called "pre-dawn moisture stress measurement," because that's when it's lowest, and it's kind of at equilibrium, and there's no sun shining or any force put on it to trigger evapotranspiration. We used to send out guys in the middle of the night to do this, and our favorite thing was to do was to fill them with Sasquatch stories, before they went out! (Laughing) We got a good bit of hilarity out of that kind of thing. That was the fun of it, as you have people working on different things; small mammal people talking to the silviculturists, people measuring fire intervals, and talking to the vegetation classifiers, all that kind of stuff. And that led toward the "pulse" idea. [See previous reference.]

Geier: Huh? [Asking for clarification on "pulse."]

Dyrness: We would go other places and have this same kind of interaction going on. We worked together all day, then sat around the campfire at night, sharing what you observed and what questions you had. That was the first "pulse." I only went on one or two, because the pulse idea hit its stride after I went to Alaska. The first one was to the Mt. Adams area on the Steamboat RNA. Jerry wanted to get some permanent plots put in. It was Jerry, Art McKee, and Bob Woodmansee was visiting, an ecologist back east now. That was an attempt to get some field work on an RNA done in a short interval. What we did was stay at campgrounds, but we ate at the Trout Lake District of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. They had a mess hall for crews and we just signed up and ate at the mess hall, and sat around our campfire at night. It was a really, really fun deal. As I recall, as our family camped out a lot, I used to have the family come up at the end, so we could get some of camping in, and go up to Mt. Rainier, for which I took a few days off at the end.

Geier: I was going to ask you whether your family ever camped out at the Andrews. Camped out there, or wherever?

Dyrness: Not a great deal, although we did make a point, Jerry and I, several times. We said, "Let's bring our kids this time, or pick a kid, the oldest one, probably." At that time, my oldest was 8 or 9, and she still talks about it. What I did, come to think of it, was when I took time off for vacation, especially when the kids were real small, you might have noticed on the way up to the Andrews, there's cabins by the river that you can rent?

Geier: Yeah.

Dyrness: We used to rent a cabin, then go to the Andrews, and I'd fish up Lookout Creek. That's the way the family would engage, in part, in reaction to the claim, "Daddy's there all the time." And they want to know what it's like. Time was when Jerry, in the early '70s, I remember him getting on this. Jerry gets on these kicks, you know, what to worry about now, and he said, "Well, what we ought to do is buy property up at Blue River, so we can retire there!" (Laughter) Which never really came to fruition, but it shows you what a special place we thought it was.

Geier: That's an interesting dynamic there.

Dyrness: And I think, can I suggest a title?

Geier: Sure.

Dyrness: "A Special Place," something like that. The H.J. Andrews, the first 40 or 50 years on the H.J. Andrews, something like that. But, "A Special Place." Use the phrase.

Geier: You know, there's something I could probably do. The first chapter there, I'm looking at the idea of a sense of place.

Dyrness: Yeah. Dig in. Are you going to get some history on the Indians in the area?

Geier: Yeah.

Dyrness: Early sheepherders?

Geier: I probably will have something, what I can find. I've got some friends in anthropology who've studied that area.

Dyrness: Good. That would be kind of neat. I'm hoping this is going to be kind of a common interest history. I can give it to people who don't know anything about ecology, and they'll be interested in this.

Geier: I think it's really got a lot of potential here for that. That's what Bill Lang [Portland State University history professor and editor of book series in which Geier hoped to publish Andrews history] is interested in, really, is that it sells. So, I want to do

that, and still keep it interesting enough so people who are informed about this, will like it. I think an informed layman might be the best target.

Dyrness: Getting back to the community-at-large in Blue River, I think we have always been kind of a community apart, except for those guys that lived there all the time. But we would always mainly hang out with the other researchers. Although, I can remember times where you'd go down to the local tavern and dance with the local gals, and stuff like that. But it wasn't that much. It was kind of a rare occasion when that happened.

Geier: Was there a favorite hangout in Blue River that you'd go down to?

Dyrness: Yeah, early on. It was called the Cougar Room. It burned down later.

Geier: Cougar Room?

Dyrness: Yeah. At one time it had "go-go" dancers [topless for a period], which made it more attractive, sometimes. It was kind of the local joint. Remember, I mentioned this meeting we had down at the Andrews in the late '80s, and we ate there. It was just before the thing burned down. Now it's burned down. Did you go into the town of Blue River?

Geier: Yeah, we drove through.

Dyrness: Yeah, and there's this café here and a grocery store there, and then you go out and you join the bypass?

Geier: Yeah.

Dyrness: Right at that "Y," was the Cougar Room [where it was located].

Geier: That was there until the '80s?

Dyrness: Yeah. I don't know how much of a hangout, but to go and have a beer and stuff.

Geier: Well, that's pretty important to the idea of a community, a home-away-from-home kind of a thing.

Dyrness: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Geier: Place where you're likely to run into someone else by accident.

Dyrness: Oh, yeah. When we lived in the trailer at Blue River Heights [name for residential area above Blue River Ranger District], people would always stop by and see who was there. I remember, Jerry especially, if he had to write a manuscript, he'd go there, because it was away from the office, and he'd feel the "muse" better at Blue River than he would in Corvallis. He'd drive off and work.

Geier: That ties in with what Fred was saying, people using the Andrews as a refuge and source of inspiration.

Dyrness: And Art, he has a little cabin, a little summer house there.

Geier: Oh, is that right?

Dyrness: Yeah, at the administrative site. It's sort of a little place. As director of the forest [HJA], he goes down there and hikes. It's great.

Geier: I had a little field trip when I was down there. We had a little picnic there, and that was one of the more relaxing days I've had in a long time.

Dyrness: Yeah. It's a therapeutic place.

Geier: I was just thinking that I'm real interested in the community dynamics up there, comparing it to Bonanza Creek, where you had people who were going out and working and then coming back, and the [Fairbanks, Alaska - USFS] lab was the site of interaction.

Dyrness: Uh-huh.

Geier: Then, here at the Andrews, people go there from all sorts of different areas here [in Corvallis], but they don't interact here as much as they interact there [Alaska].

Dyrness: Yeah. The administrative site is now the community hub. They play volleyball, and there's people, lots of kids, undergrads, that research program for undergrads at NSF [Research Experience for Undergraduates], and graduate students from all over the country. They converge on that site. People are catching the idea and the vision. It's just amazing.

Geier: It's interesting to know the impact that has on the kind of science that's done there. You mentioned the pulse idea, which kind of grows out of that basic idea?

Dyrness: Yeah!

Geier: That spurt of creative energy, and then people go off and have time to kind of assimilate those ideas, and then come back and reconnect. It's a different pattern, and it was also true at Fairbanks, where you had this continual family connection going on

there all the time. You've worked at both places. Do you have any sense of that dynamic?

Dyrness: I remember when I got to Fairbanks, I thought this is kind of anachronistic. I'm in the middle of the wilderness here, but yet, I can do fieldwork and be home every night! I also thought, "But this is kind of nice." It does place a strain on family when you're gone just about all summer. I remember when I would come home from an arduous week of tromping up and down those slopes in the watersheds [HJA]. Every day is a picnic in the woods, and you joke about that, bring your lunch and your pack, that everyday indeed is a "picnic in the woods." "We get paid for doing this?" You're right. But when I come home, the family's been around home all week, and they might want to go have a picnic, and even that could cause friction, because I want to stay and lay in front of the TV, and watch a baseball game. Something stupid like that would be a source of a little friction. Most of that time my family was living on a small farm, so there was concern about getting the hay in, and I wasn't there except, maybe, weekends.

Geier: That was in the Corvallis area?

Dyrness: Yeah, we lived on an 8-acre farm on Tampico Road. If you're familiar, on Tampico road there are a few minor bends, and then it takes a big bend to the right. If you go straight, you'd run into the place we used to have.

Geier: Yeah, we almost bought a place out there.

Dyrness: Is that right?

Geier: Yeah, we came real close to it last year. It was right before you get to the road that goes over to the dump.

Dyrness: Oh, is that right?

Geier: Yeah. And that was the blow that turned us against it. I don't know if you've been out there recently, but that dump has gotten so huge.

Dyrness: Yeah.

Geier: And I was really concerned that, potentially, trash from the dump, would be right up against the back of the property. It was about a 10-acre piece, and the dump was right up against the back boundary, and that's not what I wanted for a neighbor.
(Laughter)

Dyrness: Yeah. Yeah.

Geier: That's what turned me against it, but otherwise it was a beautiful place.

Dyrness: We really enjoyed it, because there's nobody on either side of us, nobody in back. Now there are houses in back, but when we were there, nothing. That was one of the things that was hard to leave, because we'd just remodeled the house, gotten all new carpets down, we'd planted an orchard with any kind of fruit tree you could think of. I had a strict spray schedule, as I take "orcharding" very seriously. We had ponies for the kids, we raised cattle, and had a small feed-lot operation kind of thing. Buy feeders. I'd call home and something's gone wrong with the well. I'd be down in Blue River. "What do I do?" It had its frustrations. Getting hay in with a small operation like that is hard, and I didn't have any tractor or anything. I had to get a guy to cut the hay, rake it and bale it. For a small place like that, nobody wanted to even do it.

Geier: Do you see any difference between the kind of research programs that developed at the Andrews in comparison to Bonanza Creek?

Dyrness: Well, a big difference between the Andrews and Bonanza Creek was the number of people. We just really had a skeleton crew there at Bonanza Creek. That had its advantages, because I used to think that up there, every person was more valuable, because there was just so few. Every person had their role to play. If somebody crapped out on you, you really feel it. Here, there are backups in just about any discipline you can name. It boggles your mind how many people are involved.

Geier: Would you say you get more of a sense of continuity, then?

Dyrness: How's that?

Geier: Down here [HJA], I mean. You said that part of the puzzle could always be filled by somebody. That would prevent having gaps?

Dyrness: Yeah. But there's more feeling that you're dispensable here, I think.

Geier: Oh, I see.

Dyrness: And you don't feel that up there, as you really have a role to play, and you're really valued. So, I've got to think about this, as far as commuting every day and not commuting. I think you may be on to something that does cause a change in --

Geier: Well, it would be different, I'm sure. I would guess that there might be some kind of an impact on the kinds of projects you would be willing to take on, versus ones that you really wanted to do? It wouldn't necessarily mean better research or worse research, it would just be the kind of work you take on, if there's a difference. You might think about that, if anything occurs to you.

Dyrness: Yeah, I'll think about it. Because, like I say, the overwhelming difference I always think about, is just the number of people. We really had a skeleton crew [Alaska]. Of course, with Keith [Van Cleve] retiring, Les [Viereck] is ready for retirement now, Skeeter [Richard Warner] is retiring, and of course, [mumbled asides]. Herman [Gucinski] really tried to rectify that, and the first step was maybe to get Terry [Chapin] to stay. Do you know Terry?

Geier: No, I don't.

Dyrness: He was one of our early cooperators up at Bonanza Creek. A really sharp ecologist at the University of Alaska. Then, he transferred to Berkeley. Well, it's a 20-times more prestigious place than Alaska. You can't blame him for doing it. But now, they've talked him into coming back, and heading up the LTER.

Geier: Oh, I see.

Dyrness: And he's a guy with a national, an international reputation.

Geier: I was asking Cindy [Miner-PNW Communications Director] to put together an epilogue for the Alaska study, which should be coming out pretty soon. And one of the things was the closure up there, and the people who've left.

Dyrness: As you can well imagine, I don't even like to think about it.

Geier: Yeah.

Dyrness: It really pisses me off.

Geier: I was talking to Ross, what's his name? I went to see him out at Bend? Mitchell, Russ Mitchell.

Dyrness: Russ Mitchell?

Geier: I went out to see him, and there's the same kind of feeling at Bend. I'd never been out to the Bend Lab, but they closed that down at the same time. He's been out there, and I went out there to meet him at the lab. It's nice and quiet, but it's like a morgue out there, because there's nobody around.

Dyrness: That's stupid.

Geier: Yeah.

Dyrness: Once you lose a group like that, you don't just go out and build another. We had 12 people! We had 12 researchers! [In Alaska]

Geier: That's amazing, because that's in the '80s, you said it reached that point, right?

Dyrness: Yeah!

Geier: So, it's only about a decade ago.

Dyrness: I think it's top leadership. When Tarrant was practically [PNW] station director, Tarrant and Buckman [Bob], we had people that believed in Alaska research and were behind it. I think Ethington [Robert] was, too. And now, with what's his name?

Geier: Philpot? [Charles]

Dyrness: Yeah. I don't think he really knew. You said something about him not liking your manuscript.

Geier: Well, Cindy asked him to write an epilogue. I wasn't real keen on that, he said he would. Then he read through the manuscript, and said his interpretation would be so different from mine, that he didn't want to write an epilogue, or deal with it. So Cindy and Ken [Wright] pulled something together. He was not, to me at least, he was not specific at all. In fact, he would not return my phone calls. I tried to talk to him.

Dyrness: Oh, God, that guy is an arrogant bastard. You know, man, oh man! He's part of the reason I retired. I just couldn't stand to deal with that guy.

Geier: I've never met him, although he was PNW Station Director at the time I was doing the study [Alaska]. I tried several times to contact him for an interview, as I wanted to get his view of what happened in Alaska.

Dyrness: Well, he's a Johnny-come-lately. He doesn't know what's going on up there, and never did. He wasn't that interested.

Geier: He didn't ever return a phone call. I never heard back from him.

Dyrness: (Laughing) Regarding his antipathy, have I ever told you about this story about his visiting a project leaders' meeting?

Geier: No, I don't think so.

Dyrness: His antipathy dates way back, and I don't know what the genesis of it is, but in about 1983, something like that, we had a project leaders meeting. At that time, there was a Missoula Lab [where Philpot was stationed], and he attended our PNW project leaders meeting. I forget where it was, Salishan, something like that, and he was just an

observer sent by Rocky Mountain Station to see how PNW conducted project leaders' meetings. As you do at a project leaders' meeting, you have different things to discuss, and one thing on the program was to talk a little bit about multifunctional research work units, of which ours was a prime example. I was given the job to say how we handled it in Fairbanks. Made a lot of sense. I said how we did it and what kind of disciplines we had represented, how we all got together and decided how to spend the budget, and the cooperation with the people at the university. When I got done, Charley Philpot stood up, and just ground me up one side and down the other: "Well, we would never do that in our station." I forget what he said. I was so nonplussed, I didn't even know what to say!

Geier: Hmm. So, he just blind-sided you?

Dyrness: Yeah. Like he had a vendetta against me, or something. Or our unit.

Geier: What were his points?

Dyrness: I don't know. It was just totally out of the blue. Who is this guy? Where did he get off? He's not even in the Station! He's just an observer!

Geier: Huh.

Dyrness: He and I just got off on the wrong foot, and I've not had any reason to change my opinion of him. He's been known to be a burr under a lot of people's saddles. And what he did when he came to PNW Station, he immediately re-organized everything. He did away with project leaders, and he had guys like Herman [Gucinski, a program manager], who, I've got nothing against Herman, he's a nice guy, quite a brilliant guy, but he was trying to run Fairbanks Lab from here [in Oregon]. He'd go there twice a year, three times a year, and get into shouting matches with Keith.

Geier: Hard to imagine Keith shouting.

Dyrness: Yeah, Keith was upset, as he said that this was a "goddamn carpet bagger." That's what we used to call these guys that just showed up for research in Alaska in the summertime. We were the "sourdoughs" and these were the "carpetbaggers." (Laughs) But, with the demise of the project leaders, we just didn't have any local leadership. Everybody was running out and doing their own thing, and you kind of need some kind of person who deals with the university [U-Alaska] and the public. It's interesting, because I heard, via the grapevine, that what he didn't like, least of all, was the Fairbanks section.

Geier: Oh, is that right?

Dyrness: I don't know who told me that. Maybe Martha [Brookes] or somebody.

Geier: Obviously, by the time you get to the end of that, I didn't actually have it closed, in the section I wrote, but I'd shown that the resources were limited.

Dyrness: Just kind of drained out.

Geier: The handwriting was up on the wall. Of course, I didn't see anything personally that he wrote, but Cindy told me. The only information she gave me on it, was that he didn't see that last section as being remotely close to how he would view that same situation. Obviously, he wanted to tell his own story about the reorganization, but he didn't want to do it for that study. For some reason, he just didn't want to write it.

Dyrness: Is that right?

Geier: I don't know, and haven't talked to him. He didn't really want to tell me his story.

Dyrness: You never did talk to him?

Geier: No, he never called me back. I tried several times, and his wife was there, I talked to her, and she said, "I'll have him call when he gets back." That was his wife, but he sure never returned the phone calls. That's rude.

Dyrness: Yeah. That's him. Doggone it. S.O.B. How did he get to be Station Director, for Pete's sake?

Geier: I'm always curious about that. Who appoints these people, and how do they get their positions? We were talking about that in relation to the current director, Art and Martha and I. I guess the Chief [USFS] appoints them, you know, but how are the recommendations made, and how the decision process is conducted, is a little black box.

Dyrness: The best station director we ever had, and this is a very personal viewpoint, and I've known him for many years, is Bob Tarrant. And he was the only one that didn't have Washington Office [USFS] experience.

Geier: Is that right?

Dyrness: He never went back-and-forth. Visited lots of times, but was never stationed in Washington D.C. He took a lot of flack for it, and people told him, "You really need that in your career path." That's what they tell you, because I did the same thing. In my employment, I let it be known I wouldn't consider it. I wasn't with this outfit long before they were nosing around to get me back in the Washington Office. I just said, "No."

Geier: Yeah. That's a common thread I'm finding. I think it's really interesting. In the Andrews Group here. Kerrick, didn't he hire Steve Eubanks, who not only had University

of Minnesota connections with him [Kerrick], but also, until that time, had never been in the Washington Office? Those two people, everyone is telling me, were really crucial to the development of the management --

Dyrness: Yeah.

Geier: -- science relationship. And Bob Tarrant was avoiding it, also. That's interesting. I hadn't known that about him before, that he was never in the Washington office.

Dyrness: Oh, no. And Bob, I think he only had a masters. Yeah.

Geier: I think you're right about that. I talked to him about that last year.

Dyrness: Is that right?

Geier: Yeah, for the Alaska study. And I think that's right.

Dyrness: He got his masters in soils and started working with SCS [Soil Conservation Service], went in the Army, and came back. Of course, Tarrant's a story-teller. I bet you guys really like a guy like Tarrant, because he loves to tell stories.

Geier: He was fun to talk to.

Dyrness: Oh, he's a great guy. Great guy.

Geier: He reminded me a little bit of Ronald Reagan, the way he'd kind of lean back. I can see how he can be real effective.

Dyrness: He was the kind of guy, when he was [PNW] Director, he'd send you notes for your birthday. Stuff like that. You felt like you had a friend, a good friend. He'd come on these inspection tours, we'd just have a great time and you wouldn't feel threatened. He was a happy guy and just wanted to be helpful. He'd explain what personnel moves were. They were trying to get rid of Francis Herman, and they thought the way to do it would be to offer him a directed reassignment to Fairbanks, you know, send him to "Siberia." (Laughing) That he wouldn't do. Everybody who knows Francis Herman, knows he is the most stubborn guy on the face of the earth. Great guy. He'd give you the shirt off his back, but he's stubborn, and he's not about to be taken advantage of. So, Herm called the bluff, and said "I'm going to Fairbanks!" Tarrant was telling me one day, we had John Zasada in silviculture, and he's reproduction, regeneration-oriented. We need someone else in silviculture, and growth-and-yield, to establish permanent plots, and to investigate how trees grow long-term. Old Tarrant, well, he's a great guy.

Geier: I'll be talking to him some more, probably not until December. I probably should stop, because you've been talking for a long time. It gets kind of wearing after awhile.

We can talk more in the future.

Dyrness: Yeah, okay. Well.

Geier: I suppose you probably want these back.

Dyrness: Like I say, when's this Alaska book [recording ends].

End of Interview