

Interview with Lynn Burditt, October 3, 1997, by Max Geier; in Rm. 310, FSL (USFS-Forestry Sciences Laboratory), Corvallis, Oregon.

Lynn Burditt grew up in the academically-charged Oak Ridge, Tennessee, community, went on for a MS in Forest Engineering at OSU, and worked for the US Forest Service in Montana before being recruited by Willamette National Forest Supervisor Mike Kerrick into the District Ranger position at Blue River Ranger District, home of Andrews Forest. She was in the Ranger position during the height of the "Forest Wars" (early 1990s) when a constant stream of field trips brought both regular and influential folks to the Andrews and Blue River District for public discussion of the future of public lands forests. She was a strong leader of the research-management partnership activities, including innovative silviculture and landscape management studies, and continued to connect with the Andrews Forest community after she departed for other Forest Service leadership positions in Oregon and Washington.

Geier Introduction: This is the interview with Lynn Burditt taking place on the 3rd of October, 1997. Place of the interview is in Max Geier's office at the Corvallis Forestry Sciences Lab. The interviewer is Max Geier. Time of the interview is 5:00 in the afternoon.

Max Geier: We don't have a lot of time here because you've got to meet with the safety committee, so I'd like to get started on this.

Lynn Burditt: Fred said I could be late. He said that was okay.

Geier: Okay, good. I understand you took over as Blue River District Ranger in 1989.

Burditt: Right.

Geier: Maybe you could start off here by just talking a little bit about your personal background, where you came from and those kinds of things.

Burditt: Okay. I grew up in eastern Tennessee. I think I've lived in about 17 different states, most of them during the first part of my life. I went to school at Syracuse College of Forestry, called Environmental Sciences Forestry, and finished up at Iowa State with a degree in Forest Management, Outdoor Recreation and Resource Management, in the mid-70s. From there I worked up in Minnesota a bit. It was a time when people couldn't get on very much with the Forest Service and Park Service. I had this goal of working for the Park Service at the time. I was one of those people who was not going to be a long-term hire. I needed a little more security or something in my life. So, I wound up working for an aerial survey company down in Houston, Texas, doing geomagnetic surveys. Basically, we did contour maps, going into the ground, looking at the minerals or rock down there. Somehow, through all that process, people found me through 4 or 8 different addresses, and I got an offer to go to the Clearwater National Forest, Palouse Ranger District, over in Idaho, in 1977. I figured, "Better take that opportunity."

I'd gone to school, and I wanted to work in forestry, so I needed to give it a try. So, I moved up to the Moscow/Potlatch area in 1977 and worked there for several years. We [U.S. Forest Service] have a technical training program in the agency. At the time there was one in Forest Engineering over here at Peavy [OSU College of Forestry building]. I wound up applying for that program. I'd been through a 10-week logging engineering course here. Evidently, they didn't have enough applicants so they were looking for some more folks to apply, and outreached to several of us. I applied and was selected, and wound up going through that.

Geier: Which was when?

Burditt: That was in '80 and '81. Actually, came here in September of '79, yeah, September of '79. It was probably one of the best things that I could have done, in two aspects. One was that we worked on projects for a variety of forests, and during the summer part of it, we went on assignments throughout the country. I wound up spending a month down in North Carolina and Virginia country, sometime up on the Mt. Hood National Forest, and also, a bit of time down on the Shasta-Trinity in California. It was a good chance for me to get the exposure that you don't get the same everywhere in the Forest Service. The other part that was really great learning experience and was part of that, the group of graduate students was required to help teach the 10-week engineering institute course, or a portion of that. That entailed getting up in front of a group of 50 Forest Service and BLM employees, and explaining aspects of various logging systems. I'm a fairly shy person, and having to stand up in front of a group of 50 folks, mostly middle-aged men who had worked in the woods a long time, and who looked at me and thought, "Who is this whipper-snapper young woman?" This was a huge developmental experience, especially when I'm trying to explain interlock mechanics, stuff like that. It gave me experience talking in front of groups and having to think on my feet. That was real valuable in the future.

The other phenomenal thing was being in the right place at the time. For me was it was also a time when it was really possible to get jobs back out in the [Forest Service] system. There was a chance to go on a detail up to Mount St. Helens on a volcano recovery project in May of '81. That was the year after the volcano had erupted pretty significantly. So, I got to spend from then until the end of August up working on the mountain itself, and was involved with projects up on the Green River. We flew in everyday by helicopter and then had to fly past the north side of the crater, or we flew west of the volcano and, because our work site was to the north, we got special dispensation to go next to the volcano every day, which was pretty amazing. Just being out in that setting, where there had been such a powerful event occur, getting a sense of what was the natural system, what had happened there, and how recovery was happening, and the way in which the effects of the volcano had meandered around, was just a pretty phenomenal experience. I've always kind of viewed it as the highlight of my career, although now it's 16 years ago and it's hard to even remember, but, emotionally, I still have this sense of that.

From there I went to the Flathead National Forest in Montana, and wound up in a variety of jobs. I spent a couple of years as the "forest logging engineer," which was quite an interesting

experience. Being a woman, relatively young, and working for the Forest Service, were all considered not necessarily strong sellers to the industry, which was a lot of the work I had to do, working with them. With a lot of men out in the forests, I got a chance to prove that I know something about what I was doing. After a couple years, I wound up at one of the districts as a “management assistant,” and had responsibility for all the planning, presale, and layout timber sale administration work on that district, and all the compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). I was there for about three years; a pretty controversial place, with issues related to the grizzly bear, bull trout, scenic concerns; just a wide range of concerns.

Geier: Should be about what, ‘83?

Burditt: That was from ‘83 to the end of ‘86. That’s when I first heard about hyporrheic zones. Jack Stanford with Yellow Bay was doing a lot of work in that area. I was acting District Ranger up at Hungry Horse District on the forest [Flathead NF]. Then I was selected as District Ranger at Talley Lake District on the forest, which is in Whitefish, Montana. So, I was the ranger there from March of ‘87 through May of ‘89, when I came to the Blue River District.

Geier: That was a pretty good summary. I’m going to back up just real quick. Where are you from originally?

Burditt: I was born in Kentucky and grew up in Oakridge, Tennessee.

Geier: You grew up in Oakridge?

Burditt: Yeah.

Geier: Okay.

Burditt: Which was an interesting place to grow up, if you know anything about it.

Geier: I was going to ask about that. Is that the site of the Oak Ridge National Laboratories?

Burditt: Yeah, the Oak Ridge National Laboratories are there now, but the town was actually created during WWII. It was one of the sites where they constructed parts for the atom bomb. It’s kind of like the Tri-Cities area, Los Alamos, and Livermore. So, the town didn’t actually exist before the war. I’m not sure why the Defense Department or whoever selected it, but they came in and basically told the folks who were there, they could stay and have a job, or they needed to leave. It was kind of a town created by bringing in a number of folks to work on that project. The Manhattan Project?

Geier: Yeah.

Burditt: It was a really an intriguing place, because you had this range of folks, from relatively poor people who had lived in the country all their life to this large number of Ph.Ds. and scientists who were brought in. Then it became kind of a science town. It had a fairly high level of I.Q. There were fairly high expectations on the kids in the schools.

Geier: Were your parents involved in any of that?

Burditt: My dad worked at one of the plants. He was in the Navy and then he wound up working at what's called Y-12. I don't know what that means. That was one of the interesting parts of growing up there, is they had Y-12, X-10, and K-25 names, and each plant had different rules. In many towns like that, it's fairly top secret, and so there's little badges and gates to go through and I had no idea what my dad did. I just knew we would sometimes take him to work and there was a place we had to stop, and he had to go through a number of other gates before he could get in. It creates all kinds of unusual things. I thought that was normal, growing up.

Geier: Was it high pressure to the students in school and scientific orientation?

Burditt: Yeah, there was quite a bit around that, I think. Definitely it was a community that had high expectations that way. I'd say a large number of people with Ph.D.'s and definitely oriented toward science and engineering. Those were the basic goals of the town.

Geier: Was that an early interest when you were in school?

Burditt: It must have been, because when I actually applied early to college and went, I didn't finish my senior year at high school. I started school at the College of Environmental Science and Forestry, so I must have wanted to do that. I think where that really came from was we spent a lot of time in the Smokeys [Great Smokey Mountains of Tennessee/North Carolina] when I was a kid, and it was before it got quite as crowded as it is now. I have lots of memories of being in the (Great) Smokey Mountains National Park and then doing a lot of things on rivers. Where I decided to get into forestry and those kinds of fields, I couldn't tell you when that happened, but I know I must have wanted to because I picked a pretty focused school to go to.

Geier: Sure. I was going to ask you about that. You said your early goal was to the Park Service, and you shifted from that, correct?

Burditt: Actually, it was an opportunity for employment. I actually was in Forest, Outdoor Recreation Resource Management [U.S. Forest Service]. At that point in time, there were two ways you could get on with the Forest Service. It was what they called "The Roster," and every so often, it would open up and you could apply. If you weren't on "The Roster," you couldn't get a job. With the Park Service, they were in the Department of Interior and they had a different thing called the PACE, which was the Professional and Career Exam. You had to take this exam, and if you scored a certain number of points, and they had a distribution they would go with. I believe the maximum you could get, if you weren't a veteran, was like 100 points, and then if you were a veteran, of course, you could have points added on. This was a time when there a number of veterans in that arena. So, even at 100 points, you tended to be fairly

low down the list. And there wasn't much hiring going on, so I just basically took the first opportunity that came along and wound up heading more into forest management then, instead of recreation. Although, I have used that recreation background pretty extensively since.

Geier: Maybe you could talk a little bit about when you finished your graduate work. What were your professional goals or priorities that you had in mind?

Burditt: Probably when I finished the graduate work, I was more along the lines of seeing myself as a technical person, having a skill that I could go out and do things in the field. I had a fairly good background in silviculture, and I had this goal of doing forest management. If you understood how the forest worked and you could understand the operation side of it, we could do a better job. At the end of my graduate work here, I pretty much anticipated being in that kind of technical capacity. So, I did that for several years as a forester, and actually enjoyed it quite a bit. I kind of had the luck of the draw, falling into opportunities, like with the opportunity to go to St. Helens. Then the Flathead [NF] job came up, which was one of the places I just really wanted to get to. When I was in that position, the forest logging engineer there was a person who was on this district who had been in the job that they offered me, and basically the ranger talked with my boss who must have said, "Looks like a decent person, how about we make something work out?" I had never really thought about going that direction, I got called into my boss's office, and he said, "Well, how would you like this other job?" And that kind of set me on the path to being more in the managerial end of things, figuring out how to get a program going as opposed to being a technical resource to people.

Geier: It sounds like there were some people that were kind of calling your name at certain points. Were there any people you would identify as kind of mentors, or even more kind of intellectual or academic inspirations?

Burditt: That's a really good question. Early on, I guess some of what really strikes me in thinking about early inspiration was Dr. John Gordon, who was at Iowa State when I was there. I took several classes from him, and he was a fairly stimulating professor to take classes from. He was Head of Forest Science here [Oregon State University] for a while, and then went to Yale. I just really was stimulated by his way of thinking, and the way in which he pushed people to learn and to inquire. Found him really, really exciting. It was also a time when some of the first kind of integrated texts on ecology were coming out. Eugene Odum's book had just come out and it was fairly revolutionary, even though it was kind of basic, but it was beginning to get that sense of "what is ecology?" out in the thinking world. I think those were real influential in terms of how I try to think about things, which is a systems approach; what are the conflicts and what things are happening within? Early on, I would have to say those were things within the agency.

You know, it's really hard for me to define a mentor. I've had a number of people who've helped me do things. But, I certainly would not have gotten to where I am without that set of people who give you advice or coaches. There's been a variety of those. I've had a lot of

people give me opportunities to try something and either succeed or not. That were willing to take risks for me, to give me that chance to either demonstrate that I could do the job or that I wasn't going to cut it. When I started in Idaho, I was one of the first woman foresters in that region. There were two of us who started on the Clearwater [NF] at the same time. We were pretty apart, so actually I didn't have much contact with the other woman, but it was in those early days when there weren't many women in professional positions or field-going positions. It's been an interesting experience along the way, and I think there were definitely some key people along the way that were willing to take the risk of bucking the old tradition of not necessarily including women in the work force. So, there were people willing to take that risk and try to make some things happen so that I could demonstrate what I could do.

Geier: Did you ever encounter the point where there was a place you wanted to go but where it seemed to be an obstacle? It sounds like there was something helping you pull through.

Burditt: This is one of those I probably wouldn't want to have on a screen, but, when I first started out, my sense was that there were, well, I'll give an example from the first party that I went to. All the men were on one side and all the women were on the other side. I walked in the door, and I didn't know who to go talk to. Because it was the men that I worked with, and they were the husbands of the women that were there, and all the wives and the women were over here. As for the women in the office, although they were excited to see me start an employment, many of them, I started out a higher grade than most of them would ever achieve, so there were interesting dynamics there. The wives were all kind of nervous about the idea I'd be out in the field with their husbands, so it was an interesting experience overcoming that. There were times when I wasn't sure it was worth continuing in that vein. There was a point during my early work there when I had a supervisor that wasn't real sure what to do with me. I remember one of the things he suggested, was that I could type up a paper he needed done for something. At that point, I kind of said, "this is enough." I went to the ranger's office and said, "This isn't what I went to school for. I'm not a highly-paid secretary and need to be doing some different things. It changed at that point. I did have another person on that district who really looked out for giving me good training opportunities and experience. So, I kind of had both things happen early on.

Geier: What were your outlooks, if you were having difficulties? Were there were resources to draw on?

Burditt: Yeah. Who took the steps that helped me succeed, rather than threw up another barrier? When I went to the ranger, he could have just said, "Well, too bad. This is what we need to have you do." In which case, I probably would have left the agency, because I figured I had more talents than that particular approach to life. But rather than doing that, he said, "Well, no. That's not what you should be doing. We'll head some things in a different way."

Geier: So, one of these opportunities was you were kind of recruited for this program at OSU?

Burditt: Yeah.

Geier: What was your understanding of the priorities of the University of Washington or Oregon State University and the forestry program here that you were getting into? Did you have any understanding of it before that?

Burditt: I probably didn't have an extensive understanding, in that it, it was really through the Forest Service program that I came to this, and so I did know what program I was entering, which was Forest Engineering. I got a Masters in Forest Engineering. My exposure to Oregon State University had primarily been during the ten-week Forest Engineering Institute the prior winter when I was over in Peavy Hall, and so you kind of interacted around a bit. It was, of course, a huge forestry school, comparatively, and I knew a bit about the mix of things, but my focus during that time was in that forest engineering arena, because that's the program I was in.

Geier: So you, it sounds to me like what you're saying is that Oregon State University and this area wasn't necessarily your goal in the Forest Service.

Burditt: No, it was pretty much opportunistic that I wound up here.

Geier: While you were here, was there anybody on the faculty here that you were particularly close to?

Burditt: Probably the person who was the lead for our program, actually was a Forest Service employee, Don Studier. He provided kind of career counseling and advice and guidance for us, so he probably was really our strongest linkage. There was an individual who taught some classes for us, a fellow named Ed Striker. He's not over there any more. He was an interesting resource in that he had previously worked for the Forest Service and then had left and gone to work for a consulting firm. That give a good sense of the range of opportunities that were out there. Really wasn't involved with this set of folks at all in that regard. I do remember I took several classes in the fish and wildlife group, some of which Stan Gregory now teaches. He didn't teach them at the time. I also took a number of classes in soils. I tried to do a minor in soils, and Stuart Childs was the professor of a number of those. Took soil physics and some things which, if I was in them, I kind of questioned my ability to do them. They got much more complicated than my mind got, and intriguingly enough, he happens to be married to a person who's now associate regional forester, so, kind of an amazing way in which history goes.

Geier: Who was that?

Burditt: His name is Stuart Childs.

Geier: Okay, Childs.

Burditt: He's been gone for some time, I believe.

Geier: Let's see, you went up to Mount St. Helens around that time and this group is very active up there at that time, as I understand it.

Burditt: Right.

Geier: When was your first encounter with the people involved with the Andrews?

Burditt: Actually, probably my first encounter, and I didn't know what it was, was when I took a number of the fish and wildlife courses, "Stream Ecology" and some others, because we did field work out at the Andrews.

Geier: Okay.

Burditt: That's really where my exposure came to that setting. What I remember actually is long drives (Laughter). I'm not sure that it really sank in on me, the Andrews Experimental Forest, and what it was at the time. When I applied for the Blue River [Ranger District] position, I knew about the experimental forest and a bit about it, but I didn't know the depth of the program or the mix of activities that were going on. So, probably my first exposure was in some of those stream ecology classes actually out at the Andrews. The exposure that I would have had to the folks up at St. Helens, I wouldn't have connected in the same way.

Geier: Can you recall anything about the Andrews site itself, besides the drive down there in that first experience?

Burditt: I remember going to Lookout Creek, the setting there and the old-growth forest, the different kinds of opportunities they were sharing with us, to understand "constrained" and "unconstrained" stream reaches, and some of that. The memory I have of it was of a really neat place, a fairly interesting setting. It was probably the most time I had spent in an old-growth forest. Given other places I had lived, it was a pretty amazing experience for me in that regard.

Geier: I know from my own experience, it's hard to remember people after the fact. Were there any people at the Andrews that you know that were in those classes? That you recall?

Burditt: I can't recall, and I know that I've talked with Stan about the name of the person who taught the course, and I can't recall that today. I can look it up for you.

Geier: No, that's okay. I'm just curious, because it is the impression that I'm looking for. So eventually, you are drawn back here to Blue River as the district ranger. What was the appeal of that position at that time?

Burditt: Well, this won't be as misty sounding as it might be, but I had been on the Flathead for about eight years, I kind of worked my way around and I was a district ranger at a really neat place. Whitefish is a nice town to live in, managed the biggest ski area in the region, that kind

of stuff. You've got the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier Park there, and so, my thought was, why would I ever leave here? Having been there for that length of time, I was getting a degree of pressure to move on and to move up, including potential opportunities to move into a regional office and kind of go through the fast-track career approach. My perspective was that I really liked the district ranger position, because you have responsibility for an area of land and what happens there, and you're close to it. You affect what happens, and yet you're also in a role where you can affect, to some degree, at least local policies. It was a job that I was really enjoying and I didn't want to give it up that quickly.

At the time, most ranger positions were what we called GS-12's, and to get a 13, which would be a promotion, most of those were located in western Oregon and Washington, and maybe some in northern California. So, what I had actually done was to go through the book, and make a list of the places that I would consider good places to live and interesting places to work, that would be a promotion. Then I watched as those got advertised, and I figured each time one would be filled would be kind of a five-year rotation. So, they advertised the Blue River [RD] and the Sweet Home [RD] ranger jobs at the same time. I had kind of looked at them because certainly the Willamette was one of the forests that had popped onto that little highlight list I had made. But I wasn't really that motivated to move at that point-in-time. And there was a person on the forest [Willamette] who contacted me, and I had worked with him in Idaho before. So, he called me up to talk to me about the jobs, and wouldn't I want to consider it.

Geier: Who was that?

Burditt: His name was Hank Ashton. He was the administrative officer at the time. I talked with him quite a bit, and it was kind of intriguing. I thought, maybe I'll apply. I was going back-and-forth about it because the Flathead Valley is a pretty neat place itself. Then, one day, our forest supervisor had called the deputy supervisor to ask what was going on, because Mike Kerrick, then the Willamette supervisor, was with him down at a fire training session in Marana, Arizona. Mike had asked him a few questions, and said, "Well, I hear she might apply." So, he called up wanting to know what's going on, a "You don't really want to do this, do you?" kind of thing. That really intrigued me that Mike knew enough about me to ask questions about me doing that. So I thought, "Well, it's a good opportunity to apply for a position. I'm in a place that I love. If I don't get this job, I'm great with that, and if I do get it then, that's a good opportunity with the complexity of the program." At that point-in-time, as I mentioned, I had been in the right places at the right times for things, and so I figured it would actually be a good experience to not get a job. That's how I wound up applying.

At the time, I think you had to indicate whether you wanted to go to Sweet Home or Blue River or would consider both, and I indicated that I would consider both, but definitely would prefer Blue River. That was geared totally towards the opportunity to work with the research community. At Tally Lake [Ranger District], we had done some work with the folks out of the Intermountain [Research] Station. A fellow named Ray Scherer and others worked in an area called Miller Creek where they'd had a fire study that had gone in like 20 years before, and

there was a number of plots and stuff. We had a 20-year revisit kind of thing and it was an area they had been looking at different kinds of treatments and regeneration responses. In Miller Creek, they had happened to lay out all the plots and then they'd had a fire go through unexpectedly. So, you actually had a lot of pre-treatment data. It wasn't actually a natural fire, but it wasn't your treatment, so they got quite a bit of interesting material. We were working on the 20-year visit, and I had done quite a bit of interacting. We set up something we called the Miller Creek Demonstration Forest. I was involved with developing the memorandum of understanding for that, and how could we set this area aside for perpetuity so there was a way that the value to the site could be protected. That really got me pretty motivated, and when I had been over at Hungry Horse for that short time as acting ranger. That district has the Coram Experimental Forest.

Geier: Which one?

Burditt: Coram, C-o-r-a-m. I'd had a little bit of connection there with the research community, and I just found it to be a really positive thing. The notion of trying to understand the system and learn from it and being involved with that, was really exciting. So, one of the key attractions to the Blue River District is the presence of the Andrews Experimental Forest, and the opportunity to work with the research community. It's a fairly unique experience as I visit with other folks.

Geier: From what you're saying, it sounds like it wasn't so much the specific people at the Andrews, it was the specific program with the concept of being district ranger where there was a large research community.

Burditt: Right. That's a little different for me, is not having been real, real connected with the western slope [West of Cascade Range crest]. I'd been more in the Intermountain area, so I knew of these folks. I kind of knew who Jerry Franklin was and that kind of thing, but I'd been more focused in a different setting, so it was more of the concept and the opportunity to link between management and research. That was really stimulating in my mind. And I knew, of course, who Fred Swanson is. I'd read a lot of his works and different things along the way.

Geier: You had been following the work of many of these people, and it sounds like the connection with the Andrews was kind of general?

Burditt: Yeah, it was fairly general. It wasn't like I had started out with this goal to get there.

Geier: Maybe you could talk just a little bit about, if you can recall at that point-in-time, what your concept might have been of the appropriate role for an experimental forest. What is the purpose of an experimental forest within the Forest Service?

Burditt: That's a good question. Well, at that point-in-time, I probably had a somewhat limited concept in that many of the experimental forests I had been associated with or had some awareness of, had a slightly or greatly less budget and opportunity for activity than what you

see at the Andrews. I probably saw the role as the opportunity to generate new information. I probably had a sense that it was more about scientists going and doing their thing. I didn't have a really good understanding of the linkages that happened. I was always somewhat intrigued in that people either seemed to really like connecting with research.

Geier: Given the time constraints here, I do not know if we should jump into this, but I was going to ask you if you could think about when you first arrived as District Manager in that community. How would you characterize the condition of the Andrews in relation to the rest of your concerns on the Blue River [Ranger District] at the time?

Burditt: Maybe as a starting intro to that, I can say that I actually came a week early. The forest supervisor wanted me to come before my official reporting date, because there was going to be a big meeting between folks from Pacific Northwest Research Station, Pacific Southwest [Research Station], and then, Region 5, and Region 6, and the agency [U.S. Forest Service], and he wanted me to have that opportunity to be involved with that as I came in. So my first event, coming to the district, was a week-long meeting at the Andrews with all these folks, that were, all these names you know, that I had read publications of and all that.

Geier: Yeah.

Burditt: It really stuck in my mind. They were interacting, kind of trying to see where there might be some linkages in the program, and it was just a great way to start out. And the forest supervisor [Mike Kerrick] was very clear that part of his criteria and selection with this, was somebody who wanted to work in this research thing and be a strong partner in that mode. Mike Kerrick, I really, really was impressed with his interest in pushing that forward, because you could tell that there were times that he was a little nervous about where things might go, but he was a major, major supporter of the program there. He was very clear to me about that. So, my sense of how I looked at it, the Andrews and the connection with the research-management partnership, was a key element of the job. It was a primary focus that I'd be spending a lot of time on. Actually, which I spend quite a bit of time with.

Geier: What was your perception at that time with the degree of public interest in the Andrews and activities that were going on there?

Burditt: When I first got there, I'm not sure that I have a good sense. I knew there was a lot of classes that came through. I wasn't real aware of the other kinds of interests. However, during that first year, I was just amazed by the number of interactions either with political entities, international visitors, national media, and others that came through. I actually kind of pushed that we start doing a tracking system or somehow of summarizing who was coming through, because it was really a phenomenal set of people that were coming in contact with that place and then going out to other places. I thought it was very interesting, first of all, to know what all that was and then to be able to demonstrate to others the importance of that, particularly during that time period. This is when the spotted owl, of course, had really risen up, we're moving into the injunction, and I think we got quite a bit of attention during that period of time.

Within months of my arriving there, we had several different congressmen who came out from the east coast and middle part of the country. Folks who were looking to be policy-makers, and kind of set the stage. I remember a number of different tours that we did, and the effort put into how to, in a very short period of time, be able to communicate with them about the value of what was going on there. Not only what we were learning about, like spotted owls or old-growth forests, but also the critical nature of data collection and critical nature of having an integrated setting, and having a long-term commitment to learning. I can remember real vividly, one time we were walking down through Reference Stand 2, where we had to open up a trail in there, and Jerry Franklin was walking up the hill to meet us and the sun shone through just at the right moment. [Trip with Congressman Peter DeFazio and another member of Congress]. It was like the mountain had come to talk. From my perspective, we immediately went into the fast track of the political and national media interest news. I don't have a good sense of what it had been prior to that, but the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Seattle Times*, *Discovery Magazine*. We had folks coming to do a special for public television. It just seemed like there was a fairly constant, fairly high level of interest, in this place. The political interests were coming through.

Geier: High profile position, you probably felt then.

Burditt: Yes.

Geier: Was that a surprise to you at that point?

Burditt: It probably was. And if I had realized the degree of the high-profile nature, I would have never perceived myself as being one to step into that arena. But it kind of developed over time. It was sort of like, it's here, and you gotta do it. That had sort of been building because of the concerns about old growth and the spotted owl, and the work that Steve Eubanks had been doing with folks in terms of thinking about how to work with riparian management areas and green tree retention and down woody material. The stage had been being set for when these became core issues, and this was a place that people wanted to come learn.

Geier: What's your recollection of concerns about facilities and accommodations and the structure of the Andrews at that time?

Burditt: When I first got here, everything [facilities] was roof structures and trailers. I believe we had gotten the first grant for the first quad, and construction was starting. The only facility out there basically was the snow-cat workshop. I believe that next summer was when Art's house got built, so in terms of facilities infrastructure, it was fairly limited. That was during that phase when the person [northern spotted owl field crew member] stepped in the shower and the bathtub fell through the shower floor [bathroom floor had rotted]. So, we've pretty much gone through a major growth in terms of the infrastructure, to support people being able to live in that setting and do work right there. That's all pretty much happened since around '89 until now, that major construction and building occurred.

Geier: I'm also curious about your take on the evolution of John Cissel's role and the liaison role [Position created to assist technology transfer and use of science [esp. at HJA] in management].

Burditt: I have a take on that since I helped Art and Fred rewrite the position description. My knowledge of what originally occurred, was that in the early '80s there had been some work done that convinced the regional office [Region 6] that there should be a position at Blue River associated with the Andrews that would be called the H.J. Andrews Silviculturist. Two different people filled that role over time. My understanding is that initially, the Portland office [PNW Research Station] funded the position, but there became some confusion over who was funding what and why. Part of that was geared towards the notion that there had been some cutting that had gone on in the Andrews, and there was probably a need to think about the silvicultural management of the forest over time. Two folks who had been in that original position had worked pretty directly with Art [McKee], and helped set up the notebooks for each of the various stands or studies that had happened out there. The notebooks are in the library.

It was a fairly focused position really oriented towards the Andrews' work. I arrived in May of '89, and it was a whirlwind kind of situation in those next months. The person who was in the role had some personal needs to not be in a commuting mode, and so we worked to get him a position in the Eugene [Willamette National Forest Supervisor] office. As we were getting the opportunity to kind of rethink what we were going to do once that placement was made, one of the things that had always stood out for me from that first week, was the landscape issues, since that was what was going on. One of the first things we had talked about as we stood on an overlook ridge, was the Blue River Landscape Study. The concept at that time was thinking about putting something that we called the Cook-Quentin idea on the ground [Cook and Quentin Creek watersheds in upper Blue River watershed]. That is the idea of aggregating cutting units versus continuing to disperse them. Putting that out there on the ground and learning from it. That was sort of an initial concept that had been talked about as we went through all the tours and the politics of different things, and started thinking about how this stuff fit together.

It became really clear to me that the position as described, the H.J. Andrews Silviculturist, was probably not the appropriate venue to do the things we were moving into. And so, working with Fred and Art, I rewrote the position description in late '89, early '90, to be more the "research-liaison" approach. One primary roles of that position was gonna be to kind of be a lead person on getting this Blue River Landscape Study in place and happening. Part of that was this notion that we're not gonna answer all questions of the world on this 15,700 acre watershed [Lookout Creek/Andrews Forest]. So, we re-described what the position was, broadened its roles, and looked at it having a wider range of things, then advertised it. It was also an up-graded position. The silviculturist job had been a GS-11, this was advertised as a GS-12. We advertised it service-wide and got a lot of interest. A number of people that were really intrigued by what that role might be. When we had the cert [List of qualified people for consideration], Art, Fred, myself and Rolf Anderson, who was then on the planning staff in the supervisor's office, got together, went through and made a determination of who we wanted to recommend for selection.

John's [Cissel] work with a knowledge and understanding of forest planning and modeling, and his interest in ecology, really stood out. He's been developing that role ever since he arrived, and kind of broadening what it is. He really functions as the day-to-day liaison with the Andrews Forest itself, coordinating various projects that we have going on, and kind of bridging that gap between the research community and management end of things. We've been able to develop and implement a number of projects that have been concepts for a long time. The long-term ecosystem productivity study, the young stand thinning and diversity study; all these were things that were sort of ideas out there that he's been able to push forward and help make into a reality.

Geier: I'm just curious, did you have any models of that kind of a position that you drew on, or was it just kind of designed uniquely for this case?

Burditt: I really didn't have any models for that kind of position. Probably, the only model was the Andrews silviculturist position. That would have been the model, because I think when they created it, it might have been one of the first with the idea that we're going to invest dollars into this focused person, whose role as a National Forest system employee, to help make this happen on an experimental forest. I see it as a really key position in helping continue that bridge between research and management, because there are different things that drive the two kind of thoughts of how the world works, what we're there to do, and there's always those little opportunities for communication gaps [between land managers and research community] and, and that position bridges between that. I'd like to say we were really foresighted and knew what we were doing, but....

Geier: An important point there is that you were in a lot national forests and had a pretty wide-ranging experience before you came here. What is your perception of the research-management situation here in Region 6 as compared with other places you've been?

Burditt: My sense is that the Pacific Northwest Research Station is quite a bit larger than many of the other ones [research stations], and much more active in terms of what they're doing. Because of that, I think they've had access to more resources to be more involved. My feeling would be, that part of that, at least in this particular setting, is that linkage with the long-term ecosystem research network which integrates not only Forest Service scientists, but scientists from a number of universities with management. This place is substantially larger and more in-depth in terms of what it's able to accomplish than it is in many other places. I also see that's changing. There's been a real effort since the late '80s to build rapport between research and management. In fact, several task group efforts have come out, one just recently. I can send you a little pamphlet about collaborating between research and management. What they're trying to do is help researchers understand what management is about, and help management understand what researchers are about. My sense would be, to make a better connection between those two branches of the agency, so we can do better research and get projects implemented, and do things in a way managers learn and accept, and that tech transfer [technology transfer – communication of lessons from science to users of the information]

happens more rapidly. I think that I see a focus in the agency on really building that connection more strongly than it has been.

Geier: Yeah, I'd like to see that. I talked a little bit with Cindy Miner about that.

Burditt: Okay. I can send those up to you. I didn't think to bring them today.

Geier: Kind of a peripheral issue here is, how you would characterize OSU's role in relation to research-management, as compared to other places that you might have been when there was university involvement?

Burditt: Actually, it's kind of been different at each place. When I was working at the Palouse District and we had that connection with the University of Idaho, I was probably in a role where I wasn't real integrated with it; I just knew it was going on. I saw there was certainly an active connection, between at least our district and the research community and the University of Idaho, because the district ranger at the district also had an office in Moscow. That was part of his role to be linked up there. There was a connection there, although as an employee, I wasn't really linked with it. But the school of forestry [Univ. of Idaho] was connected up. On the Flathead, the University of Montana was one you would see much more linked through the school forest and different things. I was always aware of some of those connections like the Yellow Bay Biological Station with Jack Stanford. That was another thing, but that wasn't forestry, in kind of a different arena. What I see with Oregon State University that's relatively unique in my experience, I couldn't necessarily compare it to others, is the variety and depth of involvement throughout the university with the Andrews program. The number of folks from different colleges and departments who come together and are actually trying to do their own work, and yet also be involved in more of an integrated fashion, and try to do value-added work because of that. It is an experience that I don't think you see many places. I do think that the LTER grant is probably fairly key to that, having seed money that allows people to say it makes sense to them to spend time together and really try and push that. The number of people who are doing work in this venue and working together, is just an order of magnitude different than I've seen in other places. That's partly due to the size of the school as well.

Geier: Maybe you could give me your impressions of the LTER meetings as compared to other efforts to try to integrate work?

Burditt: Well my first experience with an LTER meeting was, whoa, this is kind of intriguing. People wandered in when they wanted to, and they wandered out, and there'd be all kinds of discussion topics. It was really an interesting flow of interactions with the idea of figuring out how to integrate and do work. It was sort of like there were never the same people in the room for five minutes, it seemed. I see them being sort of that linchpin, a reason that people come together and hit on some real core issues. I don't see them, necessarily the meeting itself, really addressing those issues so much as trying to identify something we ought to work on together. We need a group to go do that. I see that as a really effective way of having inclusive involvement. They're open meetings. Anybody can come to them. There's been a strong

effort to bring in people from other locations, University of Oregon, Chemeketa [Community College], and different places. It provides that opportunity for folks to make a connection with someone that perhaps they may know who they are, or might know what they're doing, but may have not linked up, and they can make that link in person, or to come together around issues of concern to them. So, I see the meetings really serving a good purpose in that way. I think it's been really valuable, the science hour that's been added, because it allows us to not get off too much into "just business" kind of stuff, and lose track of why are we there. And the focus of the science hour and sharing with each other, gives people an opportunity to share their work, and for people to really remember what this is all about, that it's not just an administrative kind of structure.

End of Side A, Tape 1 (of 1)

Begin Side B, Tape 1 (of 1)

Geier: I was curious if, as district ranger, you've ever encountered situations where those LTER meetings help you resolve or at least identify, problems areas that needed to be addressed.

Burditt: Relative to the district itself, it'd be hard for me to say that the meetings themselves do, although we're fairly integral in them. To some degree they do in that a number of the activities that we're jointly involved with, which are not necessarily basic research, but like the "young stand thinning and diversity study," that kind of thing, we're sharing information there that we can learn, who's got a concern, who wants to be involved, and so that's helped us be able to do things to get things moved forward and get implemented. The other kinds of purposes that it served, is as an example, concerns about road management on the Andrews. It's a place where we can go and connect with most of the folks that we might need to interact with. They've also been really useful in regard to, like the Blue River Landscape management and monitoring strategy we're trying to get implemented. It's been a place where we can bring forward concepts we're working on, to say here's what we're doing. Needing to have that interaction and get people engaged. It's been a way to be able to do that. It's helped in all those ways. The other way that it's really helped, is I think, that many times, certainly not every meeting, but many times, it really stimulates some new thinking. You get a discussion going or somebody's got a new proposal that they're making, and it can help stimulate an idea or put a kernel of thought in that later comes back in a different way. Those are things that I can think of.

Geier: What level of involvement is the district expected to have in these kinds of exchanges?

Burditt: We have a real mix. When I first arrived, we had the Andrews' position, and then, district staff. We were trying to be involved in different ways, more with installation kinds of activities, like the log decomposition study. District staff were really involved in putting together the timber sale contract and doing the administration that allowed that project to be implemented. They sort of helped with how the logs got placed. Mark [Harmon] designed it, and then people had to do that. Others were involved in the Quartz Creek project with Stan Gregory, with again the design and implementation, and ways to find funding for that. What

we've tried to do since that time is do what we can to more inculcate it throughout the district. One of the things that we did, I believe it was in '92, because John's role was somewhat different than the silviculturist role had been before, and for several other reasons, we also then created a position under John, which is a silviculturist. That's what Jim Mayo is in, and he has kind of an oddball job, in that he's half with what we call the Cascade Center, he does 30% of his work with our planning and resource group, and 20% of his work with our reforestation and timber stand and improvement group. Jim has to report to a lot of different groups. His role is to do a lot of the silviculture aspects, and as an example, he's the project manager for the "young stand thinning and diversity study." With our long-term ecosystem productivity site, we found an employee to be the project manager for that, trying to find people who might take leads on certain individual projects, and get them more engaged in things and also spread out the work.

Another thing that we did in 1991 when we realized that a lot of the work we were doing and a lot of the info we were sharing wasn't just limited to the Andrews Forest, is we did create the concept of the Cascade Center for Ecosystem Management. One of our tasks back then was to kind of inculcate that concept in different places. At the district level, one of the things that we try to do is when we answer the phone, we say "Blue River Ranger District and Cascade Center." We've got stationary that has the three entities on it for things that go out under that letterhead. We also added a position that was really focused on doing the GIS work for the Cascade Center projects. We're now moving that one back into the mainstream of the district, and kind of again trying to integrate all of the work there. But we're trying to do what we can to build the notion for folks that this is all of our jobs, as opposed to people seeing it as they have their jobs to do, and the Andrews is those folks "over there." We've had mixed success as you can imagine.

Geier: Would talk a little bit about the evolution of the concept for the Cascade Center for Ecosystem Management?

Burditt: I think part of where that came from was, as we were doing a lot of these tours, one of the things that was really neat about them, is in the morning, we could go to the Andrews and talk some about streams and long-term data collection. We'd go to the log decomposition site because that was always a neat one for people to see. We could spend a morning on the experimental forest, and then go out in the afternoon to sites on the district where we were implementing some of the concepts, and talk about here's this idea over here, and here you're seeing it in action, and really get into discussions with people. It was starting to be evident that there was more happening outside that vein, and that we aren't answering these questions on this small piece of real estate, that it has certain purposes. Really, there was a lot going on outside of that. So, we needed to have a way to communicate to folks that it's something other than just the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest program, and how could we do that.

Another thing going on at that time was you had things being generated, like the Blue Mountains Institute, and the concept of institutes or centers. As we were looking for how would we name what this entity, and what would it be like, we had a lot of discussions about it

and we came up with Cascade Center for Ecosystem Management. The “Center” word kind of came along with the institute thing. But the idea is that it’s a concept or a program of work. It’s not a place, it’s not a building that you go to. I was really thinking more about, at that time, what was our idea of adaptive management. In ’91, we had come out with some notions around how we would ask questions. Based on gathering up what are research questions and management questions and public questions, it was about how we decide to answer those questions. Then, what projects do you implement that would help answer it, how do you learn from that, and then how do you feed that back in? We were trying to build that kind of system, and find a way to phrase that for folks, and describe different components of the program, such as basic research on the Andrews, applied research, demonstration opportunities, and education opportunities. As we sorted through that, that’s when we pretty much came up with this notion of the Cascade Center. It’s just sort of a way of putting some framework around a larger program.

Geier: Who was the working team on that? You?

Burditt: That was pretty much myself, Fred, Art and John Cissel, at the time. And I know we got a lot of insights from Rolf Anderson. We really had come up with this notion prior to Darrel Kenops, the current forest supervisor arriving, because I remember we had our brochure for a couple things kind of laid out, and he rewrote the brochures for us when he arrived. He really bought into the concept, and the Andrews program kind of followed where Mike Kerrick had left off, with him being a major supporter of this partnership and the work that’s done there, and he has continued to support us with the need for John Cissel’s position. Interestingly, when it was the “Silviculturist” position, we funded it primarily through silviculture-type dollars. When we went to this broader concept, one thing we struggled with on the forest [Will NF], is that it wasn’t just a silviculture job, and so we had to find a mechanism to how we compete for funding on the forest level. That was one thing Rolf Anderson really helped us with. He was willing to be the staff officer on the forest who would sponsor this in the budgeting process. We needed to get funds from all the various “fund code” areas, because of how we fund as functional areas, we needed somebody who could help say, we need to pull these little bits from each to fund this Cascade Center. As we went through downsizing in the early ‘90s and had some really difficult years, many people in the forest [Willamette] saw the Cascade Center as perhaps a discretionary item. And there were several folks who were really supportive that know this is key and fundamental to our program of work. Again, Darrel Kenops followed along Mike Kerrick’s footsteps as did the deputy supervisor then, John Nelson, and then, our new deputy, Rick Stemm, have all supported that this needs to be part of our program of work. This is important, as we do need to keep some level of stable funding going to the Cascade Center program.

Geier: Sounds like what you’re saying is that a budget cut was a very possible threat to John Cissel’s position too.

Burditt: The potential to have the funding, definitely there were some people to whom it was hard to see how funding this position helps meet our targets. We have hard targets to produce

fish structures or to produce timber volume or to produce recreation visitor days, and how does this position of John's [Cissel] and the work we're doing there, help us meet those? One of the ways that we tried to convey things, is that one of our roles that John and I have talked about, is to generate information. That is part of our responsibility, because of this setting that we have is generating new knowledge, and that is helping over time to meet those goals and objectives. But, our forest went from having 770 permanent employees to now having about 410, and we did that very painfully. When you had to go through the thought process of eliminating positions and having people find their position on a surplus list, and we also did a reduction-in-force, it was certainly quite controversial for folks. What is "necessary work"?

Geier: That might be kind of a good way to address this next question I had in mind. How does your perception of the kinds of management problems that seemed most urgent in the last decade of your work up there, and the way in which that might evolve, relate to the kinds of work that scientists at the Andrews do?

Burditt: That's a good, good question. I would start by saying that one of the ways I try to view our role, or it's my hope, that to the degree possible, what we're really trying to answer the questions that are likely to come up 20 years from now. You know, 10, 15, 20 years away, as opposed to the urgent questions of today. Some of the ways in which I think to some degree has been played out in the Andrews history, thinking back to Eric Forsman and the spotted owl, the early hooting up at Box Canyon on the south end of the district in the early '70s, and the work that then went into beginning to understand old growth and the relationship of those old-growth dependent species. That kind of led up to having some base of information available when that became a major issue. Another example of that to me, is the work that was done around riparian management and the work the [Willamette] Forest had done with the Andrews group and with Stan Gregory and other folks, to develop a management area and riparian management guidelines in our forest plan that came out in 1990. A lot of that work became some of the basis used in the FEMAT Report and in the Northwest Forest Plan, and then, you know, those guidelines were recently published in Japanese. Those are examples to me of things that were fairly critical management issues on which there was some level of information available to help address.

Other things I think where the Andrews connection has been an interesting link, happened on a field trip where we talked about the Cook-Quentin Study and idea of "minimum fragmentation," and trying to maintain future options that minimize the impact of today's practices on ecologically-significant old-growth [Field trip with staff members of the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee]. Then, when section 318 language [House appropriations for Forest Service] was written, it says "minimize fragmentation," it's kind of like, whoa. It's not necessarily that this came directly from that field trip, but it appears very correlated that information we were sharing was, that level of information, was being used to help set a framework for helping us maintain options. Actually, as we had a number of tours in the early '90s with industry groups and with environmental groups, one of the questions that came up was, "How can we be changing the paradigm of forest management when we've spent so many years trying to understand the even-age management system?"

We would have a lot of discussions about that on those trips, that we didn't know everything. [Not enough to make big, proposed changes in management practices]. We knew some basics, we knew enough to set some frameworks needed to continue learning, but we probably weren't going to have all the answers before we implemented things. And there were some of those trips where some fairly contentious discussions went on, particularly around the idea of trying to retain snags or the idea of leaving large woody debris [on the ground]. It was a very challenging time for people to understand; what is the value of leaving this large tree out there in the forest when it might be worth \$5,000 at the mill? I saw us in the exact middle of that debate. It was one of the roles we played in that transition because of the ability to look at the research setting and then go out on the rest of the district and show people here is an application, and then talk about it and have the discussions. We were put in some pretty challenging positions. There were a lot of people who didn't care for what we were trying to implement at the district level from the research learning. They felt like we didn't know enough yet.

One of the ways that I saw our role as a district was carrying forward some of the legacy Steve Eubanks left. It was partly our role to take the ideas and concepts and to start thinking about how do you apply those out on the ground. Can you operationally do it? It might be a nice idea to leave large woody material, but how do you deal with safety issues and that kind of thing. And so, partly our role was to take those concepts, implement them, think about what works and what doesn't, and tweak that a little bit. One of the good examples of tweaking that happened was from the early work on the large woody debris in our forest plan [Willamette NF]. There was a standard guideline that said we would leave eight to 15 pieces of material at least 20 feet long and of a certain diameter. Well, you get out on the ground and you have your timber sale, and you've got a tree laying there that's 100 feet long, and the purchaser asks, "So, is that five pieces or is that one?" Well, depending on who you are affects what your answer is. Some of our wildlife folks would say, "Well, of course it's one piece." Then, from the purchaser's viewpoint, they say, "Okay, I'm going to go down that log and I'm going to cut it into five chunks because it only needs to be 20 feet, so then I've got five credits." So, one thing we did pretty quickly was put together a team that looked at how we adapt that guideline to better meet what we really need to do on the ground. That was a team that Mark [Harmon] participated in. We had folks from the research community and management out there looking at it with purchasers, and we actually tried a different approach on one of our sales where we went back through all our plant association information, and checked the ranges you would find in different plant associations. Then we re-described it to say that you would have certain number of lineal feet of large woody material out there. So, instead of eight to 15 pieces, well, do I want to leave 15 or eight? If I'm the purchaser, I want to leave eight, if I'm the wildlife biologist, I want to leave 15. Well, instead of doing that, you would say we want 300 lineal feet per acre, as an example. And so, the folks worked on how we really meet what we want to do out there and be fair and clear to the operators. I think the down woody material was one of the things that was really key.

Young stand management certainly has been a focus for us, recognizing that we have a lot of areas that were cut 40 to 50 years ago, and a number of stands throughout the Western Cascades that are in the age class and size class where they need to be commercially-thinned. Well, what should we do today that will put them in a position we might want them in 40 years from now, and how is that different from what we were thinking ten years ago? Do we want an even-aged, 80-year old stand out there with the biggest trees possible, or do we want a stand that's starting to develop multi-story characteristics. So, the young stand thinning and diversity project has been geared toward that. We're also thinking about the very young stands, the stands under 20 years. What should we be doing with those? Those have probably been some of the real key things. I think the other emphasis area we've had for John, is this notion about what's the context for the management activities we do. So, from the standpoint of, I'm gonna go out and cut trees from 20 acres out here, how do I know whether that's a good thing to do or a bad thing to do.

We heard about this on one of our field trips. We would go up in the Mona Creek drainage, one of the places we'd go to show people where we left large, green tree retention, we left snags, and we had down woody material on the ground. We would also talk about the notion of landscapes, and context we put the treatments in. We were standing up there one day and talking about how at that point-in-time, this particular area was on trajectory for what you would expect from a regulated forest, because we were doing an 80-year rotation, and you thought, "Well, how much of the area would have been treated by now?" It was pretty much right on track [35% clear-cut patches]. So, we're standing up there talking about the idea of minimizing fragmentation and what not, one person said, "So this area that we're looking at, is it a good landscape or a bad landscape?" That's a pretty hard question to answer, because it depends on your management objective, what context are you looking at, and what scale. So, we put a lot of focus into this notion of landscape planning and analysis, and the use of historical disturbance regimes to perhaps see if they can give us some guidance for how we might want to do management activities in the future. We're kind of at that stage now, being able to implement this Blue River Landscape Management and Monitoring strategy, and hopefully learn about this approach that will generate information we can use when we're in the next generation of large-scale planning, what can we learn from this that will help, and maybe we ought to head kind of this direction. Or validate that the Northwest Forest Plan is heading in a good direction, or isn't.

Geier: You mentioned earlier some of these industry and environmental groups that you took on tours to discuss some of the issues of the early '90s. Are there some groups that you found particularly helpful or important to have along?

Burditt: That's a really good question. What I noticed was that there were more industry association groups willing to come on tours and talk about things. I believe part of that was they were trying to communicate to their membership, perhaps trying to get their membership to have a better understanding of what might be coming, for whatever purpose they might have had for that. On the environmental end, it was actually relatively challenging sometimes to get people to participate, because we were in this shift of the power. The power was

moving, and for some of the environmental community at that time when we were operating under an injunction [Dwyer injunction on logging in federal lands within the range of the northern spotted owl] and different settings, it wasn't necessarily in their interest to come along and figure out what are good ways to manage the forest, because from their perspective, that wasn't necessarily what the end result goal was. What I saw that was particularly valuable, especially those trips where we'd get people with a mix of interests, and so that you would have people along the scale of opinions, dialoging together, having that opportunity to question each other and learn from the questioning. So, I think that was probably the really key part. Beyond that, I think some of the key roles were the opportunity for some of the people in our political policy-making branches to take a chance to come out and ask their questions and learn from what was going on, and to think about what their positions might be on this as they went through that debate.

Geier: Was there a recruitment strategy you could use when you were trying to bring people up there? Were you trying to balance these groups, in other words?

Burditt: My sense was that we responded more to requests than that we tried to generate them.

Geier: Okay.

Burditt: As an example, the Western Forestry and Conservation Association did several tours for a period of time on the district and on the experimental forest. They would come to us and ask us to participate or to design something. Probably the ones that we might generate were opportunities for elected officials, if they wanted to come out when they were on break, or we would respond to media requests. It was probably not a concerted marketing effort on our part to get people out, but more, these were people who wanted to be talking about this, they wanted a place to come, and we responded in terms of trying to have an interconnected discussion.

Geier: Okay. I wanted to ask you this question, because I asked Mike Kerrick this also. How do you go about communicating your management needs to researchers? What's the point of contact, and how does that process tend to flow in your experience?

Burditt: I think there are a couple of different levels at which that happens. One example is actually coming up fairly shortly at the regional level, between the regional forester [Region 6] and the station director [PNW]. In the middle of this month, the regional leadership team and the station leadership team are spending a day together, thinking about where have they come from and where do they want to go in the future, in terms of the connection between research and management. There are formal kinds of approaches where you identify a long-term need and you can submit it up through channels and discussions go on. Is it something to work on, or isn't it? There are formal processes. My sense is we use a lot of informal processes locally, and communicate what our needs are.

The young stand one is a really good example. That was something Mike [Kerrick] was really interested in, and our previous Forest Silviculturist Bob Sanders, was really motivated about. They kind of saw that coming and said, "We're gonna need to do some work on this." So, we wound up starting a process that way, and it was really through the LTER meetings, and working with Art and Fred (Swanson), that some of the questions became, "Well, how do we design this, who needs to be involved, who needs to participate, what will be the priorities of the study, who can be a lead scientist, who will be the principle investigator?" I see, more at the local level, probably more connection with those positions, the project leader and the site director. We talk back-and-forth quite a bit about what we think is coming up. There are some opportunities to build that in, either to the basic program of work that they're doing, or it becomes an opportunity. Can scientists access resources to expand what they're doing? What's going on in larger scale things, such as at the regional network scale?

The long-term ecosystem productivity one is an example that was actually started out as a nationwide kind of venture. And it was initially a long-term site productivity venture, and there were folks in California involved in that. They added a slightly different focus than happened up here in the Northwest, but you had folks up in Portland who were kind of making a real push on that. I know that was kind of coming into the fray when I got here, because one of the first things I was involved in was several meetings. They had the station director and the regional forester signed off that this is an important thing. I was up at a meeting in Portland, at some point in time, I forget when. John Butruille was still regional forester at the time. We had an early morning meeting before that other meeting was going to occur, for folks that were potentially involved in the long-term ecosystem productivity thing. And I remember talking about the need to have an agreement to set these areas aside in our forest plans, as special management areas. We needed to dedicate them to the purpose of those sites, or local district rangers were going to be caught needing to produce timber out of there. How would that work when we're trying to have this 200-year study? So, we had quite a bit of discussion about that. And out of that did come a whole process for forest plan amendments and such for those sites. In that instance, you have a PNW employee who was set up as the site lead. Then you have a national forest systems person, Bob Meurisse, who's a soils person in the RO [Regional Office], and he takes that lead.

But, it is kind of that classic example, because you have all the procedures, you have all the agreements, you've got regional foresters and station directors signing things, and yet, when it came time to fund it and put emphasis on it, it sort of fell through the cracks because it didn't have somebody who was the project leader for it. There wasn't anybody in lobbying for the budget. So, it was really an interesting one to me because it was the classic example of, we're saying we need to do these large-scale studies and big adaptive management plans, and we need to make this all happen. Yet, where we had so much commitment, we had the agreements and people on the ground making it happen, it was a tremendous challenge to keep it in the forefront. This needs to occur, or doesn't need to occur. I don't know if that answers your question.

Geier: That's pretty good. I'm curious if there's any instances you can recall where the presence of the Andrews and timing of long-term research you've been talking about, is a drag on your ability to accomplish things and convince people to support what you're trying to accomplish?

Burditt: That's an interesting question. What my sense would be is that to a large degree, people who are from outside of our area tend to have a whole lot of thirst for knowledge about what we're doing. As you get closer to the Willamette National Forest, you see adjustments to that happening. It's kind of like when you're not in the eye of it, you can see the value of it externally. On the forest, on occasion, I'd say, it has actually created jealousy on some units, that we have had the opportunity to do things differently, or to work with the scientists in a way that other people might not have gotten to. We find that employees on other districts have more interest in knowing what we're doing. Yet, when we get to the management level, it's sometimes hard to get people interested in it. Sometimes it's been a challenge to have people see the value of the program. I see that somewhat depends on our ability to communicate the work in a way that people can comprehend. To a large degree, sometimes the message I hear back, is if it's so valuable, they should fund it on the regional level or they should fund it nationally. Because to a large degree, it's the forest that winds up funding what we do. So, that's sometimes a challenge.

In the '80s the way our people tended to get funded was based on unit costs, and they would be rated on how much they could do and how low they could keep their unit cost. There was a time when the unit cost, say for silviculture activities, was pretty high, because there was a lot of work going on in the Andrews, and it cost more to do things there. You're doing it for a different reason, different purposes, you're monitoring more. My understanding is that for some of the folks on the district, they felt like they could never get a good rating compared to their compatriots around the forest, because that always drove their costs up. One of the ways that was resolved was that we actually created a separate subunit for the H.J. Andrews. We have a district budget and then we have the Andrews budget. And the Andrews budget is just for those parts that the forest is doing, not for the research things.

Geier: When was that set up initially?

Burditt: It was in the '80s at some point-in-time. I don't have an exact date. And that's a little bit of actual folklore. I have never confirmed that this is why that really happened. That's part about how much energy they have to really go back and find out; is that really the history? Or, did it get set up as a separate code because the region was sending money, and it was always a separate code unit? I don't know the answer to that. There have been times when there's been a high level of intensity on the district for us to produce a lot of work, whether that's timber sales or other things. When we have some support to the research activities that needs to happen, it can kind of get overwhelming for some of the employees. It can kind of feel like it's an extra thing. How can they get everything done? But my sense is that most of our employees really feel that they get to be a part of making a difference. And that it's only in

those really high-stress periods where it becomes kind of challenging. Otherwise, it's actually very stimulating.

We've just filled our fisheries biologist position and we are in the process of selecting someone for our hydrologist position. One of the things that we find with a lot of the jobs on both the Blue River District and McKenzie District is the presence of the Andrews and the opportunity to interact with scientists being a real draw for people wanting to apply for these positions. They see it as really a neat opportunity, particularly in those kinds of fields to be on what they see as the cutting edge. So, it helps us attract really good candidates for our jobs.

Geier: That's an interesting point because a forest or district office can be a really important element to the local community. So, people you bring in there will have an impact on the local community environment.

Burditt: Right.

Geier: Maybe along those lines, how would you characterize your understanding of how the people of Blue River and the surrounding community there understand what's going on in the district, and in general in the Andrews?

Burditt: I think it's pretty mixed. Then, the saw mill left, and the highway [126] bypassed the town of Blue River in the early '60s. So, it's been a struggling community in terms of finding its place. There's a mix of views, I think, of the agency and the experimental forest. We've had a mix of reactions to the change in forest management and the paradigm. I think one of the big issues for a number of local folks is access to firewood and how that's changed dramatically, both due to the reduction in the amount of cutting we do, and then also to the idea that we're leaving material for other purposes, other than bringing it into big unmerchantable piles that might go for firewood. That's probably one of the more challenging things we deal with, especially about this time of year.

Geier: How do you handle that?

Burditt: We have a system we've come up with that doesn't make anybody happy, but it's about what we can do. People get on a waiting list and they're allowed to get two cords of wood, and we identify whether there's available material. We work our way down through the list. We generally don't have enough material we can identify that's easily accessible to meet the demand. This last year, after the February of '96 flood, there was a lot of material in Blue River Reservoir, and we wound up doing a partnership with some folks from the [Army] Corps of Engineers. We actually categorized all that material, and some of it, the really valuable wood for peelers and stuff, went to the mill. Other material that had root wads and such still attached, we identified as trees that could be used for aquatic restoration projects, and those got moved to another project. And then, we had just a phenomenal amount of material that didn't fit either of those groups. Working with the Corps, we kind of swept the reservoir because of the operation of the dam, and then also, a safety matter with recreation. We gathered that all up, the material was loaded into dump trucks, and we took it over to an area

called Stroup Flats. So, we had these huge piles out around this area. For the first time in a long time, we were able to meet everybody's firewood demand. It is a challenge, and people usually feel like the system isn't fair. They almost always feel that way anyways, because somebody gets easier to reach material or better quality, but in this instance, where we can't meet the level of demand, it's a very challenging thing.

For a lot of people who have lived in the valley a long time, and they see some of these things as perhaps more restrictive than they'd like to see, it doesn't make sense to them. How can you have money to go do this and that and the other, and you can cut down trees to send to the mill or you can cut down trees to leave lay there, and you can't give me enough firewood to get me through the winter. That's a perspective that I think sometimes is challenging. A lot of folks have a variety of perspectives just about the agency in general, and about these paradigms. And I would think that in the local community, they would pretty much mimic what you see in society in general, all the way from folks who are geared more towards having the forest being a natural system and not messing with things, to people who don't understand why we can't continue on the same trajectory we were on before. Relative to the Andrews, you get kind an interesting mix as well. There's a lot of local folks who don't know it's there. I don't think we've tapped into it to the degree that we could. I've heard of a wide range of things from "really neat place up there," all the way to, "I don't want my kids near those wacko, weirdo scientists." It certainly has a wide range of perceptions out there. I think that people who have the best sense of what's going on are probably people who know some of the folks who work there. The people who live in the area and work there, and what they're communicating is kind of what perception people have about it. I think it's a bit of a hidden gem in terms of the valley. There's a lot of people who don't realize the significant nature of what's kind of happening in their backyard.

Geier: How many people there live locally, and how many people commute in from the Springfield area?

Burditt: That's a good question as well. My sense is that back at least into the middle '60s, most everybody who worked on those two districts lived in the valley, in the general vicinity. They've continuously been working on improving the highway, and each improvement makes it much easier to commute to the town of Blue River, or from Blue River to Eugene. I've heard stories, and I don't know if they're accurate or not, but in the early '60s, it would be an hour and half to two-hour drive into Eugene. Now, depending on what traffic's like and if they're doing construction, you can get there in 50 minutes. It's not an easy commute, but we do have a number of people who do it. I couldn't tell you exact numbers right now, but the proportions seem to be fairly consistent. My sense is, there's about a third of the employees who live in the Nimrod to McKenzie Bridge area. Nimrod is at about milepost 34, and Blue River's at milepost 40, and about a third of our folks tend to live in that group. And then from Nimrod down to Leaburg, which is around milepost 18, there's another third of our employees. And then we have a third that live down in Springfield or Eugene. It's proportional. Sometimes it's a little higher down in the Springfield area. Part of why some people are able to do that is the access to the bus. You do have the Lane Transit District buses coming up twice in the morning and

twice in the evening. Actually, you can get in a ten-hour day with the way the bus schedule works for Blue River employees. You can't quite do it with the McKenzie, but there's a bus that will drop you off there, right about six, ten to six or a quarter to six. And then there's one that comes and picks people up at 4:10. There's another one that comes in at like 9:30, and then it comes back through something like 7:15 at night. And so, you can actually commute on the bus if you choose to.

Geier: Are there other people? Go ahead.

Burditt: One of the frustrations people in the up-river area have is that there's not a lot of employment in the up-river area. So, you see a lot of people who live up the McKenzie commute into Eugene for work. We kind of have the opposite, where people in the Eugene/Springfield area are commuting up to our office. When I first got to the district, we had about 72 permanent employees, and probably about that many seasonals. Right now, we have right around 40 permanents, and this summer, we were close to that on seasonals again. Last year, not counting the young stand study crew, we probably had ten to 15 seasonals. You know, when we went into our serious decline, it went way down, but now we're fairly stable at right around 40.

Geier: And they're routing from where?

Burditt: They tend to come from a variety of areas. We hire local folks, and then, people from different universities. This summer we had people from Evergreen [College], OSU, U of O, the University of Montana and from Idaho, and then, we also had a number of local folks, people who've grown up in the area who worked for us. It was kind of an interesting mix.

Geier: Quite a mix, that's good. Should probably ask one more question and let you go here. In earlier years, there was a logger who did most of the treatments that they wanted to do on the Andrews, Mike Savelich. I don't know if you've heard of him?

Burditt: No.

Geier: I was curious about now and between these studies, like the young stands or the landscape studies, are there particular groups that are more useful working with research that tend to do better with the contracting? How does that work?

Burditt: That's a good question. The way our processes work is there is an open competition for a bid, and whoever has the high bid, whoever's going pay us the most money, will get the bid. What we do try to do is make sure what is in the contract is really clear. If something, like a research-related activity, and if it's gonna have particular restraints on what they can do, we put that in our prospectus and throughout the contract. We've had a variety of people then, who've had those contracts. My sense is that you get a real mix in terms of who can deal with it the best. Some people have challenges, but what we have found is that if the sale administrator or the research folks associated with the project, take the time to explain to the

purchaser rep on the ground what's going on, and why we're doing something, that we've had really good luck interacting with people and having folks who would do their best to make the situation happen.

Part of that becomes a little bit of pride that gets built in the idea that they're helping do a study.

If we don't take that time, most of the time, it probably seems pretty confusing to people. Why do I have to do this? There are some real hard questions sometimes to answer, like the long-term ecosystem productivity, one of the treatments, we had them remove all of the small pieces of material down to a certain size, all the down woody material that would normally be left behind, they had to take off of the site. Then we turned around and put down a mulch treatment. So, for the operator, it's sort of like it's hard to get through their head why that makes sense to do. Sometimes it's pretty challenging to explain. But I think we've had really good luck with pretty much every operator. Of course, you find different levels of interest because the operators on the ground may not be the people who bought the sale. They may either work for those people or they may be a subcontractor. That was one of the things that we saw in 1991 on some of the tours, where we were leaving down woody material, and trying to leave the green trees and snags. The subcontractor out there doing the work was pretty clear that in his mind that he could do just about anything that we wanted to achieve. He really felt that he could.

However, he didn't want to be the one who wound up absorbing the cost [of more complicated and costly logging systems] for all society. So, his production rates would be lower, or other things would happen, and he wanted the system to change in some way where he wasn't the one who absorbed the costs of doing that, and that either the purchaser or agency would absorb some of those costs. There's some people who probably are more efficient on the ground, and are kind of sharper at figuring out how to do those things, and also doing their negotiating with the people they're going to work for, so that they get a reasonable price for the work they're doing.

Geier: It sounds like it might be hard to gauge, but I was wondering if there's a difference in people who are repeat bidders on the Andrews, as opposed to elsewhere on the district.

Burditt: Actually, we haven't had much timber harvesting on the Andrews since I've been here. We've only sold very small sales. The sale we're getting ready to do soon with them will be a look at some uneven-aged stand trajectories. It will be the first sale of its size we've had on the Andrews, since I've arrived in May of '89.

Geier: Yeah, I'd forgotten that.

Burditt: It's very difficult, actually, to compare because we did have the [experimental canopy] gaps study that we implemented out there. Talking to Tom Spies [who led the study], he was very happy with the work that those folks did; that's my recollection that he was happy with their work. The young stand thinning and diversity study replications are actually located on

three different districts on the [Willamette National] forest. None of them are in the Andrews. The LTEP [Long-Term Ecosystem Productivity Study] site is on the Blue River District, some distance from the Andrews. That's been one of the learning things, I think, for some of our purchasers, is that a lot of what we offer for sale has some kind of learning objective associated with it. It's not been clear to me if we see a lower bid price with our sales versus others on the forest. Sometimes I've wanted to look at a comparison, but there are too many different things, often times to be able to really tell a difference, and if so, what causes it. We have pretty steep ground and some challenging things. But, that's one of the things that I do want to look at in the next few years, because that would be one of the indicators that the price they bid for our sales is lower than other districts because it costs them more to do the work.

Geier: I'd be curious how that works out, too. But, I probably better let you get back there, it's almost 2:30 now. Thanks for your time.

Burditt: I was talking with Fred about this last week when we were down in the Sierras. I think one of the real key things we did was to switch to the research liaison position that John is in. I think there's a large volume of work that he's been able to coordinate that's not so much on the basic research end, because that's a whole different arena, but on the application end of things and demonstrations, and getting some administrative studies out there. So, as you're visiting with him and others, I think a thing to listen for is how people feel about the amount of applied work that's working off of the experimental forest versus the work and the focus that's on the experimental forest itself.

Geier: Yeah.

Burditt: You know that there's really a transition there? We've got a map I could show you sometime if you're interested. There's the map that shows all the studies in the Andrews, but then we've got one that shows where are all these demo sites and different study areas that are not on the Andrews. It's a pretty impressive map.

Geier: Yeah, I'd be real interested in that. It'd be, especially for the book, something like that.

Burditt: Okay.

Geier: One of the ideas we've been exploring, is the work beginning with the focus on the Andrews, and then, the movement off. It would be kind of interesting if we can graphically show that on just a local scale.

End of Interview