Interview with Roy Silen by Max Geier, September 9, 1996, as part of H.J. Andrews EF History Project, at Silen's office in the Corvallis FSL; Transcription by Jeff Fourier.

Roy Silen went to work on the then Blue River Experimental Forest in the year it was established – 1948 – because he had a forestry degree and a background in logging engineering and the PNW Research Station, his employer, had agreed to cut 20 million board feet from the Lookout Creek drainage. He spent months in the field before any roads entered the area, and he set out the early logging and road network. In addition to this forestry work he conducted studies and produced publications in the early 1950s that were highly influential management decisions about tree regeneration in clearcuts and efficient road systems to minimize impacts on watersheds. He helped set up experimental watersheds 1, 2, and 3. He departed the Andrews in 1954, to pursue a PhD in forest ecology and lead the tree genetics program of the PNW Station. He said he could not bring himself to go back to the forest, because he loved the land and did not want to see the effects of "management."

Roy Silen: Let's sit here at the computer and take a look at this [personal resume].

Max Geier: Is this something you put together?

Silen: Yeah. I built that. I just kind of kept a career record.

Geier: Okay. Good.

Silen: Here are things that I did before I got to the Andrews Experimental Forest. Here's the Andrews Experimental Forest. I felt a real sense of accomplishment there.

Geier: Yeah. That's good. Have you been keeping this up as you went along?

Silen: Yeah. I got it up-to-date.

Geier: Many of these are publications. Is there a way we can print this out?

Silen: I've got it set now so it prints on another printer that isn't always available. The lady that shifted it over is coming back and shift it to this one. Either way, we can probably print this out.

Geier: That would be really helpful.

Silen: We're into the stuff that you really want there.

Geier: It's nice to get this kind of material; words of the person actually responsible for it. I often get people going through publications and writings by others. What you've got here is your own.

Silen: Oh, yeah.

Geier: What I'd like to do is talk to you a little bit more about your involvement with various people out there. This is real good.

Silen: Well, you're the first one to see it. I did it after I retired to help remember what things were.

Geier: If you can promise me you'll give me a copy of this, why don't we go ahead?

Silen: Sure.

Geier: There's a couple of things we talked about last time that I want to revisit here. Probably the most important thing here is to get context on who you were working with at the time you started working at the Andrews. You started in 1948 and worked until 1954. Could you talk about your academic background and how you came to that point in your academic and professional career?

Silen: My background is being with the forest through my whole life. I was born in Coos Bay/North Bend. Then, I went to North Bend High School. Of course, North Bend was a logging and shipping community. My dad had a boat, and we towed lots of [log] rafts and that sort of thing. It was quite nice. Graduated from North Bend High School. The next two years I worked for a logging company as their bookkeeper. Couldn't get any other job, which was fine with me. I saved enough money to go to school, and went to live with my sister Luanne. I didn't have any parental help, so I was on my own. I went to San Mateo Junior College the first year. Tried to get a job in the San Francisco area, and couldn't. Came back to Oregon. Back into the woods.

Geier: How come you went to San Mateo?

Silen: Well, my sister lived at Burlingame for one thing. They let us know, most of our high school group, that there was a junior college that was free. A group of four preceded me by one year there, and they established a coop house. So, it was very cheap living and that was very important at the time [Great Depression]. I spent a year down there and came to Oregon State to study forestry.

Geier: What years were you at Oregon State?

Silen: '39 to '42.

Geier: Okay. Then, in '42 you went into the army?

Silen: I enlisted in the reserves. I spent most of the time in anti-aircraft artillery. Then, at the end, I shifted over into the infantry. Spent the last year in the war in the infantry.

Geier: What was your primary field of study at OSU?

Silen: Forestry; Forest Management and a minor in Logging Engineering.

Geier: And your goal at that time was to eventually go into private forestry?

Silen: Yes it was. I thought I'd go back to Coos Bay. But I never did.

Geier: So then, after the army?

Silen: In the army when still overseas, I applied to the experiment station for a job and got it. I went directly out of the army into the experiment station. I started in '46, summer of '46 in the experiment station, and I was there for my whole career.

Geier: Who did you work with initially?

Silen: Oh, it was a great, great experience. I immediately came under Thornton Munger, who was

head of the [PNW] station at that time.

Geier: So, near the end of his tenure?

Silen: Yeah. It was at the end of his tenure. He was there four or five years while I was there. As a result, I got to re-measure a lot of his plots, because they had been neglected through the war.

Geier: Oh, yeah.

Silen: That's where the genetics experience started. I didn't know it. I was more interested in forestry. Then, I almost immediately got under Leo Isaac, silviculturist of the experiment station, and he helped. I couldn't have gotten a better silviculture and regeneration background than I was getting, just working for them.

Geier: Trial by error?

Silen: Yeah. Sure. I was visiting all the plots, re-measuring all their plots. It was seriously neglected all through the war, so when they were in a high level of activity of trying to catch up with their measurements, I was involved with almost all of that.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: It was quite an experience to see all the facets. Then, I came under the influence of a man named Bob Aufderheide, who eventually was supervisor of the Willamette National Forest, the biggest national forest at this time, but first, he had a couple years with the station [PNW]. The Forest Service up until World War II, had been a protection agency. Fire protection was their most important activity. Cutting began heavily after World War II, so fire started to take second place to timber management, and the Forest Service was very ill-prepared for this level of cutting. Bob Aufderheide's contribution was that he felt that we shouldn't let the loggers lay out the cutting pattern, because they had no idea what silviculture really meant. He believed we should learn to do enough of the sale or logging layout, to handle this very important phase of silviculture, because where you establish the roads and the landings, will determine how you handle that piece of land from then on, in most ways. He said, let's lay out the roads and landings for the loggers, make the cutting boundaries, and try to get as much silviculture work into the logging plan as we could. We had a publication that Bob Ruth and I put out: "Getting More Forestry into the Logging Plan," a best seller at the PNW Station for several years; many thousands of copies went out.

Geier: That was in late '42?

Silen: That was in the late '40s. By then, both Bob Ruth and I went to heading up experimental forests, Bob going to Cascade Head Experimental Forest, myself to the Andrews. Both of us were involved in roads into the experimental forests and layouts of timber sales on an experimental basis.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: I think we had quite an influence on upgrading silviculture to the harvest phase, because we became some of the people who looked at getting this information out.

Geier: Uh-huh.

Silen: You've seen this record and some of the publications from all that? We (laughs) found our pieces of information, like what would you suppose was the most expensive part of the harvest operation. Very few people when you ask them that will tell you, "Turns out to be boilers."

Geier: Hmm.

Silen: It's because during the fire season you have what they call "hoot owling;" which is when you go out early in the morning to try to get the logging done, and then quit before it gets too hot and dry in the day. If you go out on one of those days, your whole crew is out there, you're paying for them, then you get word that you can't work, so they all go in and you get no more logging done. It sure raises the cost. (Laughter) That sort of thing. But, people do not realize these things.

Geier: Did you and Bob Ruth communicate about the different experimental forests?

Silen: Yes, of course. Bob Aufderheide would visit between the experimental forests at Cascade Head and H. J. Andrews. The H.J. Andrews at the time had not been opened up at all. There was a contract to build a road, an access road under the access road program, into the Blue River and Lookout Creek drainages. That had been completed only a mile or two when I got there in '48/'47. I got into the experiment station in '46. I think I worked a year-and-a-half at Portland, and then, I was at Willamette Research Center here at Corvallis, I think in '47 and into '48. I guess I worked there the first year in '48, somewhere in '48. Anyway, the records will show that.

Geier: The road was only up into where the – (unintelligible recording)

Silen: Oh no, you had to walk in before you got to the boundary of the experimental forest. So it's all untouched, such a virgin area. This is an example. I could come off the south hillside and go down to Lookout Creek, carefully. If there was a deep hole there, I'd take a little branch and stick it out to the center of the hole, the fish would come from all directions to see what was going on, just like in a hatchery. I noticed that. But it didn't take long after the loggers got in there before that no longer happened --

Geier: Yeah.

Silen: -- in that situation. That's a phase that I want to cover here, too, in that once we got into large-scale cutting, we began to get cooperators and other guys coming in. The Oregon Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit established two people there. One, full-time through the summer, and the other one was part-time through the whole year. The one full-time through the summer, his name was Wustenberg; he was a fisheries man, wasn't he? The animal damage man was Jay Gashwiler. Both those two were active through most of the time I was there, summer time or the fall, keeping up their plots. So, we had a good line on what was going on from the wildlife and fish standpoints, all through that period.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: For example, Wustenberg sampled the number of fish in a hole, by a sein through the hole, and clipping the fins and throwing the fish over the net. What would you think would be the number of fish we would find, oh, four inches or longer in a hole, that was say 80 feet long and 20 feet wide, on the Andrews Experimental Forest? Do you have any idea? Or did I tell you earlier?

Geier: You asked me this last night, it was somewhere over a thousand.

Silen: Over a thousand, yes! About 1,100 fish! (Laughter) It was incredible, of course, it didn't last very long. The activity that Jay Gashwiler was into was all the book-keeping on seedlings coming in and seedlings going out; the animal damage route. He kept track of that. His main contribution was to show that, despite all of the animal predation and loss from heat injury and so on, all the plots he was establishing, I think 4-meter-square plots, all these plots were regenerated, restocked, by 10 years. Regeneration took a lot longer than most people expected, but it was succeeding. Nonetheless, almost everything on the Andrews Experimental Forest was planted.

Geier: These cooperators with the Oregon Wildlife, is this unusual compared to Cascade Head, for example?

Silen: They didn't have anything like this out at Cascade Head.

Geier: Do you know why these people were on the Andrews at that time?

Silen: Well, it was a matter of serendipity. I think this was the kind of area they were looking to protect. It had lots of things they were looking for, and they wanted it to be in an old-growth forest.

Geier: They were there after you arrived, or about the same time as you showed up?

Silen: No. It was after I arrived.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: It probably was because I was returning to Oregon State and making some contacts, that this word got around.

Geier: Then you came back to Oregon State?

Silen: No, I just kept visiting, is all.

Geier: Oh, I see. So, while you were laying-out the roads, basically, you were in contact with people here? Do you know where they were headquartered?

Silen: They were headquartered on campus here.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: The Oregon Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. I think it's still here.

Geier: Okay. Who was your contact here at Oregon State?

Silen: My own job was set by the Willamette National Forest or the region [Regional Office of the National Forest System; logging rates in agreement between National Forest System and PNW Research Station]. We were to harvest 20 million board feet a year from this [experimental] forest. I interpreted that as not being practical, because it would take three or four years after we got started, before we could begin the first harvest. I said we would lay out and present for sale, 20 million feet of timber a year. I did that as soon as I could. The first year we set up a sale of, I think, 7 million board feet. Something around there. It may not have been that high. Anyway,

that sale was advertised, and nobody bid on it.

Geier: Mmm.

Silen: And so, the second year [1950] we had a successful timber sale, and that was Sale #1. Those were the first units that were in the experimental forest, and the one that brought the road system initially into the area and up to the 3000-foot level.

Geier: Uh-huh.

Silen: Let's see, what else would be of importance there? We actually laid out about 80 million board feet of area to get to 20 million board feet, because we had the concept that we would have a complete layout of the sale for the entire area before we sold the units that would go out first. We cut one unit out of four so that you were completely surrounded by timber each time.

Geier: What was your perception of the purpose of the experimental forest at that time?

Silen: At the beginning, it was rather simple. I was to lay out 20 million board feet a year. They had no other instructions. As far as research I did, that was up to me, if I could get everything else done --

Geier: -- Timber management?

Silen: Yes, it was straight forward timber management. But, I had had some experience with Bob Aufderheide at Cascade Head Experimental Forest, and some on the Siuslaw [National Forest] where we tried some of these sale layouts he was proposing, and so I wasn't completely green at it going in there. In fact, I was as well-experienced as most anyone in the Forest Service at that time, for logging out here. So, we began and I laid out these sales, and it was in a very tough piece of country in the first sale, because it was in a small watershed area. To get roads up through that land, it was very chopped up. So, that sale didn't go. Thank goodness it didn't go, because it allowed us, as the watershed people became interested in the area, to propose that these three watersheds be paired up with stream gages. Otherwise, it would have been sold as timber sales. So, the second sale avoided that area; came in further on upstream and took timber out.

Geier: Your first sale didn't go through?

Silen: No. The first sale didn't go through.

Geier: Okay. And the watershed people you were mentioning?

Silen: They were from the Portland office.

Geier: Who would they be? Any examples?

Silen: Names have completely escaped me. Bill Bullard was in charge of it, at the experiment station, and, Jack, not Jack Rothacher….Jerry, gosh, what was his name? These are Portland office people [May be referencing Jerry Dunford].

Geier: Okay.

Silen: I only saw them when they visited. They'd visit, give me some instructions, and leave.

(Laughter) "Gather some data and send it to us," and then, they'd never come down except once in a while.

Geier: They were attracted there during the first sale you made?

Silen: Well, once we saw what they wanted to know and what the opportunities were, we sat down and looked over the three watersheds, and decided, "That's pretty good." Then, we didn't have maps of the area. We had mapped out that sale one area by hand-methods. (Laughter) And so, we had a map they could look at, and this was quite attractive to them, these three paired-watersheds.

Geier: Hmm.

Silen: That's how that got started.

Geier: So, they were just looking around for research opportunities?

Silen: Sure. That's right.

Geier: You mentioned already there were some problems in that first sale, getting roads in there.

Silen: Yes. It was chopped-up country with very steep slopes. Watersheds 1, 2, and 3 are canyons.

Geier: Right. That's a question I want to address here. First of all, your first impressions of where to go and what to do on the Andrews, and the logistical problems you encountered in deciding how to lay out the roads and actually accomplish it.

Silen: After our first year, we got pretty good at it. Just as an example, we had a logger named Mike Savelich. He worked for Associated Plywood Mills, and they got all our sales. I think there was a little collusion going on. (Laughs) But any way, they've always been successful bidding for experimental forest sales. I remember the nasty notes he would write. He would blaze a side on a yew tree, and then take some tile and write a note. One of his notes was, "Roy, this is fine place for a road, but I want no part of her." (Laughter) Then, two years later his roadbuilder and I were talking, and he [builder] said, "There was a guy that wanted to propose a change in this curve that you put through here, so if we do it this way, we can save a lot of money," and Mike said, "Damn it. Every time I change Roy's plans it costs me money." So, I succeeded there. (Laughter)

Geier: Mike Kerrick mentioned that Mike Savelich was notable because he hired primarily Croatians.

Silen: Oh yes, sure.

Geier: Were you the person responsible for deciding who would be hired there?

Silen: No. See, that was sold as a timber sale and --

Geier: -- So that was through the region?

Silen: And the Willamette Forest, actually, were the ones that administered the sales part of it. We administered the research part of it. And sometimes that took a lot of coordination. Particularly the watershed phases of it, because we were trying to essentially stop sedimentation

in that drainage. We found out at the very beginning that the watershed problem and sedimentation were synonymous. That was it. If you could stop the sedimentation, you didn't have a watershed problem. So, we started in looking for the sources of sedimentation. Don Wustenberg, a fisheries person, came to me one day in the summertime and said, "Do you know that there are no more fish in this stream that I'm suppose to work with?" I said, "No, I didn't know that." He said, "Let's go up and see them." Every one of the pools was filled with sediment. It all came from the roads. Roads and tractor logging. So, we began to really work on that and we found that, in the tractor logging places, there were many things you could do to cut down on the amount of sedimentation. For example, if you had a little upgrade in a tractor trail, you would leave the sediment behind. And so on. And the worst thing is to lead everything down into a landing.

Geier: Yeah.

Silen: So, we found that the same thing applies to high-lead logging. We designed our sales to get the very large portion of it to be uphill yarding, because then the trails fanned out and there were sediment barriers. Any sediment would usually be caught in the vegetation. The roads, of course, would always remain a problem, and we spent a lot of time designing, trying to put our roads in locations where they would be a minimum of sloughing and soil movement, if we could.

Geier: Hmm.

Silen: We spent a lot of time looking for good road locations. It probably shows in the upkeep of those roads in the Andrews. Even in this steep country, they should have held up pretty well.

Geier: Mike Kerrick and Ed Anderson mentioned something about an initial proposal for a ladder-type road system that was abandoned. Is that something that you were involved in?

Silen: Well, they tack names onto these things, so I don’t know.

Geier: I wasn't sure what they were referring to. I just thought I'd ask you.

Silen: I did put out an article on what constituted the most efficient road system for a Douglas-fir drainage. I was saying there that the inefficiencies came from the roads that are climbing roads. Roads that were essentially level would give you the most efficient road network. Most of the early roads that were put into the National Forest System just climbed up.

Geier: Yeah.

Silen: One after the other, they just climbed up. Every time they hit a new drainage, you can go from one or another.

Geier: So, what you were putting on the Andrews was something different?

Silen: Yeah, they were different. It was essentially based on this idea having a minimum of climbing roads and a maximum of level roads.

Geier: Did you see anybody else trying that?

Silen: Oh, I think it was known for a long time before I got it into publication, because I looked at

some of the old air photos and noted the most efficient logging systems.

Geier: Okay. You were basing it on what you'd seen in practice and elsewhere on the forest?

Silen: Sure.

Geier: But for the Andrews you were able to pretty much call the shots?

Silen: Yes, since I was designing all the roads. I put them where I wanted and, of course, the roads are determined entirely by the topography. Avoid the steep parts if you can.

Geier: Let me back up here for just a minute. You mentioned that you were responsible for getting out 20 million board feet a year. That was essentially given to you as a responsibility. Was that because the experimental forest was considered part of the Willamette National Forest?

Silen: Well, the Andrews Experimental Forest was carved out of the Willamette National Forest and Supervisor [J.R.] Bruckart was very careful about his cut [logging numbers]. He wanted to be the number one in the National Forest System.

Geier: Okay. I see.

Silen: And he didn't want any area taken out, so they compromised once in a while: We'll cut 30 million feet for the next couple of years.

Geier: So there was an end to that.

Silen: Yeah, there was an end to it.

Geier: Okay. So, there was kind of a phase out period?

Silen: Yeah, that was way more than the sustained annual yield, but all the forests were doing that at the time, to get the road systems put in. With the intention of being normalized later.

Geier: So, the purpose was to cover every region and to cut?

Silen: Yeah. The saying was that, "We're cutting the best to pay for the roads."

Geier: So, the goal was to put the roads in.

Silen: Yeah. It was to get the roads attached. And that was very expensive.

Geier: Sure.

Silen: And I guess it still is.

Geier: Can you think of any particular logistical problems you encountered trying to put those roads in? You were talking about the sedimentation issue, and you were trying to avoid the traditional climbing road systems. But in terms of just the topography of the Andrews.

Silen: Well, there was a lot of good topography on the Andrews. There was a lot of very rough topography, too. It's a matter of trying to locate landings and get roads through to them. The rough parts were, of course, the problems. Every year we took them another few square miles, and planned the entire logging plan for us, so we had to take the problems as they came.

Geier: Was there a master plan for the whole forest?

Silen: No. It didn't start out with a master plan for the whole forest, because, for one thing, we didn't have a good map.

Geier: Yeah.

Silen: By the time we had a good map, we were already into the second sale. The opening of the narrow area at the bottom was all done, and so, we were extending out into the rest of it.

Geier: Going back to your perceptions of the purpose of the experimental forest at the time you started, initially, your responsibility was managing timber sales, but as people came in, and consulted with you, your ideas changed on that.

Silen: I think we pretty well figured out what happens in later stages of old-growth management, though not in a scientific way.

Geier: Uh-huh.

Silen: Whether the old growth just kind of disappears and other things come in afterwards. One of the surprising things that happened was it suddenly dawned on me that the character of hemlock, as well as fir, was largely determined by fire. A fire that had burned about a hundred years ago on the Andrews had left a hundred-year, old-second growth on the main ridges, then, the old growth was below. As I began to study that, I could see what was happening was that these fires were not fires that made a conflagration out of the whole forest, but the stand in the bottoms was almost intact. As you went up steeper hills, fires crowned and killed the trees, killed them all on the top of ridges.

Geier: Yeah.

Silen: When we were camping out in some of those areas, I had time to really look at the stand histories. I could see that, as the number of killed trees dropped from 100 percent to 80, to 60, to 40, and so on, the proportion of Douglas-fir to hemlock changed. For example, at the 50/50 point, that was when there were about 10 old Douglas-firs per acre left, half-and-half with hemlock.

Geier: Hmm.

Silen: Generally, those were very nice stands of competing Douglas-fir and hemlock. Then downhill from that, you found more and more and more hemlock, until you got nothing but hemlock. And finally, where it was shaded enough, you had these umbrella type of hemlock, not good hemlock at all. So, fire was determining the amount of hemlock as well as the amount of fir.

Geier: As you realized those kinds of relations involved there, did that begin to affect the way you designed – [roads and sales]?

Silen: I just figured that we wanted as high a proportion of fir back into the forest as we could get. Essentially, we were saying we ought to have clear-cutting. I did have some shade-tree cuttings intended to provide shade to keep the hot lethal surface temperatures from climbing too high.

Geier: Uh-huh.

Silen: I had been doing studies on lethal surface temperatures up there as well. Studies I did were primarily regeneration studies.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: I was able to at least determine for my own satisfaction that most of the problem was heat injury. [Leo] Isaac had found that out, but I simply confirmed that most of the losses of germinating seedlings was just from heat.

Geier: Uh-huh.

Silen: And I set up a sampling system with temperature pellets for each clear-cut where I'd try to estimate the problems from heat by how many of them exceeded a certain temperature when I put them off in a grid. It was greatly varied, but it turned out that when I sampled the natural regeneration, it was highly correlated with the temperature pellets.

Geier: Hmm.

Silen: At least for the years I was there. I had that in my thesis at Oregon State. My thesis was done on lethal surface temperatures.

Geier: After you worked at the Andrews, you came to OSU to finish your thesis based on the work you did there on?

Silen: I was asked to come down here and set up the program in forest genetics.

Geier: Uh-huh.

Silen: I became head of the "Genetics Project" here [Forest Sciences Laboratory in Corvallis] in 1954. The Andrews was being phased out anyway.

Geier: It was being phased by the Forest Service?

Silen: Well, it was being phased out. They were not going to have a permanent person there, and they didn't for a whole year or so. Then Jack Rothacher came down, and I guess he was there most of the time after that. There was a time when the district took over activity on the forest after I left.

Geier: Did you work very closely with the district after you left?

Silen: No. I was busy with genetics down here, then he came, and so, I didn't go back there.

Geier: So when the station was in control of the experimental forest, the people were the same as those that were working there when you were involved directly, is that right?

Silen: No, that was an entirely new group. They were entirely watershed management. Sort of the changing of the guards. The timber management program was completely phased out.

Geier: Your closest colleagues in '48 to '54 would be people like Jack Rothacher?

Silen: No, he came down there later. [1955]

Geier: Okay.

Silen: We didn't have any overlap at all. It was a year break, then he came in. So, I just knew him.

Geier: So people like Wustenberg and Gashwiler would be people you primarily worked with?

Silen: Yes. And the district people, Brit Ash and his crew. He was a ranger at McKenzie Bridge.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: They didn't have a Blue River Station at that time. It was just McKenzie Bridge.

Geier: Now, when you were laying out these sales, as Mike Kerrick and Ed Anderson were talking together about, what apparently --

Silen: Mike came there one summer and worked on….I forget just what project he was working on.

Geier: Fire control or something.

Silen: Yeah. I think so. He was just a student at the time.

Geier: So, you remember that?

Silen: Oh, yes. Of course. (Laughter)

Geier: There probably weren't a lot of people up there at that time.

Silen: Oh no. It was just the C.C.C. camp, and we all lived together in a cook house.

Geier: That might be something to talk about a little bit, the kinds of facilities. When you first went up there, there were no roads?

Silen: No. I hauled a little 12-foot trailer up there. That is what I lived in during the summers and into the fall.

Geier: Was that located about where the headquarters are now?

Silen: No. It was located where the McKenzie River Station is now. It used to be where the CCC camp was [1930s and 1940s].

Geier: So, you lived out of that trailer, and then you hiked back where you were doing your sites?

Silen: Yes. My lifestyle was really kind of interesting, because I was a bachelor.

Geier: Uh-huh.

Silen: I found a family in the community that was interested in the money that would come from serving me breakfast and supper. So, I would eat my meals with them, and fish in the evenings. It was very interesting in that I had a tough time getting out in the summertime, because every weekend seemed to be scheduled with people who would like to visit me. (Laughter)

Geier: What do you suppose was the attraction? (Laughter)

Silen: Oh, naturally, I was the attraction. (Laughter) Well, that was kind of fun.

Geier: You mentioned last time that you thought some people were attracted out there by poker

games?

Silen: Oh, yes. We had poker games out there in the trailer. I had numerous Washington office visitors wanting to see this wonderful work that was going on in the Andrews Experimental Forest, as long as it involved a chance to fish and play poker.

Geier: You found yourself giving a lot of tours?

Silen: Oh sure. Of course. All the time, tours.

Geier: So, recreational use of the forest was a personal --

Silen: Not the forest; the McKenzie River was the attraction.

Geier: Okay. You didn't take them back up in the forest?

Silen: Always took them back up in the forest. But then, fish in Lookout Creek as an incidental thing, but most of the fishing was on the McKenzie.

Geier: Okay. You mentioned there were communities where you were able to get invitations for dinner. You said earlier that you would get invitations from local families.

Silen: Well, sure. I got plenty of invitations from the community.

Geier: What kinds of people in the community were you involved with? Was this a logging community?

Silen: It was as much recreation as logging. They were making their money off of recreation as much as logging at the time, and so it was kind of split between those two groups. And it was kind of interesting, because they were all waiting for when school started, and particularly when the roads closed over the pass. Then the social season started. Everybody visited everybody else and they had these very classy home dinners, where you might go and there would be name tags for you at the table and that sort of thing.

Geier: It was fairly formal.

Silen: Oh yeah, sometimes. Of course, everything centered around the schools. I mean, they had football teams that were highly competitive.

Geier: So, the public connection between the local community and the forests, as represented by you, was pretty close?

Silen: Of course. We were just one of the community.

Geier: Did you have a sense of people in the community had an understanding what you were doing up there?

Silen: Oh, it was vague. It was vague.

Geier: It really wasn't a timber community at that time. It was more --

Silen: It was about half-and-half. It was, you know, most of people were - -

Geier: Were loggers?

Silen: Yeah, about as many logging families as recreation-oriented families.

Geier: When you think about the situation up there between 1948 and 1954, did you see any major changes in the kind of reaction of the community, or just your role?

Silen: Well, I don't get up there very much anymore. All I can say is that these communities were very sophisticated for the times. Things were going on that also were going on downtown. It's just that some things were rather primitive, too.

Geier: Such as?

Silen: Let's see, a bunch of outhouses. I wondered if people were sometimes a little slow in establishing water systems and septic tanks and so on.

Geier: The community itself didn't change so much between '48 and '54?

Silen: Oh, no. Pretty much the same. The same.

Geier: But the Andrews changed quite a bit in that period of time?

Silen: Oh, yes. By '54, I was in sale planning. That was quite a ways up the drainage. I was selling timber almost to the head of McRae Creek, to the head of Mack Creek. Everything else was much the same way out on the drainage by '54. Only corners left.

Geier: There wasn't much had been basically brought into the infrastructure?

Silen: That I didn't know, a very personal thing.

Geier: Were there any areas that you didn't know?

Silen: Actually, I knew something about almost every acre out there.

Geier: So on your hikes, you spent a lot of time out there?

Silen: Oh, yes. In a timber sale you really cover it all. You have to look at everything.

Geier: I think you mentioned last time you'd camp out there Monday through Friday?

Silen: Yes. Our typical week was to go out Monday mornings. Pack all the way up to the falls, walk across the canyons down low, with a pack on our back with everything we needed for the week. Then, we'd set up our 9 x12 silkolene fly, rolled out our sleeping bags, took our food down to the creek, and put rocks on top of what little stuck up above, so the bears wouldn't get into it.

Geier: All right. You put that underwater then.

Silen: Yeah. In big pots.

Geier: I was going to ask you about that. Did you feel comfortable out in the forest?

Silen: I never felt uncomfortable out there. The only thing that was out there could be bear, but we hardly ever saw 'em, you know. If they saw us, they let us know where they were going.

Geier: It's interesting, up in Alaska they had this bear attack.

Silen: That's a different kind of bear.

Geier: Sure. I was just curious. Did you institute a policy where you ever felt you wanted to carry a rifle?

Silen: No, timber sale people down here never carried anything except for recreational shooting.

Geier: Yeah. It's nice and relaxing and --

Silen: It was just extra weight.

Geier: That's actually the way people up in Alaska talked, too. They didn't want to carry it, but they had to because of regulations.

Silen: Oh, yeah. You go up there and they carry around real rifles. You could drop a dime down the barrel! (Laughter)

Geier: Yes, there would be pretty harrowing experiences.

Silen: You bet. I've gone out with them, and if you look and see them shaking this rifle again, you don't want to be around.

Geier: [Related Jim LaBau's story about being surprised by a bear in dense woods, and having been unable to draw a bead on the bear, because he couldn't see the end of the rifle]

Silen: He was lucky, because I had just talked to a friend yesterday who was up in Alaska, and she got into a bear attack. She was working for the BLM, and she's still recovering from it.

Geier: Oh, no.

Silen: Yeah, I'm glad we didn't have that.

Geier: Yeah. But you didn't have -

Silen: No, we didn't have that.

Geier: Sounds like a pretty enjoyable time out there, actually.

Silen: Well, yeah, you could say I had some of the best days of my life up there.

Geier: You mentioned last time, that there was kind of an emotional attachment you had for the place? [H.J. Andrews]

Silen: Oh sure. You love the place.

Geier: What about the place that struck you as unusual compared to other areas you had worked?

Silen: Well, I don't know. It was just untouched. Almost all the areas in the Cascades had been traveled by many people before, but here, I felt I was the first one going into a wild area.

Geier: You mentioned last time you had this sense of stewardship for the place, and that you had a guiding philosophy?

Silen: My philosophy was that we should harvest with the minimum impact on the resource.

Geier: Uh-huh.

Silen: When I had visitors up there, I felt that keeping it natural was what I was trying to do. I was trying to keep the sediment down, keep people out of leave areas, and the leave areas were going to be leave areas, and not have continuous entries into them. Try to do the least damage possible putting in the road system, do the least damage to the streams. We really worked at that when we would install a little larger culvert, as we would have all the debris removed with tractor cables, so we'd get them out of the way. If we had to put a tractor pass through there to get a really good bed, it was very carefully done. Immediately, we would channel the water through to cut down on sediment, and they would lay the culvert in. Meanwhile, we would have a bypass for the water. We bypassed that some way with a culvert or another method. We worked in the dry bed, then laid the culvert on the dry, and then covered it over. Then, finally, send the water through the culvert. Very, very controlled sedimentation. There was always sedimentation, but it was very controlled. Don Wustenberg showed me, on the Sale #1 watershed creek, we practically wiped out everything. From Sale #2 on, he said we didn't, as far as he was concerned, we didn't wipe out a fish.

Geier: Huh.

Silen: It was that effective.

Geier: It sounds from what you're saying, that your sense of what the resource was that you were "trying to do least damage." It was not just timber, but you're talking about the watershed.

Silen: Yeah, the watershed, sure. And the remaining years for that 400-year-old stand.

Geier: You mentioned earlier, you were in contact with Bob Ruth at Cascade Head. Is this something you see as typical in most experimental forests of that period?

Silen: Well, there weren't very many people like that. Bob Ruth didn't worry about that at (Laughter) Cascade Head. No.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: No. I don't think it was. Another thing I succeeded with in a really strange way, was that I had come to the conclusion about Sale #2, that we were putting a cutting line around the best of the timber. This old growth was in various stages of preservation. The best preserved was going to stay the best preserved, and the poorest was deteriorating the fastest, so some areas that were 400 years old, were virtually brush patches out there. That deteriorates fast. Generally, they had root fungus in them, so I began to lay out the sales with cutting boundaries according to the department policy, for fire purposes. I could classify those units according to how much deterioration there was, and I made sure that I put the most deteriorated ones into the first sales.

Geier: Uh-huh.

Silen: Well, the cruises were all done by the Willamette National Forest. The man that did the cruising came out there one day and said, "You know, that was the damnedest country to cruise." He said, "It was just so darn brushy. What's going on?" "Well," I said, "I guess I'll have to level with you, and this is what I'm doing." Explained this. I thought, well, I'll hear from the higher-ups about this. Raising the cost of cruising those areas, and next thing, here was a man from the Willamette

National Forest office, who said, "We're changing our policy on choosing the cutting sites. Henceforth, we will put the most deteriorated old-growth into the cutting units."

Geier: So, they adopted your policy?

Silen: I sold him on it!

Geier: Uh-huh.

Silen: Well, if you looked around, you could see the same thing, because the ones that were deteriorating the fastest were the ones that were already kind of open.

Geier: Your theory was, you go in and clear that out, and you get a young, productive stand going?

Silen: Yeah, you get a new start on it. Sure.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: Hoping that you can do something with the new growth. I don't know what they can do, but at least that was the idea. Now, on the other end of the scale, I knew that we were going to be cutting in this area for at least a hundred years more. If they stayed on sustained-yield, it would be about a 100-year rotation in there. And, to assure that these stands would still be pretty intact a hundred years from now, we figured we're going have to have the best ones out there.

Geier: You were looking at the long-term?

Silen: Of course. But, that was normal. Everybody figured on making the rotation. You know?

Geier: The indirect result of that was that some of the less deteriorated old-growth was not cut?

Silen: I think on the Willamette Forest, the better-preserved areas actually got left.

Geier: It sounds like policy changes from this one person who came out and had wide impacts.

Silen: Yes. I thought I'd catch hell for it, really. It changes your outlook on what they were doing.

Geier: Basically, you just sold him on the idea. Do you know who that was?

Silen: Yeah. That was Alan Weinard.

Geier: Al?

Silen: Al Weinard. Yeah. He went to the Washington office [U.S. Forest Service] after that. He was sort of second under Supervisor Bruckart, as far as the timber management side was concerned.

Geier: So the initial shift came at the district level?

Silen: No, it came at the Willamette Forest level. It was a memo from the Willamette Forest, not from the districts. It was one of those things that you didn't even need to make a publication about.

Geier: It sounds like you weren't actually out there trying to change policy, it just kind of

happened.

Silen: No. In fact, it got to where there were enough problems with criticisms from the Willamette National Forest, primarily because it was costing more to do this kind of sale layout. Criticism was such that the less they knew, the better.

Geier: What was your perception at that time about your region?

Silen: Well, they were gung-ho for "getting the cut out," particularly the Willamette National Forest, because they were competing with the Olympic [National Forest] for the number one spot in the country as far as timber sales receipts.

Geier: Did you have a sense of how they perceived research or how they perceived your role?

Silen: I don't think they liked my role, because for one thing, the engineers didn't like it. I was always complaining that these road standards were forcing us to do dumb things. Then they came back and said, "If you don't lay them out to our standards, then we won't maintain them." What I wanted to do was to reduce the standards on the roads as you got further and further from the main roads, because as you reduce standards you could fit the topography better. You could have sharper curves, less sight [shorter line of sight], narrower roads. First order was a 12-foot roadbed and a 3-foot ditch. By the time you followed their standard, the wheel of the truck near the bank was 9 feet from the first dirt that (laughter) was in powder if you went straight out from that. To me, that 9 feet was very important, because sometimes it went way up the hill, trying to get to the top of the cut.

Geier: Their standards were designed more for the safety of timber operations than it was for the health of the forest.

Silen: I don't know. I don't know what their standards were actually trying to accomplish, because they had all kinds of different effects.

Geier: It sounds like your perception was that your job there was to challenge what they were already doing.

Silen: No. I challenged it without knowing whether I should or not. I said, "My gosh, if I'm going to improve sale layouts and do it with minimum impact, these standards are in the way."

Geier: And what would you say was their reaction?

Silen: They said, "Okay, if you don't want to use our standards, we won't maintain the roads."

Geier: Not cooperative?

Silen: No, there was just no argument there.

Geier: Think in terms of the education or the knowledge of forestry of the managers. How would you evaluate that at that time in the 1950's?

Silen: Well, they were all graduates of forestry school, good people, it's just that they had different goals. I'll give them that. They were smart people. People aren't any dumber.

End of Side A, Tape 1 (of 1)

Beginning of Side B, Tape 1 (of 1)

Silen: One thing about the watersheds that I was very proud of, is that I finally figured out a way to reduce stream sedimentation and handle the logging right-of-way, at the same time. That was that when the waterway was felled, or before the right-of-way was felled, I would have them take a tractor and make a barely passable road at the top of the cut, as you went through. That was all engineered in. We would hoof it down 'til we came to a stream. This road would allow them to remove the timber with these kind of self-loading loggers. When they got to the stream, the tractor could pull all the logs out of the stream, and have a cleared area there. The first thing that would be done would be installation of the culvert and making the fill for the stream. Then, the rest of the logging road was built, that would not involve the stream in the logging phase. It would be logging across the stream. If there was anything that went across the stream, it would be on the top of this fill. Boy, when I could get them to do that, it sure eliminated the major problems of sedimentation.

Geier: When you could get them to do it?

Silen: When I could get them to do it.

Geier: Was it hard getting them to do that?

Silen: Yeah.

Geier: What was the hurdle there?

Silen: The timber sale agreement. The contract. Have to get a special thing into a contract on the agreement, that it was an experimental forest.

Geier: So, the barrier there would be management at the forest level.

Silen: Yeah, I thought it would catch on, but it didn't, really. But I had it done experimentally a couple of times.

Geier: In interviews with Kerrick and [Ed] Anderson, they said clear-cuts of different sizes were laid out, to experiment with clear-cuts ranging from about 1/8 of an acre up to about 320 acres.

Silen: Who was doing this?

Geier: That's what I was going to ask, if that was you or was that after your time?

Silen: Well, I did some cuttings set up to work on the problem of lethal surface temperatures. One of them was a series of north/south clear cuts that were 200 feet and 400 feet wide, to see how they regenerated. They all regenerated. That was never a problem. Then the other kind were large clear cuts on fairly good topography, where I could leave lines of trees, which I called my shade seed tree system. That was composed of lines of trees about 180 feet apart, just far enough so the tops of the trees would pass some shade over the ground. I tried to limit the amount of exposure to about four hours of full sunlight, and tried to have some shade passing over the area. At least every four hours.

Geier: Uh-huh.

Silen: Those regenerated easily, too. Larger clear-cuts were much slower on regenerating. They were on the Andrews Experimental Forest when I left. Jerry Franklin looked into the regeneration reporting on them.

Geier: Were you working at all with Franklin at that time?

Silen: No, Jerry came in with the watershed, the next phase. He was there, but we didn't have much contact.

Geier: That district ranger you were working with at that time was Bob Mealey. Is that right?

Silen: No, Brit Ash was there through my whole career.

Geier: Brit Ash.

Silen: He went to Alaska after we finished.

Geier: Okay. Was he the person you worked with most on actually laying out the cuts and roads?

Silen: Well, no. His crew was involved with administering the sales.

Geier: So, the different size clear-cut studies, are something that came up later?

Silen: Oh, I think there were several studies in the region on different sizes of clear-cuts.

Geier: I'm trying to learn from old-timers, who were saying the logger, Mike Savelich, was complaining about some of the different cut block sizes?

Silen: Well, yeah, (laughs) he complained about whatever he could.

Geier: Sounds like quite a character.

Silen: (Laughing) If he thought he could get some more timber or something out of it, it made him happy. When you said, "Well, I think you could cut this little patch of timber in addition to your sale." That made him happy. If you can't take any out, that made him unhappy. And, if you raised any costs, that made him unhappy.

Geier: The thing that he was complaining about the most was timber sales that required him to fell the trees within a very small unit. He was having a lot of time spent on those.

Silen: Well, sure. He took the contract on why should a guy complain after he okayed the contract? (Laughing)

Geier: I liked your comment about how he complained about placement of roads. You mentioned last time that PNW Station Director Bob Aufderheide was there for the early logging studies.

Silen: Well, Bob wasn't Director of the Experiment Station, he was the head of the Willamette Research Center [Corvallis].

Geier: Okay.

Silen: Which was stationed in Corvallis. Phil Briegleb was the station director [PNW] at the time.

Geier: You mentioned something else about Phil Briegleb, that he came out during the timber survey [Survey of the Douglas Fir Region, led by H.J. Andrews and R.C. Cowlin].

Silen: Oh, yeah! It was important in the history of the forest that he did the legwork on the survey of the region. He told me one time he was walking the trail down the ridge that goes past Carpenter Mountain and comes out at Lookout Mountain. When he got to the head of that drainage, he said, "If I ever want an experimental forest in old growth, this would be it." And he did it.

Geier: Was it H.J. Andrews who was partially responsible for setting up the forest. Is that right?

Silen: No, H.J. Andrews had no role in it at all.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: H. J. Andrews, the reason that he had prominence enough to be used for the naming of the forest [in memoriam], he was killed in an auto accident in Washington D.C., and he was there looking over housing, because he was going to be the next chief of the Forest Service.

Geier: Is that right?

Silen: Yes. That's a little detail that should be known, and that he was quite a person, and good enough to be considered for the next chief.

Geier: So, that was in the works. He was actually looking for a house to move into?

Silen: Yeah, and he would have made a great chief. [Respected in public and private sector]

Geier: Have you ever worked with him at all?

Silen: No. I didn't. He visited the experimental forest a couple of times and played poker.

Geier: Where was Phil Briegleb at that time?

Silen: He was director of the experiment station and was, as far as I was concerned, the main guy setting up the Andrews Experimental Forest [Blue River E.F., 1948-53], and accepting this 20-million-foot cut to get in, that sort of thing.

Geier: In terms of selecting the site, and working with the forest?

Silen: Making it happen. He was probably the main one there, although I don't know what the records show, you know, what the written records will show. I'm sure that he had that in mind and was going to make it happen, if he could. And he was in a position to be approving it.

Geier: Was he in charge when the name was changed from Blue River to Andrews?

Silen: Yeah.

Geier: Was there any connection between him and Andrews?

Silen: They were well-acquainted. They were kind of from the same era. Sure.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: I'm sure they thought a lot of each other. They were both very high-caliber people.

Geier: It sounds like you and Briegleb spent a lot of time together?

Silen: Yeah, I used to go skiing with him and his family. In fact, they took care of my dog when I spent three months in Washington D.C. one time.

Geier: So, where did he go from the station after being director? Did he retire?

Silen: No, I think he went to the Southern Experimental Station, which was a bigger job.

Geier: What did you do after the Andrews? I know you came up to OSU here?

Silen: Well, let's see, I was set up as project leader for the genetics project in 1954. That's what I did next. And that's what I've done since.

Geier: That's a continuous line from that point on, and as you mentioned earlier, you haven't had a great deal of involvement in what's been going on in the Andrews since then.

Silen: No. I've just chopped it off. I haven't had any involvement with the Andrews.

Geier: Well, how about with people that work there?

Silen: No.

Geier: None at all?

Silen: No.

Geier: Is that hard? Because you mentioned that last time.

Silen: No, it wasn't hard. Like I said, I was in love with the place and I didn't ever want to go back.

Geier: You were in love with the place, but you didn't want to go back?

Silen: No, I didn't want to see what happened.

Geier: Is that right?

Silen: The reason, the district took it over, so I knew everything I worked on would be in limbo.

Geier: That was only for a short period, wasn't it?

Silen: Well, they put some watershed people back on to it, but the big effort in timber management, that whole thing was gone.

Geier: Gone. So, just too painful to go back and see?

Silen: No, I don't think it would painful. I just didn't want to do it.

Geier: (Laughter)

Silen: No, I've been out there since, but not in any [official] role.

Geier: When you went back up there, were your fears confirmed about that?

Silen: No, it looked pretty good.

Geier: The road system's still there?

Silen: Well, you can't take the road system out now.

Geier: That had kind of a long-lasting impact.

Silen: The cutting units are regenerating very well. They're almost the size of timber you can cut.

Geier: Mike [Kerrick] and Ed [Anderson] were talking about this person you also mentioned earlier, Mike Savelich. And they made quite a point about his use of all Croatian crews.

Silen: Well, he still spoke broken Yugoslavian, and of course, these people, in self-defense, helped each other. He was looking for Yugoslavians. I think they all did that.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: No, they all did, because most anybody could go out there and get a job. The people I had contact with weren't Yugoslavians. I mean to say that his management team was not Yugoslavian. My management was Yugoslavian now.

Geier: I'm trying to get a handle on the level of involvement of the local community and the administration of the Andrews. Were people in that local community that you were involved with in the social circuit, involved directly in operations on the Andrews?

Silen: They didn't even know what was going on. In fact, the only thing that was going on was my crew. That was all.

Geier: How many people were up there?

Silen: Well, Hank Gratkowski was there most of the time. He was there permanently with me all year, and he was just an assistant. That's all. He left to take over work down in the Umpqua area. He and I were it, and then we got summertime help. That's all. Lots of times, it was just he and I. That was the whole staff. For most of the year. That's all. We would lay out 20 million feet a year and did the research, whatever research was there.

Geier: What was his background before he started working for you? Do you recall?

Silen: Well, he was just a graduate forester. Applied for work at the experiment station.

Geier: Where did he study?

Silen: Gosh, I don't remember.

Geier: I was just curious. He's not around anymore, is he?

Silen: I don't even know that. He was having all kinds of health problems though his career and he finally retired in the Roseburg area. Gosh, I haven't heard in the last five years what his status was.

Geier: I'd be interested in talking to him. One of the things I'd like to get a handle on is some of the people who were here.

Silen: You might be able to find him through the station's personnel people. Have them look up records for him. I'm sure he retired under the Office of Personnel Management in Washington D.C.

Geier: Are there issues you think you ought to address? Things that strike you about the Andrews?

Silen: No. Things that I would have a contribution to are in the past. Like I say, I don't think forestry is the same anymore. I wouldn't even know how to tackle "new forestry." [Alternative methods to "industrial forestry" being developed/advanced by Jerry Franklin at that time.]

Geier: There is one thing that struck me. I'm trying to find in my notes where it's located. One issue that came up in earlier interviews was the concern over an example of how research on the Andrews influenced an early environmental concern in the 1950's.

Silen: Yeah, we had groups in Eugene you might say were the ones that finally became the environmental groups, and they visited the experimental forests just as field trips. I told them exactly what I was doing. They seemed to think that this was a good approach. They really didn't at the time have any thought that logging shouldn't be done. I didn't see that, that coming out. It's just whether it was done with care, or just without care.

Geier: They mentioned that University of Oregon Professor Karl...I can't actually read my notes on this, but it's……Karl [Onthank?]

Silen: Onthank?

Geier: Onthank?

Silen: I think he was up there one time or another, because the name is kind of familiar.

Geier: It was in relation to the designation of a primitive area in the Three Sisters Wilderness?

Silen: Well, that was kind of funny because the Three Sisters Wilderness Area was where the Obsidians [outdoor recreation and activist organization] went for their horse trips.

Geier: Yeah.

Silen: Then, once or twice a summer, you'd see them gather at the CCC Camp. That's where they took off for the Three Sisters Wilderness Area with their horses. We'd get inundated with horses and trailers for a weekend. They would go into the Three Sisters Wilderness Area, come out and have a good time. They had a cabin on the site where the McKenzie Station is now.

Geier: Hmm.

Silen: And that is where they would hold a lot of meetings.

Geier: They were called the Obsidians?

Silen: Obsidians. They were the ones really concerned about the Willamette National Forest's plan to move the boundary of the Three Sisters Wilderness Area from where it started to Horse Creek

boundary, to where it is now. They took out a big chunk of that; that was argued about. The meetings that announced this change by Supervisor Bruckart, were held right up at this Obsidian cabin. I was in on these (laughter) meetings, so I was right in the beginning of the big controversy over what became the current Three Sisters Wilderness Area. It was ridiculous. It shouldn't have gone on, because it was just hard-nosed on the part of the Portland and Willamette timber staff. It just left no alternative for them but to fight.

Geier: You mean the -- ?

Silen: -- Obsidians. You see, the Obsidians were trying to prevent the dismemberment of the wilderness area. They had a cause, the Sierra Club was looking for a cause, and they got together.

Geier: This group, the Obsidians. I haven't come across that name before.

Silen: Well, that was an early group of "horsey" people. Doctors and professionals in Eugene had this horse group called the Obsidians.

Geier: Oh, I see. So mainly interested in going out riding?

Silen: Yeah, that turned out to be the start of it, and it was just a horse group. They didn't see that any more of this should really happen, that the heart of the wilderness area should be taken out by fiat. The west boundary of the wilderness area had been left somewhat indefinite by an act of Congress that set up this wilderness area. Well, I think it was an act of Congress, anyway. It very officially set up on other boundaries, but the west boundary wasn't, and Bruckart was running out of timber. (Laughter) That was what was really going on. He was looking around for places on the Willamette Forest where they could immediately go in and put in some more sales, and the west boundary wasn't decided, so it was a good place to challenge. So, he did.

Geier: You attended these meetings, just because they had their cabin right there?

Silen: Yeah, it was because they had their cabin there, and it was just good entertainment.

Geier: They would have regular meetings out there?

Silen: Well, those particular meetings. Bruckart asked them to meet because he wanted to announce that this was going to be done.

Geier: Oh, I see. Was the Obsidian group one of these groups that was part of that social circle?

Silen: Well, I'm sure that they had a lot of environmentalists in this horse riding group.

Geier: Actually, I was referring back to when you talking about when the snow season came on, you would be involved in this social circle of dinners and invitations back-and-forth.

Silen: No, this was the Eugene group. I was on the McKenzie River and when I would move from the McKenzie I would go into Portland. I had no real good contacts in Eugene in that period.

Geier: Okay. What was the ultimate result?

Silen: Well, the ultimate result was that the Sierra Club challenged this decision to move the boundary of the Three Sisters Wilderness Area.

Geier: And did they win that challenge?

Silen: No. They didn't win it. The Forest Service won, but they "lost."

Geier: How do you mean?

Silen: You know, it later became the focal point of environmental issues.

Geier: Won the battle, lost the war?

Silen: Yeah. That's it. The more they stirred it, the worse it got. The Forest Service timber management group were not going to give in to horse riders from Eugene.

Geier: So, essentially, it sounds like an inroad that brought the -- ?

Silen: -- This was really the entrance of the Sierra Club out here, that Three Sisters Wilderness Area conflict. (Laughter) I was in a funny position for watching it all.

Geier: Did they make any effort to involve you in these discussions?

Silen: No, they never asked me.

Geier: Okay, so research efforts on the Andrews never became a part of the discussion?

Silen: Oh, no.

Geier: Obviously, the issue there would be roads, right? Putting in roads and developing the area?

Silen: No, that was quite separate. This developing environmental controversy around that area [Three Sisters and French Pete Creek] was completely separate from the experimental forest.

Geier: But I mean the issue that they were concerned about what would be that, if it's not a wilderness, they would be putting in roads in that area?

Silen: Oh, sure, and they did. And, of course, they did log out the old forest wilderness area.

Geier: I guess what I was getting at was, did you see any sign that the environmental movement was dealing with studies of roads?

Silen: No, I don't think they got to that at all. It was just one of interesting sidelights of being there on the ground.

Geier: As far as you know, they didn't know who you were.

Silen: No, I don't think they ever knew who I was. I could have been a horse rider.

Geier: Sounds like you were enjoying yourself there. I probably shouldn't keep you much longer here. There's one other issue on this that we were just talking about earlier. That is, what did you consider to be the public role of research at that time?

Silen: Well, public role of research was to get information that was true, no matter how the chips fell. I don't think we ever found it to be anything else. In other words, how does nature work? And how can we use that information?

Geier: So, public outreach to try and educate the public about those issues, would you consider that part of the researcher's role at that time?

Silen: You want to get it out somewhere, but we felt we were getting it out through our station publications and in scientific journals. That was as far as our thinking went, or at least mine.

Geier: How about bringing politicians out to the site to tour the forest?

Silen: Well, that was usually arranged through the Portland office. You know, by other people.

Geier: Okay.

Silen: I didn't go out of my way to do it, but there were plenty of people arranging that.

Geier: Did you conduct any tours for people like that?

Silen: Sure. We had dignitaries of one kind or another out there that were arranged for.

Geier: Did that create logistical problems of any kind for you?

Silen: What?

Geier: Did that create logistical problems for you at any time -- taking care of visitors?

Silen: It just interrupted the work, that's all. We usually looked forward a little bit to it. It led to breaks in work, and often times these would be weekend things, when people have the time.

Geier: It sounds like that it was something you considered to be really separate from what you were really trying to do out there. It wasn't part of it?

Silen: That's right. I didn't feel that was part of my job. I felt that if I got that done or didn't get it done, it wasn't important. The important thing was that I get the sale layout and the research done.

Geier: I think we should probably call it quits for today.

End of Side B, Tape 1 (of 1), and End of Interview