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STEWART L. UDALL ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW V

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ACCESSION NUMBER 74-259

INTERVIEW V

INTERVIEWEE: STEWART UDALL

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

DATE: December 16, 1969

Tape 1 of 1

F: This is an interview with former Secretary Stewart Udall in his office in Washington, December 16, 1969. The interviewer is Joe B. Frantz.

Stu, let's talk first of all about these problems of pesticides which became an educational matter, and one of real concern during the '60's. Until then I think they were more or less accepted as good.

U: I think, the crystallization of thinking that took place in the '60's was to a substantial degree encouraged and pushed by Rachel Carson's book, Silent Spring, which of course came out in 1962. This had quite an impact on the country. She is a person who has both the writing skill and understanding of science to make points very strongly. I talked with my scientists about the time the book came out. They felt that in the main she was on target and that we ought to come down on that side of the argument. If you may remember the agricultural interests generally pooh-poohed the book, reacted rather negatively about it, and I found myself increasingly, as the months and years went by--because that's where the scientific evidence pointed--taking the position that this was a perilous activity and that there had to be restraint.

I think, looking back now over the last seven years let's say, we sort of slowly wore down the opposition. We find now the Nixon Administration in the last few months has begun to take steps. I think this was probably inevitable because with DDT in particular--after all the person that discovered this won a Nobel Prize--had an influence on health and other things in the world generally--as an example though of where you take something that was a good thing in the beginning, overuse it, push it too far, and then you find that you're doing damage and its side effects are very destructive.

F: Were you thinking of it as a sense as upsetting the balance of nature or to a greater extent of it as a pollutant through the things we eat and drink?

U: I think we thought of it in the beginning, Joe--and Rachel Carson did too--as a threat to wildlife and to the food chain. We began to see in the last few years increasingly, as scientific evidence pointed in that direction, that man himself was going to be ultimately endangered and imperiled and that this, because it was so powerful, could have a disruptive effect on the whole web of life, the whole food chain, if we didn't stop the use of it. This is, I think, where we came out in the end. But it's interesting that Rachel

Carson's book was primarily on bird life and in the last few months the focus has been on what effect this has on man himself. In this way it's sort of indicative of the whole sweep of the conservation movement and the fact that it's taken on new dimensions in the last few years.

F: What was your particular procedure in this, just an educational campaign in effect through speeches and articles?

U: That's right.

F: Because there wasn't much you could do in a legal or political way.

U: I couldn't do anything because--well, the one thing we could do and we did do as we went along, was limit its use on our land areas, on national parks, areas of that kind, and move to the pesticides that would break down readily. We also fought with the Forest Service on some cases, you know. They were doing spraying of this kind in national forests. Then the national forests, the water runs out into often times prime outdoor recreation areas, fishing streams, and gets into the estuaries, into the fish life. It was essentially kind of a little cold war between Interior and Agriculture. We, by pointing to scientific evidence, by pointing to increasing public concern, we just had to sort of slowly back them off. Then as more scientific evidence piled up, you reached the point where you could have the demands that were made this year for action by the federal government at the highest level.

F: When you do get pollutants into your water, how do you remove them except through the regular process of run-off and rain and so on. Is there some viable scientific method of decreasing the amount of pollution?

U: Of course, what we should want to do, particularly with these poisons and pesticides, is to use those types that will--they're not as efficient--but that will have a limited killing effect, where they degrade quickly and don't effect other organisms and don't effect the life system generally. This is what we began to move to. The scientists would say, too, and tell us, that DDT wasn't indispensable, that there were other pesticides that would work.

Of course, what we should seek to do generally and what we haven't done--that's the reason our whole natural system is endangered by the various forms of pollution, air pollution, water pollution, contamination--is that in the long run we could disrupt the very system on which life on this planet depends. This is what is increasingly becoming a concern of biologists and ecologists. Frankly, I think you can look back and see the whole thrust was of gathering additional scientific evidence so that we really knew what the effect was of increasing public awareness. Essentially the campaign that we waged was to help make the fight that the scientists and conservationists were making, to aid that cause of increasing the awareness and the concern so that there could be decisive action taken at the government level.

F: To shift a little bit, let's talk about the problem--and the opportunities, I suppose--of minerals on government lands. This brings in anything from safety factors, to stockpiling factors, to lease factors and so on.

U: The attitude that we started in the 1960's with was basically the old attitude that existed for a hundred years based upon the fact that your public lands were wide open to mining to exploration, that this was a vital and very necessary activity, and therefore let her rip, the more the better. There was no concern and in fact the old 1872 Mining Act is anti-conservation. It's a giveaway of the resources. It also gives people the right to move in and to bulldoze the earth and pollute and mess things up. One of the things that we developed in the last years of President Johnson's Administration was a surface mine legislation to require anybody who's going to mine to restore the earth, to restore the soil conditions, and to carry out their activities in such a way that there was no adverse effect on the rest of nature. But, again, this was something that developed as we went along. I think we were essentially evolving new attitudes and a new approach. The old attitude of unlimited mining and the mining people doing it in the cheapest way, no matter what effect it might have on streams, on the air, that this became increasingly under question and that we tried to evolve new laws, new attitudes, new approaches to do something about it.

F: I rather presume that in the eastern part of the United States where you've got this problem of strip mining that the country in cattle terms will hair over once you let it lie for awhile. The pine trees will come back and so on, but in the West with it's extreme aridity and frequently its very thin top soil that you're giving almost eternal scars that don't heal.

U: Well, that's true in the arid lands, and the semi-arid country of the West much more.

F: So this gives you a little different problem than you would have in the vast lands of the East.

U: But even, Joe, in the East--although almost all this land is in private ownership and we'd always taken the attitude that this was a state problem, state control of strip mining and so on. The coal strip mining is, I think, one of the worst forms of man's activity by using big machines and everything to really strip and gut an area. They go so deep you see, and they tear the top soil off, that even these areas--many of them--will remain scarred permanently, because they've just stripped right down to rock. Even where you have the favorable natural conditions you have it's hard to restore.

Plus the fact that the worst form of water pollution there is acid mine drainage from your coal mines. It's ruined miles and miles of stream. Again, our attitude until very recently was, "Well, you know this was too bad, but it's a necessary incident of coal mining," and if the states didn't want to do anything about, why, nothing would be done.

Yet as we began to move in our water pollution control programs we could see and identify this as a major cause of damage to interstate streams and something that had to concern the national government.

F: So consequently scarring the land, say, in eastern Ohio with strip mining becomes a national concern to me down in Texas because it is ruining part of my total land area.

U: That's right. It has a severe overall effect.

F: And, in your opinion, you brought a national focus to this during the '60's.

U: I think we did, and I think the mining legislation that we tried to push at least pointed out the remedy. Also, one of the pieces of legislation that I sent to Congress as we went out the door was for a complete rewriting of the old 1872 Mining Act so that it would become a leasing act instead of people getting a mining claim and that the activity would be carried out consonant with sound conservation practices.

This still hasn't been done. It's a major question we face right today and I'm disturbed that the new Administration seems to be casting its lot with a few little changes in the old mining act rather than the kind of thorough-going change that I think is vital.

F: What do you need, a whole eight years, such as you had, to prepare the Congress to accept things like this?

U: The Congress is certainly the obstacle. I think as far as the public and the conservation movement, generally, they would go with these changes. I'm talking about in surface mining and changing the rights laws.

F: You think they've moved out ahead in this.

U: Unfortunately, and this is where the committee system of Congress betrays us, the members of Congress who are dominant on those committees are from districts where there is mining and where there's this old tradition. They won't move over. Congressman Aspinall is a good example on this. He's strong for the mining industry. You're not going to get change unless you can move people like that over.

F: You've been in Congress and know the system quite intimately. Why do our Interior committee chairmen in Congress tend almost invariably to come from the West? Do they seek the assignment or does the assignment seek them? We can go back through the whole history of chairman and subcommittees chairmen and so forth, and they almost invariably--I can think of a few exceptions--they are men who come from the western mining states.

U: Historically I think without doubt one of the biggest breaks on conservation action has been the fact that the committees [that] handle most conservation legislation are dominated by Westerners. The Westerners themselves are dominated by the local desires and the local pressures of the cattlemen, lumbermen, stockmen and so on--in other words that they're user oriented rather than conservation oriented.

Now this is true. It goes back to Teddy Roosevelt's time. A lot of the Congressmen, Republicans and Democrats alike, fought him bitterly on the things that he did and he was acting for the nation. They said, "Well, you're destroying our local industry." This has been operating right up until today.

The one tactic, Joe, that I used in order to offset this was to curry favor with and work closely with Congressmen who were either not Westerners or were not typical Western Congressmen. Congressman Sayler of Pennsylvania, the ranking member on the House Interior Committee was very good on these matters. He and I saw much more eye to eye on issues than Aspinall and I. Senator Kuchel of California, the ranking Republican from an urban state now, he was quite good on conservation matters. Senator Jackson of Washington increasingly had the kind of awareness and enlightened approach and was more interested in conservation than in use of resources. So you had to work with those people and kind of surround and put pressures on the more slow moving types like Congressman Aspinall.

F: Let them carry a bit of the weight for you.

U: That's right.

F: What was your particular problem with this shale development?

U: There's quite a history on this and a lot of it is in my papers, of course. The shale resource, is primarily in Colorado, also in Wyoming and Utah, represents ultimately a fantastic resource.

F: Has the technology caught up with it?

U: Not quite yet and that was part of the problem.

You see, the question was, it was open to old mining laws and could they stake out mining claims and take it away. Well, that started back in the 20's. President Herbert Hoover closed all the oil shale country to mining locations. I think this was a very provident step and the question was increasingly raised by Aspinall, the Colorado Congressman, and others that the time had come to begin development, to open it up to leasing. The question was whether the technology was ready, whether it would be competitive with other sources of petroleum and petroleum products.

So I did several things. Beginning in '64 I appointed an oil-shale advisory committee of very eminent people. They ended up, somebody said, as seven experts and there were seven different reports! A little overstatement but it was a very good report because it put it in sharp focus. Then the question was could we develop some kind of leasing program. We did finally develop a proposal. Industry, in effect, rejected it which proved to me that the technology is not ready and that industry will only move on oil shale development when the economics and the technology are right. In order to encourage technology, if you give them too many advantages, it constitutes a giveaway.

Therefore, you ought to wait for technological developments. I had to administer this very carefully because if we moved too fast, gave too many concessions, it would be regarded quite rightly as a giveaway. On the other hand, there was a feeling of some of the congressional people, particularly the ones from these mountain states and from some people in industry, that if you'd open up a leasing program the thing would move forward and so on. I think this is a great reserve for the nation. Probably ultimately the federal government ought to do more research and development work itself and not just leave it up to industry under a leasing program.

F: As I recall, when the leases were first opened up, instead of the great bonanza that was expected the companies proceeded rather, let's say, timidly or conservatively and that they did not bid high nor bid very broadly for the land.

U: That's right. This proved what we suspected all along and what my people felt when we laid out our leasing program. They said, "You'll have no takers." Because if you have a program that protects the public interest, is conservation minded, that this establishes conditions that they would consider unfavorable and too stringent for them to make the investments. So we're right back to the problem we had at the beginning; how do you encourage technology, and how should this be developed; what role should the federal government play; what should private industry play?

F: Every state has something that passes for a conservation commission, board, agency. How did you manage to keep a sort of fine balance between what you're trying to do on the national scale and not override what they look on as their prerogative? Was there a close liaison here?

U: It all depended. Of course, we tried wherever we could, where there were states that were providing the new leadership in outdoor recreation and conservation, to encourage them to help move their programs along faster. Where there were state commissions, state activities, where the states traditionally have played the lead role, we again tried to have some influence on them.

You take the whole field of wildlife management, which has been primarily a state concern. In fact the states have been wanting to push the federal government aside and assume the larger role in this area, which I felt was wrong. So what you tried to do was encourage the right kind of developments and to discourage in areas where the states were trying to enhance their role by limiting federal responsibilities, federal action, in areas where the federal government had to play a primary role.

F: Why did you feel that was wrong?

U: Unfortunately, the attitude that you get at the state level to too much a degree is based on again local pressures, local considerations, and it didn't always accord with the best conservation principles and practices.

F: Also, there's nothing magic about a state border, in some cases, so that these things do cross state borders.

U: I've thought increasingly in the last years--or I saw so many of our resources--state boundaries are not only imaginary, they're very unrealistic. You know, if you were to set a group up today, *de novo* as it were to fix state boundaries, I would favor the state boundaries based on watershed. You'd have a state named Potomac, for example. The state Connecticut would be the Connecticut River Valley, and because this would put thing--

F: You'd save yourself a lot of trouble with the Colorado River, wouldn't you?

U: Yes, that's right. The state boundaries were created very arbitrarily and without regard for proper planning or attitude for resource development.

F: In early March of 1964, not too long after Mr. Johnson had become President, a public land law review commission was set up, and it reported right at the end of his and your Administrations. What was the thinking behind this? What was the genesis of the whole idea?

U: This was really a Congressional initiative and it grew out of the fight over the Wilderness Bill. It was Congressman Aspinall's idea, essentially, and not ours. There were three elements to it. One was that this was, in a way, a sop to Aspinall, who was violently opposed along and finally begrudgingly agreed to a wilderness bill, that there would be a study of the future of the public lands of the United States, which still are a very substantial portion when one included Alaska--almost twenty-five percent of the land area in the country. I think another aspect was that they passed legislation, also, that gave new powers to the Interior Department to classify public lands, to evolve management programs. Actually Aspinall thought of this as a temporary thing. We took the responsibility very seriously and were doing what we regarded as permanent classification of lands. I think it's clear now, because the life of the commission had to be renewed--it still hasn't reported--and I think its report is going to largely be a rather confused and abortive attempt to evolve new policy because Aspinall originally felt that such a study would come up with recommendations that would be favorable to giving the states more responsibility over these lands, to perhaps dealing more of these lands into private ownership and that this would aggrandize the user interest. But he recognizes now that there's very strong sentiment that these lands are a permanent legacy of the country and that we ought to keep the great bulk of them and manage them properly. I don't think this report is going to have much historical significance. That doesn't hurt my own feelings on this because it was his idea and it was not our idea. We never did expect much to come out of it, frankly.

F: Did you get the feeling that neither Congress nor the people in general understood the wilderness idea?

U: The wilderness idea was argued about for nearly a decade before the Wilderness Bill was enacted. The first Wilderness Bill was introduced in 1957 by Hubert Humphrey. It was considered highly controversial. People like Aspinall, some of the western user-oriented Congressmen, thought it was an outlandish idea. It slowly gathered strength over the years. Then when President Kennedy came out for a wilderness bill of some kind, this gave it new momentum. President Johnson supported it and of course he signed the bill in September of 1964. Aspinall initially took a very hard stance that there was going to be no Wilderness Bill and you had to almost break down that opposition.

F: How do you get it through a committee on which he sits as chairman and a pretty strong chairman?

U: The device I used was to work with the committee members who were for it. And particularly Congressman Sayler of Pennsylvania became one of the outstanding advocates and he just constantly kept the pressure on Aspinall. The national publications that were interested kept putting pressure on. He finally recognized that he was going to force the Administration to try and take the committee away from him. So he finally yielded. He got some concessions on his mining phase out , which I think were bad concessions. This was a kind of horse trading.

F: How did that work?

U: It worked essentially by saying we're going to have almost a twenty-year period in which you can have mining exploration in the wilderness. Well, the two are really incompatible. They're still going through that whole process and it really watered down the Wilderness Bill. Actually, in my view right today, we ought to be discussing doubling the size of the wilderness system in this country rather than arguing about whether there are or are not mineral values in some of the wilderness areas.

But Aspinall was throughout the most severe obstacle we had. He's a very crotchety, difficult person to work with. I often thought that if I had had someone in the House as chairman of the committee who was comparable to Senator Jackson, let's say, or Senator Anderson of New Mexico, that we might have gotten twice as much done. But he's a very strong-minded, one-man committee, and very dominate and domineering, so you have to cow-tow to him, work with him, get as much as you could, take your half a loaf and settle for that. And he was educable and flexible to a degree.

F: Now when you get something like the Wilderness Act through and it gains acceptance, does he then turn around and embrace it?

U: No, he moves over very slowly. Let me give you an example, Joe. This is one that involved the Johnson Administration. I got the President in his State of the Union message in early 1965 to propose as a kind of complementary piece of legislation to the Wilderness Act a Wild Rivers Bill where we would set aside sections of rivers and tributaries to be left alone, just as we were taking other sections of rivers and we were going to dam them. Aspinall's immediate public reaction didn't surprise me at all. He said this was a ridiculous idea and his committee, he didn't know whether they would even consider it. As a matter of fact, they didn't consider it for three years.

We finally got the scenic and Wild Rivers Bill, as it became known, in the last year of President Johnson's Administration. It took four years to break him down. You did this by number one, passing a Senate bill, a good Senate bill and that put some pressure on. The conservation organizations indicated they wanted it and they kept pushing it. The President kept it high up on his agenda of needed conservation legislation. You just had to wear him down, but he did feel I think, even when he got through--as he put it, he called it a crazy idea.

That was the kind of opposition we had to fight with this powerful Congressman sitting there. So what I did, I would work with Sayler and work with others on the committee. They'd keep nagging at him and saying, "We've got to do something; the nation wants it done; the President has put it on the list of must legislation." He'd drag his feet and drag his feet and they didn't even hold hearings. This is a major piece, new new initiative by a President for new conservation legislation and a new idea that I think historically will be seen as important as the Wilderness Bill. And though a President proposes it a Congressional committee wouldn't even hold hearings for three years. That's the kind of opposition we had.

F: So really there's a great deal of long range triumph in everything that got passed.

U: That's right.

F: Let's shift a little bit and talk about, well, two things. We have mentioned in the past the possible reorganization of the Department of the Interior and bringing in, say, the Forest

Service and the Engineers. You've got, as things stand at the moment, you have a sort of a built-in conflict between part of what you're trying to do in the Department of the Interior and what the Army Engineers are trying to do, do you not?

U: Yes. This conflict, as the '60's wore on, became increasingly a major problem. Actually, the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, arise out of the great momentum of the dam building movement that began in the New Deal days, they were still riding pretty high in the beginning of the 1960's. In fact as you remember, President Kennedy campaigned mainly in the West on one slogan, that he was going to end the no new starts policy. Well, the no new starts meant no new dams. That wasn't exactly the Eisenhower Administration's policy. They were for slowing it down.

F: That Colorado series, like Turaconti (?) and so forth all were Eisenhower beginnings.

U: This whole upper Colorado project, of course, a Democratic Congress passed it, and it was a joint effort in that respect, but there was some action on that front. But still the Corps of Engineers flood control projects, their harbor dredging, all their main activities, their dam building--with the authority they had--they were given a very broad authority by Congress. Most Congressmen, under the old pork barrel system, regarded this as a beneficial thing, something good for the country and they'd go home with their projects and feel that they brought the bacon home for the people.

F: Pretty close to sacred because you could save water.

U: That's right, but increasingly these activities came under question. Conservationists didn't want dams in certain areas. It turned out much to the embarrassment to the Corps of Engineers--for example, with their harbor dredging projects in Cleveland and Chicago and places like that-- they were dredging all of this poisoned polluted muck, all of the water pollution that will go into the Cuyahoga River for example in Cleveland and take it out in Lake Erie and dump it right in the lake! So they were part of the polluting process. They were destroying important estuaries. They were dredging where they shouldn't dredge. So we began to be in confrontations with them. Congress began to put little amendments on bills giving Interior a right to review certain things. The Corps didn't like any of this. Their Congressmen didn't either, but we had enough of strength to challenge some of these things. And I found myself as the decade wore on increasingly questioning myself some of their major dam building projects that at the beginning of the 1960's had appeared to be a sort of sacred cow.

Rampart Dam was one example, Joe. I went to Alaska after I came back from Russia and looked at their big dams in eastern Siberia and sort of made noises, although I had some reservations then, in favor of Rampart Dam in the fall of 1962. By the fall of 1967, or the summer, by our report and our action I in effect delivered the coup de grace to Rampart dam--five years later that showed part of the change.

But the Corps of Engineers, under the system they operated under, Congress would give them money, say, "Go study your project; is it engineeringly economically feasible; does it have a good economic cost-benefit ratio under the old system?" which had very many weaknesses. Then they'd come back and Congress would give them the money to go build it. Usually, nobody was supposed to have a say about it except the concerned Congressmen, the people in a given state and the Corps. And we increasingly were forcing them to recognize that there was a national interest and a national responsibility and they had to meet national criteria. But it wasn't easy and you had to fight them every step of the way.

F: I judge on something like Rampart to a great extent you're impounding water with the idea of developing an area that is not developed rather than feeding the needs of one you already have. This, in one sense, is promotional.

U: The arguments for Rampart Dam that Senator Gruening and others pushed were that this would be repeating what was done with Grand Coulee and Bonneville Dam. It would provide cheap power. It was primarily number one, a big public works project; number two, cheap hydroelectric power. Yet they didn't have, you know--Alaska then and they don't have today--the kind of markets for such power. But the negative side, the thing that finally killed them was--and bear in mind this is right up near the Arctic Circle under completely different climatic conditions--that that dam would have flooded an enormous area, the whole Yukon flats. It would have created a lake as large as Lake Erie. From the standpoint of recreation--fish and wildlife and so on--in that climate and that part of the world this wasn't creating many pluses. But it would have destroyed the breeding habitat of between five and ten percent of the water fowl population of the whole western flyway. So it was the hunters and the sportsmen who were hunting those ducks down--

F: In the marshes of Texas.

U: That's right, that really finally moved in and focused attention on the destructive side of this project. I was able, finally putting it in balance--you know we came out with a report and recommendation that was very negative and this is what really killed it.

F: Do you think in part because he didn't deliver--this is subjective--this is one of the reasons for Ralph Rivers' defeat or for Gruenings' defeat? Or do you think those are just local--

U: No, no, the Rampart Dam was not a crucial factor in their defeats. Now, as I read it, it was owed to other factors. Gruening was very critical of me. He never said anything very kindly about me in Alaska. I was fond of him personally--always liked the old man--but his idea was you made Interior Secretaries a scapegoat. So I was the strawman and he beat me around the bush. In fact, it was interesting, after we had turned in our report and it was generally recognized that Rampart Dam was dead, he got--I think this was in late '67 or early '68, I guess it was late '67--Vice President Humphrey was coming back from the Orient and stopped off in Alaska. Gruening got to him and Humphrey made a lot of noises and statements indicating that it wasn't dead and he was going to talk with me--which he never did do--and that Alaska needed to be developed and so on. So Gruening was still fighting away but he didn't succeed and shouldn't have succeeded in my view.

F: Shift to the other part of the United States, down toward Florida. You've got a conflict there between your Corps of Engineers and your National Park Service regarding the Everglades, the development of South Florida generally. I wonder if you could do a little analysis on what this is all about?

U: Here again you have a classic case. Single-minded activity by the Corps of Engineers with these water impoundments, with this drainage system, which really is a big bonanza for land speculation, land development. It also has the effect of creating new artificial water conditions. What really is ultimately involved down in the long run is who gets the water and what water supplies are protected, underground aquifers and so on. There's no question but that these big water conservation areas that were built below Lake Okeechobee on the watershed above the Everglades National Park have changed the ecology of the whole park. You know, instead of a swamp that drained naturally you have these big water impoundments, catchment areas, where the water is released then by man artificially.

I felt, and I feel now only because I've been deeply involved in the last few months in this Everglades controversy, the Parks Service was much too laggard and not nearly aggressive enough all along. I think they should have fought this idea in the beginning. They might have lost, but should have fought it. But they were passive. They went along with the Congressional delegation. When the drought came in 1964-65 along there, George Hartzog, the director--at that point the first time I ever knew the Everglades were in trouble--and he began rather vigorously then pointing out what had been done and how disastrous this could be for the park. It was destroying park values and yet the Corps of Engineers, their job had already been done and they were working on more projects for water impoundments. This again was an example where Corps of Engineers activity was undermining and destroying values in a national park that supposedly had been saved and preserved.

F: You're on a fringe there of an urban area, which is looking for expansion room, how do you answer that people versus alligators argument?

U: We just finished a report--my new Overview Organization. It's a total environment analysis.

F: That's an oversimplification but that's what the public feels a-

U: I think this states the case for balance. Actually, all of southern Florida is geographically like a rather shallow plate with the southern end of it not even having a rim you see. What ought to be done, in our view, is to have the urban development along the fringes, along the edges of both coasts, and leave these big huge inland areas undeveloped and undrained. I think if they drain and develop them you're going to have the whole ecology altered and the water supply undermined and destroyed. And the old let-her-rip type of growth, of anybody who's got some swampland, develop it--if they pursue that course, it's the course of ultimate disaster.

F: You had virtually a decade of looking at this problem. Do you think we are trying to feel our way--and I know the dangers of forecasting--but are we trying to feel our way toward some sort of urban management in which we will set aside areas in which we will deny Chambers of Commerce that sort of unlimited growth factor that they love so much?

U: I think we're seeing the first questioning of the whole basic American attitude toward growth. Increasingly in my speeches and writings and other things my last years in office was raising questions about the old attitude that all growth is good, all development is good. I gave speeches the last year out of office in Southern Florida saying if I lived there I would be only for quality growth. I would say to industry, to developers, "If you're not going to respect our geography, our ecology, go somewhere else; we don't want you." And I think this is what we have to move to.

I'm thinking of writing a major article now on the need for limits. I think we just have to think as a nation in terms of limits on population, on mechanization, on urbanization, on growth. If we don't we're going to find ourselves, increasingly, as we find ourselves today, confronted with major environmental problems. I think Southern Florida is a very good example where they don't put limits on growth, they're going to find the values present there slowly eroded and drained away.

F: Now then, one concept that changed as far as the Department of Interior was concerned during your administration, was that it became urban oriented to some extent whereas before it had always been associated with the great outdoors and empty space. Did you feel some sort of a necessity or mandate or what, to get into--at least on the periphery of city planning? Because I know you did some thinking along that line.

U: The evolution of this can be traced in our yearbooks and my old papers, speeches and everything else. It did evolve. It did occur. We were thought of as an outdoor organization, back country, the West.

F: You brought it east; you brought it to the people?

U: As the total environment concept developed, as we began to recognize the damage that had been done, as we began to recognize it--after all these urban areas where most of the

Americans lived, the conservation is important to them. The kind of air they breathe; the water that is available, both to drink and for outdoor recreation; the kind of landscapes they have. We were just increasingly driven that the big battle, in a way, was in and on the edge of the urban areas and that if we pretended by saving a few national parks or saving some wilderness, that we were saving the environment of this country, that we were kidding ourselves. We were driven towards an involvement in the urban problems. You know, the water pollution program came over. As the outdoor recreation program began to have an effect on what the cities did and didn't do, more and more of my time was involved not in the problems of the West but in the problems of urban areas and urban environment.

F: At the White House level you had a Presidential Science Advisory Committee which I'm sure dealt, among other things, with environmental pollution. Did you work with that at any stage?

U: Yes. Jerry Wiesner, Dr. Hornig, who later headed up the President's Science Advisory Council--we were increasingly involved with them. They became allies on many issues. They had, of course, other responsibilities. I think they considered their main job was advising the President on space and on defense technology and things of that kind. But they did increasingly work with us. They did naturally have a pretty good view. I loaned some of my people, as a matter of fact, to Dr. Hornig. He took some of our best people to work with him. They gave considerable help to this whole movement and the evolution that took place.

F: You also had a problem during your period with the general inflationary trend of a sort of galloping land acquisition cost which must have given you real budget problems.

U: This was and is still a major issue.

F: What do you do about it?

U: We would authorize a national park, national seashore and Congress would authorize as they did with Point Reyes, fourteen million dollars. Then it turned out today, eight years later, that it is going to cost over seventy-five million. Well, this is a recognition of realities and I think we ought to have been honest with ourselves. If we think it's important to conserve land, conserve open space, we're just going to have to pay whatever the cost is. We either have to adjust our budgets accordingly, if this is important, or reduce our goals. This increasing was rather a painful business in the last two or three years, with the pressures of Viet Nam on the budget. The military asking more and more and so on. We were increasingly in a squeeze.

But it seemed to me all along that this was some of the best money the country is investing. I think it will be so regarded, fifty years from now. We should have determined to do whatever was necessary. I was glad one of the last things we did was the Redwoods National Park. In the last supplementary budget that went through, we had fifty-five million dollars right in there with the Defense Department and their emergency appropriations. This is an emergency. You know, I said to myself, "We're making some headway; we're getting the right kind of priorities where something like this is considered as important as more money for the military."

F: That leads to something I wanted to ask you. It seemed to me that as a script you kind of worked up to a culmination, almost a dramatic culmination, of your administration with the addition of North Cascades and Redwoods right at the end. Let's talk just a little bit about the difficulties in getting those two areas into the system, because they were long drawn out fights.

U: The North Cascades, we discussed that in the beginning. This really took almost all eight years. This would not have been done--he deserves I believe the main credit, except for Senator Jackson. We appointed a very high level study commission. This was really one of these head-on conflicts between the Forest Service and the Department of Agriculture and Interior. Naturally the Forest Service, as was their custom always, they wouldn't give up an acre unless the President told them they had to or they were driven into a corner. So Senator Jackson knew this and knew that there were cross-currents in his own state. This study which is a very fine one was done with Dr. Krass, the head of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, who of course, came to Interior from the Forest Service. I think this really laid the groundwork and then it was a question of whether we could work out politics of it--and whether Aspinall would attempt to block Jackson on the House side. But Senator Jackson threaded the needle very nicely. We got the bill through the Senate and we then surrounded Aspinall, in effect, and we got action on it. And I think this was a very fine decision. I would have liked to have seen a larger area go into the national parks status but this was a pretty good big achievement.

The Redwoods was another matter. The Sierra Club had been agitating, and others, for a national park in the early '60's. It looked like a hopeless cause, you know. The Redwood preservation was largely for the preservation of the groves rather than large areas, small state parks, and so on. With President Johnson's interest and Mrs. Johnson's interest in parks and park preservation I thought I saw a wind at our backs that we could use. I went to the President and recommended in 1964 that he have a meeting in the White House, which he did, in the Cabinet Room and say that he thought there ought to be a Redwoods National Park and that he was going to push this as an idea.

F: A meeting of whom?

U: This was a meeting of the National Geographic Society, the thing we used to kick this off. They'd just discovered the tallest Redwood trees in the world. What had been previously thought to be the tallest were not. They had a special article and everything. So we had the Park people there. I think we invited some Congressional people in, Senator Jackson, Aspinall, and others. The President kicked the idea off, but it was indeed trouble from the beginning, and without Presidential interest it never would have been done. We just had to slug it out over a period of three or four years because everybody said, "You're too late; lumber companies are in there and they're cutting; you can't stop them; it's going to cost too much." We originally were thinking of maybe twenty-five million dollars and the Budget Bureau finally got it to fifty-five million. Then Congress in the end, under national pressure, took the ball. Senator Kuchel, Senator Jackson threw this Forest Service land in for good measure. Finally it's going to cost over a hundred million dollars--well over a hundred million dollars--before we're through. But this is an example of where once you got it launched and the country got interested and the national conservation organizations threw their weight behind it, it was a cause that couldn't be denied, except in the beginning everybody thought that we were biting off something we couldn't chew.

F: You have to build up a kind of popular momentum.

U: That's right, and this has to play out over a period of three or four years, usually, on a big bill like the Wilderness Bill or the Redwoods Bill.

F: How did you handle and how did you prevent the lumber companies from ruining the resource before you could get to it? They could have done you in.

U: That's right and they almost did. They did some spite cutting out there. There's no question about it, to try in effect to confront us with an accomplished fact that it was too late, that they'd cut all the trees down. But the Sierra Club and others were alert. They sounded the alarm and then Senator Jackson and others in I think late '66 and '67 demanded that the companies cease cutting. We got a moratorium on cutting. Finally the companies, who really were violently opposed to all this all along, they finally just saw the handwriting on the wall. This was going to be done and they were reasonably cooperative in the final stages, I'll say that. But you just had to beat them down.

F: What do you do to compensate for their loss of lease?

U: That was one of the compromises that Congress worked out, was to let some of them exchange for some of these Forest Service lands. Otherwise, they'd just have to cut back their Redwoods cutting program. Redwoods are a very limited resource. I think in the future, we're just going to have to get along without Redwoods. These trees have been growing there for hundreds of years. They have a long growing cycle. They're really not basically a renewable resource in the sense that you'd think of an average tree farming operation because of their long growth cycle.

F: You had something else that was similar in the endangered species problem. Was the Department of Interior pretty much instrumental in what has just come about, that is, the passage of the Endangered Species Act?

U: We had an Endangered Species Act two years ago and there's a new one just being--and additional one--

F: Broadened.

U: Broadened one being passed this year. This again was an effort in the wildlife to take up the cause while it still had public support and get legislation designed particularly in different ways to protect endangered species of wildlife. This seemed to be a popular cause. It wasn't exactly easy to do, but it did help and is helping, I believe to focus interest and attention and resources on wildlife preservation programs.

F: I rather gather it's impossible to control the killing of--or well nigh impossible--the killing of endangered species if you don't control it at the consumer level.

U: I think that's been the whole experience. You've got to regulate the sale of products. If you don't do that you're inviting the poacher and the people engaged in illegal activity--the alligator is an endangered species for example--to go ahead and do their business. But, also, this gets down to your management practices. You can also carry out management practices. I was asking Derwood Allen about the wolves in Alaska today, and he said, "Well, I'd just take them off the bounty list."

I said, "What would you do if you could set policy, take them off the bounty list and make them into a game animal and only a certain number were killed so that you were working out a scientific management program." That sometimes is the solution as well as preventing the sale of pelts or products.

F: Did the trail system idea have its origin during your period, or does it reach behind?

U: No, this was really a Johnson Administration initiative. The President--he and Bill Moyers, Califano, were the people I worked with--come up with new ideas. The President wants new programs. He was very receptive on this. This was one of the things we have evolved in the Department. It was an idea that I was always very high on. We pushed and developed it and got it through. It did not involve as much controversy as some others, although the cattlemen in the West limited the bill and shot it down. Aspinall, as usual, this was another one of our new bills that he never could see, never was enthusiastic about. Every time you talked with him he had all kinds of negative reactions. We just finally had to carry it through the Senate and get enough pressure behind it to make it go. But the whole thing was conceived and initiated at--the national trails system-- during the Johnson Administration.

F: Along that line, did you ever come up with what you thought was a really good forward-looking idea that at least didn't get a hearing? I don't mean necessarily acceptance, but that as far as you knew the President just dismissed out of hand.

U: No, there was a general receptiveness by the President and by the Johnson White House people toward conservation and environment programs. You always had a problem with the Bureau of the Budget, you know. The less the program cost, as you would expect, the more receptive it was. But the President clearly saw this, as he saw the field of consumer legislation, as an area where action was needed, there was a general receptiveness towards these type of programs. In fact, we were an area in the government that--they always expected me to show up with new ideas, new programs, and it was generally receptive attitude.

F: You were probably intimately involved with the District of Columbia more than any other previous Secretary of Interior. How did you work with the District leadership in this matter of subways and freeways and bridges and so forth?

U: Since we had the management and ownership of all the park lands--naturally this gave us a big stake. Naturally, this made us a very natural ally with the environmental protection people and we got the water responsibility. The President asked me to prepare a model plan for the Potomac in 1965. So we had both feet in the area and we increasingly saw it as an area where you could bring the conservation ideas into the city and do positive things. This really became a kind of laboratory for our new environment ideas. Here we could show the importance of the conservation idea to the urban areas. That's the reason we threw ourselves into it with considerable enthusiasm, and dash, I guess.

F: Did you bring some pressure to bear to get the Department of Transportation and others to agree that before freeways were put through that environmental values would be considered?

U: The conflict between the highway programs--highway building and conservation, you know plunging into parks, wildlife refuges--became increasingly a source of confrontation. Senator Jackson, Congressman Dingle, and others when the Department of Transportation was created put in amendments to give us a say, to give us a look-in on these things, which hadn't been true before. We just tried to fight and block them wherever we could. We got into more and more of these fights. It was important, it seemed to us, that you establish new planning approaches, that you establish the fact that we not only had a right to have a say and have a look-in but that our arguments were valid and should be taken into account.

F: You really did shoot down several theretofore sacred cows, didn't you? Freeways were once sacred, dams were sacred.

U: That's right. Increasingly, these massive engineering projects have a long-term effect upon the country. Where they were carried out in a singleminded way without regard to their side effects, without regard to their damage and effects on the environment, they increasingly came into question. We were sort of the defense attorney for the environment and we were speaking up and arguing.

F: This is partially folklore on my part, but I rather gather that you arrived just in time to keep the south bank of the Potomac from being--or west bank as it may be--of being just one solid highrise proposition. Is this correct?

U: That's probably overstating it a little bit, Joe. We did, I think, with preventing highrise on the Potomac Palisades at Merrywood, we signaled to Prince George's County and Montgomery County and all these people that highrise along the edge of the river was intolerable. Now already of course you have what you have in Alexandria and Arlington, but that had already been done. And these were areas where there was to be a compromise. But we did fight that fight, and the Park Service was very aggressive about it. I liked their aggressiveness and I backed them up all the way, and I think we did establish some basic principles with regard to no highrise except in these few selected areas along the banks of the Potomac.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview V]