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Howard W. Baker  
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HOWARD W. BAKER

REEL XVI

## [START OF INTERVIEW]

Herbert Evison: This is Herbert Evison; the place is Estes Park, and I am going to be talking for a while with Howard W. Baker, Regional Director of the Midwest Region of the National Park Service, who is, like the Director of the National Park Service himself, a landscape architect – if I am not mistaken – who has gone into administration. Am I wrong there, Howard?

Howard Baker: No, I actually graduated as architect, but during my Service career I had the title of landscape architect probably much longer than I ever had the title of architect.

Herbert Evison: I think it would be interesting, Howard, to start off with a little account of your National Park Service career; as a matter of fact, I think you ought to go back a little bit to put in something about your background and training and so on.

Howard Baker: I am a Nebraskan by birth. I went to school at Kansas State Agricultural College, took architecture and graduated there in 1930. That was the depression, the beginning of the depression; in fact, it was in the depression years, so a number of us decided that since a Civil Service examination was being held for architect in the Federal government, that that might be another opportunity for some of us to obtain a job. I took that Civil Service examination; the examination was in the Treasury Department. That was in March of 1930; I graduated in June 1930. About August of 1930 I received a letter from a Thomas C. Vint, who said that the National Park Service had a vacancy for an architect in the Junior grade which was the beginning grade in Civil Service; would I be interested. I said I would. I reported to San Francisco on October 1, 1930. I had no idea what kind of a job I was going into; I knew nothing about the National Park Service, I came from Kansas, and it was quite an interesting experience to me to get off the ferry boat there in San Francisco, check my bags, and I decided to walk up Market Street to see what the city looked like. In only a few blocks I came to the Underwood Building, so I walked in and met Vint for the first time.

Howard Baker: Tom told me some time afterwards that I was one of three names that were submitted to him from the Civil Service Commission. I was the lowest one of the three in grade; in fact, we were all within less than a percentage point difference; but Tom said, "I selected the lowest one." That was my fortune; I was fortunate in getting in the National Park Service that way. Of course, a man by the name of George Woolsey had been employed by Tom in a temporary position for a number of months, in fact, I guess almost a year. If I had not reported, George Woolsey would have been given the appointment, so George's face dropped considerably when I

walked into the office that day. George left the Service, but he is back again now in WODC, as I understand it, working as a field inspector.

Howard Baker: Of course, I had never had the experience of working in an architect's office, so all this work was entirely new to me. But that winter one of the first jobs I had to do was to design a residence for Devil's Tower. We had \$1,800 to build a one-bedroom house for Devil's Tower. That turned out to be a log building, which I designed; that was my first responsibility.

Howard Baker: Next May I left San Francisco with Kenneth McCarter, who was a landscape architect; had a residency of almost all the Rocky Mountain national parks and monuments. I was to be Kenneth's assistant. So, we went to Yellowstone; we did some work there for a couple of weeks, then we went on over to Devil's Tower to look into the residence, got construction under way. We went to Wind Cave, where we had a power house to build, we had a residential area to locate, we had money for a bunk house and dormitory; we had to devise and work out some plans for those buildings, locate the buildings. Went on to Scotts Bluff just to look at the area, then on to Rocky Mountain where Kenneth left me and said, "Well, this is going to be your headquarters for the summer. I'll see you from time to time." I never saw Kenneth until we got back into San Francisco that fall.

Howard Baker: Also, one of the field assignments, resident landscape architect; and I was then given the title of resident landscape architect, having Rocky Mountain, Devil's Tower, and Wind Cave National Park. In those days we received our appropriations on an annual basis for construction, and you had to spend the money within the year, or you lost it. Well, I arrived at Rocky Mountain – I think it was about Decoration Day – met Edmund Rogers and of course he greeted me and recognized that I was the man sent there to help him carry out his construction program. So that summer I had to spend almost all the daytime out in the field; we had the Trail Ridge Road under construction, I was the landscape architect representing the Service on the landscape phase of Trail Ridge Road construction; we had a lot of trail work under way; E. Van V. Dunn was the engineer there. Van Dunn and I went out on a great many trail locations. But in the evening then I had to sit down and actually draw the plans, the construction plans, for a residence, a fire lookout on Shadow Mountain, a mess house and bunk house up on Trail Ridge, a comfort station on Glacier Bay campground; I had to sit down and actually design all those buildings, draw the working drawings, and get them under construction.

Herbert Evison: Well now, who approved those?

Howard Baker: In those days Tom Vint approved them.

Herbert Evison: You had to send them into San Francisco?

Howard Baker: That's right. We didn't have a – we had a central design office, but we had so much work we didn't have the staff to do the work in the central office, so the fellows in the field – I just happened to be an architect, and I was given the job of doing those things.

Howard Baker: Now the Shadow Mountain lookout is the lookout over on Shadow Mountain on the west side of the park. We had, I think, in the neighborhood of \$6,000 for that building. Now they wanted a lookout that was high enough to get you up to where you could get a good view of the area; they wanted a place for sort of an exhibit room on one floor. It turned out we had to build a stone building with a log staircase on the outside, a place for a water tank on one floor, and an exhibit room on the first floor and then an observatory on top. Well, that summer we drew a set of plans, and the estimate was too high, so next winter we had to work out a revised set of plans; I had to come out from San Francisco early in the spring. I remember that trip very well, because I left San Francisco sometime in April; I made a rush trip up to the park. John McLoughlin was chief ranger at that time, and John and I drove as far as we could; the road had been ploughed out part way, in fact all the way up to Fall River Pass; and we had to park our car, walk from Fall River Pass down to Far View Curve, which is about 6 or 7 miles down the hillside. Fred McLaren was the ranger on the west side; he met us there, drove us down to Shadow Mountain, we hiked up to Shadow Mountain to make some checks on the site, walked back down the trail, Fred took us back up to Far View Curve, and we started to walk back up to Fall River Pass. When we got as far as the Milner Pass road camp, I told John, "This is as far as I can go; I have got to quit." I never spent such a miserable night in my life; you know, coming up from sea level and then having to sleep the first night at almost 10,000 feet; quite an impression. Well, that was an experience I'll never forget.

Herbert Evison: Howard, one thing impresses me here. You selected the sites for various of these facilities, and I take it from that that there was not in 1931 a master plan for this place.

Howard Baker: That is absolutely right, and that is one of the things I want to mention. In the spring of 1932 there was a superintendents conference scheduled I believe at Hot Springs, Ark., so Tom Vint decided that winter, the winter of 1931-32, that the Park Service needed master plans; so that whole winter all of us that were in the Branch of Plans and Design, as we were called in those days, BOPADS, were put to work preparing a master plan for each of national parks and monuments. Tom Vint went to the conference at Hot Springs with this bundle of plans that we had prepared

and unrolled for the first time in the Service a set of master plans. Many of them were very sketchy; we had to prepare them almost by just from memory; we had no base maps in a lot of cases – that was particularly true of our developed areas, like our headquarters areas, our campground areas, and so on. So that was quite an experience to have had a part in the preparation of the first set of master plans for the National Park Service.

Herbert Evison: If I remember rightly, those plans, some of the early ones, were colored up and made to look very nice and made a great hit at that superintendents' conference.

Howard Baker: That is one thing Tom wanted: he wanted them dressed up nicely, he wanted them colored, he wanted a cover sheet, he wanted an index sheet, he wanted a base map of the park which would show your major road system and where to locate your developed areas, he wanted little blow-ups of each developed area, so that you get an overall picture of the park; then following those would be sheets of the developed area at 40 or 100 scale or whatever scale would seem to fit the program.

Howard Baker: So, all of my Service career actually has been in this part of the country. From my days in San Francisco in 1936 I was transferred from the San Francisco office to the Denver office. At that time, I was assigned the title of District Landscape Architect, and the District consisted of the three western States here, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana, as a part of what was then – I don't recall it was called Region II, but it was the Region that was headquartered in Omaha, and the Region was divided into three districts, and George Bagglely at that time was District Officer in Denver.

Howard Baker: In 1937, the spring of 1937, talk was going on about the possibility of combining the CCC organization with the regular National Park Service organization and establishing regions; so, I was told that I would be transferred to Omaha in June. Well, I resisted that because I didn't want to go to Omaha, so Tom said "Well, all right, we'll leave you in Denver until September, then we'll have to transfer you." At that time Tom Allen was superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park, so one day I was up here talking with Tom and lamenting the fact that I was going to be transferred to Omaha. Tom was feeling sorry for me, and then as I was leaving the office going out to my car – Tom hadn't had a chance to look at a piece of mail or two – he came rushing out and said "Say, I just have a wire that I am going to be transferred to Omaha also." That was August 1, 1937, Tom was transferred to Omaha as the first Regional Director of Region II. So I transferred to Omaha in September 1937, where I had the title of landscape architect, and shortly thereafter George Nason, who was regional landscape architect, and Cecil Baker, who was regional architect, both left the Service, and I just happened to be in the right spot at the right

time, so I was given the title of Regional Landscape Architect over both architecture and landscape architecture work. That was I think in the early part of 1938.

Howard Baker: I stayed in that field until 1943, during the war, when our office was actually down to – the regional office staff was, I think, down to around twenty people. Lawrence Merriam at that time was regional director, and an associate regional director position was established. I think that other people were offered the job and turned it down, and Lawrence asked me if I would take the job. Well, I wasn't particularly interested in getting into administration, but I thought here is an opportunity perhaps to save a landscape position for some other professional man, so I said I would take it. In March, I believe it was, of 1943, I became associate regional director, and on October 1, 1950, I became regional director.

Howard Baker: So, during my professional years of course I had an opportunity to be in on the basic planning and have a lot to do with the basic planning of such areas as Devil's Tower, Wind Cave. I remember many an argument I used to have with Frank Kittredge and the engineers about the location of the administration building and the elevator, etc., at Wind Cave National Park. I was in on the survey of the location of the elevator, the trail system in the Cave. I have been in on the basic planning of Mt. Rushmore. I was there during the days of Gutzon Borglum, and I remember many of the experiences the Park Service had with him and the work there at Mt. Rushmore. I have been in on the basic planning at Badlands National Monument. Colorado National Monument, I was landscape architect who went with the engineer to go over the first road location in Colorado National Monument and also Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument. One time in the fall – it must have been about the fall of 1933 or something like that – I had a wire from Tom Vint indicating that as I was coming back into San Francisco in November, I should go by Colorado National Monument and walk the proposed road location line in Colorado Monument, and review the plans to see that they were satisfactory from our point of view and then they could start construction right away. So, I was in on that location.

Howard Baker: I have had a number of experiences at Colorado Monument, because during the Civilian Conservation Corps program, the ERA program, and all the alphabet programs we used to have – we had as many as 800 or 1,000 men there working on the road. Most of that road was built by hand labor, very little equipment. Well, I recall the sad experience we had of – we were building a half tunnel, you may recall, and had a number of people on WPA, I believe it was, from Glade Park, which is up on the plateau south of Colorado Monument. These people were all unemployed,

so they were working there in the Monument, and we were a little bit skeptical about this half tunnel, whether it would hold up or not, so we had people watching it. But one day it gave away just when a crew of men were working underneath on the road. We lost I think 8 or 9 men in that accident. That was a sad experience there.

Herbert Evison: You mentioned Gutzon Borglum a little bit ago, and I hope whether you do it right now or later in this talk that there may come to you some recollection of personal contact with him, because if I remember rightly he was quite a character.

Howard Baker: He was a character. He was a man who used every means to get what he wanted, and what he wanted was right and nobody else could contradict him, unless it might be the President of the United States, and of course you know he went to the President a number of times, President Roosevelt. He was a great man; he had ways of getting money for the project; he had no sense of accounting for money, and that was one of the things that was most difficult for the Park Service. In fact, we sent up – the Service sent some of the best management men in there to try to ride herd, so to speak, on the money that was being spent at Mt. Rushmore. His primary objective, of course, was the carving of the figures, but he could find all kinds of other things to be doing, such as building studios, building monumental stairways, building a hall of records, as he called it, by digging into the rock back of the heads, which he actually started before we found out about it and stopped it. So, it was quite an experience altogether. Julian Spotts, who was later at JNEM, was one of the men sent up there as an engineer and also as administrator. I cannot recall the name of the man who preceded Julian Spotts, but he was later with the Public Buildings Administration in Washington.

Herbert Evison: Wasn't that Nagel?

Howard Baker: John Nagel, that's right. And Nagel was one of the few fellows who had much influence on Gutzon Borglum.

Howard Baker: Herb, I think one of the things that might be of interest is the – what I think was the pioneering work done by the National Park Service in the blending of the cut and fill slopes on road construction projects. Back in the early 30's when we were getting into quite an extensive road construction program in the Park Service, we had a man by the name of Tom Carpenter on Torn Vint's staff who came to us from Syracuse, and he was set up as our road specialist and he began to develop the idea of removing the rough edges, construction edges, from our road slopes by flattening the slopes to an angle of repose that would permit the revegetation of the slopes, also blending the slopes to the natural



landscape by rounding the edges not only in the cut slopes but on the fill slopes. I think the Park Service did a lot of pioneering in that field, because since then the Bureau of Public Roads has adopted that general procedure, and as you drive along the highways today you see all of the States using the blending of the road slopes; it is all done pretty much by mechanical equipment now. So that I think that was a very fine conservation movement that I think the Park Service can take its due credit for starting.

Herbert Evison: I am glad you thought of that. Any thing you think of in which the Park Service influence has extended beyond the Service is decidedly worth mentioning.

Howard Baker: I think the National Park Service – just take this Shadow Mountain Recreation Area over here which is on the west side of Rocky Mountain National Park. Back in 1938 the Bureau of Reclamation asked the National Park Service if we would look over the proposed reservoirs – the Shadow Mountain Reservoir and the Granby Reservoir – to see what recreational possibilities these bodies of water might provide. We made quite an extensive study of the area and we made certain boundary recommendations; we felt that water recreation was going to be a very important part of a national program at that time, but unfortunately the people in Reclamation, and perhaps in other – in the Secretary's office, too, were not receptive to recreation as a part of a reclamation program, so our report was filed. While today, if you drive over by Shadow Mountain and see what has happened with a tremendous amount of boating on the waters, everything that has developed there is on private lands, because land acquisition barely went beyond the edge of the high water. So, I think the Park Service through the years has provided a great deal of leadership and stimulus to the program that now provides for recreation as a part of the reclamation and water control programs. In other words, recreation takes its proper seat at the table along with other benefits that are derived from these water control programs.

Howard Baker: I remember even as far as, as early as 1945 or 1947, I believe it was, we had one of the first interagency meetings in the Missouri Basin, held in Omaha. At that meeting, nobody wanted even to think about recreation. But today you go to these interagency meetings, the Missouri Basin Field Committee meetings, recreation is frequently mentioned; in fact, many times the entire program is taken up by discussion of the recreation benefits, the recreation possibilities, and so forth. So, I think the Park Service has really done the pioneer work in getting recreation recognized as an important by-product.

- Herbert Evison: Do you think, in that connection, Howard, that what has been worked out over the intervening years has resulted in a reasonably good apportionment of responsibility for the management of recreation on those areas, as between the Federal government and State agencies and other agencies?
- Howard Baker: In the Midwest part of the country we have been very successful in getting interest by State park organizations, by fish and game commissions, by regional county organizations, by individual county organizations, by recreation districts, in taking over the management responsibilities. There still is a definite lack of recognition on the part of the Federal government that there are certain basic responsibilities that ought to be performed by the Federal government, because actually the Federal government created this project, and there are certain things, such as basic approach roads, basic use facilities, that really ought to be provided by the Federal government. Then the State agency, or whatever management agency might be, they have something to work with when they start, because many of these States in this part of the country are not set up financially to handle a large park and recreation program. They are making fine progress, but some States, like Wyoming, have just one person perhaps on their State park payroll. Colorado now is moving along very nicely; Kansas and Nebraska, North and South Dakota – they are all making good progress, but they still are far behind States like New York and California, Indiana and Ohio, in the State park program.
- Herbert Evison: How does Iowa rate in your region as far as State parks are concerned?
- Howard Baker: Iowa has an excellent State park program. In fact, they like to have a State park within 35 miles of every person living in Iowa. I don't think that their classification of areas is quite as high a standard as it ought to be. In other words, some of these areas I don't think should be called State parks probably, they are primarily recreation areas; they like to put in a reservoir or a lake, rather, as a part of the development. So, I think while they are doing a fine job of setting aside areas for public use, I think they need to restudy their classification.
- Herbert Evison: If I remember rightly, it was one of the first States, however, which adopted the differentiation between State parks and State recreation areas.
- Howard Baker: I don't know for sure on that, Herb; I don't think I can answer that one.
- Herbert Evison: You see they had a State park survey under Jake Crane and George Wheeler Olcott back in 1930 or 1931 and I think that was one of the recommendations that came out of that.

- Howard Baker: They have a 20 or 25-year plan. I think they were one of the first States to develop a long-range plan for a park program.
- Herbert Evison: Howard, during the time that you have been regional director, one of the big changes in organization that has been made has been that of separating out the design and construction function from the regional offices and setting up these field offices of the design and construction. What's your reaction to that major organization change?
- Howard Baker: Herb, I think that was one of the finest changes the Service ever made. In the old days when we had our design and construction activities handled in the Regional offices, we were not able to staff to the point where we could get the specialists that we needed to do the jobs. This way, by having our construction and design activities concentrated in two major units, we have a fine opportunity to build the professional people up to a fine standard; we have an opportunity to bring in the specialists, recruit, bring in the specialists that we need to improve our general standard of design and construction.
- Herbert Evison: Would you specify some of those fields of specialization that are important?
- Howard Baker: Mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, architectural design, are two or three that I can think of right now.
- [END OF SIDE 1]
- Herbert Evison: Of course, that was one of the big changes. I wonder if you would care to comment on any other changes in the regional organization? I wonder, for instance, if you would be willing to comment on the desirability or undesirability of an associate regional director in each regional office?
- Howard Baker: I have very strong feelings on that, Herb, and I have a very strong feeling that the Director of the Park Service should have an associate director. I don't see how he can continue to operate the way he is without some one person who can step in and be his second in command, have full knowledge about the entire Park Service program. The very same thing is true in the regional office. People that I have as assistant regional directors, their work naturally is confined to certain fields, their primary interest lies in those fields. While we try to keep each other informed through staff meetings, squad meetings, copies of daily reports, it still is difficult to have continuity of responsibility. I have to travel around 30 to 40% of the time, have one of the assistants – frequently have to shift them, although I try to use George Baggley as my key assistant; more or less he serves in the associate capacity; but still every once in a while you find

things that George just isn't up to date on; so I think it is very important that we have an associate regional director and also an associate director.

Herbert Evison: Who in each case would be a sort of alter ego of the top man—

Howard Baker: I think it puts too much of a load on the regional director right now, because there are too many times that I have to go to things, to meetings and make trips, and if I had an associate who was equally familiar with the total program he could function and relieve me of some of that load. I think the same is true of the Director.

Howard Baker: There is another aspect of our recent reorganization which I objected to considerably when we had our original discussions at Shenandoah about a year ago, and that is the breaking down of the old division of interpretation. I think that splitting the responsibilities between the Division of Natural History and the Division of History and Archaeology without proceeding with an overall coordination of our interpretive program just throws that responsibility now into the hands of the assistant regional director and assistant director, and I just cannot see how we can successfully coordinate our interpretive programs between the natural history field and the field of history and archaeology. The coordination by an assistant regional director and by an assistant director I just don't think is going to be adequate.

Herbert Evison: Do you get reflections of this as you go around the field?

Howard Baker: You don't get so much reflection in the field because this does not go down below the regional level, but I do know that it does affect the — it has affected the morale of the employees in the regional office, and I am sure it has affected the employees, the morale of the employees in the Director's office. In fact, as I told you, the ex-regional chief of interpretation — he has retired this fall, and that is one of the reasons for his retiring — feels that he has lost considerable stature and he feels that the interpretive program has lost stature.

Herbert Evison: Now I know that in some of the regions they are picking up fellows who were in those jobs — I mean the regional chiefs of interpretation — I think, in the Western Region, he has been made the assistant to the Director for public affairs. I don't remember off-hand whether that same thing has been done in any of the other regions or not, but I was wondering if you ever considered that possibility in connection with your region.

Howard Baker: The man that I am bringing in now in that position, the assistant to the Regional Director in charge of public affairs, is Bob McIntyre, who is the chief naturalist of Yellowstone National Park. I considered that possibility in our office, but I also felt that the regional chief of natural history is an

important responsibility at the same grade, and I was hoping that my regional chief, former regional chief of interpretation, would continue in that work.

Herbert Evison: But he just isn't satisfied to do so?

Howard Baker: That's right.

Herbert Evison: Of course, you are getting an extraordinarily good man in from Yellowstone.

Howard Baker: I think so; he is going to be a very fine man and he is going to lend a lot of help to me in public affairs, and also I think eventually those positions probably will have to be moved up to a full assistant regional director responsibility; I think this is just purely an interim step.

Herbert Evison: What is the grade for that?

Howard Baker: Grade 14, same as the assistant regional director, so there is no reason why that position can't eventually have the full title of assistant regional director, the same as Dan Beard has the title of assistant director; in other words, he has full assistant responsibility in that field.

Herbert Evison: Are there any other things in the way of regional organization or regional functioning that you would like to comment on?

Howard Baker: Herb, of course I have been connected with the region ever since it was established in 1937, the regional organization; I have seen it grow from the days when we had a Regional Director and a secretary and he had very little if any authority, to the point now where regional directors have practically all of the authority of the Director, with a few exceptions which he has reserved for himself. In my administration of the region I have taken very seriously the responsibility that the Director has delegated to me; I have always functioned on the basis that I have been put out here to perform the function, to represent the Director, to see that the areas are administered and managed as they should be, and I have not proceeded on the basis that I have to ask the Director a lot of questions, or members of his staff a lot of questions. If I think I can provide the answer and have the staff advise me properly, I'll go ahead and take action. I have never felt bad if somebody came along from the Director's office and told me I had made a mistake. Those people who never make any mistakes never do anything, that has been my philosophy in administering the area, and that is that I intend and encourage the superintendents to do the same thing, because they, depending on their grade, have considerable responsibility, they are captain of their ship. The superintendent who is in the same grade as I am has all the responsibility I have; my main responsibility in connection with his activity is coordination of the regional program. We

have people come in on the staff who can advise and assist the major superintendents, and he also has key men on his staff in the same professional field; so our main purpose is to help the small area, because we have the professional people in our office and part of their responsibility is to serve as staff advisors to the superintendents of areas where they don't have a naturalist or historian or engineer or landscape architect or an architect or a maintenance man, whatever it might be.

Herbert Evison: Your major direct help, then, would be to areas in the Group A, B, and C, primarily.

Howard Baker: That's right. Of course you have to, because I have responsibilities for recommending plans, for approving certain construction plans, for approving a number of the budgeting of appropriations – management, protection, maintenance rehabilitation – I have to know about the large areas as well as the small areas and the people on my staff have to know that, be familiar with what is happening, what the needs are, what is being done in the large areas. Of course, in concession activities we are much involved in the large areas; land acquisition is a very important part of the program. Those things in the specialized fields – no area has a lands man, for example, except as a part of a responsibility, so our lands man has to be key help to all of the superintendents who have land acquisition matters.

Herbert Evison: You have a regional concessions man now?

Howard Baker: I do.

Herbert Evison: Of course I used to feel that it was a mistake to put all of that responsibility out into the field area, and I personally was glad when I saw them beginning to put regional men on, because I think they are very valuable people to have, if they are competent.

Howard Baker: That's right. This particular man I have is from clear outside, from Internal Revenue, a man who was interested in Park Service; he had been in administrative capacities in Internal Revenue, and he is turning out to be a very top-notch man for us in the region.

Herbert Evison: Do you feel that the present arrangement and the present relationships with concessioners are sound? That is, what I am asking about specifically is this business of authorizing the superintendent to approve rates and other requirements in concessions operation.

Howard Baker: I think it is all right. Occasionally the superintendents may not do the job as they should in examining the rate requirements; sometimes they are not qualified, because they are not in a position to know or understand the accounting reports and so forth. You have to give consideration, when you

talk about rate approval, to the kind of business the people are doing, whether it is a profitable business or isn't a profitable business. Also, sometimes we find the superintendents are inclined not to give adequate attention to the rates existing outside of the parks to make a proper comparison. Those are the kind of things we have to watch to see that the superintendents do an adequate job; and as long as we have a concessions man in the regional office I think part of his job is to audit the superintendents on their functioning in that capacity; and I think they can do it all right if we give proper assistance, proper leadership, and proper training.

Herbert Evison: Don't you think that in a large park, in spite of the fact that that is a superintendent's responsibility, there has to be somebody on his staff for whom a major part of his job is continuous oversight over the concession operation and a study of these outside rates?

Howard Baker: That's right. I thoroughly agree with that, Herb. In fact, in an area like Yellowstone I think they should have a concessions man, a fulltime concessions man on the staff of the superintendent. In all of the big parks where we have a large concession operation, he will have a man, called a management assistant, and part of his responsibility is concessions; also he has to do with lands, provide a great many public relation functions, assisting the superintendent in those sort of things; so maybe if he is spending 30 or 40% of his time on concessions he is doing about all he can do. But in a place like Yellowstone where we have a large concession program – and unfortunately the last two or three years it has not been a good concession program – we need a full-time concessions man.

Herbert Evison: Somebody with backbone, too.

Howard Baker: That's right. I think we are moving in that direction now.

Herbert Evison: Well, that's an interesting suggestion.

Howard Baker: I would like to say this, too, Herb. I think, as you well know – you worked in the regional office – you know it took a long time to convince the superintendents that the regional offices were a necessary part of the Service organization. I think we have pretty much overcome any resistance now to a regional organization. I think it behooves all of the regional directors to do their job, if they all do their job as the Director expects the job to be done, I think there is no question but what the regional organization is very necessary.

Herbert Evison: I think so too, and I think - am I right, when I interpret what you are driving at is that if the regional director exercises the power of decision that he actually has, instead of being afraid to do it and forever referring

things back to the Washington office – you want the regional director to keep down those references to the Washington office to the absolute minimum.

Howard Baker: That's right. I think we have to use good judgment, that we have to keep the Director's office informed on certain things, but I think we are inclined to send too many things to the Washington office; and as you well know, every time a piece of correspondence comes in it creates a little extra work for someone else and gives someone ideas, and the first thing you know you have got a question coming back, or something else, and there you go.

Herbert Evison: Somebody always looking for something.

Howard Baker: I think the regional organization, the Service just couldn't operate without a regional organization, and I think we are organized pretty well now, but I do think, Herb, that one of these days as we add more areas to the system, get more areas into say the Midwest, Mississippi part of the country, that maybe someday we might have to have another region some place with headquarters maybe in St. Louis, Chicago, or someplace like that; because actually right now in my case, I go from southeastern Missouri clear up to the northwestern corner of Montana. Well, that's about 2500 miles or 2000 miles; that is a lot of territory to cover. The Director would like to have us as individuals, as regional directors, visit each one of these areas once every three years; I try to do that, but there are areas like, for me, Big Battlefield National Monument, it's pretty hard for me to get over there. And of course, we have all the other responsibilities, meetings, new area studies – it is just almost too much to try to cover a ten-state area anymore.

Herbert Evison: I would like to ask you a very leading question. There used to be very frequent complaints that the high brass, whether from the Washington office or the regional office, would come into an area in the morning and go out at night, even if it was Yellowstone or Great Smokies or what have you; in other words, that when these people who were supposed to be keeping themselves abreast of what was happening in the field area went to visit them in order to get an idea, they simply didn't stay around long enough to catch the tempo of it or to get the feel of the morale of the place – they didn't see anybody as a rule but the superintendent, who herded them around to the places that he wanted them to see, and swept stuff under the rug that he didn't want them to see. And all of that leads up to the question: When you go into an area, like – well, here, you are in Rocky Mountain now but not on anything that would be called an inspection trip, but suppose you did come in here on an inspection trip, what would you expect to do while you were in here and who would you expect to see besides the superintendent?



Howard Baker: Well, when I go into an area, Herb, I try to go around the area with the superintendent and frequently key members of his staff, to – I am always interested in seeing what development has taken place, what planning work is going on – that is a part of my interest because I have to approve the plans. I am also interested in the organization of the protection division, the location of district headquarters, the location of ranger districts; I am naturally interested in the interpretive program, I frequently talk with the interpretive people; I try to usually encourage the superintendent to have a staff meeting so that we can sit down and talk about things, I can talk to them, and they can tell me some things that might be of interest to me. I usually try to meet all of the employees; that is one thing I have always tried to do, to know as many of the employees as I can throughout the region. I don't actually make inspections myself, but members of my staff do make inspections. Also, I want to talk about budgets, talk about estimates, talk about the whole gamut a program needs, program requirements. Sometimes my trips are short, sometimes I spend quite a few days in an area. In small areas of course a day usually is adequate; in a large area of course you need more time.

Howard Baker: But as far as my staff are concerned, I have always preached that when you go into an area you ought to contact the superintendent first, let him know what you are there for, go ahead and take care of your business, and check out with the superintendent before you leave. I want them to be sure that if the superintendent has asked them to come in on some specific problems, I want them to either be able to give the superintendent the answer before they leave or arrange so that the answer will come back to the superintendent, even if the staff man has to go back to the regional office or someplace else to find the answer.

Howard Baker: In this region we have set up our maintenance organization in such a manner that we have certain areas assigned to a certain individual on our staff – in other words, the small areas. Now everything that comes into the office in connection with the maintenance program of those areas, that man sees, and he goes out to an area; he will go over the maintenance program; he may be an architect, and maybe those questions are on roads, which he isn't capable of handling, but he will see that the answer goes back to the superintendent and give the answer; if it takes a road man to go out on that particular project, he will see that that man gets out there and does that. The same way, a road man may be assigned to a group of areas and he has an architectural problem; well, the reverse is true – if he can't handle it he will see that an architect comes out and tells what has to be done in the maintenance field. So I think – that's the program we are using – and I think the superintendents all feel that that provides a continuity and closer working relationship; we are giving better service to the field

through that program than we do by a hit-and-miss type of program. Naturally there's a tendency for people sometimes to figure well, this is a nice way to get a trip, but I don't think there's much of it.

Howard Baker: Of course, another thing that I have always insisted on is that a man must write a report on what he does in an area, not only for the superintendent's record, my record, but I want to have the other people on the staff who may be going out to the area, or he may actually talk about activities that isn't quite in his field, I want to be sure that an adequate record is made and the people are informed about it, about what happened. If he has recommendations to make and he needs my action on those, I'll clear the report, approve the report; but if it is merely a record of what he did, then a copy goes back out to the superintendent without my specific clearance.

Herbert Evison: Howard, you and I had some correspondence not long since about superintendents and the procedures that you followed when a man was appointed to a superintendency in your region. It seemed to me that you went farther than any other regional director that I have heard of in seeing that when this new man reported for duty he had a good overall conception of his area and what problems he was putting his feet into. I wonder if that might not be still further extended by having a procedure established whereby an outgoing superintendent supplemented that material that you provide, and I am thinking particularly now about the public contacts which a man builds up in a superintendency. A new man comes in, he has in most cases to build pretty much all over again; he has to find out what the attitude of John Jones is when he meets him, because the superintendent, the outgoing superintendent, who knew that hasn't informed him of it. Don't you think this a possibility of some extension of that service?

Howard Baker: I do. In fact, I used that a time or two; in fact, I used it just recently at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial when George Hartzog left. I asked him to prepare a memorandum to Ray Gregg and give him some of the basic information, and that was used as a supplement to the information that I gave him, Ray Gregg. Spud Bill will do the same thing at Grand Teton, and I am going to ask Ed Hummel to do the same thing in Glacier. Of course, in the big areas the procedure I have been following for the last four or five years isn't so important to them, because they have a staff that can inform them. In the small area is the man I feel I am obligated to give a pretty good rundown on everything I can tell him about the area, about some of the things to look out for, some of the public relations matters to know about that I want him to become familiar with – I want all these folks to consider public relations as one of their important

responsibilities, and also as I said the other day, the sort of things that can help the Service and help the Director in doing a better job.

Herbert Evison: Now you sent me a sample of one of these informational memoranda. I would take it that that was probably the work of two or three or more of your staff members.

Howard Baker: I ask my secretary to get information from every divisional office of the kind of things they think ought to be passed on to a new superintendent, and I personally take the responsibility of pulling all those things together and how much I will dictate, and I will add a lot of things myself, do a lot of culling, etc.; but the final production is a job that I like to take on myself, because I feel that probably I am the only person who can really give the superintendent the overall picture. All of the superintendents who have received those have said that they were the finest help to them that they have ever gotten, coming into a new area.

Herbert Evison: And since that is so, the thing that astonishes me is that that isn't regional office or regional director routine in all six regions.

Howard Baker: I have sent copies to the other regions; they have heard about it; I don't know whether they use it or not, but I have sent copies practically to all of the regions. Of course, it's a lot of work, Herb, and sometimes the regional directors don't like to work too much.

Herbert Evison: Well, in the course of these rounds I am going to find out, anyway, just what the procedures are in each of these regional offices when a man moves into a superintendency, because I think that is a dog-gone important function of a regional director to see that that guy gets off on the right foot.

Howard Baker: That's right; that's right.

Herbert Evison: Well, Howard, we are getting very near to the end of the second side of this tape, and we don't have to stop here, but if you feel that you are fairly well mopped up and have a little final word you would like to say—

Howard Baker: Well, Herb, this has been a real pleasure to have had this opportunity to visit with you and reminisce a bit about some of my national park experiences. I am sure there are a great many other things that I could think of and talk about, but I think this is probably about all we should try to do, and I have enjoyed it very much, Herb.

Herbert Evison: Well, I certainly have, and I am immensely obliged to you for having ducked out of a conference meeting in order to do it.

Howard Baker: I'll probably get fined for it.

[END OF INTERVIEW]