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Dorothy Huyck's National Park Service Oral History Project, 1942-1987



Chrysandra Walter
September 07, 1978

Interview conducted by Dorothy B. Huyck
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NPS History Collection
Harpers Ferry Center
PO Box 50
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
HFC_Archivist@nps.gov

[START OF TAPE]

Dorothy Huyck: The date is September 7, 1978. I am Dorothy Huyck. I will be interviewing Chrysandra L. Walter; she spells her first name C-H-R-Y-S-A-N-D-R-A. She is the San Francisco Unit Manager of Golden Gate National Recreation area. Sandy, maybe I can ask you first how you first became acquainted with the National Park Service.

Chrysandra Walter: Well, my interest while growing up with my family has always been the out of doors and we did a lot of hiking, and skiing, and water skiing, and just a lot of different outdoor sports. So, I majored in Physical Education for two years in college, and then decided to change over to recreation because it offered a wider variety of experiences and responsibilities than just Physical Education. And, as a part of that required courses that I had to take, I had to do an internship and my counselor was very interested in getting interns into Federal recreation programs, and he had never had one in the National Park Service before so he arranged for my internship to be at Point Reyes National Seashore. And so, that's how I was first introduced to it professionally, of course, I – when I was growing up I had gone to places like Yellowstone, Yosemite and all that, but never had thought about going into it as a career.

Dorothy Huyck: But you traveled as a youngster in Yellowstone, Yosemite, and some of the other of the other parks as well. Were you on camping trips?

Chrysandra Walter: Yeah, camping trips, some of them. One summer my family went back East to visit my father's parents that lived in Ohio, so we stopped along the way too many of the National Parks. And, also, I – when I was in college, I did a little travelling to various ski areas, I liked snow skiing a lot, so I went to Grand Tetons and some other places when I was in college. I went to school in Utah for two years, so I went to some of the Utah parks.

Dorothy Huyck: Now, is that when you were majoring in Physical Ed?

Chrysandra Walter: [affirmative] Uh-huh. And, then I went back—

Dorothy Huyck: Where?

Chrysandra Walter: —University of Utah in Salt Lake City. And then I – when I decided to move to Recreation, my last two years of college I moved to San Jose State because they had the best, at the time, program in Recreation.

Dorothy Huyck: So, you got your BA at San Jose State?

Chrysandra Walter: Yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: Have you done any graduate work?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, I started to, just before I was transferred here to Golden Gate, I had been accepted and had started classes for my Master's degree in Recreation at the University of Maryland and, of course, then when this job was offered to me I had to quit school and was transferred out here, and I haven't started up again, but I plan to do that. My major in college was Recreation and Park Administration, we had – at San Jose they had several different kinds of options in the field of Recreation that you could take and – including Correctional and just general Recreation and geared towards handicap recreation, my – and I chose the option of Park Administration which was headed more towards management in Recreation in Parks, so. Anyway, I do want to continue school and I think I'll – I'll probably end up going back to San Jose State to get my Masters.

Dorothy Huyck: Can I ask where and when you were born?

Chrysandra Walter: Yes, I was born in Toledo, Ohio. I was born November 29, 1947.

Dorothy Huyck: Are you an only child?

Chrysandra Walter: No, I have 3 – 2 other sisters, excuse me.

Dorothy Huyck: Older or younger?

Chrysandra Walter: Younger.

Dorothy Huyck: You're the eldest child?

Chrysandra Walter: [affirmative] Uh-huh.

Dorothy Huyck: And, where did you grow up?

Chrysandra Walter: Most of my younger years and through high school had been in California, Palo Alto, California. I mean, we moved from Ohio to California when I was, I guess, about three years old so I mostly—

Dorothy Huyck: You went to high school in California?

Chrysandra Walter: [affirmative] Uh-huh.

Dorothy Huyck: Are your parent's college graduates?

Chrysandra Walter: My father is my mother is not.

Dorothy Huyck: And, what is your father's occupation?

Chrysandra Walter: Electrical Engineering.

Dorothy Huyck: [affirmative] And, your mother?

Chrysandra Walter: She's a housewife, and she works in a bank, part-time.

Dorothy Huyck: [affirmative] While you were growing up, both in high school and college later on, who was it that encouraged the educational process as far as you were concerned; a mother, or a father, teachers, somebody in the community?

Chrysandra Walter: No, I – my parents, you know if I wanted to go to college that was fine, if I didn't want to go to college that's fine. I think, maybe one of the things that spurred me more than anything else is when I was in high school, I wanted a part-time job so that I could earn extra money other than my allowance. So, I got a job in a restaurant, and I decided that is definitely not what I want to do when I grow up. And, so that really motivated me more than anything I think to go out and do something. I wanted to have a career and so I decided that something in the outdoors would be the best, and that's why I choose Physical Education. Not until later on in my college career did, I find out that you could really major in Recreation and make a good career out of it. I thought that one of the few things you could do with an outdoor sport type activity would be in Physical Education.

Dorothy Huyck: Back in high school, did you take much math or science?

Chrysandra Walter: I took quite a bit of biological sciences, and geology and whatnot, but I never did much in much in math. I enjoyed math a lot and I was continuing on like most students do in math and I had an Algebra class and I did really nice the first semester, and the second semester a girlfriend of mine transferred into my class and we ended up socializing more than I did studying. So, I never really continued with math very much because I had sort of skipped that whole section of math basics to go onto anything further. I don't know, Math these days don't see to be of that much help anyway, especially when you have these hand calculators these days.

Dorothy Huyck: As you were growing up, did you play with boys?

Chrysandra Walter: Oh yeah, I think I played a lot when I was younger, street games, you know cowboys and Indians, and I think in sixth grade I remember at intermural or in – at recesses I'd play baseball with the guys and stuff like that. Yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: Were you considered a tomboy?

Chrysandra Walter: I don't think I was considered a tomboy, I think I enjoyed the challenge of playing with boys then the girls, I – then I got – I seemed to get more satisfaction out of that then with – with the jump rope and those kinds of games. I think I – I'm very competitive, so I found boys sports a lot more competitive, and a lot more satisfying.

Dorothy Huyck: But you don't think of yourself, as a tomboy?

Chrysandra Walter: No, no, I don't think so.

Dorothy Huyck: You obviously were into a variety of things that were helpful later on in your Park Service career.

Chrysandra Walter: [affirmative]

Dorothy Huyck: Camping trips and anything else?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, I think mostly just my family's interest in the out of doors, we had a – we did an awful lot of camping when I was very young, like seven years old. I – my parents bought a water ski boat, and we have water skied every summer since then, which included camping. And, we then got into snow skiing, and so we did an awful lot of snow skiing. And that just leads to other things, I do a lot of scuba diving, I'm just scuba diving an awful lot and golf, I do some golf and mostly outdoor sports, I just really enjoy. I think California tends to make people more outdoors oriented then a lot of other places in the United States. I found, when I lived in New York City for three and a half years, when I was in the New York City group, and then also Washington D.C., you don't find the people to do these things with nearly as much as you do in California. Because California culture is based so much on doing outdoor things, and it's just very different then the East coast is. So—

Dorothy Huyck: Some of these things are available on the East coast.

Chrysandra Walter: Yes. I guess the real thing is 1] finding people that you can do it with because that, of course, is enjoyable; 2] their accessibility is, is not nearly as easy as here in California and 3] is the expense. You know, in New York City to play tennis and belong to a tennis club is, you know, \$600 a half a year. So, there just is a lot more available out here on the West coast, and consequently I think people develop the skills and the interests a lot more.

Dorothy Huyck: After you graduated from San Jose State, did your Park Service career begin at that point?

Chrysandra Walter: Yeah. I was an intern for three months during the summer at Point Reyes.

Dorothy Huyck: When did you graduate?

Chrysandra Walter: 1969, August of 1969. And, after I finished my internship, which ran through the summer I was picked up as a temporary at Point Reyes in interpretation, and I stayed there until December. We had a conference at Point Reyes on environmental education, and a lot of my work in my internship was in environmental education, and I met two fellows that came down from Seattle there and I had – I was responsible for a couple

of the sessions, and they offered me a job up in Seattle, and I took the job up there.

Dorothy Huyck: Beginning of 1970?

Chrysandra Walter: Beginning in January of 1970, right.

Dorothy Huyck: And what did you go to in that area, in Seattle?

Chrysandra Walter: I went to a Park Technician in Environmental Education Specialist is what they called it. And I worked in the regional office there as Environmental Education Specialist and went around to many of the areas in the Pacific Northwest region, that was when the Pacific Northwest region was just starting to be established. Developing Environmental Education Programs throughout the parks in the Pacific Northwest, and also working an awful lot with school teachers in the Seattle area, and the surrounding areas of parks and giving them curriculum materials, doing workshops, how to use park resources for education, things like that. So, I worked for a year as a temporary, I went up there to Seattle as a temporary, and after a year I got a permanent Park Technician job.

Dorothy Huyck: Also, in Seattle?

Chrysandra Walter: Also, in Seattle, right. And I – so that was my first career status, and I stayed there for another year as a permanent Park Technician doing Environmental Education and I was selected into the Intake Ranger Program.

Dorothy Huyck: So, you went [inaudible]?

Chrysandra Walter: Yes, right. [affirmative]

Dorothy Huyck: And what class were you doing?

Chrysandra Walter: Oh dear, what was that. It was the Centennial Session of the Park Service.

Dorothy Huyck: '72?

Chrysandra Walter: And so that would have to be 1972.

Dorothy Huyck: Were there other women in that class with you?

Chrysandra Walter: [affirmative]

Dorothy Huyck: Do you remember how many?

Chrysandra Walter: There was, let's see, one, two, three. I think there were three other ones, four other ones beside myself.

Dorothy Huyck: I'm never sure. Was Betty McSweeney [phonetic] in that class?

- Chrysandra Walter: [negative]. Let's see, one girl among us quit the Service since that class and let's see, one girl is, was at Bandelier, I'm not sure where she is – Janis Wobinhurst [phonetic] was in my session.
- Dorothy Huyck: She's at Indiana Dunes.
- Chrysandra Walter: Oh, is she, okay. And there was a black girl who was from Independence, what was her name? God, I can't remember what her name was. And there was another—
- Dorothy Huyck: Was it [inaudible]?
- Chrysandra Walter: No [negative]. God, I know what her name is, and I just can't remember it. There was another, I think her name was Merriam [phonetic] and she was a technical at Adam's House, and I think she's still there at Adam's House, I think she was very much into staying in that community, and she was in the class as well. And then, my roommate quit, Lilly something, I can't remember her last name, but she was from Stones River.
- Dorothy Huyck: Do you know why she quit?
- Chrysandra Walter: I don't know, she was a very troubled person anyway, and I don't think she was very – she wasn't career oriented at all, I don't feel. And she sure wanted to stay in that Tennessee area, that's where she was from, and I don't think that – the time came for her to be placed someplace else, she liked the idea of going to some other part of the country, and she just got very frustrated and finally quit. She was black also.
- Dorothy Huyck: And after your Intake training?
- Chrysandra Walter: Then, I went to New York City.
- Dorothy Huyck: In 1973 or 72?
- Chrysandra Walter: That would be 1972, because the Intake – or the, or that course was seven weeks, I believe. So, I went there, and I was—
- Dorothy Huyck: You were there for several years?
- Chrysandra Walter: Yes, I was there, I think about three and half years, actually. And, when I went to New York, the superintendent there had just received a grant from a foundation to establish an Environmental Education Center at Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace and that was one of the reasons I'm sure I was placed in New York because of my experience in Seattle in Environmental Education. And so, I was responsible for starting that program, and we – for the time I was in New York worked very hard in establishing what we called the Theodore Roosevelt Environmental Education Center.
- Dorothy Huyck: You were then a GS?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, let's see, I was a – I think I was a – did I go there as a five? I think I went there as a five, and then after my one year I was a seven, and then I was a nine. I left New York when I was a nine.

Dorothy Huyck: [affirmative] Did you spend most of your time in New York on the Theodore Birthplace?

Chrysandra Walter: No.

Dorothy Huyck: In the Environmental Education Center?

Chrysandra Walter: Yeah, I would say most of the – yeah, most of the time that I did spend in the Environmental Education Center. After about two and half years, or just before Dave left, he was my superintendent, he got very concerned about my being so specialized and started to give me opportunities to get into other aspects of the Park Service because in Environment Education he knew there was going to be only so far you could go with that particular specialty. So, he changed my job to Interpretive Specialist for the New York City group, and I was involved in special programs, urban programs, festivals, and whatnot. The Environmental Education Center still, and the cooperating association, and the museums, or the visitor centers that we had and working with the different interpreters throughout the group so that I could get a broader experience than just plain interpretation and interpretation management. Not just Environmental Education, so and that is what I was doing when I was—

Dorothy Huyck: Were you working at particular Park Service sights in New York City?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, the main headquarters for the New York City group was in Federal Hall, which is on Wall Street, and then there were five other sites that comprised what they called the New York City group, so I would spend most of my time there at Federal Hall just because that's where the headquarters was but then I would work – I would be doing things, doing work for all five of the sites that were in the New York City group.

Dorothy Huyck: What all did that encompass?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, I did a lot of work with the Cooperating Association, which was Eastern Parks Monument Association, and inventories, deciding what books we ought to sell, and upgrading our sales facilities and whatnot. I did a lot with festivals, some of the park's programs at each of the sites. We did some changing of the interpretive programs, developing of some slide programs. There was some liaison work with Harpers Ferry Center on a new exhibit that was going into Castle Clinton when we first opened Castle Clinton. A lot of training of the interpreters, hiring, seasonal hiring and scheduling of their work schedules, and, oh, getting a new exhibit

produced that the association had given us money for. Just kind of wide variety of different things in Interpretation.

Dorothy Huyck: And, from there did you move to Washington?

Chrysandra Walter: Yes, then I was selected—

Dorothy Huyck: What year would that have been?

Chrysandra Walter: 1975 I think it is, November, or yeah, November of 1975. And I was selected for the Chief of Interpretation, Recreation and Resource Management of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Dorothy Huyck: And which sites did that include?

Chrysandra Walter: Okay. That, well the Parkway was really the Park, the main, I guess that's why they called it – I mean they called it the headquarters, George Washington Memorial Parkway, but it included a lot of small sites and, so we acted, sort of as a group, again with a lot of individual little sites, like Great Falls, Virginia, which is sort of an entity unto itself but that was administered by the Parkway. Glen Echo Park, again another entity unto itself, was administered by the Parkway, Old Stone House, Arlington House, and Turkey Run Farm, Theodore Roosevelt Island, and just various other smaller areas along the Parkway. And the ones that I just mentioned were the only places where we had a real visitor staff at, Great Falls we had a real visitor staff, and Glen Echo had a visitor staff, people that would provide programming for visitors and visit protection for visitors.

Dorothy Huyck: Did you have involvement in the program at Turkey Run?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, I – the department at Turkey Run was, the farm was already established when I was there, and what they were doing in Interpretation was pretty well established. I think the things that I did when I was at Turkey Run, or when I was at Go – or GWMP, so I think the things that we were able to accomplish was develop a better program for school groups. We had an awful lot of school groups visiting the farm. And, I guess, my biggest mark would be the establishment of the Environmental Living Program there, and we really worked hard to develop that whole program, where kids could come and stay overnight, and all the things that were needed, and developed a curriculum, and worked with the schools to get them out there.

Dorothy Huyck: Is that still in effect, do you know?

Chrysandra Walter: [affirmative].

Dorothy Huyck: I ask because, of course, there was a time when the whole program at Turkey Run was very tenuous.

Chrysandra Walter: Oh, right yes. Yes, I was there when that was happening, and I think through the efforts of people that were concerned and had grown to love the farm through their efforts working with their local congressmen and whatnot, they were able to change that around and NCP has, I guess, for a long time had really over budgeted, and everybody in NCP was having to take its fair share of the cut that NCP had to absorb and my predecessor, before me had decided instead of nickeling and diming everybody on the Parkway that they would cut out one whole operation and keep everything else at a standard level. Then, of course, I come on and then they were going through all those hassles with the local congressmen, and the Park Service was able to divert additional funds to the farm because it became such a political issue, and it never did close, and it's fine, it's – well, there is no problem with it now, it won't be closed ever, and everybody is happy.

Dorothy Huyck: Were you also involved in the development at Glen Echo?

Chrysandra Walter: No, they – I got there after it had been established for maybe a couple of years, I guess. I think the thing that we did – I did most with Glen Echo at that particular time was just trying to improve its physical facilities. As you know there was an old amusement park not really built for 365 days a year operation, and it was really in sad shape, and we really worked hard to get money and worked hard with the maintenance division to get them to do an awful lot of the work that had not been done to get that facility up to a safe and comfortable standard in terms of heat and whatnot. The, another thing that – one of the other things that we did at Glen Echo, and Turkey Run Farm, and some of the other areas is all of them had been operating for so long without permanent employees, and we were able to establish a good deal of career, less than full-time or career subject to referral positions, so that they would have a returning staff and some continuity because a lot of the work that was being done was being done by temporaries who would come and go and there would be no carry-over into the next group of seasonals that came, it was a very fragmented, so that was something that we were able to do for them. We, during that period of time that I was there, we got Clara Barton House, which was just turned over pretty quickly. Or not too long before I got there, and so we'd started inventorying the collection, and setting up a visitor program for that site. And so that's basically the involvement I had in Glen Echo.

Dorothy Huyck: And when did you leave the George Washington Parkway group as they called it?

Chrysandra Walter: Let's see, I got to Golden Gate in October of '77.

Dorothy Huyck: And what are your responsibilities here?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, Golden Gate is sort of in a similar situation as the other two places I have been, and that's probably maybe one of the reasons that they decided I would be a good candidate for the job. It's divided into small entities, and includes Alcatraz Island, and it includes the Historic Ships down on the waterfront, and Aquatic Park in the Maritime Museum, and Fort Mason, and Fort Point, and the whole Lands' End area including the Cliff House and Ocean Beach down to Fort Princeton. So, it has, we – it has the San Francisco unit has it broken down into districts, we call them districts here and a supervisor or park ranger in charge of each of those districts, and I guess my responsibility is managing the efforts of the employees within those districts, and the supervisors, and the budget. And all the other things and problems come up with that particular area. This, I think the unit manager concept that the Park Service went to several years ago, was if you have a big complex park, it's easier to have it broken up into units, and then having that manager be responsible for all of the activities within that unit since it's like another superintendent of a district, one section of a park, however. And so, in essence we do those kinds of things, we take care of the needs of that particular section of the park. At Golden Gate it's a little different because the maintenance division is still under the Chief of Maintenance and he has all authority over maintenance, whereas in most unit manager positions the unit manager will be responsible for the maintenance within his or her organization. But it works out well, and Golden Gate is a very complex park because of the numbers of people, and the different kinds of facilities that we have, and different kinds of programs, and the political pressures that we have on the park. So, it makes sense to have it broken into two units, to have one person for the San Francisco site worrying about the things going on in San Francisco, and somebody else for Marin side.

Dorothy Huyck: What political pressures are you referring to?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, I think that Gateway in New York and Golden Gate are really sitting in the middle of a city, and the land that we have is the front yard of some neighbors and they have a lot of ideas about what things should go and what things shouldn't go on. Some of the things that we do certainly infringe upon their rights, they feel and so we just, it's – maybe I shouldn't just call them political pressures more than just neighbor pressures because about every time we do something they don't like they'll call up and want this changed, and we'll say well I'm sorry we can't do this and they'll go to their congressman and the wheel just keeps on turning until it gets up into a political arena.

Dorothy Huyck: What kinds of things are the Park Services doing that the neighbors see as infringing on their rights?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, a couple of the things that have happened just recently is that we have a great need for a barn for our horses. We have a patrol on Ocean Beach. Ocean Beach is long and it's a difficult thing to patrol by foot or vehicle so we use a horse patrol, and the only place within Golden Gate right now that we have for the horses is out in Marin County, most of the horse patrol is here in San Francisco, so every day we have to take the trailer over to the barn, load the horses up and then bring them back, and we would lose about two and a half hours of patrol time every day just trucking the horses back and forth, not to mention it's not very good for the horses to have to trailer them so often. And so, at East Fort Miley we have an area, an old bunker area, that was not ideal, but suited for a horse farm and we had the money, we got the money for it and did all the environmental clearances and whatnot, and there was a lady in the neighborhood who didn't like the idea of having a horse farm there in her area. And we had to really do an awful lot of talking with her to get her convinced that it would be a good idea, that they aren't going to infringe upon her view, or her air space, and that it's not going to draw that many flies, and indeed it's going to be safer because we'll have more policemen in the area, the police, the park police, are the ones that patrol on the horses. And so, it just took an awful lot of dealing with her to get her convinced that we would have this barn if she had not been convinced, if we had not been able to convince her, Jerod Server [phonetic] who is the superintendent would not have put the barn there. And so, that's one person whose, one person's inconvenience against the management needs of the park, and we're very – I think is very sensitive to those kinds of things, overly sensitive I think sometimes. But certainly, more sensitive than you would have to be say in Yellowstone where you're not going to bother anybody.

Dorothy Huyck: [inaudible] some person's at both Gateway and Golden Gate are very unlike Yellowstone, they are very urban, and that here at Golden Gate the Park Services needs very much to adapt to different modes of behavior on the point of the visiting public then has been the case in Yellowstone through the Park Service.

Chrysandra Walter: Right.

Dorothy Huyck: Would you comment on that?

Chrysandra Walter: Oh, I think that's true. I think that people are not coming to Golden Gate because they want to go someplace different, they're coming to Golden Gate because it's where they normally recreate in their spare time. They do

it often, it's not a unique, and they feel that they should have more freedom than they do when they go to an area like Yellowstone that is protected one specific purpose, and you go there for one specific purpose. And so, they just get into their patterns, and I don't think that urban recreation area, and that's probably maybe one of the reasons the Park Service developed recreation areas is to be a little bit more lenient with the land that we hold and give people opportunity to express themselves in whichever way that they want. I don't think that we should try to have them - or force them into having an experience like they would have if they were say in Half Dome, seeing Half Dome and going and running on Crissy Field are two different things they are two different ways of recreating, and one is something that you do continually, and it's done in your own neighborhood, and it's nice to be able to go to an area that is a little bit more open than a city street. And then it's another kind of experience to go up to Yosemite and hike on the trails, and see all the wildlife, and there – we would want people to be more obeying of the laws and the regulations. The laws that govern a recreation area, I think should be different I think a recreation area, particularly in the city, needs to be a little bit more lenient of people's own pursuits and what they want to do.

Dorothy Huyck: Does that apply to something like C&O Canal, which is used as a recreation area within a city in Washington?

Chrysandra Walter: Oh, I think so. As long as whatever the visitors are doing don't do any damage to the historic resource, which is the main reason the C&O Canal was developed. I think – and I think that's the case in National Parks too, I see no reason why you can't have baseball games, and volley ball's games and whatnot in a National Park as long as you're not doing it in an Alpine meadow that you're going to destroy all of the flowers, or in a nesting area of the eagle, or whatever. I think that the Park Service sometimes tends to want to hold these pristine areas and make everybody sit down and enjoy them in a very esoteric way, rather than letting them enjoy them in the way that they want to, and I think that some people just don't have the ability to just sit down and watch a stream go by, or look at a dove, or a thing, they want to enjoy it in their own sense. And as long as they're not damaging the resources, I don't see why they can't do it. And it's different than a lot of people would like to see, I mean, I would like to think that people would enjoy going up to Yosemite just to be able to look at what Yosemite is and to be able to hike in it, and whatnot. But there are some people that go up to Yosemite because they want to stay in the campground, and they want to be with other people and have that social contact, and I don't think there is any reason that they can't do that in Yosemite as well as a State Park or something like that. As long as they're

not going to damage the resources for the future people to enjoy, the people that do want to enjoy it sort of in a contemplative manner.

Dorothy Huyck: I think I'll ask about people who have been your supervisors throughout your Park Service career. Have you found your supervisors to be encouraging, or discouraging, or possibly some of both?

Chrysandra Walter: [affirmative] Well, most of my – I think I – in my career I've only had one supervisor that I really disliked. The rest of them have been just very fantastic.

Dorothy Huyck: And they have been encouraging?

Chrysandra Walter: Oh, extremely. Yeah. [affirmative]

Dorothy Huyck: In what ways did they encourage you?

Chrysandra Walter: I think in just in – for instance, Dave Dane [phonetic] who was my supervisor in New York was very encouraging in me continuing to pursue a career in Park Management not necessarily just in interpretation. And actively helped get me the proper training, give me the proper responsibilities so that I could nurture those skills. My superintendent at GWMP was encouraging in me continuing in management, and we had good counselling sessions, and talked about possibilities and what might be the right direction to go, and things like that. My supervisor here is the same way. I've had one who I really, really disliked and everybody disliked him, and so it wasn't, I don't think, anything particularly against me, he was just not a manager, not a good supervisor. And so, but I think on the whole I think I've had good supervisors.

Dorothy Huyck: By the way, what grade are you now?

Chrysandra Walter: I'm a GS-12.

Dorothy Huyck: Do you think that being a woman has in anyway affected pro or con your opportunities in Park Services?

Chrysandra Walter: Oh, I think that being a woman has helped me considerably, because – I mean I feel I'm a very good manager, I think I've got a lot of talent in the field of management, and I think that the Park Service because it has the pressures from a women's movement is looking for people, women, that they can advance, that can handle the job and so, it's – you don't have to compete as much.

Dorothy Huyck: Do you think women are given a certain preference?

Chrysandra Walter: No, I don't think – well, I guess in some instances they probably are. I don't feel that I've been given preference because I'm a woman, I think I've been given – I mean I think my reputation comes before, my reputation as

a manager and as an employee comes before the fact that I'm a woman. But being a woman, gives me that little extra plus because if they can fill me – if I'm sitting side-by-side with a man who is just as capable, and they can hire me instead it helps their EEO program, and helps say to the public is yes the Park Service is going out of its way to give women, minorities, and whatnot an opportunity to advance in the service.

Dorothy Huyck: Of course, there are some people who think of the Park Services are mainly a male organization. Do you?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, I think it traditionally it has been, but I don't think it is anymore. I mean there an incredibly large amount of women in the Park Service now. Not in the management series yet, but that will come in time, but in the Technician Services there is an awful lot of women in the Park Service now.

Dorothy Huyck: Do you think they're going to have opportunities for promotion?

Chrysandra Walter: Oh, I think so. Yeah. As they prove themselves.

Dorothy Huyck: Well, I'm assuming that. I'm assuming that as they prove themselves capable of handling greater responsibility.

Chrysandra Walter: Yeah, I think that a lot of women get frustrated because they feel like they are being discriminated against, but I don't really think they are there are just as many males at their level who aren't able – advancing as fast as they'd like to advance. And I think that all will have the opportunity to advance in time. I don't think you advance as fast these days as you did in my time. I think I came into the service at a very good time, when they – the women's movement was really giving an awful lot of pressure to all the Federal agencies about the lack of women managers, so that helped me quite a bit. I advanced a lot faster because of that. But I think that now that a lot of Federal agencies have a good portion of women in management jobs, there is not as much pressure and so the women that are in lower levels these days have to compete on a real equal basis with men. Parks aren't maybe looking for women numbers as much as they used to. But yes, I mean the women obviously I think have an advantage as blacks have an advantage, if they're good they are probably going to get promotions faster than say an equally talented white male.

Dorothy Huyck: This in spite of the attitudes that some supervisors, not all but some.

Chrysandra Walter: You mean – I'm not sure what you mean.

Dorothy Huyck: Do you feel that the opportunities for promotions, for instance, are there in spite of the attitudes of some supervisors?

- Chrysandra Walter: Oh, yeah. I think so because there is enough, enough jobs in the service that if one supervisor has a negative attitude there is ten more who have similar opportunities to offer people that don't have those kind of attitudes – I don't think men, I – I mean I have not run into the men these days who have a negative attitude towards females, most of the guys that I've worked with and worked for enjoy having female managers in their Park. Find that female managers contribute quite a bit to their park organization and haven't – that really wasn't a consideration when they selected me.
- Dorothy Huyck: Was that true, for example, when you were at Point Reyes?
- Chrysandra Walter: Yeah, I don't think my supervisor there had any problem with me being a female and had any hesitations about taking me as an intern because I was a female. In most cases, it probably helps me more, I mean if you're – particularly the lower grades I would think – I think men enjoy working with women and vice versa, so I'm sure that it's probably helped more than it's hindered.
- Dorothy Huyck: You would, therefore, recommend to a younger woman just starting her career into the Park Service?
- Chrysandra Walter: Oh, yeah. [affirmative]. Oh, absolutely. I mean it's important to have talent, to be able to do the job and that's – I mean that's still the underlying thing, you've got to be able to do the job, you've got to have the talent to be a manager or supervisor and to be a person who can produce at a fast rate of speed, and have the right answers, and make good solid decisions. But I think if you have that kind of abilities, the Park Service offers a woman a very challenging career.
- Dorothy Huyck: Were there any job within the Park Services that you think a woman should not tackle?
- Chrysandra Walter: Yeah, I don't think that women are suited to search and rescue, and I don't know if this is a bias of mine or not. If I was climbing a mountain and I got myself in trouble, I would feel a lot safer if there was a male Park Ranger responsible for rescuing me than a female. And so, I mean that – I don't think that a female in the real high crime area is probably as an effective law enforcement officer as a male is. I know that a lot of people disagree with that, but I don't – again, if I was in trouble and I needed a law enforcement officer right away, I would want a male to come, I wouldn't want a female to come. And in those two particular instances, I think that you really do need a male. Some of the maintenance jobs too, that we really require a great deal of physical strength probably and men tend to maybe have a better sixth sense about construction and maintenance type of functions, and if I were a superintendent of a park and was in a position of maintenance mechanical or whatnot, or something

similar to that kind of position, I would probably want a male because I just think that they have more common sense about fixing electrical wires, or plumbing, because they deal in it with their fathers and I guess part of our culture. Firefighting, I don't know, I mean women can probably do a fine job in firefighting. I think sometime women have better endurance than men do, and firefighting doesn't maybe necessarily take a lot of physical strength, just takes someone who can really sit there through all that grime and really stick it out in building fire lines, and whatever else they do. So, the two big areas I think are Search and Rescue and Law Enforcement. And I guess a lot of that depends on the degree because certainly in small parks with not very much law enforcement and search and rescue problems, I think a female probably could do just fine.

Dorothy Huyck: Has anyone acted as a mentor for you during your Park Services career?

Chrysandra Walter: Oh, I guess, not in the sense that he's helped me an awful lot, but I guess – I really feel that my mentor is John Rutter who is, was the Regional Director in the Pacific Northwest Region. Who I just have a great deal of respect for, and I think he was probably the one who made it possible for me to get into the Albright Training Program, the Intake Ranger Program, which I think is one of the biggest steps that a person has to make is that transition from technician to park ranger, and I'm sure he had a lot to do with that. And then I've kept in touch with him [inaudible].

Dorothy Huyck: [unintelligible]

Chrysandra Walter: Oh, I think so, yeah. Because there are so many technicians and there are so few park rangers. The park ranger series is really the management series, the advancement series in the Park Service. And there are only so many of those jobs available. And there are lots of park technicians out there. A guy who patrols the road at Lake Mead should be a technician cause he's a single function person. Or the person who gives a nature walk at 3 o'clock at Yosemite is probably a technician. Single function. A Park Ranger series is set up to be a management person who has responsibility to various functions and more complicated jobs. And so, there is a lot of the lower level jobs, a lot of guys out there patrolling the roads and lots of people out there giving their talks and then they have one Park Ranger in charge of them, coordinating their efforts. And so, it's a funnel to get up into that one park ranger job, there is an awful lot of competition.

Dorothy Huyck: [unintelligible] there do seem to be some park technicians [unintelligible]

Chrysandra Walter: [affirmative]. I'm sure, yeah.

Dorothy Huyck: [unintelligible]

Chrysandra Walter: I mean, we're a victim of the civil service commission and the civil service regulations as much as anybody else is. We've got so many Park Ranger job and when we have one available, you've got to go through a merit promotion kind of system, they've got to compete with veterans who – rightfully – if they've given their time to fight wars for us need to get preferential treatment. That system is based, not on emotions and people that you know have been doing a good job and then reward it's based on competition and that's why people get very frustrated, because they see a lot of other people getting the job they've been doing for years, and years, and years and not get that job. You're just at the wrong place, at the wrong time. So, that's the way the cookie crumbles.

Dorothy Huyck: Have you been able to get an opportunity to get additional classes and courses [unintelligible]

Chrysandra Walter: Oh yeah, I think I've been able to get a lot of training. I think the Park Service has a very good training program and people who really want to take advantage of it, can. And I've been able to get training in a lot of the areas that I was unfamiliar with and also some good training and management courses that helped me [unintelligible].

Dorothy Huyck: Have you been married at any time?

Chrysandra Walter: [negative]

Dorothy Huyck: If you were married, would you expect to continue your Park Service career?

Chrysandra Walter: Oh, I think so. I mean I guess it would depend on what my husband's career was as well. If I got married, for instance, here I would continue to stay in a job I am in now, and if I couldn't advance within this area then I would just be happy with doing what I'm doing now, and probably would continue doing this. If, I was married, and my husband was transferred, I would probably see if there was something I could do locally in the park that he was transferred to and hopefully there would be a Park Service area nearby that I could go to. And hopefully he could find areas that I would have an opportunity to find other work in. If I had to quit, you know I would, that would- I think I would give up my career because of my marriage and my relationship. But I would hope to continue it, if I could. I think I would want to continue some type of career even if it wasn't with the Park Service. I think I'd want to continue some sort of career in Recreation. I think that is one of the reasons that I want to get a master's degree too, because if I ever do have to quit, I'll be able to get another job in the Recreation field. [unintelligible] I think I'd want to stay working, I don't want to become a housewife, I don't think I could find enough to fill my day, so that I would want to continue working.

Dorothy Huyck: Sure, and some people find it difficult [unintelligible] two Park Service careers.

Chrysandra Walter: Oh yeah, and that's something I think that the Park Service really has got to do something about because I think they spend a lot of money training and they have a lot of experience wrapped up in those people, and I know damn well there are places in the service where both of them could work and contribute and not conflict, not be under one another. And I think the Park Service should try to take advantage of those people.

Dorothy Huyck: [unintelligible]

Chrysandra Walter: No, I don't think the Park Service has done anything. I know of three separate cases where the wife has had to quit, because the husband was transferred, and those wives that had a lot of training knew a lot about the Park Service, and if they had transferred both of them to an area where they both could be used they wouldn't have had that problem. The woman wouldn't have to give up her career. I think it makes some of women very bitter, and they become Park Service wives and I just think it's extremely unfair, I think the Forest Service, I understand has worked out a way that the male and female can continue to pursue their career, and I think the Army has done something like that too, and the Park Service Police has been a little more accommodating and they are part of the Park Service but I don't think the Park Service has done a thing yet and I think it is a real shame.

Dorothy Huyck: Do you see the EEO function of the Park Service going well?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, I don't know, I guess it's helped, it's helped put focus on the importance of having a good balanced staff. I find the EEO officers still pretty ineffective, they tend to look at statistics more than anything else. I think one of the things that we need most to have a good EEO program in the Park Service, and in the regions, and whatnot is a real good recruiting system. But these EEO officers, I haven't seen them doing anything to really go out and recruit. And that's to me what the region needs more than anything else. Each region needs a good person who can really go out recruit, good qualified minority candidates, and if we had that, that would be the only thing we need in terms of an EEO program.

Dorothy Huyck: Do you include women in that reference to minorities?

Chrysandra Walter: Oh, I guess, I would, but I think there – well, at least in the urban areas there is plenty of qualified women and they are easy to find, I mean they seek you out. These days, I think that women seek the Park Service as a place to have a career and so they seek us out, and we have plenty of qualified women, particularly at the lower level. But blacks, minorities,

Indians, Orientals, all those different minorities, which is very difficult to find real good qualified minorities. I think the EEO Program can really do that, instead of the regional EEO Officer sitting there tallying up statistics. It makes managers very bitter towards the EEO Program.

Dorothy Huyck: Because it's so primarily oriented to statistics?

Chrysandra Walter: Yes.

Dorothy Huyck: Rather than the person.

Chrysandra Walter: Yes. And really actually trying to go and do something. The EEO officers in regions always are black, and I've seen just blatant interest in blacks only, and the EEO Program reaches far beyond that. So, I would say that I don't think our EEO Program is all that great. I think that the Park Service made them a lot of advances in the EEO Program, but I don't think it's because of any result of what the EEO Officers have done.

Dorothy Huyck: As far as women are concerned, do you see women providing support for one another or forming anything like an "old girl network"?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, our Park right now has formed a women's organization to talk about women in the Park Service and how to advance and whatnot. This is the first time I really run into a group of women who were in the Park Service trying to organize, and be concerned, and give encouragement to each other.

Dorothy Huyck: As you go to meetings with other managers across the Park Service do you encounter anything you think might become a network of women's interests?

Chrysandra Walter: I don't think so. I guess, I don't know maybe it's because I'm a woman, but I mean I encourage my female employees, just as much as I encourage my male employees. I counsel my female employees just as much as I counsel my male employees. I guess I don't feel, I don't know, maybe some of the men managers feel the pressures of the women's program on them and so they tend to maybe give women more opportunities or select women when they have a good qualified one before they would select men, but it doesn't get in my way at all. I think that I just look for the best candidate and most qualified people, and I don't choose somebody because she's a woman or he's a man, I choose the one that can do the job. Because I don't feel like anybody's going to say well, you're discriminating against women. I don't know, if that's why. I would hope that that's what my supervisors have done they picked me because they know I can do the job rather than because I am a woman.

Dorothy Huyck: They are gender blind, concerned about the job.

Chrysandra Walter: Yeah, I would hope so.

Dorothy Huyck: It's being done right.

Chrysandra Walter: Yeah, I would hope so. I think that's how I would react anyway, and I would hope that [unintelligible]. Still there are probably some men would feel pressured to have women on their staff, but maybe that's something that's in the subconscious. I don't know.

Dorothy Huyck: I've been asking you lots of questions, is there anything we have not talked about that you would like to comment on?

Chrysandra Walter: Well, I guess, the only thing we haven't talked about is maybe what my future goals would be, and I think they are probably very high. I would like to continue to pursue my career and I would like to -- the jobs that really excite me are the jobs that, that no woman has ever had. I think the job of a Regional Director, for instance the job of the Regional Director of NCP. To me, it's just extremely challenging and I would love to, when I'm qualified for it, and have the experience, I would love to be able to have the opportunity to do that job. And I would like to have the opportunity to be a superintendent of a real large recreation area, or recreation like Gateway or Golden Gate. I really enjoy the challenge, I enjoy the work, I enjoy the pressure and I would love to be able to, to be considered and selected for those jobs. But I'm not sure whether or not I'm going to be able to make that, I'm not sure that particular jobs like a region directors' job, or superintendent of really large parks are going to be open to women. I don't know. Lorraine Mintzmeyer was just selected for Deputy Regional Director for the Southwest Region which is a very big breakthrough for women. And so, that's very encouraging that the Park Service is going to open up those high-level jobs to women, and I just hope that I'll be able to compete and really be seriously considered for that kind, because I find, I mean I think that those kinds of jobs are a real crescendo to a hard-working career that I at least have had.

Dorothy Huyck: Would you ever pushed this subject all the way to the top to director, the director?

Chrysandra Walter: I'm not sure that I would want to -- I think I would love a regional director and I think that I could get all the satisfaction that I would carve out of that kind of position. The director's job would be so time consuming I would probably would have very little time for my own personal pursuits, and I don't think I'd want to give up that much time. I think a director's position is like a 24 hour a day job. And -- I don't know, it just depends if I've gotten my full of travel, I enjoy travelling an awful lot. Just depends on how I do, if I was able to get a regional director, how I would do as a regional director. But, at this particular time it's so far in the future I'm in

no way prepared to be a director anyway, so I don't even have to face that. It just depends what would happen at the time, but I hope that those kinds of opportunities will be available to women because I know I'd really enjoy doing it.

Dorothy Huyck: Are you optimistic about those opportunities being available to women?

Chrysandra Walter: Oh yes, I think so. I think by the time I'm ready, I'm still -yes, I'm only 30 and I think that, you know, after maybe 10-15 years that those opportunities would be available. And, at my particular level there is not an awful lot of women that are at my level, so that the competition, at least amongst other women, won't be as great. I think that probably they might give the opportunity to a woman because she is a woman, and I might be there at the right place and the right time to do that, and I would really like to try it. I'd really like to do it.

Dorothy Huyck: Thank you.

Chrysandra Walter: Okay, we're done.

[END OF TAPE]

[END OF INTERVIEW]