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John Townsend
October 31, 2012

Interview conducted by Lu Ann Jones
Transcribed by West Transcript Services
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ANPR Oral History Project

John E. (JT) Townsend

31 October 2012

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Audio File: TOWNSEND John 31 Oct 2012

[START OF TRACK 1]

Lu Ann Jones: Let me get started. And when I begin an interview, I need to say this is WAV file 014 because I have some other files on there. I just started by introducing the interview. This is Lu Ann Jones, and I am here with John T. Townsend, JT Townsend, and this is an interview that's part of the Association of National Park Rangers Oral History Project.[1] It's October 31st, and we're in Indian Wells, California. So first I'd just like to have on the recording your permission to record this, and I'll also be asking you to sign a legal release form at the end of the interview.

John Townsend: That's fine with me. You have my permission to record.

Lu Ann Jones: Okay. I think we're, let me – I think we're doin' okay here, so it looks like the colors are tellin' me we're doin' fine. I always just start out by asking people when they were born and where they were born and something about their families.

John Townsend: Okay, I was born on January 29th, 1947, actually in a place called the McDonald House at University Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio. My father had grown up in Cleveland, and my mother had gone to Case Western Reserve for I always thought it was a graduate degree in library science, but I think it was a bachelor's. She already had a bachelor's and she'd taught for a year, and she'd gone back. She met my father at church, and they got married, started a family, and that would've been during the war years, and I'm the oldest of three children. My parents are deceased, I have a sister who lives in Denver with her husband, and a sister who lives in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada with her husband.

Lu Ann Jones: And what is your, your mom had a degree in library science. What did your dad do?

John Townsend: My dad was a clerk. He ah, this was a big revelation to my sons the other day when we were doin' a little family history stuff, I said, "You know, I don't really think my dad ever graduated from college!" [Chuckles.] But my mother was a teacher, my dad was a clerk his whole life, so he worked for various companies in the office. He had been, he'd been injured somehow when he was a youth, so he had a, what we would say was a disability. He didn't walk really well, and so that limited his – he wasn't a very big guy – so that kind of limited his ability to do things.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhm.

John Townsend: So that's what he did.

[1] Narrator corrected the middle initial to "E" during transcript review.

Lu Ann Jones: So how long were – it says that you graduated from high school in Colorado, though – so how do you get from being born in Cleveland to high school in Colorado?

John Townsend: Ah, that's actually a story that I think I give great credit to the courage of my parents. As I understand the story, as an infant – I have two younger sisters – so essentially as an infant I got pertussis, whooping cough, and the way the story goes anyway, my folks didn't tell a lot about it cause you could say they were kind of badmouthing my grandparents, but apparently my grandmother wasn't real interested in watching my sisters while I was sick, and my mother was gonna take the three kids to Colorado, which is where she was from. And my father, and they were gonna rent a house from an acquaintance of my grandmother, and apparently my father said that why don't you just see if we can rent that on a fulltime basis? And so, they sold the house they had in East Cleveland, and packed up and moved to Colorado, and we lived in a suburb of Denver called Arvada. And we lived in a house with no inside plumbing – I guess we had cold running water – for a couple of winters until they were able to buy a piece of property and build a house. So that's how we ended up from there to Colorado, probably when I was four. Four years old. Probably 1950, '51.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhm, mmhm. So, when you were in school, what kinds of subjects did you start showing an interest in, extracurricular activities, those kinds of things. I'm just always interested in who people were when they come to the Park Service.

John Townsend: Ah, oh, well, in that particular school system that I was in – Jefferson County R1 – they had R, reorganized one in the '50s so Arvada no longer had its own school system in Lakewood. We were just county schools. And so, they were on a six-three-three system. Six grades elementary, three junior high, three high school, and junior high, I mean, I participated in football and wrestling, and then in high school extracurricular I par—well, in high school I played football a couple years, I wrestled all three years in high school. I hasten to say for the record that I was the worst wrestler in the history of Colorado high school sports. Ah, and I participated in drama, in the technical aspects of it, not on stage. And that's, I worked – actually we worked. All of us kids worked, so I brought home a paycheck since I was 12 or 13.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhm. What kinds of jobs were you doing at that point?

John Townsend: First paycheck I ever got was from a guy named Art Tidwell at Arvada Texaco, and my job was to wash windows on cars when they came in, back in the days when people washed windows and checked your tire pressure and your oil. And then I went to work for North Jeffco Metropolitan Parks and Recreation District. It was

Christmas break, I was probably 12 – in fact I'm pretty sure I was – and the parks district, which was relatively new, semi-governmental, taxing authority, and they had built a big multipurpose building which included a roller-skating rink on a parqueted wood floor. And I had gone down there, we were out of school, and my grade school PE teacher, Furman Griffis, was running this roller rink.[2] And he was overrun with people and so I just said I would be happy to help him, so I went to work every day and helped this guy out, and at the end of that break a guy named Tom Allen, who was the head of the parks department said, "We'd like you to apply for a job."[3] So I applied for a job and I started working for them in the summer as a basket room attendant in a swimming pool. You'd go in and get a basket, you'd go in and change your clothes, you'd give me the basket, I'd put it up and give you a pin with your number on it, kind of thing. Ah, and so I did that when I was 13, 14, 15, went to work for the parks district when I was 16 – I had a driver's license – in their maintenance division, and then I also worked for them in the winters on weekends and at nights – Wednesday nights, I think it was – at the roller skating rink. And I did that up through my senior year.

John Townsend: And then after my senior year I worked for, in heavy construction. But anyway, so that's – extracurricular activities were basically work and what I said.

Lu Ann Jones: But yet in a field that you're gonna end up making—

John Townsend: Probably, yeah. I had determined probably, actually I had determined by the time I got out of high school that I wanted to work in parks and recreation. I really did not think that I would be a National Park Ranger. My family was middle class at best, probably lower middle class. We didn't really do vacations. I don't honestly remember ever visiting a national park, even though I was not that far from Rocky Mountain. But I did want to work in parks and recreation, and I always at the time thought that I would end up working in municipal parks. So, the Park Service really was not my first goal. I didn't really know that much about it, quite honestly. But yeah, I did. I'm sure that influenced.

John Townsend: The only other thing I thought about doing – when I was working construction, the money was good, and then I realized that I'd be the age I am right now and I'd still be on a backhoe getting pounded to death digging ditches or something like that, and that wasn't really a good plan. And the company I worked for actually was very good. They realized I was in college, and they said as

[2] Furman Charles "Griff" Griffis (1935 – 1993). See Note #1 in narrative footnotes provided by narrator (hereafter cited as NF by JT).
[3] Thomas Preston (Tom) Allen, Jr. (1924 – 2012). See Note #2 in NF by JT.

long as I stayed in college and stayed in school and they had work, they'd keep me working, so they really were kind of interesting that way. And the only other thing I thought about doing was going to the University of Denver and majoring in Illuminating Engineering, specifically working legitimate theatre, and that was the only other option I considered except being a parks and recreation. Of course, that was, it was the late '60s and early '70s, so everybody had a pretty good chance of being drafted. I was not in the service, I did not get drafted, so there was always the option of that, that would've been a possibility, just didn't happen in my case. So, but you're right, in the field that I ended up working in.

Lu Ann Jones: How about that?

John Townsend: Pretty neat.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, how did, when you went to Western State College in Colorado, what were you majoring in or intending to major in there?

John Townsend: The truth of the matter is, you can put this down, I'm old enough to say this. I was not a really good student. I did not like high school. I hated high school. And I really thought that I'd go in the service, I really thought I'd go in the military. And I, at that time in Colorado if you graduated in the upper two-thirds of your high school class, you were guaranteed a slot in a state-supported school. And a couple of my guys I went to high school with were going to Western State, so I applied, and I really honestly thought that it would be more of well, you won't get in and I'd get in the service and life would go on from there. But I got in, and so I went, and quite honestly, when I got to college, I loved higher education. All the things I disliked about high school were not present in college.

Lu Ann Jones: What were those things?

John Townsend: Oh, probably because I'd been working as long as I'd been working, and therefore exposed to people much older than me, I got a lot of the stuff out of my system that other people were gettin' out of their system in college, and so I found high school to be pretty restrictive. I didn't really need to be told I needed to do an assignment and the idea that you're here to get an education and therefore we expect you to be in class and we expect you to do your work and that kind of stuff. Those, I didn't, I told my kids that they didn't have any idea how lucky they had it in high school, cause all the things that I disliked about high school were gone by the time they got there.

John Townsend: So anyhow I went to Western State, and my major was recreation, and then as I realized how much I enjoyed going to college, I wrote to what were then the two – no, there were three actually – three

professional organizations in the field of parks and recreation. They don't exist anymore, they actually merged. The American Association of Park Executives, if I can get the names right. There were two in recreation, National Recreation Association and then another. And so, they actually merged to become the National Recreation and Parks Association. But I wrote to these three organizations, and I said, "Where are the best schools to go to get an education in this field?" And they gave me a list. One of 'em gave me the laundry list of everybody, they weren't gonna make a commitment, but one of 'em gave me a list of six schools, and so I applied and didn't get into my first choice, cause although I loved college, I hadn't developed good study habits in high school, so I didn't have really good grades. And so, then I applied to the other five and I got into all five of them, so I had to choose which one did I want to go to. So, I chose NC State because I had never been in that part of the country, and as I recall, the tuition and fees were probably a little bit more reasonable than the others. I could've been a Red Raider from Texas Tech or I could've gone to UC-Davis or I could've gone to Indiana or Illinois, you know, or Michigan State, but I ended up in NC State and majoring in recreation and park administration.

Lu Ann Jones: I don't know if I told you that I'm a, well, we're rivals here cause I'm a Tar Heel [laughs]—

John Townsend: A Tar Heel? Yeah. All we need is a Blue Devil from Duke here! [Both laughing, brief exchange.]

Lu Ann Jones: We'd be great allies at that point, if we had that person here. Well, what did you think about moving that far away from home and to a different part of the country?

John Townsend: I, my mother used to tell me that when I was getting on the airplane, I really had this look like I wasn't sure what I was doing, but I was in a Greek letter fraternity and they had a house at NC State, and so I got hold of those guys and they said, "Sure, you can stay with us until you can get in the dormitory," and I shipped my stuff by railway express and I flew down, and my fraternity brothers picked me up, and I stayed at the fraternity house for I guess about a week and then the dormitories opened up and I moved in the dorm. I, since you're a Tar Heel, I like to tell the story about I guess [name inaudible] said to me one time – two stories, I guess – "Would you like to go get some barbecue?" And I said, "Sure." Well, to me barbecue was beef with red sauce on it, and we ended up in a part of Raleigh that I wasn't sure I belonged in, and they ordered barbecue sandwiches and I said I'd have the same thing, and when I got pulled pork barbecue with coleslaw on it, I had no idea. I've become an affectionado of Carolina barbecue, but the first exposure [laughs] was I was really kinda culture

shock, you know. And I, you know, the first football game I went to, I got a date with a very nice young lady. She happened to be the secretary to the head of the department of forestry, and we were gonna ride out with the, in the bus from the fraternity house. I mean, I didn't have a car. She drove in and met me. And at Western State, to go to a football game basically meant that you kinda kicked the stuff off your boots and maybe put on clean jeans, and that's, and I got on this bus with all these guys in suits and white shirts and ties, and the ladies all had on hose, and I was like, "Oh!" It was a totally different environment, wasn't a bad environment, but it was just a different environment, you know, it was a, I had to learn southern pretty quick.

Lu Ann Jones: How, what did you think about the landscape, just the vegetation and the landscape—

John Townsend: Oh, just dramatically different. Obviously.

Lu Ann Jones: Yeah.

John Townsend: Dramatically different. You know, you've still got pine trees but they're different, and the humidity's far more intense. And the pace of living's different, but the landscape, there's no vast panoramas. And the mere threat of snow closes schools for a week in advance, and a whole bunch of other things. I love the south. I actually really, really l like the south, but it's different country. But yeah, and I worked for the school. I ended up with three jobs, I guess. I ended up with a federal work-study grant, I ended up with a scholarship with the School of Forestry, and I ended up working with the housing department as a dorm counselor. So that took care of my room, and the other jobs, I worked for the head of the department of forestry on manual calculators crunching numbers for his statistics research and also on the forestry work crew, so I spent a lot of time in the woods in North Carolina. We just, the school of forestry had a foundation that owned these forests, and the revenue from those forests then supported so the forestry crew worked on the school for us, so I spent a lot of time. And I developed some friendships with some people who lived in the mountains of North Carolina, which I kind of poo-pooed, but until I realized that in a relative sense, you know, they go from sea level to 5,000 feet, you go from 5,000 feet to 11,000 feet it's basically the same difference. But it was, yeah, it was different landscape certainly from wide vistas. You couldn't go up into the Front Range and look out and see practically to Kansas. There was not that. Or you couldn't go east and see the Rockies come up out of the ground. You were just in the thick of things, so to speak.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, what kinds of courses in a parks and recreation major, what kinds of courses comprised that major?

John Townsend: What happened just before I got to NC State was a man by the name of Gordon Hammon[4], who had retired from the U.S. Forest Service, had developed a curriculum in, the title of it was Natural Resource Recreation Administration, and he had taken that curriculum and I don't know where all he went to, but it ended up at NC State, and they adopted that and they got that, I'm sure – you've been in academia and I haven't, so I'm sure this is not like a cure, "I got this great idea" and then they adopt your curriculum, but and so, when they adopted that it was far more oriented from strictly parks and recreation to a natural resource-based thing. So, the department of parks and recreation, which had been in the School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, moved to then it was called the School of Forestry. Now it's called the College of Forestry. So, when I got there, which was 1967 – the beginning of '67, '68 academic year – was the first year that parks and recreation had been part of the School of Forestry. So their curriculum in recreation and parks administration was still the same curriculum, the same courses, you had a course in park planning and you've had a course in recreation and planning, and you'd have a course in facilities management, and all the normal core courses and that sort of thing, and then the natural resource curriculum, which was a separate degree, but I lost, basically lost a semester in the transfer process, so I was gonna have to go another semester anyway, why not go two more, just a few more thousand, a few more hundred bucks in those days, and pick up a second degree. I did not pick up the second degree. I took all the core courses, but I probably didn't take calculus or something like that. And those courses were, would be like recreation planning in a natural setting. I remember those courses, we did, we went to the Hope Valley Forest, which the school owned, and we did a recreational management plan for the Hope Valley Forest. So, we would have to consider it from its recreational opportunities – had a river that went through it and access and all that kind of stuff. And so those general – we got a sense of visitation, we got a sense of understanding who the visitors were, you know, I guess I could pull out an old catalog or something. [Laughs.]

Lu Ann Jones: No, just because—

John Townsend: But those were kind of general—

Lu Ann Jones: Yeah, yeah.

John Townsend: There, well of course there was ecology and botany and I'd taken botany at NC State or at Western State. I took ecology at NC State. So, there were the foundational science type courses that you would expect. You know, you'd take soils for both outdoor rec so

[4] Gordon A. Hammon (1913 – 1997). See Note #3 in NF by JT.

you'd understand it and you'd take soils for parks and recreation management so you'd have some idea of what you were dealing with if you were building a park in a city. So specific courses like that, those are the ones I remember. And, like I said, those are the other foundational courses, economics and that sort of stuff that I hadn't picked up at NC or at Western State.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, it seems like you mentioned an internship that you kinda got your foot in the door—

John Townsend: That happened because NC State required an internship of their parks and recreation majors, and they had these internships set up all across the state of North Carolina and in Virginia and South Carolina and throughout generally those states around North Carolina. And what had happened historically was some of those parks and recreation departments paid those folks, and they paid 'em pretty well. So, if you were from Lumberton or something like that, you know, well, you're an intern, you work for free, you know. If you're gonna go to Durham for your internship well, they expected to pay you. Well, the school had realized that that wasn't quite right, so they got all these departments that would have these internships, but you didn't, you paid your tuition, and you went out there and worked for free, was basically what it was traditionally for an internship. Well, serendipitously or fortuitously or by fate or by design, the year that I was to do my internship, the National Park Service had created a whole new program, which was an Intake Ranger Program or, more specifically, and Urban Intake Ranger Program. And as I understand it, what the Park Service had done is they realized they had a lot of biologists and botanists and foresters, but they really didn't have a lot of people that knew about people. And they had a lot of visitors, and so maybe they needed to have a better understanding of visitors. But again, we're talkin' the late '60s and early '70s, and that was a sea change in this country, you know, so the Vietnam War, I mean, the whole, the world was changing, so I imagine the Park Service realized the world was changing, and they picked up on this. So, they created this program, and they went to many of the colleges and universities that had outdoor recreation programs. Colorado State, University of Washington, Penn State, I don't know where all, NC State, many of them, Texas A&M, and they said, well, at NC State at the time, which was in the old Southeast Region, they had four of these intake ranger slots available that they would allocate to NC State. How many they gave to Clemson, I don't know, but they had four for NC State, and they pre-identified these positions. One was in Washington, DC, one was at Philadelphia, one was at Shenandoah, and I frankly forget where the fourth was.

John Townsend: And the process was is that they being the Park Service contacted NC State and said we have this program, we'd like to see if we can get some of your folks involved in it, and the university was supposed to let people that might be interested know. If we were interested, we went down and took the student trainee exam. It was not the federal service entrance examination, but it was like the FSEE, only it was for student trainees. We had an interview. People from the regional office came and we set up interviews, and we, Bill Brown and I can't remember who they were, but they were kinda legendary folks, I'll try and remember. So, we interviewed and then the department had to make recommendations. And so, the Park Service went through that, and they called the school up and they say, well here is the four people we'd like to have in this program. And this Professor Gordon Hammon, who had retired from the Forest Service, he encouraged me, knew I was working my way through school and he said, well, if you do one of the regular internship deals, you're not gonna make any money this summer, it's gonna all be out go, but if you can get one of these Park Service jobs, they will pay, cause they don't have a system that you're gonna work for free for 'em. So okay, and even though this is recorded for posterity, I'll still admit that I looked at him and said, "Park Service, aren't those the people that won't let you cut down trees?" Cause I had worked one season for the Forest Service in Gunnison and boy, this is great. I'd go to work for the Forest Service, I loved the work we did, I would've done it the rest of my life if I thought that I could've lived on the pay they were gonna give me, and so my, I was in forestry school, and so my whole thing was they don't, those guys don't let you cut down trees, right? And he was a pretty wise guy, I mean pretty wise man, smart man, and he said, "Well, you know, you might want to give 'em a try first, and they really have a lot going' for 'em."

John Townsend: I learned later that he was one of the four people that had written along with somebody from the Park Service and somebody else, the handbook and the manual that's far as I know we still use today in how we count recreational statistics. so, he was a smart guy, and he knew the Park Service. He wasn't a timber beast, and so he said, "And by the way, you need really to apply only for this job at Shenandoah." I mean, he also realized I would probably not be happy in Philadelphia or Washington, DC. And so that, very serendipitously, because I needed an internship, because the Park Service started that program, and because Gordon Hammon was there, I applied, got selected, didn't have a car, got the man that became my father-in-law, I was dating his daughter, he drove me up to the park. It was a great experience. I reported for duty, folks at Shenandoah were very wise and they realized and they said, "Well, if you will drive, there's two ways to get where you're goin',

we're gonna give you a government vehicle to do there, if you will drive in this way, then you can stop at this grocery store because it will not be out of your route of travel." Otherwise, I would've been breaking the law. And so, okay I'll do that.

John Townsend: And I went to work there, I went to Dickey Ridge Visitor Center, little bit more to the story, I mean, obviously I had some employee orientation and so on. I roomed with a guy and worked at Dickey Ridge and ran the visitor center. We did get good new employee orientation and coaching and help to learn how to do that. And then halfway through the summer I traded jobs with a guy named John Krambrink[5], who was in the same program, but from Michigan State, and he was at Mathews Arm Campground in the north district, but he went to Dickey Ridge, I went to Mathews Arm. I led interpretive hikes, gave campfire programs, I suppose like every other interpreter of that era, the legend and the myth of the Yellowstone Campfire story was all part of your interpretive program, and you led singing. I remember one day in the park mail I got a box of song slides which told me that somebody had audited my program and I had not led singing, so this was just a hint that I was supposed to lead singing. So, I, you know they say that a high percentage of people are afraid of public speaking and so that a funeral more people would really wish they were dead than giving the eulogy, but and I don't particularly like public speaking any more than the other guy, but anytime I get nervous I say well at least I don't have to lead singing and so. So, we had to do that. So that was the first summer and then—

Lu Ann Jones: Can I ask you something?

John Townsend: Sure, I'm rambling on—

Lu Ann Jones: No no. So, when you were leading interpretive talks, were they natural history, like naturalist, or what kinds of topics would you be talking about?

John Townsend: I actually was not very good at doing that, and I'll come back to that. But we had a, I think, I think Shenandoah had an absolutely outstanding interpretive program.

[END OF TRACK 1]

[START OF TRACK 2]

John Townsend: They had really good people. D. Bruce McHenry was assistant chief interpreter, E. Ray Schaffner was the chief interpreter.[6] Had great esprit de corps and morale within the interpretive ranks. I

[5] See Note #4 in NF by JT for more information about John A. Krambrink.
[6] See Notes #5 and 6 in NF by JT for more information on Douglas Bruce McHenry and E. Raymond Schaffner.

think the whole park did, but the interpretive ranks, they published every year. They published like an annual, you know, of the summer seasonals. I mean, this was the kind of stuff they did. They took pictures and all that kind of stuff. And so, you had time on the job, you had on-the-job time to develop your interpretive programs. And they had an incredible slide library, and they had a great program to where, through the cooperating association, they'd give you the film, you'd take the pictures, they'd process it and if you wanted copies of it, so you could go out on your own time and so you know you had the 101 best hikes or however many best hikes it was, *101 Best Wildflowers* by Massey[7] or you'd have the hike books, and you'd have experienced interpreters were there, so you would develop a hike that met at the information board in the campground and then you'd maybe go over and hike on the Appalachian Trail or something and you'd talk about the flora and the fauna and that sort of thing. Even though and I won't consider I was very good at it, but it was, you could develop your program, and it would get audited. Somebody would go along sometime and just see how well you did. Because of my major, I was actually more comfortable talking about how you put power lines in or how you build roads, something like that [chuckles] than I was about you know or talkin' about the erosion on the Appalachian Trail rather than talkin' about the cohosh bugbane [*Cimicifuga racemosa*[8]] or how you could make tea out of white pine needles or something like that. I wasn't skilled at that.

John Townsend: But and in campfire programs same kind of thing, you'd have a theme that you'd talk about, maybe how Shenandoah came into being and about the chestnut blight, the great chestnut blight, and how it came in during the depressions and the Conservation CCC's work in the park to develop the park, those kinds of things. So that was what we did as interpreters.

Lu Ann Jones: So how, like, I've been the past couple of years near the Big Meadows and Rapidan and that area, so where were you in relation to that?

John Townsend: The first summer I was there I was on the north end of the park closer to Front Royal but that's not – is that right? [Both speaking, unclear.]

[7] From Note #6a in NF by JT: More correctly this should be *101 Wildflowers of Shenandoah National Park* by Grant and Wenonah Sharpe, University of Washington Press, 1958.
[8] See Note #6b in NF by JT or p. 5 in *101 Wildflowers of Shenandoah.*

John Townsend: Front Royal's on the north end of the park, then Front Royal. Okay. I get confused, cause I think where's park headquarters at. They're in Luray, park headquarters' in Luray—

Lu Ann Jones: Yeah.

John Townsend: I was at Front Royal. If you get on the Skyline Drive at Front Royal, just as you get kinda up on the drive, the first place you come to is Dickey Ridge Visitor Center, and if you go about half the length of that north district, what's the crossroads there, Swift Run Gap's down farther, whatever that first crossroads is there that takes you in to Luray, about halfway down is Mathews Arm Campground. And you go past the crossroads where the entrance station is and you go in Central District, you go about half, about a third of the way down, there's a lodge and about half of the way down is Big Meadows Lodge and Big Meadows Campground, the Big Meadows – the [Harry] Byrd Visitor Center. Yeah, so I was on the north end of the park for the first summer I was there.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, where did the seasonals stay? I mean, what was lifelike among the seasonals in a park like that?

John Townsend: It depended somewhat on the district you were in. In the north district, there were two of us that were at Dickey Ridge, and so we, you know, you could have two people working the Visitor's Center, you could open early, close late, have two people in the middle of the day and you could do that x number of days of the week and then there were just one of you for a couple days. So, you had kind of double coverage on the weekends, and that worked out really nice. And then farther back toward towards Front Royal, there was some housing there for the protection rangers, so there wasn't a lot of socialization or anything, you kind of went to work and it wasn't necessarily monastic by any stretch of the word, but it's a beautiful place, so, you know, you took busman's holidays. You went hiking and just kind of stuff. If you were at Big Meadows where there was a concentration of housing. At Dickey Ridge I stayed in a cabin called the Cherry Cottage, which had been made from wormy chestnut wood and built, I suppose, by the CCC. I don't know the history of it. It might have been a cottage at one of the lodges. I don't really know that. So pretty decent quarters. Krambrink on the other hand and what I moved into at Matthews Arm had that terrible old, horrible, horrible old house trailer. The floor fell through on the bathroom in that actually. It was, you know, and we did all kinds of bad things, like we heated by turning on the oven and leaving the oven door open. So, the quarters there were a little less good. And Big Meadows had relatively new quarters, probably been built, part of Mission 66. So, they had nice apartments. They had two sets of four apartments.

John Townsend: So that was pretty nice. And if you had all those four apartments with two people in an apartment, so what's that? Eight, sixteen, and then you had the ranger that was stationed there, so you had 20 or 30 people – little different environment. Yeah. But it wasn't – in the Forest Service we lived in a tent for half the summer, so [chuckles] wasn't bad at all!

Lu Ann Jones: So, you went back there after you graduated, is that right? I'm kind of following your narrative here and trying to ask some questions from this, which is very helpful. So, you went back there a second summer?

John Townsend: Ah, well, the way the Intake Program worked was is that you got into the Intake Program the summer between your junior and senior year, and at one time I would not talk, I mean, I would just avoid this because it was sort of embarrassing, but those of us that were in the Intake Ranger program started as permanents. We weren't truly seasonals in a strict sense of the word. Our appointments were permanent subject-to-furlough appointments, and so at the end of the first summer, we were furloughed, and we went back to school and we finished our degrees and then we came back after we graduated at the end of our senior year and worked in the same park again, and then we went to Albright Training Center. So, the summer of, I guess it would be 1969, I worked at Shenandoah as Park Naturalist-Interpreter, went back to college at NC State, got my degree, left NC State, came back to Shenandoah and went to work. This time I went to work in Visitor Protection and Resource Management. And I worked in the Central District, so I changed divisions but stayed in the same park. And so that, and everybody else in that program did the same thing. They might've stayed in Interpretation or if they were in Protection, they stayed – I don't know how anybody, but there was the same – the exception to that were people who had graduated in mid-year, so they really were in the program at the end of one academic year and they only had one semester left, and so there were a group of people who were in the Intake Program, one of my classmates that got in, Joe Smith, was in that, and he graduated in December and so he didn't go back to a park, he just went to Albright Training Center. So that's how that worked.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, okay, so at that period, take apart for me what it meant as to Protection and Resource Management. What did those words entail?

John Townsend: In Shenandoah anyway, at that time, well Resource Management, that was the purview of the rangers – was Resource Management and Protection, I guess. But Resource Management really was limited to one guy that was a permanent and some seasonals, and they were involved in blister rust control on pine trees. I don't

really remember any really focused Resources Management things like data collection or trying to understand ecosystems any more than we already did. So, my job, I mean, and what we did, the rangers did – was road patrol, you know, maybe look for speeders or maybe help people who had a flat tire or a dead battery, just have a presence. And we collected, ran the entrance stations, they had an entrance fee, so we collected fees at the entrance stations and in the campgrounds and in the Central District, we didn't have any forest fires while I was there, we didn't have any wildfires when I was there, but we had a fire cache, so I guess if we had, we'd have rolled out with the gear.

John Townsend: And in the Central District, we also had Camp Hoover, and that summer I was the Camp Hoover ranger. Camp Hoover was President Hoover's retreat on the Rapidan River and it had been turned over to the Boy Scouts and then to the Park Service after President Hoover, and when I was there it was the White House had come up with some money, the way I understood the story, and they had refurbished the president's cabin and the prime minister's cabin and we were managing a kind of a little getaway place for Congressmen and Senators and White House staffers and, you know, I mean, this was my second summer in the Park Service so this was all kind of foreign to me. But apparently there was somebody in the Washington Office someplace in some cubicle, I guess, that took reservations, and apparently there was some kind of a pecking order, but I'd get informed that so-and-so was gonna be there to stay at Camp Hoover for the weekend, and so my job was to go down and be at the entrance station to greet them when they came in, and I'd drive down in front of them and unlock the gate and I'd drive down to Camp Hoover with them, and I'd show 'em, you know, here's the firewood, it's all set in the fireplace and here's the matches and here's how you light the fire and here's these really nice-lookin' pieces of furniture that are really mouse-proof boxes, and that's where all the linen and everything is at, and they had a, you know, a regular ordinary kitchen with propane stove and everything, and they would stay the weekend there.

John Townsend: So there, R. Hoskins was the superintendent.[9] His directions were fairly straightforward. If there were only men staying there, I only had to go down twice a day, but if there were any women, any ladies there, even though they were obviously accompanied by their husbands or whatever, I had to go down three times a day. It was. Hoskins was a true old southern gentlemen, and so that. And I would go down, so I'd get 'em in there, it was usually on a Friday, and I'd go down sometimes on Saturday, couple times maybe three times on Saturday, and everything's fine and so forth. There was no

[9] See Note #8 on NF by JT for more information on R. Taylor Hoskins.

communication at Camp Hoover, so if someone called for Senator So-and-So, I'd go down and I'd get him, and I'd drive him back up to Big Meadows where he could get on a phone. But, you know, it was kinda grand. The senator from Wyoming[10] brought his whole staff there, probably at the time I was there the guests, of the ones that I remember the most, was Leonard Garment and William Safire. They both came with their wives. Leonard Garment was Richard Nixon's personal counselor and William Safire was his speechwriter. Later wrote for the New York Times, recently passed away. And there was a rather large Norway rat that inhabited Camp Hoover, and we had set out enough Warfarin, Coumadin if you're a heart patient, and the rat was weak, but he came out when I was there, and between Leonard Garment and William Safire and myself, we kinda hazed this rat into a fishing net and got him into a toolbox in the truck, and I hauled the Camp Hoover rat off from Camp Hoover. I never took the time to write to either of those guys to ask, 'em if they remembered that and see if they'd put it down on paper for me, which—I don't know that I regret that, but it's one of those 'Gee, I wish I'd taken the time to do that. It would be really kinda neat'. So that was what Camp Hoover was. And that was what the range in Visitor Protection and Resource Management Visitor Protection Rangers did in those days.

Lu Ann Jones: Did you carry a firearm?

John Townsend: That was another interesting thing. The rules there were that you carried a firearm after dark. And as a permanent, but not really a permanent, that was one of my first big disputes with management. Actually, a guy named Bill Schenk. Was when I was assigned a night shift one time and I showed up wearing a firearm, says 'You can't do that,' and I says, 'You know, if it's dangerous enough for you, Bill, it's dangerous enough for me'. And he had to make a decision as to whether to – I guess his decision was to either allow me to be armed or to do night shift himself. [Laughs.] So, I did, but it was really kind of a, you know, I don't want to say 'draw the line in the sand' kind of thing, it wasn't intended that way. Just seemed that if it was dangerous enough that park management and the chief ranger thought that somebody needed to be armed after dark, then obviously it was dangerous enough that I needed to be armed after dark.

Lu Ann Jones: Now did you have any training in firearms?

John Townsend: No, the Park Service didn't provide me any training in firearms whatsoever. I had occasion one time to be with my District Ranger and have him tell me to look in the glove compartment and find a

[10] See Note #9 on NF by JT for more information on Wyoming Senator Clifford Peter Hansen (1912 – 2009).

revolver that was in there and look and see if there was any ammunition, see what ammunition was in there, and there were, my memory is this revolver had a sling swivel on the butt of it so that they could carry it. You know, it was leftover military surplus stuff, probably from the first world war, I mean, it was very, very, very antiquated, then the rangers there had gone through some firearms training and they had gone down to the Park Police Range in Fort Taunton, which is where it was in Washington, DC, and had qualified, but there wasn't any, to the best of my knowledge, there wasn't any organized type of law enforcement type training going on. Maybe at the Natchez Trace Parkway there was, maybe at some specific parks they'd done something locally, and I think the Natchez Trace probably was the leaders, but other than that there wasn't anything, so yeah. It was, I got a call one Sunday morning from the District Ranger, and his specific question was, "Have you shaved yet?" And I said, "No." Which was kind of an odd question. And he said, "Good. Get in your truck" – and he meant my personal truck, which by graduating I'd gotten a vehicle and so I was a resident at Colorado, so it had Colorado plates on it – "and meet me." And I, okay, so I drove there and there was such a road and this pullout, and I saw this car that belongs to this guy and he's a notorious ginseng poacher. So, I want you to go down there and see if you can talk to him and see if you can get him to admit that he's been poaching ginseng. And so, you know, I'm right out of college, and we made this up on the fly, and I went down and parked my truck, and I had the Sunday newspaper with me, and I saw the guy come outta the woods and he's back into the woods and then he realized it was a dark-green truck and it wasn't a Park Service truck and he came out, and I walked up and started talkin' to him, and etcetera. And didn't have any clue what I was doing. And then about the time, after he'd admitted that he was digging ginseng and he was showing me all his stuff, I made up an excuse to go back to my truck, ah "run out of chewing tobacco or something like that," and I had a radio under the seat, so I got in like I was gettin' that and radioed in, and the rangers swooped in. But we had no training in that. It was all fly by the seat of your pants. It was a different era. Totally different era. [Laughs.] Totally different era. It wasn't a bad era. It was just a totally different era. Yeah. But we had a lot of fun. Not that way, was fun. But the socialization was good and there was a lot of camaraderie, and I think everybody knew what they were about and what they were doing and why they were doing what they were doing.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, by this time, what did you think of the Park Service by this point?

John Townsend: Well, I had realized that they were more than the folks that wouldn't let you cut down trees. I mean, part of the really great

thing with that Intake Training program was, you know, at the end of that first year, that first summer, there had to be two things had to happen. The Park Service had to say We would like you to come back. And number two, you had to say I'd like to come back. So, you had the chance to really kind of try on the Park Service, and they had the chance to kinda try on you, and I realized that they were really a fine outfit. They really stood for something important, and you know you can't go to work in a park like Shenandoah and have decent new employee training without – I don't specifically remember anything specifically about the history of the Park Service or, you know, having to memorize the mission statement or anything like that, but I'm sure that there was something about that and something about the importance of the resource and what the Park Service was about and so. I mean, I could be a little crass and say I didn't have to look for a job, but I could've looked for a job, I could've been like my classmates and said, you know, but the Park Service was a fine outfit and I was uncomfortable wearing the flat hat, I mean, you don't just take to that until you get used to it, you know, and but I took to that okay, and I enjoyed, I liked what they did. I thought they were a noble organization with a noble mission, and I could easily see being a part of it.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, what was that Intake Training like?

John Townsend: Well, after those two summers of experience we all went to Albright Training Center for a course called Introduction to Park Operations, which was more than just the Intake Rangers. There were about twenty of us. There were probably about thirty or so people in a class, and a class before us that had less intakes and more folks. They were trying to get people from throughout the Park Service, all the – horticulturalist from National Region was in my class, administrative officer from Hawai'i Volcanoes, and the other intake rangers. And so, it was, Intro to Park Operations was however many weeks long, I can't remember. And you'd have one week of specialty training in Interpretation. You'd have one week of training in Protection, and that's where we finally had some firearms training and got to shoot and qualify, and the FBI had sent people in, we had courses in constitutional – it didn't matter whether you were in administration or maintenance, you went to this class. And it didn't matter if you were a protection ranger. You got out and you led interpretive hikes at Grand Canyon as part of your interpretive week. And we'd have a week on this and that and the other, and so forth and so on, and you'd have various guest speakers come in. Some of 'em were legendary, some of 'em thought they were legendary, some of 'em became legendary. One thing we did do was we took a week off, not a week off, but a week away from. We took several field trips. But one was a week-

long trip to San Francisco and [Oakland]. The other half of the trainees took a week-long trip to Los Angeles. I went to San Francisco, and there we hooked up with – there was a regional office in San Francisco – and also with the Parks Department. And so, the idea was to understand urban environment and the urban culture and what people from the city brought to the parks. To grasp the idea that when you leave San Francisco to go to Yosemite, you don't somehow magically change or morph into a different person. You take the values, and you take the culture, and you take the understanding that you have of how life is, your worldview I guess that's the best word, your San Francisco worldview comes with you to Yosemite, and if the worldview in Yosemite's different, then there might be a clash there. And of course, that was the fall of 1970 and Stoneman Meadow incident had happened earlier that year, so.

Lu Ann Jones: Is that something that people were already talking about?

John Townsend: No, I don't remember talking about Stoneman Meadow until later in my career. But so, Intro to Park Operations, and this is my personal opinion, was a sad thing when the Park Service no longer did Intro to Park Operations, because when you do Ranger Skills, you send rangers to Ranger Skills, and you do Interpretive Skills, you send interpreters to Interpretive Skills. Intro to Park Operations was where you had all of these people, this very cross-disciplinary folks all gettin' exposed to stuff. So, everybody had to shoot, everybody had to go to constitutional law, everybody had to give an interpretive program, everybody had to understand all this stuff. And it was very – it very much made you a part of the greater organization rather than just a protection ranger or just a maintenance man kind of thing. And I thought it was sad when the Park Service got away from that. Some people have said that not everybody got to go to Intro, and that's true. Not everybody did get to go to Intro, and I kind of liken that to not everybody gets to go to the service academy, but that, and the officer corps is greater than the people that went to the service academy, much greater far greater than people that went to the service academy, but the people that went to the service academy are those that are expected to carry on the ethos of the organization. And so, I looked at – this is much later I developed that philosophy, but I've come to look at Intro as that way. If you got a chance to go to Intro to Park Operations, you were part of that group that was expected to carry on the ethos of the organization. Not everybody got to go to Intro, that's true. There's, but that was a different time. We didn't deliver training electronically, and we didn't do other stuff, but that was what Intro was. Everybody had to learn how to put a diamond hitch on, pack a mule, we just had to learn how to do that. We all had to learn how to rappel off the side of the Grand Canyon. That

was just what we did. And then from there the Intake Rangers went on to Washington DC, went on. Did that adequately answer your question?

Lu Ann Jones: It did. Well, you mentioned Denis Galvin was one of the instructors and at that time where was he in the Park Operations?

John Townsend: Ah, Denny – he's an engineer, South Boston boy and he's an engineer – and I don't know, what his background was before he was at Albright and before I met Denny? I honestly don't know where he'd been, but you know a little exposure to Denis Galvin and he's unforgettable. And so, Denis Galvin, Bill Burgen, Charlie Wyatt, and Don somebody-or-other were our instructors, and Dennis yeah, went on to be the Deputy Director. I mean, I think that the funniest story about that is my good friend Mark Forbes in Seattle, who had a job in Seattle similar to the one I had in Omaha – we'd be in Washington, DC for some kind of a meeting and Dennis Galvin's the Deputy Director of the Park Service and Mark would say, "Let's go see Denny," and we'd just roll down the hall up there and go in and the secretary would say something and Mark would say, 'Oh, we're here to see Denny." And she'd kinda look at us, these two raggle-taggle guys, and you know Forbes would stick his head in and say, "Hey, Denny!" and Galvin'd say, "Hey Mark, John, come in!" And so, it was this, the guy was your instructor at Albright, and you know he was one of the two instructors that went to San Francisco with us. So, I went to dinner—a brand-new Intake Ranger-and I went to dinner every night when we were in San Francisco with this instructor, Dennis Galvin, who later was a Deputy Director of the National Park Service. Doesn't make me more special than anybody else in the Park Service but later on, it's just like, I mean, I'm in awe of the guy because he's just so damn smart, but you know I wasn't in awe of him because he was the Deputy Director. You know, I just walk down – he's a regular guy, you know. So that was another interesting thing about going to Intro. You had that interplay with the instructors and your classmates, and you developed those networks of people that you could call, you know, it does. It did.

Lu Ann Jones: Well at that point you went to the National Capitol Region. Did people get different assignments from there? I mean, how were those assignments—

John Townsend: We ultimately, the intakes all went to National Capitol Region. Technically speaking we were all part of the Branch of Training WASO, but our duty stations were at National Capitol Region. And the reason they did that was because it allowed them, the Park Service, to actually put us on some per diem and to ease the burden of suddenly going there and so forth. And there were two kind of housing arrangements. The Park Service, and for all I know they

still own 'em, yeah cause they – anyway, I'll remember – they owned two houses and all the single folks lived in these two houses, one for the women, one for the guys. But if you were married you had to get an apartment, and I was engaged and I was gonna get married, so I just moved straight into an apartment. And, of course, if you lived in an apartment, you got a little higher per diem than if you lived in the houses etcetera, etcetera. And I was assigned to the Division of Urban and Environmental Affairs in the National Capitol Regional Office, and other people were assigned to other places – maybe Wolf Trap Farm for the Performing Arts, which was relatively new at the time – or maybe they were assigned to Monuments and Memorials, or they were assigned to National Capitol Region East, I think, you know. Who might – Gentry Davis, who was a superintendent at one time might have been assigned to NCR East. And so, I reported, and I worked for a guy named David Karraker, who was a wonderful man.[11] Great guy, tremendous interpreter, manager.

Lu Ann Jones: What was – I mean, that sounds kind of intimidating – Division of Urban and Environmental.

John Townsend: Oh yeah. It's a horribly impressive field. You know, we were dealing in – yeah.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, what—

John Townsend: Well, they, again [chuckles], again what the Park Service had done – the Park Service is pretty dang smart sometimes. What they'd done is they'd figured out, it's very interesting to me if you're talking about makin' parks relevant to people. The other day we were here, the gentleman from Gateway talked about, you know, we get people out and they camp and so forth, well, here we are this was the summer of 1970, I guess, '70, '71, '70, and the Park Service had a program which was Summer in the Parks, and we're in the nation's capital and all that parklands, Park Service land, and so they were functioning much more like a city recreation department, is what they were doing, and they were trying to make those lands and that stuff—

[END OF TRACK 2]

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John Townsend: —relevant to the people there. There may've been a crime prevention aspect of it. Tension was high in the country. It's also the civil rights era, so there may have been some sub-context that I'm unaware of. In fact, there probably were, but I'm, so the Division of Urban and Environmental Affairs actually was

[11] See Note #12 on NF by JT for more information on Dave Karraker (1928 – 1992).

responsible at the regional office level for all of the Summer in the Parks activities and we also, there was a big program to write NESAs, National Environment Study Areas and the documents that went with those. I actually wrote the document for the environmental study area for the Frederick Douglass home as part of my assignment. I go to Frederick Douglass home, understand what it was and write an environmental – so you could take kids there and they could go to Frederick Douglass Home and not only learn about Frederick Douglass but about environmental issues and that kind of stuff. And how can we use this piece of real estate that we have, and it was a cultural resource in that case, to teach these inner-city, urban people, primarily children, about nature and the environment? So that was what DOU did. It was a pretty good place to work actually. I mean, I got exposed to some pretty cool people.

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhm. Well, what did you think about living in Washington, I mean, you'd been in a place like Shenandoah, very rural, and you come to the nation's capital, an urban—

John Townsend: Well, it was a, it wasn't all that horribly bad, to tell you the truth, and I did grow up in Denver, so I wasn't actually—

Lu Ann Jones: That's right.

John Townsend: That was actually kind of an interesting thing about that group of trainees, is that a guy named Howard Dimont[12], when we were at Albright, had said, "Why do we have to go to Washington, DC?" And the answer was you really need to learn about and understand and get in touch with people who live in the cities 'cause they come to parks. And Howard had said, "I grew up in Jersey City." And Mark Forbes[13] says, "I grew up in Seattle." And so, every one of us had grown up in large cities to start with, so it wasn't like we didn't know large cities, but that was part of the reason you were there. And again, there was kinda this interesting camaraderie. The single folks were all up there in the Nebraska Avenue houses. They were on Nebraska Avenue, and so they had their own, you know, they had communal meals and they had, you know, just it was a pretty good deal. Like living in a big fraternity house, I guess. And those of us that were married, we had our apartments. Well, this guy I had gone to college with, Joe Smith, who was a little bit before me in his program, he and his wife had an apartment, they found me an apartment, so I had an apartment just in the same complex as the Smiths did, and after I got married, we could, we'd hook up with other married couples, most of whom were more or less young newly married, more or less, and you know you'd get

[12] See Note #13 in NF by JT for more information on Howard ("Howie") Dimont.
[13] See Note #14 in NF by JT for more information on Mark Forbes.

paid every two weeks and so you'd go out for ice cream, you know, or something like that. Long before the days of video and so forth, and so maybe one payday you'd go for ice cream and the next payday you could afford to go to a movie. But there were a million free things to do. I mean, I went to concerts down by the Watergate for free, and there's a gazillion museums. Washington's a wonderful city, just you know.

Lu Ann Jones: Where did you live?

John Townsend: I was asked that question the other day and I spouted the same Apartment 101, 3022 Patrick Henry Drive, Falls Church, Virginia. That's right where Highway, the Leesburg Park, right there by Seven-Corner Shopping Center, I knew the exact apartment number. Yeah. They were buildings that were built for quarters during the Second World War, brick buildings, so we had a, I guess we had a two-bedroom apartment, small second bedroom, yeah.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, is this Flo?

John Townsend: No this was my first wife, Sandy Horton Townsend, who I'd met at NC State.

Lu Ann Jones: Was she from Raleigh?

John Townsend: She was from Wendell, town east of Raleigh. She majored in Natural Resource Management and Conservation of Natural Resources, so we met in college and married. We were married 23 years. Twenty-three years. So, she's a good person. I still stay in touch with her occasionally. I mean, we have children in common, so that's important. She lives back in her hometown.

Lu Ann Jones: In Wendell?

John Townsend: Wendell, yeah. She lives in Wendell. We, but yeah, so we were there, newlyweds and she actually worked as a seasonal interpreter at Custis Lee Mansion, at the Arlington House. And I know one of the people here was talking about capturing talking to seasonals about what it was like to work there, and I said, "I oughtta have her give you a call." I remember coming home and they wore period costumes, and I remember talking about how heavy and burdensome hoop skirts were, how hard they were to wear, yeah. You know, and that's where we were, what we did. It wasn't bad. I didn't mind it at all. As I put in the notes, this same guy, Joe Smith, he had really wanted to be in law enforcement in the Park Service, and so he actually went to Lucia Guminski[14] who was kind of our den mother in our branch of training, and said, "You know, we're

[14] See Note #16 in NF by JT for more information on Lucia E. Guminski (Bragan after marriage).

all here in Washington. Wouldn't it make sense to have us go to the Park Police Academy while we're here rather than send us out to the field and then bring us back?" And the Park Service said, you know, that's kind of a blinding flash of the obvious, and the Park Service then – and the Park Police, as you know, is part of the Park Service – but the branch training somehow, Lucia could tell you how that happened, worked with the Park Police to create a second Park Police platoon, and we were offered a chance to go and most of us took it. A few guys didn't. A few said no, I don't want to do that. But most of us were in USPP, United States Park Police Platoon 71C, and that ran concurrently with 71B. And the other members of 71B who were rangers were rangers who had come in from the field, like Bill Schenk, who I had worked with in Shenandoah and later worked with in the regional office. And they were detailed back there to go to law enforcement training. The rest of us were already there. So, we just went to law enforcement training. And then at the end, when we graduated from the Park Police Academy, which at that time was being merged into the consolidated Federal Law Enforcement, but might've, so I had like two diplomas, one from the Park Police, one from the Service. When we graduated from that we were assigned out to parks and there were three of us – Howard Dimont, Edward Scott Kalbach, and myself – were assigned to Lake Mead. So, we graduated from the Park Police Academy in late June of '71 and reported to Lake Mead in July of '71.

Lu Ann Jones: Did you have any say whatsoever in where you were going to be assigned?

John Townsend: No, we didn't have any. We just got called in and set down with Lucia and she said, "Okay, you guys are going to Lake Mead." You know, it's like Why me? Why that, you know? [Chuckles.] But we'd gone through Lake Mead when we were at Albright, and it was a high-profile – what we used to call high-profile – law enforcement area. They did a very active law enforcement park, and most of us were like we really didn't join the Park Service to do law enforcement. That wasn't what our primary intention in joining the Park Service was. We didn't mind enforcing the rules, but that wasn't our goal to do law enforcement. So, it was kinda like, you know, I didn't really want to work at that place. It was a great experience, though. I wouldn't trade the fact that I was a Lake Mead ranger for anything.

Lu Ann Jones: What made that such a high law-enforcement job?

John Townsend: Oh, because it was right outside of Las Vegas, Nevada, and because people go there to let their hair down, so they misbehave, number one, and often in the course of misbehaving they kill themselves, and they can cause a lot of destruction to the resource.

If you do anything about the high-water mark – of course the water's so low that anything you did below the high-water mark's still could show. And it's just a Las Vegas, it's just kind of a wild town. So at least it was at one time. And so, the park had at some time had perceived that they needed to have what we used to say was a high-profile law enforcement presence. They needed to be armed all the time, they needed their cars to be well marked, and they needed to have all their emergency equipment, and they needed to be well trained, they needed to know how to go to court give testimony and how to prepare cases, they needed to work cooperatively with the local agencies, and so it was a far more urban-type law enforcement being done there. A lot of traffic and boating law enforcement, then many other places. That's probably what happened at Lake Mead.

Lu Ann Jones: Did you get into emergency medicine or search and rescue? Did that kind of join in with your law enforcement at a place like that?

John Townsend: At Lake Mead, the answer's yes. We didn't do that much emergency medicine. The whole emergency medicine scheme and program in the country was kind of emerging at that time. I actually worked with a guy by the name of Jon Chew at Lake Mead, who later went back to Shenandoah and later went to the Department of Transportation and actually ran the Department of Transportation Emergency Medical Technician program for DOT, and he was a real leader in that in the Park Service and in DOT.[15] Has a company called the EMSStar right now and does that all over the world. He actually was a ranger at Lake Mead when I was there. But that was an emerging field at the time. But certainly, we did search and rescue, a lot of water-based search and rescue. That was just part of our job. Whereas, you know, the rangers in Yosemite or Yellowstone or Teton or somewhere, they were doing SARs on the mountain or in the backcountry. We were doing SARs on the water. Which was a fairly frequent occurrence. Somebody, the lake would come up and somebody would be in trouble, or somebody was overdue, and we'd have to go find 'em. So yeah, there was a lot of that. So not so much emergency medicine. That's changed. I mean, Lake Mead changed completely in that regard, but not when I was there.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, then you go on – you're in different districts when you're there – what difference did it make to be in various districts?

John Townsend: Well, actually I was in two. I was at Callville Bay and at Las Vegas Wash, which were really two sub-districts in the same big district, but the three districts when I was there – you had the Boulder District, which was from Boulder Dam, Hoover Dam up

[15] See Note #18 in NF by JT for more information on John L. Chew, Jr.

to the canyon, and then what was north of there I don't remember, and then Lake Mohave was the Mohave District. I don't imagine there was a great deal of difference, except the Boulder District generally speaking was probably a little busier 'cause it was closer to Las Vegas. And the district to the north, around the Virgin Basin so I don't remember which and the Virgin River comes in, but I don't remember the name of the district, they probably had a little more, a little less boating activity. Maybe a little more water actually, and some more remote areas. The district to the south, when you'd have holiday weekends, they'd start. People coming from southern California would start filling the campgrounds at Katherine's Landing first, then work their way north, but other than that, I think they were probably a little less overall busy except maybe for an area called Willow Beach, which is the north end of the district. Now rangers that worked in the districts may dispute that, but when I was between Callville Bay and Las Vegas Wash, we looked at the statistics one time and 41 percent of all the reported incidents that occurred in the entire recreation [area] occurred in that sub-district, the North Shore sub-district.[16] So I'd say we were pretty busy. [Laughs.] Cause we kept, you know, we did reports on that stuff, but 41 percent of all reported incidents in the whole recreation area – that's all three districts – were on the, between Callville Bay and Las Vegas Wash. But the differences were just Callville was newer, and Las Vegas Wash was older, clientele was different, Callville Bay being newer had a little maybe higher-end clientele. Las Vegas Wash being older Las Vegas Wash being older, I don't want to say they were lower-end clientele, but they weren't maybe as monied, so that's the only difference. Same work.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, when you, again, now you get this temporary assignment to go for the police class number 48, and here you say, 'I was selected' and who selected – I mean, I'm fascinated by people being selected and kind of—

John Townsend: Well, what had happened was is that when the Congress decided to consolidate all of the law enforcement training for the federal government, they exempted the FBI and I think at the beginning they exempted the Border Patrol. But everybody else ran their own academy, and somebody figured out that really wasn't all that efficient, so they passed, they created a consolidated Federal Law Enforcement Training Academy, and as I understand the story, and of course this was a zillion years ago, I was very new in my career, so I'm just speculating more than anything else here, but as I understand the story, Congress started looking around for Where are we going to build this? And they thought, you know, we'll

[16] See Note #20 in NF by JT for more information on this.

build it here in the Washington, DC area. Well, that's an expensive proposition, and as I said, actually I was in the Park Police Academy, but we actually attended classes at 1310 L Street, and there were other federal agencies going to class at 1310 L Street. We shot at the Park Police firearms range, we drove at Beltsville, Maryland, on old runways up there, the same place the Secret Service still has training. At Beltsville, but we weren't in their facilities. So, by 19 – what was that – '75, I guess, they'd started closing some military bases, and one of the bases they'd closed was the Glencoe Naval Air Station, which had been the world's largest lighter-than-aircraft base, and they ran dirigibles out of there. And somebody figured out, I suppose some senator or congressman from Georgia, figured out that that'd be a great place for this law enforcement academy. So, the law enforcement academy was moving then, physically moving, from Washington, DC to Brunswick, Georgia to Glencoe, the former naval air station, and the first class of park rangers that was gonna go through that facility was Police School 48. Well also the Park Service was going to have three people that they were going to assign to the staff at FLETC. They were gonna be on the FLETC staff. They were gonna be on, at that time it was the Treasury Department, now it's Department of Homeland Security, but it was going to be on, like, Park Service employees, but on that staff.

John Townsend: And I applied for the job. I competed for the job and, you know, I had telephone interview and everything, and I came in fourth. I was the fourth person, so that's how I got selected to go there. [Laughs.] They threw me a bone, and so the Branch of Training, Tom Thomas and Bill Tanner, offered me the, they said, "Would you consider going down there on this detail to be the class coordinator agency representative?" And I said, "Sure." I mean, I wanted to go to work down there anyway, so why not? So, I went to FLETC, I got there a little bit ahead of when the students were supposed to get there, and it was a brand-new place. Well, your offices will be in the former post chapel, okay. The Park Police guy was already there. Money was no object. I mean, he wrote a memo and said, "We'd like you to do this," and they came over and they just refurbished all these offices. The students showed up, some of 'em brought their families, some of 'em didn't, so the morale problems were terrible in that regard. And they were there for a long time.

Lu Ann Jones: How long were they there?

John Townsend: Ah, they were there for like seventeen weeks or something, there for a long time. And there were really no facilities at FLETC at the time. I mean, it's a nice campus now and it's got the old military clubs. It was a Navy base, so you had to have an officer's club, you

would've had a chief's club for the chief petty officers, you would've had an enlisted man's club, and then you would've had an acey-deucy, club for the chiefs, so you would've had a lot of clubs.[17] But they weren't open and running, I mean, they were closed, you know. There was one that they opened up on Friday afternoons or something like that. So, there wasn't a lot for students to do. It was not a real good situation, and the facilities weren't all built up. Classes were held in a large building that, it worked, I mean, it worked fine, but the rangers weren't necessarily built up, and driving was done on an old runway, which was okay, that's what we did on Beltsville[18] but they didn't have driver training tracks, so it was just a transition time, and it was in the fall, so the weather in Georgia can get to be kind of cold and high humidity. It can be kind of bone-chilling right there on the coast. But it was a great experience. I'd go back and do it again. It was fun to be there. We didn't have a lot of trauma.

John Townsend: We had one student who, I got called, had gotten arrested. He had a drinking problem that he didn't know about. He'd do about a two or three times a year binge drinking. So, he really had an alcohol problem, but other than that he didn't drink at all, but he'd go and so I had to deal with that and, of course, half the class wanted to hang him and the other half of the class had kind of a 'There but for the grace of god go I' kind of attitude. We got him back to his home park. I happened to know the chief ranger of his home park. We had worked together at one time, I was able to talk to him, got him back, got this guy into some counseling. He left the Park Service but actually went to work for another federal agency, and actually ended up being a commissioned law enforcement officer for another federal agency, so he had a, as far as I know, I haven't talked to him in years and years and years, but as far as I know he had a good career. He just needed to get a handle on that. It was a tough thing to deal with, cause here we were in the first class down there and we were in the Park Service, and so we were a little bit snooty anyway because we were the Park Service, and but at the same time everybody wanted to put their best foot forward. They wanted to represent their agency, and this guy had kinda betrayed representing their agency well. So, it was not one of the more pleasant experiences in my career. The good part is the guy turned out okay and he had a good career, you know, but it was a kind of a rough row to hoe for a while. Yeah, but that was the only real problem I had.

John Townsend: Well, I did have one student that had real tough time taking written examinations and we had to work really hard with him, give his

[17] See Note #21 in NF by JT for more information on these clubs.
[18] Beltsville, Maryland is the location of the US Park Police's driver training facilities.

exams in a verbal way, but that's essentially the two things I remember that were really tough and, you know, but it was kinda fun to watch all that was going on.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, is there a certain point in your career that you began to get a sense of, you began to envision where you wanted to go in the Park Service?

John Townsend: Well, that's a very interesting question. I, when I was in Shenandoah and I looked, and I think about the – you'll probably marvel at this – I looked at the grade levels and I looked at what the people did. And at the time I worked at Shenandoah, there were three district rangers. Two of them were GS-9s, and one of them was a GS-11, and he had a GS-9 sub-district ranger. And I looked at that and I said, 'You know, that GS-11 district ranger's got the best job ever, you know. That's the best job ever.' Like in the Forest Service on the ranger district. That's who like owns that district. That's like their little fiefdom if you will. I don't mean that in a bad way. I don't mean it in a bad way. It's their piece of creation that they're entrusted to take care of, you know? And I said, "Man, if I can ever get to be a GS-11 District Ranger, I will have been successful in my career. " And so, when I eclipsed that, I took out a little piece of paper that I'd written down. There's my career goal, and I said, "Wow, you know, I've actually achieved my ultimate career goal way before retirement time." And I never really set my sights at being a superintendent or regional director or anything else like that. I really, that was the only time I ever specifically said, "Boy, if I could ever be a GS-11 district ranger, wouldn't that be great?" And then to have been a chief park ranger and to have been a staff ranger in the regional office and to be able to do the things that I did, I think, are tremendously rewarding in my life. So, I don't know that I ever truly focused on that. I had subordinates that, when we'd sit down and do their performance appraisal, I'd ask 'em that question. "Where do you see yourself when you retire? What job do you see yourself in?" I remember one of 'em said to me, "Regional Director," and I remember I kind of paused and I said, "Okay, now let's figure out what you've gotta do to get there." He didn't get there, but he did get to a very senior position, so that worked out fine, but I can't say that I ever specifically thought that, you know, January 2nd, 1982, I had an epiphany or something like that. Nothing like that at all.

John Townsend: Then, when I started in the Park Service, most people transferred about every two to three years. And you would get called. It was like, more like the military: "We'd like you to come to work at such and such." And so, your career was really all about how the Branch of Employee [Evaluation or BEE] pushed knitting needles through the card in the manual system they had. If you had a

vacancy in a park, they'd write the skills they needed when you were doing your performance appraisal, you'd self-evaluate your skills and your supervisor would rate you. That all was in the BEE system. They'd punch these cards out and they'd run these knitting needles through, and they'd match up that skill and these cards would come out and people were on a detail from the Branch of Employee Evaluation, and they would make overhead transparencies of this stuff, and they'd put 'em up and this group would sit there and they'd say, "Yeah, he's a good match" or "No, he's not a good match" and they'd come up with a list and send it to the selecting official and the selecting official would look at the information and call you up and say, "Would you like to come to work here?" And it was considered not cool to turn down like two of 'em. And promotions generally, not always, but wasn't necessarily the case in my career, but promotions generally went with transfers. So, I didn't really, if I was gonna do my career over again, I would've hoped that I would've been more wise and there were a couple of places where opportunity presented itself and I was not smart enough to see that it was opportunity, so therefore I didn't seize it. But in a case of 'if I knew then what I know now', I would have seized the opportunity to develop not so much mentoring, not so much coaching, but something in between mentoring-coaching relationships with some people that I could've called and asked for their counsel and developed a relationship where if they saw that I was, you know, doing something stupid that was gonna – which actually happened to me. I had a couple guys call me in one time and said, 'You've got the makings of a great ranger, but you have a marvelous ability to piss people off. Might want to pay attention to this, this, and this.' And that was one of those opportunities. If I'd have been smart enough to realize what was happening, I'd have said, "You know, that's pretty neat that you care enough about me and my career. Can we sort of formalize that so I can call on you and, you know?" So, in that case I might've had a different career, but I'm certainly not unhappy with the one I had. I don't know if that adequately answered your question or not.

Lu Ann Jones: So, am I understanding correctly, like for example you are getting evaluated and your supervisor sees what your strengths are, and that person then hears about another, hears about, is told about particular openings that are gonna come up, would that person then tell the hiring people? Would it be that, from point A to point B?

John Townsend: No, what happened is you had an office in Washington that was called BEE, the Branch of Employee Evaluation, and so your annual performance appraisal was held during your birthday month. So, my birthday month's January, so every January is when we had a performance appraisal. Which was nice because it spread

the workload out over the year. And as part of that performance appraisal, I would write down manually, I'd say, "Well, I see my next logical career step as being supervisory park ranger in a natural area." I probably wrote that down at one time or another, cause I was in a water-based recreation area and the Park Service is bigger than just water. I should get a broader range of experience. So, I might've said that. And my supervisor would be writing down what he thought my next logical career step was and we'd talk about how this [unclear]. And there's a whole set of skills. Well, are you skilled in search and rescue? Are you skilled in interpretation? Are you skilled in building roads and so forth? And you could say I have absolutely no idea about this or I'm an expert in it, and there's kind of a range in between and you'd check where you thought you were. Well, your supervisor would say "This employee's skilled in" – and they were checking where you were. And all of that stuff then kinda got merged together and then of course it got reviewed by the chief ranger and then the superintendent, and it ended up back in the Branch of Employee Evaluation. Well, the system they used, McBee something or other. It was on a card stock and by notching the cards in a certain way, you could notch the cards based on the skills you had, and so then the cards fit in this box, and you could run these long needles through, and you'd catch the people that didn't have the notch, you see what I'm saying? So, this was like a really, really manual sort of computer sorting system, is what it would be. And so, you'd come up with this stack – I never served in BEE, but I know how the system worked – and you'd come up with this list of people that met these skills. So, if you're hiring somebody and you're saying, "Well, I need an historian, and here's the skills I need the historian to have." I'm very skilled in oral history. To complement my skills in oral history, I want somebody that's really knowledgeable in some other aspect of history. Or my focus is also in—

[END OF TRACK 3]

[START OF TRACK 4]

John Townsend: early American history and I need somebody who's in postmodern history. " Is this making sense?

Lu Ann Jones: Mmhm.

John Townsend: And so, you'd write these things down. Well, somebody over here'd say, hey, I'm really skilled in postmodern history and blah blah blah, and the card kinda shakes out. And then there might be 50 cards there, so you'd start looking at the written material, and then you'd reduce that to a list of people. You'd get that and you'd look at their paperwork and you'd make a selection, so that help clarify that a little?

Lu Ann Jones: It does. It does. I'm gonna close or adjust those blinds because the light's beginning to get annoying, I know. Well, for example, if you were having this conversation and you were saying this is where I want to go and they were asking do you have these skills, would there be opportunities then for you to take particular trainings and they would say, now we call the Individual Development Plan or something like that, so that you would say, Okay, I don't have, I have three out of the four skills I need, and in the coming year, will you help me get this kind of training?

John Townsend: Ah, the answer to your question is both yes and no. The answer yes is in theory there was. So if I said, if I was at Lake Mead and if I had said, I see my next logical career assignment to be a supervisory park ranger in a natural area, not water-based, you know, yeah, then my supervisor might say, "Okay, what skill development do you need to have, what training do you need to have to do that," and so the first thing they would've said is "You need to go to Introduction to Supervision," if for no other reason than the Office of Personnel Management required it. So, you need to go to Intro to Sup. And so, they'd say, "Well, when is an Introduction to Supervision class that we can get you into?" And then maybe you'd get to that, and they'd say, "You need to follow on an Intro to Group Performance. When can we get you to a Supervision and Group Performance." Or they might say, "Well, what kind of a natural area are you talking about? " If you're talking about going to Yosemite, then we need to – or Grand Teton – then we need to look at what skills you may have in technical climbing, which I had none. Or those may be something you'd learn when you got to a park. I mean, I learned how to run boats when I got to Lake Mead. So yes, there was that opportunity, but as people probably in my generation and earlier will tell you, the opportunity to go to training – we would've slept in tents, in sleeping bags, because it was, there were training opportunities, but it, they weren't plentiful. The Park Service wasn't niggardly in their training opportunities, they just, a lot of people wanted to go, and it wasn't like I'm not going unless I have a private room. You just, you were thankful that you got into training, and you, so yeah. There were those opportunities. That's the yes part of the question. But the no part of it is there weren't that many of them out there. There – you didn't deliver training electronically. You couldn't log on, and you had to physically go someplace, or they had to physically bring an instructor in, and you physically went into a room. And that created, obviously, questions of time away from your workstation, the cost of getting you there, etcetera, etcetera.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I'm really curious, I want to go while we're talking about training, I'm gonna skip over Indiana Dunes for a minute, because you did get into this Natural Resources Management Specialist

Training Program, and I'm really curious about how that training program worked.

John Townsend: It was a, ah, I was in the first class. It evolved from there. The first class, I mean, they were just great people. I mean, Jon Jarvis was in there, so obviously one or two people did really well! There, Steve Cinnamon was in there. There were just a marvelous group of people in that class. But it was, the best way I can describe it was to say it was a little bit of a roll-your-own program, in that all of us brought in different skills when we got there.

Lu Ann Jones: Where were you physically? Where did you physically go?

John Townsend: Oh, well it was an on-the-job type thing. So, I was at Indiana Dunes at the time, and we all met – where was our first session at? We probably all met, it was probably at Mather Training Center. We all got together at Mather Training Center. That's where graduation was, was at Mather Training Center, but I could be wrong about where the first one was at. All got together from the various places we were and got to meet each other and so forth and so on, and then there were certain classes that were standardized, and I don't really remember which ones they were. There was one at Texas A&M that everybody went to. But then the rest of them, you know, some people would come in with the background in, say, aquatic ecology. Well, I mean, I took an aquatic ecology class at the local university, because I had no background in aquatic – I mean, I had a background in ecology, but I had no background in aquatic ecology. And somebody else, so kinda pointless to say, Well, you gotta go to an aquatic ecology class if their degree was in aquatic ecology. So that's why I say it was kinda more roll-your-own kind of thing. I remember making the point that I think a good resource manager oughtta be able to articulate about the resource to people, and so I think that a good resource manager oughtta have a good background in interpretative skills. And even though I worked as an interpreter, I'd like to go to Basic Interpretive Skills classes being taught in St. Louis. And a guy in the regional office, Ben Holmes, that was the overseer for the program in Midwest Region, says, "I agree with you, think that's something that a good resource manager oughtta be able to do, and I'll approve you going to that class." So, I went to that particular class as part of that. And I can't remember the specific class at Texas A&M, but it was more of a Sociological Aspects of Resource Management, I think that was probably the title of it, and everybody went to that. We were all there together.

Lu Ann Jones: For how long?

John Townsend: That was a week, probably a week. Almost all the classes were a week, but the training program lasted over about a two, slightly

more than a two-year period. And in that two years you were exposed to these various week-long or two-week long training events, and like I said, some of it was take a class in aquatic ecology at a local university. And at the end of it we all had – and I don't – guess I could dig through and find what the criteria was or what they'd hoped to achieve but I mean, obviously what the Park Service hoped to achieve was they, at that point in time they'd recognized that they did not have a cadre of people who were, much like when I came in as an intake, Urban Intake Ranger, they didn't have a cadre of people that had this sensitivity to what the people brought with them. They didn't have a cadre of people who were specifically trained in resources management. Might have some scientists that could do research, they might have some folks that could do blister rust control, but in terms of resources management – and the fire program was becoming far more scientific. It was changing a great deal. By then it was really changing, Fire Pro had come about, so we were running the fire program on a far more management-oriented basis driven by data and needs, and prescribed fire was starting to come into its own, and so the quote 'managing the resource', I suppose there might've been a heightened awareness of air quality, sound, and any number of other things that the Park Service said we need to, the guy that was seminal in that was a guy named Ro Wauer, who wrote a paper about resource management in the Park Service, and I think that was probably the great inspiration for that training program.

Lu Ann Jones: What was his last name?

John Townsend: Ro W-A-U-E-R.[19] And I don't know if his paper has been digitized and is online.

Lu Ann Jones: I'll have to look.

John Townsend: But Ro Wauer. Yeah, run around to the Chief Scientist's office and say, "Hey, I need Ro Wauer's paper from the sixties about resource management in the Park Service!"

Lu Ann Jones: Well, do you think part of that is there are new laws and mandates that are being created that parks are going to have to pay attention to?

John Townsend: Well, there would be that, but that would be a lot more strictly speaking, I think, environmental compliance, as it would be resource management. Although the two are not mutually exclusive. I mean, as a resource management specialist, I wrote a whale of a lot of categorical exclusions for National Environment Policy Act. I mean, I wrote a lot of categorical exclusions for trail work and other stuff. So, it's not like they're, you know, unrelated

[19] Per Note #26 in NF by JT, copies of Ro (Roland) Wauer's paper are attached.

things, but I guess I see a lot of that as environmental compliance, but obviously your natural resource work has to fit into that. They have to be married to each other, joined at the hip.

Lu Ann Jones: What are, I mean, one of the reasons I'm especially interested in this is that I'm working on some training for people who do history work in the National Park Service, but may have little if any formal training in historical research, etcetera, and a lot of that will be online, and so it's a tremendous challenge to teach something like, so I'm really fascinated by this, guess what we would call today 'blended learning' that you're getting, where it's self-directed, some of its classroom, very directed, etcetera, and the combination of that. But in the instance where, for example, you took a course at a local university, was that something that you decided to do, that they, you know, that you had to have certain, for lack of a better term, kind of credits or something that you had to complete before you finished that training and this was, was this voluntary or was it voluntary within a set of options that you were gonna—

John Townsend: That's a great question, because quite frankly what I don't, wasn't really, didn't prepare myself well enough by digging through things, say what was the criteria for the Natural Resource Management Training Program. But I'm certain that there was a criteria or criterion in terms of, you know, in Mager Objective language.[20] "At the end of this two-year period of time, the people that are in the program will be able to." And so, once you articulate that 'be able to' then you can take, and this is what we did there, you can take and say, Well, John Townsend's one of these people in this program. What are his existing skills? My aquatic ecology skills were – versus what we want him to be able to do two years down the road, so as per your question, once you identify your strengths and weaknesses or if that were your skillset, what do you need to fill in the skillset? So, John needs to be able to do this two years down the road. He needs to be able to fill in the skill set in aquatic ecology. And the part of, I might've self-identified that, because we did have some, I mean, Indiana Dunes is at Lake Michigan and we had a Pinhook Bog, which is an aquatic resource, and so there's some aquatic resource involved at Indiana Dunes, and so if I've got the bog and this and that and the other, I probably need to understand, and some streams going through there, I probably need to have a better understanding of aquatic ecology than I had. So, I may have self-identified that. But then that was, since it was part of that training program, obviously the government paid that, I mean, I had to get admitted. I had to go

[20] See Note #27 in NF by JT, re: Robert Mager's "Preparing Instructional Objectives."

through the hoops to get admitted to take the class, but they paid the cost of doing it, and I was able to do it on government time.

John Townsend: Then in that, I know, I mean, I think, yeah, I think that's a doable training model and it's probably a doable training model online and some of it may be, some of it online you may be able to challenge certain things, if you can challenge it and successfully meet a certain level of knowledge, then you move on. I suppose that could happen, too, you can say at the end of this two years, we want you to understand something about the social and, the sociology of resource management or how the social aspects of it, the human dynamics portion of it and some way to measure whether you already knew that or not.

Lu Ann Jones: That's very helpful, and I think one of the challenges that we've been thinking about is how to, say, give people the option of taking courses in colleges, you know, I mean, at certain levels, history really needs to be in a classroom for a certain number of hours and in conversation with professors and peers and things like that, so it's very interesting to see this kind of program and the commitment that the Park Service was willing to make because this was an identified need.

John Townsend: Right. It was identified need and they were willing to make that commitment. I don't really know the story on the funding of it and anything. I know that Ro Wauer's book was, his paper was seminal in getting, identifying We're not doing a good job of this basically, we're not doing a good job and we need to do a good job of it. And there was a guy named Bob, I actually will promise to look that up for you, but he actually was the den mother for the, like Lucia Bragan was for the Urban Intake, Bob was for the Resource Management, and he worked for, the chief scientist at that time was probably Gene Hester[21], and Bob later went over to Bureau of Indian Affairs as a fisheries biologist, but I'll find out who he was and how he structured that program. After the two years I was in it, the program changed somewhat to where it was a little less roll-your-own and a little bit more structure. That was one of the criticisms I think we had, it was great to be able to roll your own, but you needed to have a little bit more structure to the program to ensure that everybody was getting the same, but it still, if you took a Jon Jarvis's experience versus a John Townsend's experience going into that program, they were radically different, and his skill and knowledge level was very different than my skill and knowledge level, and to say "We don't care. You all have to work in an entrance station together anyway" is kind of a not necessarily

[21] See Note #30 in NF by JT for more information on Gene Hester.

productive way of managing people, in my opinion anyway. So, I hope that's helpful.

Lu Ann Jones: So, you had gone to Indiana Dunes, though, as the chief ranger.

John Townsend: Well, I went as the district ranger, and promoted, yeah.

Lu Ann Jones: And so, what's the difference between the district ranger and the chief ranger? What is that title?

John Townsend: Well, technically the district ranger works for the chief ranger. [Laughs.] But anyway, that's kind of funny because, you know, you look at Indiana Dunes and it's not that big of a place, and you talk about districts and sub-districts and so on, you have to scratch your head, but when I was recruited actually to go there. My named popped up from BEE, and Don Castleberry – I was on vacation and he called me up and he offered me a job to develop and organize, to plan and develop and organize and recruit and staff and supervise and manage the law enforcement program at Indiana Dunes. That's a pretty close paraphrase, cause I wrote it down. I have it someplace. And so, even though some people said Oh I don't know if you really want to go to Indiana Dunes or not, I did, and—

Lu Ann Jones: Why were some people—

John Townsend: Well, they – just because it was northern Indiana, southern tip of Lake Michigan, and it was at a relatively new park, started in '66 I guess it was or '69, and it was one of those parks that some people didn't think belonged in the Park Service and then so there was you know, is this really a place you want to work or not work? And will you have funding or won't you have funding and so forth and so on. Ah, but I did, and the guy that actually was the chief ranger, guy named Rod Royce, he left and so, interestingly enough, he went to Cuyahoga Valley. And then my name was on the cert for the chief ranger and so they offered me the job and I took it of course; I'd be crazy not to. And that was a great experience. At the time, then, so when Rodney left, I was really like the only permanent fulltime. There was a permanent subject-to-furlough, two permanent subject-to-furloughs, and I was the only permanent fulltime person. And in Memorial Day of 1977, the, I mean the park was relatively new, the local people were sure that we were gonna bring out hordes and hordes and hordes of humanity to the beaches, we were gonna remove all this land from the tax base, therefore they would have no money to hire law enforcement people or any other kind of people to deal with the masses of humanity that were gonna come and infest their beaches, and we were really like not popular.

John Townsend: There was a big meeting, and I remember the superintendent J.R. Whitehouse saying, "Well, how many people, how many law enforcement people do we have?" And I said, "One. Me." Cause the rest of 'em were seasonals, I didn't count 'em as fulltime law enforcement people. Oh, my gracious, that was the wrong thing to say. And so suddenly we had, it freed up after Memorial Day, I was directed, "Write the position descriptions and build your organization." So, I wrote position descriptions, and I filled positions, and we just looked at the park regardless of its size, we look at it in the traditional sense, where it had districts and sub-districts. Hired two district rangers, a protection specialist, probably the first woman to be a protection specialist or law enforcement specialist in the Park Service, Janice Wobbenhorst.[22] Had five sub-districts, and you say, 'Place like Indiana Dunes?'

John Townsend: You know, you think of sub-district in a place like Wrangell-St. Elias or something, got a bazillion acres, had a take one at Indiana Dunes it's a little tiny section. But as I said to a guy in a fire management class one time, about the biggest prescribed fire we'd ever had at Indiana Dunes was 300 acres, and he just, he said, 'I have slopovers bigger than that.' And I said, and he was actually on the Gunnison, "Yeah, but you don't have Williams Tank Farms. I mean, we can't afford to have slopover at Indiana Dunes. We'll burn down a city, we'll burn, we'll ignite a tank farm full of oil, you know." There's a huge difference. So, there's a complexity there you can't pick a complexity based on where something is or how big it is. In fact, a guy named Jim Tobin, who was a legendary ranger, came there. He was in Washington, DC, and he came to Indiana Dunes, and I met his wife here not long ago. And she's "Why?"[23] And I, "Oh, from Indiana Dunes." And she said, "Did you pull him out of the bog?" He'd stepped off the trail and gone into Cowles Bog and like up to his shoulders into the bog.[24] And he said later, he said, "I was in more personal peril within sight of Chicago than I ever was in any of the large western parks that I worked in." You know. So, it's, you can't discount a place like that based on where it's at. But anyway, and we got, we had Ranger Division, we did good work. It was a great time, had good people. We were all focused on the same mission and creating a great division. It was a wonderful time. So that's the difference, I guess, between a district ranger and a chief ranger. So, the chief ranger is a head ranger in a park and works for the superintendent, assistant superintendent. District Rangers work for him or her.

[22] See Note #32 in NJ by JT for more information on Janice Wobbenhorst.
[23] See Note #34 in NF by JT for more information on this question.
[24] See Note #35 in NF by JT for more information on Cowles Bog.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, now, are interpreters considered rangers, too?

John Townsend: I think they're rangers, I think they're very much rangers, and maybe not everybody else does. I think that one of the things that's happened in the Park Service that I find distressing is that we've grown into an organization that has occupationalism in it and I read a paper by an Air Force officer about occupationalism, and the best example I can use, although I don't know this personally but I think I'm a hundred percent right, is that if you were to ask someone who's in the Marine Corps what they are, if they're in the Service, they'd [say] "Yes I am." "What do you do?" I think their answer would be "I am a Marine." Or also in the Coast Guard. I think if you asked somebody in the Coast Guard. "I see you're in the military. What do you do?" "I am a Coast Guardsman." And if you asked somebody in the Air Force, say "You're in the service, what do you do?" I'm willing to bet the answer would be "I'm an intelligence officer or I'm a pilot." And, more specifically, "I'm F-18 pilot" or "C-130." So, they identify with their occupation of intelligence officer. They don't identify with their organization of Marine Corps or Coast Guard. I think I'm; I'd be willing to be a pretty cold drink on that. And I think what's happened to the Park Service is that we've become an organization of occupationalism and so "I'm an interpreter," not "I'm a ranger." Or at least, rather than "I work for the National Park Service," "I'm a part of the National Park Service." And then, "Well, what do you do for the Park Service?" "Well, I'm an interpretive ranger." Or I'm a protection ranger or I'm a natural resource specialist or I'm a cultural resources or I'm a historian, yeah. And I think that's happened in the Park Service, and personally I find that sad. I think that when I started with the Park Service, we identified with the Park Service. In fact, I think that the greatest compliment I ever received in my entire career was kind of an off-the-record sort of thing when one of my supervisors was someplace and was being introduced, said, "Oh you, John Townsend works for you." And this guy laughed, and he said, "Well, I'm his supervisor, but John Townsend works for the National Park Service." And I consider that to be the finest compliment that I ever got, that this guy said he doesn't work for me, he works for the Park Service. And I'm just afraid we've strayed from that. So, the answer to your question "Are interpreters rangers?" I think they are. And whether they think they are, and whether they think they are or whether today's protection rangers think they are – is a different matter. But I think they are. And, you know, it saddens me when I go to Washington, DC, and I see people who are interpretive rangers and they're, they don't wear their uniform as well as they could. Or protection rangers who don't wear their uniform as well as they could. It just says that they don't, they've either never been taught, or they don't

understand the importance of what that communicates and so forth. I'm old.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, when do you think that that change might have happened?

John Townsend: I think it happened, well, I think it happened two times. And I can't prove this, I've never done – but I'd be happy to work on a paper with you about it. You know, Horace Albright said, "Never, do not let the Park Service become just another bureau. Keep it youthful, strong, and vigorous." And, with no disrespect meant whatsoever, I think that it started to change when the Heritage Conservation Recreation Service was merged into the Park Service, not because HCRS was a bad bunch of people or anything – not at all – but the primary, I think that if we were to look back in correspondence and documents, I think that we could find that about that time and subsequent to that time, and so I'm speculating that's the causal effect, that our language changed in our documents. Our language changed from being the Service to being the NPS. We became another alphabet organization. And I think it happened because HCRS people did a lot of planning documents and they're used to acronyms, and they were writing that kind of stuff, and so it just morphed in. It wasn't an intentional deal. But I've read a lot of the old documents and they talk about the Service. I remember reading this wonderful letter from the director of the Park Service to the wife of a ranger who'd died on duty, and it just said, 'the Service has lost', not we, 'the Service has lost' – it created this sense of something bigger than yourself. And NPS doesn't do that for me. So, I think that's part of it.

John Townsend: And I think the second part is, quite frankly, is when, although it's proper that it was done and it was long overdue, is when we recognized that many of our employees that do law enforcement should fall under the enhanced retirement or commonly called 6C retirement, and so that set those folks apart in terms of retirement, and then went along with that was the fact that they have a different shield, they have a different badge. I mean, I don't think it's a big deal that they carried firearms before that. But those two things started to identify people as not only is their job slightly different, they're the ones that wear the firearm, the defensive equipment, as opposed to the ones that don't wear the defensive equipment, but their retirement system's different and so I think that and the shift from the Service to the NPS were the two kind of times. Although they were at two different times in history, but I think those two things got us into thinking differently about who we are. Can't prove it.

Lu Ann Jones: Interesting.

John Townsend: I'd love to go dig through stacks, love to have the time to do that, write a paper on that!

Lu Ann Jones: Well, maybe I'll do that!

John Townsend: Occupationalism in the National Park Service and 'just another government bureau' – I have the titles! [Laughs.] See if my thesis is correct. I mean, I'd be equally as happy if I was proven wrong, but I think that's what happened. I hope that adequately answers your question.

Lu Ann Jones: Yeah, I'm just, I appreciate your interpretation of that. Well, gosh, I guess I'm just so struck, and maybe this is part of the difference between occupationalism, you had so many opportunities to do things, both kind of long-term jobs but these, and I know there are still details today and things like that, but you had opportunities or took advantage of opportunities to go to places like the Fire Center in Boise, and what difference do you think that made? Again, you know, just to have a little time in different places?

John Townsend: Oh, I think that when I, I taught at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center right up until I retired. And one of the things that I always said to the students was 'Look, if you have an opportunity to do a detail someplace, especially a thirty-day or longer detail, do not turn it down. Simply don't turn it down.' Don't say I am never going to go to WASO, you know, you'll get me to WASO when they pry my cold dead fingers off the throttle of my boat or off my climbing rope or whatever the hell it is. Don't do that, because you just broaden your horizons, you just understand. You know, the Fire Center is not some mythical creature up there. When you've gotten up at the crack of way early and you've helped prepare the report that has to be back in Washington, and there's a two-hour, what they're Mountain Time, there's a two-hour time difference, well if it has to be in Washington at seven, it has to be out of Boise at five, and if it takes you an hour and a half to prepare it, you've gotta be at work at three thirty, you know? And when you had a chance to do that and when you've had a chance to see how that place functions and how it comes together, it just broadens your horizons. And same with the detail to the Washington office or anyplace else – '93-94, '94-95, whenever that reorganization was – when the Midwest region required, cause at one time they were part of the Midwest region, properties at Rocky Mountain Region and areas of the Dakotas, we had rangers, chief rangers Jay Liggett, Mike Pflaum and others, come to Omaha and do details. We said, 'We want you to come down here and here's a project you can do while you're here. You're gonna get to go to lunch with people, you're gonna associate with, you're gonna get to meet people, you're gonna get to see how this office works, and here's the project we want you to do while you're in here.' And we found

the money to make that happen, just because they could get exposed to how things functioned. Not everybody gets the chance to do that, but if something pops up and it says we're looking for a detail or two, Branch of Safety WASO for physical fitness program, and that happens to be something you're interested, and you have some skill in even though you don't do—

[END OF TRACK 4]

[START OF TRACK 5]

John Townsend: —are in your park, I think they should apply. Yeah, don't turn those down. Your panorama of view is better that way. Now I think it can be bad, in that you can either wonder how anything gets accomplished [laughs] or you can. I'll try and give you an example. There was a chief ranger of the National Park Service, Chris Andress. And he left the chief ranger's job and became the superintendent of Ozarks and he died, I can't remember what cancer or something, which is just horrible, died real quickly, bad thing, but when he was a chief ranger, somebody had commissioned a review of the Ranger Activities Office in WASO, and it was less than complimentary. And I was with Chris at a meeting after that, and you could tell that he was pretty hurting from this less than complimentary review of what was going on. And I talked to him, and I said, "Chris, I'm gonna tell you that, truthfully, in all honesty, I think that some of that criticism is valid criticism, some things that those of us that are in the field" – even though I was in the regional office, relative to WASO that's the field – "are disappointed in and aren't happening." I said, "But, what the report failed to do was it failed to give you any credit whatsoever for the stress and the strains and the realities of what's happening to you." And I said, "For example," and this is hyperbole, but "if you say to Tarsha, which was his secretary, 'I'm going down the hall', which was a euphemism for 'I'm going down to use the men's room,'" I said, "before you can get there five people have second-guessed your decision. Three of them for the political ramifications. And," I said, "the report doesn't give you credit for that." Well, I would never have known that, had I not done details in the Washington office. I would never have had a sensitivity to what chief ranger, division chiefs, and associates have to deal with back there, had I not done details, and I would've been – I'm not trying to say this to brag about myself, I don't mean it in that way at all, it's almost embarrassing to say this – but I'm sure I would've saw 'That report's right, that son of a gun, dah dah dah de dah de dah de dah,' but we might've been disappointed in some things we hoped would happen on his watch, but, like a lot of people have said, 'Well, you know, I didn't see your name on the cert.' [Laughs.] So, I just think that people oughtta do those, you

know, I mean. I had, those were chances for me to go do some neat things, so I took advantage of them. But that's the thing that, you know, that you learn, and at least on one of those details a lady from the Corps of Engineers told me the Washington office is a great place to work, just don't get seduced by the illusion of power. And so, well, that put it in context. Yeah, I work in there, you gotta keep everything in balance. You know, hope that's got at what you were looking for.

Lu Ann Jones: Yes. Well, what was it like to go to the regional office in the '80s when you made that move?

John Townsend: Well, that's kind of an interesting sort of thing. The reason I became the Resource Management Specialist from being a Chief Ranger is the more benign answer is there was a great guy I worked for, and he became my boss. Wonderful, wonderful guy named Dick Littlefield, who'd been the Youth Activities Coordinator in Seattle, and that program was ending, and his job was getting abolished, and the Chief Ranger's job at Indiana Dune was getting upgraded. And so, the benign answer is that they placed him there because he was a special placement guy, and so I became the Resource Management Specialist. Probably more realistic answer was that I drew too many lines in the sand and made too many people mad at me [chuckles], maybe a combination of those. And I was at Indiana Dunes for a long, long time, and it didn't really look like I was gonna go anyplace, didn't look like I was gonna leave there. And then there was a – and I didn't know this until about five years later – but there was a very wonderful guy named John Kawamoto[25] was Associate Regional Director in Omaha in Planning Environmental Compliance, and he was at Indiana Dunes on some type of a visit, and he went back to the regional office, and he wrote a personal memo that there weren't any copies of in the files or anything. Actually, there was one copy, the one he wrote. Then he wrote the regional director and he said, 'We've got a guy at Indiana Dunes who's languishing away and dying on the vine up there, and his name's John Townsend and we need to get him out of there.' And so actually the successes I had in my career I owe to John Kawamoto. And so, there's a guy retired in Omaha, by the name of Bob Walker, and Tom Thompson, regional chief ranger, called me up and said I'd like to offer you Bob's position, and I said, "Well, that's, I don't think you can really do that, since it would be a promotion." He says, "Oh, we're gonna rewrite the position so it's at your grade level, if you're interested in it."

[25] See Note #38 in NF by JT for more information on John Kawamoto (1926 – 2000).

John Townsend: And I was smart enough to see the handwriting on the wall, that Providence or somebody was helpin' me out here, and so I lateraled in there and I worked for Tom Thompson, and it was a great experience. Was a wonderful, wonderful guy to work for. We had really good people in the office, and there were only four of us. Tommy Thompson was the chief, Ben Holmes was the resources guy, myself, then a law enforcement specialist who was a Park Police captain. And we got along well, and we liked each other, and we ate lunch together every day, and all of that good stuff, and I think we got good things done. If my wife was here, she'd say the floor I worked on was called the Wax Museum, cause nobody ever saw anybody move down there, but I think we were actually doing a lot of things. We were actually doing a lot of really good things and supporting the field. We didn't have a lot of money. When I got in there the chair I had was broken, and the reason it was broken was ‘cause when Bob Walker left, somebody stole his chair that wasn't broken and put a broken one there. And so, I ordered a new chair, and the secretary said, 'You spent more money in one acquisition than we've spent on anything except salaries in the last year.' I said, "Well, I gotta have a new chair."

John Townsend: So, they didn't have a lot of money to do stuff, but they figured out ways to make things happen and support the parks and help the rangers. It was obviously different than being in the field. I mean, not the first of which was, the standard at that time was that everybody wore civilian clothes. So, what did I have? I didn't really have anything to wear to work really. And you didn't, you weren't gonna work on Sundays, you weren't gonna work on holidays, and it was just a lot of differences. But we were great in terms of flexibility of when you could, you know, our timing was flexible, so I didn't have to punch a clock at 8 o'clock. So that was pretty nice. And, like I said, we did some good things in general, just in general we did good things. I think we were very supportive of the parks, and the real big change was that, as a regional office person, you had this responsibility to support the parks in multiple different things. So, when you're in a park, as I say, a chief park ranger, all of these things fall under your purview: emergency medical services, search and rescue, law enforcement, and resource protection, maybe safety. Safety might, at a, not a great big park, you'll have a separate safety officer, but at a smaller park like, say, Indiana Dunes, safety may fall into your bailiwick, you know, the list is endless. Uniform program, recreation fee collection, ad infinitum ad nauseum. And then you get to the regional office and you're the lone ranger staff person that's supposed be a quote “expert” in all these things, and the interface between the Washington office and all the programmatic requirements and the

park, well partly what that means is you get to be part of this Service-wide committee that deals with that.

John Townsend: So, I found myself suddenly on this Service-wide committee. I was suddenly part of the fee management committee. I was suddenly, after a couple years, as Tom Thompson did it, because it was really fun to do, was be part of the uniform committee. So, you'd go from being a hopefully an effective chief park ranger to this staff job, you know, I mean, an "authority," but you're suddenly part of this relatively small group that's making these decisions about how these programs run. The guy Gordon Hammon I talked about earlier, he had said to us, he'd said, couple of really cool things, but one of 'em was that 'You really can do more in a staff job than you ever do in a line job'.[26] And I didn't really realize until I got to the regional office, when the Park Service talked 'Oh, we're gonna really gonna empower our employees,' you know, kind of the standard line was 'Well, I was empowered from the day I went to work. They gave me a firearm, you know.' Or my comment was, 'You know, 17,000 people get up every morning and I've told them what they're gonna wear to work that day, cause I'm one of the ten people on the uniform committee' kind of thing. Don't talk about empowering employees. [Chuckles.]

John Townsend: I mean, my tongue's in my cheek when I say this, but my point is you suddenly go to this, you just suddenly go and it's not a power thing, I don't mean, but you suddenly go, it's actually a responsibility thing. You suddenly go from you got a lot of responsibility at this park, you have a lot of responsibility not only regionally but nationally, and you're supposed to be able to take the needs of the park and the needs of the service as a whole and balance those. So, if there's a real need in uniforms, let's just say, for boat shoes, you have to understand how the system works and whether you can carry that in the uniform program and you have to balance all that kind of stuff and understand the finances involved in it. And so, it's a big scope thing that you're not really, you have to grow into, you can't really go in there knowing how to do that. I really liked it. I really, really liked working in the regional office. I was going, I actually did apply for it, cause I gonna apply for the chief ranger, think I did, North Cascades, and I went to Tommy Thompson, and I said, "Will you support me in applying for this and so forth and so on?" And he said, "Yes, I will," and then he said, kind of in passing, "But you may want to think about what you do best." And when I thought about that, I realized what I did best was being a staff ranger in the regional office. I was, that's what I was very good at doing. And just my talents and abilities were just there. But it's, you know, you did, you kind of said, this

[26] See Note #39 in NF by JT.

is what 17,000 people are gonna wear to work tomorrow. [Laughs.] I mean not literally, but figuratively. And I found it a great environment, and we had some good people that were in our office, and we had some okay people that we worked for, we got to be a bit creative and so that was kind of fun. But I happened to be in the regional office and therefore I'm on some of the service-wide committees when the fee program changed, just when the uniform program was changing from being the traditional Alvord & Ferguson or Gregory's vendors to being a managed program through Horace Small, R&R [R&R Uniforms in Nashville, TN], and DF. And of course, Bill Halainen's the guy to talk to about that. And Wes Price was the fee program manager and he'd be a wonderful guy for you to chase down in Blacksburg [Virginia] sometime.

Lu Ann Jones: So, Bill Hal – he's the guy –

John Townsend: Yeah, that's the guy to talk to, that'd be a wonderful addition if somebody could ever sit down and talk to him about, just in general, like you're talking to me, because he has this incredible institutional knowledge. but if somebody wanted to specifically pick up where Dr. Bryce Workman did the uniform history from that and go on, Bill would be the guy. And so, it was, yeah, workin' in the regional office for me was a very rewarding kind of experience, and like I said I worked for good people pretty much, and we did good things. But it was definitely different than being a chief ranger or district ranger. It's very, very much different than responding to the budget call or responding to the call about such and such. You were the person who was helping make the budget call or making the call for such and such, and you were the person who was having to put all that stuff together to answer what they wanted in Washington and to interpret the needs of the park to the Washington office. And when I went into the regional office, way very early days of computers and such, and so a lot of things, everything, was done hard copy. The Washington office would send something down, you'd get a hard copy, so we're going to go through a rewrite of the one that's easiest to talk about is the uniform handbook, about how to do the handbook.

John Townsend: So, we want some input from the field on that, so then you'd generate 30 letters to the parks, memos to the parks, and you'd say, 'This is what we want to know and here's when you have to have it in by.' You'd get all that stuff in and you were manually cutting and pasting and assembling this stuff and then writing. And then you got that from all, at that time ten, regions, and then you got to go back and somebody like Bill Halainen had manually put all that stuff together again, and then you were in a room with nine or ten other people, and you were looking at all these results, and you

were making these decisions about 'Are we gonna have topcoats?' 'Are we gonna do this, are we gonna do that? You know, how are we gonna address this need and how can we do that?' So, it, very much different than being in a park.

Lu Ann Jones: Well what kind of traits do you think your colleagues or supervisor there saw in you that, where he says um—

John Townsend: Oh, think about what you do best?

Lu Ann Jones: Right, mmhm.

John Townsend: Boy, I don't know. I guess I would say, and these are not traits that would be unique to that kind of work. I would say perhaps. Although I, [laughs] since I met you, you may not agree with some of these. Maybe an attention to detail. Maybe an enjoyment of doing quote "research" end quote. Not, I mean, like academic research, but really looking into something. Maybe an ability to, and this is the hardest thing to do when you go to the regional office, the hardest thing to do when you go to the regional office is to quit thinking about 'my park' and start thinking about 'our region'. And the next hardest thing to do is when you find yourself on one of these service-wide committees, is to subjugate 'my region' to 'our service, our system'. And, but at the same time you've gotta stick up for your region. I remember Bonnie Winslow saying, you know, I understand I've gotta think about the service as a whole, but I'm definitely sticking up for these small monuments and memorials here in the Southwest. And so, I think an ability to do that, an ability to understand that in the Midwest Region, an Isle Royale and a Fort Larned, Kansas are equal places, that because Isle Royale is a national park and doesn't give it a lot more.

John Townsend: I mean, I realize that there's superintendents and there are superintendents. And there are chief rangers and there are chief rangers. I mean, there's captains of ships and some of them are aircraft carriers and some of them aren't, and they are still captains of ships, and I understand that. But I think an ability to try and be balanced. That's a better word than fair. Balanced, to try and look at all of that, and to articulate that as best as possible. And to, when you've made a decision, to explain why you've made that decision. I remember a uniform thing one time where we'd made a decision, we'd looked at all the input we had and we said this is the best decision based on all the input is X, and so we said, "We've made this decision, this is why we've made this decision." Cause we knew that some people were gonna be unhappy with that, but we articulated why we did it. And I think another one is actually really caring about the parks, not so much caring about the bureaucracy, understanding how to deal with the process to support the parks. I guess those would be traits. You know, I suppose I could say you

get along with people. I'm not sure how well I get along with people, but you've gotta do that, you have to be able to, in a regional office job you're talkin' to, well, in the Midwest Region when I retired, there were fifty-some odd parks. So, in theory I had to deal with 50 chief park rangers, and I might have to deal with 50 staff specialists on their staff, and then I had to deal with the Washington office, and I had to deal with my contemporaries in the other regions. And so, I would like to think that, for the most part, I was able to get along with them and respect them and they respected me, and we could work collaboratively and cooperatively. I don't mean I'm sound like the former Secretary of the Interior, but those are good words actually. So, I suppose respect is maybe a part of that, to have a respect for the, you know, the 'Well, when I worked in such-and-such' mindset doesn't really do a lot for people. I don't know. I've never thought about that.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, you said—

John Townsend: That's a good answer, that's as good as I can do, kinda sounds a little boastful, I don't mean it that way.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, I think in the best of all possible worlds we figure out what we're good at and if we're lucky we land in a place where we can exercise those talents. So, you, I think you mentioned that there were, you know, a handful of times or so where you drew a line in the sand or perhaps—

John Townsend: Less than diplomatic? [Laughs.]

Lu Ann Jones: Less than diplomatic [laughs], say we'll go with that, but less than diplomatic. So, can you give an example of that? And what inspired that?

John Townsend: I can probably, I can think of a couple of them that, maybe this is what inspired me in the regional office? One I was thinking about the other day, and it seems awfully petty, I mean, in hindsight it seems really, really petty. But it is an example of how the Park Service used to be, and I hope it's not that way anymore, but at one time if you bought any capital equipment, somebody at the regional office had to review what you did. I mean, it seems sort of ridiculous that you're paying somebody a lot of money to manage a park, but you can't trust 'em to buy their own capital equipment. So, somebody was reviewing that, and I remember one time we were buying vehicles, for the whole park, and I was put in charge of writing up orders for cars for the park. And I was very easy to identify the needs we had in law enforcement, the law enforcement sedans and we had policies that said you have to drive this kind of car, so that was easy to do. But one of the cars I was supposed to do, I was supposed to write up a justification for a new vehicle for the superintendent's office, so I did that, and it went it with

everything. And the regional equipment review board said "We're not gonna approve that car. And we're not gonna approve it because we don't think that you need this, and we don't think that you need that." Things that you would consider standard today, like air conditioning, you know. And I was so upset about that that I went in and I spent all day Saturday and all day Sunday in the office, and I researched, I found research material from the aircraft industry, tests that were done in California about fuel efficiency about driving a car with air conditioning versus driving a car with its windows down, and basically I proved that air conditioning, it is more efficient, so basically I proved every point I had and I fired that back off to the regional office, which basically said, I mean, I basically just got in their face about it. Well, the net result of that was I made everybody on the equipment review board mad at me, you know, I mean they had the choice. They had the choice of saying, "You're right, we're sorry, we made a mistake," or they said, "Yeah, you're right but we don't care," and they chose the latter one. You're right, we don't care. So, there was this antagonism immediately between the regional office and the parks because I'm sure they treated everybody that way, so that was maybe one of the things I wanted to do away with when I got there, was not have that antagonism.

John Townsend: And you know, in hindsight, that wasn't really a brilliant thing to do, and I had, career-wise anyway, and I had employees that were mistreated. I had an employee named Dave Dutko; his pay was all screwed up. I had an employee named Paul Berkowitz whose pay was all screwed up.[27] Berkowitz took some pretty direct action. He wrote his congressman. He didn't endear himself to anybody, and of course I got called on the carpet about it and I had to look at the superintendent and, you know, on this conference call with the regional office and say, 'You expect me to tell a guy he can't write his congressman? You're talkin' to the wrong guy. I'm just not gonna do that, you know, it's crazy.' That didn't endear me to anybody. Dutko had been promised his pay and stuff would get fixed and it never got fixed, and it never got fixed, and I remember writing a memo that I started, the title of the memo was in RE: Dutko. And I pretty, it was not an, a tactful memo. It was a fine piece of writing, but it was not tactful [laughs]. Proud of it, but it didn't do me much, it didn't do my career a lot of good. You know, if I could do it over again, I'm not really sure what I'd do. I'd hope that, I hope that I could say that in a way that wouldn't be so in your face and so 'here's a line in the sand'. I would hope that I could do it better, and that's what I mentioned, if I'd had the

[27] See Notes #42 and 43 in NF by JT for more information on David G. ("Dave") Dutko and Paul D. Berkowitz.

opportunities to, if I could seize the opportunities to take advantage of a Gene Daugherty[28] or a Rick Gale and they called me in at Lake Mead and said, "You've got the makings of a great ranger, but you can really upset people." They were a little more blunt than that. That I'd 've said, "Hey. Can you coach me on that?" And when I ran into "How do I deal with?" By that time, unfortunately, Gene Daugherty had died. But I could've called him and "How do I deal with this? What's the way to do this?" And they could've been my advisers on the side. "Well, John, I think maybe if you approach it this way it might be." You know you want to say go jump in a lake, I mean.

John Townsend: Even in the regional office one time, some – I don't remember what it was – I remember something came in and I was tasked with writing the response to it, and I had it written, and Tommy Thompson got it and he looked at it and a couple days later he said, "Hey John, I need to talk to you." And he says, "Okay, we've got this off our chests now. You want to maybe rewrite this?" You know, and it was okay, I was able to blow off all my steam and then rewrite it in a much better, more, a kinder, gentler way, so those are a couple specific examples, and I just, you know, had I seized that opportunity, I might've done that different. And I don't know what difference it would've made in my career, but probably would've been a little smoother. Probably would've been a little smoother.

Lu Ann Jones: We've been, and I've had a blast this afternoon. I think we have been talking about two and a half hours—

John Townsend: Oh, my gracious!

Lu Ann Jones: But that's fine. But I want to make sure that we do talk about how you got linked up with the Association of National Park Rangers.

John Townsend: I will. I'll roll another story in here if I can.

Lu Ann Jones: Please.

John Townsend: When I was in the regional office, we were having coffee one morning and probably one of those mornings after regional director staff meeting, when all of the folks from maintenance had gone through and gotten awards, and nobody from ranger activities ever got an award cause they never had any money. And somebody said something about "Well, we oughtta have a such-and-such award, award that recognizes rangers." And somebody else said, "That would never work." And somebody else said, "Why?" And somebody else said, "ANPR tried it and it fell flat." And somebody else said, "Well, that's cause they didn't do it right." And this

[28] See Note #44 in NF by JT for more information on Gene Daugherty.

discussion, there were only four of us there, but this discussion went. So, we said, "Let's do something about that." So, we do our research, and we wrote something up and we solicited input and we put it together, and it became the Harry Yount Award. And we did it in the regional office. And then there was this joint chief ranger's meeting. We did it in the region, the Midwest Region.[29] Joint chief rangers' meeting, and Jim Brady was standing up pontificating about how we oughtta have a Harry Yount Award, Tom Thompson was, "Jim, we already have one." And Bill Tanner says, "We've been thinking about one." And Bonnie Winslow was there, she said, we had this artist[30] come in, and I went to Washington, and I did a detail for one week and wrote it all up and then I went back in '93 as Acting Fee Program Manager and Bill Halainen says, "Whatever happened to that Yount award thing?" And I says, "I don't know. I left it with you guys." And we resurrected the, found the stuff I had my disk with me, and we rewrote it, and one day Jim Brady says, "JT, we're going over to National Park Foundation. Get your Yount stuff together." And I had Mary Davis, I said, "Put this in a nice folder." She looked at me like – and I said, "No, it has to be in a nice folder," I said, "We can't just take 'em something stapled together over there." And we went over there and said Jim Brady said, "We've got this idea. Are you guys interested in it? We need your money." And they were fixin' to do the very first National Park week, during the Clinton Administration, and they could see the value of this, having a ranger come out there selected for the pure outstanding ranger, I mean, they could see the beauty of that. So, they said "Well, we'll fund it out of our money, and we'll find somebody to sponsor it." So, we're driving back, taking a cab, and I'm upset because originally we were going to present it on the birthday of the Park Service, and Brady says, "John," he says, "you don't be upset about what you didn't get!" You know, and so, okay that's fine. Well then, we didn't hear anything, we didn't hear anything, we didn't know what was going on, and the actually the announcement kind of fell through a crack someplace. Well, all of a sudden National Park Week's coming up. Well, what're we going to do? So, we got together, the Washington office got together, and they said, "Man, we've gotta do something here." Well, they found where this thing got bogged down and the nominations are starting to come in and they were scrambling. I wasn't really directly involved in this. They were scrambling, and so they said, "Well, how about we have a lifetime achievement component?" So out of thin air that kind of got created. They started looking around for likely persons. Well,

[29] See Note #45 in NF by JT for more information on this point.
[30] See Note #46 in NF by JT for information on artist Susanne Vertel and this award.

one of the people that had been nominated under the regular process for the first-ever service-wide Harry Yount award was Richard T. Gale. Well, that just absolutely clicked for who would be the perfect person to receive a lifetime achievement award. And so, Rick Gale was selected for this lifetime achievement award, and he said, when he first heard about it, "I thought it was the most elaborate practical joke that had ever been devised." And we had this artist, Bonnie Winslow, from the Southwest Regional Office, had hooked up with this Susan Vertel and we figured out a way to get somebody to do the original artwork and lah-dee-da-dee-da-dee. And there was this big event at the White House, and I didn't go to it but Bill Halainen did. But he and I were in the halls of the Interior building, rating his stuff from uniforms, getting everybody in the proper uniforms so they looked good at the White House, asked Bill Halainen about that, and we have this wonderful, wonderful photograph of Rick Gale and Bill Clinton and then the Secretary of the Interior and Arthur Sulz[berger][31]—

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John Townsend: —Jr., publisher of the New York Times who underwrote the picture, and the photograph actually, Mrs. Clinton is there and she's in this beautiful green dress almost identical in color to Rick's uniform, and she has a gold brooch on over her heart exactly where Rick's badge is at, and I used to use that picture at FLETC, and I used to say "Do you think the First Lady picked that dress by accident? She wanted to look like a ranger. C'mon, get serious." It was wonderful, it was just great to be part of that group that developed that award, and I think it's gone on to be pretty neat.

John Townsend: But how does that relate to the ANPR. Well, when ANPR got started, they offered membership and of course I had no money but they had a lifetime membership and I realized I was gonna live a long time and so that was the way to do it, and so I became a Life Member, and I attended one or two rendezvous but never really had the money to go to any till after I retired, and then I started going, and by that time Flo and I were married and so we started going together. And Lee Werst was the president, and on his watch ANPR had identified that ANPR should really do something related to the birth of the Park Service, the centennial. I prefer the term birthday to anniversary. Birthday's what living breathing things have. And Rick Gale had stepped forward, he was the legendary Rick Gale, he had also been the president of ANPR. Well, the reign of Rick Gale at ANPR, and he'd stepped forward to

[31] Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr., publisher of *The New York Times*. A copy of the photo referred to here is included in NF by JT.

chair that committee, and he, you know, "John, you oughtta be on this committee," and he kept twisting my arm for about a year, so at the next rendezvous I said, "Okay, I'll be on that committee."

John Townsend: And we fumbled around because one of the criteria was "What can we reasonably accomplish?" And "What can add value-added to the birthday?" And we fumbled around with things like commemorative stamps and lah-dee-dah-dee-dah-dee, and then I think I might've told you this story but on the tape recorder. Flo and I were invited to a party, and I met a lady at the party. She was introduced to me as the sister of the hostess, and I said, "What do you do?" And she said, "I'm a public affairs officer with the Forest Service." So, I, "Well, that's cool. My wife's a public affairs officer with the Park Service. What're you doing as a public affairs officer with the Forest Service." "I'm getting a graduate education in Forest Service history, because I'm doing oral histories in conjunction with the Smithsonian for our 100th birthday." So, the light bulb went on and at the next ANPR meeting, I said, "You know what?" And I just told that same story and I said, "That's something we could accomplish."

John Townsend: And then that led to me coming into your office after the Gettysburg Rendezvous, which led me to now being interviewed by you! So, I mean, that's the story. The story you're talking about. In terms of ANPR, you know, they have their own history, and they came out and they offered it, and I said, "You know what, I'm just gonna be a member of that." And so. I'd been a member of the professional organizations, the Society of American Foresters, National Recreation and Park Association, American for Health, Physical Education, and Dance, and I'd been a member of those professional organizations for – and so I viewed ANPR as, even though it had a social component and was noted for having a keg of beer in the back of the room, as being a quote 'professional organization' and I had hopes that it would become a professional organization. I don't know that the Park Service gives credit to people for – and I don't mean credit in terms of 'you get a brownie point towards your next promotion' or anything. I just don't think the Park Service recognizes in any way when people make that effort to maintain their professional competencies. I did have an experience, a sad experience, I think, where I had maintained my continuing education units with the Society of American Foresters. So they sent a nice letter to my boss[32] and asked him to recognize me, and he did it, but he did it in such a way that it was clear he didn't think much – 'so what, who cares?' – and so the message that I'm sure everybody else in that room got was the Service doesn't respect the effort that anybody puts in to maintain their

[32] See Note #50 in NF by JT for more information on how this occurred.

professional competencies. It was a sad thing in my opinion, and I think, you know, yourself as a professional, you deliver papers at professional conferences and so on. I would hope that at least that, I would hope that at least in some pockets of the Park Service that's respected rather than pooh-poohed and so. But I had hoped that ANPR would be that kind of professional organization. You'd maintain your professional competencies. So that's why I got hooked up with them. And that's the story of ANPR. I've got two and a half more hours of stories! [Laughs.]

Lu Ann Jones: We can do that next year! Let's take a rain check, because I think everybody, we've talked to has at least two more hours of stories, believe me, I believe that. It's been great, though, to talk to you.

John Townsend: Ah, I need to sign some paperwork?

Lu Ann Jones: Yes, this is the legal release form that will allow us to use it and all that. So, if you could write your full name, just print that, and then signature and address, so we know how to get in touch with you.

John Townsend: Yes.

[END OF TRACK 6]

[END OF INTERVIEW]