

Done primarily for a history of wildlife management in Wisconsin – emphasis on wildlife – The full interview on tape at the State Historical Society

1-21-01

HCJ

AUDIO TAPE LOG

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INTERVIEW DATE: 11/14/00

LOCATION: Residence

INTERVIEWER: David L. Gjestson

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OTHERS PRESENT: None

EQUIPMENT USED:

Recorder - AIWA IS199 Stereo

Tape - RCA RC90 Hi-Fi Stereo

TAPE CONTENT SUMMARY:

000 Born in northwest Minnesota, 1926. Grandson of Norwegian immigrants. Dad was great hunter, especially on prairie grouse and ducks. Brought up during depression and drought years. One younger brother and two sisters. Most memorable experiences included:

1. Duck hunting with dad; very abundant resources.
2. Grandfather's farm west of Twin Cities; lots of marshes and grasslands.
3. Era reminder - Old picture of 50-60 pheasants hung on a fence line with hunters behind birds (still has picture).

Great tragedy: Move to Minneapolis in 1936, then Finley, Ohio (near Toledo) in 1937. Dad was Superintendent of Schools early on, then bond sales and textbook sales when in Ohio.

Ohio resources not as plentiful as Minnesota. Fished in stone quarries. Lots of idle land (still in depression/drought era), so pheasants were marvelous! Typical daily bag was 2 cocks and 4 rabbits. Remembers camping, fishing and trapping muskrats (120-130 one fall) too; put him through first year of college!

Joined Navy in August, 1944. Stationed in Memphis (Tenn.), Norman (OK.) and Jacksonville (FL.). In 1945, had rheumatic fever and spent time in sick bay (thus, qualifying for early discharge).

155 Discharged in 1945 (after second atomic bomb). Spent that fall hunting, fishing and trapping muskrats. Remembers the "Office of Price Stabilization" setting prices on most items during the war including muskrat furs! Gas and meat were rationed. GI Bill and muskrat harvest paid for his first year of college.

High school biology teacher, Doc Phillips, very influential on Bud's interest in biology (others in college also had much influence). January, 1946, started in forestry major at Bowling Green State University because quota kept him from going to University of Michigan after he had originally been accepted. However, he was able to transfer to U. of Michigan in 1947 in the School of Forestry and Conservation with "concentrations" in wildlife.

209 Received BS in 1949 and MSF in 1950. Thesis was "Impact of Deer Browsing on the Northern Forest". High deer populations and over browsing was intense even then (described).

247 He graduated in June and, in August, 1950, was hired as the District Game Manager by the Wis. Conservation Department (WCD). Originally, he had applied for a research position under Cy Kabat. He recalls "a little, short guy asking him if he'd like to be a Game Manager". He learned later that this guy was J. R. Smith, Director of the Game Division!

He started his new career at Black River Falls under Area Game Supervisor Stan DeBoer and Biologist George Hartman. Because of the high deer harvest the year before, he took heat from local sportsmen right away. He soon transferred to Viroqua to replace the departing Harry Stroebe.

277 He was given law enforcement credentials (like most field managers). Typical of the time, there was no in-service training. He worked in Crawford, Vernon, LaCrosse, Monroe and Richland counties, a 5-county area which probably evolved out of the growing Public Hunting Grounds program.

Early Game Managers were the unsung heroes of the profession and included Harold Steinke, Harold Shine, Paul Kennedy, Earl Loyster, Alan McVey, Harry Stroebe, Norm Stone, Thern Deerwester and many others.

Pine River was the only PHG in the Viroqua District for a long time. Then, Van Loon, Bangor and the Wisconsin River (river corridors were the early focus). The Kickapoo PHG followed later.

333 Game Manager duties at that time included landowner assistance, Mississippi River access, pheasant stocking, land acquisition, and PHG leasing/maintenance. Mississippi River access was difficult because of the railroad tracks which separated public lands from the mainland. Safety concerns required the WCD to spend a lot of time finding routes into the river bottoms (story told about the "Lansing Dump" negotiations).

Bud becomes the Area Biologist at Spooner in 1951 when Frank King was promoted. He becomes Acting Game Supervisor when Burt Dahlberg takes on the deer book project.

415 Bump Gardner mentioned as the Fish and Wildlife Service specialist who developed and promoted exotic game in the U. S. This is where the idea of stocking black grouse and capercaillie came from for Wisconsin. John Keener was in charge of the capercaillie monitoring on Outer Island in 1951.

445 Bud does field work on Stockton Island to support the idea of Bob Marshall (U of Minnesota) to stock pine martens after they had been extirpated from Wisconsin. Later surveys showed project failure.

496 Bud also got called to pick up some fishers at Poynette (they came from New York). He transported the animals in a cage in the back seat of his car to the Rhinelander area where he met Bernie Bradle and they were then released (another futile effort).

525 Bill Grimmer once called Bud and directed him (and Art Doll at Park Falls) to release some spruce grouse on the "Doring Estate" east of Park Falls. Another failure.

600 Continuing with his time at Spooner, Bud talks of spending a lot of his time on deer. Working with the Conservation Congress, doing deer surveys, feeding deer in winter, and working in the Flagg Deer Yard.

He spends another 5 years at Spooner, but takes 1954 off to get another masters (in public administration) at Harvard. He also gets married.

Dahlberg takes a year off to write his whitetail deer book with Ralph Guettinger and Bud becomes the Acting Game Supervisor, Northwest Area.

648 While still at Spooner, a major skirmish takes place with the foresters over protecting prairie grouse (sharptail) dancing grounds on county forest lands. The Research Section was very strong then and the data solid on the importance of certain habitat for the birds. Bud found a significant dancing grounds on the Namekagon Barrens in Burnett County "already furrowed for tree planting" and took up the fight. He lost. Newspaper reporter Gordon MacQuarrie wrote "one box of matches could've solved the problem"!

708 Bud completes a written sharptail management plan and describes several areas still offering opportunities for sharptails including Fish Lake, Crex Meadows, Kohler-Peat, Solon Springs and the Town of Barnes, Moqua Barrens. He also did a thorough economic assessment of sharptail management vrs. jackpine reproduction. "Ecological blocking" theories (buying scattered, key habitat) by the Hamerstrom's were also used to support more habitat areas for sharptails, but the ideas were ignored. The WCD leased blocks of land in lieu of the ecological approach.

738 (Side note: Later, as a Natural Resources Board member and Chair, Bud ironically sees Wildlife Managers forward plans to manage sharptails at Fish Lake.)

752 Bud is transferred to Madison in 1956 as the Federal Aid Coordinator, replacing Wayne Truax (who went to Oshkosh as Game Supervisor). He helped publish wetland drainage surveys (developed by others in the Division) in the late 1950s and notes they are still used today! He also created 5-year land acquisition plans for the Game Division (another process continuing today).

Bud recalls some of the real estate appraisers of the time including Gene Parfey and Red Davis. Bill Field was assigned land acquisition duties under Bud by J. R. Smith (Bill, a former warden, had been supervisor of game farm/shooting preserve licensing since the late 1940s). Bud sent Bill and others to MAI training and managers (the first trained appraisers) became much better at land buying (note: MAI sanctioned training continues through current times).

Land acquisition accomplishments become a highlight of Bud's career at the time. He recalls the excitement of bringing 108 options at a cost of \$339,330.17 located in 24 state projects to the Commission at one time in February of 1958 (a feat never repeated by any Division!).

832 Bud left the WCD in 1960. From 1960-1963, he's a Recreation Specialist for the Department of Resource Development, then served as Deputy Director and Director of that Department. *The hardest work of his professional career!*

With Gaylord Nelson providing the leadership, he had a major role in conceptualizing ORAP and initiating its focus on capital investment (land). He worked with Gaylord Nelson to make the county forest system permanent (2.3 million acres), but was later disappointed in some of the planning process, that wildlife managers were not really aggressive with their new authority, and public support groups did not develop around the county forest system. Significant accomplishments included the establishment of state, regional and local comprehensive planning which included wildlife in its broadest sense.

(some interview and off-tape background)

From 1963 to 1967, he works for the Department of Interior, Office of the Secretary, as the Regional Coordinator for the Upper Miss. River and Great Lakes Region. He worked with Nelson again and saw the Apostle Island National Lakeshore created and Bud contributed to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers legislation including the St. Croix-Namekagon National Wild Rivers and the Wolf River.

From 1967-69, he served as co-chair and chair of the Upper Great Lakes Regional Commission. He was later Governor Lucy's alternate to the Commission.

He became a professor of Regional Planning at the University of Wisconsin in 1965 and served in that capacity until 1989. During his tenure on the faculty, he was appointed to the Natural resources Board in 1972 and became Chairman for two years before his term expired in 1976. During that era, he worked with Senator Gaylord Nelson on creation of the first Earth Day celebration.

986 His Board highlights are many, but he was most pleased with the smooth transition when Tony Earl was hired (1976). Voigt stepped aside after fine service simply because the Board wanted new leadership in the new, evolving political climate.

Bud also relays some discussions he had with Kellot about reorganization with regard to the important role the Department of Resource Development (vis a vis WCD and the proposed DNR) as well as indicating the controversy reorganization created with "the Red Shirts" (sportsmen).

015 As another highlight, the land he bought or had a hand in coordinating, planning or approving as a Board member was the most tangible of all his accomplishments (his Chair of the DNR's Stewardship Advisory Council led to a \$460 million renewal of the original \$250 million program). He believes strongly that providing public access to natural resources remains most important. Private development impacts remain a serious concern and resultant forest fragmentation is still a very important issue and major threat to the forest.

He is most proud of the creation of the wild resources policy, the master planning process initiated when he was Board Chair, and especially pleased with the role he had involving over 15 years with the Lower Wisconsin Riverway.

060 Bud believes his personal accomplishments were best in the area of policy and planning. He recalls his 10 years with the WCD as "one of the happiest of his career".

Today, he takes great pride in being a founding member of and activist with the *1000 Friends* group and the *Gathering Waters* land trust.

In closing, he makes special note of Ernie Swift's contributions and credits him with creating a cadre of professionals for the agency (Game Managers). He recalled that Ernie remarked, in a speech to wardens, "that he felt in the future all wardens should have a college degree". Bud also noted the critical role J. R. Smith played in developing a professional wildlife program.