

## Interview with Lori Otto, 7/28/96

Robert: July 28th, I'm speaking with Lori Otto. This is oral history interview project for the Wisconsin conservation hall of fame and Lori will start us by giving us a little background on how she got involved in conservation, how long, and what spurred her to become interested in it.

Lori: I was born on a farm in 1919 and I was the oldest of three little girls. My father always wanted a son. And so sort of became his son. His hired man. And I learned to do everything, I learned to ride a tractor, and he was a dairy farmer. During the war, I drove his big milk truck, but I was outside all the time, and I loved every minute of it. I just loved everything we did. And we never stopped for coffee breaks, we had a jar of water under an oak tree in the field I remember stopping to drink water. But other than that, I didn't know about coffee breaks, until after I got married.

Robert: Was there any prairie around there?

Lori: By the railroad tracks, and along the old road. It was managed by Bernie.

Robert: They were managing it back then?

Lori: That's the way they got so called weeds along the roadside. Because they were burning. I remember that.

Robert: They were native prairie species, right?

Lori: Yes, if I'd only known that when we played Indian on the farm, we made little wigwams, not little ones, you know big wigwams. And we drowned out squirrels and skin squirrels and pretend we were Indians. And if someone had said that those had been the flowers that the Indians had around them when they hunted. That would have been wonderful, but it never occurred to anyone to say that. No one knew it. Well, it certainly bothered him a little bit, but ? Was just a city kid. So, I didn't know that until I heard Hugh ? Talk about prairie plants at the first conference I went to. Prairie Conference in 1970. And I saw those slides, and I looked and heavens sakes that was ? on the railroad track and I didn't know? at all. Uh, um, and they were managed by Bernie, and I can remember being worried when they burned the railroad tracks cause I thought they would burn up the shooting star. And I used to gather great bouquets of shooting stars and carry them to my teacher in the springtime that I took to the country school that was a mile away and I'd walk the railroad tracks to get to school. And it was so beautiful in the springtime with all the shooting stars just millions of shooting stars. But I was so aware of my father's care particularly on the soil. And he had gone to the university short course before he became a farmer. And they must have had a marvelous professor there that really talked these guys into taking care of the soil. Because when he actually bought the farm then he had terraced the three hills and I didn't pay much attention to him. I didn't think much about....? But I didn't really realize what he had done until the day that I got my pilot's license. And that was the day after an enormous rainstorm. And my husband to be and I went up, that was my first passenger and I took him up. In this little tailer aircraft and we flew over, we were gonna fly over my father's farm, and over his father's property which was along ?. And so we flew over all this farmland to get to my dad's place. And the view was very disconcerting because there were great, great gully's and water that had washed away oats fields, and corn fields, and the soil was over the pas-

tures and it looked like a delta at the end of the Mississippi. Until we got to my fathers farm. And my fathers farm, it looked like a picture out of the national geographic. And there we concentric circles of water sanding the terraces and nothing. There wasn't a gully a ditch anywhere. And the pastures were just a bright emerald green. Nothing had washed out under those pastures. And I'm rather delighted that today after all that was subdivided that same pasture land is the green land for Madison. But I'll never forget..

Robert: This is during the new deal. This is during Roosevelt's New Deal period?

Lori: Yes, Yes, Yes. Um, well no it was considerably after that cause it was during WWII

Robert: Oh so it was, there was a legacy on that.

Lori: Uh yes. It was between the new deal and first of all my father had that ag. short course. And then during Roosevelt's time and the Depression, I happen to remember those terrible, terrible gust storms. We lived through all of that.

Robert: So there were storms in this country?

Lori: Oh, awful. Oh, awful.

Robert: I always think it of more in the plains states.

Lori: Oh, no. No it would come through the screens and we had a drought. And it was so hot even though our house was on the highest hill and all the windows were open. It was so hot we couldn't sleep in our beds. We would sleep on the varnished floors. But there would be grit on the floor, you would have to dust the floor first and you couldn't see the moon, and the.. everything was fuzzy when you looked at the sky. And the colors at sunsets, but the air, the air it was awful. Um, see I was born in 1919 and I don't know where the lord he's? Then, then Roosevelt after that he was wonderful programs. And my father entered into that in winter time. Farmers don't have all that much to do in the winter time. And he would go off and persuade other farmers to rotate their crops and to terrace their lands and to plant windbreaks. But I can remember him with a great big wheel that had a tape measure on it. And I would, I was in school, so I didn't go off with him, But he really was committed to trying to be a better farmer and to train other farmers to do that. So that, so I got that feeling from the earth from my dad. That was for sure. Certainly not my mother who never, ever went outside. Um, she papered, or cleaned, but she never went outside. She was a city girl. Um, I didn't do anything environmentally I didn't even write a letter to the editor. And I wasn't a member of any conservation organization where as today I am a life member of every conservation organization that offers life membership. And I think I belong to most of them in the country, Missouri Prairie Foundation. The whole group . So I wasn't reading much literature that educated me in any way. IT was just the little things that we get over the radio. But nothing stimulated me to do anything. And I think you can get very discouraged with people. We were taught in school, we didn't have environmental courses in school. There wasn't such a thing as an environmental degree when I came out of college. There was no such thing. So, we weren't alerted . I can vaguely remember someone saying, you shouldn't have more than three children because there were a lot of people in the world . Some sociologist on the campus had said that, that long ago. And you ought to have three because in case one died then you'd end up with two. I can remember someone saying that in the restroom.. Other than that I can't remember any environmental concerns that I got in my college education. And I started out in botany, and then at the end of the year, the dean of women called me in and she said "What do you think you are doing." And I thought

well I 'm such a good girl. I don't smoke, I don't drink. What does she mean what does she think I'm doing. And I said, "Well what do you mean.?" And she said "Is that all you want to be> Just a high school biology teacher." And I thought well that's not such a bad thing to want to be. Then there was a women, her name was Greely, that was a women who really had a chip on her shoulder about what women were not allowed to do apparently. And she had it, and she must of called in, I bet she called in every A student who was female on that campus. And gave them the kind of lecture that she gave me. So, um she said you just take a year off and take whatever you want to take until you find something that, that, so you can take another course so you can go in another direction. So that's what I did, and I took leaf archeology, and Kekopher was a famous economist and so I took his course cause I certainly didn't know anything about money, and um, some history courses, and anyway I ended up in something called related art and that's what my graduate degree was in. Which was wonderful because looking back now it's always been my love of design that I think I was just born with. Cause I remembered just loving everything, the way the sun would shine on the eves, on the ears of corn, and on the silk coming out of the ends of the ears. I don't know, just, I just seemed all of a sudden a paradise. Obvious things like the blossoms of the apple trees, but in the little green apples. It was just always into that, and today now that when you look at my house, you look around and you see the original art of the little piggies on the walls, and the sculpture in the corner on the balcony. And the Mosee by the bench next to the entry way. I mean everything you look at is designed with ceramics, and then as I said to British television was here for two days last week, and this man was interviewing me, garden designer, we were sitting at the table and I said do you think a woman who lives like this and sees like this, you open up the door and walk outside and look at a lawn something that's bleak, its a lawn. So, as it turned out. That was a marvelous major, I'm indebted into that dean woman who called me in and said you know look around, see how many other paths there are in life that you could be taking. And then when I ended up in Portland Oregon during the war and went down to the employment bureau to get a job, I wasn't qualified for anything. She said you take shorthand. I said no. Do you type? And I said no. And everything thing she said, I said no and I said however I have a college degree and I can learn and so she said and I said what about these shipyards over here, who works in those? And I said they weren't born knowing how to build ships, and she said no, and then she said well what would you like to do. I said what's the highest paying job, and she said welding, and I said fine I'll go to welders school, and that's what I did. Then when I ended up coming out of school that fine training of art work that I had done, developed the tiny muscles in my hand and arm-or something, and I was really good, so I became the specialty welder on those (?) ships because you can't -as that rod is melting down - have you ever welded?

Robert: no

Lori: so this hand has to move not only this way, but it has to move this way and you can't break that arc, and I could do that. I would never form a bundle, but that went right back to that college education that i had, learning to letter really control of my hand. So, but mostly it payed off, I think. It's just the richness of my life. It just continued on. It's always there. I always want to make everywhere I go more beautiful. I walked into my children's grade school, and it looked like Alcatraz. The brick on the outside looked like

dog poop, and inside there was nothing, just these long hallways. So, um I was part of an art committee- chairman- every other year to get art on the sides of the schools, and then one day I said to the people of the committee, "what are we doing?" Inside lets do something outside, and then began planting native plants outside of the school. Then just four years ago I planted an environmental garden for that same grade school that I started out at on my daughter now, who is 51 years old. I still do things for that school. I donate art to them, and I've done this really beautiful environmental garden for them, which I chose all the trees and the shrubs and the wildflowers, and payed for them, planted them, and payed for the management, which isn't much because its a little, there isn't a lot of managing to do. Again it's just this fullness of wanting a diversity of life, and a healthy life; with all of its insects, wether they be in soil or on plants or in the air and to have the- it's just a been such a precipitous drop in songbird pop. It's terrible. The first one was during those DDT years

Robert: and that's when you got involved with those issues

Lori: well I moved here and I was here maybe five years or so. Moved here in the early 50's, and I think I was here about five years when the DDT situation became a real problem. First with mosquito, and then after that spraying of the Elm trees. There are elm trees everywhere, all the streets were lined with elm trees, and they were spraying from the ground at first

Robert: What were they spraying them for?

Lori: the Dutch Elm disease. They were spraying by helicopter, and after i had started reading, especially all the information that doctor Joe had gave to me from his graduate students, and he and I met, we were both on the board of the Wisconsin Chapter of Nature resources. He had given all this information, and I was really a highly educated suburban woman, as far DDT was concerned, just because he bet me.

As he found out things, and as his students—he had students who were doing research with us, but then he was in contact with other universities and with other students, and so all this information was accumulating, and every time he'd get something, he'd mail it to me. So

Robert: How did you get involved in this little bit, the TNC, Nature Conservancy?

Lori: Oh, that was through Hughie Oklas (?). The first thing. . .

Robert: How'd you Meet?

Lori: I met Hugh . . . I brought him down here to give a lecture to my rich neighbors. We owned 20 acres of land. Gorgeous woodland that. Always on Sundays we would go for walks through the woods, and then we discovered that. I mean when we bought the water house, we didn't realize we bought into a corporation. That owned the streets and the paths to the beach, and we owned 20 acres of land jointly. Well, we came here, my little son was 3 years old, and you don't hike very well with a three year old, and by the time he got a little older we would do our Sunday hikes in that incredibly wonderful woods. You couldn't walk in there without an identification book in your pocket because there were just so many flowers we had never seen before, and Lake Michigan acts as a big refrigerator, and when the glaciers we see that the man with the heat came, and a lot of this area turned to prairie, our deep deep ravines were held cool by the air from Lake Michigan, so there were little relic pieces, left from the Boreal Forests, and that made this very special. So, one day—oh, we had annual meetings. And one night we went to the

annual meeting. And by golly they were going to sell that 20 acres so that they would have money for the upkeep of the private roads, and they were going to have a guard at the gate to keep our roads private. And they would just sell that 20 acres, and then they would invest the money. We'd always have this as long as we lived. Well, this is a neighborhood where by God, the people here could afford to make underwear, you know it was crazy that they couldn't dig down in their pocket and contribute. The roads had fallen apart and they needed some money, there were big potholes, and no one. I mean, these were people (can't understand) from Stevens Point, but even when you go into a store and you buy sausages and it says Usinger(?) on it? Well, the original family lived right across the street from me. Usinger, who's the big bread guy? Yager had a couple more houses. Yager couldn't reach down in his pocket? Pay the fix the potholes? I mean this was goofy. And when I heard—this was before I knew about the woods—so I heard that I had one voting stock in woods, so the woods is down about 2 blocks if I follow the street. So my husband and I walked over one day and this was this gorgeous woods, and I did not know why they should not be destroyed, but I just knew it shouldn't be destroyed, but I didn't know why. And there was a lot I didn't know about that woods, so I came home, and I called up my bookstore, and I said to Jeanette Shopper, I want you to send me every book you have on identification of flowers and of shrubs and any of the environmental books. So I got Virginia Eifert's first book. I got Leopold's. . .whatever it was, and I got . . .and I just sat down and I just read them all. And somehow or another, I heard of this hebutus(?) and I got all the neighbors together in a big barn of a house across the street right on the border of that property, and I had Hugh (?). Hugh was so passionate. God, he was wonderful. At any rate, when it finally came through, they had voted before I did all this, they had voted to do soil tests, percolation tests on this. And then they had a yearling (?), and before we met, I went to , I chose 4 other women, educated them, and then we took photographs of the (?) they had made of the wild flowers. All the people who lived along the lake were interested in the lake didn't give a damn about the wildflowers, so we had to go to them with photographs of wildflowers, and convince them that this was worth saving.

Robert: door to door on this.

Lori: What? Yeah, literally door to door. We did it door to door. So we contacted all 100 people. I then I took all the people who had died, I had to look up the will and what not. We voted and we won by three votes. And it was interesting the people who . The husband of the woman was a real sage, oh my god this house, it was a neighbor over 3 houses, and when I looked at him and asked for his vote, He said, "Well, Lori, I only care about mowing the lawn, but I like you so much, if you really care about this, I'll vote to save it," and then at the meeting, someone got up and said, "I'm sure as hell not going to vote for a place just for Lori Otto to walk in," you know it was a real fight. It got down to money. But that's how I met Hugh, and that was really my first time that I dabbled into any kind of controversy about the environment. That was launched me really, but not so seriously that I gave up all the public things I was doing, that didn't happen until the DDT rights. So to save Fairy \_\_\_? \_\_\_. And uh, then is when I voted Stebernstein (?). And nobody else . . .that's what's so disturbing. We were big coffee clutches here, all of us who had little children. We would meet at ten o'clock in the morning and we would go down to the beach or something. . .on the porch. Our children would play together on the beach or in



the sand pile. So I said, I can't figure out what's eating the heads of the robins. And they'd say, "It's robins, Lori, what are talking about," and I said, "Well, the robins . . . and they die, and then you see the bodies around and they don't have any heads. What's eating the heads?" Well, they didn't even see that the robins were into vultures(?). Then a couple days later they'd say, "Well, Lori, yeah I did notice a robing fluttering around on my lawn," and then everyone said. . . I mean I don't know why the guys who mow the lawns didn't notice the robins without the head, but I seem to be the only one you know who's never seen? And then as I've said before, you have to be educated enough in the environment before you?. And that's the great advantage of being a member of a conservation organization and you ought to be a member of at least four or five so you get their newsletters, and that's because you can't get it from the newspapers. Once in a while you will have an outstanding environmental reporter. We had Paul Hayes for example for the journal, who used to do great articles now he's retired. But, but that was only occasionally. Where as the newsletters, they are so educational and so you really can't get upset with when someone comes around here collecting for citizens for a Better Environment or for decade, damn few people here will give them any money and all of them people could afford to and should because they're responsible for destroying the earth, my gosh. These are the people who are really doing it. But they don't probably inside the gares and only 5 of us out of the forty give anything to these people who come to our doors and probably the other four only give because they see my name on there. Ah, but you can't get angry with them, because they, they don't know. And you don't get that on television, I mean where can they be educated to care. So that's part of it. I mean people who say they're good citizens, they're patriotic, they hang their flag out on the fourth of July, that's being patriotic. Or they go vote and they're patriotic. What are we doing to save our country? And to save what is our earth. Look at the birds on the flags and the vegetation. That's us, that's our country. That's the foundation of our life. What's left of our country? We're different from every other country on the whole planet and you'd think that we would have an obligation to save it, instead of knowing that we're destroying it, and diminishing and the diversity. It's awful. We all plant the same kinds of flowers. We all the plant the same kinds of trees. And we all mow the lawns. And then they think they're being good citizens cause they mow their lawns. No, they got a back end too. Um well, withe the DDT hearings, I went to the village which I have never gone to a village meeting. And I went in, this whole stack of stuff that Joe Wicki had given me to say to may village that we should not be spraying. This is just too awful, you're killing the birds. And they would say they were much too busy to read this. If you go in a to make a presentation with a half a page summarize it or whatever. Cause these guys won't read it. I mean that's true. If you appear before the legislature in Madison or I suppose I'd be never been before congress but I bet its the same way there too. They're just too damn busy with too many things, they aren't gonna read them. So I had no, I didn't know how to speak, I was just one scared housewife with a quivering little voice and went into there in front of these nine guys and just told them the terrible thing that were happening because they were spraying DDT and they just say well everybody else is doing it. What difference is it if we do it or they say what do you want birds or trees. And I say uh, uh and you just look at them Robert: either or.

Lori: yeah, yeah, yeah, and it wasn't just birds for God's sakes, It was just the really tough

part with I went to an elk, well lets see first of all, Joe, the AG department had appointed a committee to represent all of the users of DDT in our state. And those were. . . Someone represented the canning industry. Someone represented the fishing industry, someone represented the hunters, someone represented parks and recreation, someone represented the municipalities, well you got down and you had 17 people. Has anyone, has Jim talked about that? 17 people that advised the AG department, and the Ag department in turn, put out their advisory to the communities to whether they would use DDT or not. So this, there was a wonderful reporter from the Milwaukee Sentinel who worked behind the scenes behind this DDT and . . .

Robert: was it Kennetts?

Lori: No, Olson.

Robert: It wasn't Don Johnson?

Lori: Johnson. Olsen. Don Johnson.

Robert: I've talked to him.

Lori: you have.

Robert: Yes, he told me how he found out about it in a drinking session with um, Shanberger, the Fish Commission, and they got drunk together and he spilled the beans.

Lori: No kidding.

Robert: Yeah, I have it on tape. And he went back to down here and he went to the university and they wouldn't tell him anything at Madison. He went to Les Voight and wouldn't say a word. He went to the Ag department and they wouldn't say a word. Cause he said they had this agreement, this trilateral agreement where unless all three of them signed off an release of the information, the other two could not release anything. It was against the law - they had some kind of agreement between the department of agriculture, the university, and the department of Natural Resources.

Lori: I didn't know the university too.

Robert: Yeah, and so he said, you know, he was basically running against a brick wall. And he finally went to Walter Scott. He sat down and said Walter was at his desk. He was on the other side. He said, "Walter, I know somethings up with this DDT issue. I know it's bad. Something's going on and I know people have information and they just won't release it. Something's fishy. I need your help. And Walter said, "You know, I work for the DNR here so obviously I can't talk to you. I can't give you anything. " So he said, you know, he still was talking to him, he was pleading his case, and Walter stood up, opened his drawer, pulled out a stack of papers, slammed it on his desk, kind of dramatically and walked out of the office. Which was a cue. It was all the raw data that the DNR had on DDT cumulations and great lake fisheries and also some of the fisheries up north. And also the gulls against the gull acts, you know, I think it was the gulls they were looking at that there wasn't any reproduction, and so he had all this data, he took it, and that was how Walter Scott helped him.

Lori: That, God I'm glad to know that, because -

Robert: So then he had to figure out, it was all raw data, and he was just a reporter - he didn't know how to decipher it, he finally was able to figure how to, and that's when he wrote the story.

Lori: Gosh, I'm glad to know that. Walter Scott solves damn shitty scare and when it came time to vote that committee. Larry Molo was guy who would vote whether to use DDT or

not. And this was after Johnson had exposed the fact that there was DDT even in Lake Michigan. And that the gulls were regurgitating the ex-lax and their young couldn't make it. That's wonderful, anyway, when Walter, when Larry Molo, first of all they voted to use DDT, and that made me furious. Then they abstained from Molo. The last time they voted, Joe voted not to use it on that committee of 17, Joe represented the University, and Larry Molo represented the DNR. Everybody voted to use DDT, even after this big expose' of the, that Johnson did. But they abstained. When they abstained, I was furious with Walter. And he said to me, "Lori, we share the same toilet," I couldn't believe that, and I came into everything so innocent, I was so innocent. And I couldn't believe that officials said these things and acted this way and. . .

Robert: Basically he was saying he had to live with these guys.

Lori: That's right! He had to live with those guys.

Robert: He didn't want to rock the boat.

Lori: Yep, yep. And I would come to him with things that Joe had said to me, and because Walter had asked me to call up all these people and I had such a good report, you know I REALLY got into it. What degree, what the solution of DDT was and how often they put it on and how many trees they put it on, the whole thing, I got all the details. Cause I would narrow in, and I finally got smart enough to go at the end of the day, all workers come back into the village and the chief guy's there and so I just go there and face them head on and I had the score Walter had given me and I just filled out the whole thing. The DNR wants to know this, well so bit by bit, I got into a good relation with Walter, but I just remember him as scared, a scared man, Well, with Johnson, I had gone to a Elm tree conference in Madison where they recognized. . . . And before I went to that, I had lunch with Joe at noon and He said that they had tested all of the lakes and the rivers in Wisconsin, no maybe Walter that, that all the lakes and rivers they had tested and they had found DDT in every single one of them. That day when I had lunch with Wicki, His report had just come in on DDT in the Great Lakes, that big lake - 80 miles across and here there were DDT in the alewives, the chumps, the chumps because the chumps are very greasy, there's lots of oil in them, yes that's right I haven't eaten chumps since then, you know that? Chumps, but um, that was so overwhelming and so I went from lunch with Joe and then at the conference to have the Ag committee and all these guys -Charles Coleval, recommending DDT. I couldn't believe it. And I kind of dragged myself out, all these men went, they got their coats and I was out getting my coat and there were just a few guys left, they had big mink coats, and as I was reaching for my coat, the guy next to me said Larry Molo from DNR and I said, "I just can't believe this, they recommending DDT when that report that the DDT in the fish" and he said " you keep your mouth shut." He said that they tested every one third fish in all of the lakes and rivers. And he was furious with me. And I said, " I didn't know anything about the lakes and rivers of Wisconsin" He said, " I was talking about Lake Michigan." HE didn't know about Lake Michigan. So here we were standing in this room and he said, "Keep your mouth shut." I said, " Are you worried about the tourist leaving Wisconsin?" He said, " Yes and this is just as bad in Michigan and Minnesota." And I said " Yeah, but you don't want the tourists to play musical chairs, and that's what you're talking about. And he said, " Yes, that's true, we will announce it, but we will all announce it together at the same time." Well, I got in the car and drove home, and I was going to appear at my village, the following day with all of this informa-



tion that I just heard that there was DDT in the fish and in all our fish whether it's Lake Michigan or whatever. So I drove home and I thought, well if I let this out, I'm responsible for the crash of the fishing industry in Wisconsin, Molo made me feel it was my fault.

Robert: All your fault.

Lori: Yes, the fisher and all the fishermen, and we're the third greatest fishing licence. And all the money, they get from fishing licenses and well, the whole economy would collapse, if I opened my mouth so I drove I decided, I'd just take this Johnson, and let him be responsible for the collapse of the economy in Wisconsin.

Robert: That's his job.

Lori: So, I went in to see Johnson and he said, "Please don't say anything. I worked so hard on this Lori, I worked so hard on this. I had to go behind doors, and in the Ag department and the DNR. I'm just getting it together -Don't blow it for me. Please." I said, "I won't say anything."

He didn't trust me. The next morning the whole front page of the Sentinel was all of this, then the Journal at night. The journal at night reduced it to one column. But, that's wonderful to know about Scott. How great that he did that. Dear Walter. Scared Walter. Well, so they voted to use DDT, I don't know the year, well, let's see.

Robert: When did Johnson's story come out? In '64. He told me. Was it 64?

Lori: It must have been later, because uh, Because I remember picking up, I remember it was a Thursday, I picked up the local newspaper, the community newspaper and on the headlines was that the Northshore communities were going to spray the DDT and I thought, the Sunday before that I read in the Milwaukee Journal, the Sunday paper that there was this group of scientists who were trying to stop the spraying of DDT in Long Island.

Robert: So it was the same time. It must have been '68.

Lori. Somewhere in there. And so I called Joe and I said, "I'm going to fly to New York and meet these people and have them come to Wisconsin. "Joe said, but Lori." "You call Charles Worster."

Lori (continuing): In the meantime, I had stuff from Charles Worster and had been corresponding with him. But he didn't know me from anyone. And I said to him, "You call up Charlie Worster and tell him who I am and I'm coming up immediately." And Joe said, "Lori, wait another week, because we are having the national meeting for nature conservancy." And Joe was also the treasurer of the National Agency and he said, "I will fly out with you." So I waited a week. And we flew into the big airport in New York and Joe went on to the meeting and I got on the little plane and flew to Long Island. I had been talking to him on the phone. And I said, "when can I call you," and he said, "you can call me anytime, all through the night, if you want to." So it thought, what is this, doesn't he sleep. I expected some old guy up in the attic somewhere working on DDT, and he said to me "I want to know more about DDT more than any other living person on this planet." And so he had corresponded with everyone, talked to everyone he could. He really knows about DDT and he had great stories to tell. On campus, for example, the guy would come to spray the trees and then he had the students go out and collect the birds, the warblers that died on campus. They had this big freezer, and he had all these birds and the next year

when the guy came to spray the trees, he said, " come in, want to show you something in the lab." And he opened up the freezer and showed him all these dead warblers and that guy stood there. He said, " You mean to tell me, I did this?" And Charlie said, " Yes, you did." He said, " Never spray the trees again." He just didn't. He stopped. He said, " I will never forget the look on that man's face." Anyway, so , when i got ready to meet Charlie, I said, " I'm 6 feet tall and i have gray hair. ' I expected a great mob of people, how would I know him. And he didn't describe himself to me at all. So I just described myself and I told him I'd be wearing a blue and white dress. So I got on the plane and there was only one other person on the plane. It was a tiny little woman and she was black, and she was oh 22 years olds and she was short. So, got off the plane, there was no one there, so I walked into the airport, small airport. And there's only one person there, and here's this blond, looked like a curly haired kid about 25 years old and he was the only one there and the black lady sailed through, no one was picking her up and so I thought, well, uh, old Dr. Worster has sent me one of his students to pick me up. So I walked towards him and I said something, I dropped the name, Dr. Worster, and he said, " You can't be. . . You can't be Mrs. , You're Lori Otto?" Out of the two people, it has to me. So he 40 years old and I was fifty years old. Joe Wicki was 60 years old. And that , I spent the afternoon with Charlie - we had dinner together and the next day, Joe came in from his Nature Conservancy meeting and the three of us walked together on the beach and it was interesting. We three, Norwegians, blonds, walking together of the beach, I was between the two men and they would call out the amount of DDT in the breasts of various birds that they saw. They didn't call out the names, they call the percentage of DDT that's formed in the breasts of these different kinds of birds. Anyway, Charlie, that night had gone to their lawyer. He said we got all these scientists together he said we got this idea that science and the law can combine and we can make a difference and He said, we need a case. Otherwise this is going to dissolve. And I said God I got the perfect case for you in Wisconsin, if you'd come in any earlier, we wouldn't have been able to get any money, and you wouldn't have support. If you come in later, it's going to be too late. I mean we had 60 eagle nests, we only have 3 left, along the shore of Lake Michigan and they aren't producing young. No eggshells, You have to come now. He said, " Lori, we've got all the marbles. All we need to do is lay them out in front of a judge." And I said, " We've got the judge in Wisconsin, We've got a special law with our DNR, we have a DNR hearing examiner and it runs like a courtroom, and we just have to prove that this is a pollutant in the waters of Wisconsin. And Anyway, he went to Victor Ganico that night and he said, yeah, lets do this. So the next day, Joe and I were getting on this little airplane to fly out and Charlie said, "we're going to need \$50,000 to come into this state, I had to find a lawyer that would introduce Ganico into the state." And I said, " sure I can do that, because I have a lot of friends who were lawyers." And I thought it was going to be simple, as it turned out it wasn't simple, but anyway, at that time, I thought it was. \$50,000 - I couldn't think of where I'd get \$50,000. Any money we had, went directly into my husbands psychiatric hospital. We didn't have any money, period. I don't think I even had \$100 in my banking account and he was a poor professor's son and I was a farmer's daughter and my father went into bankruptcy. We didn't know anything about money, we didn't have any money. And what's more, we didn't know people who had money. There was no one I could turn to. He said \$50,000 and Charlie said, " Just go to your group and ask them!" I got on the plane and I said to

Joe," The group? I don't have a group!" I'll tell you, after this, I got a group. That's when I really started joining Conservation sections, so I got home, I thought, God, who do I go to? So I went to the Audubon Society, and I was not a member. I just found out and went to their meeting. And these old men smoking were around a big fireplace in some building somewhere.

Robert: No women.

Lori: NO, and I came in and told them about this and they sat around kind of transfixed as if I were some angel that had just dropped out from heaven. And the president sat with his big cigar, he said, "this is too good to be true, too good to be true. He said he'd give \$700. I knew there were other organizations and so I took the \$700. And then I went to the Izaak Walton and they had no money, no money, but they had a lawyer, a feisty wonderful poor, financially poor, lawyer in a little shack on Water Street, not exactly a shack, but a dingy little office. But anyway, when I got home, right away I tried to find a lawyer, no siree, they would not help me because their clients were polluters of Lake Michigan. But anyway, I couldn't, I had a neighbor who was a good, good friend, I couldn't believe I had classmate from high school days and college, no sir, they wouldn't. I couldn't believe this. I couldn't believe that. So when I called the Izaak Walton, it was a woman, an older woman, she said, "that's terrible. So I took my beat up car, went down to water - oh when, I asked my friends, I talked to their offices, Do you go to lawyers' offices? You can't believe it - You walk in there and say oh so this is why my bills are so big - \$300 an hour. I went to this guy's office and it was a dingy little hole and so I walked and he said "sure, I'll do that." And then he also became one of the petitioners with us. But, oh gosh, well, getting back, I went to ,from Izaak Walton, I went to Sierra Club.

Robert: What was the name of your lawyer?

Lori: I've never remembered his name. And you know, he was a crucial step in this. Well, we could call Mirriam Dahl - she's still alive, she's still working with . . . But I also, I wonder if um, but people don't think he's important , they wouldn't have put his name down. The guy who wrote this had socks so dirty they would stand up and they were mismatched. He found. . . i had to find homes for all the scientists, because didn't want to pay hotel bills for them, and we also put up the reporters that came. Any rate, then I went to the Sierra Club. Marvelous, young man who was president. They had just moved into a brand new home with their two little children must have been 4 and 6 years old. They were such a good-looking couple. And I sat there with this whole story -left all my information with them because this was such a , so worth it and I never, ever heard from them again. It turned out that was the day he was diagnosed with some kind of cancer that went so fast and it killed him. But I could certainly see why he never, the last thing he cared was DDT. He just had a short time.

Robert: This was what group?

Lori: That was the Sierra Club, so I lost the Sierra Club. I couldn't get anything from the Izaak Walton cause they didn't have any money, and I only had \$700 from Milwaukee. I found out that Milwaukee Audubon, you know they aren't very rich and now I'm a life member of Audubon, and I know a lot about Milwaukee Audubon. They don't have money and they little. They are great activists. You can't get directors of Nature Centers to do anything for you because they are dependent on money to get the wealthy people and wealthy people are well, can't step on toes, otherwise you don't get money. It's crazy. But

anyway, then i thought I would go to the fish people, there had to be somebody who was in charge of fisherman so Slip Brothers is the big fish name in Wisconsin or at least our part of Wisconsin up here. So I went up to the Slip Brothers and scared stiff DDT, terribly worried about it, but he said, we can't let people know it's in our fish. My restaurant business will go bad. He said, he ended up, he gave \$15 because fisherman are poor, are poor people. So I got \$15 . OK, then I thought, Honeybees, Guys who sold honey acres. That's the big. So I called up the guy with Honey Acres. He said they were terrible. . . And He said he'd give me ten dollars so he gave me ten dollars. So then, there was woman who was a big birder in Waukesha, I've forgotten her name. . . Nelson. Her husband was on the board of directors of my husband's hospital and my husband said to go to Nelson. So I called her, she knew what was happening in the bird world, she really knew and so she gave me \$500 but I could see I was a long ways. That was the end of my rope. Then my daughter came home, my daughter was a freshman in high school and her teacher and she came home and she said," Mommy why don't you talk to my biology teacher." Her biology teacher was Roy Brown. So I called him up, not knowing him at all and he said," where do you live" and I called him school, and he said," where do you live?" And I told him, he said" I'll be over right after school". He sat there and I sat here. And he said," I'll give you everything we have, our entire treasurer and if we die doing this, it'll be worth the cause we have members in Madison, that will find places that they can be fed and housed. "

Robert: He was representing the -

Lori; CNRA. And then his father, and he was still at the Milwaukee Public Museum. So I called Charlie, I can't do any better. It was Roy who suggested that we have A meeting of interested people, by which he meant wealthy people at the museum and he had Charlie Worster talk to them about DDT. So I called Charlie, and he came in. And I expected an audience, but there were like 7 people. Well, one of those people was Fred Ott, people so often when I met people they say do you Freddy Ott? And I say, "NO" " Well, you ought to meet him" So there was that Fred Ott and Owen Grommi, he was an old man and he felt that .... Was Charles Worster, this man who was forty years old but looked as though he was 25 and he was such an appealing, and he so articulate. And he was teacher and he could say the essentials all in an outline and just he could just educate in a such short time. It was a joy to listen to him. And these older men, and just took off, and Freddy Ott, made his fortune in paper - the worst polluters and i think it's on Freddy's conscious and he truly cares, had spread himself much too thin. But he was fantastic, he got up thousands of dollars, I counted up to \$80,000 but it was late. I had , when we got to fifteen thousand dollars and we started the ball rolling, everybody met in this house, Ganico, and worster, and the scientists from the East Coast, California, 2 from Canada, Louisiana. Like Charles Worster said,

" It's a big scientific puzzle, and the whole puzzle was put together here, a lot of these guys talked to each other on the phone, they never met each other and they just wouldn't go to sleep, you know? I had persuaded my neighbors to take them in, so they could sleep all night and they wouldn't go , they wouldn't go, they slept on the floor. I came out on the balcony the next morning, and there were men lying all over the floor, I had to step over them to get to the kitchen to make -they drank tea. But I can remember stepping over these bodies,, but as I was standing there looking down at them, I thought, These people

over there from California, 2 from long island and they were on the couches but mostly on the floor and then they hadn't even turned off the cuckoo clock. They must have talked all night. And they were terribly excited about meeting each other, and they all had this passionate feeling about the horror of DDT. And it was great to see it all happen.

Robert: Now, in the Dunlapp's write-up here, he talks about how there was first this Milwaukee suit. .. a tree company was involved and the city of Milwaukee and they said that before they even filed a suit . . . They said they'd just stop spraying.

Lori: Yeah, we. . . That was a frightening day. They sent us.

Robert: Was that before all this.

Lori: that was before we went up, no, how was that. Because Ganico was there, he did the thing, and we went in and we lost, And we, Walter Scott had steered us on to the wrong ordinance or whatever it's called, so we were on the wrong one. It was Belke tree company I guess, here in Milwaukee and it just lasted a half a day. This one particular guy decided to stop to stop spraying. So we had done nothing- we'd stop one guy from spraying along the waterway, that wasn't it. And we were all close to tears. And Vince said, " you know you got the wrong . . . take this one." And so we just turned right around and picked up the pieces and off we were on this other ordinance. Whatever it was, so we got the right one. Boy, that sure worked. I remember they'd meet here, in the middle of the hearing, now the hearing would go on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and then started the 2nd of December and we had however many days that was, then the rebuttal by a chemical, January and February sometime in there. And then we came back with our rebuttal. But um,

Robert: You said they would meet every Tuesday?

Lori: Yeah, and . . . Oh, Victor, they would reassess here before Victor would fly off. Victor always had to go home. He always went home.

Robert: Back east.

Lori: Back East. Yeah, he was extremely dependent upon his wife and son, it was his anchor. Boy, he was so wild, we had to fire him, it was too bad. /gosh, but he would sit here and say: " Charlie, call Sweden, I want the mother's milk. " And so Charlie would go to the phone and call Sweden, it would be the middle of the night in Sweden, and convince this fellow to appear at our hearing - whatever his name was- What, we needed money then and then everyone would go and Freddy Ott would go to the telephone and he'd call up a friend and he would say," Jack I wan a thousand dollars on my desk tomorrow morning." Then whoever it was would say something...

Then he would say well, just a minute. . . Eddy gave me, he'd pull out a check, Eddy gave me 2300 yesterday, but you know we have to bring these guys in, and we have to feed them and that costs more he said if you get me 1000 dollars tomorrow morning, get \$500 from Dick, and said I want \$1000 on my desk, and then you know he'd get off the phone and he'd call someone else, and I was Baffled. I sat down in the chair, and I said, "Freddy, how'd you do this," and he said, "oh Lori we scratch each other's backs." So that's how we got that. I never had to fund drive ever again, Thank God, that was something I couldn't do. I tell, I did lots of other things. I said scratching in the New York Times cuz I want a big converge on this. And there was a column that was written on our DDT. And some guy who really needed and wanted what he was talking about. And I can't remember whether it was before he set the second or afterwards, but there was this column and

he was really good, So but there was no need. We were (can't understand) It was just as a. . . So I started reading Times, and I read over and until I found this man's pattern. So then I wrote to him, thanked him for what he had written, telling him that.

Robert: He is written from the Times

Lori: That's right, now wait a minute, how did I find out. Then I saw an article by him, and said this is the guy who did that other one. So I wrote a letter to him, and said—he was very flattered that I had written to him. And so then that way I had his compliments. And he said keep posting him on this. Well, as it turned out I really didn't need to because there was a wonderful woman who walked in the first day, her name was Wendy Wold (?) . And she sat down on the wrong side, of the room. They were all lined up, there was all ag-technical guys lined up on the one side of the room, and then on the other side of the room, were all the environmentals. And I sat down and I thought what the hell is that blonde doing over there. So I went over and sat down beside her because I had to find out she was. And she was she was unattractive. She weighed too much, and uh, she had on a short skirt that she should have never sat down in, blonde hair on down to the, she was not attractive. Anyway, I sat down beside her, found out she was a reporter for the Act of kindness (?), and I thought, oh you know she's, I'm not sure what her background was, but it was in science. It wasn't. She was an art history major. I had an art history minor. So what she wanted to do was she wanted to be an art critic for a New York paper, so she had graduated from Wisconsin, went to New York and couldn't stand the dirty air.

And came back, and her mother worked for the Wisconsin State Journal, and so Whitney went to the Apple (?) Times, and the Times already had an art critic, a music critic and so they just said well they needed someone to cover these hearings. God was she ugly. She'd write up the hearings, and Jackle (?) times gave her whatever space she wanted, she was always on the front page, always big headlines, it was Fantastic. This woman gets a tremendous amount of credit for this, but she would write up for instance the estrogen and the h-thing which is a very complicated thing, that story. And I read her, she wrote enough for the paper, and the next day, she came rushing in she rushed up to charlie, she said, "Did I make any mistakes," and he said, "yes you did" and then he corrected her, whatever the hormone was, and then that night she corrected the paper, she made that correction. Then the day that they talked about thinning up that, when ag-chemical came on, they had these wonderful tests with quail. And there was no way they fed DDT to them, and there was, I don't know, whatever they did, there was no effect on them. On the eggshells, and then this smart alec who worked with chickens, and he said, " Well, they break the sound barrier, and it scares the shell out of them," that's why the eagle shells were thin, . At any rate, that was on a Thursday afternoon that Ag came up with this no effect on eggshells. And it hit the settle, the headlines, DDT Doesn't affect eggshells. Of course, the guys who had contributed to the money, and bought them were furious. They called Freddy and said, " what did you tell us," and uh Whitney in the meantime, rushed up to Charles, and said, "no, those aren't the birds, they're the insect" And the carnivores, he said, not the seed eaters, he said, that's. . .next Tuesday, so he said, "Well, I'm just going. . .(can't understand)" So the people in Madison (laughs), I told that to someone recently, I don't know Paul Hayes, or somebody, He said, "My God, she was a good reporter" so there ain't no truthful stuff in the paper, she got the truth. (laughs)

Robert: That will come in Handy



Lori: Anyway, Whitney went on, she got something she suspected here at Harvard, she came back, now she's on the end of toil grinder for 17. But her covering of that trial she educated Madison, she educated legislatures, and by god until that time, you could never get a GDTE bill out of committee, never could. Ag would never let it out cuz CNRA had tried that. There was, you just couldn't. After this hearing a year before Manchester came down with his ruling the legislature. I don't know how many days after our hearing ended, the bill passed the legislature, to ban DDT., It just went bang zoom like that.

Robert: So those Nelson was this jerk with the

Lori: Gaylord was

Robert: Nolve?

Lori: who was that guy? . . . . Could have been Nolve, cause I know . I think it was Nolve? Cause after that I went into Natural Landscaping and I know Nolve had a, a beautification for people in that. We were defending Don Hagon with this, but that was in 19? I don't know when Nolve came into office.

Robert: I don't know, but I know he was governor in 1971. Seventy and seventy one. But that was when it was still a two year term wasn't it.

Lori: Yeah but he still could have been reelected couldn't he have?

Robert: But Nelson...

Lori: Yes he did. You bet he did and he did in congress. And you know when I went to...

Robert: Did he pick it up before the end of the hearing. Was he...

Lori: Oh, he picked it up before the hearing.

Robert: So he campaigned it?

Lori: Yeah, early. Uh, because when I appeared before the board that night of my village board here, the uh... I don't know. It was one of the board members or somebody... It must have been one of the board members and he said "You keep your mouth shut he said, or this will go all the way to Washington!" And I went ....And I got out of the car and low and behold Gaylord Nelson got voted into Congress and it was in our paper. And I thought that damn fool. Well it wasn't the next morning it was shortly after that some-time or another...he would face up. He really did work that way. Gaylord can't get up from you know there's a quote from me in the paper here. Of course he read all the Wisconsin papers so he picked it up. We lost six marbles...(can't hear her, she is mumbling) There were six wonderful, wonderful senators that went down at the next election.

Robert: You know the statute that was used, section 22706 that allowed the ? paper place where you could, um allows us to ask any state agency for a declaratory ruling on the act ability on the law enforce in that department...Do you know it it had ever been used before?

Lori: Oh no, I don't know. No I don't

Robert: OK, I was just wondering.

Lori: I only knew about it because of Walter Scott. He's the one who told us about it, and actually...that particular one...who told.

Robert: Maybe I have the wrong section or statute or whatever. And overall, who was. Les Voigt was the secretary at that time right?

Lori: Yes.

Robert: (Laughs) How helpful was the DNR in this case?

Lori: Uh, Walter, behind the scenes, but I remember....the people who, they didn't call us

environmentalists, they called us conservationists and then you got one lower than that and you were bird lovers but you were little old ladies in tennis shoes. And I was determined, I'm gonna model in New York in a museum?. And cause I was married to a man who's 6'4", I always wore high-heeled shoes and dresses. Um, and i remember growing up stopping in at Walter Scott's office, wearing a long dress with a chiffon scarf. And I went into his office and he said "Lori, I want you to come with me" And uh he said, "You have to be less buoyant." And so in the meantime he called up an outstanding environmental reporter. We had Paul Hayes for example for the journal, who used to do great articles now he's retired. But, but that was only occasionally. Whereas the newsletters, they are so educational and so you really can't get upset with, when someone comes around here collecting for citizens for a Better Environment or for decade, damn few people here will give them any money and all of them people could afford to, and should because they're responsible for destroying the earth, my gosh. These are the people who are really doing it. But they don't (can't understand)...probably inside of the gates and only five of us out of forty give anything to these people who come to our doors and probably the other four only give because they see my name on there. Ah, but you can't get angry with them, because they, they don't know. They don't know. And you don't get that on television, I mean where can they be educated to care. So that's part of it. I mean people who say they're good citizens. They're patriotic, they hang their flag out on the fourth of July, that's being patriotic, or they go vote and they're patriotic. What are we doing to save our country? And to save what is our earth. Look at the birds on the flags and vegetation. That's us, that's our country. That's the foundation of our life. What's left of our country? We're different from every other country on the whole planet. And you'd think that we would have an obligation to save it, instead of knowing that we're destroying it, and diminishing and the diversity. It's awful. We all plant the same kinds of flowers. We all plant the same kinds of trees. And we all mow the lawns. And then they think they're being good citizens cause they mow their lawns. No, they got a back end too. Um, well with the DDT hearings, I went to the village, which I have never gone to a village meeting. And I went in, this whole stack of stuff that Joe Wicki had given me to say to my village that we should not be spraying. This is just too awful, you're killing the birds. And they would say they were much too busy to read this. I you go in to make a presentation you go in with half a page. Summarize it or whatever. Cause these guys won't read it. I mean That's true If you appear before the legislature in Madison or I suppose I've never been before congress, but I bet it's the same way there too. They're just too damn busy with too many things they aren't gonna read them. So, but do Derrick? And I had no, I didn't know how to speak. I was just one seared housewife with a quivering little voice and went into there in front of these nine guys and just told them the terrible things that were happening because they were spraying DDT. And uh, they just say well everybody else is doing it. What difference is it if we do it. Or they say what do you want birds or trees. And I say uh, uh, and you just look at them.

Robert: Either, or

Lori: Yeah, yeah, yeah, and it wasn't just birds for god sakes, It was just the really tough part with ?(Un-understandable name) I went to an elk, well lets see first of all uh Joe, Uh the Ag Department had appointed a committee to represent all of the users of DDT in our state. And those were... someone represented the canning industry, someone represented

the fishing industry, someone represented the hunters, some one represented the parks and recreation, someone represented the municipalities. . .all \_\_\_\_ out. . .Could have been Nolse, cause I know, I think it was Nolse. Cause after that I went into natural landscaping and I know Nolse had a, a beautification for people in that. We were defending Don Hagon with this. But that was in 19—? I don't know when Nolse came into office. Robert: I don't know, but I know he was governor in 1971. 70 and 71. But that was when it was still a two year term,. wasn't it.

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Robert: The university was more enough people from the university

Lori: Oh of course Joe Dickey was wonderful.

Robert: Bill Riner, I gotta admit, bill Riner.

Lori: oh yeah, a zoologist. Yeah, and i haven't gee, I haven't had any contact with him since, I haven't even worked with him since, I don't know where he is. Yeah, he was very important in Madison, he got his students together, and everything was , we had everything to report, even the general secret to report. That was part of what the money we tried to get with us, everything was double reported. At night, let's see he wanted his scientists to come in a day early. One, because these guys would never peaceably come in, they never pink corded before. So he wanted them to sit there, and watch the days here to see what was expected of them. Then at night he would drill the hell out of them. As a matter of fact, he was , I heard him, I was in a hotel room with Joe Hickey and I couldn't stand it, I never heard or went to another one again. He would, he was so cruel, he was so cruel, and he interrupted them and tried to rattle them, and he just tear them to bits, and t

Lori: (continued). . .He would tear them to bits. And then he would help them build up the case that he had torn down. It was an amazing performance. The other thing is, we'd all have to go out to the airport to meet the guy who was coming in. Then, Kiln says, so he'd give us a . . .celebrity.

Robert: It all depended on him.

Lori: Yup, that's right, and then we had to find him, so we had, we had to rent a room, a private room in a restaurant and have a fine dinner and suddenly he would buy wine so we'd have wine with dinner. And we could not talk about DDT. We could not talk about DDT. So one night we were going in and Charlie and I were standing together and I said, "What drink, "there was enough sounds . And he said, "Shhh, there's a recording machine under the table," I said there's a microphone under the table cloth. (laughs) So we were , whatever we talked about, yeah, he got, but we were not to talk about DDT.

Robert: did the Hammerstroms, did Fran Hammerstrom get involved in this? Cause he such a involved in the raptors.

Lori: That's right, but she was never used as a witness.

Robert: Do you know her?

Lori: Oh sure, oh sure, as a matter of fact, in Wisconsin. Wisconsin Trail? What did they call us? Lori Otto, something to do with the Gran Damus (?) Wisconsin did an article, with photographs of us. Maybe it was two years old, I don't know, and they, whatever it was, it was over 75 years of age or some people were still active.

Robert: What did you. .This was just such a big event, what did you do after it was all over? Hole up in your house?

Lori: I know at the end of the day, on the very last day, we met at somebody's house in Madison.

Robert: Almost anti-climatic, I would think.

Lori: To say good-bye.

Robert: I bet that was tough.

Lori: We only went because it was superior. All of us. It was wonderful. I was disappointed that ag wasn't stronger. I respected a lot of those guys. I expected them that they would have a better case. They're first lawyer, god he was awful. He was awful, and he,

he was very clever. We had CBS there, the television broadcast. And that lawyer talked. . . .the way. . . .I'm. . . .talking. . . .now (very quiet, space between words). And he asked the dullest questions. They finally gave up the just. And then, I sat beside the guy with the big television. And he would, then Shelley Rooster came out, and he said, as a witness to land more work for us, and I just kicked the television man, made him turn the television camera on. And suddenly it went on national coverage review. They could see this was just going to drag on for weeks, but she was—he was, well anyway he got fired. And then they got Stafford. Stafford didn't study. Victor Yanco he went through whatever, when he got ready to get that witness on, he knew that witness's research backwards and forwards and anybody else who had done the same thing. He really, really studied, gosh, he knew as much as anybody and Stafford didn't know a damn thing and you can tell by his questions. He was I don't know, I don't know, what he did, I don't know what he did but he wasn't prepared. He was, he tried to be as flamboyant and as interesting as Victor Yanco, but it must have been great fun for Vansusen to sit there when these two guys trying to out shout each other. It was fun, but the comparison, one really knew it all, and the other one didn't know anything about DDT. Didn't seem to care much that he didn't know. When the hearings were going to start and come to Madison, I had to go to Madison to find the to get people to help with housing and so I went to Peg Autress was fabulous in finding housing for everybody and she was with Nature Conservancy and then the CNRA members, we trained them all so we had rooms for whoever wanted to come and Richer wanted an audience he said that's subliminal push to judge so we shouldn't the people who would house these people also the people who housed them should be involved, should see their, because this was going to be so much fun. This was going to be so exciting, so we had the rooms crammed with our side. I went up to start making arrangements, I met with Joe first. That was after Peg had recommended the use of DDT, after Joe had presented the whole case to 17 people they still voted to use it. And Joe very, very close to tears, and he said, "Lori, they just don't listen, they just don't care. " And I said, "I care." He said, "Rent the Marie hotel, that's a rundown old hotel, we'll get cheap rooms. Put them all there." I said, "I should say not, they are going to people's homes and we're going to get everyone excited about this." He said "Lori, you really think we can?" Well, I've never seen anybody whose spirits who were really down in the bottoms of his shoes, he couldn't believe that he couldn't have convinced those 17, These were all leaders, in each of these things, they just weren't guys you just pulled off the streets for heaven sakes, these were men

Robert: But their research was probably was being funded by chemical companies.

Lori: No, I mean these were the heads of the municipalities, the head of the tanning company, and the fruit rollers of Door County, they were each men representing their industry and my god, you can't give up DDT, you were going to have carrot yellows, and leaves of cabbage would turn to lace and the industry would fail in Wisconsin, so there's the guy representing the canning industry, he didn't give a damn if everything else was dying - he just really didn't. They were going to continue to use DDT in order to have cabbages.

Robert: That's what's happening now with methyl bromide and strawberries, it's basically one of the most toxic chemicals on earth and they continue to spray the strawberries. It breaks down very quickly, but if you're exposed to the minutest drop, you're going to

die.

Lori: So it's the sprayers that they have to

Robert: They spray all the strawberries, I mean it definitely produces huge strawberries, the strawberries we get now that are this big is because methyl bromide. There was a big article in the Smithsonian about it. It's use and how they are trying to ban it. And they have shown strawberries grown without it compared to ones with it and it's almost a five times difference. So you can see there is so much money involved in it. But it's one of the most toxic -

Lori: CBE published a -citizen's of better environment - published a list of the fruits and the vegetables that took the most chemical use, strawberries were at the top of the list, so I haven't had strawberries since then.

Robert: So after the hearings, this is when you got involved in -

Lori: well, you know, after, Yeah, because then, I was fifty years old and I thought one person can really make a difference, but I thought for some reason or another I thought I'd die when I'm sixty, and I thought I had ten healthy years, what could I do to match this. And at that time, that was 1970, at that time, there was a nature center, a first nature center, Karen Newburg which is about half hour's drive north of here and

Robert: This is before Schlitzauto

Lori: Yes two years Schlitzauto, and we had been trying for years to get a nature center here and anyway, we got this one started, we had Andy Larson and his wife who had just come back from the peace core as directors and Andy had a degree in forestry and I don't know what, how he happened to apply or how we found him, but, anyway I wasn't in on that, they hired him and Andy said, "I want a year to train, to teach a naturalist, you see at that time, there wasn't, no one had a degree in environmental, it was through education that was. . . So anyway he said he wanted to train this naturalist. And he put out the word for a college educated person for this job, and there was seven of us and I thought, every once and awhile I thought about being an environmental teacher for children so we met every Friday for a whole year and he really, one of the things we did was each subscribed to a different paper and I had the New York Times, someone else had The Los Angeles times was a wonderful environmental writer for the Los Angeles Times. At any rate, each one of us had subscribed to a different newspaper and we would cut out the environmental stories and then, and at that time the xerox had just started and it was that awful smelly pinky stuff. But we read all those, that was part of it, and then of course we went water tests in the Milwaukee River that runs along the edge, it's called river's edge ti's the name of the nature center, It started with 70 acres and now i think we have 400.

Robert: I've been there, it's an amazing place.

Lori: Isn't it?

Robert: Did they ever hire a new executive director.

Lori: OH, right now?

Robert: Andy retired.

Lori: Yeah, he halfway retired, but I think Mark Dimmer just resigned as director of that, he's just been there for a year and a half, Bob Nichols resigned before that, Ashley, who was entomologist, resigned before that, Don Danielson was there for about ten years, but he was not environmentalist, He was funny, he was a fund-raiser. Nice personality. Great with rich ladies, geeze, he was great. Anyways, But, at the end of that year, he sat the 7 of



us down in a circle and said now what would you ladies like to teach? Two of them took the river. And two of the took the woods. Two of them took the soils and the fields. And that left me, and I was fifteen years older than all of them and I said, " Andy, I want to teach children. The adults don't take care." He said," Lori, you just take them all and run with it." So, I had all summer, and I thought I didn't want to do anything more with pesticides, I was up to my neck with horror stories and that whole thing. And the river, Cleveland caught on fire, it was in the paper - a river caught on fire, my God, Then it caught on fire a second time, and I thought what are we doing? What are we doing that we could be so bad to put so much in the river and I mean, the new pesticides were going into the river, but really that the river should go on fire, so then I started looking about well how are we behaving on the land and then also why are we using so many pesticides and you know, especially wealthy people, are much worse than any chemically addicted farmer, Oh my gosh, Oh they so often. It's terrible, so I started looking, started thinking about then I started a slide culture on the terrible uses just because of lawns, and so I worked up this lecture called healing the earth, that we should find an alternative for all these, so I tried to show them the awful things we've been doing and to show them and at first it was anything so you'd have to match the plant to the soil to them and you wouldn't use any chemicals, and you wouldn't make any noise so you wouldn't be using power equipment. And noise pollution, in the early 70's, they did a poll in New York, and asked what the greatest environmental worry was, and 87 percent of them said noise. Noise. I do, for twenty years, I've been doing tours on Saturdays. This year NBC is coming to photograph, videotape it. But I think people, I mean, I have Tim from ? Owners to say home and talk to these people for twenty minutes. Just to start at nine o'clock in the morning and finish at three thirty in the afternoon I give them a half an hour off to have lunch. But want them to meet the different kinds of people who have given up their front or celebrating where they live... (tape blanks out) courageous kind of people would do that to a front lawn. But two of us, the people inside (she is mumbling and I can't understand) ...and uh, (more mumbling).. look out a window and not be able to see a lawn anywhere. But then think about how they feel. So safe, so quiet. It used to be when the pioneers first came to feel safe we destroyed them. Now to feel say you don't want to do that cause you look out and say oh..

Robert: Except for the Germans.

Lori: (continuing with sentence)...there were pesticides there. Except for what?

Robert: The Germans. They always left the wood locked.

Lori: Ohh, yeah but for those wealthy ol' Germans and their estates they wouldn't have anything

Robert: But they always had their wood locked.

Lori: Yeah, Yeah

Robert: I've seen you know, I'm trying to see why Wisconsin has progressive certain aspects of conservation and you see other states like Pennsylvania and New York who are leaders and uh, I think it has a lot to do with who settle here in a way that created a cultural land use mind set to the state. If you look at New York and Pennsylvania it has strong German populations. Especially Pennsylvania. Look at Wisconsin, very strong German population. Especially when a lot of the early progressive forestry legislation was being passed at the turn of the century. And half of Wisconsin population was native

or German. And forestry goes back to Germany to the fourteenth century. Actually, they were teaching from the pulpits and the churches about conserving what growing timber. You know, replanting all the way back to the 14th century so its basically a cultural trait to have forests. And I believe they brought that over here and in a way, its not solely responsible or maybe not even primarily responsible but I think its very instrumental in WI being a leader in conservation I mean its not the best state in many aspects but it has been. It's produced fairly leader type people in this conservation field and its led the nation... certain the many different things like this DDT thing for instance. And I also think its just the nature of the land of WI. We still have wild places here and our population still has that connection, even Milwaukee there's still a connection with the land that you don't find in New York City or Houston or L.A. or Chicago. There's that tradition of hunting and fishing that's so strong. So I think its all of these combined I wish I could really put my finger on it and say its this, And this is what I would like to write about in my book. Why has WI been a leader and these are just thoughts I've had to include in my book about possibilities for WI. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Lori: Well, I think....we do have a history of...(more mumbling). Like I remember Paul Olsen, talking about something about Wisconsin. The vegetation of WI by. There's no other state that has, has done a book like that on the vegetation of their state. We can go back and that's our bible.

Robert: ? Alan Lapold go back to him. And Leopold, even though he wasn't born here he is a Midwesterner.

Lori: He certainly is. Yeah.

Robert: But he started to develop his ideas in New Mexico, it was here where he found his sense of place

Lori: That's right

Robert: To develop, really was able to hone in his ideas of a land applicant by the community. Very simply about this place.

Lori: Yeah, cause he (mumbling)..talk about that one. I think we were one of the early states t have a chapter of Legion Conservancy too.

Robert: ? Watley was founded in 22. And Appleton was like two months after it was founded in New York. There was Fond du Lac, Appleton and Milwaukee had chapters. So it went right off the boat.

Lori: Well, we talk about progressive legislation. We have one on one side, and god it's equally terrible on the other side.

(both of them are talking at once)

Robert: ...to what's happening now..

Lori: (more mumbling) ...and the legislature one of the two dirty dozen environmentally. They have terrible records. Terrible

Robert: Thank you for talking to me.

Lori: Oh, fine. (laughs)

Robert: This has been great. Sorry about? But this actually I think it worked out very well.

Lori: Well you didn't have to listen so long. You got a lot of work ahead.

Robert: Yeah, I do. Its a huge project.

End of Interview