

File 1

00:00

(It is Tuesday, July 26th, and I am in Kanosh, Utah. That's spelled K-a-n-o-s-h, and I'm interviewing Dale Boothe, which is B-o-o-t-h-e. My name is Nancy Freeman. We will just get started. Dale, tell me a little bit about where you grew up and your educational background.)

Well, I grew up in Delta, graduated from high school there, and then I went to the trade school up on Salt Lake for two and a half years to become a machinist. Then I got involved with—I've always wanted to work with wildlife, and all the time I was goin' to school I had an application in for four years with Ole Morris, (note from interviewer: given name is Owen but called Ole) who was the state director in the '60s, and anyway, I graduated from the trade school and I got a call, or, Ole Morris retired, and his replacement was Don Donahue, state director for the state of Utah. And I met with Don a couple times and got hired right on with the—it was Fish and Wildlife Service at that time. So that's pretty much it. I started April 5th, 1967 with Fish and Wildlife Service and since then I've had a lot of training through the program, pretty much everything that they've had to offer, I was able to take that training.

02:07

Anyway, I started out as a field person, trapping and working operation areas. I had a large area, covered a couple or three counties. At that time I think there was only about seven of us, at the time. And anyway, I worked that for a few years, and then they asked if I would be interested in bein' an aerial gunner. So I served 14 years as an aerial gunner, besides take care of a winter district. So—

02:55

(When you were growing up, did you hunt and fish and trap?)

I did. Before I started, I always messed with coyotes, trapping and this sort of thing, always hunting. Never have been much of a fisherman, but mostly hunting and working with horses. I was a professional horse shoer for quite a while. I did that as a hobby, and still do it some.

(Who did you learn the most from, trapping, or who did you learn from trapping about when you were growing up?)

Well, um, the guy that got me interested in this was Bob Oppenheimer. He's the— [chuckles] when I was in junior high and high school, I'd spend the, the days out of school, and on weekends sometimes, working with Bob. And Adria Ahlstrom, which was the district supervisor here in Kanosh at that time, I spent a lot of time with those two guys and they taught me a lot about trapping. And I've just been interested ever since. And I've been doin' it since I was a young boy. [chuckles]

(Well, and we should say that Bob Oppenheimer is your uncle.)

He is. Yes. [laughs]

04:15

([laughs] So it runs in the family some! [laughs])

Runs in the family.

(So you learned a lot from them growing up?)

Right.

(And then you got the job. And where did you start?)

I started workin' out of Delta. That was where I was hired. Then they moved me over. My district was in the Juab County area, so I would camp over there, and that went on for two or three years, I'll say two years over there. And then at that time an opening come up in Utah County, and so I took that, and I was up there, like, 37 years, 36 years, and then I still have that area, so.

(Where is Utah County?)

It is just over the point of the mountain from Salt Lake County to the south, so it'd be the next county over.

05:21

(Now, when you first started, would you stay out for long periods of time and camp out? How did that work? Because I know it's different now.)

Yeah. At that time, yes, it was a camp-out thing. And it was—you was pretty much a loner all the time. You was alone all the time, workin' these areas. They—I can remember when I first come on, they give me a teepee tent to camp out in. [laughs] And then the second thing they come up with was some homemade camp trailers. They looked like sheep camps, but they were only, like, maybe 10 by 12. We camped in them and we thought that was a pretty nice home. [laughs] I would camp from Monday through Friday and sometimes even on the weekend, depending on what time of year it was. If it was lambing time we'd usually work the weekends. So, so I was gone away from home a lot. My wife, she—I'm pretty sure she raised all the kids while I was working [laughs] 'cause we was gone so much, but yeah, it was a—it was a camp-out thing. At that time, we didn't get paid for camp rate. We paid for our groceries and our propane and our ammunition. They paid us I think it was \$140 a month for truck use, and that included our horse and dogs and campin' out and the whole thing.

07:07

(So you paid for your own food?)

Yes, pretty much. I remember when I first started my—I started at \$350 a month plus my \$140 expense check. [chuckles] So—but at that time, bread was 22 cents and gas was 19 cents a gallon, so—

(Was it considered a good job?)

Yes. Yeah, I think it was, and that's what I wanted to do. And I was just happy as pigs in mud. [laughs]

([laughs] Now, describe a teepee tent to me.)

A teepee tent was just a little 4 by 6. It had a rope with a, up at the top and you'd just pull up under a tree or somethin' and pull that rope up under the tree limb and just pull on it and it would just go up just like a teepee, and we just had little cots to go in there, and that's what we camped in to start out with, so.

08:10

(The trailers must have—)

The trailers was really an improvement. [laughs] They come on—and we still use 'em today.

(Same kinds of things?)

Yeah. We just modernized 'em a little bit, you know, but the same kind. They're easy to pull, you can take 'em into really rough country. And the way our trucks are designed now, why, works good. We throw our horse in the truck and our camp behind and we're outta here.

(So you used horses in the beginning?)

In the beginning, I can remember—well, first, we used our own truck. I probably used my own truck for five or six years. I can remember when they decided to give us government trucks, GSA trucks, I was, like, \$400 or \$500 is all in the hole for tires. I mean, it was pretty hard to make it on \$140 usin' your own truck. But anyway, we got new Dodge trucks. They were 6 cylinders. They was no radios, no kind of communication in 'em or nothin', [chuckles] but they were—it had a gas credit card, and it was good. [laughs] We thought we was really comin' up on our jobs, and so, that's what we used, was—that was my first government truck.

09:36

(And you also mentioned dogs? Did you use dogs in the early days also?)

We did. I in the early days, when I started, the trappers pretty much just trapped and used our ground tools. About when I started, there was a fellow, Milt McQueary, they hired as a—and he was from Colorado, and he was a coyote caller. And he's the one that got this howling to locate coyotes with his voice. I spent quite a bit of time with Milt in my days. I, uh, I can remember, they would hold wildlife conferences up in Logan every year, and it would be a week-long thing. And I can remember, um, at one of the conferences, they called myself and Carlyle Rollins, which is also—worked for a long time for us, to put on a demonstration on how to howl coyotes. So we got up there in front of—and this was four states—there were four states—Wildlife Services there, and it's the first time that I had to get up in public in the building and howl like a coyote. [chuckles] I can remember that was pretty hard to do, but anyway, we got up there and we howled and demonstrated how we located and called coyotes and then shoot 'em as they come in.

11:21

And we'd work with our dogs after learnin' how to call. Why, I had a couple of dogs that I would train, or trained, when I howled, and the coyotes answered me, these two dogs would go out to the coyotes. All you had to do, was pretty much, was just set there and wait for the dogs to

bring the coyotes back. The dogs would harass 'em and the coyotes would get really aggressive and follow 'em right back to me. The dogs'd come right back. So that method took hold and went like wildfire out there. And I can remember at the end of the week up there at Logan on the college campus that every trapper up there from every state was learnin' how to howl. [laughs] So that night everybody was howlin' around there. I'm pretty sure the town of Logan thought we was crazy. [laughs]

12:17

([laughs] About when was this?)

It had to be in about '69 or '70. '69, I would say would be closer. So, and that method still works today, but, um, there is so many people now, they're sellin' all kinds of tapes in any sports stores. It's makin' our job a lot harder as far as stoppin' trouble, because a lot of coyotes are educated to howlers and everything. But the majority of us still have these trained dogs and they really today help us, you know, to stop the predation.

(Still use 'em?)

Yup, we still use 'em.

(Now, you mentioned in the early days you had some ground tools, you called them. What other tools besides traps did you use?)

We used the Victor #3 long spring traps, the leg holds, and then we used the old cyanide gun, they called it. That was about all when I first started, we just had those two methods, plus the aircraft. Then two or three years after I started, I was asked to attend a seminar or training, [pause] I think it was in Colorado or Wyoming, using Gregerson snares, neck snares, foot snares, and so I spent a week there, and then I come back to Utah. And on the way back, I can remember, there's no way that you're gonna catch these coyotes with snares, cables, especially around the neck, you know. I just didn't really feel good about it. But I—they sent me back with two or three dozen snares. So I started usin' 'em, mainly along fences and stuff around sheep allotments and pastures, and by golly, they really worked. So that got goin' in Utah. Snares was a pretty good tool for us to use.

14:48

(So you got sold on the use of snares?)

Yes. And along with the neck snares and foot snares, and we use 'em today still with—on the lion and bear. When I started, they used the big ol' bear trap with the teeth and all, and you had to have clamps, you had to hang the clamps up in the tree when you left, and the signs. And they were really difficult to set and they were a pretty dangerous trap, 'cause they were out in the woods. At that time there wasn't as many people out there as there is today, but anyway, this throw arm foot snare replaced that, and it's been really good and it's not near as dangerous. It's just a good tool for us.

(And regarding bears, the trap is actually banned, isn't it?)

Right, it is, yep. They were banned. I can't remember what year it was, but I can remember we turned in all those old bear traps. Today I wished I had one, [chuckles] because they're an antique. They were huge. You could hardly carry 'em on a horse, you know. So—but this foot snare has certainly replaced that tool.

(When you started out, what were the main animals that you trapped?)

16:23

The main animal was coyotes, pretty much coyotes. Some bobcats. There was a lot of bobcats those days. And they would give us some problems during the lambing season time when the lambs were newly born or a week old. Then we would have some bobcat predation. But—and then in some areas we'd have some lion, you know, but I can remember when I started there was lots and lots of coyotes. I think we have less coyotes today than when I started. But maybe there's not less, but it seemed like it was easier to call coyotes and you'd see more coyotes every day than what we see today, you know. But coyote was the big problem for us.

(And in your 37 years, which was the majority of your work, in Utah County—that's further north?)

Right.

(Was there a difference in the animals there that you found, different species?)

No, it was pretty much the same. And for a long time we had very little bear and lion problems. But then, oh, I would say the ten years after I was up there, lion problems started to appear, you know, and then pretty soon we had a lot of lions, and the same with bear, you know? I can remember over around the Strawberry area, I've trapped most every district in the northern half of the state, but right now, when I was at, say, Strawberry, for instance, I had hardly any bear problems. And today, that's about all we have there, is bear problems. Human health and safety problems, along with the livestock problems.

18:25

(What do you think has been the difference? Why there were fewer bear problems and now there are more?)

I don't know. I've not been able to figure that out. I keep thinkin' that DWR is movin' 'em in, [chuckles] but I know they're not. But you know, we take bears out of this place, and the next year I'm thinkin', well, it's gonna be a better summer for us, but it's just about the same every summer. So the bears are increasing here in the state. We just have plenty of 'em. And it seemed like there are more problems with bear during the dry seasons, dry years that we've had. If the berries does not get frozen in the spring, you know, then it seems like it's a little better. But this year, right today, we still got lots of bear problems goin' on in the north district.

(And you said lion problems increased also?)

Right.

(Any reason for that that you can think of?)

I really don't know. I know we—like, in the Logan area and some of these places out on the desert, we hardly ever had lions. But they're pretty much everywhere right now in the state.

19:48

(What's the primary way to trap or control mountain lion?)

Well, I think the way—the best way is to get the animal that's caused the problem is, if you get right on it with dogs is the best way. You know that you've got that lion that did the damage. Then the other way is, you can set snares, foot or neck snares by the kill if they buried it. Usually when they buried it or covered it, they'll usually come back and feed on it that very night. So you know that you've pretty well got that lion that did the damage. It's a lot of work to set ground tools for lions. You gotta pretty much ride the country, find out where he's coming from. It takes a little bit of horseback work in there, too, till you find their pattern of travel. And then as soon as you find that, you can set on the scratches on top of ridges and stuff and usually pick 'em up that way, too. So the main thing we want to do is get the predation stopped and get the right animal, and that's why I like to use the dogs first.

(To get the right animal?)

To get the right animal.

(And they can do that in such a way how?)

The dogs? We just go to that kill, right where the lion has fed, and spend a lot of time there and then we just release the dog and he'll track 'em right out. And sometimes they go a long ways, sometimes you can pick 'em up at a short distance, and they'll just tree, and so we just destroy 'em right there, unless DWR has some reason to remove that lion or bear and we do that occasionally.

(What is DWR?)

Division of Wildlife Resources. They're our kind of neighboring agency that we work with on bear and lions. Bear and lions are a game animal here in Utah, so we have to work through them. And we have to have confirmed losses before we start any work on bear and lions right now.

(And they are a state agency?)

Right. Yeah.

22:36

(You also mentioned bobcats. Tell me a little bit about bobcat problems and then also how you trap and hunt a bobcat.)

Well, uh, like I say, bobcats usually cause some depredation when the lambs are real young. We go in and we can either trap right in where they're killin', use the carcass of the lamb that they had killed, and we can set the ground tools there, or we can use dogs, just like we do on lions, so. And bobcats are probably—they're real easy to trap. They'll usually feed upon a lamb and then

just go a little short distance and make little scratches, you know, kind of like a house cat. You can set on them pretty well, get 'em. But as the lambs get bigger, it becomes less a problem.

(Are there many—is there much of a bobcat problem now?)

We've had a lot of bobcats in the state, but right now, a few years ago when the hides of bobcats got up to, I think it was like, they got as high as \$800 for a hide, there was a lot of private trappers, and it did away with a lot of bobcats. But in the last few years I've noticed they've come back and Division of Wildlife Resources still—they put out so many permits, tags, on bobcats. So I think maybe this year in my district we've only had, like, one bobcat predation problem so far. So, it's nothin' real serious, really.

24:35

(We've talked about lion, bobcat, bear. However, you've said the animal you've probably worked with the most and caused the most problems are coyotes?)

Right.

(Explain to me a little bit about the problems and—you know, you talked about how you actually were interested in coyote trapping as a teenager. [laughs])

Yeah.

(So how you got into that and then the problems that you have, and trapping methods, those types of things.)

Well, coyotes, when I was younger, I was just—got interested in just bein' able to trap 'em. A coyote is a smart animal, and they're not the easiest animal to, to trap. But coyotes are probably our biggest problem during March, April, May, you know, June, July, because of the newborn lambs. During the lambing season, the coyotes are having their pups, and so they've got to feed their pups, and they usually take the lambs. I, I have trapped coyotes that was killin' lambs and cut that coyote open to see what it was feeding. I have found as many as 11 lamb livers in its stomach, so, and that would be just one night's kill. So coyotes kill a lot of lambs in a hurry.

26:27

So at that time, I would usually just call, locate, try to call and shoot. If not, then we would put out the, the traps, either coil spring or long spring traps, and try to trap 'em. If we couldn't do that, then we would call in the aircraft, if they continued to kill every night. That was one of the good tools that we have. So I guess that's—I just got interested in trying to trap coyotes. There was a lot of 'em when I was a boy. I lived out in the sagebrush north of Delta. I was just always interested to see if I could catch 'em. [laughs]

(You mentioned aerial gunning, use of the airplane. You have been a gunner for a long time?)

Right.

(How long?)

14 years. I was in the back seat as a gunner. That tool, our aircraft, we only had—first we started out with one airplane in the state of Utah. That airplane went all over. That was pretty much Van and Darwin (note from interviewer: Van Warnick and Darwin Mabbrott) worked in that aircraft. And then we got our second aircraft. That's the one I filled the gunning spot there. We pretty much covered the northern part of the state with the north airplane. We would just go out on trouble calls and pretty much just work there. We had the air-to-ground radio. Our specialist would go in the areas where they were killing a lot of lambs and sheep and they would voice howl 'em. And then they would call us in and we'd just fly that area until we spotted 'em. Some areas were—the terrain was really rough, some was just out in the flats. It just depended where they had the sheep at the time. I think the gunning aircraft is—it can be pretty much a dangerous job, you know, it's especially when your target's movin'. We did a lot of hunting in rougher terrain, and your speed and visibility's a little more difficult. I found that working with the pilots that I flew with for quite a while, it wouldn't take too long until each of you knew what was gonna happen, you figured each other out, and it'd work just like a time clock, you know, everything just—you know, I could almost tell—if we run into several coyotes, I could almost point out the coyote the pilot was gonna go in on first. He knew what I was gonna do. It's just really two guys workin' together pretty close, made a pretty good system.

29:56

(Now, I hear in the early days that when they used the airplanes, sometimes there wasn't even a ground crew. By the time you came along, was there a ground crew and those kinds of things in place?)

There was. Pretty much all the time that I was flyin', we had radio contact with the ground crew. There would be some times that maybe that individual wasn't there, so we'd go out on our own, but we always had to leave some information where we was goin' and about when we would be back. And we still do that in our state offices on the radios, too, somebody knows at least where we was goin' to work.

(Oh, even when you go out to trap, those kinds of things?)

Right. Yes.

(Did you ever have a close call in the airplane?)

I did. Had five of 'em. [chuckles] Yes. Do you want me to explain?

(Yes, sure, I'd like to hear about them.)

31:03

Well, I guess the first one that I can remember that, uh—well, I'd been in a couple of whiteouts before, where there's snow and fog and you go through and you can't—it really gives you a funny feeling. You can't tell if you're up or down. And I guess I've been in a wind shear where the south-north winds meet, and I can remember lookin' down and seein' the cedar trees all bent over, and about that time the wind caught our airplane and flipped us right over upside-down. I can remember lookin' out my window, it would be upside-down, and the trees were comin' right at us. So I just figured we was goin' in and for some reason, that airplane, it was probably the



pilot that got it turned back, but we was pretty much on a stall, just barely flyin', you know. But we made that.

And then the other time, I was flyin' with a new pilot, and he hadn't been used to flyin' the rough terrain, the mountains, and that type of thing. We had fueled up in Delta and was headed back towards Salt Lake, and it just kind of be that the pilot always looks out the front and to the left and the gunner looks front and right. I mean, that's just the way we work, you know, lookin' for coyotes. Anyway, the next thing I knew, we was flyin' up this canyon. And we, I knew we had low air speed. I knew the area really good, but I told the pilot, I says, "I think we're gonna find that we're in trouble here goin' in this canyon." And he said, well, he said "Is there a wide spot up here?" I said, "Not very wide." I can remember he had the full throttle on the airplane, and the airplane was just slowly losin' air speed. We got up to the mouth of the canyon and I can remember him sayin', "We're goin' in." And I said, "We're not goin' in. You're gonna get this thing outta here."

Anyway, I can remember guidin' him through, makin' a right-hand turn, and I can remember a whole bunch of rocks with eagle droppings and everything on those rocks. [chuckles] So I figured with the air speed that we had, and makin' that turn, we'd stall out in the turn. Anyway, he did do a good job. He got into the turn and then just put the nose down. I can remember lookin' at the tire on my side and goin' over those rocks with that dropping, that I thought the tire was gonna hit the rocks, is what I thought. I can remember I had in mind—come to mind was, it was the next day was the opening day of the Utah deer hunt, so it come to mind that somebody would find us here, you know.

34:43

Anyway, I can remember we got through that. We got the nose turned around and was headed down the canyon, but we had very little air speed. I was watchin' the tires and the trees was just goin' by and the right tire hit a cedar tree and took the top of it and it got caught between the tire and the brake cylinder. So it just kind of flipped the airplane, threw me into the side, and the pilot, you know. We got through that and the airplane started flyin' and we headed for Salt Lake. I can remember myself and the pilot never said a word all the way [laughs] to the airport.

(Did he keep flying after that?)

Yeah, he did. But I can remember he was really nervous, and I always carried a stick and a throttle, and I had that in, you know. I had quite a bit of training. I wanted to know how to land that thing if ever need be. So I had quite a bit of training. But I can remember, after I told him that there was no—this was pretty much a box canyon, his neck went as red as that typewriter there. That's what worried me, 'cause I was pretty sure he wasn't gonna get us out of there. But, you know, I can remember I talked him dang near all the way through that little mission. [laughs]

(He probably got better. [laughs])

Yeah, he was a good pilot. But he just hadn't—it was just one of those things, he made a left-hand turn in that canyon and there was no way out until—you know. But then I had several other little ones that wasn't as bad. That was probably the worst one, that I figured we wasn't gonna make it through. But I think when you're in 'em that long, there's always a time that you're gonna have maybe a close call or somethin', you know? But, for that many years, I think our

program was pretty safe. We had good pilots. I would get back in 'em again today. And I enjoyed bein' a gunner.

37:20

(Tell me what time of year, because I know there's a small time of year that you use the airplanes, correct?)

Right. We usually start 'em, oh, I would say in October, 1st of November, and go through the latter part of May. And then we pretty well turn 'em off because of, here in Utah the sheep migrate from desert to high country, and with the heavy foliage and everything, why, it's pretty hard for the fixed wings to—

(—to get into the high country?)

Right. And then it's so hot, there's not much lift to the air, you know, and so we pretty much turn 'em off around the latter part of May, and then we'll start 'em back up around November 1st, I imagine.

38:17

(Did you do in your years any work with the research center?)

[sighs] [pause] You know, it seemed like I have. I know we've banded geese and stuff like that. I worked with, um, [pause] up on the Deseret, I can't remember what we was doin' up there, but I know I've picked up young coyotes and taken 'em up to the research center there for, for their use there. I'm just tryin' to think of some projects. I know we did some projects. I worked with—I can't think of his name, the one that left here a while ago?

(Russ Mason?)

Russ Mason and then Eric—

(Gese. Mm-hmm.)

But I can't remember all what the project—it was pretty much collarin' and stuff like that, you know.

(Did you use at all—and that is connected with the research center somewhat, and it's also a tool—did you ever use or have testing done with the livestock protection collar at all?)

We did, you know. Before they banned the livestock protection collar, we did use 'em some. I used 'em in a couple areas in the north part, and just two weeks ago we got—I got recertified for that collar again. So I'm thinkin' we're probably gonna use that some this winter, whenever we see a need to use that.

(And you have been a district supervisor how long?)

I was just tryin' to think before you come. [pause] I would say probably 18 years or so.

(And you've always been in the north district?)

Right.

(When you're district supervisor, which you still are, do you continue to do work out trapping and that type of thing?)

I do. I spend a lot of my time out in the field with my employees. I—when we have new employees, I spend a lot of time gettin' them familiarized with their district, their cooperators, and then I do a lot of field review work on 'em, even with my old-timers, do a field check, makin' sure all the signs are up, everything's within policy. I look for that every time I go out, you know, it's just on my mind. But most of the time I'm just havin' 'em solve their problems. And then, like I say, training new employees.

(How many district employees do you have?)

I think I have 13 right now.

(Is that usual?)

Yeah, it stays about that for as long as I've been district supervisor.

(Is this the district office here in—?)

This'd be my district office in the north part right now, yeah.

(And before it was in where?)

Before I had it in Alpine.

(Alpine?)

Alpine, at my home there, too. But I was close to the state office, and I'd spend a lot of time with the state office, too. [pause] But I, you know, I check with all my guys. I know what their plans are for the week. I check with them every Sunday night. I talk to my employees. So I know where their problems are and where they plan to work this next week or whatever. About every week I go with a different employee doin' somethin'.

(Do you spend less time camping and those types of things than you used to now that you're a supervisor? Or are you out as much?)

I think I'm probably out more, camping. I try to stay in my office one day a week, and I try to do that on Mondays and then go out in the field the rest of the week.

(So you're gone still during the week?)

Pretty much, yeah.

(In those little campers that're now a lot better than the teepees?)

Yeah, but we also have some real nice campers now, so you know, we've come up in the world. [chuckles] We've even got some—I think they're, like, 53-footers. They have a slide-outs and the whole ten yards. It's just like motels now, [laughs] motels on wheels.

(Boy, you have come up! [laughs])

Yeah, really!

43:42

(What do you like best about your work?)

I guess I like best workin' with my employees, specialists, and bein' around the livestock industry. And that's probably it. I just enjoy the outdoors and bein' able to get out in the wild on horses. I'm just kind of an outdoorsman. [laughs]

(And you mentioned you still use horses?)

Right.

(Is that to go into places where you can't get any—?)

Most all my district, all my specialists has just about gotta have a horse to go, to get in. All spring and summer country's pretty rough country. I have a large—what they call the north slope of Uinta. They pack—they have sheep that go way back in the wilderness. So they have tents back in there, and just this week now we're goin' back in and we'll go back in for seven days or so, pack in, and check all these herds for problems and this type of thing. So all my guys are pretty much on horseback during the summer months.

45:11

(Someone has mentioned to me the use of four-wheelers. I assume, though, that the terrain is too rough, so you need a horse. Do you use the four-wheelers much?)

We do use it some. Probably more so on the desert, out in the winter, fall-winter ranges. But there's a couple of districts I have that's got a lot of private land and there's a lot of roads in that private land and it's all behind locked gates, and we do use four-wheelers in those areas. But as far as public lands, on the forest lands, it's pretty much has to be horseback.

(What do you like least about your work?)

Least? [chuckles] Right now it would be doin' computer work. I'm not a computer man, and we've just changed our system and gone to computers. But I'm likin' it even better, but that's probably the least— [laughs] That and attending meetings. [laughs] We have a lot of meetings, you know, to attend to, but it's gotten better over the years. I can remember havin' a work plan meeting. They would last all day. And we'd have the environmental people there attending those meetings, and they would just—it would just be an all-dayer. Now, with the state director I got right now, Mike Bodenchuc, he's a pretty sharp guy and he's on top of things, and he'll help us

all with meetings. It's goin' good with meetings and everything. But I really don't have anything that I really dislike. I'm uncomfortable with the computer work, but it's gettin' better.

47:13

(How do you use the computer in your work?)

We use it just, to keep track of our losses, where we work every day, miles in our trucks, just about everything that we do every day goes on our computer.

(You log it in?)

Log it in. Then it's my responsibility to check all my other guys' reports. I have—right here I can tell you, in fact, I just did it this morning, see where everybody was workin' the past week, just lookin' for serious problems and see who's doin' what, you know, what they got goin'. That is one thing about the computer that I couldn't do before. I could call on telephone, but I can see all the reports now and it comes up on the screen. Pretty nice. And then when you have these work plan meetings, you've got all that info on there that you can pull off and use in those meetings. So, it's a good system.

48:23

(You mentioned daily logs earlier, before I had turned on the tape recorder. What is a daily log? How long do you keep one? Just explain that to me a little bit.)

Well, I kept a daily log since 1967. I write in it every day, usually at night, and I start out the time I left home, what with, horse, dogs, truck, and where I worked, what allotments I worked on, write down all the losses and who I had communication with that day of cooperators. Pretty much everything that you do but we write it down every day. And then right now all my guys keeps logs, and Monday through Fridays, then we come home and we put all that information on the computer.

(So yours is on the computer, too?)

Right.

(I assume in the early days you just wrote it down?)

We just wrote it down. We had forms. I can't remember the number or the name of that form, but it was a write-in, Monday through Fridays, and that went on for years. And then we got a little more modern and we used bubble sheets. That was our last old system before the computer. But with the change last February, why, we just log all this in with the computer. But we still have our log books that we carry around in our trucks, and they're filled out every day.

50:06

(What do you find the most challenging about your work?)

[sighs] Challenging? [pause] Um, I guess the most challenging is when you have, maybe employee problems. They can be quite challenging. You lose sleep over that, you know. But it's just probably when [pause] maybe something new, you know, maybe like this computer system's

been a challenge to me. But I don't worry about depredation problems too much. We've been doin' it so long that we can get right on it and solve those problems. But most challenging would be doin' our aircraft work in the winter with helicopters, keepin' track of the invoices and the monies and the PDS funds that comes in from the cooperators, makin' sure that that money's spent where it's supposed to be. It's a little more paperwork, a little more office work during the winter months.

51:27

(What's been the most difficult political or social situation that you've found yourself in, and how did you resolve them?)

I guess that would be, the most difficult was when we have our work plan meetings. We have a work plan that we work with on the public lands, forest, BLMs, and in order to get that signed, you know, a few years ago you'd have environmental problems, or environmentalists come to your meetings, and that was pretty stressful. But right now, like I say, all of our meetings are pretty good. We can go in there and present our work plan, make the changes in allotments, if Forests has any changes, we can make that right there, they're goin' pretty smooth. But that's pretty challenging, too.

(What were the problems when you would have the environmentalists come to the meetings? What kinds of concerns and what kind of challenges did that bring up?)

Most of their problems was that, [pause] I think when we would have our bear and lion problems, they didn't want those bear and lions removed. Since then, they have come up with a program that any sheep or calf killed by bear and lion, they get reimbursement. It's a reimbursement program.

(The rancher does?)

The rancher gets reimbursed half of what the value of that animal would be when he would go to sell it. And the environmentalists, that's what brought that on, pretty much, you know, and just a lot of areas that they didn't think we needed to be working or today, they don't like the airplane program. But I can remember we held a lot of meetings with those kind of people, and they've gotten a lot better. They have learned a little bit about our job. And they've been a little easier to deal with.

(So is that what has changed? Because you said pretty much it's not a problem any more at your work plan meetings, so you must have all met somewhere in the middle to resolve it a bit?)

Yeah. But I can remember the BLM and the Forest Service decided that they really didn't need to attend those meetings. [laughs] For some reason they came up and I can't remember why, but anyway, we pretty much didn't get invited. But they would still ask for our work plans, still today they can get copies of whatever we do, you know. But I think for the majority of them, they just realized they—when we was havin' all the problems, I don't really think they really understood our program. They just thought we was out there killin' everything we could kill. And they found out that's not true. And so it's worked out a lot better. And they can get a copy of the work plan if they have anything they want to discuss with us. They can meet with us or whatever.

55:28

(And you've mentioned the whole idea of selectivity with capturing animals, and I assume that that has—)

Yeah, that has helped a lot, too. And we've really worked hard on tryin' to do that, to get the animals doin' the killing on livestock. And we've gotten pretty professional with it, and I think we're doin'—

(What is the funniest thing that has happened to you while you were capturing or handling animals?)

Hmm. [sighs] [pause] [chuckles] I don't know, I'll have to think here a minute. There has been several things. I can remember one time, you know, if we catch bobcats and they're not injured in any way, we release 'em, we still do that. I can remember a few years ago, I come up to take this trap that was set for a coyote and I had a big bobcat in this trap. So I was gonna try to release him. And I just got messin' around with him, I just had a stick that I was gonna hold his head down, a stick with a V in it that I'd put over his head and just hold him to the ground while I stood on that trap. I can remember that he got away beyond that stick. I knew he was gonna jump out at me, and so I started to go back. The cat jumped up on me and grabbed my shirt. He was still in the trap. [chuckles] So I was pullin' back, and that cat was still pullin' my shirt plum out! [laughs] And I didn't think it was real funny at the time.

([laughs] But now it seems funny!)

Yeah. But I've had a lot of funny things happen on this job. It was—it's been an exciting job.

(What is the scariest thing that happened? The bobcat thing sounds like it was scary at the time. [laughs])

Yeah. I can remember one time out north of Delta that this lion got killin' sheep, and I can remember he killed 53 sheep. There was a lot of snow on the ground. He buried two or three of those sheep. I put this trap in there, it was a leg hold trap, steel trap. And I can remember goin' up there to check it, I think it was the second day that I'd placed the trap. I took my two coyote dogs. I had to walk in quite a ways. In fact, I can remember I had to have snowshoes to walk in there.

58:34

Anyway, my dogs got carryin' on, so I figured that lion had to be trapped. I had a drag on 'em. It was just a short drag, and I was worried about that to begin with, but it was the best thing I could find. So I put that drag on it, and it was just an old dead tree, about five inches in diameter and maybe three feet long. It should have been longer, you know. Anyway, when I got there, the lion had moved down the canyon quite a ways, drug that little drag down the canyon. When I got up to where my dogs was barkin', the one dog had that lion kind of in the back on the hindquarters, and this lion was spinnin' around, and I can remember seein' my dog, his feet would be right off the ground, you know, the snow. That lion was tryin' to get him from behind. Anyway, when that lion seen me come up out of the open, he started to lunge for me, and the dog still had him, you know, was still hangin' on to him. But I can remember before I could get my gun off my

shoulder and all this stuff, that lion was comin' right at you, pullin' that drag. He wasn't caught anywhere, he was just free, draggin' that. That was a little scary, you know.

60:07

(What happened? I mean you're still here, obviously.)

Yeah, Well, after I got—I had a backpack on and my gun and I had all my trap supplies and everything in there. But anyway, as the lion kind of lunged for me and he kind of went to the side of the tree and I shot him right there. I didn't dare shoot because my dogs was on him so bad, you know, but anyway, I was able to get him shot. He was one of the biggest lions I've ever taken even today. And that lion's over in one of the universities in Colorado right now. They live-mounted him.

(How big was he?)

I think he was—I can't even remember. He was—oh, I think it was, like, 120, 130 pounds or better. He was a big-muscled lion. I can remember skinnin' him and boy, the muscles in his back legs and front shoulders were probably the stoutest lion I've ever taken, you know. But that was scary, goin' up there. I had snowshoes on, couldn't run, you know, didn't have a horse. [laughs]

(And trying to grab your gun out of your backpack.)

Yeah.

61:32

(What is your favorite lure recipe?)

Well, I've used a lot of lures out of these trapping magazines, O' Gorman's, and all their scents. And they have some good scents. But I've always made my own, pretty much. That's one thing I've enjoyed, is makin' different scents. So I buy the ingredients and make it. But when I was usin' M-44s a lot—and I still make M-44 scent. It's just interesting to see if you can make a good one that those coyotes will really pull that device.

(What is your M-44 lure scent?)

How it's made?

(Well, yes, and what you use.)

I guess the very best scent that I make, and I haven't made any for a little while, but you have to have a base meat, ground up, and you ferment it down until it's about like salad dressing. Then there's an ingredient you can put in there to stop that so it don't rot any more. Then you can just put your basic scents in there, or lures. I guess the best one I've made is with antelope meat as a base, and then you can put tonquin and all these other little things in there. But you can overdo it, too. You gotta get it—the thing with M-44 bait is, you don't want a rotten smell. You use it in the winter, fall, so you try to make it kind of a sweet smell, that seems to work pretty good. I've made a lot of scents, trap scents. You just rot down fish, whatever you think to put in, you know.