

Interviewee: Robert “Bob” Cornelius (BC)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Working as a Park Ranger at Curecanti National Recreation Area for the past 20+ years of his career.

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TM: Today is Tuesday, April 23, 2019. This is a Grand Canyon Oral History interview with Robert “Bob” Cornelius. My name is Tom Martin. This is a Part 16 interview with Bob. Bob, good morning, how are you?

BC: I’m doing well, thank you.

TM: Great. May we have your permission to record this interview over the phone?

BC: Absolutely. Uh-huh.

TM: Thank you very much. Last time we met, we were thinking that today we might talk about the Park Service relationship with the Bureau of Reclamation there at Curecanti and the differences in local Park Service rules vs. the Code of Federal Regulations coming out of Washington D.C. Could you start speaking to that?

BC: Well, the way the CFR operated is rules are made. A lot of times they’re generated from the park level. They’ll be a specific problem. As you know, recreation is always changing so to address that, a lot of times you had to have new regulations. We didn’t have drones 20 years ago or 25 years ago, and they’ve had to address that problem in some of the parks.

When I first started with the Park Service, the CFR was starting to go out of date, I guess, this was in the mid-70s. There were things in there that we had that needed to be updated. One of the ways they addressed this was by Congress modifying the Code of Federal Regulations so that the local superintendents had more control over specific things that occurred in their parks. One of which could be drones, for example, as I just said. But things like hunting in Recreation Areas, you’d want to have areas where you could hunt and areas where couldn’t hunt. You wouldn’t want to just say you could hunt in a Recreation Area and have people shooting around buildings, parking lots, campgrounds, all those different things. One thing that we did was it allowed us to adopt state law as federal law as far as hunting and fishing regulations went. That was very beneficial. When I was at Dinosaur National Monument, I did a lot of hunting enforcement there, because we actually had a right-of-way that went up to the National Park. Of course we were trying to keep people out of the park, obviously, hunting, but they could hunt on BLM lands either side of our right-of-way. So we would have check stations, we’d man check stations with the Division of Wildlife, and stuff like that. It wasn’t that they were hunting in the parks, but they were doing illegal hunting. Since we didn’t have a very good federal system, we would handle things through the state. I think we talked about that maybe once before.

Generally when you were enforcing the CFR, you had some different options. You could write a violation notice, hand it to the person, and say you either have to appear in court, there were certain mandatory appearances, for example. This would be before a federal judge. They were mandatory...and this was all the different parks I was in before... Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs was always a mandatory appearance. Other things could be handled...either you could choose to appear or you could bond out, and you're basically saying, I'm not guilty but I don't want to show up in court and the maximum fine was going to be \$25/\$50, whatever it was, and I'll just pay that. It's more of a convenience type thing.

Things that the superintendent could do... We had quite an extensive compendium. This started when I was at Curecanti and Black Canyon. We spent many, many hours poring over maps. That was one of the ways that you did it, you had maps that were available for public inspection or little copies of the maps that we would take around and hand out to hunters or fishermen or whatever. Things that were put in the compendium that the superintendent developed were easier to get out to the public. You had information. Then we'd have maps on bulletin boards and things like that, too, that would show where people could or couldn't hunt or fish.

One of the areas that was always interesting was the Bureau of Reclamation worked with the Division of Wildlife, kind of separately, and they wanted to have closures a certain distance back from their dams at Blue Mesa, Morrow Point, and Crystal. These were areas where they didn't want people fishing because it would interfere with their operation of the dams. They didn't want people fishing up over the tops of the dams, although that was done initially at Blue Mesa. They were fishing right off of the penstocks there and stuff and on the face of the dam. They stopped a lot of that after 9/11. They gated it all off and everything because that was allowing access to areas of the dam that were kind of sensitive. One of the interesting things that happened was that there were certain guys in the Bureau of Reclamation that enjoyed the fact that they could access areas that the general public couldn't. So on a number of occasions, we caught bureau people fishing in the closed area. This would particularly happen when the kokanee salmon would run up. They were put into the lakes. They'd bring the trucks out from Roaring Judy Hatchery and they'd put the fish in the lakes. Then the fish would generally go back to those areas, but those that made their way somehow through Blue Mesa Dam, and they'd get down in Morrow Point Lake and stuff, they would run 'em back up toward the dam. So you'd get these kokanee runs up toward Blue Mesa Dam in particular is where we had issues. Once I caught some guys down there fishing off Blue Mesa. One of them happened to be one of the guys that I had rescued. We talked about that last time about this rescue on Morrow Point Lake.

It was one of the Garcia brothers. He happened to work at Roaring Judy Hatchery. He'd come down to the dam for some reason. So here I catch a Division of Wildlife guy fishing in the closed area along with a couple of Bureau guys.

TM: Oops. What did you do?

BC: Oops, yeah. In this case, because of this relationship that we had, here I'd saved the guy's house, I just gave him a really bad tongue lashing. Told him you work for the Division of Wildlife, you know better, get out of here, basically. Probably should've have written him a violation notice, but I didn't want to play, I guess, Jekyll and Hyde [chuckle].

TM: Yeah, gosh. That puts you in quite the difficult dilemma.

BC: Well it does. I remember a Division of Wildlife guy one time told me, I don't play with my job. I thought that's a really good philosophy. You need to treat everybody the same. That's just a good way to work. I also was in a meeting with another Division of Wildlife guy and I asked him before hunting season, I said, "Who should we be looking out for? Are there particular people like from Olathe or Delta or Montrose that are kind of notorious characters?" He says, "Everybody." [chuckle] He said there are no innocent people when it comes to wildlife laws, basically.

But later on we did have another kind of an important case where one of the rangers from up at Blue Mesa, a guy named Ned Callahern, he was really a sharp guy. He came down and I had told him where to go where you could look down on the dam, and I said if you see people...this was like orientation...when you see people in this particular area they're in a closed fishing area and they need to be checked out. He went out to the viewpoint and he looked down and he saw these guys that appeared to be fishing below Blue Mesa Dam. So he drove back across the dam, the access point was on the other side at Pine Creek, he drove down the Pine Creek Road and when he got to the gate that was supposed to be double locked...you'd put two locks together so both agencies can access the area...the Bureau lock had locked out the Park Service lock. He thought, oh, that's kind of odd. So he climbed over the fence, walked down the road, and he caught a guy by the name of Jack Sage down there and some other guys fishing in the closed area. Of course, these guys were actually on duty. I mean, it's not like it's on their day off. This Jack Sage was the #2 man with the Bureau in Montrose, so he wrote him a ticket. Jack had to pay, I forget, \$80 or \$100 or something like that. Well, that was obviously a very effective deterrent to Bureau people fishing after that happened.

I had had incidents with this same guy. He was always kind of on the edge. It depended on who the supervisor was or what they said in Salt Lake whether the Bureau people followed what was their own policy. The policy basically was, we can't do things on our days off, or whatever, that the public can't do. Jack was always trying to go the other way on that.

The first summer I was down there, I went down to the Crystal Dam. They were still doing some construction there and they had a fence across the road quite a ways down the road from where the current fence is that the Bureau has. It's about a tenth of a mile down from the dam. I saw this boat back up in there and there was a woman sitting in a truck. I was looking at this boat up there, and I said, "Do you know who that is up there?" She says, "Oh, yeah, that's Jack Sage." I said, "Oh, well, I don't really care who he is." I went up the road and signaled them across, they came across and I said, "You can't fish here." That was probably my first chance to meet him and realize I was going to have some issues with him over the years. His supervisor was a guy named Larry Anderson. I called Larry Anderson and I told him what was going on. He said, "Just write those people tickets because they shouldn't be there. They can't do anything the public can't do." As long as he was the manager, that rule pretty much was followed by everybody. Once he left, things got a little bit looser again with the Bureau people. The thing is a lot of times, they would go up and go out on Morrow Point Lake and fish all the time. The thing was they were violating policy, they weren't violating the law necessarily, because they had their own Bureau boats and stuff like that out there and they would go out on the lake. They could say it was a VIP tour or they were out trying to...what was the one Jack used to tell me occasionally...go out on Morrow Point Lake and do sample testing for the Division of Wildlife. See how many fish are out there. Some excuse like that.

I had another incident with a Bureau guy. I'd just moved to Curecanti, I'd been there about a month, a month and a half. I went down the Pine Creek Road toward Blue Mesa Dam, and there's a Bureau guy

over sawing down a cottonwood tree and bucking it up and putting it in a pick-up truck. So I contacted him and he said, "I'm cutting this tree down because it could be a hazard and it could fall across the road." I thought, yeah, that's exactly what you're doing. So, I went up to my supervisor and said this is going on. I don't know what he ever did. I don't know if he contacted the Bureau of Reclamation or what regarding that, but I noticed we didn't get any more trees cut down after that.

TM: Why do you think he was cutting it down?

BC: Firewood.

TM: Oh, really? Cottonwood's not real great firewood. It kind of burns fast, hot.

BC: Yeah, but it burns clean and it's free, as far as he's concerned.

TM: Well, there is that.

BC: There's always that aspect to it. So there was a lot of contact with Bureau people over the years and it was a little bit difficult to write them violation notices in some cases because they weren't necessarily breaking the law but they were breaking policy. The other thing they would do is bring their families up to the top of the dams on their days off and show them around. That was something they weren't supposed to do either, but that still went on.

We had a really interesting meeting one time with this same guy, Jack Sage. I can't remember his supervisor's name now. He was kind of a good ol' boy. Joe Alston and I met with them over some issue I forget at the Cattleman's Hotel in Gunnison. We decided we were going to have lunch and discuss some things. We sat down and had lunch and both of these guys order cocktails [chuckle]. They had a couple of cocktails and Joe and I were just kind of rolling our eyes. What's going on here? They just operated a little bit differently than the rest of us [chuckle]. Overall they were pretty good people to work with.

I guess every park I worked in, the Bureau had its tentacles. Grand Canyon, water releases affected all the recreation and boating. In fact, I was down there, I guess it was about '73 or something, when the federal judge, I don't remember if it was Wallace Ritter or who, told the Bureau that they could not put water into Rainbow Bridge National Monument. So all of a sudden...I was at Phantom Ranch and the river went from a trickle to this torrent. It was the highest that I ever saw the water when I was there. It was way up over the boat beach and everything. In fact after the water receded, there were a gazillion tamarisk plants coming up along the beaches there and stuff. That went on for, I guess, a couple of weeks at least before it was finally decided that water could be allowed in the National Monument under the bridge. So that was my experience with the Bureau at Grand Canyon. I never really met with any of them or anything. The water level went up and down, and that was all a result of the Glen Canyon Dam and the releases there.

Then, of course, Dinosaur there was the whole previous Echo Park Dam controversy that had been pretty much resolved. The Bureau was still interested in some of the local Colorado water. People were still interested in dams up there at Dinosaur. There were a number of times we took VIP tours, or whatever you want to call them. Took people down the river that were with the Bureau and Colorado water people. I remember them talking, "Gee this would be a good site," something like that.

One guy that was interesting that we took was a fellow by the name of Vern Jetly. He lives here in Montrose and he was the photographer for the Bureau of Reclamation. The bureau had an office. Here in Curecanti in Montrose, we shared an office with them here in the east end of town. They had a photography file there. They had this huge machine that was like a gigantic rolodex. They had tens of thousands of pictures in this thing and they were all cataloged. This Vern Jetly did all of this. He was the photographer. He had a darkroom there. He took photographs all over the western United States, basically, wherever the Bureau had projects. They had photos in there of the canyons here at Curecanti and Black Canyon before the dam. Then as the dam...all the construction and everything. I used to go in there all the time and look through these and make Xerox copies of them and stuff like that. Because of the railroad history, they had pictures of the bridges and stuff like that that were down through the canyon and all that type of stuff. Eventually they moved all of that photography up to Salt Lake City when they closed the office here. Because they were still working on Silver Jack Reservoir and Ridgeway Reservoir. That's what this office was. It had been Morrow Point and Blue Mesa and all that, the main office had been in Montrose. They ended up finally phasing it out. It's a real estate office or something now. They had a lot of just really, really interesting photographs that this Vern had taken.

TM: I bet.

BC: He's an interesting character. He's quite elderly now.

Dinosaur, obviously, had quite a bit of interest with the Bureau and releases from Flaming Gorge. They would usually have low flows in the spring, because the Yampa River, which is a natural river, is putting a lot of water downstream. They would increase those and then regulate them throughout the summer so there could be boating down through there.

TM: So they weren't matching the Flaming Gorge releases to meet the Yampa? There's a funny relationship between the Yampa peaking and the Green peaking that meets the Yampa. I think the Green's a little delayed on that. It's a little further north, is that right?, and it doesn't quite peak at the same time as the Yampa.

BC: Yeah, you'd have runnable water in the Lodore Canyon in the spring, but it wasn't usually the flows that you had during the summer. You'd have the higher flows in the summer. I think that was pretty common.

Then I moved to Glen Canyon. Obviously, out on the big ol' lake there, I was kind of sad after the flooding of Glen Canyon, there was always kind of, you know, felt that way about it. While I was there the lake rose, I think, to its highest pool. For example you didn't have to go down toward the dam and around Antelope Island to get uplake. There was a cut between the upper end of Wahweap Bay where you just shortcutted everything. That was a pretty nice deal as far as whenever you went back and forth uplake, it cut the trip...

TM: A lot of money was put into the cut to make it deeper as the reservoir level dropped. Right now it's out of the water.

BC: Yeah, I'm sure it is. Then of course, we also had... I think we've talked about, previously, the security of the dam and the tunnel and everything. We dealt with that with the Bureau. When I first moved to Glen Canyon, the city of Page was still policed by the Reclamation police. Then they started a Page police department. With that we lost our dispatching. Eventually the Park Service ended up paying for 24-hour

dispatch with the police department there in Page. We used their little jail occasionally if we had to hold somebody overnight.

TM: Oh, okay. So interesting relationships with the other agencies nearby just to save funding and not duplicate systems.

BC: Right, right, you'd pay. And dispatching, that's the kind of classic thing. They'll have one dispatch and everybody pays money into it to support it and then you have your dispatch operation. We did that here in Montrose, too, with the Montrose sheriff's department. We also did it with Gunnison's sheriff's department. We had a dispatch operation with both. It's much more cost effective then to try to hire 24-hour-a-day dispatchers for the Park Service or to have the supervisors act as dispatch at night from their homes. A lot of parks have done that over the years and it's not very efficient.

TM: No, yeah, you talked about that. I mean, it's just crazy to have people that have full-time day jobs then serve as dispatchers at night. That's just a losing proposition.

BC: Yeah, it doesn't work. But there were some other things with the Bureau at Glen Canyon. It was the first time I saw these high scalers work. One day the Park Service pilot, Warren... I can't think of his last name. His name was Warren. He was flying around and he saw this huge cloud of reddish dust. He flew over and it was right above Rainbow Bridge. He called me at the marina. I think I mentioned this maybe once before. We got everybody out of there, we closed Rainbow Bridge. Then the high scalers for the Bureau came in and knocked a bunch of huge chunks of rock out. These guys would hang in... They had a thing called wire rope they would use. It was a big piece of like hemp rope that was about an inch wide or more and then they had a steel cable that went through the middle of that, twisted wire. Then they had little seats they sat on like a little swing. They were buckled into that. They could move around pretty good with that and they could also clip into another rope if they had to and stuff and move this apparatus. They did a lot of scaling there. When I was at Curecanti, the high scalers were putting wire wrapping, sort of like cyclone fencing almost, a lot of places where there was a lot of rockfall. They would do this particularly where you had a cliff where rocks spalled off but you had workmen or a power plant or something like that below that could have severe damage and stuff like that. They did hundreds and hundreds of square yards of this stuff. The first time I saw them was at Glen Canyon after that big rockfall.

Also they had a big boat. They had a Uniflite. It must have been about 36-maybe-feet long, maybe 40-foot long. They used that to scoot all over the lake. We used it a couple of times. If it was uplake we could get a hold of them and they provided like ambulance service sort of. I remember a couple of times I went on their boat so that we could get downlake faster. So that was a benefit of having the Bureau there, I guess.

Also the Park Service took over the old Bureau of Reclamation, one of their buildings in Page, for their headquarters for a long time. That's where they were at when I was working there, before they built their new park headquarters south of the dam and all.

Let's see. I wrote one little note down here. Doesn't have anything to do with the Bureau of Reclamation [chuckle]. There was this one incident that occurred at Glen Canyon. We had these people that were...there was a little gang. It was called the Huddleston gang. Have you ever heard of them?

TM: No.

BC: The Huddleston gang were a group of people that were related with that last name. The reason I thought about this was because we had these huge parking lots at Glen Canyon and we were having a lot of car burglaries where people would break into cars when people were out on the lake and steal things out of the cars. So we were doing a lot of patrols. You'd go sit in your patrol car out there and watch the parking lots or you'd walk around the parking lots at night. What the Huddleston gang... They figured out what they were doing. They went to parks all over the west. They would camp somewhere outside of the National Parks and then they would take motorcycles and they would drive into the parks. They would do this at night. Then they would do things like they'd put socks over their shoes and stuff to kind of tamp down the noise of them walking around. They would walk right into people's campsites and steal stuff. They were also doing these car burglaries. They would use motorcycles because they could get away really quickly and they weren't as obvious on them, maybe. I always remembered, one night I was out patrolling one of the parking lots near the Wahweap Lodge and I startled someone that was probably breaking into a car. They ran, got on a motorcycle and took off. I chased him, but I couldn't catch him. I always wondered if that was one of the Huddleston's. They eventually caught them and they all went to prison for a long time. Just a kind of an aside, didn't have anything to do with the Bureau of Reclamation. I always wondered if I almost broke the Huddleston case.

TM: Yeah, yeah, that's an interesting issue of long-term parked cars in lots all across the west at all kinds of service areas. Recreation Areas, National Parks & Monuments, campgrounds.

BC: Well, people's guard is often down when they're in a park. You leave stuff out on your picnic table and you go recreate during the day and you don't think anything about it, you come back... It's like they're in a different world than the real world, but actually they're in the real world because people still steal and do bad things.

TM: Yeah, yeah.

BC: Let's see. When I moved to Montrose, the Curecanti and Black Canyon, the power operation center was in Montrose. One interesting thing happened when... There was a reorganization of government when the Department of Energy was instituted or whatever you want to say. The Department of Energy took over the operation of all the power lines and the Bureau then strictly produced the power at the dams and took care of the reservoirs. I don't remember if it was Jimmy, I don't think it was Jimmy Carter. I forget which president it was under, but they decided to... Carter was quite a bit earlier, wasn't he? Must have been the Clinton administration. They decided they wanted to rename the Bureau of Reclamation and other agencies to make them...what am I trying to say...more reflect what their mission was, I guess. So the Bureau of Reclamation became the Water and Power Resources Services. I remember the outside of their office here in Montrose. They had this huge sign, it was made out of Redwood. Bureau never did anything halfway, you know. It was Redwood heartwood. It was all routed out, beautiful sign. Bureau of Reclamation. Well, they had to take that down and they put this new sign up: Water and Power Resources Services. We teased them and we'd called them the Whoppers. They didn't like that. This was something... The Bureau of Reclamation... Tradition in a government agency sometimes is very important. To be called the Bureau of Reclamation was really important to them. They groused about this for years. I'll never forget when they reverted back to call them Bureau of Reclamation after 4 or 5 years, or whatever it was. The day that that was signed, that legislation or executive order or whatever was signed, they tore that other sign down and put the old Bureau of Reclamation sign right back up. That was like priority 1 for the Bureau of Reclamation in the United

States, get that sign up. I always just thought that was interesting because tradition in a federal agency is something that's so important to some people.

TM: Bob, I'm curious. Do you see a day when, given the advances in wind power and solar power and advances in gas fired electrical generation turbines, do you see a day when the Bureau of Reclamation may take on a new mission of decommissioning some of their dams?

BC: I don't know if they have done it, but there have been dams decommissioned in some places for other purposes, like up in the Northwest for salmon and stuff going up the lakes. But, you know, hydropower is pretty efficient. We right here in Montrose... The water that comes from the Gunnison Tunnel, if you're familiar with that, from East Portal out, they have put a hydro plant out here on the canal. It comes out of a tunnel and then it makes a really sharp drop and on that spillway there, they've put a hydro plant. It's small. I'm not sure, I think it was probably Bureau of Reclamation funded, but I'm not quite sure who is operating that. I think the Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association. They're a private irrigation company, but all of the works were built by the Bureau of Reclamation. They were always interesting to deal with because if they... They could always kind of tell you, "We'll have to check with the Bureau on that."

They could stall you on a lot of things. We had a meeting one time, or several meetings actually. We came up with a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of Reclamation on how the East Portal Road, that goes down to the bottom of the canyon, the Uncompahgre Valley Water Users properties, and the roads in both directions, one going up to the Crystal Dam and one going down to our campground, how all that area was going to be managed. The Bureau didn't want a lot of Park Service regulations and environmental issues. They wanted to be able to keep the road open so they could get to the dam under any circumstances basically. You get a tremendous amount of rockfall down there. So they wanted to have places where they could take the rocks and toss them off the side of road. In a couple cases they built whole parking lots along the road because there was so much debris. What do you do with it? You got to get it out of the river. They're always sensitive about anything that went into the river that could push water back up into the power plant and decrease the power plant efficiency and stuff like that. So we came up with this Memorandum of Understanding. They basically had agreed to have a corridor, and we agreed to have a corridor, along this road, and the Bureau could do anything they wanted basically along the road. They could chop down trees if they needed to. They could move rocks and that sort of thing. The benefit to the park, for one thing, is that the park didn't have to maintain the road. The Bureau maintains the road. It also delineated the boundaries of the water users properties so that they weren't doing things that were impinging on the Park Service's mission or vice versa. We also were given a building down there that we used for quarters and for a small little contact station. So everything was laid out. But that was one of those meetings where a couple of us showed up and a whole bunch of Bureau people showed. It's a little bit intimidating to go into something like that. That was probably the only time I really, really got involved with working with the Bureau on coming up with any kinds of plans or that type of thing. There were things...

TM: So Reclamation. You'd have a meeting with Reclamation and they would... Would they bring in other staff members from surrounding areas? How would they just show up with eight people?

BC: They would bring people from Salt Lake because whenever you'd talk with the local guys, can we do this or that, there were certain decisions they could make locally and certain decisions they couldn't. So they would always defer, "Well, I got to call Salt Lake City." The guys would fly down here from Salt Lake City to attend meetings like this. They might have a legal person and they would have an engineer, you

know, different types of people like that. In fact, flying was a problem in that one time they had a terrible plane crash. I forget how many Bureau people were killed. I think 5 or 6 people were killed. They took off from the Montrose airport to fly back to Salt Lake. I think they had a new pilot. The Uncompahgre Plateau, which is basically south and west of Montrose, is kind of deceiving in that it gains elevation slowly but the crest is pretty high. I don't know, it must be 8000 feet or something up there. This pilot, instead of circling and gaining altitude over the valley, he just kind of flew straight up the plateau and didn't have enough power in this aircraft and they crashed. All these guys were killed. They have a memorial here in Montrose I think at the Bureau of Reclamation building over there on Rio Grande.

TM: It's interesting, because the National Park Service has legal representation. They have engineers, they have superintendents, and assistant superintendents. If you guys wanted to, you could have brought in that kind of support, but clearly there was no need. I'm just curious to know why Reclamation thought there was a need to do that. You mentioned intimidating and I thought was that...

BC: That might be part of it, yeah. It's hard to say. Or maybe they're just justifying their jobs. I have to respect the guys because they're the only real agency in the government that makes money. They make money every time that turbine turns. Every other agency in the federal government, I can't think of another one, is taking tax dollars and just spending tax dollars. The Bureau is actually self-funded. They actually make money for the rest of the government, too. That's kind of an interesting aside.

When I first got to Curecanti, I remember, I made friends with all of these Bureau people. I used to go visit the people in each of the power plants so I knew who the main people were. Some of the guys I had actually worked with at Glen Canyon so I knew them. They're a small agency and they move around just like Park Service people do. So that was always kind of fun to see people again, obviously.

But one of the things when I first got here, it seemed like to me, that you could get some of the local guys, particularly the equipment operators, to do things for you. You had a rock you wanted to move or something so you could get your boat in on the lake or something. I remember doing that one time. As time went on they were unionized. The Bureau of Reclamation people were unionized and everybody had their little niche, their little job. You'd go ask somebody, "Hey, can you do this?" They'd say, "No, I can't do that. It's against shop rules," or something. From that standpoint they got a little bit harder to deal with on a one-to-one basis. They apparently were afraid to make a decision on their own and go do something. They had a specific job that they had to do.

TM: Interesting. You know, I kind of want to cycle back around to the CFR's versus the Superintendent's Compendium. You had mentioned something about snowmobiles and ice. The snowmobiles out on the lakes when they were frozen. Was there a CFR that said that shouldn't happen and then did the Superintendent's Compendium allow that?

BC: Yeah, it's been a long time ago, you know, 15 years or more. I can't remember exactly what the rules are now, but I know in our Compendium, we came up with a map that showed the areas that snowmobiles could access the lake. There were certain places where they could get onto the lake surface. Basically the whole frozen surface of Blue Mesa Lake could be accessed, except probably right around the dams I'm guessing. But it's been a while since...

TM: Just like a boat in the summer time. You can access the whole lake except around the dam. That makes sense.

BC: Right. You can go about anywhere. Another thing would be like there's probably something in the Compendium about all boats that go on Blue Mesa Lake have to be checked for these zebra...

TM: Oh yeah, the exotic mussels. The little clam things.

BC: Mussels. Zebra mussels, yeah. We had maps of, I think I mentioned earlier, about where you could and couldn't hunt. We came up with a little rule that you couldn't shoot a gun like across the trail, for example, from one side of a trail to another, because of the danger of hitting somebody. You had to be so many feet from a trail or a developed campground, or those types of things. Then another one would be the hand-carry boats onto the two lower lakes. We didn't allow people to drive their vehicles down to the shore below Morrow Point Dam. We had this giant stairway below Blue Mesa Dam and people would carry their boats up and down there, but it was just hand-carry boats, basically. If you could carry it down there, you could put it on the lake.

I had one boat one time, this guy got it down there okay, but the thing weighed a ton, an absolute ton. There was no way he was going to get it out of there. I finally said, "Well, I'll tow it down to the dam, Morrow Point Dam, and we'll pull it up out of the lake." We took it down to the dam and I hooked it on... They had this big crane down there. It's one that's on railroad tracks and the crane goes back and forth on this gantry. So I just used that. Hooked a rope over the top of it and we just pulled this thing up using a truck. Pulled it up out of the water up onto the dam and then hauled it down to Cimarron. The kid came and got his boat [chuckle]. I remember I think we dropped it once back into the lake and it didn't even dent it. It was just such a monster of a thing.

A little bit more about CFR. We had this bond schedule. Most of the rangers didn't think the bond schedule fit the crimes in most cases. That people were getting off with a wrist slap. I remember this was really true at Glen Canyon where people with a half million dollar houseboat wanted to park near the boat ramp. So they would just park on the boat ramp and go off for a week and leave their car parked on the ramp. Well, it would interfere with people getting their boats in and out of the lake.

TM: Absolutely. Really? People would do that?

BC: Oh yeah. We had a limit like a one hour zone or something like that.

TM: Yeah, loading and unloading kind of thing.

BC: And the fine for leaving an unattended vehicle like that or parking over an hour or something was like \$10. So, even if you increased it to a \$100 bond, if someone is determined that I can afford to run this giant house boat and this is just my parking fee, basically, is the way they were handling this. So we came up with a solution and that was to call tow trucks. We would get tow trucks out of Page. After we did that a few times and the word got around, then that kind of took care of that issue to a degree.

TM: So you would tow the boat away or their...?

BC: No, tow their car.

TM: Tow their car away. Okay.

BC: Tow their car back to Page. Their car and if they were people that had a trailer, we'd tow the car and trailer. That becomes a huge inconvenience to them and at least they don't do it again. But anyway, we wanted to change the bond schedule that we had. I went ahead and developed this whole thing, checking with other rangers in other parks and locally in our own parks, what's a reasonable bond on different things? We sent it in. The chief ranger sent it in to our regional office and I get a call from John Chapman, when he was working in the region. He was all upset about it. The reason he was upset about it was because he would have to take this to the U.S. Attorney and get their approval. Then the U.S. Attorney would then have to take it to the Chief Federal judge in Denver, in this case. He didn't want to go to all that work. He was quite upset, but he eventually did it and we got a new bond schedule. John Chapman later became the superintendent of the park. I guess he could have got even with me for... I gave him some work and I'm sure he gave me some in return when he was superintendent. But that helped a lot.

TM: So you've got a bond schedule that needs to be updated. You do that and you show it to your boss, the chief ranger, and the chief ranger goes, yeah, it looks good. Why wouldn't that just go to the Compendium for the superintendent to say, this is the Compendium for our park and this is our bond schedule?

BC: Because he's not the judge. The judicial system sets the fine if it's not specifically in the law. They'll usually say 6 months or \$5,000 fine or something like that. That sounds real scary, but for practical purposes, to make the system work, you develop bonds. Unless it's a real egregious thing, you say, well, that's going to be their penalty basically if they decide not to show up in court. So you want something that's reasonable, but still hurts a little bit.

TM: So the Compendium would deal with boundaries and area closures, but anything fine related or court related, that had to go through a different... The superintendent couldn't put any content in the Compendium about that.

BC: Yeah, the superintendent had no control over that at all. When I was at Glen Canyon, we did have a U.S. Attorney that told us we could go ahead... The ranger in the field could modify the bond based on the egregiousness of the offense. Say the same guy had done the same thing a couple of times. Instead of a \$50 bond, you'd say a \$100 bond. We got away with that for a short period of time until the federal judge in Phoenix found out about it. He was really unhappy because we're now judge and jury.

TM: Oh, I see. Okay.

BC: So that stopped and we went back to our old ineffective bond schedule.

Another thing that was interesting, was getting a hold of people. Every park I was in was the same issue. You'd write someone a violation notice. Then they would either pay the bond or just ignore it, you know, I don't care about this. Like people do all the time, like with parking tickets. I had one interesting case at Cimarron one time where I wrote a guy a ticket for illegal camping. He camped in a picnic area not too far from the visitor center. He was right in front of the sign that said no camping. So I wrote him this ticket. It was a \$25 fine. This was first thing in the morning. It was like 7:30 in the morning or something like that. I went back to my office and I parked the car and I looked back down toward the picnic area just in time to see this guy tear up my ticket and throw it in the trashcan. He took off in his car and headed west toward Montrose. I think I had actually gone in my office. I had a window that faced the picnic area and I looked out the window and I saw this. So I had to lock the building up, run out

and get in my car and chase him. I caught him about halfway to Montrose. He pulled over and I said, "Say,..." I had actually gone down to the trashcan, too. I went down to the trashcan and got the ticket and had it with me, then I caught him. I asked him, "Why'd you tear the ticket up?" He said, "I just did." I said, "How are you going to know where to send the bond money?" He said, "Oh, I memorized all that." I said, "I don't think so." So I got the guy in handcuffs. I said, "You're under arrest." I got him in handcuffs. He pleaded and pleaded with me. He was from Oregon. I said, "Okay, tell you what we'll do. We'll drive back down to the post office in Cimarron and you will buy a money order for \$25. We'll put it in the envelope and I'll watch you put it in the slot and then you can go." He said, "Okay." That was better than going to Grand Junction, because that's where we had to take prisoners. We went back and I told Bill Newbury the postmaster, I said, "This gentleman needs to get a \$25 money order." So he did. He went on his way and everything was copacetic.

But a lot of people did not always pay their violation notice. Another thing I would do, sometimes you would catch somebody doing something, but you didn't have quite enough evidence to maybe write the violation notice at the time. So you would send it to them through the mail. I used to send them. They went in official government envelope, and it said, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Black Canyon National Park, or Curecanti National Recreation Area, or something. You would send it certified and they wouldn't accept it and it would come back. I thought, well, this isn't good. I'm sending them a certified letter, they see all this information on there, they know what it's about, and they just don't accept it. There was a woman who was our secretary down here in Montrose. Her name was Olivia Martinez. I told Olivia, I said, "I'll tell you what I'd like to do. I want to get a plain envelope and we're going to put your name on it as a return address." So we had O. Martinez and then we had the Black Canyon Office address on it. So we would send certified letters to people and everytime they accepted the letter because it said O. Martinez and not National Park Service on there. I delivered a lot of violation notices that way and it was pretty effective. If a person was a local, they would generally pay the bond. It was people that were from out of state or something like that. They figured I'll never be back there again and anything. I think I mentioned maybe in an earlier discussion, where a guy decided not to pay his entrance fee to the Black Canyon. Do you recall that story?

TM: No.

BC: Well, the guy came up to the entrance station and was very upset about having to pay whatever it was, \$7 or something, to go into the park. He kind of was very rude and intimidated the young lady who was at the gate, but finally agreed that he would just turn around and go back out because he didn't want to pay the fee. Well, instead of just turning around the entrance station, he decided to go into the park and maybe turn around at the first viewpoint or something like that. He went down to Tomichi Point which is the first viewpoint. The visitor that was in back of him witnessed all of this, him berating the seasonal at the entrance station. The guy confronted him at Tomichi Point. Said, "What are you doing?" It embarrassed this guy, so the guy turned around and went back out. He did go back out of the park. But now he'd gone in the park and hadn't paid. Nancy Zanger was on duty that day and she chased this guy. She found him about, oh, I guess, 10 or 12 miles from the park on Highway 50. Pulled him over and wrote him a violation notice for not paying his entrance fee. This guy was from New York State. When he got back to New York he just ignored the request to appear or pay his \$25 bond. The Assistant U.S. Attorney in Grand Junction, they started corresponding back and forth. The guy said, well, he just didn't want to pay because of this, that, and the other. I remember the U.S. Attorney calling me and I had to write up, basically, a history of fee collection in the National Park Service for his information. This guy really was obnoxious. The judge, the U.S. Magistrate, Rob, finally had enough of this guy. He said, "Put out an arrest warrant for him." The U.S. Marshall who was in the courthouse over there in Grand

Junction, he had a friend who was also a U.S. Marshall in New York. So one day he pays this guy a visit. He basically told him you either go to jail...like I told this other guy...you either go to jail or we go down to the post office and you pay the bond. In this case, the guy just wrote a check or something, handed it to the U.S. Marshall, I think, and the case was closed. He finally did have to pay his \$25, but it took clear across the country, 3000 miles, to get payment.

TM: Yeah, it took \$300 worth of salary time to get it.

BC: Oh, yeah, I can't imagine how much money it cost the government. I had to make several written statements and stuff about the whole case. The first time, I had to describe in more detail what had happened. The second one, I had to talk about why we have fees in the national parks. It was kind of crazy. Let's see. The other thing that we did at each of the parks that I was at, we didn't always have a good federal judiciary. Dinosaur was that way, in particular. So we handled things through state courts. I probably said this before. One way we did it is we deputized our staff. So over the years, I was thinking, I've been a special deputy in Coconino County, Arizona, and Moffat County, Colorado, and Uintah County, Utah, and Gunnison County, Colorado, and Montrose County, Colorado...

TM: How interesting.

BC: ...and I was a Utah boating enforcement officer. So that's how you dealt with things. A lot of the cases we would deal with, we did through justices of the peace both at Grand Canyon and Glen Canyon, in particular. When I got here to Black Canyon/Curecanti they had a part-time magistrate in Grand Junction and then kind of a full-time magistrate over in Grand Junction as the caseload started to increase with all the federal agencies on the western slope.

TM: Right, yeah, you'd think there's enough federal land around Junction that one person could stay busy there.

BC: Oh, yeah, they have plenty of things going on. We went over to federal court... Every month we had to go over there. Someone had to go from the park and be over there for cases, because we almost always had a case going. Well, I've had an interesting career [chuckle].

TM: You have. Gosh.

BC: Lots of things have gone on. I'm envious of myself [chuckle]. Wish I could still do it.

TM: Well, as a citizen of this great country, I want to thank you for your service.

BC: Oh, well, thank you.

TM: It's an amazing life and an amazing career, so I certainly thank you for all the work you've done to preserve our resources for future generations. Your children and your grandchildren, and all of our great grandchildren will benefit from this.

BC: Sure, well, it's been an honor. Sometimes I sit in awe and think, boy, I got paid to do all this stuff, to have all this fun. Ride these snowmobiles, and drive these power boats, and row down the rivers, and ride horses, and hike miles on beautiful trails. Someone's gotta do it, as they say. I really appreciated

your patience in listening to all my windy tales and everything, Tom. I'm looking forward to visiting with you one of these days in Flagstaff.

TM: That would be a lot of fun. You know, as we wrap this up, is there anything you'd like to say, thinking 50 and 100 years ahead to future Park Service employees?

BC: Boy, you know things are much different than when I started. When I started, they were much different than they were the previous 50 years, I guess, is when I first came in on the 50th anniversary. It's a daunting task to try to allow people to visit and enjoy our National Parks and Monuments, historic areas, and keep them the way that they were when they were first established. I just almost shake my head sometimes thinking how can we do this? Because the popularity of them... A few years ago I think they thought it was waning, and it's actually increasing enormously. There's so many things that are happening as far as population. Whereas we used to have isolated parks, we now have communities growing up around them. I read the other day, the fastest growing community in the United States is St. George, Utah, right outside the boundaries of Zion, and not too far from Bryce and those other areas. I guess if I was to give any advice, it would be be honest with people, especially in law enforcement and dealing with people, and try to just do your best. If you're in search & rescue be prepared for those types of things. I don't know. You caught me off guard a little bit.

TM: That's good. Be honest, do your best, and be prepared. I mean, that's great.

BC: Yeah, yeah.

TM: Nice. Well, Bob Cornelius, thank you so very, very much for your time and taking the time to do these interviews. I'm really, really honored that you've done that. Absolutely, I hope to see you when you're in Flagstaff or if we're up your way in Montrose, we'll definitely stop in and say hello.

BC: Give me a call sometime, if you get a chance. We go to Flagstaff all the time, it seems like I've spent half my life down there I think [chuckle].