

Transcription Grand Canyon Historical Society

Interviewee: Pat Grediagin (PS)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Growing up in northern California and western Oregon, Pat spent a lot of time out of doors. Her parents hiked her and her two little sisters into Havasu when she was 15 in 1970 and she fell in love with the desert. After graduating from college with a degree in recreation planning, Pat got a volunteer position at Canyonlands National Park in 1977. This is her story.

Date of Interview: November 19, 2020

Part 2

Method of Interview: Telephone

Transcriber: Kiana Cook

Date of Transcription: December 15, 2020

Transcription Reviewers: Tom Martin

Keys: Canyonlands National Park; SCA rangers; The Maze District; Hans Flat Ranger Station; Spanish Bottom; Horseshoe Canyon; The Dollhouse; Green River, Utah; Moab, Utah; Telluride, Colorado; Henry Mountains; Capitol Reef National Park; Bluegrass Festival; Salt Valley; Arches National Park; Peabody Archeological Surveys; bird survey routes; Anasazi and Fremont culture; Ancestral Puebloans; Canyonlands river rangers; Colorado River; Westwater Canyon; Cataract Canyon; Anderson Bottom; Mineral Bottom; Rapid 5; The Confluence; Tom Cox; Jim Braggs; Ed Forner; Glenn Sherrill; Barry Miller; rock rescue training; law enforcement training; river ranger training; EMT training; Friendship Cruise

TM: Today is Thursday, November 19th, 2020. This is a Part Two Interview with Pat Grediagin. My name is Tom Martin. And, again, this is a Part Two Grand Canyon Oral History Interview. Good evening, Pat. How are you today?

PG: I am fine. Thank you.

TM: Great. Pat, may we have your permission to record this oral history over the telephone?

PG: Yes, you do. You have my permission.

TM: Thank you. We ended up Part One in the winter of 1977-1978. You were home for the holidays, working as a waitress in Corvallis, Oregon. And you had spent the previous part of 1977 as a ranger in Canyonlands National Park. And I had a question—as I'm just doing this intro, I'm reminded I wanted to ask you, do you remember when Canyonlands actually became a national park?

PG: '64. 1964.

TM: Okay. All right. So it had been up and running for 15 years or so before you showed up.

PG: Right. Right.

TM: Okay. And home for the holidays, filled out seasonal paperwork for Canyonlands. And then what happened?

PG: Well, I got hired to go back to The Maze as a seasonal ranger. The year before, I'd actually been a volunteer in the form of an SCA, a position that the park used to help flesh out the paid staff. So this would have been my first government job where I was paid by the Park Service to be a ranger in Canyonlands. And I think that I probably started in early March of 1978 with my seasonal position in The Maze and ended... It was a long season so, in my mind, I went into the end of October, I think.

TM: Okay. And March to October, that would be 180 days, probably.

PG: You know, I'm not sure the 180-day thing was in effect in that timeframe.

TM: All right. That makes sense. I think you mentioned that last time. You had already worked in The Maze before, so that was familiar to you.

PG: Right.

TM: As a seasonal, did you get any more perks than you'd had before?

PG: No. Actually, not at all. So the work that I did—well, I got paid. That was the big perk, actually.

TM: All right.

PG: But the work was just about the same. I can't think of anything that really distinguished the first—my first seasonal job from my volunteer SCA job. And then I also worked there a second year in The Maze, which is jumping ahead with this history a bit. But they all basically were the same work. I would go on patrols or I would be in the—we called it a contact station, where people would stop in and get permits and information. Now, you might call it an information station—

TM: Okay.

PG: —there at Hans Flat. And I had a 10-day workweek and then was off for 4 days, and I think always left on my days off and went either to Moab to get groceries and to see people I had come to know there. Or maybe I would go off and explore. Like the Henry Mountains, I remember doing a hike in the Henry Mountains and going to Capitol Reef. So it just depended upon, you know, that weekend and what the weather was like and what I felt like doing. But I didn't stick around the housing area on my days off or go back into The Maze on my days off. I headed out.

TM: Cool. Okay. Remind me the vehicle you had?

PG: I had a Volkswagen Bug, which was actually a really great car for the rough road that—

TM: And sand.

PG: And sand. Exactly. And, you know, it just went through stuff just fine. So that was...

TM: Yeah. Because the engine sits right on the drive wheels.

PG: Right.

TM: Very handy to have all that weight over the tires there, so...

PG: Right.

TM: Great. You mentioned going to the Henrys. Did you, like, climb up to the top of the Henrys there?

PG: Well, I did. I remember hiking to atop of one the peaks.

TM: Wow.

PG: And I can't remember what it was anymore. But I don't remember that it was anything—a particularly stunning ascent. I think there was a road or a campground that probably was within 3,000 feet of... You know, I don't know, but I'm just speculating that it wasn't like I had my crampons on and ropes and stuff like that [laughs].

TM: Do you remember what the view was like, though?

PG: It was a great view. I can remember.

TM: Oh, neat.

PG: Yeah. That was a great view. And I remember taking a picture of one of the... I think it was an SCA that was working there in 1978 who went with me. There was somebody from where I was working there at Hans Flat that also had some days off, and I think we went over there and hiked up—you know, explored the Henrys a bit and hiked up to the top of something, though I don't know what it was.

TM: Fun. And you mentioned Capitol Reef.

PG: Yes, and I know I went and did the San Rafael Swell.

TM: Okay.

PG: And there was a back way to go to Green River where, if you were, for instance, in Horseshoe Canyon, you would just go due north from there on a county-graded road rather than going west to the paved highway. And I don't remember the highway numbers there. But it was just longer on dirt and... It was a longer dirt road to go that back way into Green River, but I know I did it at least once. And I know that because I... Oh, what happened? I broke down, basically, in my little Volkswagen.

TM: Oh.

PG: Driving in, I think I was going to go to, like, Telluride or something like that.

TM: Okay.

PG: And I was on my way to somewhere, and my car broke down, and I was in the middle of nowhere. And it was in the evening, because I had left after work. But it was warm, so it was summer or—yeah, it was probably June. And, so, I ended up walking into Green River.

TM: Wow.

PG: It was something like 24 miles. Because I thought to myself, "Okay, I've broken down here, and it's going to be really hot tomorrow, and I'd better just get this taken care of—the walking part taken care of—while it was cooler at night." So I walked all night long, basically, and I got into town. And I found a pay phone, and I called a wrecker. And some local guy in Green River gave me a ride with his wrecker back to the car. And I can't remember what was wrong with it, but it seemed like I was on my way again later that morning. So, whatever it was, it got fixed, as I remember. And I went off and did... I think I went to Telluride, to the Bluegrass Festival or something like that.

TM: Oh, neat.

PG: So, yeah. So that's—you know, I had—I was in a new setting there. Basically, Canyonlands was not where I had grown up or southeast Utah. I had been there in 1977 for two-, three-month work periods. But I'd loved the idea of looking around and exploring. And, so, on my days off, you know, if something sounded good, I'd just head off that way. And I remember going to the Bluegrass Festival. I don't know if that was actually 1977 or 1978, but—

TM: That would have been one of the early years for that.

PG: It would have been real—yeah, real early.

TM: And what was that like? Good music?

PG: Well... Yeah. I think I was by myself there, and I probably just hung around like part of a day or something like that. I think it was Bluegrass. Maybe—I'm trying to remember now. I think it was a Bluegrass Festival.

TM: Okay.

PG: But I might be wrong. It might have been some other music festival there. But I think it was in June, and it was definitely in Telluride. And I don't remember much more about it. I don't know. I must have camped somewhere in the area and then, you know, came home later. And maybe I met a friend there. I don't—I—you know, I don't remember the particulars. I remember it was sunny and it was a stunning—I hadn't spent much time in Telluride, or maybe it was my first time there. I'm not sure. But I have a visual image of this sunshine and the old buildings and it just feeling like, you know, the early summer in the mountains. It was lovely.

TM: Nice. Nice.

PG: Yeah.

TM: Yeah, up out of the desert, then, it would have been green, lots of flowers, and...

PG: Right. Right. A nice change of scene.

TM: Fun. What were some of the things that happened that 1978 summer at Canyonlands that you recall?

PG: I don't have specific memories of either '78 or '79, the two seasons that I was a seasonal out there.

TM: Okay.

PG: I know that I did a couple different kinds of projects both years, that spanned both years. So I would say that I didn't get a lot of specific instruction on my patrols to "do this and do this and do this and do that."

TM: Okay.

PG: So I was left to my own devices a lot. And I had just a lot of time. And I was in Horseshoe Canyon, for instance, sometimes for three nights, four days, being a presence there and talking to someone if they'd come through. But, you know, that got a little bit stagnant after a while. And, so, somebody had set up some bird survey routes or... I guess "routes" is not... I guess routes is a good enough word. I think there's another word, but—to where you would walk a certain area and document all of the birds that you heard or saw—

TM: Oh, wow.

PG: —along that tangent. And I wasn't—I didn't really know birds. But I thought, "Well, I guess I'll do that," because it was interesting to me to try and figure the birds out. It was puzzle solving, and it kind of gave me something to do. So I know I did some bird transects—that's the word I think I missed before—in Horseshoe Canyon, down at Spanish Bottom, and near Hans Flat, up on the high plateau. So that would have been different environments. And I probably was like a 60% accuracy rate because I was learning birds. And some of them I'd learn, and I'd go like, "Oh, I know what that bird is." But others, I wouldn't know, and I'd be like, "Hmm, what is that?" and I'm flipping through the book. And maybe I didn't write them down, or maybe I thought, "Oh, it looks like this. I'll call it that." So—no, I probably had a better—I probably had 80-85% accuracy. But it was—I was learning birds by taking this project on.

TM: Nice.

PG: So I remember doing that. And the other thing that I became very fascinated with was there were some copies of an archeological—I think it was the Peabody Archeological Surveys had been done in Canyonlands maybe about the time that was being established, maybe in '66 or something like that.

TM: Okay.

PG: I don't know anything about Peabody. In my mind, this is connected to Harvard a little bit, but I... I mean, that's me just trying to dredge up information from a long time ago. But there were these binders of different sites that had been documented by these teams that were looking for archeological sites in the park to document and see what was there. And there was copies of it in the little contact station we had. And I started being really interested in that because I had never been around archeology. And now, they call them... Well, at the time, we were calling it the Anasazi and Fremont culture.

TM: Right.

PG: And now they call it Ancestral Puebloans, I guess.

TM: Right.

PG: But I'm going to just use the phrase "Anasazi" because that's easier for me to say.

TM: Okay.

PG: So I thought, "Wow, this is really cool stuff, and it's like a treasure hunt. You know, I want to go see if I can find where these sites are." So I would take notes or... I don't think I'd take those books with me. So I must have taken notes and—or marked on my map. That's probably what I did. I probably marked on my Topo where something might be and took some notes. And I would go look for those sites, and they might be rock art, oftentimes, of some sort and of some caliber, not necessarily extraordinary, but maybe it was just, you know, a simple thing or two. But it had been documented. Or, sometimes, it was partial granaries or other small structures. But I loved going to look for those things and then finding them. And what I did figure out was that, oftentimes, they were not quite accurately mapped.

TM: Ah.

PG: And I had a—I don't know how, but I just had a pretty good ability to read maps and figure out where I was. And, over time, I realized that I actually am pretty good at that. You know, when you first start doing it, you're looking at it and saying, "Either they're wrong or I'm wrong. This isn't adding up." But over the span of my life, I've figured out that I'm actually pretty darn good at it.

TM: Nice.

PG: And, so, oftentimes, I would say, "Either they're wrong or I'm wrong." And I'd sort it out, and I'd be like, "I think they're wrong with where this is." And it wouldn't be a great error, but it was a—you know, something that was correctible, so I would make a correction. There was kind of a log sheet in the contact station at Hans Flat where we would keep track of these sites that we found. Somebody else had started doing this, and I picked up on it on my own and said, "Oh, this sounds like a great project." And, so, I would go back and document what I had found at this site—

TM: Cool.

PG: —and have a map of where it was and what it was. And I just loved doing that. So that's the kind of things I remember from that time period. But I don't remember, like, anything particular. The two years get messed together in my brain. I don't remember—

TM: Yeah, that makes perfect sense.

PG: Right, one or the other.

TM: But what a great way to just check out the resource, make sure the resource is being protected—

PG: Yeah.

TM: —and learn it yourself.

PG: Right. And it sent me on quests to locations that I might not have actually ever gone to.

TM: Right.

PG: You know, I'd say, like, "I need to go up that side canyon because there's something up in there." And, so, I did get out and see a lot of different places because I was looking for these things. The other thing I remember doing was going—somehow, I must have had—like, took some annual leave or something and put them together with my four days. And I went to Montana one of those years, and it probably was the second year. And I visited a man that I had met—an older man, and it wasn't anything romantic. It was just someone who was a desert guy, and he had been in Canyonlands and other places, and I was really intrigued by all these places that he'd been to because I wanted to go explore them too. And, because I had had a few days of annual leave saved up with my weekend, then I decided to do a big road trip. And I went to Montana, and I remember meeting this man up there and actually going camping with him a little—like, for a night or something and doing a little backpack. It was all an adventure to me, like, "Wow, I've never been to Montana before." But he had a dog that had puppies.

TM: Oh.

PG: And I thought, "Oh, that's such a cute puppy. Oh, it would be great to have a dog." So I went back to work with this puppy. I show up back to work with a puppy, which in retrospect is like, "Well, now what?" But—because, you know, in theory, you're probably not supposed to take your dog on patrol with you.

TM: Right.

PG: And, in theory, who's going to be taking care of it when you're off on a six-day patrol?

TM: Right.

PG: But, I don't know, I guess I just was young and said, "Oh, something'll work." And, so, I came back mid-season and had this puppy out in remote Hans Flat, the Maze District, and I just took it with me. And my boss didn't seem to... I think he also thought, "Well, now, I don't know what else she can do with it." So my little puppy went on patrol with me, and I can remember when it was sort of adolescent age, taking it up to the top of one of the spires in The Dollhouse.

TM: Oh, wow.

PG: And it just curled up at my feet and went to sleep when... Like, I don't know if he was terrified or exhausted, but these were the kinds of things you could get away with doing back when I was out there that, once the Park Service got a little bit more structured and professional and as image awareness or I don't know what evolved. I don't know if you could get away with doing that anymore.

TM: Right.

PG: But I enjoyed having my dog with me.

TM: I bet. Did you get into climbing?

PG: Well, we—I didn't ever do climbing myself, but we did get trained in rock rescue.

TM: Okay.

PG: Kind of minimally so, but we... The first week or somewhere early in the season of when I was a SCA in '77 and in '78 and in '79, there was a week of training that would take place in the Needles District where all the new staff and the—well, everybody, basically, that was a ranger would go down there and have this training. And it was a little bit of archeology. It was a little bit of—we shot guns.

TM: Okay.

PG: I wasn't law enforcement but, you know, we practiced target shooting. I didn't even carry a gun. And we had... So we had rock rescue training there, where we learned how to take a litter over a cliff—

TM: Oh, wow.

PG: —and, you know, theoretically haul someone down a cliff. And I can remember we also once—at least once, maybe twice—practiced that out in the Maze District where we went to some place near the housing area and took a—worked with the litter a little bit. So I had some training with that, but I was—it wasn't, like, rock climbing per se. It was rock rescue, which is a little different.

TM: Were there any rescues? Did you get a chance to use that training there in those two summers that you remember?

PG: No, I did not. No, I did—nope, I didn't. And, later in my career, I had more training with litters. And I don't think I ever had a... I don't think I ever did get involved with... I got involved with getting trained a lot, but I never got involved with using it. So, nope, I didn't.

TM: Well, that's a—and, just to sidetrack here a little bit, the training, I think, that Park Service employees get is just great.

PG: Yeah.

TM: Because you get comfortable with stuff which you may never use.

PG: Yeah.

TM: But, when you do need to use it, you're comfortable with it.

PG: Right. Right. Right. Yeah. Right. Yeah, I got a lot of training over the years, and it was all—and a lot of it never really got used, but it sort of broadens you and broadens your capabilities. And even sometimes things... Rock rescue might be applicable in other situations, like just how to handle ropes and knots—

TM: Right.

PG: —which comes in handy on river trips sometimes.

TM: Yep.

PG: So it's just...

TM: And you get a chance to meet other Park Service employees and make connections that way—

PG: Right.

TM: —for your career, and so that's a benefit as well.

PG: Yeah.

TM: Yeah. Did you have any interactions with visitors that were unusual or that you remember?

PG: I do remember a couple of them. And, so, a couple of different times, I met people that I became pen pals with. And one was that older man who was a desert rat kind of guy that would come out of Montana every spring and go exploring around the Southwest or the Four Corners, at least. And I was fascinated by the places he had been because it was all new to me.

TM: Oh, wow.

PG: And I became a pen pal of his, so that was part of what reinforced that relationship.

TM: Cool.

PG: And, then, another—I met a couple from Albuquerque that were out in The Maze. And, somehow, they were very friendly, and I was friendly. We exchanged addresses, and we became pen pals. And I later was skiing at Purgatory in Colorado and met them—I mean, accidentally saw them on the slopes.

TM: Oh, my.

PG: It was one of those coincidences where you're like, "By the way, is that...?" You know, and you say their names. But I ended up visiting them at, you know, a later time in my life at their home in Albuquerque a couple times.

TM: Nice.

PG: So I made some friendships with people who were—also enjoyed the desert and had come into the areas, such as visitors. And another time I can remember, when I was down at Horseshoe Canyon, camping by myself, and some people came in to see the pictographs. And, of course, I'm talking to them about the Canyon and the pictographs and this and that. And this woman said—and she was from New York—and she said, "Aren't you afraid to be down here by yourself?" And I was like, "Not at all. I would be much more terrified to be walking the streets in New York City by myself." And, so, I just realized how we all become comfortable in the settings that we're comfortable in.

TM: Yeah.

PG: And hers was the City, and being out in the wilds of Utah was a risky or, you know, something that made her slightly, at least, afraid. And she wouldn't imagine doing it by herself. And, for me, it was absolutely nothing to be camping out there by myself, but other settings might have worried me more. So I remember having that realization about how we get used to our own settings and...

TM: Nice.

PG: Yeah.

TM: Well, you become comfortable with a place. You're hiking around all over the place, so you kind of knew the lay of the land.

PG: Yeah. Yeah.

TM: And, you know, so long as you had food, shelter, and clothing—

PG: Right.

TM: —you go, “Hey, well, I'm on this road. The car's broken down. I'm going to walk 24 miles, and I'm not going to think a thing of it.”

PG: Right. [laughs]

TM: “And, if I run into somebody else on the road, that'll be great.”

PG: That'll be great. Right.

TM: Interesting. Kind of quick adaption to a wide-open country.

PG: Right. Well, by the end of my—so, in 1978, this is—I just thought of something else that will transition into the next phase of my career in Canyonlands.

TM: Okay.

PG: Another episode, and that was, I think I mentioned to you before, where I was hiking... I went down to Spanish Bottom and camped with the river crew. And then I was hiking out the next morning, and I had my backpack, and it was heavy, and it was hot. And I went back up to The Dollhouse. And they're all just throwing stuff on the river and splashing down and going down the river in boats, and I'm like, “I don't want to be a backcountry ranger anymore. I want to be a river ranger. That looks like more fun.”

So that happened when I was in The Maze, on a patrol, and had camped with—and gotten to know the river crew a little bit and camped with them. And I thought, “That looks like that’d be a fun job.” And I had no river background at all, but that fall of—let’s see. Wait a minute. I’m a year behind. This is 1979. So I was a seasonal in The Maze ’78 and ’79.

TM: Okay.

PG: And in the fall of ’79 is when I decided that I would go to a law enforcement training school for seasonal rangers, and it was a pretty new thing, had maybe been something that you could go to... This was in Santa Rosa, California, and it was something that you put yourself through. It was a five-week training course to get you qualified to be hired as a law enforcement seasonal versus—

TM: Oh, wow.

PG: —a backcountry or a general ranger. And Canyonlands had decided to change their seasonal river ranger position from general ranger to law enforcement ranger. And, so, they were going to be hiring people for that job in 1980.

TM: How did you get that data? Or did you even get a whiff of that? You were just like, “Well, I want to advance. I’ll go to their ranger school as a seasonal and see what that’s like”?

PG: No, I knew very much that this was happening in Canyonlands because—

TM: Okay.

PG: —remember, I looked longingly at the river patrol as they went down the river.

TM: Right.

PG: And I knew the river rangers, and I had—you know, just word gets around that, “oh, the park’s going to shift these positions to law enforcement positions.”

TM: Okay.

PG: “And they’re going to be looking for people that are qualified to fill those positions, based on...” The first qualification would be that you’re eligible to get a law enforcement commission, which is what the Park Service would authorize you to do law enforcement with.

TM: And that’s a 20-year commission, right? Like law enforcement in any town, is that right?

PG: Well, that—well, kind of yes and no. So I was looking at the seasonal level of law enforcement.

TM: Okay.

PG: And you can be a seasonal for your whole life, and you don't even get into the retirement system.

TM: Oh, right. Oh. Okay.

PG: Yeah. So, once I got into the permanent ranks later—you know, a few years later in my career—they did hire me as a law enforcement—into law enforcement position at that time as well. And, at that point, I did start with a 20-year retirement potential, but—

TM: But, by then, you'd already had a number of years in.

PG: Right, which—so, personnel rules are that I—if I bought those years or paid into the system for those years, because they didn't... The whole retirement stunt is they take some of your money out of your paycheck to go into your retirement fund. And they hadn't been taking it out of the seasonal check because I wasn't in the retirement system.

TM: Got it.

PG: Once I got in to be a permanent position and was doing law enforcement, I had the ability or the option to go back and to buy—to pay in for the years I was a seasonal, which would give me credit for two extra years.

TM: Oh.

PG: Or, really, for extra months, because one was an eight-month season and one was maybe a seven-month season.

TM: Okay.

PG: I was able to buy 15 months' worth of additional time towards my retirement.

TM: Okay.

PG: So, you know, it gets complex with all those personnel laws. But, at the time, I was not thinking of retirement at all. I simply was thinking that it looked like it was more fun to be a river ranger than to

haul my backpack up out of the Spanish Bottom of The Dollhouse trail. And, if I wanted to be a river ranger, then I had to go to law enforcement school. I had no interest in law enforcement.

TM: And one of those river rangers said, “Hey, Pat, if you go through this course”—

PG: Right.

TM: —“we’ll hire you next year for the river”?

PG: Well, they didn’t say that.

TM: Okay.

PG: They say, “If you want to be *eligible* to be considered for the river ranger job”—

TM: Bingo.

PG: —“you have to have these qualifications.”

TM: Nice.

PG: And then I put together the fact that the two guys that were there working there that year, if they didn’t go to a law enforcement school, I mean, they weren’t going to come—if they didn’t, they themselves, go, then there were two open positions they had nobody lined up for.

TM: Yes. Nice.

PG: So I figured it was a good gamble.

TM: So tell me about the school. Where was it? What was it like? What did you do?

PG: So it was in Santa Rosa, California. It was one of the first schools of this type to get set up. I think there was one on the East Coast that might have beat it. So, in the late ’70s, some community colleges, probably, I think they were, set themselves up to be able to take people who wanted to be eligible to work law enforcement seasonal jobs for the Park Service and give them the training for that. So they coordinated with the Park Service to find out what the training was that the Park Service was needing a candidate to have.

TM: Okay.

PG: And they set themselves up to provide that training to people. And, so, another fellow seasonal in The Maze—or, no, excuse me, in Canyonlands—do you want names for this? Or...

TM: I do, if you're willing.

PG: Sure, I'm willing.

TM: Great.

PG: So his name was Tom Cox, and Tom is still a very good friend of mine.

TM: Cool.

PG: He was working, I think—I think he was an SCA on the river crew in 1979 when I was out in The Maze. So he had been working on the river crew as a volunteer and also had the same intelligence that we were going—that they were going to be shifting to law enforcement. So we conspired together and said, "Hey, we should go get our qualifications, and we should go to that school." And, so, we decided—we signed up for it and decided to drive out there together. So we took his truck and drove to Santa Rosa, California, after our season was over. So I was think it was October of 1979. And we camped in a campground there to save money. Other students that were staying there—it was—somehow, there was an old jail there, and they had converted the jail cells into dorm rooms if you wanted to stay in them. And, so, other students at that school—and there might have been 20 of us, and people just like us that were young, in their 20s, and wanted to be eligible to get law enforcement jobs for whatever reason. And, so, we were from—and most of them had worked at some park already somewhere and also saw this opportunity was opening up for them if they just went to law enforcement school.

TM: Okay.

PG: So there was probably 20 of us there that were going through this school. And I think Tom and I were the only ones that camped in the nearby campground and then went to class from there each day. So it was five weeks of basic law enforcement, which was, you know, teaching you how to shoot a gun, teaching you how to do some searches. You know, you can't just search. You've got to get warrants. So real fundamental stuff about law enforcement.

TM: Okay.

PG: How to make an arrest, you know, how to put handcuffs on somebody. So it met the standards that the Park Service had set up. And, so, Tom and I got our diplomas or whatever, our certifications, after five weeks. And then we applied in the fall of '79. We applied—I think you just applied to Canyonlands for work. I don't think we could specify the job. I can't remember that part now. But we put in applications hoping we would get the river ranger job.

TM: Right.

PG: And then we did. So I will fill in a little bit. In the winter of—after my first seasonal job, when I was off, when I wasn't working anymore, the fall of 1978, then—so there was two winters, after my '78 seasonal job and after my 1979 seasonal job in The Maze. I had some work, some jobs that I did locally in Utah around Moab then, and I can't remember which year I did which of these. But one of the years, I was a crew leader on a BLM YCC crew and took, I think, high-school-age kids and we built fences.

TM: Okay.

PG: And I didn't know how to build a fence but, you know, I got some sort of instruction and then would tell them how to—you know, pass it on to them and just ensure that the equipment was there that they needed. So I stayed around Moab. Both of those winters, I got unemployment. I had that YCC crew leader job at least for a month or two one winter. I don't think it was the whole time I was off. And, then, another winter, I worked—there was a USGS survey guy that was doing some surveying in Salt Valley in Arches National Park.

TM: Oh.

PG: And, so, he was a surveyor for USGS, and he needed some assistance to help carry the equipment around and to take the notes on. So three of us that were off-season seasonals, three of us got hired—and we all knew each other—to help this guy do his survey project in Salt Valley Arches. So that was another job that I had during one of those two winters.

TM: Okay.

PG: So I just basically hung around Moab and had four months maybe each winter that I needed to fill and do something with. And, so, between unemployment and some of those jobs, I filled out those winters. And, so, after Tom Cox and I went to our law enforcement academy in the fall of 1979, then

that was the second winter that I just hung around in Moab and had one of those two jobs. I can't remember which one now. And, then, in the spring, I got offered a river ranger job. So that was—

TM: So, okay, that's the spring of 1980.

PG: Yes.

TM: Okay.

PG: And the interesting thing about that was I had no idea how to row a boat.

TM: Okay.

PG: I had no river background at all. My family had never been boaters. And I had hopped in the boats with the river crew at one point when I was a seasonal in The Maze and had camped with them. One time, I hopped in a boat at Spanish Bottom and floated down the first five rapids and then hiked back and—

TM: Oh, cool.

PG: —hiked out. So I had been in a boat. And one of them said, "Do you want to try and row?" and I said, "Oh, yeah, sure, great." And, you know, I immediately ran into a rock because I just had... If you can remember when you first put your hands on the oars, you don't know quite which way to go and—

TM: Right.

PG: —how to—how to—it just doesn't come together.

TM: "How does it work? And I just banged my thumbs together on the oar handles, and that hurts, and..."

PG: Right.

TM: Yeah.

PG: So I started from zero or minus five. You know, I was like, "Ugh. Ran into a rock the first time—the first 40 feet." But I got a river ranger job because I had the qualifications to be a law enforcement ranger, which the Park Service was starting to shift more into—law enforcement stuff. And they figured I was teachable.

TM: Right.

PG: So I was like, “Okay. Great. Teach me.” And I know that we did something up in Westwater, as if Westwater is a good learning... I mean, that canyon still scares me.

TM: Yeah. Me too.

PG: [laughs] But that was my learning—that’s where we went to learn how to row.

TM: Wow.

PG: So...

TM: I mean, just—can you describe Westwater a little bit for us, the people who don’t know about it?

PG: Yeah. It’s a two... Let’s see. It’s between Moab, Utah and Grand Junction, Colorado—

TM: Right.

PG: —or upstream of Moab on the Colorado River. And it probably is an hour and a half drive from Moab towards Grand Junction, maybe an hour. And it’s a—I don’t know, maybe a 22-mile stretch of river? Something along those lines that you could theoretically do in one day. Or, a lot of times, people will do it as an overnight trip.

TM: Right.

PG: And the first, roughly, half of it is not a big—is not terrorizing. It’s just a pleasant little splashy river with maybe some smaller rapids. But then it goes into the narrow canyon, Westwater Canyon, for, I don’t know, maybe only five or six miles because it’s so nonstop that it doesn’t last forever. But it just is... There’s no... There’s no—hardly any place to ever pull out and take your breath or recover. So it’s got some difficult—Class III? I don’t know, maybe Class IV. I don’t know what the score rapid is. But they’re hard rapids. And, so, I don’t remember the trip through there exactly. I imagine what happened was on the upper part, which wasn’t so difficult, is where they started trying to give me some basics: “Here’s how you work the oars” and “Here’s how...” At the time, the schooling I got was to row away from the obstacle. And, so, if you were going down and heading into the left wall or the water was pushing you into it, you would row away from it in an upstream direction.

TM: Okay.

PG: And that was the basic way to avoid catastrophe that I was taught.

TM: Do you remember who was teaching you?

PG: Well, it would have been my coworkers. Jim Braggs was the district ranger. The lead boatman was a fellow named Ed Forner, and he was also—he was half-ranger, half-time ranger and half-time boat mechanic, so he had both responsibilities.

TM: Okay.

PG: And I think Glenn Sherrill—I think he was the subject-to-furlough permanent river ranger at the time. And, then, Tom Cox and I were the two seasonal river rangers.

TM: Had Tom—did he have water experience? Had he boated before?

PG: Yes, he had boated before in his life, before Canyonlands—I think just, like, lakes, rowing on lakes. But he'd had some kind of rowing, boating, minor background. But he had been a SCA on the river crew the previous year—so 1978, if my memory serves me correctly. So he had gotten a chance to learn some rowing the year before. So I was the one that really didn't know—that needed schooling.

TM: Had anybody mentioned that, you know, Cataract Canyon at high water in the late spring, early summer with really very few dams upstream—I mean, there's Flaming Gorge up on the Green—

PG: Right.

TM: But the rest of the Colorado River drainage, the old Grand River as it used to be called, mostly on dam, that can put a lot of water down through Cataract, and it is a place to be reckoned with.

PG: It is.

TM: Had anybody ever mentioned that to you? Or was it just like, "Yeah, this is a great job. You'll like it"?

PG: Yeah. No, I knew what—I mean, I knew Canyonlands had a—or Cataract Canyon was a serious, scary set of rapids because I had hung around with the river crew, both if I bumped into them at Spanish Bottom or—it wasn't "bumped into." We would plan a rendezvous there.

TM: Okay.

PG: And when I was in Moab for the winters, when I was doing those two other winter jobs, I spent time with the people from the river crew. So I knew that it was consequential down there, but I just figured, you know, "Okay, I'll figure it out." I don't remember being scared in an abstract way in advance. I do remember being scared, like, the day I was rowing through there for the first time, but not so much just in advance with the notion of it.

TM: And it's funny because when you—I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong. But when we boat Cataract, we don't go there for the big water, and it's lovely.

PG: Yeah.

TM: And, so, you know, people don't talk about—they talk, you know, getting down there at 60,000 and, you know, Satan's Gut, and you're like, "Oh, I don't know about this. I don't feel good. I need to stay home today."

PG: Right. Well, the river crew was made of rangers who had figured out how to boat.

TM: Right.

PG: So it wasn't a crew of people who were boaters that had real high skill levels and knew all that. So, anyway, we didn't go through Cataract above 45,000 or so.

TM: Okay.

PG: Maybe, maybe somebody went through at 60,000. I don't know. But we just didn't do patrols through there then.

TM: Okay. At that time, was the catch and release program going?

PG: No. You mean at the Bottom?

TM: Yep.

PG: No. So what was going was that we had what we called a fly camp at Spanish Bottom, where we would have a ranger during the month of June. So we rotated in and out of there for seven-day stints each. I loved it. Another of my coworkers one year, you know, he just didn't really like it at all. But I loved going down there for a week with my big cooler full of all kinds of, you know, tasty food and then... So we would be at Spanish Bottom with a radio, and river trips would check in with us to find out

what the recent river level was, what was it as of today, and ask if there was any other information that they needed to know, anything that would—yeah, any updates on anything. And we were a point to which they could retreat back, sort of, if they had an emergency.

TM: They could walk back up?

PG: Yeah.

TM: And you'd be there.

PG: And, one time when I was there, there was a crew member that walked back up from, like, Rapid 5 because a woman had been stung by a scorpion in their camp, and she had decided—I think she decided that she was going to go into anaphylactic shock or something like that. I don't think she really was having such a problem, but she was afraid that she was going to have a problem, and they didn't want to continue with her down the river if she was going to have a problem or thought she was going to or was uncomfortable with it. So they hiked up to get a helicopter to take her out. So they hiked up and got ahold of me, and I hiked down there. But, coincidentally, when I put my Park Service uniform shirt on that morning, there was a scorpion in it, and it had stung me on the arm.

TM: Oh, my.

PG: So I had been stung that morning. But it was like a bee sting. You know, to me, it was not a big deal.

TM: Yeah.

PG: So I hoofed it down there with my flip-flops on, you know, down to Rapid 5. And this woman's sitting with some kind of shade thing over her, and she's—

TM: Which is a mile and a half or so, isn't it?

PG: Yeah. Yeah.

TM: Okay.

PG: But I was good at running in flip-flops by that time.

TM: Oh, good. Okay.

PG: Yeah. So I got down there with this river guide, and she got evacuated by helicopter. But I can remember her—I remember her finding out that I had also been stung that morning, and she was looking at me, going like, “Well, how come you’re not feeling so bad?” and I’m like, “I don’t know. It just didn’t bother me so much.”

TM: Yeah.

PG: So that was about the only time I can remember someone coming upstream to get help, at least when I was on duty.

TM: Okay.

PG: We didn’t have any—

TM: Can I back up a bit?

PG: Sure.

TM: We’re kind of a little too far ahead, because I’m thinking, “What did you do with your dog?”

PG: [laughs] Oh, yeah, well, that’s a good point. So, when I lived in Moab—I wonder if I lived there... I’m trying to remember the first... So I got a room with Ed Forner, the guy that was on the river crew and was the lead boatman. He had a trailer and rented out one of his rooms. And, so, I rented one of his rooms, I think, the first winter I was in Canyonlands and then the second winter as well. And, by that time, we had become sweethearts, so then I was kind of just living with him. And I think my dog just stayed with him the whole time when I wasn’t—because I was—yeah, when I was off on patrol.

TM: Okay, so that’s one question I had. Another question I had was the five-week training that you had, did it include any first aid?

PG: No, but the park had us go through first aid training each year or every other year or whatever. And, during that time, I did get an EMT certification. I think that was on my own. I think the park just gave us that standard, you know, maybe a one- or two-day first aid class.

TM: Like a basic first aid. Yeah, like a one- or two-day class. Yeah.

PG: Right.

TM: But EMT, that’s a whole ’nother step up. That’s like a many-weeks-long—

PG: Right.

TM: —you know, how to read cardiac rhythm strips and...

PG: Well, it's not quite that complicated.

TM: Okay.

PG: I mean, I did read—so there's a park medic program that the Park Service now has that is quite elevated. The EMT program was kind of... It was put on by the local ambulance company or the hospital in Moab, so it was a course that I took in Moab. And it really was how to prepare someone or stabilize them until the ambulance showed up.

TM: Oh, almost like today's Wilderness First Responder, the "woofer."

PG: Well, except we didn't have the wilderness [laughs], you know, aspect to it. It really was kind of a, you know, "You come across a car wreck, and how do you check for stuff?" Or you—

TM: But it's how to package, how to keep the vitals going, how to make sure people are stable—

PG: Yeah. Right.

TM: —until you can get them to further definitive care.

PG: Yeah. Right.

TM: Cool.

PG: How to check vitals, how to document it, how to do SOAP notes.

TM: Okay. Yeah, good.

PG: But it really didn't have that wilderness aspect to it or...

TM: Okay.

PG: And I think that—I'm pretty sure—so Tom Cox and I and other seasonals in the park, we took it on our own. That was not something the Park Service put us through. That's something we did one winter, one of those winters.

TM: Okay. And, then, did you get a chance to loop, to do laps in Westwater, or was it just once, and you're done, and there you go?

PG: You know, I think we only did it once. Do you know Barry Miller at all? He was a river ranger in Westwater at that time.

TM: No.

PG: He was up on the Selway after that. So he was a good boater, and he might have gone with us as well and been kind of the lead person doing the training, the training whatever, you know, which was really figuring it out as you went. I don't think I rowed through Westwater myself.

TM: Okay.

PG: I think that because there was multiple people in a boat. And I probably had the flatwater section to figure out how to use the oars, but then probably someone else rowed through Westwater.

TM: Okay.

PG: But that was basically my training as well, and then I just did a—maybe I went on patrol. Maybe I was a passenger on a patrol through Cataract. But, mostly, I just kind of was given the oars and said, "Okay. You feel like you can figure Cataract out?" And I said, "I'll just do whatever Ed does." I did it right behind him. And if he turns left, I'm turning left. And if he starts rowing hard, I'm rowing hard.

TM: Okay. And to get to the fly camp, did you have a motorboat to get down there and then motor back up again?

PG: Yes.

TM: Okay.

PG: Yes. So the bulk of being the river ranger in Canyonlands was not going through Cataract. The Park Service would only run a patrol through Cataract once a month, and that would probably be April—maybe six months—April, May, June, July, August, September. So probably about six patrols that went—they would be—originally, they were rowed. Later, we got a motor rig and would sometimes motor and row. But those patrols happened about six times a year, and I only went ever on two or three of those, because somebody had to stay behind and do shuttles and things like that.

TM: Right.

PG: We sort of took turns. The bulk of the work that I did was in Zodiac boats.

TM: Okay.

PG: So we would launch either in Moab and zoom down to Spanish Bottom. Or we would launch at Mineral Bottom, on the Green River, 50 miles up from the Confluence, and go down. But, mostly, we were on the Colorado because that's where most of the traffic was. So that's how we got down to Spanish Bottom for those fly camps.

TM: Which you occasionally—I think they call it “going around the horn,” where you'd go from Mineral down to Spanish and then up to Moab.

PG: Yes. Yeah, we could do that, and did that on occasion. But I think more of the time, we were just on the Colorado because it was easier to do. You know, it was just shorter to get to the put-in. It was just more logistically easier. But we did do trips down the Green. Probably we went down the Green and took out on Moab more often than—I don't think we got picked up on the Green so much.

TM: Right.

PG: So those were—that was—when I was on the water, it was mostly in the Zodiacs. And there would be two of us, and we would go on patrol together. And, actually, the other really main thing we did was that we were getting concessions inspections on the commercial outfitters. So the concessions person at headquarters would ask that we get two in-camp inspections on each outfitter, and we must have had, like, a dozen outfitters each season. So, before we would go on a three-day patrol or a four-day patrol, we'd figure out who was on the water, because they had to send cards in that said, “Okay, we're going to launch this day, and we are doing a four-day trip.” And then we could calculate, “Oh, well, on day one, they'll probably be around here. On day two, they'll probably be around here.” So we would figure out who we needed to get inspections on, and we would go into their camps, usually in the evening, because we were supposed to observe the three-bucket wash system. We were supposed to observe that they had handwash for the kitchen and handwash—that they had a toilet and that they had handwash by the toilet. So we needed to see them in camp, which worked out great, because they always invited us to dinner.

TM: Right.

PG: So we would oftentimes not do a whole lot during the day. We might just be in a certain camp, and then we knew that somebody was going to be in that same vicinity that night. So we would be waiting there for them to show up and get their camp set up. And then we'd time it and walk into the camp and we could observe all this kitchen and camp activity and talk to the people who were there and be the friendly rangers. So that was what a lot of our work was, was getting those inspections on the water. But we also did inspections at the launch ramp, I think two on each company, where we would make sure they had all the safety equipment that we required of them.

TM: Right.

PG: And, at that time, Canyonlands was really sticky. I think they started backing away because you take on a certain liability if you say, "You must have this. You must have this," and then people go down and have trouble. Then you're sort of on the hook because...

TM: You had everything.

PG: You said that they were good to go.

TM: Right. They had everything that you told them to have, and they were in trouble.

PG: Right.

TM: So it must be the park's fault, which is stupid, but I get it. Sure.

PG: But, at the time, there was a lot of requirements that we had for people who were going to go through Cataract Canyon.

TM: Okay.

PG: And that was probably pretty legitimate at the time. People were—you know, people had been using toilets for a while, but there was things that were being phased into the river industry in the '70s that the old-timers wouldn't have been using, like fire pan requirements and toilet requirements and, you know, carrying your ashes out and different things like that that not everybody might have been up to speed on.

TM: Okay.

PG: So we did inspections on the commercial companies, which were pretty good always. But we also went and checked every private boater that launched.

TM: Okay.

PG: And, so, we would find out who was launching where. And the rangers would go and check the private boaters for equipment that protected the environment, like toilets and fire pans, and then also on safety equipment like appropriate PFDs that were not Mae Wests that had bad chambers or something like that—

TM: Right.

PG: —or the Class 1 PFDs with bad chambers. So we did inspections. And, at the same time, we would talk to people about like, “Well, here’s a great place to camp if you’re doing the six-day trip. You might think about this. You can hike up this canyon.” And, you know, we just imparted to them good information.

TM: Cool.

PG: So that was what the river ranger job was, was going out and doing those—well, in the spring, you were getting all the equipment ready and sanding things down and revarnishing wood. We had wood frames when I first started.

TM: Oh, wow. Yeah.

PG: And painting frames and painting ammo cans and doing training. So the first month and a half was all that kind of stuff. And then we would start doing some patrols. But, always, we were having the responsibility that somebody had to be around to go down and do trip checks seven days a week or whenever they happened to be on the calendar be done. So that’s kind of what the river ranger job was.

TM: Did you write a lot of tickets?

PG: No.

TM: Okay.

PG: I did not, which I always kind of questioned, and I still question whether there really was a need for a law enforcement in the backcountry or on the river. But, you know, the Park Service was figuring

things out and at that point, thought, “Well, yeah, maybe people are going to try and go illegally” or whatever they might be doing down there. But, no, I think I wrote one, maybe—I might have written a couple of tickets. I can remember writing a ticket to a commercial outfitter that had his dog with him on his commercial trip because you weren’t supposed to take dogs down there.

TM: Okay.

PG: And he was the very first ticket I ever wrote, and I actually became kind of friends with him later. And he, you know, would always tease me about, “I can’t believe you gave me a ticket for my dog!” and I was like, “Well, you shouldn’t have had your dog there.”

TM: Exactly.

PG: “And, plus, I had to get my first ticket written. I wanted to get that first one written so I could have that experience behind me, so you were just my opportunity.”

TM: Oh, fun.

PG: Yeah. So, no. There was not much law enforcement. I didn’t really have much in the way of any kind of medical incidents other than that scorpion sting. I can’t really think of one off the top of my head, another one. So it was not heavy at all. It was extremely light with law enforcement, extremely light with medical incidents, because, you know, rangers are in one spot, and you’ve got the whole rest of the river for accidents to happen in, where you’ll never run across those people.

TM: Right.

PG: So, mostly, it has to self-resolve or be taken care of by the people, and they show up at Hite with their problems, and the rangers down there take care of them.

TM: And that’s Glen Canyon, and that’s not Canyonlands and not my department.

PG: Right. Yeah. So we didn’t really get involved too much.

TM: I wouldn’t think you would have too many people on there without the appropriate permit. Was that... Did that happen more...?

PG: Yes, you’re right. No, it didn’t happen. I can remember one time where there was somebody that was—it was some weird thing where these two guys... I can’t even remember the story now, but they

were, like, not boaters, and they were maybe on the edge of the law somehow and were kind of desperados but not really bad guys, and they were going down the river. And they didn't have any kind of equipment with them, and I don't know how we learned about them. I don't think I actually—I think maybe I was told to watch for them or something, because I knew about this. But I don't think I ever saw them, and I can't remember... It seemed like they did get into the park, and I can't remember how that—what happened to that.

TM: Okay.

PG: So there were occasionally a person—I mean, very rarely, where you would get a person that didn't have a permit.

TM: Okay. Okay. Yeah. And, again, because I think permits were easy to get for the do-it-yourself folks—

PG: Yeah. Right.

TM: —there was no need to try to steal a trip because you could get a permit. It wasn't a big deal.

PG: Right.

TM: It wasn't very costly. It was easy to get.

PG: Yeah, it was—it was—well, it was... I'm going to say it was easy to get a permit, but here's where it was not easy—but here's how you could get around that. You had to list—you had to certify that you had had experience with rivers that were comparable to Cataract.

TM: Yeah.

PG: So you had to say that, "Yes, I've rowed the Grand Canyon. Yes, I've rowed the middle fork of the Salmon" or other rivers that would establish that you knew what you were doing. And, so, in your application, you had to, I think, write down maybe one or two or three. I can't remember the number because I didn't review the applications. My boss, the river district ranger, reviewed them all. But you had to certify that you knew what you were doing by saying, "I have rowed these rivers." So that makes it a little harder if you haven't really done that. But then again, if you lie, you know...

TM: Right.

PG: You get the permit. So I don't know how many people lied. Probably not too many, because the Park Service did a pretty good job of letting people know that this was a serious, consequential trip that they were embarking on and they really should know what they were doing and be prepared for it.

TM: Yeah. Another question I had was about the Friendship Cruise.

PG: Yes.

TM: Was that still going then?

PG: It was.

TM: Really?

PG: Yep. And, so, the first several years at least, I can remember what we would do is we would go to Anderson Bottom on the Green River, partway down, downstream of Mineral Bottom—

TM: Yep.

PG: —but in Canyonlands, and the Park Service would—so the Friendship Cruise would stop there, and a lot of them would want to camp at that same place and, you know, socialize, I guess. So the Park Service would go there and dig pit toilets. And we had some canvas tarps, so you'd put, like, I think maybe six or five posts in a certain configuration, and then you could tack the tarp around to where it kind of spiraled around and provided privacy at the toilet.

TM: Oh. Kind of like a snail shell where you're kind of walking around and then there's a toilet and you can walk out again and get some privacy without a door?

PG: Yes. Right. So we would dig holes, and we had these little stools that were toilet seats that would sit on top of the hole. And then we would dig holes and put the posts in and wrap the canvas around for privacy. And we probably—we did at least two of those, maybe three, on Anderson Bottom. And there was a—I don't know if you know Anderson Bottom—

TM: A little.

PG: —but there was a cave—

TM: Yes.

PG: —on the upstream end of the Bottom—

TM: With a door and a window and—

PG: Yeah.

TM: Yep.

PG: And that's where we stored all that stuff.

TM: Okay.

PG: So we would just go down there, pull it out, and then there was these massive signs—well, no. They were massive when you were trying to handle them in a boat. They were half-pieces of plywood, like four-by-four.

TM: Right.

PG: And they would say—orange trim around the edge, and they would say—maybe—I can't remember if they said... "Anderson Bottom"? I don't remember what they said. But, for sure, when you got close to the Confluence, they would say... There was, like, a big arrow, and there was a big warning. And, then, there was a fixed sign on the bank that was a big warning sign that was always there: "Warning: hazardous rapids ahead. Don't go down there."

TM: Right. Down by Spanish Bottom.

PG: Right. But we hung signs up before—

TM: How did you hang them? How did you put them up? They're temporary.

PG: Yeah. We just had ropes or something and hung them from branches. Or maybe we—I don't know if we had some fenceposts that we would pound into a beach or something like that. So we—and I can't remember how many there were, but we put some informational or safety signs, I guess is what they were, out. And maybe, like, there was a sign that said "Anderson Bottom," I think. But they looked so—when you got any distance away, even though they seemed big, four-by-four, when you were handling them, when you got a distance away, they were just these little teeny signs. They were small.

TM: Yeah.

PG: I can kind of see how people might miss them. And, indeed, there were people who missed the signs and went down into Cataract Canyon.

TM: Every year, yeah.

PG: I think every year, yeah. And, mostly, it seemed like—I don't remember that we had a—maybe once we had somebody get seriously down in there, but I think people would figure it out, like, at the first rapid and turn around, and we'd hear about it. But they would miss the turn, basically, and continue down and at some point... I don't—you know, it's vague in my mind now how many people actually got into big trouble in Cataract. It wasn't too many or any when I was there.

TM: It was rare, but when it happened, it lit up the press.

PG: Right.

TM: I remember in 1959 or '60, a couple died, drowned there, and a kid survived.

PG: Yeah.

TM: But I think maybe he died, but the wife might have made it, I think. Anyway, yeah, it would happen. At that time, at Anderson Bottom, there was a big concrete slab there, and it seemed like there was a cookout or there was a—people could stop there overnight? Is that right?

PG: I think you're right. They would overnight there. The Friendship Cruises would overnight there, and maybe they did have a cookout. I had kind of forgotten that if... I don't remember that for sure.

TM: Okay.

PG: That sounds familiar but... And, so, part of it was that the Friendship Cruise was a little bit stronger before 1980, when I started on the river crew.

TM: Right.

PG: By 1980, it was starting—it had already—it was declining.

TM: Okay.

PG: And I can't remember if... So I ended up working on the river crew until 1986.

TM: Okay.

PG: And there's more—so I transitioned to a permanent job, and there's more stories on the way.

TM: Yeah. Good.

PG: But I can't remember if... I think the Friendship Cruise was still going in 1986, but, you know, it didn't last much longer if it was still going. I can't remember when it ended, but it was not going strong. And I don't know if they were doing the barbeque or the cookout. I think they were still, like, in 1980, but...

TM: You know, I'm thinking about kind of wrapping this up, and so I've got a couple more questions about the Friendship Cruise. And, then, of course, the next interview, I want to talk about 1983, high water, and—

PG: Yeah.

TM: —other things that you remember from your time there, working on the river.

PG: Yeah.

TM: The Friendship Cruise, at one point, it seemed as though maybe the Park Service wasn't real keen on promoting this motorboat event. I could have this wrong.

PG: I think you're right. I don't think the Park Service promoted it. The Park Service facilitated it, but I think it kind of got grandfathered in. It probably existed before the park did.

TM: Oh, it did. Oh, yes.

PG: Yeah. So, when the park became a park, there was a tradition that had been established, and the park went with that.

TM: Right.

PG: But I don't think the park ever promoted—you know, I don't remember the park promoting it, at least in my years.

TM: Okay. Okay. And, so, the NPS clearly didn't mind when it died a slow death?

PG: No. I think we were all kind of through. Yeah.

TM: Right.

PG: I think we were all kind of grateful because it was kind of a big party event, you know, drinking and boating and... Which is not... Well, you know... I shouldn't say that. Sometimes I get into this position where I feel like I'm evaluating what's the proper use of our parks and not proper.

TM: Good point.

PG: And motorboaters have just as much right to motorboat down that river as other people.

TM: Right.

PG: So they were legitimate users as well and pre-dated the park, so that was legitimate.

TM: Yeah. I mean, big parties happen on oar trips.

PG: Right. Right. Right. But we—I don't think any of the river crew was sad to see it kind of fade away because, for us, it was an event to contend with and facilitate and then be ready to help out with people who got in trouble.

TM: Right.

PG: And, indeed, my boss, Jim Braggs, in 1983, I remember it was—I'm pretty sure it was—yeah, it was '83 during high water. The water had started coming up already during when the Friendship Cruise was, which was either Memorial Day weekend, I think, maybe, end of May. And, so, water was pretty high, and I remember like, "Oh my gosh, the water's getting really high. This is remarkable." But a boat flipped or—I think it flipped. I think a motorboat flipped in the Slide, which is on the Colorado, not too far above the Confluence.

TM: Right.

PG: And Jim Braggs, the river district ranger, happened to be in a Zodiac nearby, and he saved a woman's life by reaching down into the water and cutting her life jacket strap or whatever that had gotten stuck on something, and she was stuck under the water.

TM: Wow.

PG: And, so, he ended up getting a Valor Award from the Park Service and was flown back to Washington, D. C.—

TM: Right.

PG: —along with other people. Every year, they gather up all the heroic deeds that different people have done and give them these awards in Washington, D. C.

TM: It's a big deal. The Secretary of the Interior is there. Yeah.

PG: And, so, that was 1983 that that happened.

TM: Okay.

PG: So that's the kinds of things that the Park Service needed to be prepared to deal with was accidents, life-threatening accidents, other accidents. And that's what our job was. So that was, you know, that's what we did. But when it started going away, it was kind of like, "Okay, we don't have to worry about that so much anymore."

TM: Right. Okay. All right. Well, maybe this is a good place to wrap up Part Two.

PG: That sounds good.

TM: Okay.

PG: And we'll continue tomorrow, and... Yeah.

TM: Yeah. We'll continue—

PG: '83 would be probably a good time to pick it up.

TM: Yeah. And if there's anything else about the Friendship Cruise that you think about tonight or tomorrow before we talk again, please bring that in.

PG: Yeah. I can't think of anything right now, but if I do, I'll save it for tomorrow night.

TM: Nice. Very good. You're the first person I've talked to about the cruise, and I've started to do a little research on that. So, with that, this will conclude Part Two Oral History Interview with Pat Grediagin. My name is Tom Martin. Today is Thursday, November 19th, 2020. Pat, thank you so very much.

PG: You're very welcome. I've enjoyed it.