

Transcription: Oral History

Interviewee: Steve Martin (SM)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Retired Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent Steve Martin recounts his 1970's experiences at Grand Canyon

Date of Interview: April 24, 2016

Method of Interview: In person

Transcriber: Amy Bayer

Date of Transcription: July 2018

Transcription Reviewers: Sue Priest, Tom Martin

KEYS: Colorado River Patrols, Peter Wynn, Tom Doerr, Jim Hannah, Bill Whalen

TM: Today is the 24th of April 2016. This is the home of Tom Martin and Hazel Clark. Today we are interviewing Steve Martin, Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park. This is part of the Grand Canyon Historical Society Oral History program. Steve and I got together a couple days ago and talked about kind of what we'd like to talk about, so today we're going to talk about it. Steve, what year were you born?

SM: 1952.

TM: And where were you born?

SM: In Wisconsin.

TM: What did your folks do?

SM: Dad was a World War II vet and mom, during World War II was a college student. They met during World War II. Dad did a variety of things on the GI Bill, including going to Colorado School of Mines and then was in Wisconsin getting his law degree. Then just to sum that up a little bit, when I was 2... Dad had gotten interested in the west, but when I was 2 and he had graduated we moved to Tucson, Arizona.

TM: So you grew up in the desert then.

SM: 1954 we moved to Tucson.

TM: Did you camp out a lot? Were your people outgoing, sorry, were your parents outgoing?

SM: I wouldn't say... They went out. As far as outgoing socially, somewhat. They loved the southwest and they loved the parks. It's kind of interesting, they really liked general public lands. I think that parks, even in the fifties, were restrictive for them. They liked camping without a campsite and hiking where they wanted to hike. We visited Grand Canyon in the late 50s, and Zion and Bryce, and kind of all of those areas. Dad practiced law for a couple years in Tucson and then got a job at the university teaching business law. He had most summers off and we spent that cruising around the Colorado Plateau.

TM: Did you hike in the Catalina's, Santa Rita's?

SM: Yeah. All of that.

TM: Tucson is very conducive for getting outside.

SM: Well, and especially then. My parents bought a house on the north side of Tucson, which is now kind of northcentral Tucson, but at that time it was the edge of town.

TM: Where was that?

SM: Catalina foothills. It was the last subdivision headed north so there were maybe 100 houses in this subdivision that had been built in the 30s and 40s. That was pretty much it. It was all about the desert and the mountains and everything all around Tucson. Pretty unrestricted, too.

TM: Nice. Do you have brothers or sisters?

SM: I have two brothers, they're older.

TM: How did you get involved in the Grand Canyon? It sounds like your parents took you there in the late 50s.

SM: Yeah. It's not that roundabout, but I'd always been interested in the outdoors and in 1970 I got a job at Teton Valley Ranch Camp outside of Jackson Hole. Being a camp counselor and leading trips into the Bridger-Teton Wilderness in Teton Park on horseback and canoes and hiking. That was pretty amazing. It's just sort of a piece of luck to get that job. That kind of brought an interest in parks and in public lands. Also, it was kind of that era of Earth Day and the environmental movement. So I started a program at the university. I started college in 1970 and in '72 got involved in a program at the university which is basically what we would call now Resource Management but it was in...

TM: You can finish off your sentence.

SM: Anyways, it was an integrated program, ecological program, designed towards managing big tracts of public lands.

TM: And that was at the University of Arizona?

SM: Mmhmm.

TM: Okay. And it was great because your dad was a professor so tuition was like zero.

SM: It was, yeah, basically zero. [laughter] Which is, after having sent 3 kids through college on modern times it's like...[laughter]

TM: So two years into that degree, then '72?

SM: Mmhmm. Stan Brickler, who was my advisor and a really good friend, had begun... Along with freezing use at the Canyon, the Park Service had started a research program to better understand what was going on on the river and kind of make preparations for doing a longer term plan than just freezing use. So Dr. Brickler had been down the river a couple of times with a few different outfitters. He just said, for a summer job, where you can make some money, really have fun, he was just... He fell in love

with river trips and all of that. He must have gone down maybe in... His first trip might have been in '71 or '72. So he introduced me to Gay and Gay hired me in '73 to run the river.

TM: What was it like working for Gay?

SM: It was good. Gay was really fair and he treated me really well.

TM: Was this before he transitioned to motor rigs or was he still running the Neville-style Saturn boats?

SM: No, I don't know when he converted, but it had been a few years. I don't know how many 2, 3, 4, I'd have to look. Prior to that he had converted to the... His boats were 37-foot snout rigs.

TM: Long boats.

SM: Long boats. Greatly underpowered.

TM: What do you remember about driving those boats?

SM: [laughter] It was hard. They were surplus tubes and in order to surplus them, the government slashed the tubes so that they could be surplus it all as damaged goods. So the boats would start with these big damaged pontoons that you would stitch up. Baseball stitch 'em up and then put glue on and make them so they leaked. Having 16 or 18 passengers on one of these boats with a 20-horse was quite the challenge. It was tough. But you learned. There were some boatmen who had been there with Gay several years before I got there that were good.

TM: Who was that?

SM: I would have to go back and consult with Sid. Other trainees at that time were Scott Thybony and Sid and myself. I'm just drawing a senior moment blank on some of the other people. Cam Staveley, of course, was running. He must've been 17 or 18 at the time. He had grown up doing it and he was really good. It's so funny. Brad Dimock was also a trainee at that time. All people who have stayed around for a long time.

TM: Any funny adventures or stories you remember from working on the commercial side in the summer of that year, 1973?

SM: You know, it was a summer of, well, a couple of things. One is that the dam fluctuations were huge back then. Your average daily flow in the summer when you were running was somewhere around 4,000 or 5,000 cfs as low and 25,000 to 28,000 as a high. I think the max that they might've put through was maybe 30,000 at that time. It just created tremendous bank fluctuations and variance in the rapids from what now would be considered low water to probably what would now be considered pretty high water. So it was... Some of the rapids in that lower water time were really tough to navigate in those big boats. You spent some time stuck on rocks or fixing motors or doing all those chores.

TM: So when you were stuck on rocks were you like, let's wait because the water is going to come back up? Let's go for a hike or let's go do something else?

SM: If you were stuck on the bank 'cause you hadn't gotten up four times in the middle of the night to move your boat, then you'd go for a hike or something until the water came back up. Generally, in the river we were always able to get the boats off. We didn't have any incidents with Gay's boats that... You might get stuck, like in Serpentine or something, where you hung up at the top on one of those rocks and you'd get everybody then... Boats are 37 feet long, you get everybody in the back or the front, you spin it off and rumble down the river. But it was challenging. You were generally running a couple of boat trips. I think the passenger limit at that time was 40. You were doing camps... 7 days to Diamond Creek, which by the time you get everything, it was really 6 days to Diamond Creek and the last night you camped at Scorpion Island. So you were up cooking on wood fires and getting the passengers rolling, trying to get them on the boat by 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning so you'd have time to visit places along the way. But, we were young and it was exciting. It was really fun.

TM: Did you see any presence of the Park Service at that time?

SM: It's interesting 'cause in '73, I don't remember any presence of the Park Service on the river. It wasn't until the next year, in '74, where...and that would be something that would be interesting to check out...but whenever the Park/Tom Doerr, because of the new river plan, got some money and bought the rowing boats and the motor rig. I think that they may have just had that rig in '73.

TM: So how do you spell Tom's last name?

SM: D-O-E-R-R or D-O-E-R. I can't remember if it's one or two.

TM: D-O-E-R or D-O-E-R-R?

SM: Right.

TM: Okay. All right. So I talked to Glade Ross. I talked to him a couple days running now. He's a wonderful guy. In theory he was the first Grand Canyon motorboat operator, it says on his nametag.

SM: Which is pretty cool.

TM: Yeah. He said the first patrol boat they bought was a used Jack Curry J-Rig. Do you remember that being in the Park fleet?

SM: Tom... The boat that we had was one of the new...of course, it had the old side tubes...old 2-side tubes, I have a picture of it. Then it had a new center tube and the new diamond plate frame. The Park ran 40 on that, which was the limit I believe, or was it 50 might have been the statutory limit. It was funny because that made it too heavy for a traditional Jackass [A manual levered transom lifting apparatus] .

TM: Let's back up for a minute, because we're still in 1973, you're working for Gay, so you went back to school then in the fall of '73, spring of '74?

SM: Yeah, and I graduated the spring of '75. So I was in school '73-'74, the two years that I ran commercially.

TM: Okay, so in the summer of '74, back working for Gay again?

SM: So in the summer of... That winter we had gotten on the river, gotten some experience and saw the rowing boats and the longer trips and everything that went with it. So I applied to a couple of companies to get on rowing boats.

TM: What was it about the rowing trips that attracted you?

SM: Kind of growing up doing sports and then in '70, '71, and '72 doing the really active outdoor stuff, canoeing and horses and hiking and climbing. In college we were rock climbers, kind of the early era.

TM: End of Campbell?

SM: Yeah, that's where we practiced. But then up on Baboquivari.

TM: Windy Point?

SM: Yeah, in Windy Point and then in the Cochise Stronghold down by...there was a lot of climbing. Then some of the people that I climbed with went on to do stuff all over.

TM: Did you climb with Joanna McComb? Did you know Joanna at the time?

SM: You know, that name's familiar. Primarily, I climbed with David Baker who later dropped out of school and started Summit Hut, which he ran for 40 years. He climbed all over the world. But, I got into river running so that was better. But anyway, the rowing boats they had, you're looking at 12- and 14-day trips. The ability to hike and explore and to row a boat, it was just way more along the lines of what we wanted to do. And so, it wasn't... We were appreciative of Gay and we liked Gay a lot, and like I said, he was really good to us. It was just that standing in the back of a motorboat or on the oars, you wanted to be on the oars.

TM: So in '71, Sanderson was running a 10- or a 12-day motor trip through the Canyon. Ron Smith was running a 10- or a 12-day motor trip through the Canyon. Gay was running 7 days to Diamond, so he seemed to be leading the pack for speed. Is that right at the time?

SM: There may have been a couple like Western or somebody else may have been on a similar track, but Gay had that turn around so you could basically almost turn around in a week. You just take the boats right back up to Lee's Ferry and there you go again.

TM: Okay, so the longer trips were attractive to you. But not long motor trips like the other motor companies were doing, but oar trips.

SM: Right, but oar trips. We were kind of wilderness advocates, as well.

TM: Did you think about that when you were running the motor with your hand on the throttle? Kind of thinking about wilderness and my greasy fingers and my smell of gasoline?

SM: It's funny because at first we were just so happy to have jobs in the Canyon. That was job one and it was truly amazing. But again, on those trips you didn't hike Surprise or Tapeats. You might've gotten up

to the top of Deer Creek but even that generally, Lower Deer Creek, Havasu, Little Colorado, Elves was about it.

TM: Places that were short, maybe 100 yards/200 yards to get to from the river, but not beyond that.

SM: Yeah. And you had a lot of passengers, too, to shepherd.

TM: What was your guide/passenger ratio?

SM: We would have a boatman and swamper on each of the boats, so there'd be 4 or 5 of you. If you're on a one-boat trip, most of the trips I recall were two-boat trips, but if you're on a one-boat trip there might have been the lead guide and 2 or 3...maybe 2 swampers...1 or 2 swampers. On the bigger trips there'd be 2 or 3 swampers and 2 boatman. You had your hands full taking care of everybody and cooking.

TM: And that really hasn't changed. It's still the same ratio today.

SM: Pretty close, yeah. Again on rowing trips, the number now is probably one guide to four passengers...four or five...four probably. And on the motor trips it's probably still the same where you have 14 passengers and perhaps 2 or 3...usually 2, I think...a guide and a swamper.

TM: Okay, so tell me about your first rowing trip.

SM: Ron Hayes, who was one of the owners of Wilderness World, basically sat in the boat and told me how to row and just let me row through the Canyon. I mean, that's kind of how you learn. I think I had 8 trips with Gay already so you kind of knew some of the logistics of the rapids, but not all, because there were some difference in motor runs and rowing runs. So I made one trip with Ron and the next trip I got a boat.

TM: In 1974?

SM: Mmhmm.

TM: Was it common then for someone with very limited river exposure as we consider it today – 1, 2, or 3 trips – to get their own boat then?

SM: Yeah. I would say yes. I would've had my own boat like my 9th or 10th trip down, I mean my own rowing boat, but only my second trip rowing a boat. Which made it pretty exciting. We had 4 passengers but there were other people on that trip. Ron was a really good boatman, Ron Hayes. We had some other people who had been on the river for at least a couple of years that were running boats. And at that time you scouted a fair amount of rapids. You could watch people go through and you could follow people going through. Once you got this understanding of handling the boat it was... So 14 days of rowing a boat, you knew how to make your left oar work and right oar work.

TM: It's interesting to see back into the 60s, one trip through or two, you got your own boat. It was pretty fast. It was a steep learning curve.

SM: Yeah.

TM: Off you went. So did you work for Ron then that summer?

SM: I worked that summer and then... Brickler knew the people at the Park because he was doing research for them. I had been talking to the Park all that winter of '74-'75. Tom Doerr had come up with the idea, maybe somebody else but nobody else was there then, but Tom Doerr had come up with the idea of starting the boatman training sessions. At that time, the Park didn't have any boatmen, any rowing boatmen, because Jim Hannah and Peter Wynn were no longer there. And so...

TM: Let's back up for a minute. Who were Peter Wynn and Jim Hannah?

SM: Jim Hannah was the... At the time that I learned about the river unit, which was the first time we really saw Park Service boats on the river, was 1974. The Park Service was very active at Lees Ferry checking in boats and checking everybody out. But in '73, I don't recall ever seeing a Park Service boat on the river. '74, with Jim Hannah and Peter Wynn, who were both good boatmen and had been hired to be on the river, we saw them. They would stop into our camps. In '73 and '74, especially in the '74-ish times on rowing boats and in the time of the big Mae West kapok life jackets, you made your passengers keep their jackets on. But if you were on low water, it was running 5,000 and there weren't any rapids and the wind was blowing upstream, we tended to take our Mae West's off and row without a life jacket. Of course, the rules were that you were supposed to have a life jacket. So the Park Service...kind of a cat-and-mouse game. I don't know if they ever wrote anybody a ticket, but they did catch us a couple of times. They would sit in the blind eddies and then come motoring out when we rowed by without our life jackets on and scold us and we would put them all back on until they motored downstream again and then we would take them off. [laughter] It is funny. But that was when we started to see the presence. They were, Jim Hannah and Peter, were good resource people. They were not just worried about the life jackets. I don't want to short them on it. They were very concerned about safety and the safety on both private trips and the commercial trips. That was when the recognition of how dirty the camps, the popular camps in particular, were becoming. They were real active in trying to think about what to do there. It started that whole evolution. Instead of fires on the beach, you had fires in fire pans. But then all the charcoal went in the river and it washed up on the beaches and the fire pans sitting on the soil blackened the soil. So if you were in one of the popular camps that had fires even in fire pans every night, there were issues. And of course, issues with toilets and what do we do with that. I think they were both really highly respected people and rangers at that time that kind of started the kind of early ethic of what the Park river rangers were doing. And not knowing anybody who would... I guess there was this one guy who was on a couple years before...

TM: And he had two seasonals, did Glade Ross. He had a guy named Eugene or Gene Sopko and another guy I forget his name.

SM: You mentioned their names and I hadn't heard of them. Which is really interesting because it just shows how limited our view was. We were all kind of looking to now and ahead. Of course we had known Jim and Peter and so we didn't really think about who the rangers were prior to that much.

TM: Right. So Jim and Peter were working when you transitioned from working commercially on the river to...

SM: Yeah, they kind of provided me with opportunity because Jim Hannah went, I believe...I don't know if he went from there to Dinosaur and then to Alaska, or directly from there to Alaska. But Jim ended

up/Hannah ended up staying with Park Service, was a career ranger and pilot. I think he might have gone either to Canyonlands or to Dinosaur or someplace. Kept running rivers and then maybe in late 70s went on to Alaska. Peter Wynn, who was a really good kayaker, and a couple of friends kayaked the river somewhere in there the winter of '73, no '74-'75. December of '74 or '75 somewhere in there, snuck a winter trip. Somehow that came to the attention of the Park Service, so Peter was let go. But he was a really good guy. It was unfortunate just that that happened. On the other hand, it sort of opened the door for me. Back to the spring of '75, I'd been talking to Tom Doerr and he wasn't sure if they would have a spot for me, if they'd have the money. They had this, I believe it was in April, a boatmen training session set up. Probably Jim and Peter and Tom had begun to think, okay, we need to do that. But then Tom didn't have anybody to go on the river, so I ran a Park Service boat as a volunteer on that first boatmen training session.

TM: What year was that? '75 spring of?

SM: It would have been spring of '75.

TM: Okay, got a question about Pete's trip in December...January.

SM: Somewhere in there.

TM: Was that the first time you'd heard of somebody doing a winter trip? Were people doing winter boating back then?

SM: Not a lot. Yeah, and I don't know of any... That was unusual. I don't recall ever talking with people who had run winter trips at that time. But there probably were, they just decided to go for it. And when you think about it, that's quite a trip in those old kayaks. They probably had some caches or something along the way because he was a hiker as well.

TM: It's interesting, at the time again, talking to Glade who wrote very few citations, but the citations he remembers writing were for river trips without a permit. They were told to abandon their trip at Phantom and vacate all their equipment. Ken Hulick got a helicopter and chased after a trip, found their Kleppers. Put two of the Kleppers on the skids of the helicopter and flew them out and sent the pilot back in to get the other boats and fly those out and then track those kids down as they were trying to resupply. So here's a Park Service employee stealing a trip without a permit. The ramifications to other do-it-yourselfers were not nice, so it makes sense why he would then be terminated or would have to face the music for stealing a trip even though he was very well-versed with the river and how it worked.

SM: Yeah, I also think that at that time it was a pretty adventurous group that were boatmen. Peter was a boatman. They probably didn't... I'm sure they took care of the Canyon and they did it and so I don't think that it was seen... I mean from the Park Service's standpoint it was important. Probably from the river community or a boatman, it was seen more as a bit of adventure and just kind of a little bit of mischief. Not as something that was that serious. But again, as the Park Service began to see the use growing and put in the position of administering that use, then they had to begin to take a firmer hand in the whole management of the river and trips without permits and all those kinds of things.

TM: Who was the superintendent at the time?

SM: I think Merle was. Yeah. When I got there, Merle was superintendent. I think he must have come in either '73 or '74. We can look that up.

TM: What was he like?

SM: He's really a good guy. He was a resource person. He had been a ranger, a field ranger, in Tetons and maybe Rocky Mountain. I think he also was at...not Rainier, but one of the other parks in California, of course Rainier isn't in California, which I'll probably think of here in a little bit. Anyway, he had also, during World War II, he and Craigheads, later of grizzly bear fame in Yellowstone, had written survival books for the military by being dropped off on islands and learning to survive. He was a biologist and a real outdoors person. He loved the river. His health...he had some heart problems and diabetes so his health was not great. He couldn't hike much like he did in his younger years, but he loved going on the river. We took him down the river once or twice every year. Really good guy.

TM: So your first trip was as a volunteer, April 1975.

SM: Uh huh.

TM: And then Doerr came through with the funds?

SM: Yeah.

TM: How'd that work?

SM: Yeah. Once they kind of got sorted out what was going on. In April, that was when I graduated as well, went back to Tucson and Tom said that if they figured out the money they would give me a call. Kind of through a couple of fits and starts they got the money to get the Park trips going. So in the end of May, I got a call that I had a job. Sid and I were married then. We met in '73 on the river. The Park at that time didn't... We had the one job so Sid and I moved to the Canyon and told them... They knew that Sid was a river runner and they didn't take advantage of that. We volunteered to... It's like, okay, until there's money available Sid will work on the river as well. The Park was hugely supportive of that. Superintendent was hugely supportive. Bob Yearout, who was the unit manager, was supportive. That first trip with the Park was in the big motor rig. Sid and I were both pretty good at running that. Ran to Phantom in two nights and three days. Tom said, "You'll do just fine," and helicoptered out. So Sid and I were on our own to basically, at that point, develop the river program. Again, with the help of Tom Doerr, who didn't come back on the river, but was always very supportive of Sid and I. Bob Yearout occasionally went on the river, but not much. He's not an outdoors guy.

TM: So what was Tom's position again?

SM: Tom would have been the... They were units, but he would have been supervisory ranger over the river.

[Interruption]

TM: So Tom's the river unit manager.

SM: Yeah. Basically the way it worked was Bob Yearout was the Inner Canyon Unit Manager. So it's very...it's different. The traditional system of the Park Service is districts, but for whatever reason, to be a little progressive or whatever, the Grand Canyon had gone to units. So there was a Desert View Unit, a North Rim Unit, South Rim Unit and Inner Canyon Unit. Bob was over the whole inner canyon. He was a really good guy, not much of an outdoors person, but just really smart and supportive. Then Tom's function was being over the river portion of it.

TM: Of the inner canyon?

SM: Of the inner canyon.

TM: So not backcountry, but river.

SM: Right, river. So the river did... The backcountry portion would have been all the trails. And the river, we did all of the side canyons that were associated with the river. All of the hiking like Saddle or Nankoweap or the Little Colorado, which was shared between the Navajos and the Park. Deer Creek, a lot of those, the lower parts, were all stuff the river helped manage. And all the campsites, all the canyons.

TM: So in 1975 there's just basically you and Sid then. What kind of motorboat did you have?

SM: It was one of the... It might have been a Smith Rig, an S-Rig, a 37-foot.

TM: Do you have any pictures of that?

SM: Yeah, I have one or two in here. With a diamond plate. It was nice. It was new. I mean, it was really...it was good. Then the trend was...there really was interest by the Park in '75 to really...in the whole wilderness lands...looking at wilderness lands...what should the river be and which direction are we going to go? We had the two Salmon River boats, the 18-foot neoprene with kind of diamond plate and webbing. They were heavy, heavy boats, 12-foot oars.

TM: It was metal diamond plating, not aluminum.

SM: It was heavy. That said, they were...again, they held the air, they were new. At that time to run a trip, then Sid would take a boat and I would take a boat.

TM: Just the two of you?

SM: Yeah and then we would have... Also that was the big build up. Brickler was involved in the early science studies. At that time the Park Service had gotten like a million dollars over 3 years to study the river. We were taking down a lot of scientists. Some of that money went to the Museum of Northern Arizona and Caruthers started becoming somewhat active. We contracted with him to do some of the research, and then we took a lot of researchers down ourself. All those initial studies of fisheries and beach and campsites and human waste and sand erosion and impacts on cultural resources. So it's like the whole package was going on at that time. We would run, Sid and I would each have a boat, and we'd run, take the researchers. Then that was the time...I did remember it was the Interagency Whitewater Committee, which were the managers. Use wasn't just growing at Grand Canyon, it was growing at Canyonlands, Dinosaur, Westwater and then BLM and the Forest Service had the Middle Fork and Main

Salmon. For a few years in there the Interagency Whitewater Committee would get together once or twice a year and talk about river management. So we took down the Colorado to look at what was going on there, pretty much all of the managers of the other western rivers.

TM: Do you remember who was on that committee?

SM: There was Tom Hartman from Canyonlands. Pete Perry, the superintendent there, came occasionally. Bob Yearout. I don't remember who was there from Dinosaur, sad to say. I'm sure if I really thought about it, I could remember. Then a couple of guys from the Forest Service, I would have to again stretch the memory to remember who they were. Really good guys. I'll think of the guy's name, he later became superintendent of Mesa Verde, but I just can't remember his name. But anyway so there were a half a dozen managers... Oh, and Marv Jenson who was the BLM river guy from Utah, who later, when Bob Yearout left the Park, hired Marvin to be the Inner Canyon Unit Manager. Tom Doerr left like in '77 or '78, he stayed on the South Rim but when he changed jobs, then I got the lead in the river ranger and a permanent job.

TM: Do you know Marv's background?

SM: He was a range manager from Utah.

TM: Did he have boating experience?

SM: He got boating experience running Westwater and I think he also ran some up on Dinosaur, those rivers up there, but he managed Westwater and whatever BLM managed. He loved it. So we took him down the river, Sid and I did. He rowed some on that trip and just really, really loved the Canyon. So when Bob Yearout moved to Tetons, Marvin applied for the job. Of course, we all knew each other and worked together, not just on the river but at all of these administrative meetings 'cause we also went to Western River Guides, their meetings. Western River Guides was the outfitters, the owners of boating companies all over the west, they met once or twice a year. We, as the Interagency Whitewater Committee, would go to those meetings. At that time Bob Yearout would've been the official member and I was the river guy who came along.

TM: As a do-it-yourself river runner it's interesting to see ex-employees now working for the agency interfacing with the owners to sort out river management. How do I politely frame this question? Do you see where I'm going with this?

SM: Well, there's no question that the private river runners or the do-it-yourselfers were numerically and politically quite a minority at the time that river use was frozen. They were something like, if I have... When the use was frozen it was something roughly, the whole pie was 96,600 or something like that. The privates got 7600 and the commercials got 89,000. The commercial river runners were in business, running lots of trips, had the equipment, were politically connected, and they were concessioners at that time. The concessioners within the Park Service had a national concessions group that were very powerful, as well. It's like the Conference of Concessioners or something to that affect. The people who managed Yosemite Park, Curry Company, Grand Canyon Park Lodges, Yellowstone Park Lodges all were members of that and a pretty powerful lobby at that time, very politically connected. Those were really big businesses. So in general, the concessioners, they had definitely the voice. They had organized meetings. At that time, again, the private use coming out of...some of the early private use was commercial boatmen on their own time running the trip that they've always wanted to run. So,

instead of a 10-day motor trip you were on a 30-day private trip. That's not true of all, many of the privates were just private do-it-yourselfers that loved the outdoors and bought a canoe, then bought a raft or saw a raft go by, and before you know it you're doing something much more adventuresome. At that time, in the early days, the outfitters were just... I don't think it was seen really as, being there at that time, it wasn't being thoughtfully discriminatory against the private users, it just sort of was what it was. I have some pictures, and you do too, of private river rigs kind of alongside the early commercial rigs. One looked like the Joads, generally. All except, like I think I told you before, except for Fred Eiseman who had these beautiful dories and did these 30- or 40-day trips.

TM: Well, Fred of course had worked for Gay so he kind of knew the commercial scene a little bit. The Clampett's or the Purtyman's didn't know the commercial scene, and yet, there they were; outnumbered, outgunned, outpoliticized, out-lobbied.

SM: Yeah. Because the Park was trying to decide what to do with motors and oars. The bulk of the trips on the river were motors, the bulk of the people going down and were being taken on motor trips, and the Park was kind of testing the limits of what it should do with wilderness. At that time wilderness meant no motors. So the outfitters were kind of galvanized against... Not all of them, some of the outfitters supported no motors. But generally they were supportive of the status quo. So the outfitters were gathering together not only to preserve the greatest amount of use for themselves, but also kind of the status quo of motors and oars, and all of those kinds of things. They really had a lot at stake and so they had a really strong voice.

TM: Let's go back and talk about something you mentioned about the Park starting the river guides training, if you will. What was the first time you became aware of that?

SM: The first time I became aware of it was just as a boatman hearing through, I think Wilderness World, that there was going to be a spring trip that the Park was going to run for boatmen training and then me contacting the Park on that. That was at the same time I was lobbying for a job.

TM: That would have been '75?

SM: That would have been the winter of '74 and then the first trip in '75. My understanding is that Jim Hannah and Peter Wynn, both of that boating community, thought it would be really good to get all of the guides together and talk about interpretation and what the Park was doing. Just kind of begin to share ideas and those kinds of things.

TM: So had that gone on a year or two before?

SM: Not that I'm aware of. I think that was the first year.

TM: What do you remember about that? Where was it held? Do you remember who showed up?

SM: I cannot remember everybody that was on the trip. I remember Sam West, and at that time he was going by Sam Street, who was, I believe, an Oars boatmen. There were a couple of dory boatmen on the trip, but generally, its funny how little I kind of remember. Tom Doerr ran the Park motorboat on it and I ran a Park rowing rig. Then we had the other of the Park rowing boats. So we had the two rowboats, the motor boat of the Park and then the other guides ran the other boat.

TM: So was there a land session and then everybody scurried up to Lees Ferry to go boating?

SM: No, there was just the river session. The first one was just the river session. I believe that the first land session we held at Albright, and it was just because of the logistics, was in '76. We'd gotten money from the Grand Canyon Natural History Association and Albright Training Center gave us a classroom. We brought David Brower, and of course Caruthers and Bob Euler and there were some... Euler was a well-known Canyon archeologist, and of course, Caruthers worked with the Museum of Northern Arizona. Some of Caruthers' people. Everybody got together and talked inspiration and talked about all the science and to get more in education. Then the next year, at the on-land session, is when we introduced the rocket box toilet, which has now become the "Groover". That came out of...we were...Marvin...well, the Park during my first and second winter...so it'd been the winter of '75/'76, we were looking at... Of course, it had become obvious to everyone that the beaches were going to hell and we had begun writing the river plan. Caruthers, Marv Jenson and I were working on that. We had been experimenting with a variety of different things. The evolution is it went from just people going to the bathroom anywhere to Gay Staveley beginning to carry out human waste. Then we all began to take these little recreational vehicle porta-potties that held Blue Goo, and it would consolidate all... Everybody would use it, but then you'd bury that each day or every other day on the beach someplace. So that didn't really resolve things. In every place that there was enough sand to dig a 2- or 3-foot hole, which were all the best campsites, there were all these Jet John poops. Sid and I had run and gone down... It's obvious that we were going to have to figure how to carry out the poop. For recreational vehicles and for home emergency fallout shelters and all those kinds of things, they had these little toilet seats that stood on four legs and you basically put in some either lime or Blue Goo and you pooped in those. That was your emergency bathroom. We took one of those down the river and used it. Hung a plastic bag, pooped in it, tied the bags up, and put them in the rocket box and carried them out.

TM: That was in 19...?

SM: Would've been late in the summer of '76. It would've been towards the end of our second summer running. At that time we were pushing rowboats, so we knew it had to work. Marvin and Caruthers and I were meeting and it was like, well, why do you need the legs? We'll just put the toilet seat on the rocket box and put the bags over the rocket box. We'll just poop in that and then we'll tie it shut. Actually, I have a do-it-yourself couple of slides here that were taken in 1977 when we started to really push it. We started giving not only boatman training session to the commercial boatmen, but we started a program at Lees Ferry giving slide programs to private trips.

TM: And that happened in '77?

SM: Either '77 or '78. Slides I have and do-it-yourself, when we posed, the happy guy bagging poop was...those were shot in '77. We actually hired John Running, who's the photographer from here, to help us put together a slide program for the private boaters. Lees Ferry Store went out of business and we drug the old trailer across and started giving talks in that.

TM: Was there good buy-in from the river concessionaires to start packing out solid waste?

SM: We had the carrying out human waste, we had using fire pans. The evolution of... Then through this guy, Knutson, who was the public health service officer that was assigned to the Park that we ran all winter... We ran trips for 12 consecutive months doing a whole variety of research. One of the researches was monitoring fecal coliforms and the degradation of poop and the Jet John patches. So we

ran all these trips and Knutson, the public health guy, came down on a number of those and was really instrumental in sort of “we got to do something here.” He came up with the idea of peeing in the river. During that same time is when we came up with, Caruthers and Marvin and I and John Thomas and others, the ammo can business. So back to the boat, I’m getting back to the boatman thing. Go ahead.

TM: Quick question. Knutson worked for Public Health. Was he Coconino County or was he federal?

SM: He was federal. The Public Health Service provides, in big parks and regions, a public health service person to monitor... You have all the food service on the South Rim. At that time we also had some shigella and other breakouts on the river, which are dysentery-related. So there were a variety of things that we’d come up with, which was the 3-bucket wash system with the Clorox dip, hauling out your human waste, going to fire pans, beginning to limit summertime use of firewood, and peeing in the river. All of those kinds of things. We presented those at the boatmen training session. We presented them at the Western River Guides and the outfitters met with mixed results. Some of the outfitters were over it, some were less over it. We can’t carry out human waste on row boats, the campfire is an essential part of... Some of the people that I have the highest respect for were against one or the other of the aspects of it from the outfitters side. That the campfire was essential to sit around in the evening kind of socialize and all those kinds of things. “Oh my god, you can’t pee in the river. The guests will never do that. It’s just like counter-intuitive, we can’t have our commercial passengers peeing in a river.”

TM: Who was putting up the objections?

SM: I don’t know if I should name names. A variety of... Then we had others, outfitters, that were, “Yeah, we gotta do it.”

TM: So who was with you? Who was supporting you?

SM: Oh supporting. Merle was supporting it, the superintendent, Marv Jenson at that time and a couple of the outfitters... Go ahead.

TM: So that’s it, which outfitters were with you?

SM: A couple of the rowing outfitters were definitely with us. A couple of the rowing outfitters were definitely against us. A mix. Gay Staveley, he was the pioneer for carrying out human waste, so he was with us on a number of things. There was a real mish-mash, but we presented...

TM: Just be tactful.

SM: Yeah. We presented at the boatmen training session, and at that time, they were our major allies in getting all of these things done.

TM: The guides?

SM: The guides. It wasn’t necessarily 100% belief by the guides. You had a dory boatman going, “Oh yes, we can carry them out. We’ll figure out a way to get the poop out on the dories.” We had people saying, “We’ll get the message across on the human waste and urinating in the river.” The three-bucket system, I think all the outfitters were fine with that. They were all over... They understood sanitation, they understood keeping your guests healthy. That was like a no-brainer. Then getting the food, cleaner

beaches... At that time slop buckets and everything were going in the river instead of on the beaches. That was a big step. You didn't bury that stuff, you didn't leave it there and you got it out on the main current. I would really say that the boatmen were...through the Boatman Training Sessions and just through the spirit of. We also had on one of the subsequent...I don't remember all the dates...the boatmen also pitched in on the training trips and other things to help build the first trails up Nankoweap, the first trail up Saddle, because we had all that multiple trailing. I think I have at least one slide of that as well. They were definitely...the boatmen helped carry the day on all of the environmental and other issues in the Canyon.

TM: So let me make sure I get this right. It wasn't necessarily the concession owners who were with you, the Park Service realized they could go to the owner's employees and get the employees buy-in and basically force the owners to follow along. Maybe force is too strong a word.

SM: Yeah, I think force... Our view was that it wasn't so much to force them. I don't think... I tell people we weren't that sophisticated, we were just enthusiastic. We loved the Canyon and we loved the trips and the boat. So it was just natural to go to the boatmen. We were all former boatmen. They had the same passion that we had for it and, again, there was... Like I say, some of the outfitters were 100% in from day one, others were 50% in, some were hardly in at all. The boatmen really just showed really, it's no big deal, it's nothing off the bottom line, it's really good for the Canyon. I don't want to paint all of the owners, because many of the owners were absolutely like us: in love with the Canyon. My first three owners were Vladimir Kovalik, Ron Hayes and Gay Staveley. Gay loved the Canyon and he was an enthusiast. So was Ron and Vladimir. They were all over it. There were many of them, George Wendt, who you would expect were just all over doing anything that they could.

TM: Yes, and I think of maybe Georgie, some of the do-it-yourself river runners that then became permittees and then became concessionaires, that remembered the 40s and the 50s might not be so embracing of change?

SM: Yeah. Though it's funny, Georgie, she came along fine. She was just such an amazing force. She certainly had one foot in the past being one of the true originators of the commercial river trips. But, Georgie, with her own style, she was fine with whatever. She went along with it. Yeah, really fortunate that I was in that era when you could get to know Georgie.

TM: What were relationships like between concessionaires? You'd meet with these guys once a year, wasn't it at the end of the season?

SM: I think it was once a year. There might have been a spring and a fall on some of the years, but we met at least annually. There were just lots of discussions on the river plans and the river issues and the motors and oars and numbers and all of those kinds of things.

TM: Yeah, it was interesting talking to Glade. He said you'd see Georgie on the river and she'd be leopard skin, rhino hide, just you wouldn't want to get real friendly. But then at the meetings in the fall, winter and spring she'd be in squash blossom dresses, very pretty, and just very professional and very friendly. Very different from who she was on the river.

SM: Yeah, it's interesting because she always invited us into her camps. We had a great... And, you know, she was running her trips. She wasn't just an owner, she was an operator. She was always to me and the rangers I later hired... Sid ran '75, '76 and part of '77, and then we had our first kid in early '78. I

would say that generally on the river, which was kind of where I started in those first few years, if George Wendt was on the river or the Quist Brothers or Georgie or whoever, they were always really open to... And ARTA...who am I thinking?

TM: Lou? Lou Elliot?

SM: No, Rob Elliot. Those guys were running, and Outdoors Unlimited, the owner... When they were on the river, which was my first contact with all of them, they were all really good to work with. There wasn't a big schism, there wasn't any schism really between the Park Service river team and the concessioners.

TM: Right. Just logically it would make sense that those are your friends. You're going to see those people on the river. We'll fight with the managers in the offices and we'll fight with them in DC, but the people on the water, there's no sense in fighting that fight because they're... you're going to see those people again and again and again there. Don't piss them off.

SM: And everybody was...it was...as it is now, I'm sure...I know less about it now. It was really...everybody who was running the river regularly at that time really felt lucky to be a part of the whole adventure, I think. It was really fun.

TM: Fun. I think that's basically the questions that I had. What I'd like to do now if you're willing, you've got a stack of slides here and a little slide viewer so let's just drop those in here.

SM: In no particular order.

TM: Just drop them in, we'll take a look. I think if you put the whole stack in there, you can just reel them out. Will that work?

SM: Sometimes it jams. I'll be pretty quick though.

TM: I may not want you to go quick.

SM: So there's Sid and Marv Jenson in what probably would've been '76. I think that was his first trip.

TM: They're sitting on a boat, Marv's got a Mae West life jacket. It's a silver boat. It says NPS on it.

SM: That's the Salmon, those are the Salmon River and you can see the lead taped to the oar.

TM: For counter weights.

SM: For counter weights. So Sid...cause these were like heavy boats, 12-foot oars, so we counter weighted. But you can see the diamond plate, even the rowing boats had that diamond plate under the oars.

TM: Right, right.

SM: I'll try a few of these at once.

SM: This is just a picture of Sid on the beach with the three...look at how young she looks...with the three, but there's the three bucket...

TM: Wash system.

SM: ...wash system, yeah. Really early on.

SM: Maybe I'll put in a few more of these, try and get through these. Just pictures of a few of the Park Service boats and one other one.

SM: There's Sid. Somebody bailing after she ran one of the rapids. She's all wet.

SM: There's, I think that's Don Chase rowing by and I think Brickler.

TM: Chase? C-H-A-S-E?

SM: Yeah. He was the Desert View Unit Manager. I have a couple shots of him in here because he was... At that time there weren't a lot of rangers hiking. Chase, even though he was a unit manager, which is fairly far up there, was really...loved the river, hiked all over the place, really quite a...

TM: Actually a resource getting a feel kind of guy.

SM: Yeah, and there's a picture of one of the early private trips. You can see 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 little boats.

TM: Yeah, it's kind of like today. Everyone likes to drive.

SM: Everybody likes to drive. Well that's why you do it.

SM: So there is a picture of Badger at really, really low water. That was the year that they shut down after the dam and so the Park... A lot of the trips had to be evacuated, the motor trips. It got too low.

TM: What year was this?

SM: '77. It was....I can't see it on this one. I have some other ones. I believe it was '77.

TM: You know what, I'll scan these in and I'll send them to you and if you can back-label them?

SM: Okay. There's some of the researchers. I think that's Robert Euler there on the left. John Thomas. The picture is this guy in the front. But basically, it was...and you can there is a tape running through there and that was the start of where we were monitoring beaches to see if things were improving or getting better or worse.

SM: This is the toilet rig in '75, which has the handwashing, but it's one of the Jet Johns that we buried.

SM: And just as a way of... This is just a picture of Marvin, cause I thought, with his...

TM: Sunglasses.

SM: ...wild sideburns, at that time.

TM: Is he still alive, Marv?

SM: As far as I know. I haven't talked to him in a number of years. When we were both working... He ended up as Assistant Superintendent at Yellowstone and then retired and worked for Ted Turner.

SM: This is just a picture of one of the water buckets, but then one of the early fire pans, which was actually a wheel-less wagon as part of the evolution.

SM: I just threw this one in because it's kind of cool. We had a lot of contacts. That's a big fella. We camped a lot with the commercial outfitters and I just thought you'd be curious to see a big fella.

SM: There are not quite in sequence but there's the toilet in the ammo can from... This is June of '77 that we started the...

SM: Here's a picture of the Park motor boat. Pretty nice rig, huh?

TM: Okay, that looks like an S-Rig sort of thing.

SM: Yep. Diamond plate. See the diamond plate floor and the big cooler? It was really...It was nice.

SM: Oh, this I just threw in because I think it's funny.

SM: This is before PowerPoint. When we used to type things up and then shoot a picture. That's for a presentation on the increase in use and all that.

TM: So you've just written it up and stuck it up on the wall and take a picture of it.

SM: Yeah, that's how to make a PowerPoint projection.

SM: This is one of the slides we were using at that time, too. Prior to hauling out your human waste, a lot of it was pooping in the rocks and burning your toilet paper. Of course, there were a number of fires in different places from...

TM: That looked like Nankoweap all burned up.

SM: Yeah. Oh and this one I just threw in. Changes in river management regimes.

SM: There's the dory camp.

TM: And the dories are high and dry, stuck up on the shore.

SM: You can see how much... That was a typical nightly fluctuation, which you know.

TM: And the water would drop or come up a large amount.

SM: That's just a picture of me running the boat with my... I was a little unusual, not a lot of Park Service people had beards.

TM: And your life jacket isn't attached...

SM: I know!

TM: ...there, Superintendent.

SM: I wasn't Superintendent at the time.

TM: I know, but...

SM: This is one of the pictures... We did all kinds of significant scientific studies.

TM: Who was that person there?

SM: He was one of the researchers with...Suttkus, Royal Suttkus, who was one of the people out of, I think, Tulane University that were doing a lot of...got the contract. The Park Service put out a bid, "we need a bunch of research on small mammals and reptiles and fish" and so this guy from Tulane got it.

SM: I got a kick out of this. One of the commercial trips wrote "Viva Los Federales" on the top of our Jet John.

TM: Wonder who did that?

SM: It's just funny. It did show we had great camaraderie with people.

SM: This is just...sorry these aren't in order.

TM: No worries.

SM: This is, I believe, a shot of the lower part of Hance...

TM: Wait a minute. Where the heck is that?

SM: ...in really low water.

TM: That's grim. That's grim looking. That's about 1000 cfs.

SM: What do they call that? It's the Valley of the Giants, or something?

TM: Yeah.

SM: So those are the giants.

TM: That's Whale Rock.

SM: Uh huh.

TM: Oh my heavens. Wow.

SM: It was low. It was pretty cool though. We were the only trip that kept going at that time.

SM: Oh! This one is from one of the boatman training sessions. That's either me or Crumbo there and then just building...This is the trail up Saddle Mountain. Everybody pitched in.

SM: I should pull these out so they don't get too many. Oops! I didn't mean to do that. It's kind of fun, I hadn't...

TM: It's very fun.

SM: It was all because of you that I then went back and pulled some of these out of the box.

SM: There's a picture. I just threw that in, sorry. It's crooked. That's John Thomas.

TM: Okay, so he's got sunglasses, he's got a beard, he's rowing, there's a person behind him to his right.

SM: I don't know who that is. But anyway, that was when...

SM: Here's a picture of...

SM: And here's another one of the...

TM: Wait a minute I haven't seen these, don't be shutting down. Just a minute, you're going too fast.

SM: That's another one of the how-to...

TM: How to set-up your pooper.

SM: How to set up your pooper.

SM: I have another one here. This is just a picture of the Park. One of the old runs around... when we used to...

TM: What is that rock?

SM: So that's the rock at Hance. When we always used to run... 'Cause the water would to come up and so we'd do that left run around that big rock at the end...

TM: Yeah, it's the muffin rock and the motor rigs used to run down through there.

SM: Sometimes.

SM: There's a picture of Sid driving the Park boat. Just to document her activity.

SM: This one is a... I'm going to turn this one over, too. Some of these I got in crooked. I'm going to come back to them, I got them in all crooked. We started wearing our life...

SM: There's Gary. See there's the picture of how easy it is... He was the Chief Ranger on one of these trips. Helped with the "how-to" thing.

SM: This is one of the... Because we went from the fire pans and dumping them in the river and eventually just banning summertime use.

TM: So this picture is of charcoal floating up on the beach...

SM: Yeah.

TM: ...and why it wasn't a good idea just to take your fire ashes and charcoal and just throw it in the river, because it would just float right back on the beach.

SM: This is a picture of Chase just 'cause he was one of the early... When you asked who was supporting you in all these things, you had Bob Yearout, who was a manager, you had Don Chase, who was a manager, and then you had Marv Jenson as the manager, and Merle. There were a number of people there who were doing it.

SM: This is...I don't know what that is...an early campsite picture. I think it's just a commercial camp set up at the time with a huge pile of firewood and the big 55-gallon drum cut apart.

SM: This is another private trip. They've come a long way. That's why one of the things we had talked about last time we met was how much having Pro and the other people that lease equipment or rent equipment and help the privates.

SM: That's just a picture of me. Once we got good life jackets we started...

TM: Zipping them up. That's good.

SM:...zipping them up [laughter].

SM: So that's kind of it in a nutshell.

TM: Fun. Very cool.

SM: We have a bunch more, but that kind of gives a flavor, I think, of the time.

TM: Absolutely. If you don't mind, I'd love to scan those in and I can email you low resolution pictures.

SM: Or I can bring you over a thumb drive, if you...

TM: I can put the high resolution right on the thumb drive.

SM: Actually I think I might even have. Well, I don't know if I have one.

TM: One thing I learned, don't email high res pictures.

SM: Yeah.

TM: Then if you could help with the labeling, that'd be great.

SM: Yeah, I can do that. Between Sid and I, I think we can look at them and...

TM: So between Hannah and Ross, I need to connect that up now, because I have a gap there. Are you still in contact with Hannah at all? Because there's a Jim and Shelly or Sheryl...

SM: That sounds right.

TM: ...Hannah on Facebook, but they rarely use it. Been since last year they posted anything. There's a phone number up in Alaska which I called and left a message and...

SM: Yeah, that's probably them. Because they...

TM: Okay, I'll be persistent. I'll keep calling because I really would like to talk to Jim.

SM: Yeah, he would be... We used to laugh, he either played pro or semi-pro football. We used to laugh about how those rowboats were set up for him because the 12-foot oars and the heavy-duty frames and the 18-foot bulletproof neoprene. He didn't think that they were heavy at all.

TM: [Laughter]

SM: I think we rowed those for a couple of years and then Vladimir had a deal with Campways and was using those tubular frames and the 18-foot Havasu boats and so as soon as we could, we converted. The Park bought three of those and that's what we ran.

TM: You emailed me a picture of a dory going into Badger. What can you tell me about the Park's adventures with dories?

SM: We camped with the dories at one of the double camps back in the days of Sand [Sanderson?].

TM: With Martin Litton?

SM: Yeah, with Martin Litton's dories, but Martin wasn't on the trip. It would've been whoever was leading his trips at the time. I can't remember...somebody. We had the director of the Park Service, Stanton, with us.

TM: Bob Stanton?

SM: Not Stanton. No...it was...I'm sorry. Just had a bleep...I'll think of it here in a second. I have it on that...Bill Whalen. It's on this rewrite to Abby. That would've been like in '79, I think, '78 or '79. We had Merle on the trip, I think that was before Dick Marks had gotten there, and Bill Whalen, and...

TM: Whalen was?

SM: Director of the Park Service in Washington, DC.

TM: NPS Director, okay.

SM: We camped like one of those National camps or one of those camps up above Lava that had double camps. We weren't camped together but within a few hundred yards of each other. We went up so that the director could talk to the dories and meet the commercial boatmen, and all that. They invited him to run Lava. Said, "Come on, you want to see how a real boat works?" We were running rubber boats. So Whalen went through Lava with the dories. Rode up front, of course they nailed the run. And so, we took some shots which went back to DC. I don't have a picture of him anymore that I could find in a hurry, but I might someplace. So he went back to DC and he said that was wonderful. We're talking wilderness, we're talking all of this. Of course, they were wonderful trips that we took these guys on. You know how that it is. You're on a trip with 8 people, they're just awesome. He said, "We should have the best. We should be just like Martin Litton and the dories." He said, "How much is it going to cost?" We had no idea, so we said, "I don't know, \$3,000 or \$4,000 apiece." Which in '78 or '79 was a lot of money. I think he gave us like 10 grand from the director's budget, not out of the Park budget, said get a couple of dories. John Thomas knew of somebody in like Idaho or whatever that was building boats, I think it was Idaho, and built us these two dories. A green one and a white one. The Park ran them for a couple of years, generally supported by a raft, you'd have a raft and a couple of dories, but they just weren't really practical for the kind of work that we were doing. I missed a couple of the slides in there. I also had one of the humpback chub. So you may find more. Sometimes they stuck together. But anyway, we were seining fish in the river and hauling tools to build things with. They were just beautiful boats and good for VIP trips, but not really practical. Sid and I left to go to Yellowstone in 1981. Somewhere late in the summer of '81 or in '82, I think they flipped one in Lava, and crashed it into the wall in Lower Lava. Ended up... I think maybe made 1 or 2 more trips after that but basically then mothballed 'em. They just weren't worth it. Kim Crumbo, we had hired Kim, was an excellent boatman, and John Thomas, was an excellent boatman, when we left, they kind of took over the river operation after I left.

TM: Well it was...Wilderness was not then in vogue by 1982. The Wilderness Plan had been...

SM: Shot down.

TM: ...sunk, if you will, and so the vision of wilderness that Whalen had was not the vision that James Watt and the new director of the Park Service had.

SM: After that the Park kept its big motorboat for a couple years, but then just really went to rowing rubber boats for the longest time. And then, again I was gone, before I came back as Superintendent in 2007, somewhere in there the Park had bought another big motorboat, a couple of motorized snout rigs and several rowing boats. Still ran a lot of rowing trips but had a real mix, which makes sense.

TM: Do you think you've got a photo of Whalen in Lava?

SM: After his trip, we did a photo. I'd have to go back through. I might, but I don't that I do.

TM: If you find that, I'd like to see it.

SM: We had like a dozen photos of that trip put up. You have a picture that I texted you, it has a picture of the next director, who was Russ Dickinson. So there's...in that picture...I'd have to have look...is Merle still there?

TM: I'm sorry...

SM: Here, I have it here.

TM: I haven't looked at those, yet.

SM: But anyway, just so you know that. It has Howard Chapman, who was the Western Regional Director. It has...let me just hook this up real quick and I can pull them up. It has Sam and John Thomas and I and Cindy Burns, who was then with us on the river.

TM: Did you send me one email or two?

SM: One. I think there are 3 or 4 pictures.

TM: So I've got 3 pictures here. So here's a whole line of people lined up 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 folks here.

SM: Okay, so from right to left we have Sam West.

TM: Okay, then?

SM: Brian Harry, who was the Superintendent of Lake Mead.

TM: B-R-I-A-N?

SM: Yeah.

TM: H-A-?

SM: H-A-R-R-Y. You have me.

TM: Superintendent of Lake Mead?

SM: Yeah. You have John Thomas. You have some unidentified staffer guy.

TM: Looks like Fred Eisman the bald guy back there.

SM: Yeah, it's not. Then Russell Dickinson.

TM: And Dickinson was Director?

SM: Director. Marv Jensen, who was then a river unit manager. Then Cindy Burns, who came on the river to help with cooking and she was learning to row and doing all that kind of stuff. And Howard Chapman, who was the Regional Director. Dickinson was a really good guy, too.

TM: What year was this?

SM: So that would've been...must've been '79 or '80. It would have been '80. It was after the change in administration.

TM: Right to left. Boy, the most serious looking dude in the whole bunch is you.

SM: Yeah, that was kind of funny. There's that picture. So that's Sam.

TM: So one white and one green.

SM: Uh huh.

TM: Okay. Are these dories... All right, so that's Sam West?

SM: Yeah, and what's the other one. Let's see here. Oh, that's a picture of Merle and me I think at Kanab, but I'm not sure. Just because he was so instrumental and he was so supportive.

TM: This would've been just before he died then?

SM: Yeah, he retired...he must have retired in '80. And then Dick Marks came in and then Merle must've died like in '81, I think.

TM: There's a picture of John Riffey receiving his 40-year ruby pin out there at Toroweap, right on the edge. John's wearing his plaid shirt and his floppy little, you know, keep my ears warm little floppy hat. Merle is giving him his ruby pin and Merle is dressed to the nines. Just shiny, bright. Got this beatific smile as all the superintendents have. It looks like they're passing a roach, this tiny little reefer. And they're both so happy, they're both going to be dead in six months. Heart failure.

SM: Yeah I know. It's so funny because Riffey was, in his own way, such a rebel, but Merle just loved him because they were both the real deal. You know what I mean? Probably even with me included in later years, as superintendent, they became so political. Back then, it was still a political job but it was... I think at the Canyon, we had 150 or 160 employees. When I was superintendent we had 500 to 550. Just the...in just the complexities and the issues and the political climate and all the gamesmanship that goes on with Congress.

TM: Well you talked about this the other day, the one big contributing factor was population. 100 employees to 500 employees, yeah, but Las Vegas wasn't on the map, and then Tucson and Phoenix and Salt Lake City and Albuquerque and all these big cities filling up.

SM: And the tour companies. With all of that comes growth and tourism. It's really interesting to look at... I've been doing this thing for the Grand Canyon Trust looking at population in 1970 and population now and just how many more tens of millions of people are out west. But that also then generates that many more people interested in making money off tourism. In something like 23 states, tourism is either 1, 2, or 3 of the most significant contributor to that state's economy. So you have millions more people that are pushing that as a way to make money, as well. So the whole growth of everything from pink jeeps to huge bus tours to just the marketing of these places has really changed it. Overflights, the tens of millions of dollars that overflights make. So it is a factor.

I think I had skipped a few slides, so when you get to those... One of them I think that's in there, is the picture of the humpback chub and that was when... It's so funny because the chub has become a player in the high flows and the dam and all that kind of stuff, but at that time they weren't certain scientifically they hadn't captured adult and baby chubs and all that stuff. This is one from Shinumo Creek on one of the research trips. I just think its funny how they weren't even supposed to necessarily be in the river then. They're there 40 years later and yet all of this angst is... I think sometimes we missed the real reason for trying to rebuild the beaches and all that.

TM: You know what's interesting, I'm looking at this picture of...Brian Harry is there and Dickinson is there and Chapman is there. This is 1980. 1950 Superintendent Bryant is writing Otis Marston, "You're on your own down there. Good luck."

SM: Yeah.

TM: So in 30 years, here's the Director, there's superintendents, the Park has made finally it to the river in 1980.

SM: Yeah. It's also really interesting because when you think about these guys. I have a impression of this trip, which is really interesting, because Brian Harry and Dickinson and Chapman were all feel...had grown up as rangers doing what I call "real" rangers. They're out on horseback, they're spending the winter in cabins in Yellowstone counting bison, they were doing all those kinds of things. They met us at Lees Ferry to start the trip. They show up and they each, instead of being like overwrought and overdressed and out of comfort, they show up with these little tiny duffels that have like an extra pair of shorts and a shirt and a rain jacket, you know? And that's it. And they were...it's like what you could fit in your saddlebags. They were really...they weren't politicians. A lot of the people now, and this is just a personal...it's neither right nor wrong, it just is...but that was the era when these managers had been in the field and rangers had loved the resource. I'm not saying that... I think people now love the resource, too, but a lot more likely to be a bureaucrat or an administrator or somebody off the hill that's never worked in a park and will end up appointed as a Regional Director. It's a very different feeling and again it's neither here nor there, it's just life is changing and the politics have become in some ways more important than the inspirational values of the resource. People tend to stand up less for the resources. It's like play politics first. It's like, oh we couldn't do that because we'll get pounded or whatever. It's different. Different evolution.

TM: Whalen. Do you think he was the first director to go down the river?

SM: No. I don't know if he was the first director. Whalen was not the first director. I can't think of his name, too. The year before I got there they took the director and a couple of his people down in like in '76 or '77. Here, I'll Google them.

TM: Also, there was a Udall trip. Was an early Udall trip. I'm sure park VIP would have been on that trip. I'm just trying remember when did the Park re-engage with the river, or engage? I shouldn't say re-engaged because they hadn't engaged at all.

SM: I don't know if any... Was Udall on the trip with Brower and the... It's Mather blah, blah, blah. Wirth wouldn't have gone down. Hartzog didn't go down. Ron Walker went down the river.

TM: When was that? Do you know?

SM: He was director '73 to '75. So he would've gone down...and it was before I got there...so I think he went down in '74. Then Everhardt didn't go down. Whalen went down. Dickenson went down. Mott did not. Ridenour did not. Kennedy did not. Stanton did not. Fran didn't. Mary didn't. I took Jarvis down when I was superintendent.

TM: Walker's not in here. Interesting.

SM: What's that?

TM: That's just Jeff's political history review. It's a good resource for a lot of this. Mark Walker? What's his first name?

SM: Um...Ron. Ronald.

TM: Okay, great. As we tie up this oral history, is there anything else you'd like to get on tape?

SM: Not that I can think of.

TM: From this period.

SM: No, I don't think so. It was a fun era. 'Cause it was also... Out of the river plan, the research that was going on and we'd hired...we were monitoring campsites and all that. The Park was doing some of it...this is just a little aside, but it's interesting, too...and Caruthers, we had contracted with Caruthers to do some of it through the museum. Caruthers...so this would had been...again, my dates are bad...but say '77 or '78...came back and said people are having an impact but now that we got the charcoal and the human waste and the fires and the pee and the group size and all that kind of things, things are getting better. But the burros are what's really hammering the place. So that kicked off, it generated out of the river plan, all of the stuff with the burros. So in conjunction with Caruthers and then some park staff and some people we had brought in from New Zealand or whatever, did all of that initial work with monitoring the burros and tranquilizing them and putting them on a river boat and flying them out from Whitmore Wash. Merle was superintendent, which led to the whole agreement with the Fund for Animals and getting the burros out of the Canyon. The river unit was right in the midst of the Inner Canyon Unit at that time.

TM: Hulick was talking about that, too. He said they were doing the aerial killing out of helicopters. He said they weren't using machine guns but we were using some pretty big fire power.

SM: We actually got trained. There were 4 or 5 of us that got trained. He had somebody from one of the local bases came up, one of the sharpshooters, and we had these match perfect M-14 rifles. So we had done a little bit of shooting of the burros, but the plan came out, and it just...it tanked. So there was never any major burro reduction program from the helicopters. We had shot a few out of discrete side canyons for scientific purposes. Then we came out with the plan, and just got...it was one of the first...because back then you started doing EIS's, taking public input. We got like 5,000 letters in 7 days on don't kill Brighty. It was really interesting because... So, we did some shooting, but mainly it was really limited. Then Fund for Animals said... Cleveland Amory sat down with Merle and Merle said, "We have a plan. We have the right to do this." And Cleveland Amory said, "Well, if we pay for it and you'll

allow us 6 months, we'll take all of them out alive that we possibly can." All of us were kind of going, oh no, let's shoot them. Because we had seen what they had done to the Canyon. Just trashed it. Merle said, "Okay." Believe it or not, they got like 80% of the burros out. It just showed that... Merle was just that kind... He was just smart and common sense. He was just like, "Well why not? They've been down there for the last 40 or 50 years, so we'll give them 6 months." They raised like I think almost a million dollars and got those cowboys...

TM: And motorboats.

SM: ...then right at the very end, the Park went and shot the last handful. But yeah, I think, they got... Cause we had done all of the practice with them, flying 'em out and putting one on a boat. But they I think contracted with somebody like Western Rivers or whoever. It was impressive. I mean, none of us gave them a chance in hell. It's also kind of interesting era. The Canyon has really rebounded from those years.

TM: I've got a question for you as a citizen that really tries to support the parks as best as I possibly can. There is a turnover in employees. It's almost as if the agency looks for employees that go from service unit to service unit, from park to park, as a way to get more skills, get more understanding, work with more people, maybe climb the company ladder. From the outside I see skillsets leaving. New skillsets coming that don't understand the resource. By the time they get things figured out and start coming around to the program, they're gone. I can count the last superintendents, seems like they last 4 or 5 years, they come and they go. Deputy Superintendents come and go. I guess, I'm going to use the word frustrating from the outside to try to get to know people and then see and leave. You wish them well in their careers, but then you have to start again. Is there a perception within the agency that sometimes you need a John Riffey, sometimes you need somebody who's going to anchor in and stay there for a long haul to understand the place?

SM: I think that generally the culture of the Park Service came out a military model. And the military model they moved people around. But any rule has its exceptions, the Riffey's or the whoever's. Generally, to get promoted you have to move. It's really interesting, because I was a river ranger. I got into... In '77 they had what they called a ranger intake program where they got some money and they were going to hire like 50 new rangers for the Park Service. At that time the ranger division was in the quote, management series, of the Park Service. It's changed that. Now it's in the law enforcement series. But back then it was in the management series, which meant that you could go step up and your shot was at being a superintendent, assistant superintendent or whatever or chief ranger, management of the Park Service. This was '77 I got in. In '78 I graduated from the program and the national program said, "Okay, he's got to move. We got to get this guy, he's got to go this park, this park, this park." Merle stepped in. I was like, "Merle, I don't want to go. I love the Canyon. I'm here." We had kids and it wasn't practical in the early 80's for me to not be home a lot, so we moved on. But up until then I had no plans. So Merle pulled strings and I got to stay. Back then even, at that level, is the intake. At the 7-9, which is low, high-level superintendents are 15 or SESer, was that okay we'll get you in the system and do that. There's another thing that's really changed. Since I was a ranger, you're either in resource management, you're in interpretation, or you're in law enforcement. They're three different career paths. I think that's changed the demographics as well. You have less affiliation necessarily to parks and all of that. You come in, you get promoted, you move and move, and then you move on. There are more and more...this is a good thing, I think...that is there more and more dual career couples in the Park Service. Very few dual career couples when Sid and I were entering in. There were some, but not many.

TM: The dual careers don't stay at a park. They move as well.

SM: But less so, I think. Because it gets harder and harder for both to find jobs that they like.

TM: Okay.

SM: But that said, even the dual careers move.

TM: So has the agency realized that maybe that's not really a good thing? Or is it a good thing? I guess you could argue it both ways.

SM: I think you could argue it both ways. I was superintendent in Denali for 8 years. That was somewhat of a long stint, but it was also just perfect for me with timing with my family. There was a lot to get done, we enjoyed the hell out of it. So that worked really well. There are benefits to... If you have some continuity... It feels like somewhere in that 5-8 years is probably really good. You have to realize, too, with a superintendent, especially in the bigger parks, they're pretty stressful positions. Stressful, not only from outside politics, but because you have a lot of employees. Some are happy and some are really unhappy. You spend a lot of your time just working through those employee-type issues and conflict between employees, and all that. So I think you reach a point where it's good to go. But I would say that for a while there, 2-4 years was not uncommon for a stay. But now, I know several people at the Canyon, Bill Vandergraff and Ken Philips and others, that stayed a long time and were really productive. I think at that level, and that's kind of the John Riffey level in that work, some of those people just really find a home and stayed. When I moved from here to Yellowstone, it was interesting because a number of the district rangers and other people stayed there a really long time. Management tended to move on, but you had a lot of district rangers and other rangers who just loved it and were career. Spent 30 years in Yellowstone.

TM: It seems to me, because when you mentioned Philips and Vandergraff, those are people that come to mind that I see the public that are caring about the Park anchor into and learn from and learn a lot from. I think of Tom Meyers and his relationship with Ken Philips, other people with their relationships with Vandergraff. They get a chance to know how the agency works and how to better serve the agency from the outside. So, it's tough when you have such a huge revolving door, people there for a couple years they're gone. It's very interesting.

SM: No, I agree. I think the Park Service should do more to encourage people to stay longer in those positions. But, as you start having kids in college and you're looking for promotions, right or wrong you tend to...

TM: Right, and I think both of those people sacrificed to stay at the Park. Sacrificed their career, their salaries. It's an interesting dilemma.

SM: It's a tradeoff. But I agree, I think Park should do more.

TM: Well, Steve Martin thank you very much for your time today.