

Roosa 1 12

I: Start. Today is November 23rd, 2016, interview with Dean Roosa. Interviewer Jean Eells and we'll just go ahead and start with-- uhm, where you started in this kind of work.

P: Well, officially in 1975. That's when I was involved with the Nature Conservancy and County Conservation Board in Wright County prior to that, but 1975 is when I was hired by the State Preserves Advisory Board-- so I can associate the Conservation Movement in my mind starting in 1975. I like to think that there are people who were important to the movement, even though they may have been involved in only one single project or transaction but it had lasting effect. I like to think of these people as un-sung heroes. They were low-key, they didn't try to get publicity for their own sake and some examples would be Lloyd Ensorrew, Neil Heiser, Neil is H E I S E R and he was a Wildlife Biologist in Ottawa and he submitted for purchase, the Loess Hills Wildlife area. What twenty-four hundred acres or something like that and one-- you could say, well that was part of his job, well, indeed, but he's the one who talked to the landowners, he's the one who walked the boundaries, he's the one who made sure it was a good purchase for the state and I don't want his name to be lost, because you know, if you mentioned his name at a meeting, you know, hardly anybody recognizes it. Other people-- like in Western Iowa, Barb Wilson was a Naturalist, I don't know what her profession was, but she got very interested in the distribution of especially rare plants in Mills and Fremont County and so she did a lot of interesting work involving new records. She deposited her material in the University of Nebraska so it's a little bit hard for us to access but she's another of the un-sung heroes. [long pause] If you want to talk about personalities, it's hard to overestimate the influence of Carolyn Benne. She was a-- she was one of the most enthusiastic, passionate, Outdoor Educators that I'll ever meet and she unfortunately died at about age forty, very suddenly. You know, she had twenty-five or thirty years of-- of important work that intended to be done so it's-- I always feel bad when I see someone who's life is taken that early. I think she was very important in this establishment of the Loess Hills seminar. It's just hard to overestimate her influence. It was sort of taken over by the Blankenships around Sioux City, you know, their contribution is very important, too. They not only helped save prairies in the Sioux City area, you know, they even purchased prairies on their own for the protection. Other unsung heroes in Western Iowa would include, well Larry Farmer-- he lived near the-- what's now the Broken Kettle area. He's the one who tipped Larry Eilers and me off that there was a big chunk of roadless land in-- near his home. He used that as his jogging area and he was so impressed that there were these several sections that did not have a road through them and he-- that he-- he was instrumental in pointing out the importance of that Five Ridge Prairie or the Broken Kettle area. In 1963, is when the nature conservancy started its first chapter in Iowa. It was run by volunteers for ten years and Larry Eilers-- well, Roger Leonards was the first president, I think Gaylen Smith was the second president and then I think Larry Eilers-- the third president. It's kind of foggy now, but it's under Larry's direction that things really got started. He's the

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one who engineered the first full-time director of the conservancy, that was Larry Cantero and Larry Cantero was the one who negotiated for the purchase of the Broken Kettle . So 1963 through 1975, the Nature Conservancy was strictly volunteers but it was still pretty active. In fact, it was [laughter] one of my favorite meetings of the year would be when the-- all the volunteers got together to talk about things. In 1975, then they hired Larry Cantero and the growth of the nature conservancy in Iowa has been spectacular. They have, what, twenty-one or twenty-three, twenty-four employees now. To me, that's startling. I hope people are as impressed with that as I am. So 1963 was an important year. In 1960-- well, if you want to talk about years being important-- 1963 would be an important year. 1965 was important because that's when the state preserves advisory board was established. In 19-- '68 was the year that Daryl Smith started with the university and his influence has been really remarkable. I'm kind of wandering here a little bit, but--

I: That's totally fine. Everybody has.

P: The people who I think are unsung heroes... It started out with Neil Heiser, then the Blankenships and Bob Moats up in Estherville. The county-- he's the conservation officer. He's been very helpful in helping John Pearson and Mark Leoschke find new site-- peatland sites, but he's the one who tipped us off to the importance of the Anderson Prairie, which is I think a two-hundred acre prairie that was-- it was purchased by Mr. Anderson and kept it in a pretty good condition until the conservation organization wouldn't show interest in it. It was one of the Ada Hayden sites that she-- that she located during her-- 1940's study, but Bob Moats-- entirely self-taught, but he became a very good Naturalist. Very, very helpful in activities and sites in Emmet County. Lloyd Crimm is another person who is an unsung hero. He's been taking people out to Doolittle prairie forever. Once a month he takes people out there and he introduces them to the wonders of the prairie. Those are the kind of things which-- you know, themselves are rather, you know, not spectacular but those are the things which we built this movement up. Eighty to a hundred years ago, the people were working almost independently. You know, Ada Hayden did her work at Iowa State. She may not even of known McBride or Schimek-- they all worked independently. They didn't have the structure of the Natural Heritage Foundation. They-- the Prairie Heritage or the Iowa Prairie Network or things like that. They were pretty much alone. Well, over the years, these events have taken place that build upon this-- the foundation they helpful the conservation movement become more aligned with groups. Now we have the Natural Heritage Foundation, the Nature Conservancy, the Native Plant Society, the Iowa Prairie Network, Ducks Unlimited, Quail-- whatever they call themselves, Whitetail Group. All these people are working for exactly the same goal. We want public lands where we-- for recreation.

I: Yeah.

P: So I'd like to look at the conservation movement, the conservation scene is kind of a jigsaw puzzle and all of these people putting in one of the missing pieces and these people you mention like Lloyd and Neil Heiser, they all did a very important thing. Other people who I think don't get their share of credit is like Pauline Drobney. She went to the 1986 Prairie Conference in Benton, Texas and she came home and said, "well since they have their national convention in even numbered years, why don't we start Iowa's in odd numbered years?" There's probably more to it than that, but I think she was very important in this Prairie Heritage that they have in July or August every other year. Robert Thorne is someone who needs to be mentioned in this context. He was a professor of taxonomy-- or a Botany professor. A taxonomist by profession-- at the University of Iowa and he attracted students and encouraged them to do a floristic study of a big part of the state. One person did the Driftless area, that was Heartland. One person did the Southern Iowa Drift Plains, that was Ted VanBurgen. One person did the Iowan Erosion Surface, that was Larry Eilers, and Jack Harder did Northwest Iowa. Well that was in the 50's, but still in 19-- in the mid 70's when I was putting together the endangered species lists for the first time, we relied on those to a large degree. They were very important. Then Robert Thorne was D and D the big name in taxonomy. He moved to California and he established his own thorne system-- systematic. So he indeed was a big name, but his influence in Iowa was just overpowering. You know, he did so much to elaborate the distribution of Iowa's plants. When Larry Eilers and I did the checklist of Iowa plants, we relied a lot on the distributional data on his students' PhD thesis.

I: Wow. hum.

P: Another person that you-- people maybe don't recognize as much as they should is Jerry Schnepf, S C H N E P F is how you spell his name. He was a landscape architect by training, but his his forte or fort [laughs] was planting. He was a chief planter for the Department of Natural Resources.

I: Okay.

P: And he's the only-- I think he's the only person I worked with who had real vision. Most of your parents can see to the end of the day, he can see to the end of the year. He's the one who-- he and Robert Ray, appointed the first board of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. That was in 1979. Late 1978, early 1979, the growth of that has been spectacular almost paralleling the Iowa Nature Conservancy. They have twenty-four, twenty-five people on their payroll now. Jerry and I-- about the first thing I did when I started with the state was to start arguing for a statewide inventory. Jerry-- I mentioned that to Jerry Schnepf and he immediately picked up on it and he was instrumental in us finally achieving funding for the natural-- Iowa natural areas inventory. The nature-- we couldn't get it to happen. We thought the utilities would help fund it. We thought the DOT would help fund this, all those things fell through so the Nature Conservancy

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finally-- one of their heritage programs and for two years, they hired four people, located in the Department of Natural Resources. They bought the computers, bought the maps. At the end of two years, they turned that program over to the Department of Natural Resources, so these four people who worked full-time on this inventory process. In 1975, there were two of us working full-time in a natural area protection field. Larry Cantero for the Nature Conservancy and me for the State Preserves Advisory Board. Today, there's twenty-four, twenty-five members in the Nature Conservancy, an equal number in the Natural Heritage Foundation. Four for the inventory. So there was at least fifty people working full-time in the natural areas. In the natural area protection. That should make people feel real good. When you pile on top of that the county conservation board, which is the most-- one of the most successful programs we've ever had, which I don't think has been duplicated in other states, that I know about, but that's where conservation should be, you know at the local level. I think everybody would realize that. Now we have, you add the Naturalist, there's probably seventy Naturalists in the state, if you add the Executive Officers, of the county conservation boards, we probably have two hundred people working now in land protection. I think the growth in Iowa of these conservation workers has been just spectacular. I don't-- I'm not sure people realize that. I hope they do.

I: I don't think they take the time to look back where it started. I think that's, you know, it's making me smile today because I lived through a lot of that and I-- as you are talking about it, it makes sense. It-- we have a lot more support and you are starting-- starting back when you were almost working alone. Almost. You know.

P: Right. I had a thought and it disappeared.

I: Sorry. I did that. Yeah, two hundred plus people working on land protection.

P: On the other hand, we seem to be stuck at like forty-eighth, the forty-ninth as the state in the land per capita-- land per person for recreation. We don't seem to be able to do that and I don't think we are purchasing land-- the foundation has been very effective in protecting land easements in some purchases but there's been a reluctance I think on the side of the legislature to purchase more land. [long pause] Another thought escaped me. [long pause] If you look back on the deep history of Iowa, I think we have a lot to say. I think most people realize Aldo Leopold was an Iowan. I think a lot of people realize John Lathey was an Iowan. But also, Ding Darling was very important in cartoons with the Des Moines Register. He was ecologically oriented and I think he served a very important part and I think the Des Moines Register was an important voice for conservation. It was-- I think it's kind of a long history of Ding Darling had this wonderful voice of the outdoors. He was followed by Reece Tuttle who wrote the "In the Open" column. He was followed by Larry Stone who wrote the "In the Open" column for a long time and then suddenly the register dropped his column and things haven't been the same-- Larry Stone did so much. He's not recognized nearly as much as he should

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be because he brought conser-- the world conservation down to a local level. To a personal level. There's a lot of us who enjoyed our ten minutes of fame to Larry Stone's articles. You know, we would-- people who never of heard about ol' Russ Hayes from Waterloo if it hadn't been for Larry Stone or the Reeses from Churdan area and so on. He highlighted these people. Interesting people doing wonderful work but not getting any share of the credit. It's just-- they just dropped out of site. They have this column called "Outdoor Dan" now, but it's one hundred percent hunting, fishing, you know. There's nothing about conservation that involves Iowa. In-- I think-- I took a course in Agrostology in the late-- early 70's maybe in Minnesota. Study of the grasses and I learned about that beautiful grass, the Indian grass, the side oats, Scribners, purple top, all these. When I got home, I couldn't find anyone except the hard core taxonomist you know, Richard Pohl and people like that who knew these grasses. Now you go into a meeting, everybody in the room knows all of these grasses. You know that's a wonderful growth in awareness, I think. But it shows you that in the mid-- early to mid 70's, there was not-- you couldn't have formed the Prairie Heritage Network in 1975. You couldn't have formed the Native Plant Society. It took this slow evolution and finally in 90 is when they formed the pra-- the Iowa Prairie Network. That was about the first time you could really have a group of people who had similar interests, big enough to keep it going and I think, I think you could say the same thing about the nature conservancy. You know, in the time they formed and developed the interest-- it couldn't have happened in the 60's and had to wait until the 70's and 80's before the growth occurred. These early people, Aldo Leopold, John Lathey, Ding Darling, Ira Gabrielson, Ada Hayden, McBride, Charles Bessey, Schimek, those are all-- Paul Errington, Henry Conner-- those are all giants in my world because they did so much without any-- Larry Stone-- to him. To tell what they are doing, but they laid the groundwork so these intermediate people, you know, the Roger Landers, and Jerry Schnepf could take over and now we have, if you are interested in nature in Iowa you have all kind of outlets to get involved. You have, you know, they have every one of these organizations has volunteers. You can get involved on almost any level. You can-- it's just where we've never been before.

I: It's a nice place to be.

P: Huh?

I: That's a nice place to be.

P: Yeah. Well I think people don't realize-- they think Iowa is still, you know, dominated by farm philosophy and it is but there's still a huge interest in the natural world. I think the county conservation board and the naturalist that work for them have been a big cog in helping-- especially youngsters get the first taste of knowing the importance of a plant or the importance of a mouse. I was sort of talking a little bit ago about some important years. We could talk about 1946, that's about the first time anybody showed any real

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interest in preserving prairies. Ada Hayden got a grant from the Iowa Academy of Science to look around to see-- to recognize-- to recommend areas to be protected. So we can sort of hang our hat in 1946 as the beginning of the prairie-- oh, the high interest in prairies and then in '59 the county conservation boards-- '63 the nature conservancy was formed, '65 the state preserves advisory board, '73 was a big year. December 28th, 1973 was a big year in anybody's mind who worked with endangered species. That was the day of the year they passed the federal endangered species act. It's been one of the most successful acts that the federal government has ever put together. There's been very little controversy. A little bit on the western states because of water rights, but it's been very low-key. Iowa passed its version of the Iowa endangered species act in 1975 and we utilized-- the federal act was put together section by section. A section dealt with funding. A section dealt with enforcement. A section dealt with a provision which allowed someone to take a species. Well in-- part of the federal act said that if we signed a fed-- a cooperative agreement with another state and had the proper enforcement and research provisions, they would pay three-fourths of the fund. So we put together, I put together, I guess I should say, a proposal dealing with mainly looking around northeast Iowa. It had to involve an endangered species and we had several endan-- federally endangered species in the state. We got the ice age snails, the Pleistocene snails in northeast Iowa. So we were interested in finding out new colonies so we hired Terry Friest, to search northeast Iowa to search for new colonies of this snail and he found several and in the process he found he and Jeff McCullough for instance found new populations of monkshood and a lot of different plants but I should breakaway and talk about one more person and that's Bob Mullen from Central Iowa. Bob Mullen was a conservation officer in Tama County and he knew an elderly couple who had a couple of farms and a wonderful, well dominated woodland that they were going to give to Iowa State University. Well he suggested to this couple that they donate the Oak Woodland to the state as a state preserve. Which they did. It's now Miracle Wood State Preserve north of Toledo. Getting back to the endangered species aspect, there's a provision, we had two federal A coordinators, Les Flemming and Don Criswell and they knew-- they realized that we could use the value of the donated property as a soft niche for the endangered species project. So here we had a project of three-hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, which did not cost the state anything because we used-- or federal aid people made this happen that we used the soft niche of that land so this is all very intricate--

I: Yeah.

P: Yeah. And it's you know and it's-- exists because you know the one conservation officer had tremendous effects in us realizing what the really stunning aspects of Iowa's natural history-- that's it's really, Iowa's natural history is far more pervasive than what we like to think and here is a state-- ninety-six percent of its land surface is modified through agriculture, through roads, through cities and still we are finding out these wonderful things. [long pause] Even though, I like to think that the conservation

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movement is sort of dominated by groups, you know, the foundation, the nature conservancy, prairie network, so on. There's still a great deal that can be done by individuals. I think Daryl Smith is a wonderful example of that. He-- he was a force at Lakeside Lab for probably a decade, introducing a lot of people to the prairie. He produced the film on Iowa Prairie. He was part of the "Land Between two Rivers" series and had a following there. He was on the preserves board for a long time-- I think, we can't overlook the importance of individual people. Daryl Smith being one of them. Jerry Smith being one of them. John Boles and his study for thirty years of Iowa Mammals is one of them. Jim Christiansen who spent a lifetime studying Iowa's herpetology. You could put Jim Dinsmore with-- and Steve Dinsmore with the making wonderful records of the bird world.

I: Did you know Paul Christiansen very well?

P: Boy, I knew him. Paul Christiansen was very important because he was Roger Landers first student. He first really-- true-- prairie researcher. Along with being probably the most decent man I've ever known. He was a marvel, he could give long-- he was on the preserve board for a long a long time and he-- then he was on the state conservation commission board for a long time. He was just-- he's another one who really didn't get the full credit that he should of.

I: Died too early.

P: Died too early, that's right.

I: And I think everybody that I have asked that question of him, you know, that they knew him, I think everybody has said one of the most decent human beings you could ever meet. Yep.

P: I've often thought that the Iowa Natural Historians, probably the nicest group of people by and large that I've ever been around. In 1910, or 2010, we passed the-- you know, the-- what do they call it-- where they allocate three--

I: Water, Land and Legacy, the Iowa Water Land and Legacy. I WILL campaign.

P: Yes.

I: For the tax.

P: Six years and we can't get in instituted. Sixty-seven percent of the people said they wanted it. The legislation startlingly refuses-- I don't understand why-- that's not being responsive to the-- it's not a democracy--

I: Going to take a break. Stop shut it off and we will just take a second session.

Roosa 2 12

I: Session 3 with Dean Roosa on November 23rd, 2016. Interviewer Jean Eells.

P: I feel I've been doubly blessed in this conservation movement. I felt I had a wayside seat when all this is going on just because you know, I worked for a board that was state wide in its-- in its outlook, but everybody I mentioned but obviously people like Hayden and the really old timers then either quite-- good friends or at least acquaintances of mine and I treasure their-- their friendships. Glen Krumm was a person who did one of the early detailed studies of a prairie. He did what is now called the Cedar Hills Sand prairie and I think it's been maybe followed up and expanded a little bit but he was one of the early people to do a detailed study of an area. I think Paul Christensen was the first peer-prairie researcher. I mean he worked with a lot of transplants-- individual species and I hadn't looked at his PhD research but I think he was the one who really learned or called attention to the not only the plate of the prairies but the-- no-- the promise of the prairies.

I: So I've got a couple of questions brewing around in my head and so I may come back to some things. This may not be in order but you were hired in 1975 but you had been on the scene in the wings, earlier than that.

P: Well, just be-- yes. Mainly, attending the nature conservancy that-- then working with Wright county conservation board and Webster county conservation board a little bit but yeah I was somewhat involved but not so--

I: So were you an employee of the Wright county conservation or you were working as a consultant?

P: Some of us got interested in the fact that they were-- they weren't receiving the full funding from the county that was allowed by law so we wrote to Doyle Adams-- at that time, and they got the wheels in motion so they got the proper funding but I was a high school teacher-- for-- for

I: Oh, that's right.

P: For fifteen years, prior to my work with the state preserves board.

I: At Clarion then?

P: huh?

I: Clarion?

P: It would be Goldfield.

I: Goldfield. Okay. hum. So you having been connected to the nature conservancy through attending meetings prior to '75 you would have seen some of that going on but then in 1975 when you started for the preserves board, what did that work look like? What were they asking you to do?

P: Well, for about the ten years prior to that, Governor Ray did not make appointments to the preserves board. In fact, there was a-- there was a letter. I have a letter from the executive assistant of Governor Ray saying that they planned to go in a different direction from the conservation point of view, rather than the preserves board. They were going to disband the preserves board. Gerry Schnepf was an acquaintance-- maybe a friend of the Governor and he encouraged the Governor to start making appointments and to see-- prior to that, the ecologist worked out of his or her home. They were not as attached to any other agency. Well Governor Ray thought that every board and commission-- this is according to Dar--

I: Barringer.

P: Dorothy Barringer. She was a friend of the Governor. I'm not sure quite if it was her influence or not, but the Governor said that every board and commission should have secretarial help. So they transferred what was my position physically into this Department of Natural Resources. So we had secretarial help. When I was-- Gerry Schnepf was the chief planner and I think it was his intervention that saved the preserve board. I don't know that officially, but I don't see how it could be any other way because he talked to the Governor and he said transfer that position into the-- into his section-- the planning section-- what it really should be. And so I think we owe Gerry the continuation of the preserves board. Up to that time, Jean Lowes was the first ecologist for the board. I talked to her on the phone-- according to my notes, I do not remember this, but I talked to her once on the phone but I wish I could remember because I had a lot of questions I should have asked her. Well she, I don't know what. She separated herself from the board-- I'm not even sure of the year, but the conservation commission, I think-- I don't know, you know, illegal manner or not, they assigned Paul Kline who was a wildlife biologist to the board and I don't-- I've never thought that they have the authority to do that. Then Paul Kline committed suicide in about 1973, I think and then they assigned Ken Madden who was a fisheries biologist and I think the board had nothing to say about it. I just think they-- the department did that and that I have often thought it was a little bit, you know, little bit shady. My-- when they hired me, it was the first time the board had, you know, really, the say on who they wanted to hire. When I was separated from the state, the way the department was, the Governor [long pause] Branstad, I guess, yeah, Branstad, would not authorize that position to be filled so they assigned John Pearson as the board ecologist, and again the board had nothing to say about it so there's been a little bit of a shaky structure as far as the board is concerned. I
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think the board is a separate state agency and I don't think it's being looked upon as a separate state agency.

I: Okay.

P: But the Iowa-- the conservation movement gosh, it's being compromised in a large way because of the-- oh, our water quality is really almost disastrous, the invasive species is really becoming a major effort and we are not-- of course I'm not involved in it anymore but I don't see any movement to do the research that needs to be done, I don't know how they control it. Our deer population is out of control, we don't-- near as I know we have not put up any deer exclosures so we can have quantitative information on what the deer are doing to our woodlands. If you go into almost any woodland, right now, this mass understory is the Tartarian honeysuckle--

I: That and buckthorn.

P: Buckthorn and garlic mustard. Yeah.

I: So pervasive.

P: So even though the conservation movement to me looks healthy, I'm not sure that our landscape is healthy.

I: So--

P: To get back to what the preserve board was like, they had not-- they sort of, well Paul Kline and Ken Madden they were wildlife biology, fisheries biologist-- they didn't have a natural area of expertise, even of interest. You know, their interest was in management of wildlife, management of the fisheries so there was a period when the things were pretty low-key and so when I started our object was to dedicate areas that were in kind of a back-log so that's what we-- we specialized in. We probably dedicated like a dozen areas a year for quite-- you know, quite a long time.

I: So what went into getting one of those areas that was like you say, kind of backlogged, what went into getting those through the process of getting them preserved? From talking to the land owners to...

P: Yeah. Talking to the landowner was often times, was a public agency. Quite often the department-- county conservation board, for instance. Nature Conservancy would dedicate their areas so it was mainly determining whether it fit it into a structure of what needs to be protected. We had geology, history, archaeology, and natural areas. We are one of the few states that have all of those entities. Most of them are just natural

areas. Wisconsin has got-- they call them scientific areas but I think they are entirely natural areas but we haven't really-- that's why it was so interesting-- we had on the board someone from the state archaeologist, Edwina Anderson, state archaeologist, Jean Prior from the state geological survey, Peter Harstead from the state historical society. So we had some of the most profound experts in the state on the preserves board there. I don't know what it's like anymore. I haven't-- I haven't kept up with that.

I: That's pretty neat. That's a neat deal. So you-- talking with the land owners, you had to do a fair amount of field work then?

P: Yeah, you had to have some kind of a physical description of the areas and we had to-- the board had to look at it and say yes it's suitable for preserve status. I mean, when you have the Governor-- you know, signify that this is a special area, to me that's pretty important. I think we-- I don't think it's, its broadcast enough. The state preserve is a state preserve because the governor and the state preserve board think it's special and it's quality.

I: Talk a little bit more about management. Land. Land management on those areas that--

P: When I took over, I naively thought that if we purchased an area the best thing we could do was leave it alone. Well it's turning out with the developing landscape in the midwest, it's the worst thing you can do. Of course, we have to burn the prairies on a regular basis otherwise they are going to become the yellow forest but we didn't realize that burning woodland was important. That's just something that is just-- dawned on us in the last decade or so. So I think there's a movement with John Pearson to do a lot more management than what I detected was important.

I: Did you have anyone help with management or was there anybody?

P: No. See-- ideally the preserves, the title of the preserves board is the state preserves advisory board. It was never meant to be only management. That way had managers like you know if the DNR dedicated something, they had one wildlife biologist who was going to be in charge of that area or if the state historical society they had someone to take care of it.

I: Did areas need to be of a particular size?

P: No that's something that's a critical importance to prairies. Nobody knows the answer to this, yet. But how big an area needs to be to be self-sustaining from a biodiversity standpoint for two-hundred years. We don't know that. Some of us think that Hayden

prairie, a couple hundred acres is not big enough and maybe there should be quarters, they can probably be quarters along roadways that protect-- that connect Hayden prairie, I don't know-- across the prairie or something like that but we just don't know that. We have some small prairies like Ames High prairie is-- I don't know how big it is, yeah, a few acres, probably just the inbreeding of the animals and plants is going to run down-- ecologically, not in our lifetime but certainly not--

I: Down the line.

P: Yeah.

I: Uhm, so management was then left up to the areas and so the designation was but how-- who, and when, were determinations made for invasive species removal? Were you doing that back then or is that something that's more contemporary? 'Cause I'm thinking I know that you and Bill Pusateri walked along the west face of the Turin slope and tried cutting some Cedars--

P: We did. Right.

I: To remove those.

P: Usually the wildlife managers got too many prairie-- too many areas so he can't do that. So I think John Pearson was just hiring people to like-- to do brush clearing and so on. I know he's hiring Bill Watson to do brush clearing on the Turkey River Mound for instance. So I think if Bill and I didn't do it in turn, it wasn't going to get done.

I: How did you acquire knowledge about what to do?

P: Well, in 1973 and 4, before I started officially, John Dodd and George Knaphus and Ken Madden and I went to a meeting in Prairie Du Chien, there's a state park there. We met for-- there were two-- there were representatives of-- I think the Wisconsin national area people called this meeting and they invited Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, Illinois, Arkansas, as well as Wisconsin. There was six states. They had representatives and the outshoot after a couple years of thinking about is the formation of the Natural Areas Association. It was a nice fall group for a few years-- very-- and they published a Natural Areas Journal and that's where you got down to the brass tacks you know, they would describe the-- what happened after they burned an area. How do they control an exotic species in one of their preserves so I think that's the primary of where I gleaned is [natural] about management. Now the Natural Areas Association today is a pretty big deal. It went nation-wide after about five years and so they have their meetings every fall. It's still a very viable organization that-- that's where there's a lot of good information.

I: Interesting. So that was a real-- real beginning of that. Can you talk a little bit about what your-- from where you were-- what did it look like when the legislature was starting to talk about the Living Roadways Trust Fund as a segment of REAP, as you-- and the integrated roadside vegetation with the DOT, from your perspective what did that look like?

P: Well, it was very encouraged, especially when the-- there was a lot of talk about developing our roadsides into--especially like along the interstates into genuine, you know, prairie vegetation. I don't-- I'm not sure what happened. I don't-- I thought by now we would drive through mile after mile after mile of prairie. I don't see it happening, do you?

I: Uhm, to some extent, but not. Yeah. It's-- the program is still viable and its still going.

P: I thought what a wonderful thing because even for-- buy quarters for migration-sit species other than just being good to look at, low maintenance, a lot of pollinators can live there. I really thought that coupled with this stretch of prairie strips that they have that Iowa State is doing now, that could be our salvation if it's adopted.

I: yeah. Yeah. Could be-- make a huge difference.

P: It wouldn't take much, I mean, you saw what happened to the Monarch butterflies when we started mismanaging, and it's costing a tremendous amount of money to retrofit the environment so the butterflies can survive.

I: Survive.

P: Yeah. Survive again.

I: Yeah. Yeah.

P: So I don't-- I can't really, I wasn't involved in the roadway trust, I don't know very much about that, I just thought what a wonderful-- to have in REAP-- what a wonderful extension of good ecology.

I: Who are some of the movers and shakers in the legislature that you might remember?

P: Mel Wibb was one of the ecological-- environmentalists there. Let's see. We sort of were restricted from doing very much with the legislature. So I really didn't get very much involved in that.

I: Okay. It's all right. I just thought sometimes-- sometimes there's a lot of talk and stuff behind the scenes and sometimes there isn't. Just thought I'd ask. Landers talked about giving lots and lots of talks to garden clubs and anybody that wanted to talk about prairie. He had a canned program that he would go and do everywhere. Do you recall playing that kind of a role?

P: Oh yeah. I didn't keep track of how many, but I suspect for a while, I gave probably a program a week.

I: On...

P: Often to garden clubs. You know, sometimes professional-- to the Iowa Academy of Science, I tried to be active in all of these. Tried to get the name of the preserves board out to the public, you know, at least once a month. Either article, or-- Larry Stone was a cooperator in that regard. We lack that now-- we don't have this nice statewide influence that we had at one time. We never have-- never had meetings of the nature conservancy-- used to be a high point of my life, my year I should say-- to go to these membership meetings in a room full of two-hundred people who looked at areas like I did. It's not happening, I guess they are too big or too busy or something.

I: That's an interesting insight because you think about having influence with a board general public and having a voice through the Register really was that sort of voice, people who might not have otherwise

P: That's right.

I: Otherwise come in contact with a county conservation board of such. Good point. So you were there from '75... until when did you...

P: 91 or 92.

I: Okay. So that's twenty-- more than twenty years. No.

P: No.

I: Just under twenty years. And you mentioned writing articles and are there likely to be reports and such that you had written within the DNR archives of some sort? I'm sure they've got some kind of an archivist but I don't know what they...

P: There's a lot of things that I'm just now clearing out my office and I don't know. If any of it is archive-able or not. I really don't.

I: You were working on early computers.

P: Yeah.

I: Things that don't necessarily have hardware that you can read stuff anymore.

P: In fact, I had part of the book of master plans that Larry and I did. The-- I had a team who had a disk of the-- or a narrative and it can't be read. It's that old. We can't retrieve the data from it.

I: So in that time period then, so that I've captured-- you spent your time helping to make sure that areas that were worthy of being preserved made it through that process. You were aware of, and shepherding areas that needed to get into the line to get through and keeping an eye out on inventories of species that were in those so that you kind of-- oh, we don't have some of this or some of that...

P: Right. That's one of the criteria would be what individual species are unprotected? Yeah. That's right.

I: So that was a lot of what you did and then, outreach, public outreach, doing presentations and-- did you have time to do much research? Anything in particular?

P: No. The raptor research I did was just sort of incidental to my job. Not officially part of it.

I: Okay. I was curious about that 'cause it was-- I knew you had done that and I didn't know if that was part of your preserves work. Are there other things that you've got notes on that I--

P: I think we've--

I: Feel free to keep going, I mean, we can go any direction you want from here.

P: Oh, I just-- there are people I don't want to see lost to history.

I: And I'm glad you are bringing them up. 'Cause I don't necessarily catch all of those. Sylvan Runkel is a name that has come up from time to time from others and I don't know if you had a lot of interaction with him..

P: I did. He was chairmen for several years and then he was advisor so he and I probably-- I probably spent more time with him than any other person. He was willing to jump in the car and drive to-- you know, Clay County to check out-- in fact, he was very

influential in establishing a number-- acquiring a number of our preserves. It was his friendship to-- well, there's a place called Mossy Glen up in Clayton County and Sylvan had been there with a group of soil conservation service. He wanted to show them a certain plant so he and I-- he got to know the owner Mildred Hatch and so we stopped to see her, asking permission to go back there and look and it's-- I suppose a week later we got a note from their lawyer that they wanted to donate this land to the state as a state preserve. There's a man named Arnold Roggman who lives in Garnavillo and Tom Hartley who had done the study of the Driftless area had found this area of the hillside that was very rich in rare plants. Sylvan and I went up there several times trying to find this area. Finally we did! It was-- it's got the pink lady slipper, monkshood on it. Just a gorgeous area and we didn't know who it belonged to so we checked with Bob Grau who was a forester in Northeast Iowa. He said, "Oh sure that belongs to Arnold Roggman." So we went to stop to see Arnold Roggman.

I: Can you spell Roggmanan.

P: ROGGMANAN.

I: K.

P: And he lives in Garnavillo, he turned out to be the most-- interesting people I ever met. He was interested in archaeology and history and is a good friend of Clark Nailhum oh and about a week later we got notification that they were going to donate ten acres to the nature conservancy. He was a good friend of Darryl Dineson out in-- I think, I can't remember out in-- Cass County perhaps? Darryl Dineson had this twenty acre prairie and you know it wasn't long before Darryl Dineson donated that to the county conservation board. Largely due to Sylvan's activity. He and I worked-- we were interested in expanding Bixby's state preserve so we-- there's a wonderful area to the west of it that we stopped to see if Sylvan knew this man whose name I've forgotten now, anyway, wasn't long before that became part of the preserve due to Sylvan's activities. So he was very instrumental and he could explain to somebody why this area was important. More than-- better than anybody I've ever seen. You know, in hindsight it might sound kind of corny if you or I were sent to this person but Sylvan it just made all the sense in the world. [long pause] There's been a couple-- two occasions when I was with the preserves board an attempt to resolve it. One time, Bill Pusateri and I we stopped in to see the chairmen of the board who was-- the chairmen of that committee who was from Dubuque and his name I've forgotten and we explained to him how important it was and he said, "well, that's fine." He said, "We won't go through with it." But they-- then later, there was a movement I think Dorothy Barringer was the person who kind of squelched that so there's been several attempts to dissolve the preserves board and I think it's one of the most innovative and important activities of the state government.

I: Do you get out and about in the preserves much still?

P: No.

I: No. Yeah. Kind of nice to look back though and see those spots on the map? Yeah. I'll just ask the catch-all question. Is there--

P: Huh?

I: I'll just ask the catch-all question, is there anything else that you can think of?

P: Well, things keep going in and out of my mind.

I: Well, take the time to get them all out, Dean.

P: [long pause] I think we've covered most of the things I thought were important. I've mostly involved in the prairie side of things-- the first time I ever saw a prairie was when I was-- after I had graduated from college so I was probably twenty-five or twenty-six before I even saw a prairie, I was much more interested in woodlands and wetlands than I was in prairies.

I: Wetlands is an interesting area.

P: Huh?

I: Wetlands is--

P: Yeah.

I: Area of preservation.

P: Yeah.

I: Getting those preserved must have been harder than even prairie and woodland.

P: Yeah, that's right.

[laughter]

I: It's okay.

P: Probably think of something spectacular as soon or something.

I: That happens to me, I can appreciate that. Well, I'll stop this, just for now.