



Skagit Oral History Project
Phase II: Final Report

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The Interviews, Phase II (April – July 2004)

What follows are edited transcripts from the Skagit Oral History Project, Phase II interviews. The original, unedited transcripts, the complete collection of audio recordings from which the transcripts were produced, and digital video recordings of each interview are available in the SEEC offices.



Joel Connelly, Seattle



Jerry Garman, Seattle



Ray Williston, Victoria



Norm Pearson, Victoria



Randy Revelle, Seattle

Joel Connelly (Interviewed April 17, 2004)

Joel Connelly grew up in Western Washington and maintains a personal connection to the magical landscapes of the region. A reporter with the Seattle Post-Intelligencer since the early 1970s, he covered the Ross dam controversy for the paper, as well as issues dealing with energy, the environment and Canada more generally. He continues to write for the P-I as a national correspondent with a focus on the local political, cultural and environmental concerns of the Northwest. Joel currently resides in Seattle, Washington, but is likely found hiking in the North Cascades.



I grew up in Bellingham at a time when the battle over the creation of the North Cascades National Park was going full throttle. My parents were hikers so we hiked the mountains of the "Magic Skagit", a nickname I learned early in life, and also drove the bumpy road down from the Chilliwack area to the Canadian side of the line, took a look at the Valley, which was just beginning to get recreational use, and went through one of the quirkiest border crossings in the state.

Much later, with the *Seattle P-I*, I began writing about environmental subjects, and this had been one on the front burner for a very long period of time. But also, beginning with the first year I was with the *P-I*, I started covering Canada for the paper. At that time, you had the short-lived Social Democratic government of Premier Dave Barrett, which was also quite a nationalist government. The Barrett government intensified opposition to

raising the dam; made a nationalist issue out of the agreement to pay the City of Seattle something like \$35,700 a year that its predecessor had signed. I covered the then Minister of Land and Water Resources, Bob Williams, on a canoe trip down the river, which a Seattle City Light consultant had said cannot be canoed. And the *P-I* early on was committed to a peaceful settlement in which Seattle would get power from British Columbia but would not raise the Dam, which of course would have flooded not only eight miles of the Skagit river and British Columbia, but also, more importantly, at least to the Connelly family, the Big Beaver Valley on our side of the line.

Why was that Valley in particular important?

Enormous red cedar forests. We've got some great cedar valleys remaining in the state - the

Little Boulder River, now a wilderness east of Everett - but some of the great cedar forests in the Cascade range are in the Big Beaver Valley. Again, it was one of those places that nobody knew. Seattle City Light's consultant - you know, the person who was supposed to be determining the various valleys - undertook what could only be described as timber cruising in the area. And you had folks such as Joe and Margaret Miller who lived in the valley for a period of time that finally brought out, if there are gains and pains, what would be the pains in this case of raising the Dam.

I heard about the issue a long time ago. Seattle City Light had built, as I recall, a 500-foot high dam, had the authorization to build a 621-foot high dam. I was a graduate student at the time of the first demonstration in 1970 in which the American folk singer, Melvina Reynolds, author of *Little Boxes*, sang at the Skagit. It was also very interesting, again, when I came upon this in a professional sense, covering Canadian politics. You have deep political fissures up there - parties do stand for things and so on - but this was one issue in which people from various parties did cooperate and so you had, for instance, the Run Out Skagit Spoilers committee, the ROSS committee. The lawyer who incorporated it, John Fraser, was a conservative. The young firebrand physician who was fighting to save the valley, Tom Perry, was democratic socialist, a member of the New Democratic Party. And so, again, this was very unusual for Canada, a cause that spanned partisan consideration.

John Fraser is a friend of more than 30 years standing. I got to know him as a result of this particular issue. He was a highly influential member of parliament. He was the speaker of Canada's House of Commons. He is still a major back stage player. In addition to saving the Skagit, he is probably the person, more than anyone else, responsible for the creation of the Haida Gwaii National Park Reserve in the southern Queen Charlotte Islands. Basically, a man of great influence because [of] the blue blood in his veins - the conservative politics - but also the fact that he is a strong environmentalist. Unfortunately, in our country, very few people combine those values anymore.

I had the energy beat with the *Seattle P-I* in the late 70's and early 1980's. This mainly concerned the coverage of the Washington Public Power Supply System's nuclear construction program, which for a time threatened to melt down the

economy of the Pacific Northwest. There was a series of other issues involving the Skagit River. Puget Sound Power and Light Company wanted to build twin reactors in the lower part of the river. You, of course, had the High Ross controversy in the upper part of the river, and for a time Seattle City Light proposed to build a dam at Copper Creek just above Marblemount that would have flooded an additional ten miles of the river. The river is not named the Magic Skagit for nothing: the discovery of an earthquake fault eventually drove the nuclear plant out; the threat to one of the great winter populations of bald eagles in the United States stopped Copper Creek; and of course, public opposition and a cross-boundary, negotiated settlement stopped High Ross. It is as though the river protected itself. And again, none of these projects ultimately was needed.

A few years back, a friend of mine from college and his fiancé (he was a self described venture capitalist) came out. Myself and my late spouse took them out to Mount Baker, and on the way back we swung by a fundraiser: Skagitians Concerned About Nuclear Power. And two of the old ladies who were leaders of this, Helen Day and Sophie Nebble came up and hugged me and we talked for a bit and so on. My friend from back East asked incredulously, "Do these people have any influence?" And I said, "They helped stop a twin nuclear project, and by holding this valley, have contributed substantially to the solvency of the utility that once wished to build it." Sophie was a Skagit dairy farmer. Helen was the veteran liberal activist of the valley.

In terms of High Ross, the first thing I did was, with a bunch of friends, (was) hike into the Big Beaver Valley. It was one of those times when winter came late, so we could, in late November-early December, on a bitterly cold but clear day, hike down to Ross Dam, across Ross Dam and then the six miles to the entrance to the valley. Then spent a couple of days exploring the valley. It was frozen solid so the mosquito population was not to be bothered with. (I) took a look at what the pains would be to go along with the gains, and I came back and did a little bit of research. I'd written about it a great deal in terms of political back and forth kind of thing but getting into the Big Beaver Valley and basically seeing what was at stake intensified my interest. It would probably be 1980, 1981 - in there. It would be just as the negotiations were about to coalesce. The Royer administration made the commitment to negotiate.

A few words on the politics of the situation. While in the [Skagit Oral History Project Phase 1] interviews everybody sounds smooth in terms of discovering people that they could negotiate with and so on, there was initially a great deal of ignorance on each side of the border in terms of how government on the other side worked. The Mayor of Seattle offered to negotiate with the premier of British Columbia, who of course did not consider a mayor to be his counterpart. The British Columbia government put an extremely capable person in as Environment Minister as a signal to Seattle that it was willing to negotiate, a signal that Seattle was a little bit slow to take up on. But eventually the whole coalesced into a situation in which you had the technical experts and so on, but two fun loving guys: British Columbia minister Stephen Rogers and Seattle Deputy Mayor Bob Royer, who were the point people on this.

The technical experts talk gibberish. Luckily you had some very interesting political figures on this. John Fraser, of course, believed in his cause passionately. Bob Royer was a breezy, candid person. So was Rogers who was [a] former airline pilot, and a very, very, very, very funny person. The environmental groups on both sides of the border - North Cascades Conservation Council is a bunch of people who have worked together for, at that time, better than 30 years, now better than 50 years. But you also had the enormous repository of information: the Millers, who spent a summer in the valley; and also Pat Goldsworthy who had been with the issue for a very, very long period of time. On the Canadian side, Ken Farquharson ... was in Scotland part of the time and impossible to track down there. But Tom Perry was usually available and again has become a friend of long standing.

There's yet a fourth controversy, namely, if you look at Manning Park in British Columbia it does not cover some of the absolute headwaters of the Skagit, and so there's a major campaign on to create a Cascade provincial park or a Skagit Provincial Park immediately to the west of the Skagit. So there are people from the Okanagan-Similkameen Historical Society, took me on a long weekend hike where we went up to the edge of the Skagit watershed in one place on the Dewdney trail, and then swung around to the historical Whatcom trail, which is very steep incidentally, and came down that way. So, again, a good deal of fieldwork.

The *P-I*, almost from the beginning, supported a negotiated settlement to this. We praised then governor, Dan Evans, in the early 1970's in which he took this position. We were strongly critical when, as one of her first acts in office, governor Dixie Lee Ray, in 1977, rescinded that and changed the State's position to one of all out advocacy of the raising of the dam. So the newspaper was on the side of the angels, and bluntly, so was I.

How did you express that in the articles?

Quite simply, first of all by going into the field to the Big Beaver Valley and so on, and basically taking a look at what would have been flooded. Ditto with the Upper Skagit. Spending some time there, bedeviling the British Columbia government on the Cascade wilderness issue because the government at the time was impervious. On the one hand they were paying at least lip service to preserving the lower part of the valley, while on the other hand they seemed ready to log the hell out of the upper part of the valley. So, basically taking a critical stand toward both those on the Seattle City Council that wanted to raise the dam and a critical posture toward the British Columbia government for wanting to protect the lower valley but at the same time designating - some were later withdrawn - timber sales on some of the more historic trails in the region.

Environmental issues simmer for a long time, suddenly become hot and then cool off again. The Skagit nuclear plant was basically considered a kind of a sideline battle between Puget Power and the environmental groups until a possibly active earthquake fault was found running through the valley underneath the plant site. The Copper Creek dam became, again, a quiet battle until the winter raft trips to see the bald eagles took off, and the project was perceived to be a threat to them. High Ross was always more of an emotional issue because it was both a nationalistic and environmental issue on the Canadian side and it was more of a cause for the environmental groups on the American side. Again, Seattle City Light's early consultants had fit the classic definition of "biostitutes": people who were hired to justify a proposed course of action, rather than point out any facts that would stand in its way.

Did you get many reader responses on your articles? Letters?

The most delightful was ...from Puget Power president John Ellis in the *P-I* editorial board. Well, of course his utility had its main concern down valley with the nuclear plant. Mr. Ellis supported the raising of Ross Dam and Mr. Ellis had a contentious relationship with the *P-I* at the time because we were: A, critical of his nuclear plant; B, because we had a cartoonist named Ray Collins who had a strip called - the strip's major character was Dipstick the Duck, who on several occasions went by a nuclear plant site and found a radiation-zonked bear. So you actually had the president of the state's largest public utility delivering tirades in the editorial board about a cartoon duck. But at the same time, he didn't like me either and he didn't like me because of what I was writing about the Skagit nuclear plant at one end of the valley and the High Ross project at the other. There was vigorous debate in the "Letters" pages of the paper over the virtues of the dam, particularly after one contentious hearing at the Seattle City Council in which Councilman Sam Smith argued strenuously in favor of raising the Dam and some people took his remarks as being a great gust of common sense in the debate. Others were appalled. The whole thing was coming to a head in the early 1980's.

You mentioned there were cartoons that were reinforcing some of the points you were making in your articles. What other images would be used in conjunction with the text?

Not many. It's always been very difficult to spring loose a photographer for a three or four day hiking trip. So, generally the pictures we used were simply of Ross Lake. A few of the pictures had been supplied by the Millers ran with stories. Of course I wrote about them since they at that time had moved on from the Big Beaver Valley and were involved in the restoring of the plants and the much trampled meadows of Cascade Pass.

You mentioned some biostitutes... how did you handle the technical information that people talked about, and what kind of role did you see that playing in the controversy?

It was always necessary to measure the optimistic statements of the politicians against the technical difficulties of realizing what they were talking about. Its one thing to say British Columbia will sell 'x' amount of power to Seattle. Its quite another thing to find out what precise projects that power is going to come from, where it is going to be transmitted. So you will find in some of the

other interviews that you've done, careful tribute given [to], for instance, Seattle City Light economist John Gibson, who is absolutely essential in translating the general agreements of the politicians we're talking about into the technical language to cover a long term treaty.

What were some of the other headlines that were of notable articles that you put out?

The paper gave me [a] very nice Sunday spread on hiking the Whatcom and Dewdney trails. They used a picture from one of the Vancouver papers when there was [an] all-party gathering in the upper Skagit on the British Columbia side to kind of reinforce the fact that everybody in the political life of the Province did not want the valley to be flooded.

Aside from your role being a journalist in the controversy, what kind of social involvement did you have with other people and other players, environmentalists...?

First of all, I was covering British Columbia for a lot of other reasons too, and was able to burrow fairly deeply into its government, have access to its senior people in cabinet and even the premieres, both Barrett and Bennett, although they were from opposite sides of the political system. Mr. Fraser and myself again had become friends of longstanding - just had breakfast in Vancouver last month. Perry and I drank scotch the night before. So that - anyway these people - you meet quality people and you kind of remember them as news sources and so forth when you need to take bearings on things, such as the situation.

Ultimately the agreement was a very, very good thing I think, in terms of teaching each side how the other worked, and also in terms of the quality of the natural environment that was saved, and third, I would argue, the amount of attention it put on the threatened valleys on both sides of the border. And most of this territory was ultimately protected.

Do you continue a connection with that part of the region?

Yes I do, for a number of reasons. First, the Skagit Environmental Endowment has helped with some of my recreating, notably by bridging two streams at the start of a particularly strenuous trail. Second thing is that the Chilliwack Ranger

District of the British Columbia forest service has believed in scalping trees all the way to the American border, even if it's right to the border of our North Cascades National Park. So you have some major logging atrocities that have been committed along the border, west of Ross Lake and that continue to be committed along the border, and I do my best to give them some bad ink on this.

When you think back on this particular story, is it one of the road marks you look back on?

We have a long-standing tradition here in this state of eventually doing the right thing on environmental issues. When I was a kid growing up in Bellingham the timber industry was denouncing advocates of the North Cascades National Park and of preserving Glacier Peak wilderness as bird watchers. In a memorable case, one conservationist, who actually worked at the pulp mill in Bellingham, stood up in Happy Valley school and pointed a finger at the timber industry guy and said, "You're the bird watcher, mister. The bird you're watching is the eagle on the dollar bill." Well, eventually we created a Glacier Peak Wilderness Area and later expanded it. We created North Cascades National Park. We created an open lakes wilderness. We passed a - Congress passed a 1984 wilderness bill. We solved the Ross dam controversy. So there was, over the years, a great deal of progress to the point where about 12 percent of the land in the state has been protected under the Wilderness Act in my lifetime.

What disturbs me now is that the bi-partisan and cross-party lines tradition, and even cross boundary traditions that allowed us to work these things out are being lost. And you now have for instance an apparent impasse over what would seem to be a very non-controversial issue: the Wild Sky Wilderness - east of Everett- attempts to foster greater cross-boundary cooperation in the North Cascades have generally come to naught. So I don't think the US authorities, for instance, are being informed at all about grizzly bear restoration in Manning Park just over the border, nor have the Canadians consulted at all on plans to log again along the boundary of our North Cascades National Park at Depot Creek. In the Chilliwack district, one recent notable atrocity: there's a tiny little valley that is surrounded by, but not included, in the Skagit Provincial Park, in Manning Park, but it's not in either one of them. They've gone in and logged it without any

environmental studies or anything like this. So, I've covered a large number of battles that have ended up in victory for the good and the true, but things are not as optimistic as they were 20 years ago.

Why the breakdown in the transboundary tradition of cooperation?

The present British Columbia government under Gordon Campbell is both anti-environmental and also quite insular. They own 77 of 79 seats in the British Columbia legislature, they don't have to listen to anybody. Our forests in the northwest got an enormous amount of attention - regular visits by cabinet secretaries and the like during the Clinton administration as they were putting together the Northwest Forest Plan. You have far less attention, far less resources and so on devoted to same during the Bush administration, and a natural tendency to be more sympathetic to rural groups who see transboundary cooperation and so on in terms of United Nations takeover, sacrifices of private property and sovereignty and so forth. Plans ten years ago for an international park in the North Cascades came to naught for that reason.

How much involvement has there been of local people in terms of their activism for or against, and have you been involved in interviewing them for your articles?

Ten years ago, again, when a transboundary national park was being proposed, we had a strong amount of opposition from property rights people in Okanogan County. So, (we) interviewed them of course. Let's see, what else? I've interviewed conservation groups in British Columbia more recently about the logging of the area flagged by the Skagit and the Manning parks. And I've resumed a little bit of journalistic fire at the Chilliwack District, which God knows deserves it. North Cascades Conservation Council continues to monitor this, although its activists are getting, frankly, older. I pay some attention to the North Cascades Institute. And, what else? Once I get a brace put in my right foot I'll be back hiking this summer.

Oh, great! You mentioned sort of a generational turnover potentially. I'm wondering, one, at the time, did you consider yourself an activist? Or part of an activist group? And second question would be, do you see differences between your

generation of people concerned about the environment and coming generations?

Well, coming generations are very deeply concerned about the environment, but often in terms of one's personal behavior, in terms of restoring streams, you know, various local actions. I was fortunate enough to grow up in northwest Washington at a time when three of the great seminal battles of the environment, and in North America, were being waged in my backyard - three things which really put the environmental movement on the map. The first was the effort to get a North Cascades National Park in our mountains against the opposition of the timber industry, which had long been dominant in the State's economy. The second was when Kennecott Copper proposed a half-mile wide open pit mine in the heart of the Glacier Peak wilderness on Miner's Ridge, right between Image Lake and Semiahmoo Pass. This is something marvelously depicted in a chapter in John McFee's book, *Encounters with the Archdruid*, on David Brower. The opposition to this featured hikes by then Supreme Court justice William O'Douglass [and] Mt. Vernon physician Fred Darvill, invaded the Kennecott Copper shareholders meeting in New York, holding up a large picture of Glacier Peak and Image Lake. Ultimately Senator Jackson threatened to open matters of the 1872 mining law in order to block Kennecott from doing this. So again, a huge open pit mine in a pristine place. It was also one of the places where the Sierra Club delivered, in the late 60s, it's famous advertising campaign, when the dams threatened the Grand Canyon, which had the famous headline: "Would you flood the Sistine chapel so the tourists could get close to the ceiling?" The one on Miner's Ridge was an open pit visible from the moon. The third battle was on Guemes Island north of Anacortes - which, may or may not be in the San Juans, depending upon how you define them - where there was a proposal to put down an enormous aluminum smelter, greatly supported by local county commissioners, fought by the residents of Guemes Island, their Lutheran parson, and two lawyers, John Ehrlichmann and 'Eagle' Bud Krogh, who would later achieve great notoriety and serve prison sentences as aides in the Nixon White House.

So, all of this was in, say, the late 60's, was going on. Ross Dam was percolating and was about to become the first major transboundary environmental issue. So I basically grew up with

this going on in my back yard. And it's a wonderful way of learning about conservation politics. My mother was a freelance writer who did stuff for *Time-Life*. When *Life* magazine did its first major cover piece on the endangered American environment, circa 1960, a picture of the pulp mill and tobacco spit-like waters of Bellingham Bay graced *Life* magazine courtesy of Dolly Connelly.

You've mentioned that the State has been fairly good on environmental issues, and the activists have had many successes. I'm wondering whether you feel the future is as optimistic for our generation coming...?

Certainly not if global warming overwhelms the progress we've made here. If we take all of these measures to protect salmon habitat and so on they will go for naught if the ocean warms, the mackerels and other predator fish move north in the Pacific and eat the salmon when they're out in the ocean. Having the Magic Skagit reserve protected ... the Magic Skagit will not run as it does now if some of the great glaciers of the North Cascades shrink or melt, or if our snow pack in the winter goes down and if the run off-season is much shorter. Nor will we get the amount of electricity we get from it to power those toasters in Seattle. So global warming threatens to screw up both the ecology and the economic life of the Northwest as much or more as just about any other part of the world I can think of. So, that would be the reason for pessimism.

In terms of the political struggles, you have a constant. There is great public support for preserving the natural features of the northwest that make us livable, and that is pitted against special interests which want resource extraction and so you will always have campaigns for wilderness. You will always have timber industry front groups opposing them. You will always have local committees trying to preserve heron rookeries. You will always have the Bureau of Building Industry Association of Washington trying to eviscerate the Growth Management Act. Those will be the constants.

To return to the Ross Dam issue and the final signing of the treaty and creation of the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission - were you involved in those developments?

I tracked as closely as I possibly can since the negotiations were taking place elsewhere. The reaching of the agreement was at the airport when

the negotiators came home and so on. In terms of the formal ceremony, I can't remember being there. The feeling was, I suppose, we had covered the issue exhaustively, the ceremony was designed mainly for news organizations that hadn't.

And the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission, are you involved with that commission?

I've been aware of its work. I know people - the first enlightened National Forest supervisor we had here, Don Campbell of the Mount Baker/Snoqualmie National Forest in retirement, became, I believe, the chairman of the Endowment Commission. And on a more particular level, one of the great hikes, one of the great multi-day backpack trips of the Cascade range is Crater Mountain Devil's Dome, which loops around Jack Peak, the great 9,000 footer just east of Ross Lake. The hike's first day features 3,900 feet of vertical elevation gain to a little tarn called our Crater Lake. It used to be that you had to go to the east bank trail head and cross Ruby Creek on a suspension bridge there and then hike three miles upstream along the creek before you could then gain the 3,900 feet of elevation and four miles up to Crater Lake, because Ruby and Granite Creek come together right at about that point and, through much of the summer, neither one of them is fordable. So again, Skagit Environmental Endowment bridged both of those creeks. The floods of last year may have taken the bridges out for all I know, but basically save four miles of very boring hiking. So my thanks to the Skagit Environmental Endowment was to be able to get all the way up to Crater Lake while the sun was still shining and while myself and friends could get out a bottle of whiskey and go to a particularly lovely overlook and look all the way back down from whence we had come.

And now you play a part in helping protect that area?

Again, this is homeland. Another thing: I was a very little boy at the time, but during the early 1950's we had some of America's preeminent beat poets working as lookouts. So Gary Snyder spent a summer on Crater Mountain. He was later up on Sourdough. Jack Kerouac spent a summer up on Desolation Peak. There was a wonderful event a couple of summers ago in July, where Snyder came back and there was kind of a

reunion of people that had been on those lookouts in the early 1950s. So even a bit of American cultural history since, you know. Snyder did some spectacular writing up on Sourdough in particular, and Jack Kerouac's *Desolation Angels* was inspired by the twin towers of Mount Hozomeen just north of Desolation.

How did you become a reporter?

I was between masters and PhD at the University of Washington and I got a summer replacement job at the *P-I*. Loved the work. Had a certain grounding in various issues and places in one thing or another so that they discovered that I could start with a leg up, and one of the first things I did was went off and did a Sunday magazine - we had one at the time - a piece on Mount Baker. So that's how I got started.

How much did you work with other reporters, particularly Canadian reporters on this issue?

It's a highly complicated answer there. There's a press gallery in the legislature in Victoria. In order to cover the government over there you have to get yourself temporarily credentialed to it. The press gallery is one of the great packs of our time. Canada's freedom of information act laws are much weaker than they are here, but this is compensated for by what is called scrum; namely where reporters surround a politician and will not allow that politician to go until the questions have been answered. And I took to this like a duck to water and so consequently there is an awful lot of kind of informal trading of information back and forth, say, between myself and Von Palmer, who was the chief columnist for the Vancouver Sun on the BC legislature. We don't see eye to eye on things but at the same time, read each other's columns. And again, from the beginning there's - there are all sorts of pictures on the wall of the press gallery in Victoria. Various crazy things done over the years in the life of the place. I'm the only Yank on the board.

With respect to the Ross dam controversy, is there a major issue we've missed?

It is just extremely gratifying. I think the Northwest is better off for that line of decisions and the outcomes of the late 70's and early 80's. The Magic Skagit is better not to have two five hundred foot nuclear plant towers in it. It is better that the Copper Creek dam was not built and you still have eight miles of salmon spawning habitat,

and bald eagles eating the spawned out salmon. It's a lot better in the fact that you do not have the High Ross project and that you still have those red cedars in the Big Beaver Valley and the eight miles of the Skagit unflooded on the British Columbia side of the line. So the decision to not build did not cause lights to go out in the Pacific Northwest, but rather for some great natural places to be preserved and even in the lower valley for the farmland to be protected.

Are there other people who were involved who you think we should be contacting?

I think the list is pretty good as it is there. And trying to think back for a moment. The only person I would add to that is see, Steven Rogers, who was the British Columbia Environment Minister who negotiated with Bob Royer. He lives in Vancouver. I haven't seen Steven in a long time. He went back to flying after he left politics. He was the Minister of the Environment, later the Minister of Energy in the cabinets of the Bennett years.

Jerry Garman (Interviewed April 17, 2004)

Growing up in Seattle, Jerry Garman didn't expect that he would follow his father into a career with Seattle City Light. In fact, after starting with the public utility in 1978 as an assistant power analyst, he eventually became deputy power superintendent in 1978, holding that position until he retired in 1992. As of last year, being manager of his own company in the interim, he had been managing power longer than anybody else in the Northwest. A self-proclaimed environmentalist, Jerry is a strong advocate of hydropower, and of raising the Ross Dam to its fullest extent. He continues to enjoy spending time on Ross Lake and in the North Cascades region.



My father's parents moved here in about 1916. They stayed for a couple of years, then went back to Pennsylvania where they came from, then came back out a year later and stayed permanently. My Dad went to Interlake grade school, which is now a shopping center, and to Lincoln High School. And I went to Interlake, Hamilton and Lincoln. So, we've been here for quite a few years. My mother's folks came out from Ottawa, Canada, originally to Vancouver, then came across the border to work in the lumber industry, and they moved into the United States in about 1928. So we go back about 80 years.

As a practical reality, City Light, I've been part of it since I was born. My Dad started with City Light when I was six months old in 1938 and by the time I was 8 or 9 years old he was Assistant Safety Manager for the department and I used to

spend a lot of time traveling with him when he had to go to safety meetings or investigate accidents or things of that nature. So there was a fair amount of activity even up on the Skagit River. I go a long ways back. I can remember one time, when I was about 10 I guess, my Dad had had to go up there and interview a bunch of people on the river because there had been a fairly substantial flood down around Mount Vernon, and some of the log booms had been displaced in the flood. So he had to interview the people to find out when we had released water and how soon - how long it had taken to travel down the river. He talked to one old guy who had lived there since the turn of the century. When he was about 14, his father went out and found a gold nugget the size of my fist. So there's some interesting history about that.

Where Ross Dam is presently located, it's in a bend in the river that they dug the gravel out to get to the bedrock to put the dam itself in, and then used the gravel because it's some of the best gravel in the world to actually mix into the concrete. The only thing they didn't do is they didn't wash it first, and they probably buried something between 6 and 7 million dollars worth of gold in the lower level concrete pours in that dam, because Ruby Creek at one time was a major mining community, which is just above Ross Dam. So there's a lot of history up there, and I go back a long ways and at the time, when I was a kid, I certainly never expected that I would end up working for City Light or actually being responsible for the projects. But, starting in 1978, I had responsibility from then until I retired in 1992.

I heard stories about the building of all three of the projects. Actually four, because there are four projects up there. Newhalem Creek, which is only a two-megawatt project, was actually built by the original contractor at the time the Gorge Powerhouse was built in 1927, and it was to supply power to the construction crews, but it's still being used to this day by the city as part of the power supply. And then Gorge Dam - there was a diversion dam in the power plant - was built in 1927. Then Diablo came immediately after that. And Ross was started in - I think 1936. It was built in actually three levels, and the third level is what you see today.

The checkerboard that's in the front of it when you look at it was put in there to actually allow for the raising to the High Project elevation seventeen hundred and twenty-five feet. That was to allow the concrete to actually bond together. If you look at the dam you will see that there are squares in the dam and it looks like a great big checkerboard. And that was so the High Project at the time - the design that they had for the High Project would have meant thickening the dam all the way up. The project that we ended up with would not have required that. But the checkerboard is still there. Because the original contention when they started the project back in the '30s, was that it would be build to elevation seventeen hundred and twenty-five feet. The present structure peaks out at elevation sixteen hundred and two and a half feet. So we were going to add another hundred and twenty-two and a half feet on top of it. The first generators went in starting in 1948. Between 1948 and 1951, the four generators that are presently there were actually, physically installed. Interesting thing about those

generators, they are exactly the same size as the generators that went into Grand Coulee, which was actually being built at the same time that Ross was being built. And so those Westinghouse units are the same as what is in the first powerhouse of Grand Coulee because both dams are approximately the same height. That is something that most people, I don't think, know.

Ross Dam has a peak capacity of 450 megawatts. Grand Coulee, with all of the construction that's gone on over there, is over 7000. But Ross Dam, if we had gone to the high elevation, would have added ... let's see, five hundred and seventy-five I think it was. It's been so long since I've thought about, it, I'm not positive. But it was about that.

Everything that was needed to be known in terms of going to the ultimate height had actually been designed in the original construction, although it was built in stages mainly because of cost. And, remember, in 1941 we ended up going to war and so everything basically was put on hold, primarily because there wasn't enough construction talent available to work on something like that with the war effort. So it was in 1945 when things really started picking up again, as soon as the war was pretty much over. But their original thought was to go to the ultimate height right from the very beginning. That was not an afterthought.

When I turned 18 I didn't have a job that summer and I was able to get hired on as a part-time laborer, so I worked in the underground down town, digging ditches. I did that for three years until I finally realized that really was not my calling. All the power lines in the downtown of Seattle are buried underground. And it takes some fairly special techniques and training to actually be able to install that equipment. So we have an underground system and then we have our normal overhead system that you will see all around the rest of the city. When I graduated from the UW, I took a degree in engineering, in electrical engineering, and I immediately - I had been working as an apprentice engineer for two years in the underground system, designing underground - and then immediately started working as an assistant engineer, and my first major project was the University District. I did the design, the underground design for the University District back in 1963-64. Honestly, thought that I'd probably spend most of my career doing straight engineering, but in 1969 I had a chance to go into, what was then an expanding division within the utility called power management as an

assistant power analyst, which would be a senior engineer level, and decided it sounded like it was kind of interesting, so that's what I did starting in 1969. And when I retired from my company, last year, I was the senior power manager in the Northwest. Nobody had been doing it longer than me.

The decision to go ahead and build the High Project, actually, was made in about 1967-68. We had completed the boundary project on the Pend d'Oreille River at that time, and we knew that in relatively few number of years we were going to need to have more power available. And, so the High Project was given the go ahead to move ahead by the then superintendent, John Nelson. In '69 I transferred from underground engineering into power management, and was immediately put in charge of making all of the calculations necessary to be able to go back to the, then, Federal Power Commission, now the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, to get our license amended to allow us to actually go to construction. In '67 I think it was, the North Cascades National Park was created, and the Ross Lake Recreation Area was carved out of the middle of the park with malice aforethought, because hydro-electric projects can not be built in a National Park. And so what they did was, they left this area along the river itself, on both sides, as a National Recreation Area, where hydro-electric projects can exist, so that we would have the opportunity to build the High project. In 1942, I believe it was, the treaty between the United States and Canada was signed, which gave the United States the authority to actually back water across the border and into Canada. And it contemplated that the ultimate area to be submerged would include the High Project. Even today, even with the existing project, we back about three-quarters of a mile into Canada when the reservoir is full. But, so, I mean, we're talking decisions that had been made sixty years ago or more.

So in 1968, when the Department decided to go ahead with it, it was the logical thing to do because it had been a progression of actions that had gone on from the mid-30's on. I started doing all of the design operational criteria. I didn't do the design work for the project itself, but I was doing things like determining how much water would be released under certain conditions. I did all of the calculations for determining what kind of nitrogen super-saturation would exist. That was one of the big issues that the people who were against the

project were trying to say - that we were going to create worse nitrogen super-saturation in the river than existed, because of the High Project, and my calculations showed that would not be the case. The Skagit River, without any dams on it, would have nitrogen super-saturation. It means that the nitrogen gets encapsulated in the water itself and it can be very damaging to salmon smolt. It actually gives them what amounts to the fish equivalent of the bends. So what we were able to do was actually run tests and run the calculations to show that we would actually enhance the river, not detract from it. We did all of the studies necessary to determine how much additional energy and capacity we would get, and how we would regulate the river. One of the studies that we did was to show that we were already utilizing, from a storage standpoint on an annual basis, about the perfect amount of water. So the reservoir starts full and it's drawn down during the winter and then when the spring snow melts it goes back up again. The amount of water represented in that up and down motion was what we were going to use for the High Project, which meant that the reservoir would have only been drafted about fifty-five feet instead of one hundred twenty-seven feet that it is now. So we would have actually enhanced the view of the lake, 'cause you wouldn't have all that big expanse of open hillside during the time of the year that the water is pulled out. Those were the kinds of studies that I did.

Then starting in the early seventies when we actually went back to the Federal Power Commission to get our license amendment, I was one of the key witnesses that was back there. Matter of fact, I spent the better part of a year back there during those hearings - Washington, DC - the High Ross hearings in front of the Federal Power Commission. They were the hearings before an administrative law judge where both sides, us and the people who were opposed to it - both Americans and Canadians ... the Canadians had intervened also. There were a number of people in Canada who had decided that it was sacrilege to allow the nasty Yankees across the border to back water into Canada. So I'm being a little facetious but only a little. So they had intervened on the side of the environmental community here in the United States to oppose the project. Many of the people, I won't say all of them, because there were some very dedicated people who just didn't agree with us - but many of the people liked the idea that North Cascades National Park was a very primitive park and

basically, unless you were in extraordinarily good physical condition, you really didn't have very much access to the park. And so it was, in a sense, you could say it was their personal, private playground, and they wanted it kept that way, and that was one of the major reasons why they opposed it. Because in the process of us building the High Project, we would have opened up the access in the park in a way that presently does not exist, and probably never will exist. So there would have been obvious opportunities for other people to actually get there in a way that they cannot physically do now. So there was a fair amount of opposition, not just because 'not in my backyard'. And I can understand that, I don't necessarily agree with it but I can certainly understand it because I've got my own place in Darrington where I'm growing trees and I don't want somebody to come in and mess in my nest either. So I can understand where the opposition came from, but there were some very interesting statements made. I remember one individual in particular - and I can't remember the name of the guy now - got up on the stand and said that we were going to desecrate this pristine natural lake - which just happened to have a plug at one end of it five hundred and twenty-five feet tall of reinforced concrete - because I can assure you there was no lake where Ross Lake now exists until Ross Dam was built - but he got up there with a straight face and said that we were going to destroy a natural lake, which I always thought was kind of an interesting statement.

But, what ultimately happened was that we were given license to build the project and were actually getting ready to move ahead on it and were sued by the Canadians under the theory that we were supposedly violating the Treaty. So while that lawsuit was being ground through, the negotiations actually got started between the State department, Canada, the Province of British Columbia and Seattle over what ultimately led to the settlement of the High Ross process. I was directly involved with those negotiations. There was one set of negotiations going on, and then there were some private conversations going on separate from that - I can't - I was not there. I can tell you what the results were, but frankly I think it was a desecration. There were some private negotiations between the Mayor and his brother, who worked for him at the time, and some of the people up in BC, which ultimately led to a settlement to where BC Hydro supplies Seattle with capacity and energy equivalent to what the High Ross Project would have built, and they do

that for an eighty-year period. What Seattle did was pay them what the then cost of the project was going to be, including interest for bonds. And that was - that's their compensation for the 80 years worth of capacity of energy. The problem with that settlement comes in two parts. If we had built that project, we would have floated bonds to build the project. In 1983, when the settlements actually took place, the interest rates were like fourteen percent - the worst they've been in modern times. What we would have done is float bonds to build the project and then as soon as the interest rates were up we would have financed the bonds. So the net result is, the cost of the project would have dropped substantially, but with the settlement what we did was we paid Canada an equivalent amount of money over a five year period that does not allow for any lowering of interest rates. So effectively, the price of what we're paying for the power from Canada is probably twice or three times what it would have actually cost had we actually built the physical project. That's a problem. The other problem that we had was that Canada, BC Hydro, really didn't have any surplus at the time. I mean, they had a little bit but they were growing just like we were down here, so all we did was take power away from their own people up there with this settlement. At the same time, we didn't have the extra power down here that High Ross would have given us. So, we ended up having to build a whole bunch of combustion turbines in other locations - not for Seattle particularly, but the Northwest as a whole. And frankly, I personally, being a native Washingtonian, would prefer to have a clean atmosphere and no combustion turbines. So those are two areas that I frankly still personally believe is a wrong decision. But that's the way things happened.

It was an interesting situation because in 1977, '78, the region was looking at massive deficits. Then we ended up with an economic downturn that was horrendous. I can honestly say the three of you have not seen one like it. I hope you never do. But that is the era of the billboard that said, "The last person out of Seattle please turn off the lights." At the same time that we had a huge economic downturn, we had a massive inflation and so the price of everything jumped substantially. That's when the original price of gasoline quadrupled. And of course the President at the time was saying we were going to run out of gasoline by the year 1990 - but I still think I can buy it - but any way that's what he said. So there was this big panic about energy. There was a

huge push to cut back on consumption, which actually was fairly successful. So by 1981 we were surplus - the region, Seattle was - and we were still buying power from Bonneville, but the region in general was surplus. By 1985 however, everything had flipped back around and now all of a sudden we were looking at major deficits again. And in '83, '84, '85 was when I was in charge of putting in the extra two units over at the Bonneville project. They would have been delayed probably 3 to 5 years had we built High Ross, but they had to be accelerated because of not building High Ross. Then we built five small hydro projects in the Columbia basin. We built them on irrigation canals where they have major drops and so we were actually able to take an irrigation canal and put a little generator on it and get some electricity out of it as well. But all of these were being done in the mid 80s when all of a sudden we went from feast to famine again. Energy has typically, over the last 40 years that I've been involved, been a cyclical kind of an operation. We go from very tight times to very fat times, from very tight times to very fat times. The one thing that we never learn is that we always believe that whatever today is it will always be that forever. And then when all of a sudden tomorrow shows up and the opposite is true, we say, "What happened?", but you know, that's human nature. That's the way we do it.

I personally believe that the High Project would not have destroyed the environment up in the upper valley as the opponents were convinced it would. Partly, we would have a reservoir that would not draw down anywhere nearly as much. The other thing was that we had designed the operation of the project, and the project itself, to minimize any of the impacts. Now, there would have been a few of the big red cedars in up Hunter Creek that would have been taken down, but even there, most of that would have been saved - there was very few. So, from an aesthetic standpoint I think the High Project would have actually looked better than the existing does, because, remember now, you have six months out of the year where you've got a hundred foot of vertical shoreline showing because the water's been pulled out. Well, if you cut that in half, it's going to be half the aesthetic impact. So there were a number of things like that that I think would have been an enhancement, up to and including - and I can say this now that I'm 66 - the fact that I would be able to enjoy that project and that national park in a way that I can't physically do it today, because it is too primitive. And most

people, like me, are in the same boat. The best you can hope for is to drive Highway 20 and stop periodically to take a look at the view - but having access to that backcountry you don't have. And so frankly, I think that's a detriment.

The issue was the environmentalists against the nasty users. At the time, I think if you had a vote of the citizens in the city, there probably would have been an 80-20 - 80 percent in favor, 20 percent maybe opposed. Most people wouldn't have understood that there was an issue. It was a relatively small but extraordinarily vocal group that led that charge. And probably, I think I can safely say this, if there had not been an international border involved, the High Project would have been built. It was partly because of some fairly intense feelings on the part of the Canadians who felt like the United States was always doing it to them, and the fact that we had gotten this agreement to flood the Canadian land back in 1942 at the height of the Second World War - they felt it was unfair of us to take advantage of it in the '70s and '80s. And while I may not necessarily agree with that, at least I can understand why they might feel that way. You know, it's never fun living next to a nine hundred pound gorilla and frankly there have been a number of instances where Canada has felt that the United States has taken undue advantage of them, and probably with some high level of fact. So it was I think, that feeling of one more time we're doing it again, that got the Canadians upset. And it was probably that more than anything else why there was a settlement and not the High project.

I was one of the chief negotiators and I must have made twenty trips up to Victoria - which I have to admit was kind of neat, too, because we always went up in sea plane and landed in the inner harbor so that was always kind of fun. We were negotiating with the provincial government because what happened was, both the United States federal government and the Canadian government said, "All right you guys go fight behind your own doors. You take care of it. When you finally figure out what you want to do come back and tell us." Which is pretty much what actually happened.

And so over about a eight-, ten-month period we ended up negotiating with the Canadians. The Mayor wanted to have a settlement. The Department was not in favor of a settlement because we knew that, no matter how it was settled, we were not going to end up financially as

well off as we would have been with the Project, but we worked for the Mayor of Seattle. The only part where we did have some control was the amount of energy that was going to be produced by the High Project had been calculated. I'd run those calculations ten years before, so it was a known commodity and BC was willing to give us the energy. What they did not want to do was to give us the capacity that went with it. I had insisted that we had to have the capacity the High Project would have given us or I would not go along with the settlement. Obviously I was not a politician, but the Mayor did not want me going to the press screaming bloody murder that we'd been ripped off. And so I hung tough and ultimately we did get the 138 megawatts that we were supposed to get. So, in that regard, I say, okay, we did okay on the settlement, but it was a tough way to do it. And frankly to this day, I still think both countries would have been better off had we built the project and done the necessary upgrading to the Canadian side of the border that we had planned on doing. But, you know, that's the way it goes.

We had a number of people in Canada who frankly agreed with us. I can't remember their names now, but there were a lot of people that actually did work in the Upper Skagit Valley. It turned out that on our side of the border the upper Skagit had never been logged, and primarily because part of the valley itself is very vertical. The valley is not very wide considering how deep it is, and so it was never convenient to log it. But, when you get above the border into Canada, the valley broadens out and there had been a fair amount of logging done up in that area, so the quote "pristine natural wilderness" that people waxed eloquent about didn't exist in Canada. It did on the United States side, but not in Canada. And there were a number of people, in the logging industry up in Canada who, they just roll their eyes and say, we don't know what these people are talking about because they have never been out here or they would never say this was a pristine natural wilderness because it wasn't. I have pictures of the Upper Valley in flame. What we would do - and this happened for years, and my Dad was involved because he was a safety officer at the time - they would take all the tree stumps and all the dead branches and all the stuff that was floating in the river and haul it back to the very end of the valley and when the river was down, when the lake had been pulled down, they'd pile all this stuff up and then early in the spring, before the water started to rise, they would

burn it all. And they did this for about seven or eight years straight. And that's the way they got rid of all of the clearing debris from when the project had originally been built back in the late 40's when it was finished. That's not pristine natural wilderness, not when you're looking out over acres and acres of stumps. So it's all dependent on where you were in terms of which side of the border as to what your view looked like. But there were a number of people in Canada who actually had supported it. Although there was a lot of people in Canada who didn't, and I think primarily, as I said earlier, because they felt it was just another example of the big bully across the street taking advantage of them. And I can understand that.

I think that there was tendency on both sides to become very polarized. I spent from 1969 until 1982, '83 - whatever it was - almost exclusively working on High Ross. When you do something like that, that's that intense for that long, it takes on a life of its own. Well, the people who were opposing the project did exactly the same thing. And so the net result was the only good environmentalist was a dead environmentalist as far as I was concerned. And I'm sure they would have said the only good power guy was a dead power guy as far as they were concerned. People become very, very polarized when they get into these kinds of arguments. And I have to admit, even now, twenty-five years later I still get irked every time I think about not doing that project.

One of the big issues was fisheries. And you have to understand that High Ross itself was not going to have any impact on fisheries. Because it's above where the salmon could go. The salmon were basically stopped at Newhalem and that's because the gorge between Newhalem and Diablo is some of the roughest country I've ever seen in my life. And if you ever saw water coming down - typically, during the year, you go up there and it's a dry riverbed, because we don't like to waste water - but if we're in flood and you see water coming down that gorge, between Diablo and Newhalem, it's the most scary sight you'll ever see. The salmon couldn't get up through there. They were stopped basically in Newhalem. So anything that we were doing in the operation of the river was not going to be modified at all by the High project. But the fisheries people did have concerns about how we would cut water back at certain times of the year and effectively strand the salmon fry along the banks of the river. The negotiations that we entered into - and a lot of this

had to do with the Indians, it turned out, interestingly enough – City Light and the Indian tribes ended up agreeing on a way of operating that, frankly, was good for both of us and ended up on the same side against the State Department of Fisheries. That was because we agreed how to run it. Department of Fisheries didn't want to agree with anything that City Light was proposing. So we finally steamrolled them.

What was the actual thing you agreed on doing?

On the way we would actually operate the river in terms of how fast we would raise or would lower the water so that it would allow the small fish to actually be able to move back and forth along the edge of the bank and not be trapped. And that agreement, to my knowledge, is still in place right to this day. So there were people we could work with.

The Indian tribes?

Actually it turned out that they ended up being a major support for us at the time we realized the project later on. And that was good.

How did you work with scientists with this issue?

In most cases we worked well together, because both they and ourselves within the Department were looking for answers that were legitimate answers. I'm not going to fudge work. If I don't like the results then that's just tough. That's the way it is. But, whatever the results are, that's what they are. Most scientists are that way. It's either right or it's not right, and I can work with people like that. So, we didn't really have that much problem with them. In fact, a good substantial number of the scientists that were working on the project actually were being paid by City Light. You know, they were running the different studies of one type or another for us to give us the information. And in some cases, we didn't like the results. But what we ended up having to do was modify how we would operate the project to take into account what those results were to be able to negate them so that they would not be the bad results.

Were there scientists working for the environmentalist groups?

There were a few, but not too many. I think there were probably limited funds from their standpoint. This was expensive. I don't know how many

millions of dollars that City Light spent, but I wouldn't be surprised if it was 15-20 million dollars in that licensing project. And that's back in 1969 and 1970 money when you could actually buy something with it. But the people who were opposed to us did have limited funds. And a lot of them were, I don't want to call them scientists, but they were at least bordering on that themselves. So they were able to do their own studies.

Did you want to talk a little bit about the negotiation process itself? What led to the Treaty? What your specific role was?

Well, the Treaty - I guess there is a High Ross Treaty - I forgot about that. The original treaty which is the border treaty between the United States and Canada, actually, was done back in the '30's and early '40's, actually it goes back before that. The Saint Lawrence was primarily the underpinnings of that Treaty. But it turned out it was a treaty that covered all of the rivers that crossed from the United States into Canada or from Canada into the United States. Red River in North Dakota is a river that comes out of Canada that starts in the United States and goes into Canada so it's the reverse of what happens with the Skagit. So that Treaty is the underpinnings of everything that goes on across the border. And it talks about a lot of things, not just water movement, but a lot of other stuff. But it was the Treaty under which the 1942 agreement had been entered into which would have allowed the flooding of about seven miles of the river basin itself, as opposed to the three quarters of a mile that exists right now. What we finally ended up doing after we ended up with the settlement - then that was put into typical treaty language and confirmed by both governments - I didn't have anything to do with that part of it because that was kind of a *pro forma* process at that point since we had already come to a settlement agreement. One of the things that came out of the treaty was that there would be funding - a certain amount of funding for the Skagit Endowment Commission. There was also an agreement that we would buy certain lands along the basin in the general area, not necessarily along the river but certainly within the general Skagit area that would then be preserved as nature preserves. And I know that there have been a number of purchases of those made over the years. In most cases it's old growth timber, but not always. Some cases, they've actually bought riverfront to be able to protect riparian situations.

Have you been involved with SEEC at all?

No, I was not involved with that. That's touchy-feely. I'm strictly a power man. City Light is, because we're funding the Endowment Commission and there are people within City Light that actually are actively involved with it, but I wasn't personally.

Have you been back up to that area?

I haven't been up there for the last five or six years, anybody that tells you that retirement gives you lots of time to do all sorts of things, I can assure you that's not the case. I'm too busy to be able to take trips like that. But I have a tree farm up in Darrington, which is only one valley over. And I've spent a lot of time up there, so the North Cascades is an area that I do know well and I will probably go up this summer some time just to renew acquaintances because I was responsible for the operation of those projects for about fifteen years. And I'm kind of proud of that. It was good times. There's a few people that are left but I retired in 1992. And of course that's 13 years ago, so there's a lot of people who've retired now. But there's still a few that are left.

You've been able to keep track of how that region has been changing over the years...?

Well I've kept track of it mainly because I've been in the industry until last year. I actually had my own company and what we were doing was power management work for a lot of other people, not Seattle, but nonetheless we were doing it for other people here in the region, so the net result is I have a pretty good idea of what's happened to City Light. Plus, I happen to be a rate payer/owner and I don't like the way my bills are going, so I've kept real close tabs on what's happening to City Light the last seven or eight months. But, yeah, I've got a pretty good idea of how things are going up there.

I don't think the average person would probably notice any big change. I think if you were to go up there camping or something of that nature you would see pretty much what I expected to see in 1980, that the area has not had huge changes. Oh, yeah, there's been some subtle things that have been done. I think there's a new meeting and interpretive center up at Diablo, which did not exist at that time. But other than things of that nature, it's going to look pretty much like it always has. The boat trip from Diablo up to Ross that

they have for the tour - that boat trip has been around since 1947 or earlier. And the lift there at Diablo itself, that lift was originally designed to carry the railroad cars that carried the supplies to the barges on Diablo Lake that were then taken up to the original construction of the dam - how they brought the steel and cement and all that other stuff up there.

I've spent quite a bit of time on the lake. And I'm one of the few people who have actually gone up and down the lake extensively in a helicopter because we used to actually go up and make a loop, at least once a year. We'd check the shoreline on all sides, make sure everything was copasetic.

What's your sense in terms of environmental activism and how it may have changed - was it more intense during this period and things have quieted down for issues facing City Light for example?

I think it has to some degree. Back in the '60s and '70s the environmental movement - well, I won't say it was new because it certainly had been around in one way or another for a longer time - nonetheless seemed to catch the imagination of a lot of the population. And like most things that are perceived to be new, you had a lot of instant converts and a lot of enthusiasm. I think today, there is probably a little more pragmatism and while I won't say we don't have the same issues, I think the rhetoric is toned down quite a bit. What would be a good example? Well, the development up on the Snoqualmie Ridge area that Weyerhaeuser's been trying to do, there's been a fair amount of environmental antagonism to that, but you have not heard a huge amount about it, where back in the '60s and '70s that was big news, literally, almost every day if something like that was going on. So, the developers have gotten smarter in terms of knowing how to develop something to have relatively minimal impact. And I won't say that was always the case because it certainly wasn't. The environmental community itself I think has gotten smarter in terms of knowing when to pick their fights. So the net result is we don't have as much rhetoric going on as we used to have. Are people any happier? Probably not. I mean, you get the good diehard converts on either side and they're going to be just as upset but I think in general we don't certainly see as much of it in the newspaper or the TV as we did at that time.

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I think that one of the things that a lot of people don't understand is that City Light has been a pretty good steward up there for a long time, longer than I have been around. City Light does more to tame the river in terms of floods than any other entity. Generally the floods that you hear about down around Mount Vernon and Sedro Woolley would be three to five feet higher if it weren't for those projects. So while people may not like to have them there they're not all bad. And I'm positive - I know for an absolute fact they've saved lives by virtue of the fact of taming the river. The Skagit River is an extraordinarily volatile river from minimum flow at Ross Dam, which is - the record flow of minimum flow is about 400 cfs (cubic foot per second) to maximum flow of 72,000 cubic foot per second - is like, what, a hundred and fifty to one? That's a volatile river. That's a river that's a killer if it's not controlled. To have it in a natural state would mean that most of the Skagit Valley would not be livable the way it is today. So, you know, there's reason to say that City Light has been a pretty good steward.

(Remind me if I forget to tell you, Bill Newby has a videotape that is made of the original 16mm color film that his father shot of the original construction of Ross Dam. And I have a copy of it myself but I can't figure out where it is right now.)

A question I haven't asked you is a basic question: how much energy does the Skagit river produce? And where does the energy go?

The Skagit river produces, let's see, Ross Dam, when it's full - and I have to qualify that because when it's full it'll produce 450 megawatts of capacity - Diablo produces 159 megawatts, Gorge produces 175 and then Newhalem produces 2. Now when Ross is way down it'll only produce about 200. So it depends on how much water is in the reservoir and the elevation that water falls through is what determines how much capacity can be produced. In terms of energy, let's see, Ross is 66 average. Boy, you're asking me to remember numbers that go back a long ways. Well, roughly 200 megawatts. And that's about 20 percent of Seattle's needs. Capacity wise it's about forty-five percent. The power all comes to Seattle. There are four 230KB, four 230,000 volt lines that come down from the Skagit and come into the Seattle's Bothell substation and those are the lines that actually bring the power from the Skagit into Seattle. Does all the power stay in

Seattle? Well, not necessarily because electric currents flow to wherever it's needed. So at any instant in time, some of it ends up in Snohomish County. But, on paper it all comes to Seattle. And then the Seattle project over on the Pend d'Oreille River - that's a thousand fifty megawatt single dam. That's a big dam, that's one of the biggest in the northwest. That represents about 50% of Seattle's capacity and about 60% of the energy. So that's a big project.

And the rest usually comes from Bonneville, comes from Grant County, we have a small piece that comes out of Priest Rapids, it comes from the Columbia Basin irrigation projects, and it comes from the Lucky Peak project over on the Boise River in Idaho. And then there's some coming from BC Hydro that's actually the equivalent of the High Ross Project. All of that added together represents basically the supply for Seattle.

The river does two things - flood control is certainly a major, major plus. But the dams also enhance the fisheries by virtue of the fact that we artificially control how the water is released. Mother nature has the tendency to give you feast or famine. And when you have a massive flood, it'll scour the river and it will literally take the redds - the salmon redds and move them out to sea and that will be the end of them. So, to the extent that we control the river, and control how it goes up and down, we actually can enhance the fisheries and do a pretty good job of it. It's not the only part of the Skagit, so you have to understand that about only fifty percent of the Skagit can be controlled; the rest of it's natural. The Sauk Suiattle come into the Skagit and there are no dams or anything like that on those rivers and they can be extremely volatile in bad water conditions.

So when you say only 50% of the Skagit is controllable, it's because of tributaries you include in the river system and also where those tributaries enter into the river...?

If they're above us we can control it. If they're below us we can't. But even there, in some cases, depending on the power needs, we can actually cut back generation or release when a tributary is running heavy, so that even that can be a settling effect. It's not perfect, but at least has some benefit. So, the fact that the projects are there are not all bad. Matter of fact, the reality is that the fact that the projects are there are the only reason people can get up there in the first place.

Because where Highway 20 goes, until it gets to Diablo, is now running on the railroad bed that was the Skagit river railroad that Seattle City Light built to build the projects. So the road from Rockport up to Diablo itself wouldn't have existed had those projects not been there. That railroad actually was there until about 1952, '53. Matter of fact the engine is still up at Newhalem.

The other thing that I was going to do - suggest that you get a hold of Bill Newby. Bill Newby was - well I think he spent his whole working career on the projects. Started out as a laborer and by the time he was finished he was manager of the whole Skagit complex. Worked for me for a number of years. Bill grew up there. His father, I believe it was, homesteaded up there, and in fact, around the mule teams that were used to transport supplies in when they went in to do the original surveying up there in the 1930's. Bill has 16mm film, color film, of the building of the first stage, maybe even the second stage of Ross Dam. At the time it was called Ruby Dam, and it wasn't until after J. D. Ross had died that the City decided to rename the dam, Ross Dam. And actually J. D. and his wife were buried up there in a crypt at Newhalem.

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I consider myself an environmentalist. I'm a native Washingtonian. And there's an old saying that's kind of crude but it's still accurate: you don't do it in your own nest. Why in the Sam-Hill would I want to ruin my own nest? Now, having said that, I personally believe that hydroelectric power is vastly more benign than our coal plants, or gas-fired combustion turbines or any of the other predominate forms of energy production - and yes, we can build windmills, and yes, we can do solar cells and things like that and they work when the wind is blowing or when the sun is out but they don't work all the time. You still have to have sources of energy for those times when the other things don't work. Hydroelectric power is a lot less damaging than are any of the other major sources and so to be an advocate of the hydro - I frankly think this could be an advocate for the environment. Now, people wouldn't necessarily agree with me, and that's fine, they can have their own opinion even though it's wrong. But, so, I think I am an environmentalist. I know how I do my own tree farm. And frankly I use environmental aspects to do my harvesting; I don't want to destroy it.

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Did the Mayor succumb to some political pressure because of the press? I think to a degree...But certainly there was a substantial amount of - well, not all the press, by golly - Bob Lane of the *Times* was actually very pro-City Light. Joel Connelly of the *Seattle P-I* was very anti-City Light. And so I'm not going to blackball the press by saying all the press was that way, because that wasn't true, but certainly Joel was very much against the project, very much against City Light. And did that have an effect on how the Mayor reacted? Probably. And yeah, I'm probably the one who was considered to be the black hat from the other side, I will admit that.

Ray Williston (Interviewed June 19, 2004)

Ray Williston was British Columbia's Minister of Land, Forests and Water Resources for 16 years, from 1956 until 1972, under Social Credit leadership. During that time he was a strong advocate of honoring the treaty between the United States and Canada by raising the Ross Dam to its highest level. Ray has earned a lifetime of distinguished positions and awards in the fields of education, resource management, and industry, and is considered one of the most influential politicians in British Columbia during the 1950s and 1960s. Ray currently resides in Sechelt, on the Sunshine Coast north of Vancouver, BC.



I was married in 1939 and as part of the honeymoon for my good wife, we walked up the Skagit River over from Hope to Princeton. One thing I remember, we got up one morning in the cabin on the trail, and the owner of the cabin, a very rustic establishment, went out and caught two trout. We had trout for breakfast on the first morning I'd seen the Skagit River in the Skagit Valley. And from there, I've been associated with it more less ever since, because in British Columbia I was in charge of all water rights, power -- things of that nature -- for 16 years. I've been there over the years. I was back with the family the odd time. And the last time I was in was - given what you were doing, I thought I'd better go back and take a look at it, since I hadn't seen it very recently. And that was an illuminating experience. As a matter of fact, it enabled me to kind of check what had taken place in the 20

years since the Treaty on the Skagit had been agreed to between Canada and the United States.

How long ago did you go?

About a month ago. I was surprised that the road in was in much better shape. There was a trail the first time I went in. They've always been logging in that area, in the Skagit River Valley. But the road had been vastly improved and had been given adequate drainage, but it was still gravel. The only facility I saw on the Canadian side of the boundary, specifically designed for the servicing of tourism was one gathering of shacks for treatment - people went in and they needed to have facilities for cleanliness and so on. But the only actual piece of mechanical equipment I saw was one of these hand pumps that pumps up and down to get the water, and I saw only one of those on the way all up the valley. As a matter of fact, in

20 years, since the Treaty was signed, I saw very little that had been done. One lake where the dam site is (and no way connected to the dam site) had been cleaned out and made available for the launching of boats. Because on the Canadian side you can't launch a boat behind the Skagit Ross Dam. Originally when that was built, it was to be approximately a hundred feet deeper to the end of the reservoir than it is now, and as a consequence, they only cut the trees down when they were clearing the reservoir to diameter breast height and they left all the stumps exposed and those stumps are still exposed on the American side. And now they decided at the present time, they decided not to proceed with the higher Ross Dam. So I guess, unless someone removes them, they never will be removed and they're certainly detrimental to any approach from the Canadian side.

As well as this, on the Ross Dam side, there's a coffer dam right across where the present flooding moves in to Canada, and the wind and so on has brought down debris and other materials, and that piles up high right against this coffer dam and the stumps. I found that rather strange because it was supposed to be developed as a recreational [area] and certainly, expected to be made much more accessible to the general public. But very very little has been done in the last 20 years for improving. As a matter of fact, way back in the time I had responsibilities there, one set of the Park's Branch used to be under Forests, and I had the Forests at that point, and they did put one very good set of camping facilities in below the Ross reservoir. And you might wonder why, way back when, the people didn't realize what they were doing. But they all expected the Ross Dam to go to its elevation and that these stumps would be many many feet - up to a 100 feet - underneath the surface and wouldn't bother anything at that time. However, that didn't come to pass.

You might wonder what my association was. I was Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources in British Columbia for 16 years from 1956 till 1972, and during that time the Skagit came within my area of responsibility. Before that I was Minister of Education for 4 years in British Columbia from 1943 to 1946, and then I was Minister of Lands and Forests till 1972. And during that time that I was in charge, I used to honor the organization that they had put on the Skagit River, because in 1909 the Government of the United States had established a national procedure for the dealing of water problems that were

experienced on both sides. And one of the early ones that had to be dealt with on a national basis was the Skagit project. And, so, really they- which to me was an example that I haven't experienced elsewhere in my water work - they planned that river right from the sea to the ultimate Ross Dam which you're dealing with right now. That was all approved from the initial time period and then each project, as they came up in the valley, on the American side, they had to secure permission - it was examined in detail - before it could proceed. "They" I'm talking about are the American authorities who are responsible for water management in the United States, and latterly I guess, the people who were in connection with the environment because on the treaty there were more things doing with the environment than anything else in the original treaty.

The original treaty, as I said, between Canada and the United States, and which was agreed to by Ronald Reagan in Washington - his name appears on it: "Ronald Reagan"; I just thought it was interesting because it was in the papers this week - in any event, I accepted that when I had my responsibilities, and I always considered the Ross Dam would be built, never gave it any consideration whatever. And as they built up in stages, when it came about 1942, the Seattle City Light wanted specific permission to proceed towards what they call the "High Dam" in stages. And they wanted to have approval for the first and second stages almost immediately. That was in 1942 that they went to the International Joint Commission to look after these matters, and they (were) approved. And I accepted that when I was Minister, and it always appeared in the documentation that they had that right. And I always considered that they had that right to do it when I was a Minister in British Columbia. And I never questioned it, whatever. And the only thing we had to do - the IJC said so - we had to, in British Columbia, have agreement with the City of Seattle - how much we had to be paid for allowing them to flood this larger area when the High Ross was going to be constructed. That went on for some years - the discussions - and finally in 1967 we reached an agreement with the Americans on what damages would have to be paid for when they put it in. The sum of money was agreed to on both sides. And that was just for occupation of the land that the reservoir would occupy.

They got permission, but in due course, around the 1950s and 1960s people built cottages on the

American side of the Ross reservoir. I was never down there but I heard about them. I happened to hear about them in a rather strange way. In 1972, when we had a provincial election in British Columbia, an objection was raised to the High IRAL project and the flooding would take place. When I read the documentation today it said that there was strong protest about this. When I was Minister, I never had one person enter a protest against the situation. And when the election came in 1972, one of the parties, I believe it was the Liberals, encouraged and helped with finance by people from the United States, demanded that that flooding not take place. As a matter of fact, how I knew this as a Minister was that, they organized petitions that would be presented to me. The general manager of the petitions, who was supposed to send them to me for not allowing any flooding to take place, must have got into some difficulty because he said he had to send a report every week of what he was doing He was a person running for office in the Federal government and wanted this way to get special permission. This person sent me a copy of the report that he would send to his headquarters instead of sending the petitions. And so naturally, I took them with a grain of salt, what they were doing was just publicity. They were financed in part by the people in the United States to prevent raising of this (the Dam) because of problems that might be anticipated on the American side of the border. Now, I've never been up there past Ross on the American side. I don't know what building or camps they had that could have been affected by the raising of Ross Dam. So, I never actually saw the Americans.

In 1972 we were defeated and I no longer had the responsibility. The - what you people call the socialists - the NDP were elected and they had, as one of their planks in their program, that there would be no more flooding of forested lands or something, for purposes of power generation. But they were only in for one term for four years and the group that came next also - this whole surge, you have to be back in those days to see what was happening. Let me cross back a bit- two of the largest hydroelectric programs in the whole of the North America were developed on Columbia and Peace River. These came at that time. Now, there were lots of people in British Columbia, and I was Minister so I had to deal with this matter. In British Columbia, there were a larger number of people who thought we'd never use the energy that we got from these two enormous projects. When you check on your map the reservoir

behind the Peace River project is over 200 miles long and 20 miles wide. It's the biggest man-made lake in Canada and I think that applies to United States as well. And, if you want to then forget my name for now, the lake is called the Ray Williston Lake. You can see it on any map of Canada or British Columbia. As a matter of fact, with the power project that comes from the Peace - it has the transmission lines that go from Peace to Los Angeles, they're tied together. The Peace River right to Los Angeles. They feed power back and forth across that grid that's in there. Be that as it may, I put, as Minister of Lands, the right-of-way for transmission lines through the Province. You cross this right of way several times as you're driving north, and you can see what's evolved already: there's a place to put in the transmission lines for hydro projects as they expand without having to go through all the problems that you go (through) on acquiring land for transmission lines.

Getting back to what I was driving at, people didn't realize that we'd ever use all this. We have ten penstocks and generators in the Peace Dam and we only intended to start with three and the people thought we'd never ever get the ten put in. It never stopped from when it started- they put in the three and kept going through right to the end. So what people were saying is, we'd never use up the power. We've never caught up to the power from the Peace and the Columbia until today, and the two greatest projects they have (are) for importing power from Alberta and other places and generating power from much smaller units within the province of British Columbia. But this focused on the public mind, so the group decided that they would stop, as a matter of fact, any further flooding of lands back in those days...

Who was the group?

The provincial government. The strange part about it, they wouldn't even let me (see the documents) In the meantime, I'd left British Columbia and I was a consultant in New Brunswick, and when I came back, I tried to get from them information as to what they were putting out to stop the construction of High Ross Dam. And they wouldn't make me see it - I never saw any of these documents because I was against it all the time. I thought, in the general interest of power and the best use of power, that the Dam should be completed. Because they had the whole thing set out - they didn't have to set out any transmission lines and so on. They never even mentioned the great value of raising the

Ross Dam to its ultimate elevation up above another 100 feet from what it was. Nowhere in any of the documentation did I see it explain why that was of such a value to the City of Seattle. You can read that documentation today if you will - and you won't find one mention of the value of Ross Dam to every other one of those power installations that had been put down on the river.

You've mentioned the value of raising the dam for Seattle; what was the value for BC in your mind?

None! Absolutely none - that's what I'm saying. If you look in there, this whole thing was geared, and was engineered - I won't say engineered because they proved it - but if you read that documentation, the thing that was said over and over again: Seattle would never lose the rights to a High Ross Dam regardless of what we did. It said over and over again in the Treaty that if anything interrupted this or BC stopped immediately without any Federal permission, the City of Seattle could go to the completion of the High Ross Dam. Its just amazing.

I had acknowledged it... and I still think it's right. But when they were selling this proposition, they never mentioned that this water is not only used in Ross but is used at every other one of those sites. And there's no evaluation in the Treaty material as to what that benefit means totally to the City of Seattle.

The other sites at other dams farther down...

They were already built -- they just had to be modified a little to handle this extra water from Ross.

The Treaty was signed. They started signing in 1909. They got permission in 1942 to go right on into a staged development and it's still there. If BC blows its nose the wrong way, they can still back up and put the Ross up to elevation even though it's flooding part of British Columbia.

The interesting thing is that in the 1970s there was a sort of global anti-dam movement...

Yes, that went through. It's pretty well disappeared because ... using fuels to generate steam to generate electricity is creating far more pollution than is created by water developments where there's no pollution. The acceptance of water-based generation, I mean river dams, is very much changed. I'm going to deal with one of

those right now. Not only did they stop the things such as the Skagit, but a far more serious thing in British Columbia. When the NDP government created that atmosphere which secured for them stopping electric developments, the Camano which has two power plants - Alkan and Camano in British Columbia - the one is finished, the big aluminum smelter near Kitimac is right there, but they started well on with not only the approval...

The change in attitude -which had come across a lot with the environmental movement - played a part in this: Alkan had already started on the second phase of the development.... They finished the first one and it was highly successful and was aided and abetted by the Federal Government who were in the Korean War and needed additional aluminum production. . (Then) demand disappeared. In the second (phase) they were well under way when they could no longer create large reservoirs for this purpose. The stupidity of (the environmental) movement was that the storage had already been created. It wasn't going to be additional storage demanded for the second phase. I'm just saying what the impact on the people was. They'd spent between \$500,000 and \$600,000 on the next powerhouse when they stopped them through court action, and since then, they've not only not gotten any more power but also had to compensate the Alkan company for terminating a project which had been completely approved. It really defies common sense the action that people take sometimes in environmental matters when they do not consider the other facts at all.

And you should understand that, in[so]far as the High Ross, all the stories I've been discussing today with High Arrow - the Seven Mile as they call it there - really has very little effect insofar as British Columbia is concerned. And, in terms of production of electrical energy, very little impact. You can do that on the Skagit and finish it. They can't dream out any environmental projects that could be carried out with as little damaging effects on the future.

The other part they don't understand, when you're up in the mountain areas, the rainfall variation in the year has tremendous impact. So, we have what we call firm power and capacity. Firm power means that you can just run and use it 365 days of the year at a constant rate and its always there. It's greatly to be cherished. To show you the difference in your case that only comes to 20-30 megawatts of firm power from the whole

production. Whereas if you took the total capacity - in other words, if there was a tragedy and you had to pump power in to get all the power out - the capacity is better than 500 megawatts.. The plant can produce that and can do it for several short periods.

It's very difficult to charge it (nuclear power) up, whereas water power, and why it's so beneficial - it's instantaneous. At night time, for instance, it's supper time all down the Pacific Coast at 5 to 6 pm when all the mothers and everybody else turn on the electric ranges and suddenly bing on the electric system. If you have water power, you press a button and it opens the turbine - sshhuup - and it provides the power. You can't do it with nuclear, you can't do it with anything else. You also get more value from your water because it all remains at a high level. It fills up there, it falls a greater distance, it creates more energy. When you're doing these major things the greatest difficulty you have is with the environmentalists who figure everything you're doing is to the detriment, or you're filling up somebody's pockets with moneyand you're doing it just for financial reasons instead of your actual operation of your utilityand they don't differentiate between this type of situation. They say everybody should shut off their lights and use less and that's what we should be doing. That's neither totally sensible nor possible as it takes place. I think we've got to bring this element in - and environmentally - so that the total situation is served. That's why I was telling you a few minutes ago about that transmission line that goes right from the Peace River in our country. It goes from the border, and serves down to Bonneville in the United States. It goes right to there. I made it, rather than get into a fight about every piece of transmission line not benefitting everybody. There's a very wide corridor it comes down. And now the farmers are farming below those towers raising crops, because it doesn't affect them. It keeps the mess from hydrolines, it benefits them very cheaply, and it benefits new lines that have to come down, and they just come down through the belt. And they don't get nearly so many people telling us that these lines are going over the top and giving us cancer and all these kinds of things which comes out. It makes sense.

So, was this how you understood the rationale for the raising of the Ross Dam - that it was a kind of understanding that Seattle would need energy? I am trying to understand how, as a Canadian, you

saw the value of the Ross Dam, or whether it was more because of respecting the Treaty?

I think it's to our common interest to see that they get the best use possible. Ross Dam served them in the whole of the Seattle City Light because it gives them a source of power almost instantaneously that can be put on and off, and some of the bigger projects in the interior don't have the same draw. Because in the arrangements that (were) reached, BC Hydro and BC have to take from the Peace River. They have to deliver their power to Seattle on the amount that they have to provide by Ross Dam not going to elevation. They've done so very little about this. When I was getting ready for this (interview) I went up to talk to the hydro people, and the chap who's in charge surprised me very much. In the first place, it says in the Treaty that at least every 10 years you have to go over the whole operation. He's been in there for some time, and there should have been two meetings held now for a re-evaluation of the whole thing. It's spelled out. He says to his knowledge there hasn't been a resurvey of this whole thing. And now it's (been) twenty years. [He's in charge of] the negotiations between Hydro and the City of Seattle, and his name is Ken Stafford. ... This means taking it to the border andpaying the cost to Bonneville for moving that power from the border for 80 years down to the City of Seattle. And, what BC is getting back in turn for this power for 80 years and so on is relatively....., I'll challenge you to go up there and figure out where the evaluation comes for British Columbia. There are twenty camp sites up there. There is one communal thing that is used once in a while, and recreationally speaking that's all we get out of the Skagit.

When I read the Treaty, for Seattle, they have themselves protected all the way down the line, but if they change anything, or it comes out and they change anything, in the future, Skagit does not even go back to the American government or anyone else. They can raise Ross Dam to its elevation and get the benefits of the Ross Dam that's coming down. They had to get the estimates during these 80 years of how much it was going to cost them to raise the Ross Dam - and it was in those years and times when they were raising it. Then, each year, the amount that they got the power from BC Hydro, they had to pay so much for it. They have to figure out the time they would have built up, (had they not stopped building it), and work all their finances, on what it would have cost at that time. And then when they pay back -

they had certain things they had to do with High Ross. One was fill the dam, and the other was operate it with all the men. They had to figure out how much it would take for the men to operate it all these times, how much they had to pay back of the capital expenditures. That's the basis upon which they pay, on a unit basis, for the power they get from BC Hydro which is delivered to Seattle. Seattle City Light have worked with them to get the same price charged to BC Hydro for delivering the power from the boundary to Seattle City Light. They pay the same wheeling charge to Bonneville as Seattle pays in other places. That's one benefit but it's just coming out.

But when I talked to this fellow, Ken Stafford, he really did not know anything about the whole thing. I said, how much of your time does it occupy ...this arrangement that's going on for 80 years? He said, "I just treat it as any other customer!" As though it was an outgo of power. There are customers. That's the only thing. If you read that Treaty, you'll see about every so many lines that, if this doesn't happen this way, the City of Seattle has the right to come back and build High Ross. They've got that in perpetuity for the whole 80 years.

You told us all about the way the current expenses are figured. One thing I wanted to ask about: in your support of raising the dam, how did you try and mobilize support for raising the dam, honoring the treaty, and dealing with the environmental opposition (and other kinds of opposition)?

Just by following the International Joint Commission. They instructed BC and Seattle to get their heads together even after they had caused cessation in the building of the Dam. They advanced that for one year. The International Joint Commission didn't think that there was any answer for the United States. They were far better off to have the project completed, and (have) complete control over it. I've been trying to show how they use that control for the regulation of water, which is very, very valuable. They lost the regulation of that quantity of water, that had to be delivered from (BC) Hydro because Hydro didn't deliver it the same way. In 1984, when the Treaty was passed, before they cancelled out all the agreements that they'd had before, they said: "Carry on your negotiations for one more year to see if you can't reach some kind of proper resolution... Because any one of us who've worked for many years in the power

business can't figure out how this was ever arrived at by power people who believe in what they're doing. It's exhibited by the protection that's been given to Seattle City Light. In turn for that, you try and establish what the benefit of that treaty has been to British Columbia."

Originally when I was working on this, we were trying to adapt this large reservoir, which was going to be created by our right. We wanted it to be developed for recreational purposes because we only have one good area out from Vancouver up the Fraser Valley on the south side and that is Cultus Lake in Chilliwack. I was working in those days to have another equally beneficial recreational lake body on the Skagit. It would be at least seven or eight miles long and it could be occupied by British Columbia. One of the rules [that] would have been put in was that British Columbia had the ability to use it for recreational purposes during that period because it was in British Columbia. But the way it's today, it's completely on the American side. With the material debris, it's no great attraction drawer for people but it was all tied in with the attitude towards the environmentalists.

When you were in the field as Minister did you rally public support through the media, or?

Didn't have to. Never once did anybody ever come in on the environmentalist side. I never had any pressure put on me whatever. The only thing I can see is that, below where the reservoir should have been taken there has been one very small lake that's been cleaned out and a boat launching ramp (installed). But it's very small. Something to placate those people in Canada who look up at the reservoir behind Ross Dam and say where do we fit? Because you can't get into it on the Canadian spot that's up there because of the debris. You read the Treaty ... they thought they were going to do fairly great things. But, in these twenty years that it's been there, there's been very little show of any beneficial (results). There's a bronze plaque that I saw when I was up the other day, and I just looked at it: a bronze plaque that said that due to the action of the school children and the local residents and so on ... I was up talking to the people in Hope. You can't get anybody, anybody [to] support what's there and what's there at the present time and what it could be.

So in other words, the people in the local area of the Canadian part of the watershed would prefer

the dam to be raised, for the reservoir to be built..?

Yes, that's right and a decent recreational business put in there. That's there on the south side of the Fraser river.

Were you in touch with those local communities while you were Minister dealing with this issue?

No, when I was Minister I didn't think there was any chance whatsoever of them not completing the High Ross. So when I quietened people who were completely out of base when they were in there, and say it wasn't a fact of life, but certainly I never felt anything about it.

I know that there were a few of the previous interviewees who took issue with the compensation -- so I wanted to get back to that to see what your perspective was on the original treaty and your involvement with the amount of money compensated for the original flooding of BC. I'm wondering what your perspective was on that?

Well, all they did was, they cut off our own land the timber, they cut the timber and left the stumps. As I told you, they're still there although a lot of them in twenty years have started to disintegrate just from natural causes. But, I don't know.. I never had any people... One person, one Cabinet Minister, his whole objection was that it interfered with some of the fly fishing on the Skagit river.

Well, the negotiations which finally took place, , the two men from the Cabinet who signed it, one was a school inspector and the other one was a lawyer, and neither one of them, in all the time I've been in public (life), had any impact on environmental, electrical, or flooding matters. They gave me a copy of the Treaty and I was rather amazed when I saw the two people who signed it. I know why they didn't want me to see a copy of the Treaty. This goes [back to] what are we getting back on the benefits side? I defy you to read that Treaty yourself and tuck in the back of your mind the City of Seattle and who is being protected in this. I don't blame them. I think the City of Seattle should have protected themselves behind High Ross. Everything's in there, all you got to do is build it, and its a tremendous source of additional power from the standpoint of the environment. It's creating no problem whatsoever.

So, in terms of the original treaty that was signed where Seattle would get the power, and it would flood BC, did you see that as a fair arrangement?

Yes, because it had been agreed in 1909. And they had that right going way back there. What do you do after they've started and they built according to what was prescribed? What do [you] do, come along later and say that's... I mean you can't undo it.

It seems that one of your main concerns is that because the decision was already made, and so much work was already put into it, money, time, and so on, and really the environmental impact was so minimal, that this dam project should go ahead. But, if there was a new dam project that was being constructed today that did show environmental impacts on diversity and so on, do you think that it should go ahead because it would provide electricity, or do you think it should not go ahead because of its environmental implications?

If it had major impact on the environment, it shouldn't go ahead, but, if it didn't have major impact on the environment, it should go ahead because they're just going to replace that energy with either burning coal or petroleum products, and polluting the environment. That's what really worries me, that people by stopping one thing, don't benefit on the other. For instance, the big problem going (on) right down near this Skagit river is that tremendous gas plant that they're trying to put south of the border near Abbotsford. The Canadian government finally turned it down because the air mass that moves through that valley eventually arrives at Hope where the mountains come together and it traps all of theatmospheric materials that work that way. They were putting this generating plant right in the path of the air movement that takes the pollution down towards there (Hope). That's getting to be one of the worst places for pollution in all of British Columbia. This was going to make it worse and so they (the government) have been fighting that. The gas comes from Canada and they put the plant across the line.

I think they should explore the opportunities to create energy in a form which is least detrimental to the environment. I say I'd never get Peace from the Columbia today with the attitude out there. You see, I was Minister of Lands, Forests and Water, and when you're putting in a hydroelectric plant, what do you need besides land, forests, and water? So I spent my time

talking to myself. I had to get approval from myself in three words - on the basis of lands, forests and water. A lot of people would say in those days that I was prejudiced, and I could have been to a degree. But (when) I stand back and take a look at the total value which comes from the energy, from the two basic energy projects we've got in British Columbia, and how many small thermal plants that would have had to take their place, this tells me there's no comparison in environmental indication (sic) And everybody knew that 'cause I used to get blamed. I used to get this quite a bit in the old days. Anyway, its been interesting.

Norm Pearson (Interviewed June 19, 2004)

Norm Pearson worked in town planning in Vancouver and Seattle until appointed as Executive Assistant to the British Columbian Minister of Lands, Water and Forest Resources under New Democratic Party leadership from 1972 to 1976. A major accomplishment of Norm and the new administration was the doubling of provincial parks, including the protection of the upper Skagit River watershed from flooding by the Ross Dam. Norm currently resides in Victoria BC where he works to defend First Nations' land rights.



I graduated with a Bachelor's degree at UBC in 1961, and decided at that point to go on into town planning and to start at that course immediately. And, at the end of the first year, I tried getting a job and it was just for the summer because the coursework would continue. This was a Master's in Town Planning that I was doing. I couldn't find a summer job that was appropriate so I ended up taking a full-time job serving the municipality. The next year, at the end of the year, I ended up going with the lower Mainland Regional Planning Board which was a regional planning agency that operated on the entire lower mainland including Hope and the edge of the Skagit. The fellow who headed that up was Jim Wilson who never had anything to do with Skagit but he was a dynamic fellow that really brought out the best in people and inspired me a great deal. We were sort of a strange group, responsible to politicians elected from the different municipalities. One of the projects we took on was a Regional Parks Plan.

Rick Hankin was the key person in that. He later went on to become the Regional Parks Director at the Greater Vancouver Regional District which eventually replaced part of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board. Rick was very interested in the Skagit among other things, of course, and so we made a point of including that in the Regional Parks Plan which was published in 1966. That included the full spectrum of major parks. What we call Town Parks, Regional Parks, and Provincial Parks. And the Skagit was put in the Provincial Park category. I should mention that this was a rather interesting exercise because we had input from the various agencies in BC, Washington State, Alberta, into what constitutes an appropriate array of parks in the area and came up with a rather good plan, I think. The person who took over the Regional Planning Board after Jim Wilson left added a great deal of information on how to bring the whole thing to life economically, and the political process that would

be essential for this. So, the plan was immediately adopted and they started buying land right away. But not the Skagit at that point, unfortunately.

One of the key elements that we felt would be needed in the lower mainland was a trail system, and we saw the connection between the Chilliwack valley into the Skagit and over into Manning Park as being crucial to a trail system. So, that was the first point in which I became acquainted with the Skagit. As I said, Rick was the person who did most of the leg work, I did most of the editing and cleaning up, and final report writing, and thus the report came to fruition. So, it wasn't until a year or two later that I actually visited the Skagit and at that point I observed tree stumps on tip toes. The way the water had raised the stumps out of the reservoir had pulled the stumps up out of the soil so that they looked like they were standing on tiptoes. The roots went down into what was left of the soil -- and you could look right underneath the stumps. So, I was horribly depressed by this vision of the reservoir that had not had the stumps cleaned out beforehand. This was where the existing flooding occurred into Canada, and these were the stumps in that reservoir that were immediately revealed as soon as drawdown of the reservoir occurred. (My wife and I decided one day to just go up there and take a look around. Rick's work - he'd done all the site visits. I did some site visits - but we did not get out to there. Largely because it was envisioned as a Provincial Park, not a Regional Park and I visited all the Regional Parks that we'd proposed.) It couldn't help but hit us rather heavily, and also it was an eye opener what a magnificent area it was otherwise. The meadows in the area, the rhododendrons that prevail in the area, the pines. It's just a beautiful area.

I was with the Regional Planning Board at the time we wrote the report. My wife and I took off on a trip to England for a year and when we came back I worked with the Regional Planning Board again. But we took on the Provincial Government of the day on an issue -- and the Provincial Government decided to get rid of the Regional Planning Board as a way of getting rid of the problem. So, the Regional Planning Board was disbanded and they created four Regional Districts to replace the Regional Planning Board. [The issue] was the rail route to Robert's Bank. They wanted to place the rail route right along Boundary Bay which was a major area of environmental concern. Just a magnificent area that would have been harmed by the bulk coal-

carrying cars going along the waterfront, and other aspects of it as well. That was one of the key issues, and we'd almost had some minor skirmishes with the government of the day.

So the planning board was...

Dissolved. I went with the Greater Vancouver Regional District as the Acting Director of Planning, but I didn't like the way things were done. So I decided to quit and I went with a firm of architects, Arthur Erikson and Jeff Massey, and shortly after I took that role and started working there. Arthur Erikson was asked to work on a project in Seattle, so I ended up shifting south for almost a year to work on a project that was to locate a roadway running from I-5, a major North-South highway through Seattle, and it was to connect from south of Seattle over to West [Seattle], to replace the Duwamish Waterway Bridge. So, here I was working essentially on an extension of the freeway, but it was an arrangement that was made after the fact. There had been engineers appointed by Seattle, and then an agency of Seattle said that it should be a multidisciplinary team, so they hired Erikson and Massey as architects and a whole bunch of others. There was an economist who used to work at Boeing, and various other people. That was a time when Boeing was having difficulties. So, I got to know Seattle a fair bit at the time. I also got to know a lot of what was going on within Seattle City Council and well, we had to work with Seattle City Council in the work we were doing. So, I continued in that role for a year and then decided to go on my own as a consultant, which I did. I also was a part-time lecturer at the University of British Columbia in the Town Planning/Regional Planning School and I ran a course in the practical side of town planning, a workshop course Friday afternoons. It ran for three hours from two-thirty to whatever, competing with the grad student pub, but we had a lot of fun and we sometimes found ourselves still going at seven o'clock on a Friday night.

I was going to do it again the second year but Brad Weissman, the director of the school and I got talking, and we thought we'd invite another town planner by the name of Bob Williams to be part of it, and we'd do a team-teach operation. So, Bob Williams and I met and discussed and worked out what we would do. But about that time there was an election in BC and that was when the NDP was elected to replace the Socred government. And no sooner were the results out

than Bob Williams found himself appointed as the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, and also the Minister of Recreation and Conservation responsible for Parks. He was also made the Minister responsible for BC Hydro - the ..provincially-owned power operation. So, this was a combination, of course, that immediately involved the Skagit. About a week after I convinced Bob that he wouldn't be able to team-teach and do all these other things, he gave me a call, actually I'd like you on my team. So I became his Executive Assistant. We'd been living in Vancouver and we picked up and moved to Victoria. I closed down the consulting practice and it took us a little while to get everything sorted out in terms of the contracts that were in place, but we did so, and I took on a new role.

We just spoke with Ray Williston, who was the Minister for Lands, Forests, and Water before Bob Williams. Were there a lot of changes in terms of perspective and policy from Williston to Williams?

Oh yes, total change. Lands, Forests, and Water Resources takes in a lot of turf as you might realize, and Bob Williams had very strong ideas about resource management, and where the benefits from that resource management should accrue, and also very strong feelings about parks. Several parks had been desecrated by the previous government – or eliminated - and it was Williams' desire to, in effect, double the acreage of Provincial Parks in British Columbia. So, he set out to do that and it was at that time that absolutely magnificent parks were set aside across the face of BC. The Skagit was small potatoes by comparison, but it also became a focal point in his work. He immediately declared that BC would not allow flooding of the Skagit Valley as envisioned in the 1967 agreement.

Well, the declaration was made and at some point in this I met Ken Farquharson. I've known Ken for so long I can't really remember when I met him. I almost feel like I've always known him, and, of course, you've interviewed him in the past and been aware of his perpetual role and involvement in the Skagit. I think his role with me was to - because of the phoning and bugging me about doing something in this regard, or trying to do something in that regard - to keep the matter in the forefront of my mind. And you'd have to appreciate that I was being torn in a thousand different directions because Williams was an extremely active Minister. He wasn't satisfied just looking after his own department. He tended to

browse in other departments as well. So we became involved in many, many facets. There was the environment and the land. One of the items that the Social Credit government had created was an Environment and Land Use committee, and we looked around at a way of starting a Department of the Environment, and decided to start on a small scale so we thought of creating a Secretariat for this Environment and Land Use Committee, which would be a professional focal group that would try and do inter-departmental things and chase environmental questions of paramount importance. We had to run the gauntlet of getting around the Public Service Commission which insisted that for every professional you had to have at least 6 clerks. So it was an educational program process for them, and one for us as well to try and achieve this, but we did.

You created a Department of Environment?

No, we created a Secretariat of the Environment and Land Use Committee which had as its focus a group of Ministers rather than a single Minister. Everything was run through all of the Ministries which were affected by a decision so that all of the Ministers were involved at the political level in this sort of process. It proved very effective.

I am sensing that there were these environmentalist impulses on both your part and Williams' part, and wondering where the inspiration came from - what sort of social movements may have been ongoing at the time that may have influenced you both, here and across the border?

I think the Skagit itself was a very strong push for things simply because of all the people who ended up becoming involved and seeing the absolute ridiculousness of doing the High Ross Dam. Also the comments that were made by the various organizations that had been created to chase the issue, like Ken Farquharson and the ROSS Committee to Run Out Skagit Spoilers. I should digress there and say that Ken had this absolutely fascinating ability to bring people from all persuasions, political or otherwise, into the fold and let them understand the circumstances involved. So, there were people that I couldn't talk to but Ken could, and then we would compare notes around the back door, so to speak. So, this was a very important role. There were other organizations in the States that focused on it as well. But there were also organizations that were

not focused on the Skagit but became active in it simply because it was such an obvious strong issue. The question that kept hitting me was the ridiculousness of the financial aspects that went into this as well. Not only were we getting a mudpond that would drain each year if the High Ross dam was built, but the rent that we were getting for the land was miniscule by comparison with normal rents. So, the whole thing stank and it just seemed so ludicrous.

The 1967 agreement rent issue - how did that come about?

I would like to know. I don't know about it. It was the previous government by some miracle and otherwise came up with this amount - and it just looked like it must have been something else somewhere that was happening. But, I don't know.

So, was this was a nationalist issue in terms of the rent - was it also an environmental issue?

It was an environmental issue foremost. I didn't like the idea of a mudpond. And I thought that there are perhaps better opportunities to generate power. We're going to need power and we can't get around that and we did know that Seattle City Light needed the power one way or the other.

Another thing that had happened at that time was a parallel issue that also involved Seattle, the Princess Marguerite. The CPR had been running the Princess Marguerite. Originally, there had been a triangle service that went from Vancouver to Victoria to Seattle. The Marguerite was just operating between Seattle and Victoria and it brought a lot of tourists to Victoria and sent a few south in exchange, but the CPR, having run this boat into the ground for a while, decided that they didn't want to run it anymore. So, this rather sentimental link with Seattle was going to get lost and there were some efforts by private operations to take a look at it. But they didn't seem to be going anywhere ...so Williams became involved and he got me to take on the negotiations ...Wwe worked on it and pretty soon we had a boat!

You were negotiating with who?

The CPR - Canadian Pacific Railway - that operated the service to Seattle. So, we negotiated and we managed to pick up a bunch of land in Victoria's inner harbor that was going to be needed for parks in the future. So, it was a downtown-downtown ferry run that was rather

important. So, I hired someone that had formerly worked with Marathon Realty to restore and rejuvenate and upgrade this boat - ship, let's call it; it's not a boat. It was put together very quickly and the dockyard workers in North Vancouver that worked on it were so enthusiastic. I think they volunteered a little bit of time on the thing as well - it went so fast. We put the boat in service and had an inaugural run, and went down and shot off cannon in Seattle harbor. Cannon filled with old grapefruit -- ha ha! And had fun. It would have been 1974 - '73 or '74, somewhere in there. So, that took time away from the Skagit issue.

And what happened to it? Why didn't we take the Princess Marguerite coming up here?

It was discontinued by the government that replaced the NDP at a later date. And, eventually went for scrap unfortunately.

You said it took time away from work on the Skagit - is it related to this work on the Skagit?

Only because it was this connection to Seattle...

Did it actually help Canadian politicians and public in terms of forming connections between Seattle City Council or the public there?

At a later date, I thought it did. We did our best to involve Seattle in the inaugural run and bring them onstream in that regard. Purely for the sake of the ship at the time..

I see. Who were some of the people in Seattle that you forged links with that were later important in the Skagit negotiations?

Well, I really don't remember the specific names on that issue. There's no connection with Lands, Forest, and Water Resources with that, but it was the sort of thing that Williams got involved in and it really captured a lot of the spirit of Victoria at the time. I should mention that after a couple of years of working directly with Williams, I took on the role of being Deputy Minister of Lands which was one of the three segments of William's portfolio.

What were your responsibilities with that?

Well, the Skagit continued, and Whistler continued, and the Marguerite continued.

Specifically about the Skagit, what were some of the responsibilities you had?

Well, early in the game, before I became Deputy Minister, I was still in my previous role, we decided that we had to try and do something about the Skagit. Our initial thrust was to hire a couple of lawyers. Mike Goldie - we engaged him to present our case against the 1942 Order and the 1967 Agreement before the International Joint Commission. And we hired Marvin Durning, the Seattle lawyer to play a watching brief and put our case anywhere it had to be put south of the border. So, that was an initial thrust. We knew that right from the outset that that wasn't going to be enough to appeal to the International Joint Commission. We didn't expect them to reverse anything, but we did expect them to pay attention. That also gave us time to look at other avenues. I worked all the time with Ken Farquarson to keep him informed, and he kept me informed of what he was learning in various sectors, so it was a compatible kind of relationship. Our objectives were the same. And, it was a very positive kind of experience.

What were some of the arguments that the lawyers used to contest the IJC ruling or agreement?

That, looking at specific legal questions - I'm not going to get into the details of all that - that things weren't done properly, or that it was repugnant, or it was unconscionable in terms of the economics. All the arguments that we could think of that could be placed.

When you said that you and Ken Farquarson had similar goals, what were those, would you say?

To stop the Skagit, period - the High Ross. Let's see, it was the 1974 the ROSS Committee decided to have the International Canoe-in in the Skagit Valley, and we decided that that was an appropriate opportunity to up the ante a little bit and actually create a Park in the area. So at the canoe-in event, Robert Williams who was then the Minister of Lands, Forests, and Water Resources, [and] Radford - and he was the Minister of Recreation and Conservation by then - went to the Skagit and actually declared the park, announced the formation of the park - the Skagit Valley Park. It was to their disappointment that it was just a recreation area, not a full fledged Provincial Park, and I sympathize with that feeling. There was a lot

fear amongst the lawyers in the province and the Parks Department that we'd be open to a legal suit from the people who held mineral rights in the area if we made their land a Provincial Park. A recreation area would allow that to continue, within limits, their activity - of which there was none. [Chuckle]. But they still held those rights. So they wouldn't have a legal case. I would have rather used a cookie cutter to outline the areas where the mineral rights were involved as recreation area, and the rest as a park. Be that as it may, it upped the ante and I think broadcast a little further afield our intentions.

Can you describe the Canoe-In a little bit?

My involvement was doing my best to stay out of the canoe. But Williams did go down the Skagit in the canoe. Tom Parry had already described quite fully that situation. I even had frog men to make sure nobody drowned on the route. It was an exciting event. There were a vast number of people that came to the event, people that had never been to the Skagit before and were only peripherally interested. But it seemed to have the right flavor and so it was quite an event. And it made a lot of people aware of the rather dramatic scenery and environmental qualities that were there in the Skagit: this curious blend of the Okanagan, this dry belt stuff combined with the coastal vegetation, all the rhododendrons. It was quite amazing.

Was this one of the first big media events about the issue, would you say?

I think there had been others. We missed part of it because of when we were away in Europe, my wife and I. But earlier on there had been some events. And it just gradually built up. But this was probably, to my knowledge, the biggest event in the Skagit.

When I think of it, people would get enthusiastic, and then it would taper off because it was so long between things when you're dealing with outfits like the International Joint Commission and power commissions. All of these things become a blur for so many people that they become disinterested in the Province, because it can't make everything happen immediately. Becomes a bit of a yawn as well. Trying to keep it going, that was Ken's department. He kept bringing it to my attention, but kept bringing it to the attention of reporters. He was skillful with the media, and some of the members of the media became, you

know, totally enthralled by the whole issue 'cause it was a fascinating issue. And then, Ken was also, well, he was an engineer, so he was always trying to be practical about things and looking for solutions. And he realized that there was going to be a need for solutions, and others did too, myself included. But, I'm not sure if it was Ken who first raised it, but I think it was, the idea of using Seven Mile as a part of the solution, part of the tradeoff on the Skagit. Seven Mile is a dam on the Canadian side on a river that flows from the US into Canada. So it was really a complete reversal of this issue. Instead of the Skagit, where the dam was south of the border on a stream that flowed south from BC, it was the other way around. The Seven Mile had the advantage that, in environmental terms, the impact was far, far less. It was almost insignificant because the valley involved was quite steep-sided so the area flooded was not vast. It was small by comparison. So, by raising the Seven Mile an additional feet and flooding into the States to the base of another dam in the States, it enabled adding considerable power and some capacity that would potentially help out in solving Seattle's shortage of power. So, at that point, the idea of some power going to Seattle was raised.

Were you involved in the negotiations with the Americans or other BC officials?

It went on to that. We broached the idea of meeting with Seattle, and got feedback, and in June of 1974, three people went down from BC - Ken Farquharson, Mike Goldie the lawyer, and myself. And we toured the American Skagit on the way to look at the Dam as it existed, and made our way to Seattle. We had a session with Marvin Durning, our American lawyer, and then met with Wes Uhlman, the mayor of the day. A huge delegation from Seattle. To take a first step, so to speak, looking at the possibility of negotiation.

What was Wes Uhlman's perspective? He was someone we wanted to interview but he declined. I was curious what you can tell us about his role to the extent that you're familiar with it.

I'd have to approach this in perspective. I led off with presenting our concerns. That we were concerned that this was - well, I took the outline, the historical perspective the first and foremost, that there had been long ties between Seattle and Victoria. That we'd been good neighbors for a good many years. That a lot of the activity that came to BC came up through Seattle for dozens

of years in the past - or a hundred years at least in the past. And, that the ship that we had put into use, the Marguerite, the social and emotional connection that had been there a long time had been retained and restored by the Province's actions, and that as good neighbors, friendly neighbors, that the agreement of 1967 was not exactly a neighborly one. And that we wanted to look at alternatives. Wes Uhlman was saying that the answer for Seattle - at least, that's my recollection - basically that Seattle wanted to be made whole, that they needed the power. But I was reading body language and I felt that there was more of a willingness there that was being stated - that there was a willingness to look at alternative ways of looking at it. I took it as a very encouraging sign and that's what I reported back to the Minister in Victoria upon our return.

It was just you going to represent BC?

I was there with our lawyer and with Ken Farquharson. But they weren't there to speak, they were there to observe. So it was just myself. But I did meet with Marvin Durning after, and I did meet with some of the other people that were in the wings, so to speak - well, I guess it was part of the organization that was looking to the next mayoralty contest.

Were there other environmental groups or environmental interests that were in solidarity with your concerns at that time?

Yes, there were. I met with all of them at one time or another mostly after what I've talked about so far. But, I'm afraid I don't know their names.

The North Cascade Conservation Council, something like that?

And other people in BC as well. Curly Chittenden, I'm sure you've heard all about him - a character and a half. I don't recall specific individuals. Burt Brink was involved. And Pat Goldsworthy - I think he was with one of the groups. Soon after that, there was an election in BC and the NDP was tossed out of office. That would be the equivalent of the Republican Party.

Just back up a moment: there were some suggestions that I made to Seattle after that meeting. There was a letter. After the meeting, we figured out some avenues. In November of 1975, at the request of the Minister, I wrote a letter to the administrative assistant to the Mayor

outlining what we thought might be an avenue - proposed what we felt what was an equitable solution. It was to accept the existing flooding, that was the flooding that just barely came into Canada, but avoid any further construction that would raise the dam. Secondly, to establish an international park in the area involving both sides of the line. Thirdly, look to alternative power arrangements, and we'd raised it before but we raised it again in writing, using Seven Mile project as an element of that solution.

Was it you and Williams mainly that came up with these proposals?

Yes, and with large input from staff. Ben Marr was involved. He was the Deputy Minister of Water Resources at the time. He became involved. He replaced the first Deputy Minister of Water Resources who'd resigned and he had some good ideas. We involved people in BC Hydro: Jim Wilson that I'd mentioned earlier, who had headed up the old Mainland Regional Planning Board, he was involved at BC Hydro, and he ferreted out people who helped put together ideas and started quantifying things in terms of how much power and where power can be derived from. So, all of those things have to be put together to try and piece together a basis so that we didn't suggest something and not have anything to follow through with. Suggesting Seven Mile with all of these things involved, so, that's when it all ended for me because the Government changed, and pretty soon after the new Government arrived I was asked for my resignation. I said I won't resign and so, I got fired.

How many years does each government have before an election?

Well, there's a maximum of 5 years, but its different from the American system. Its not a fixed term. And, it can rise and fall on a government's confidence motion. If they fail in a vote that can finish the government.

So, how many years were you in this position?

We moved to Victoria in October '72 and my employment with the government ended in January 1976 shortly after the election. It was return of the Social Credit government and they found that they couldn't reverse the Skagit back to what it had been before. They continued the negotiations through to a final solution. And it's actually quite magnificent to read the interview

with Ben Marr to see his involvement. Having been involved in his selection as Deputy Minister, it was interesting to see that he'd done such a good job. He did a great job.

Can you outline what happened in terms of the negotiations and why was it irreversible?

Just public opinion had taken over and the issue wasn't going to suddenly dry up and go away. It would have had problems. Actually, one of the people who was elected was Jack Davis, who was with the Federal Government before as a Liberal and he switched to Social Credit, and he, well, he was with the Federal Government. He'd opposed the raising of the Skagit High Ross Dam, so he took a commanding role, I think, preventing a reversal of position.

You had mentioned that, in your meeting with Wes Uhlman, you'd sensed some openness...

I was just reading his body language and the tone in which he spoke. It wasn't harsh; it was friendly. His body language was telling me that there was a lot more beneath the surface, that he would be happy to see the Dam stopped provided there would be some way out.

With the proposals that you made was there a receptiveness on the part of people in Seattle?

I assumed so because it formed a basis for what eventually transpired.

As for myself, I remained interested in the Skagit to a certain extent. I actually volunteered to assist the new government on it. But, was turned down of course because I was considered tainted meat - wrong color, wrong persuasion. I wasn't an NDPer but I had certain sympathies in that direction. I thought I might even write a book about the Skagit and I did gather a lot of information towards that end I talked to a lot of people that I hadn't had a chance to talk to at any length - including Ken, of course, Farquharson, at much greater length, and others involved - Goldsworthy. One of the things I did was visit the Seattle Public Library and browsed through all of the Skagit material they had. One of it was an announcement about an art exhibit. I started reading this. It was a catalog for an art show at the Seattle Art Gallery. I started reading this, my goodness, I wonder who wrote this, this sounds very familiar. I flipped to the back. It was written by Tom Robbins, the author who'd written several

books, and one of them, I think, *Another Roadside Attraction*, has elements of old highways and byways of earlier years. He struck a note of accord. And I followed that up with a trip up the Skagit on the American side. And I picked up a hitchhiker along the way. A young fellow. He was quite a character. He seemed to have a very strong respect for the Valley. At one point, he said, well, don't be alarmed when we go around the next bend, you'll probably see a couple of dozen bald eagles and sure enough, we came around the bend, and there they were. It was fish run time and the obvious was happening. He also mentioned, further up, that there was an area that he'd come across a native fellow. A spiritual person that believed in traditional native treatments. Including lying down in the Skagit river head upstream. So, this remained with me all these years. I had become fascinated with the thought that there were probably interconnections between the Indians that occupied the Skagit valley with the native people in the Chilliwack area on the Canadian side, going through up the Skagit valley. But, I started writing the book and it petered out. Other things became much more important like earning a living and doing other things.

What was the gist of the book going to be?

Just a story about how everything happened, speculating. It would probably end up being fiction. Trying to bring in some of the hypothetical elements of what might have transpired in the earlier days before the white man arrived. The native use of the area and its significance. The spiritual side of native experience.

So, it wasn't going to be a story about the political debates around the dam?

That too. It was probably far too ambitious.

So a long history from native use to contemporary native use and the dam? I think there's potential, you know...

Sure. I have yet other things that I want to do now. But I have gone on to work with native people here and that's dominated my career for a good many years now.

Why don't you tell us a little bit about your perceptions of the final conclusion of the controversy and the formation of SEEC and how you view that as a solution.

The final outcome? I think its fine. I haven't gone into it in detail believe it or not. When I finished with government I, in a way, finished with government temporarily. I just wanted to do something that was different and I had to depart from that. That's probably why I had difficulty trying to write a book. I did all the right things in terms of data gathering and resources. I've got boxes of stuff. There it has sat, and it has not inspired me since. Partly, its a "been there, done that" feeling and I'm more interested in getting the result and seeing a satisfactory solution. That sort of ended the issue and my need for involvement.

What is the results/solution that you talk of?

Saving the lower Skagit area - the lower part in BC from flooding. Beautiful meadows that are there, fascinating environment, the ecology is most unusual. Seeing the ridiculous financial arrangement laid to rest so it's no longer with us. And, a more equitable solution that allowed BC to win and Seattle to win. End up with a situation that was fairly reasonable.

One of the things we've been asking some of the people: to what degree they involved scientific advisers, or to what degree science came into play in shaping their perspectives or political strategy?

Well, science to the extent that we had advice from people, most of whom were engineers. But not science in terms of environmental scientists. There were people like Ken Farquharson, people like Burt Brink who had strong biological connection. Those kinds of things came into play indirectly. Provincial government had some of those people on staff. But, we saw it more as an issue of trying to solve more of a political situation than something that was going to be answered by science. You could go up and down the wall with science. The question in that wasn't going to solve the dilemma or the problem of getting Seattle power and getting at an agreement made between Seattle and BC for an inappropriate sum, for an inappropriate reason. It seemed to me totally stupid. So, we had to get out of it.

Randy Revelle (Interviewed July 26, 2004)

Randy Revelle was an elected Seattle City Councilmember from 1974 to 1981. During that time he served on the Energy Committee, participating in the groundbreaking and nationally recognized Energy 1990 decision that abandoned a nuclear power future for the city in favor of energy conservation. Randy went on to become King County Executive and now works as Vice President of Policy and Public affairs at the Washington State Hospital Association.



I served on the Seattle City Council from Jan 1974 until November 1981 when I left to be King County Executive. For the first four years I was Vice Chairman of what was then called the Utilities Committee which had jurisdiction for the utilities including Seattle City Light. And during that time, probably the biggest decision we participated in was what was called Energy 1990, which was a decision about whether or not to participate in WPPS 4 and 5, which we decided not to do. Then, I became Chairman of the newly-organized and newly-named Energy Committee which focused exclusively on Seattle City Light and energy conservation because they had become such huge issues at that time - broke away, if you will, from the Utilities Committee - and I chaired the Energy Committee from Jan 1978 until November of 1981.

The dominant issue was, as I said, Energy 1990 that was basically 1975-1976 in reaching a

decision. I think we decided in July of 1976 and then after that most of our emphasis was on implementing those decisions. It was, in my judgement, the single most important issue decided in the eight years that I was on the Council, the single most complicated, and the single most controversial.

The issue was whether, in order to continue to get the power that City Light needed, should they purchase a share, I think it was 10%, of the WPPS plans, WPPS 4 and 5. We were already participating - before my time, Seattle decided to participate in the first three nuclear plans from the Washington Public Power Supply system, effectively known as WPPS. We were in those three plans, and so this was an issue as to whether or not we should participate in 4 and 5, I think to the tune of about 10%. And, the other side of the issue was, no, it would be better for us to get the power that we would get from WPPS 4

and 5 by doing it through conservation. And so, really, the issue was do we need to participate in additional nuclear plants in order to meet our electric energy needs, or can we do it for the foreseeable future through dramatically augmenting our conservation programs?

In 1973-1974 there was the OPEC oil crisis and there was a sense of energy insecurity for the US. Do you think that played a role in the way in which you went about evaluating energy needs for the Seattle region?

I don't remember that it had any impact at all. It may have. It may have been what energized the advocates for this program but I don't remember that at all. It really focused, not on the overall energy picture, it focused on electricity needs in the Seattle City Light service area. That's what we focused on. It was not a state-wide issue for us, it was not even much of a regional issue. As I said, as Miller said, "we don't need it (nuclear power) and it costs too damned much". It was very expensive power. And of course, our conclusion was, we could get the same power by not using power. Conserving. That's what conservation is. Or using it more efficiently, than we could by purchasing power from WPPS 4 and 5.

We looked at hydropower, and of course, City Light is one of the largest hydro power systems in the country. I forget the percentage - maybe half of the power provided by City Light is provided based on hydroelectric generation. My recollection is, at the time, we didn't really count Ross Dam - High Ross Dam - as a resource, because - and we turned out to be right on that too - because we were very skeptical that we'd ever be able to raise it. My recollection is that the conclusion the majority reached was that there were not major additional viable hydroelectric resources in the region, the distance of the City Light service area, that could replace the load that was going to be met by WPPS 4 and 5. So, we didn't rely on hydro resources. We relied largely on conservation. Maybe some reliance on another alternative like wind power, but I don't think that was much either.

Interestingly enough, later on (that was 1976) I think in '78 or '79 we carefully analyzed whether we should build a dam on the Skagit River at Copper Creek. And we decided not to. And our assumption in the Energy 1990 study was that while we would explore Copper Creek as an alternative resource, just like High Ross, it was

probably unlikely that we'd do it. And that turned out to be true. We rejected it.

Why was it, even at the time, that you were skeptical that the Ross Dam would be...?

Didn't think that the Canadians would agree to let us do it. It was fundamentally that. And in the case of Copper Creek we thought it would probably do more environmental damage to the Skagit than its benefits were. So, a cost-benefit analysis of Copper Creek led to the conclusion, which I think was unanimous - it may not have been, but it certainly was 8 to 1, or 7 to 2 - that we shouldn't build Copper Creek. So, if we'd relied on Copper Creek and High Ross Dam in our calculations in Energy 1990, we could have been in trouble because we would have been relying on resources that eventually were not built. But my recollection is - I don't state this as fact - we said that neither of those resources were likely to be built and therefore should not be included in the resources expected to meet the necessary load.

So, some of other people we've interviewed talked about how environmentalism as an ethic or as a movement was just getting started in the early 1970s. So, I'm wondering whether you felt that at the time part of this environmentalist political climate may have influenced the decision?

Oh, without question. The Energy 1990 decisions in 1976 were dramatically influenced by the environmental movement, articulate and knowledgeable environmentalists, etc. That was a major factor in the decision. And in fact, we ended up relying on energy conservation, which is generally far more environmentally sensitive than building a nuclear plant, for example. So, yes, that played a major role. It played a role for most of the time I was on the Council, from '74 through all the way to '81. And I'm sure afterwards.

The debate around Ross Dam, there was a lot of opposition on the American side: the Cascades Community Council or the North Cascades - I forget the name - those and others that were American organizations were very much against flooding Canadian lands. And, of course, the Canadians were against it. And then Copper Creek, that was a major environmental issue. I can't remember others at that time. High Ross Dam and Copper Creek were the two biggest, after... The biggest was Energy 1990 in July 1976. The other two decisions came after that.

Energy 1990 - was that the name of the decision that was made to not go WPPS and to go conservation?

It became the name. Energy 1990 was the name of the process and the studies that were done, and then it became known as the Energy 1990 decision. And the reason for 1990 is that's when they were forecasting the load out to 1990; 14 years. We picked that as a benchmark against which to run all the calculations and comparisons and so forth.

Did it turn out to be an accurate projection?

I was going to go find out. By 1990, I was even out of government. So, I just didn't do it. My recollection is that somebody told me that we were pretty accurate. We certainly didn't need the WPPS 4 and 5. I don't remember any details of the forecasts.

Some of the other people we've talked to have commented that, in fact, the public involvement or the public response to the High Ross Dam was more Seattle-based than, say, locally Skagit-based, and I'm wondering in terms of the Copper Creek whether you remember much local Skagit involvement [or] opposition?

There was both. I don't remember the magnitude. I just remember the general citizen comments both from the Skagit Valley and Seattle, primarily the environmental community, were: don't built it. I was not the Chair of the Committee when I did 1976. I was Chairman when the Ross Dam work was going on, and I was Chairman when Copper Creek was decided. But I was Vice-Chair when we decided Energy 1990 so I was not in charge of the process.

You mentioned before that weren't too involved in the Ross Dam issue...?

No, that was largely negotiated and delegated to the Mayor's Office. We had so much going on - it was just enormous. During the time that I was Energy Committee Chair, energy issues were the dominant issues in the City of Seattle. I mean, it just overshadowed anything else that was going on. It was much bigger than anything. The only thing that approximated it was about a year and half, or two years ago, when there was all sorts of controversy over the drought, and the deregulation, and the California problem. That came close to this. But I think during those four

years that I was Chair, we had more and bigger energy issues than any other time in the city's history that I know of. So, we basically cut up the workload. And Bob Royer was the lead person on working through the Ross Dam issue.

Why was it such a big issue at the time?

Number one, the Canadians were opposed to doing it. And we couldn't do it without their permission. And secondly, the environmental community, which is quite strong in Seattle, and had a lot of influence on the Mayor of City Council, felt that it was the wrong thing to do.

But in terms of energy issues themselves dominating Council priorities...?

Just with all the - the WPPS issue, and then the Ross Dam, and then the energy conservation, and then there was the whole Pacific Northwest Utility, I forget the name of the Act, but there was a whole Federal Act where they were restructuring how Bonneville was operated. I mean there was just issue after issue. There were huge issues. And, the Council, I just don't think they've dealt with a package of issues like that before or since.

So, it wasn't that you were suddenly facing this major energy crisis in terms of actual needs, but because of all these issues...

No. All these various issues happened all at once. Particularly the PNWUC, is what the bill was called. The Pacific Northwest Utilities Coordinating Committee. But in any case, there was this major piece of Federal legislation that was dealing with Bonneville Power's role in the city, and I mean in the region, and a whole host of other issues. That legislation was led by Senator Jackson at the time and we participated quite heavily. It was just a time of major focus for Seattle City Light, and therefore the City of Seattle, from a variety of energy issues. I don't think there was any single factor that contributed to this.

In terms of the High Ross issue - in your view, do you think that, having made all this investment in the project, the idea of abandoning it on environmental grounds was justified?

It was a tough decision. It was not an obvious decision. What was obvious was that the Canadians weren't going to let us do it. So, I think what the negotiations focused on, is, that if you're

not going to let us do it, will you provide some compensation for us, some power, and I forget the details which they did to offset the power we were going to lose. But I always felt we didn't have a chance to build, or raise the Dam as long as the Canadian or British Columbia government opposed it. It just wasn't going to happen and it didn't. But I think we got some power from Canada in exchange for not raising the Dam, but I don't remember how much.

There's lots that you could talk about. I think that, you know, we didn't just make empty promises. We really - at least as long as I was there, and I think it's continued - we really worked hard to try and develop energy conservation programs and opportunities so that we could demonstrate that we were correct in not relying on WPPS 4 and 5 to meet the load. As it turned out, we were really correct because WPPS 4 and 5 were never built and therefore [we] never would have got the power that we would have paid for.

Was there resistance from the business community at that point? That they would be under pressure -- their bottom line was going to be...?

There continued to be resistance from the business community. Though I'm sure if you talked to the City Light people that do it today, conservation is accepted far more than it was back then. I think it's less revolutionary, if you will. To reject a generation facility and replace it with conservation - we were probably the first utility in the country to do it. I don't know that as a fact, but I suspect we were. I think that's why Congress invited us to come back and talk about it.

Congratulations.

It was fun. I have a copy of that testimony in some place, but I wouldn't have the foggiest idea how to find it.