Interview

John "Jack" C. Wright

Chief Forester, Weldwood

Interviewed by
Peter J. Murphy

Part of the Forest History Program Interview Series

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fRI Research
Informing Land & Resource Management

About the Forest History Program at fRI Research

fRI Research, originally the Foothills Model Forest, has been conducting research in sustainable land and forest management in Alberta since 1992. The positive impacts from the application of this research (e.g. Grizzly bears, watershed, forest history) to improving forest management and resource sustainability can be seen across Western Canada and beyond. The Forest History Program began in 1996 when Pete Murphy, Bob Stevenson and Bob Udell began a project to record the natural and management history of its Hinton Forest. This project soon expanded to add more reports and to encompass the entire model-forest land base. The program has produced a series of seven books and e-books including an Ecotour, an Ecotour App for west central Alberta, one DVD project and a series of reports about the evolution of adaptive forest management in the West Central region of Alberta.

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The Forest History Program Interview Series

Between 1997 and 2000, the Forest History Program conducted 33 interviews with various people who played important roles in, or were connected otherwise with the development of the remarkable forest management operation at the Hinton Forest of Weldwood of Canada. These were background information that would be used in a series of books and reports that would follow, all initiated by one book project linked to Weldwood's 40th anniversary celebrations in Hinton in 1997. Some of these interviews are posted to the fRI Research website for general reading, others are available only with permission for research purposes. All interviews were professionally edited to retain content but improve clarity but preserve content.

Dr. Peter Murphy—Interviewer

Interviewer Dr. Peter Murphy is Professor Emeritus in Forestry at the University of Alberta, where he taught and conducted research in forest policy and forest fire management from 1973 to 1995, during which time he also held positions of Chair of Forest Science and Associate Dean for Forestry in the Faculty of Agriculture & Forestry. During his time at the University he was active in promoting the study of forest history and its importance as guidance for the advancement of forest science today. As part of this he initiated and conducted a number of important interviews with key players in Alberta's forest history, most notably Des Crossley—Hinton's first Chief Forester—and his counterpart in the Alberta Forest Service, Reg Loomis who together established the foundation of Alberta's forest management agreement system. Dr. Murphy is the Chair of the Forest History Association of Alberta, and has been a member of the Forest History Program team at fRI Research since the program began in 1996, where he has authored and co-authored a number of books and reports.

Interview Date: June 11, 1997 and May 8, 1998

Jack Wright, 1967. Photo Credit: Weldwood Historical Photo Collection.

Interview

Interview 1: June 11, 1997

Murphy This is an interview with Jack Wright at his home in Hinton on the 11th of June 1997. Good morning, Jack, and thanks again for making yourself available. What I like to do at the beginning of an interview is just get a little perspective, in this case on you, to see where you came from, what got you into forestry, and what shaped your opinions and views? Could you talk about where you were raised?

Wright I was born and raised in Pembroke, Ontario. Pembroke was a lumbering community with its sawmills and river driving. I was familiar with logging operations. We had a cottage on the Ottawa River, and we used to drive up and down by boat from Pembroke to our cottage. It was 45 miles along the Ottawa River. We were constantly on the lookout for deadheads from river driving and the booms, and, in the spring, crews were continually going down the river with the sweeps going along the shores to get the logs that had hung up in high water. Logging was just a natural event.

Murphy What years were those, Jack, roughly? The 40s?

Wright Well I was born in 1930, and I was there until 1948. Then the family got into the motorboat business, but we were in the glove business since 1884 in the Wright Glove Works. We dealt with all the logging companies, and, of course, we bought hides from the farmers, so we were kind of close to the land in that way.

Murphy Did you work for the Wright Glove Works, then?

Wright I did when I was going to high school. I would go in on a part-time basis and cut out mitts with big dies, mallets, and big chopping blocks—this type of thing. The town was dependent on lumber, and one mill was owned by Consolidation Paper. It was mainly a sawmill running there, plus the Pembroke Lumber Company and Pembroke Shook Mills (making box shooks for Aylmer), and the Eddy Match Company. Our family used to do canoe trips in Algonquin Park, and there was logging there all the time, so we were familiar with logging everywhere we went. This just seemed natural. We knew a lot of people. My family had a lot of friends that are in the forestry business. They worked for the Ontario Lands and Forests, so the local superintendents were always friends of the families.

Murphy Had you considered other options for a career in your high school days?

Wright I don't think so. Finally, it just seemed to be the natural thing to go into. I didn't want to be in the glove business. I wanted to be outdoors. I spent the rest of my life outdoors, hiking, and canoeing. By the time I was five years old, we were skiing into our cottage during the winter—35 miles up the road from Pembroke. The road was plowed one car width, and then, when we wanted to stop at

the cottage, we had to shovel out a place to park the car off the road. We would drop off some bricks with the local people and put them into their ovens, so, when we were going home, we could put the warm bricks under our feet. We spent our life outdoors. As I say, I was brought up on the river. I paddled the river most of the time.

Murphy Did you learn to canoe there?

Wright Yes. I have the same style and model of canoe today. A "Chestnut 50-Lb Special" it was called in those days.

Murphy That was a classic.

Wright Yes. I took my first trip up the river when I was two weeks old. I don't remember, but I do have a picture of it—complete with a nurse. At that time, we had a cottage about 20 miles up the river at Downey's Bay. The later cottage, 25 miles upriver, was built in 1932. When I was a teenager, I didn't even bother learning to drive the car because all summer I had a boat in the boathouse. Why bother driving the car when I can go by boat?

Murphy You mentioned that you were given a talk in high school by someone?

Wright Yes. On one of their career days, we were given a talk by Dave Bruce from Ontario Lands and Forests. This chap was very boring, and he tried to convince us that there was no point in going into forestry because there were not going to be that many jobs in forestry. This fellow worked for Lands and Forests at that time, so we decided, another chap and I, that we were going to go into forestry and when we graduated, we were going to apply for his job! He is retired by now. I told him when I saw him in Halifax two years ago. He said, "Neil Dunne told me the same thing. It is because of me that you guys went into forestry." That is why I finally decided to go. I had thought of going in the year before to University of New Brunswick (UNB) after I finished my Grade 12 because a friend of mine was going down. Don Biggs was going down to school. But then I thought, "No, I will stay another year, and get my Grade 13 and go to Toronto."

I could go after Grade 12, but it would have been five years at that time at UNB. Or four years with Grade 13 at the University of Toronto (U of T), so I thought, "Well, it is the same length of time. I might as well go to Toronto." It was more convenient.

Murphy Had you worked in the summer at all with Junior Rangers or other?

Wright No. Boy scouting. My father was a scout leader from the time I was born. He was the commissioner in later years, but we always went out canoe tripping and things like this. I remember planting trees with the Boy Scouts on these abandoned farm lands. It was years later that I found out that all the trees that the Ontario government was growing, instead of putting them into the forest where they keep telling people that were being planted, they went to this type of thing—these groups planting up abandoned farm lands, which eventually were reverted back into farm lands again. I guess those

were Depression times. They were also sold to farmers for windbreaks or Christmas trees. When I started working and travelling around and visiting the companies and wondering where they planted the trees, I realized they never planted any trees. It was a big deal in the mid-1960s. I remember going to a Canadian Pulp and Paper (CPPA) meeting, and Ed Bonner was talking about planting their trees up at Spruce Falls. They had planted about a hundred thousand trees, and this was a big deal—they had grown them themselves. They were planting them in the forest, but that was a big deal that somebody was planting trees. I was pretty disillusioned with the forest practices in Ontario and Quebec.

Murphy Let's go back to the fall. What year was it you started at the University of Toronto?

Wright Well, I graduated in 1953, so I would have to backtrack from there four years to 1949.

Murphy Did you sign up for the regular BSc Forestry Program?

Wright That was the only program they offered. That is the reason I went to Toronto because I felt they gave a fuller course. UNB and the University of British Columbia (UBC) both had two streams. You either took forest engineering or you took forestry, and I wanted both.

Murphy Interesting.

Wright Because at that stage I didn't know where I was going to work into it.

Murphy Did you get both?

Wright Yes. We got the whole works, and I think it was a heavier course.

Murphy Who was the dean then?

Wright Bernie Sisam at that time. Dave Love was on the staff and is still there—doesn't look much older than he did then.

Murphy Did you ever have second thoughts about the course when you got into it?

Wright No. Some of those Mickey Mouse courses I wasn't fussy about, but, no, I never did. I realized that some of them were not as up-to-date as I would liked to have had because they were still talking horse logging and river driving and those kinds of things. There was horse logging going on. Of course, we were still horse logging here when I come out—up until 1969 or 1970. But in other areas, there were other harvesting methods using tractors, logging trucks, etc. in those days.

Murphy Did you work in forestry during the summers?

Wright Yes. I worked in forestry research at Chalk River (Petawawa Forestry Station). I worked at Petawawa the first year, and, then in 1951 and 1952, I worked in Alberta.

Murphy Where? Kananaskis?

Wright Out of Kananaskis. I worked in the Lesser Slave Lake country. I did some work in Kananaskis just for a week or two in the spring with Jack Quaite. That is where I met Des Crossley, and then I worked with Quaite up in the Slave Lake on spruce-aspen management. That is why I wanted to get back to Alberta. When I graduated, I worked at Petawawa just for a short time, and then I went to the Forest Inventory Section in Ottawa under Si Seeley (Federal Forestry Branch, Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources).

Murphy Was John Wagar there at that time?

Wright Sure. John worked with me right through. As a matter of fact, when I heard they had a job here, I wrote Johnny because he wanted to come out west.

Murphy Bless you for doing that!

Wright I wrote him and I said, "Johnny, here is a chance for you."

Murphy Interesting, because he phoned me, and I didn't know how he had been made aware of it.

Wright Well, you see, John had done most of his inventory work in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and the only place that he said he would like to work other than up there would be in the Foothills where they had that same type of forest conditions. So I phoned him and said, "Here is your chance," and he finally got here, and he said, "You know, I was ten years too late. I should have come out when you did."

Murphy He had a great spirit.

Wright Yes, John and I bowled together. I've got a picture of the winning team for our department—John Wagar, Russ Dewe, Bill Hardy, and I.

Murphy In Ottawa?

Wright In Ottawa. Yes. I had a pickup truck, so I helped him move from Hull over to his house in Ottawa the first time. Then he and Bill Hardy built this house out there near the river (Rideau) later.

Murphy Going back to your first job, what convinced you to apply for a federal research job? Was that your interest at the time?

Wright I was interested because I had been to the federal forestry station at Chalk River and stopped in there because we knew some people. I was in high school, so I was kind of interested in what was going on and that is why I applied for work there in 1949. I really enjoyed that. I worked with Ken Logan, who I later lived with in Ottawa

Murphy In what area was it that you were working?

Wright In silviculture.

Murphy What was silviculture like at that time?

Wright At that time, there were a lot of forest management plots, like shelterwood cuts and strip cuts and this type of thing, which we measured. And then I did some with Ken Logan on problems relating to the light requirements of spruce as an understory of aspen, and some basic research where we were dealing with controlling light with different types of laths and screenings to permanent sample plots that were spruce under aspen. Then when I came out to Alberta, I had the opportunity to work with Jack Quaite the next year on the same type of thing—spruce/aspen competition in the north. I came out with him in both 1951 and 1952.

Murphy Where were you based out of?

Wright We were actually travelling around the north working out of Fawcett Lake near Smith and Slave Lake and the Fawcett River. We were based out of Kananaskis, but we were only in Kananaskis for a week or two in the spring, and that is the last we saw of Kananaskis.

Murphy Did you work in other areas other than Smith?

Wright Smith, Slave Lake up to Faust, we spread up there, but we were up at Fawcett Lake pretty well most of the first year. In my second year, we spent most of the time on Remples Road up the Fawcett River. We worked with a jobber for Stelter out of Smith. We were doing scarification work under various densities of logging, from shelterwood to clear cutting, to pre-scarification and post-logging scarification. We did dip and dive site preparation using International-D9 tractors with angle blades.

Murphy Were those in predominantly spruce stands?

Wright They were predominantly spruce stands.

Murphy Did you do some work on spruce-aspen relationships, too?

Wright Yes. We did a bit both years. The first year was practically all that spruce- aspen, where we laid out plots under various intensities of logging. We put in small plots for regeneration. The other study was pairing spruce with aspen competition, where we selected equal sized and equal age spruce trees. For one of them, we cleared the aspen from around it for a distance of two times the diameter of the crown. We treated them with Ammate (ammonium sulphamate).

Murphy To poison the aspen?

Wright We poisoned the stumps. We did that in various age classes from about 15 years of age to 90-year-old spruce. That was mostly the project I worked on that year. Although I did work on the regeneration cover intensities with the shelterwoods a bit the first year, the second year was mainly on the scarification of spruce stands. We started doing different dip and dives of scarification with little TD9s, so that was the main project. The second year, we still had completed some of the aspen competition stands.

Murphy I understand you went and revisited those sites.

Wright I revisited them in about 1986 or so to help the CFS relocate them because, if they couldn't find enough of them, they were going to abandon the project. We did manage to find quite a few. They had Dr. John Crawford ("Jock") Lees come out to help them find them, but he didn't find very many. We found quite a few, and it was amazing. Of course, everything, like everywhere else, has changed. The access has changed. The old roads that we used to drive, you couldn't even find anymore. I remember one group, we wandered around, and, after that I said, "I was only in here a couple of days looking at those plots, and there was a sawmill in here, and we drove in and watched that sawmill." We got there and we found the sawmill site, but several old roads were all grown over. But they did finally find them, where we thought they were. The stuff around 50 years was the amazing stuff.

Murphy What was your reaction?

Wright Because you could see the crop trees from 300 or 400 yards away. You could see this big spruce, and you would go in there and sure enough it was clear around it. Then you would go and look for the control, and it would be something that was still under the canopy (aspen) about maybe 35–40 feet, and these others were 75–80 feet, so they were spectacular. But those trees that were under the canopy of the aspen never broke through.

Murphy Hadn't broken through?

Wright The tops were still just whipped, and they hadn't broken through yet. Now the older ones—we did some around Faust, and they were close to the 90-year age class—were all freed because the aspen had died out shortly after, so there really wasn't much difference between the control and the treated ones. But that was because the aspen died naturally, but the younger stands were right from the tiniest stuff. It was just spectacular. And they use that as an argument, and they talk about it—they have aspen competition. "We can't treat it. We should plant spruce." I said, "What is the point in planting spruce? Pine doesn't live, and spruce doesn't grow, so you either get rid of the competition or you don't bother planting." It is as simple as that, because, if you have to wait 100 years until those spruce are going to release, you haven't got anything the first rotation, so you have lost a rotation."

Murphy Yes.

Wright You either have to get rid of the competition or write it off. But they still want to plant spruce. I see them out there planting spruce trees. Why? Because they think there is going to be competition!

Murphy What prompted you to switch to the inventory unit after you graduated?

Wright Well, a job came up. Quite frankly, there was nothing in silviculture available. I could have stayed temporarily on silviculture.

Murphy It is a sad commentary on forestry at the time.

Wright Yes. But the inventory research was interesting until I met Si Seeley, and then I lost interest pretty fast. He was an idiot (pardon the expression).

Murphy He was quite renowned.

Wright Sure he was renowned on the backs of other people. Take for example the guy that developed the stereoscopic transfer device (Seeley Scope). (Si can't see stereoscopically). He never developed that. Mark Robinson developed it. Seeley put a patent on it in his name. The project I was doing was very interesting because I was doing aerial stand volume table research. As a matter of fact, you probably know Bill Hilborn.

Murphy Yes.

Wright I followed Bill. He started this project, so I followed Bill.

Murphy Is that when Bill went to UNB to teach?

Wright Yes. So I moved there in the fall of 1953.

Wright Bill used to come back in the summer and had a cushy job because he was the kind of guy that buttered up to Si, you see. He would get a cushy job wandering around with his hands in his pockets with Louie Nozzolillo , but Louie did all the work. In terms of this aerial stand volume table, he hadn't really done much—he just had this project and put in a couple plots. I worked with Barry Sully. Barry and I were known as the "gold-dust twins" in those days. We went everywhere together. We worked together, and he was working on crown density studies, and so we combined the two studies into the aerial stand volume table approach. We took what they called "Moosehorn readings" at that time to determine the amount of crown cover. We established temporary 1/5-acre plots in various types and tried to relate them to find some correlation that we could use to develop aerial stand volume tables.

It worked really well, but Si Seeley prided himself on having never having been cut back on his budget. No wonder, because it was a laugh. He never put any budget in. The first year I went out in the field, we were out for about three weeks, and we were out of money. That was all the money he had budgeted for field studies. I said, "Do you mean to say I am going to spend 11.5 months trying to analyze two weeks work?" He said, "Oh, yes." Well, that suited Bill Hilborn. He just wanted to muck around anyway. I said, "This is ridiculous." My review came up in July, and I went to this review. Dave Gray and a couple others wondered how things were going, and I said, "This is ridiculous. I am finished my summer program, and what am I supposed to analyze? At this rate, it will take me 25 years to get enough information to do anything." About three days later, Si came down. He said, "I can't figure it out, but they just gave me another (I forget how many thousand

dollars) to do some more field work. Is there anything you can do?" I said, "Yes. I sure can." So we got some money. It wasn't much.

That guy was nuts. You would go out, and you would have maybe 100 sample plots that you had done in various types, and you would work up a correlation. I remember him coming in one day, and he sat down and said, "You know, I think you made a mistake somewhere. I went out and I measured a couple of trees on the museum lawn on the weekend. I don't get the same correlation you get." What kind of a guy? Big elms. I had it to the point where for several major species in the east we could make good correlations, but there wasn't any way you would ever get that published because it was too simple. It was a simple correlation. He had this idea—his crown C over B ratio or something he had dreamed up and that was the main thing as a criterion. And I said, "This is stupid. You are using a dependent variable as an independent variable. It just doesn't make sense. You can't do that." I couldn't convince him at all. So when the chance came out here (Northwestern Pulp and Power at Hinton [NWP & P]) for inventory, I thought, "Well, here is a chance to use some of this information" because I knew they had a permanent sample plot system started. I had been trying to get transferred out West with the government. That is how Des knew I was interested, and that I wanted to get transferred to Kananaskis if I could.

Murphy Had you been in touch with him?

Wright Yes. I had been in touch with him. Then he used to come down to Ottawa for the directors' meetings every year, and I would see him then. He was still with the federal government when he offered me the job here.

Murphy But he knew he was coming here to Hinton.

Wright He knew.[1] He was coming, but I got married in August 1955. There was a telegram on my truck when we got back from our canoe trip. He offered me a job here, but he wanted me to take over the photogrammetry part of it and mapping. I really didn't see myself doing that. I had done a lot of work with that because we were in the photogrammetry research section in inventory and photogrammetry under Si. I just couldn't see myself looking through a stereo all my life and doing that. Besides that, there wasn't any place to live. They didn't even know whether we were going to be able to use these old woodlands cabins. I had a nice apartment overlooking Dow's Lake in Ottawa. I was just married then. He was down again at the end of the next summer. In 1956, I had just built a house in Ottawa. I had started building in March, and finally moved into it just about the time he got there. I asked him how it was going. He said, "Terrible. We lost a sixth of our area in fires. What we did all summer was fight fires." He wanted to know if I was still interested. I said, "Yes. I still am." Well, he was going to see if they had some other things that they needed, and he would go back

[1] Jack Wright's Note. He had accepted the job of chief forester with NWP & P when I got back from my honeymoon in Algonquin.

and see. But they were not offering much money. In those days, I think I made about $375 with the federal government, and he was offering about $275 per month.

Finally, he wrote me back (with a job offer in cruising and cutblock layout - with slightly more money but still less than I was making at the time), and they had some trailers we could live in. They were building apartments, too, but we didn't want an apartment. I had been in an apartment before I built the house, so I decided to try a trailer. He saved both for me, so I resigned from the government. I didn't even sell the house until after I got out here. I lived in the house for about a month, and, when the offer came, I said to Marg, "Do you want to go out there?" She said, "Might as well. We are going to go sooner or later, so we might as well go now." So I took my wheelbarrow and my rakes over to the neighbours and said, "Here. They are all yours. Go ahead and work on your place." I didn't stay very long.

Murphy On what date did you come?

Wright I left there New Year's Day. I arrived here January 7, 1957.

Murphy So from when you graduated in 1953, you went to Petawawa just for a short while, then you went with Inventory, and you were with that outfit right through until you came here?

Wright I finished there in mid-December 1956.

One of the main reasons that I wanted to come here was when I talked to Des. He told me that the company, Northwestern Pulp and Power Ltd. was committed to practising sustainable management. As a matter of fact, they had signed their first agreement on September 14, 1954. In that agreement (he sent me a copy), they had committed to sustainable management. That was one of the main reasons that I accepted the job. On the job in Ottawa we were travelling all over northern Ontario and Quebec. We were using the federal government's permanent sample plot system for ours, rather than reinventing the wheel and establishing new plots. We would go there, and we would take crown density readings and relate them to their stands, so we were kind of helping another group at the same time. Don McLean and George Bedell had their growth and yield plots all over northern Ontario, and we would go and meet with the company people because they (the plots) were on company limits usually. We would talk to Frosty Winters at Stevens, Ontario, and other company foresters—Norm Kissick, Paul Ward, etc.—in Thunder Bay. They would sit and talk about how bad things were in forestry because these were the forestry people, and they were all discouraged because there was no forestry being practised.

Early Days on the Job—March 1957 Embarras WC Cruising Party

Murphy What was happening then?

Wright Nothing really. They were trying to do some permanent sample plot work with the government, and they would cooperate with anybody they could to find out more about what was going on, but there were no silviculture prescriptions in their harvesting. There were no silviculture reasons for the harvesting. They just cut.

Murphy Whose responsibility was it for renewal or silviculture?

Wright The provincial government. The province of Ontario and the province of Quebec. It was the same thing when I worked with McLarens Limited in Quebec in their limits. We knew what was going on there—I worked with Tim Kenny and Peter Potter.

Murphy And were the governments doing anything?

Wright No. They were not doing anything. All the trees they were planting were going in shelterbelts.

Murphy What was the philosophy? That nature would renew itself?

Wright I don't think they had any philosophy. They just gave these big blocks of land to these companies and let them cut. There was very little control. As long as they got their stumpage, they didn't care. They had no management plans, and they had far more land than they needed or could use. It was all based on water-based transport. They were river driving.

Murphy It is significant that you mentioned that the foresters to whom you were talking felt despondent because they were not practising forestry.

Wright Yes. We weren't talking to the operations people. Each of the companies usually had a guy interested in growing and finding timber, looking after forestry things.

Murphy A guy—one only?

Wright A guy usually. Maybe have one guy who would be the chief forester, and that would be depending on their situation whether they would have somebody in the field or whether he would be it. There was Paul Ward out of Great Lakes, and Paul wasn't really that interested in forestry anyway, but he was their chief forester.

Murphy Would his responsibility be more for supplying the wood?

Wright No. He was supposed to be doing forestry work, and so he would have a little cubby hole and he would be looking at what types they had, and maybe doing some experimenting on silviculture or something, if he could, to try and justify it. But they really didn't have any apparent influence on the operation. As I say, the fellows at Caramat and Stevens with Marathon. They had a fellow Frosty Winters who was out in the bush and Norm Kissick was their chief forester at that time. We had met with Norm, but he had somebody working with him. They were most discouraged. The guy that I worked with out of McLarens was the son of the owner. He was a real gung-ho guy. He was from your era at UNB. His mother was the owner of McLarens. Kenny. Tim Kenny. I worked with Tim.

Murphy So he could see there were problems.

Wright Yes. He did. But, you know, they had no responsibility for it. They paid money into the government—stumpage for reforestation. This happened in all the provinces. British Columbia, of course, still does it. They pay money and the government is supposed to do the job. Ontario kicked it back and forth, you know. The government would be responsible, and the companies would pay for it, and then they would say, "Now we are going to change it, and the companies are going to be responsible." They still wouldn't pay the government, and nobody did anything. They just kept passing the buck for years.

Murphy So you were obviously quite taken with the conditions of this lease here.

Wright Yes. First, before I left there, I went to the air photo library with George Brown. We dug out air photos for this area, so I knew what to expect when I came here as far as the forest's topographic conditions were concerned.

Murphy So you had an opportunity to size it up?

Wright Yes, cover types and what not. They did a lot of work with photographs, and I worked with George Brown on site productivity. I would ski with George every week all winter.

Murphy So that was a great background you have brought with you.

Wright Yes. It was interesting, and as I say the production inventory (strip cruising) wasn't worth a hoot here, so I got into prism cruising. When we finished, the first measurement of the permanent CFI (continuous forest inventory) plots, we developed our own aerial stand volume table using the criteria developed while with the federal government.

Murphy Earlier this morning, we had had talked about the clear cutting at Camp 5, which, to my recollection, was one of the first public controversies about what was happening to the forests around Hinton. Would you please restate those comments for the record?

Wright The big clear cut that started there in 1956 and extended through to 1957 was the first. It was the first, largest clear cut, although we had some in the Berland River area (e.g. Camp 8) that were large because of the muskegs and isolated patches of timber. One of the first things that I did in January of 1956 was Jim Clark and I went out with Charlie Jackson and Reg Loomis in Reg's old jeep on a cold morning to see this big clear cut at Camp 5. We parked on the hill just above Quigley Creek and looked across the valley, and Reg looked at that and said, "If you can get regeneration on that big clear cut, I've got no problems with clear cutting." But, of course, years later he retracted that statement.

However, I could never get Reg to come back out and look at the Camp 5 clear cut because it really was a success story. They (the Alberta Forest Service [AFS]) insisted on leaving small seedblocks throughout this large clear cut, which I could never figure out because in lodgepole pine why would you leave seedblocks? But I guess this was a requirement that we had to do on experimental basis. Those were cut out in the late 50s afterwards. If anyone could see it now, you can't even tell it has been cut over. Several years ago, I guess it would be in the mid-1980s, there was an oil well drilling just off the Robb Road. We had taken a group in there. I think it was on a Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, Forest Management Group tour, and they let us climb up to the first platform. From there, you could look across the valley at this cutover, and you know, we had to point out where we had cut, even at that time.

Berland 8 Clearut winter 1958

They have taken the rig out, so we can't climb that hill again and blocked off the road, but, I imagine if you could get up in the air, you would see the Camp 5 cut.

Murphy Do you recall the size? You talked about a large clear cut—do you remember how large it was at that time?

Wright At that time, they only cut the first side of the hill, so it was probably about 600 or 700 hundred acres. Then, in 1957, they extended it. We extended the clear cut north, and then modified it into strip cutting instead of leaving seedblocks. They had left some narrow strips on the north side. But I would think, excluding the area around the strips, it probably was in excess of a 1,000 acres at that time. Many years later (1974–76), we did a progressive clear cut in the Berland that actually ended up at about 5,000 acres (including the 800 plus acres in Carl Carlsen's timber berth (E7-L7) in Berl V, which was cut at the same time). It was a joint study with Fish and Wildlife, with the company keeping a record of the economic cost benefits. Fish and Wildlife were to assess the impact on wildlife. From the point of view of the success of the regeneration, it was quite successful. As far as Fish and Wildlife was concerned, they found there was no game in it to start with. I don't know whether they ever followed up, but they kind of lost interest at that time. I don't know if they ever followed up on that one.

Murphy It is interesting, too, that Fish and Wildlife's concern at that point was largely the so called "game species".

Wright It was mainly moose that they were interested in, and they couldn't find any.

Murphy Were they consciously concerned about biological diversity at that time?

Wright I don't think so. There were so called "indicator species" they were looking at. They were using elk in the southern part of the area.

Murphy We'll talk later about that progressive clear cut on the Berland. That was an interesting concept to put forward. But going back to Camp 5, you had commented, too, about the growth rates on there. Could you redo that for the tape, please?

Wright I was referring more to the mature stands that were left and how they have really grown because of the association with alder. It impacted on their stocking levels, which are in some cases probably more open-grown than we would like it. Also with the nutrient assistance, the growth rates have just produced some terrific stands up there.

Jack Wright in Camp 5 (McLeod IX) Regeneration, 1981.

Murphy Do you have a recollection of the volumes per unit area with the increment figures?

Wright No. Just judging by going through it, I would say those stands are running, in my terms, around 60 to 70 cords to the acre, so you can look at that, too, in terms of cubic metres per hectare—probably 450. So those are quite good stands.

Murphy Yes. Are the regenerated stands growing similarly?

Wright They are. The older regeneration is really producing good stands.

Murphy And are the alders are still present?

Wright There are still alder present, but to varying degrees. Where it was ideal we have really good stocking and really good growth in some places where alder didn't come in as heavily, then we have what I consider still over-stocking in areas.

Murphy You mentioned Reg and Charlie who, for the record, were with the Alberta Forest Service. At that time, Reg was head of Forest Management. I understand that he had an aversion to clear cutting. He didn't really like the idea.

Wright It was a reflection of his days when he worked for the Brompton Pulp and Paper Company in Beardmore, Ontario. I am quite familiar with the harvesting at that time in the Beardmore area, and they were just huge clear cuts in jackpine. They grew the best blueberries I have ever seen.

Murphy They didn't get regeneration?

Wright They did not get much regeneration. There was too much slash left, and with no site preparation, and the slash was high up in the air.

Murphy Interesting.

Wright I worked up there with the Federal Forestry Branch measuring some research blocks. I guess that would be in 1954. We walked across these blocks, and we would comment on not much regeneration. But they sure grew great blueberries! We had one of those soil augers that had about a ten-inch slot in them—one of those tubular soil augers. I think we had something like eight or nine berries in this thing—we would fill this slot, and we took a picture of these huge blueberries. They cut everything except the swamps, and that was Reg's background I think.

Murphy That explains a lot.

Wright Brompton Pulp and Paper and later the St. Lawrence Corporation.

[They appeared to stop the interview for a break at this point.]

Murphy Reconvening in the afternoon at Jack's house—we were talking about Sundance Lakes and the proposal for them as a Special Place. When did you discover the site?

Wright In 1961 with the CFI crew. They were camped at Kaydee Creek. They would go down and crawl over these sandstone bluffs to get to the plots in the valley. It was a long piece from the road, and they had found a great big petrified wood stump halfway down over the cliff. At night, they took the Land Rover and parked at the top of the valley, and they put a cable on this stump. They got it almost to the top when the cable broke! So, somewhere on the bottom, there is a beautiful piece of petrified stump. But this is a valley with all these sandstone sculptures along it.

Marg Wright, Jim Bocking—Hoodoos 1972

We thought that would be a nice place for a trail, but it wasn't until the next time we measured plots, which was probably in 1971, that Ray Ranger and I went in to check these plots, and we could see where the fellows had snowshoed in from the new Emerson Road. Emerson Road was put in 1969. They walked right down where the bluffs were in the snow and followed right down the face of it. We said we should reserve this because now it is a reasonable walk to the Emerson Road. We put that in our next management plan, mapped it, and took it out of production and set it up as a recreation area.

We started the trail in 1973. It would be about 1971 when we set it up formally, but we had looked at it in 1961. We decided it would be a good recreation opportunity. So we put a reservation on everything to the height of land right from our Emerson Road right down to the southern boundary because it was of more value for recreation. To log it, you would have had to put a road down in the valley, and it wouldn't make sense. It was not just an altruistic kind of decision. From an economic point of view, it wouldn't have made sense anyway to try to log it, so we took that out. The company recently nominated the Sundance Valley under Special Places 2000. But since then, somebody has expanded the nomination to include half the country around it—way beyond the bluffs, which doesn't make sense. But the original part has been out of the management since 1971.

Murphy But it was perceptive of you to recognize its value and to earmark it in that way.

Wright Another good example is the Goat Bluffs up in the Lower Pinto Creek Valley. In 1960, we were camped down on the Pinto, right below the bluffs. We would get up in the morning, and we would see these goats on the side of the hill all the time. We took that area out in the next management plan. That would be the 1961 revision. We had taken the valley out and set it up as a reserve. We checked both sides to see how far you could see goat trails. It was about ten years later that a couple of fellows, Gerry Lynch who was their wildlife biologist in Edson and one of the other biologists, came into the office. They sat down and passed the time of day with Des and I. Finally, Des said, "What do you want?" "Well, we have an area that we would like to set aside as a goat habitat," they told us. We said, "We took that out ten years ago." It has been set aside for a goat reserve from management, so we beat them to the gun on that. And that is another area that somebody has decided they would like to make several townships in size instead of just the area the goats use. But both those areas are ones in which we took the initiative and set them up. They are really unique just like Emerson Lakes.

Murphy Yes.

Wright That was interesting because Eric Marison laid out this Emerson Creek Road in 1969. There was a beautiful esker that goes right through the middle of Emerson Lakes, and he proposed to put the road there. (Actually, it was Hank Ryhanen, superintendent at Edson that objected to the road location). And Owen Bradwell said, "What are you putting it through there for?" Eric replied, "Oh, because it is good for road building." The rest of us thought, "There has got to be a better place for a road than through those lakes." We moved it over and put a reservation around them. That is when we set those lakes up.

Murphy Is the Emerson Lake area withdrawn from the lease now?

Wright I don't think it is withdrawn. It is still set up as a reserve.[2]

Murphy It is part of your area?

Wright As a reserve, yes. But we have it as a reserve of some kind (might have been deleted in the most recent agreement). I don't know how much. The campsite just covers a little bit of it, but the whole thing has got trails all around it so that they are all reserved. It is just like the other trails like the Bighorn Trail where we identify these trails and try and save them. Someone was telling me last night, "You have got to do something about these trails. Somebody had been down the Bighorn, and said it is all cut-over and you can't find the trail." I said, "Now that is not true." I said, "The trail is the boundary on those cut blocks. If you were in the middle of a cut block, you were not on the trail."

Murphy That was remarkable in itself that you identified those trails and tried to mark them.

Wright Yes. It is an ongoing thing to try to get them tied down exactly. It is pretty tough. Another project that was identified was the Edson-Grande Prairie Trail. It was all old cutover, and a lot of roads and everything else, but I know where it goes. I just finished doing the Bighorn Trail south down to Southesk River on the photographs.

Murphy Far out.

Wright But I think I convinced them that it would be wise to go to the Gregg Cabin and then cut across the McLeod Trail and to Steeper. Then take the Beaver Dam Trail down to Grave Flats and then link up with the Bighorn Trail South because the other we used as a boundary in Camp 33 cut blocks. But it goes right through the strip mine of Cardinal River Coal, all the way, and it will be mined right through to the upper Gregg River. The other one is just as historical a trail and obviously was also a Dominion Forest Service trail because Beaver Dam Cabin is a Dominion Forest Service cabin.

Murphy Is that cabin still there?

[2] Editor's Note. Emerson Lakes has been withdrawn from the FMA landbase and is now part of Sundance Provincial Park, established April 28, 1999.

Beaverdam Cabin 1976

Wright It was last time I was there. I located all the cabins from the photographs there. There were a couple—I would like to see if they are still there, like Nose Hill. I spent a lot of time in Nose Hill in early days. It was the only place to stay in that whole Marlboro area with a road to it, and the road wasn't much. We used to stay there. There would be six, seven guys staying in that cabin. We stayed in that thing all the time when we cruised the Camps 20 and 24 areas. It was a great little cabin. The 1961 burn burned all around there. It burned the wood pile on the porch, but never burned the cabin.

Murphy That is interesting.

Wright It just scorched the outside of the wall. But after the fire, of course, the road was impassible, and I haven't been back. We put a winter road in about a mile away, and I walked in there one time, and the cabin was still there—that is ten years ago.[3]

Murphy Where we left off before lunch you had just arrived at Hinton. What were your impressions?

Wright It was pretty cold. Actually, when I arrived on the morning of January 7, 1957, it wasn't too impressive because it was -40 degrees. There was a frost haze, and we went right past Hinton. I saw a sign saying "Hinton". The next time I looked in my rearview mirror, there was another sign saying "Hinton". We hadn't seen anything except the station. We were on the western outskirts at Sam

[3] Jack Wright's Note. I walked into the cabin this fall (1997), and it is still there. There was a hole in the ceiling, but it was in otherwise in fair condition.

Pete Smith's Rainbow Trailer Court, so we went back in and said, "Where is this mill?" He said, "You turn off after the station—they had just built the new highway that year. It was still gravel then. We turned down just past the station and found it, but I thought I had seen an outline of what looked like a gravel pile or something. It was the pulp piles. So that was my first impression.

Murphy Where had you driven from?

Wright We drove from Ontario.

Murphy Did you have kids then?

Wright Yes, our son Doug. We came out and they had a trailer for us, so we went and moved into the trailer. They had brought in a bunch of trailers from the States, American trailers, and they were not insulated. They didn't have the skirting on them yet. They had just set them up, so I just kept the water running in the bathroom the whole time. Every morning, there would be knocks on the door. People were coming to see if we had water running. They would get some water, so they could cook breakfast. It was pretty cold, but I was only in it one week.

Then, that weekend, I went to Edson because they had an apartment for me as well. I went to Edson to see if I could just get some of my furniture and bring it back. I went into Wilson's Feed Store, and they showed me where it was. They said, "Go over to Worthing Transport. They will take it all up for you." I said, "It is Saturday night." They said, "They don't care." So I went over, and they said, "Sure. We will deliver it tonight. We will be there after supper." The stuff arrived about 8:00 at night. Phil Appleby and I were trying to move it into the place, and the power went out! We got a flashlight to try and find stuff. That was my introduction to Hinton. It was great. We went out and scouted around the countryside. John Miller, Jim Clark, Phil Gimbarzevsky, and I, about the second or third day, went up behind Folding Mountain to have a look at the countryside and slide down the hill on our snowshoes. Most of my work clothes hadn't come. It was almost a month before the trunk arrived, so here I am with my ski clothes, which I had luckily, and four-buckle overshoes. We got by.

Murphy When Des hired you, what did he say the job would be?

Wright It would be cruising and cut layout. For the time being, that is what they wanted.

Murphy Was that the first priority when you arrived—to find cutting areas and to set up camps?

Wright Yes. We were going out to see the various camps and check the cruises that they had made on them for timber estimates and get a look at how the cut layout was being done. I was working with Jim Clark in a little wee office—the two of us. My big introduction to the place was how corrupt it was in the upper echelons of the woodlands division with woods manager, Gordon McNab and all of his buddies from Northern Ontario, his drinking buddies. Most of them would end up in his basement. The first week I was there, Jim and I were sitting in the office and this Albert Eisenberg walks in (a scruffy old character), lays down this beautiful map all painted with trees and with this road on it.

He said, "I just laid out this road for you, Jim. I thought you would want to see it." And Jim said, "Where is it?" He said, "It goes down to the Yellowhead Tower." And Jim says, "Why do we want a road to the Yellowhead Tower for?" He said, "There is nice timber there." Jim said, "There is nice timber all over the place." After he left, Jim said, "You know, we better go check that. Those guys have probably built it already." Sure enough, we went out there, and they had stripped it. You see this guy Eisenberg, he laid out the road. He would go out with maybe a sack of raisins and maybe a bottle of whiskey for a week, and he would lay out a road somewhere. Then he would go on a toot for two weeks, and then he would paint (draw a map of) this road, and he would bring it in.

Then the guy who worked for him was Ernie Monager, who we called "the weasel". He was in charge of the equipment, but the equipment that he used was owned by Hamp McNab, who was a brother of Gordon. I am sure Hamp never had a plugged nickel to his name, so they obviously were Gordon's Cats. They were just trying to find places to keep these guys working. They had knocked down all the Forest Service phone lines because all they did was run up the Yellowhead Trail with the road. Our cruising crew were going down to the Yellowhead Tower, where they had to spend the first two weeks putting the forestry telephone line back up!

That winter, it was a real eye opener because of the stuff that went on. There were guys here that didn't have a job. There was nothing they were capable of doing, but they were on the payroll. It was such a contrast to the forestry group, you know. Des ran a pretty tight ship. This was really wild. In the summer, they brought Harry Collinge in to see what was wrong with the mill. In the meantime, they found out what was wrong with the woodlands, too, because I think it was Leo Leivo or somebody who blew the whistle. McNab's Cats sometimes got 25 hours a day. They decided it wasn't right. They started to investigate, so Gordon was down the road that summer before we had our first picnic at Camp 1. That was August 1957.

Gordon McNab showed up in his white convertible in his big Stetson to see how his boys were doing. Harry Collinge was shuffling around. He was just kind of a consultant to look at the mill and see what was going on. That was when we met Harry, too. But it cleaned up pretty fast. After Gordon left, things really smartened up and Adrien Provencher came as woodlands manager.

Murphy Was that at the same time that Tom Easley left, too?

Wright That was one of the recommendations of Harry Collinge, but it was Easley's choice. He was only supposed to be here until start-up, so it was a mutual understanding, not a matter of sacking the guy. He left in the summer and then we got Harry Collinge as the resident manager, the guy who had got the mill producing.

Murphy When you got here, then, you were assigned to cruising. This was an immediate task that had to be done to keep the wood flowing to the mill.

Wright Cruising and cut layout. They had a cut layout crew as well. They had two fellows on that crew.

Murphy What was the vision of that, then? You must have developed a vision of where you were going once you got there.

Wright Yes. From my own point of view?

Murphy Yes.

Wright I was interested either in the forest management or the silviculture. John Miller was here from the US with the forest management, and he was only here temporarily. So I worked with John, and, then when he left the next spring, I took over his job as head of inventory management section. But I had worked on CFIs—the permanent sample plot (PSP) system and was familiar with Continuous Forest Inventory—before that, so that was kind of a logical thing to go into. And cut layout—Jim couldn't handle it and the cruising. Jim and Des were doing a lot of negotiating, as well, so Jim didn't really have time for getting involved in the day to day cruising and cut layout. There had been another fellow up from the States by the name of Frank Laduc who worked on that, and it was after he left that I came. They brought several people just from the States just to get started. It was on the understanding that when things were rolling in their department, they would go back to the States.

Murphy Do you think they reflected that corporate spirit that you identified earlier on wanting to do things right?

Wright Yes. I was impressed with the guys from St. Regis. This John Miller in management—he was a real keen guy. He had lots of ideas, and he was always searching textbooks for relevant methods of forest management and asking what you thought about such and such. He was looking for allowable cut models to choose, and eventually we selected the Judeich Stand Method we found in one of the volumes of a forest management textbook. It suited us because we had even-aged timber, and we were inventorying by ten-year age class, so it was a logical method to follow. That is when we decided on that.[4]

[4] Editor's Note. The Judeich Stand Method is one of the simplest allowable cut models, using a formula as follows: AAC = Vm/R—meaning the allowable cut is equal to the total merchantable standing volume divided by the chosen rotation age, either selected or calculated.

John Miller ca 1957

Murphy When your inventorying by ten-year age classes—is that getting ahead of the story? When you were cruising initially was it just to try to do the cut layout?

Wright No. The original was operational cruising, but the cruising with CFI plots was for management. That was established in 1956.

Murphy In 1956.

Wright That was the age class for each plot, which we refined once we get into the age class inventory. This is separate inventory.

Murphy Was this a part of your network of what became permanent sample plots?

Wright Yes, permanent sample plots. So what we did is we grouped those by ten-year age class, and we calculated the empirical growth from the volume by ten-year age class, so initially we used that empirical growth. It was logical to project that way. Of course, we initially worked on a 100- year rotation. Once the plots all came in and we started working on current and mean annual increments, we decided that probably 80 was a more realistic rotation age—and it was. But as we found out later the reason for that was because of the fire history, and that the free-to-grow stands all were burned in the 60- to 80-year age class. So the stands that missed the burns were invariably those overstocked stands that didn't burn. They were 120-year age classes, practically overstocked pines and spruce. So what you had for a mean annual increment curve was really about three curves. You had this free-to-grow group, and then they disappeared, and this other group came in to the picture,

and so they extended it. They were dropping off at the end, so it really kind of skewed it. When we started getting into remeasurement (at the second measurement of the plot), we started finding out that these trees were not slowing down at 70 years of age. They were still growing. The next remeasurement showed the same thing. They always kept putting on growth. There wasn't any drop-off at all. Why there was a drop-off was because the older ages were lower volume stands. They were a different kind of stand than those younger ones that were growing free-to-grow. That is what gave us this crazy curve. There is no doubt about it that 80 years is more than adequate for our second growth stands, but, in our initial stands, probably 100 years would be a better cut off.

Murphy With your 80 years' rotation—did you consider sawlogs at that time?

Wright Yes. There is no doubt about it. The best sites would have sawlogs at 80 years, and I think most sites will have them at 80 years, judging by what we've got now at 40 years. There are sawlogs at 40 years now.

Murphy Are there?

Wright At some places like Marlboro and down in MacPherson area. I am really not too worried about that. The problems we have to watch, and they are not unusual, are what happens with stem rust (*cronartium*) in normal area and with *armillaria* creating small holes. But if you look at natural stands, there are lots of big holes. Based on what was there naturally, it is certainly going to be much better. The forest management was really a bigger challenge because we simplified the cruising, and, when we finished the first measurement of the CFI, then we prepared aerial stand volume tables. From then on, the whole operation of operational cruising and inventory cruising was done by one person using aerial photographs, and we just had sample points on our photographs and we interpreted those points and applied the aerial stand volume tables. Then the accuracy was way better than it was with ground cruising.

Murphy Really? Would you go out and do a ground check?

Wright They would ground check, but they didn't have to check that exact spot. All they had to do was check that stand to make sure because you were applying an average volume. You could increase the intensity whatever you wanted, whether you wanted one sample point every mile or one every legal sub or whatever. You could just put in a plot, so we switched to real stand volume tables. Of course, that is what I worked on in Ottawa, these aerial stand volume tables, and I knew they would work. We applied and it took a little convincing the government (AFS) that it made sense. It looked too simple for them. They did some checks.

Murphy Jack, you are saying there was more wood on many of these blocks now than what we started with then?

Wright Yes. Mostly the uncut and some of the cutovers. Some of those cutovers didn't help too much either, particularly up on that junk (over mature timber) across the river. Luckily, we got rid of much of it in the first cutting cycle (30 years). In places that I haven't seen maybe for 20 years that we haven't cut yet, and in some areas that should go for later harvest, I am wondering how they are doing. Because of the roads, these open-grown stands were still growing, and, in the past, they wouldn't have kept growing. They probably would have burned.

Murphy You refer to volumes on cutovers. Are these cutovers that were done before you came here?

Wright No. We have got some good volumes coming up already on stands cut over by the company. We were getting four-inch trees at 20 years of age in our cutovers. In natural stands, we never got them before. We never got four-inch trees until after 40 years in fire origin stands. We gained about 20 years.

Murphy What would be the major difference?

Wright Stocking. Sure. The fire origin stand just sits there. You know the Gregg Burn is starting to get some patches (after 40 years) in there.

Murphy That are expressing dominance?

Wright Yes. They are starting to express dominance in a couple places. You take the Berland Burn. It is still ten feet high at the best, and the 1956 burn is still running probably about 50–60,000 stems per acre.

Murphy My gosh!

Wright That whole Berland, that is the problem there. It doesn't start growing until it is 100 years of age. But I couldn't get over that old lodgepole pine that we cut up in those Berland blocks. It was 220 years plus. There was one stand up there that was over 300 years, and it was pure lodgepole pine, but it was all breaking up. It was just a small area so they finally cut it. There was nothing coming up. There wasn't going to be a natural succession. It would have been grass.

Murphy Is the story a little different with spruce?

Wright Yes. Most of the spruce that we had was exceedingly old, and the Camp 1 area was all pure white spruce, whether it was in the swamps or whether it was on the hilltops. There was no black spruce out there. In the high elevations, we had spruce to fir. In the high country north of Hinton, the overmature stands all started as pine because there are still pine remnants, particularly the 350-year-old timber. There are good remnants of pine in it, and a lot of it was over 450 years, and so there wasn't much pine left. But we were lucky that we cut them in the early days when markets were good, and we didn't have a sawmill because there was so much shake in that stuff.

Murphy Yes. It wouldn't have yielded quality lumber.

Wright No. There wouldn't have been. And before people got the idea that you must not cut old growth, we had cut most of it, and replaced it with something productive. I can remember that they talked about how productive these old growth stands are for wildlife. That first fall we had been working up in that area up near Camp 29, cruising and doing cut layout. We were there for the whole hunting season, and we hadn't seen a thing. Finally, the last day of season, Jim Clark said, "We better go and get a deer." I said, "Well, there is nothing up in that area at all. Let's go down around Jarvis Lake." We got in there, and we laughed because we saw four or five deer. They were awful small. We looked them over, and I found one that was a little bigger so I shot it. I was cleaning it, and these others were still around and I hadn't heard Jim shooting, so I took the next biggest. I just put one in each hand by the ears, and I dragged them. Jim said he saw me coming down. He said, "Boy, you must have some monsters." There was nothing growing in that old timber. Maybe a few martens or squirrels, but we had been working there that whole fall and hadn't seen a single thing. The hunting season used to go from the first of September to the middle of December. You could shoot anything on your tag.

Murphy But are there other old growth characteristics that are of note? Were there birds?

Wright Well, "old growth" is probably a misnomer because it is really the stage of maturity, and you get the same thing in the stand. It depends on its mix of species really. If you have pure pine, you probably don't get too much in it until it starts to open up. But if you have got a mixture of spruce and fir, it certainly doesn't have to wait until it is that old to provide wildlife habitat, other than snags for woodpeckers and what not. Now they are starting to save snags—they got around that workers' compensation problem. That was the big thing because we didn't want to touch snags, but anything over 20 feet had to come down before you opened the face. But now, we can leave them if they are machine-felling, so they identify snags. We always did try to save the poplar, though we in the forestry end of it argued a lot stronger than the woodlands!—"Don't cut any of those aspen because as soon as you cut them they are going to sucker." They used to sometimes knock them down where they shouldn't. Now, they are either utilizing or they are saving them. There has been a big change in attitude and the whole operation is amazing.

Murphy But many stands in many areas have come back heavily to deciduous. I think of McLeod 6 on the Robb Road.

Wright Yes. If any place there was any aspen at all, it is at the lower elevations. It is not a problem in higher elevations. Once you get over 4,000 feet, aspen doesn't present a problem.

Murphy Do you still have good biodiversity?

Wright Yes. I think there is more biodiversity in all the cutovers because of the mixture of the natural seeding of the spruce and the pine, whereas, after fire, it will come in as pure pine because it comes in so hot, and they come in so fast. Eventually after 40–50 years in some places, black spruce came

in. Now, even in areas where they plant pine, there is always spruce that are in there and aspen are growing in. But they are getting a little smarter on the timing, you know, and for saving the aspen. It has reduced the aspen competition considerably.

Murphy The timing in what retrospect?

Wright The timing when you harvest the aspen. If you do it in the wintertime, it is not as bad.

Murphy The first sprouting?

Wright Yes. The first sprouting—but if you go in when they are growing vigorously, they just sprout all over the place, particularly the balsam poplar. But in a place like Camp 1, aspen isn't the competition down there—even though there is quite a bit of brush, it is so off-site down there that its rotten by the time it is 15 years of age. It really isn't the competition. It is the spruce.

Murphy Is Camp 1 coming back in spruce?

Wright Yes. It has come back into spruce. We can't find a provenance of pine that will grow there, which is kind of interesting because this new seniors' lodge was named "Pine Valley". They had a contest, and somebody in Evansburg submitted a name. The board members were situated east of here, and they accepted it out of 53 names. There is no pine in this valley because this is an area of high lime soils. We can't find a provenance that will grow. I can grow pine if I water the heck out of it, but, naturally, there were very few pine in this area. So it is anything but a "pine valley". They had somebody up in Evansburg to name it. I am quite critical about it this morning.

Murphy Everything is a "fir tree"?

Wright That is right. Everything is a fir tree. A fir tree must be pine. So now we have a Pine Valley Lodge down in a spruce aspen forest.

Murphy Let's go back to the permanent sample plot program—is that what you called it—the CFI?

Wright Yes. CFI, the continuous forest inventory. That's Cal Stott's terminology in the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture).

Murphy Was that recommended by the St. Regis group?

Wright Yes. They had already done some around Rhinelander, Wisconsin. That was close to Milwaukee, where Cal Stott's headquarters were, so King Sheldon, chief forester at Rhinelander had agreed to put in a CFI. That was prior to 1956. They figured that would be a good inventory. We finished it as an inventory and decided it really wasn't much value for future inventory. There are better ways of getting inventory than going in and doing permanent sample plot every square mile, so we switched it to what we called a growth and yield inventory (permanent growth sample) (PGS). And already St. Regis in some of their areas had switched to permanent growth samples. St. Regis had a very good

research group both in forest research and in pulpmill technology. They had a fellow that was a chief forester (Paul Dunn), who went around and visited all the operations. He was a professor of silviculture at Duke University in the States, and then St. Regis got him on staff. Dunn would tell you what other operations were doing when he visited here, to be helpful. He had a fellow working with him, Bob Hyde, who took over after Paul retired. They would still come around, and, if we had something we were wondering about, or if anybody else was doing it, he would say, "You should try this. They are trying this down in the New England States." So it was a very good relationship. St. Regis was a good company, and so was Champion. There wasn't any difference. We worked for them when they merged. We still worked for the same people from St. Regis. They have never turned down a budget for forestry. They were used to a budget.

Murphy Des Crossley mentioned that he had worked out an arrangement within the company that your forestry program would be funded to the extent of about 10%.

Wright Ten percent of the wood cost.

Murphy Is that the budget to which you are referring?

Wright Well, no. If we wanted something, if we wanted to build a nursery or if we wanted scarification to increase, they were right behind it all the way. Any major capital budget item would be approved by New York. The magic figure was half a million dollars, so you always were trying to check your spending down below this, so you didn't have to make a trip to New York to justify it.

Murphy But that is in addition to the 10%, then?

Wright Yes and no. Operational expenses would be part of the 10%. That 10% worked for a while, but, after a while, it didn't work because we started reducing our cut when they started buying chips, but we were treating silviculture on what they had done ten years previously. So seven years previously and ten years previously, they had cut up to 300,000 cords a year. We were down to 200,000 cords a year, so we couldn't stay within 10% of the current figure because we weren't treating the acres that they were currently cutting. But we never had a problem. We never had an argument at all. Internally, we did. We had to try to keep our budget based on what we really needed rather than try to spend 10%. We were always under 10% until they reduced the cut. We had no problem working with that figure, and we wouldn't have had any problem working with that figure if you took the number of acres we were treating compared to what they were cutting—if you made it proportionate.

But that was a goal that Des had kind of agreed with. Pete Hart was a northern woods manager at that time, and out at St. Regis they had a northern woods manager that looked after the western part of it, who was Stan Hart's father. Stan was here on the original inventory crew that came in before they signed the agreement, when they were looking at around Edson. He was on that initial inventory crew that sampled this stuff, and they picked up samples all around Edson and sent them

down for testing and decided it was an excellent spot. Then, by the time we finished, we had moved the forest management area over to be centered on Hinton rather than around Edson.

The company had bought property down (I guess some of it was Canadian National Railway's Tollerton Properties) by the Tollerton sites south of Edson. They had about six quarter sections down there, and that was for the mill site. It was supposed to be, but then, when they started doing studies, they found there wasn't enough water in the McLeod River (and, of course, Edson has been mad ever since), so they moved it up here to the Athabasca. They eventually sold the Tollerton properties. One quarter section they sold to the town of Edson for a dollar for the Willmore Park.

Murphy That is good to know.

Wright Then the other five quarters, they could have been of value, but they decided to get rid of them, and some guy in Edson—I don't know what his connection was—managed to get the whole five quarters. They could have done a lot better. So the original proposal was centered around Edson, and it went up as far as Whitecourt. When they decided to move to Hinton, they took it right to the mountains.

Murphy I understood that Reg Loomis was given permission to sub-contract to whoever it was that was developing the proposal, and he essentially defined your area based on his knowledge of it.

Wright Yes. The original area that Reg set up was the area centered around Edson.

Murphy I had understood him to say that he moved it west.

Wright I don't think so because the reason it went west was because of the mill site.[5] When I first came, Charlie Miles was still out looking at various areas on the ground and deciding whether we should keep them or not. Because the old government maps were terrible—anything that was under about 60 years old was shown as brush land, and you had no idea whether it was regeneration or what it was—we had to look at every one of those areas to find out what was on it. It could have been swamp. It could have been brush. It could have been regeneration. Reg, I know, had selected the original area where they should look because they had no idea when they came up. He laid out that map. He may have had some influence on the shift west, but I doubt it. They took everything that they could get from here. What wasn't a matter of selecting, we went as far west as it was reasonable to log, and Charlie would go out and check the slopes to point out where to cut it off. Then we kept modifying it. We didn't finally modify it until—this was about 1959 or 1960—we finalized the boundaries of the agreement. It was a revision to Schedule A of the agreement—the one around Hinton—but we didn't finalize that until about 1960.

[5] Jack Wright's Note. Reg was responsible for delineating the alternate area once the decision was made to move the mill to Hinton.

About that time, we had to get to work because the agreement said the area was for two million acres, so they had to balance to that figure, and so it was a matter of lots of give and take. The area we started with, of course, was much bigger than that. We kept knocking it down until we got to that size, and we had to work with the Department Lands Branch, going over each of those original township diagrams and finding out how much area there was on each township and tallying them up. It was quite a lengthy process, and there were quite a few areas we threw out. There was that whole area north of Highway 16 on the way to Edson, which is now the Edson Corridor. There were two townships in there that we rejected because they were just about straight hardwoods. We took them out, and we took in some of the area south of Fickle Lake, and then we put some in there, too. Part of it was muskeg, and part of it was a young age class—and we were short young age classes—so we got some of it. The other part was in the provisional reserve, which we never got—they give it away to somebody else.

Murphy We can talk about that later.

Wright It was the young age class that we needed. It was about 50 years old, and there were very little in the young age classes. Other than the 1956 burn, we had very little under 40 years of age, so we needed those. That is what we looked for when we were doing this boundary revisions.

Murphy I should have known, and perhaps I did and forgot it, that the boundary wasn't fixed with the 1954 agreement. There was a tentative area assigned. As I understand it, you negotiated the final area.

Wright Yes. What they did was they actually put in the area that was available for a lease and provisional reserve. That was approximately 6,000 square miles, but, from that, we had to select the part we wanted for the lease. So the PLA (pulpwood lease area), as they called it, wasn't finalized until about 1960. It was a revision we documented. It is a revision to Schedule A in the Pulpwood Lease Agreement.

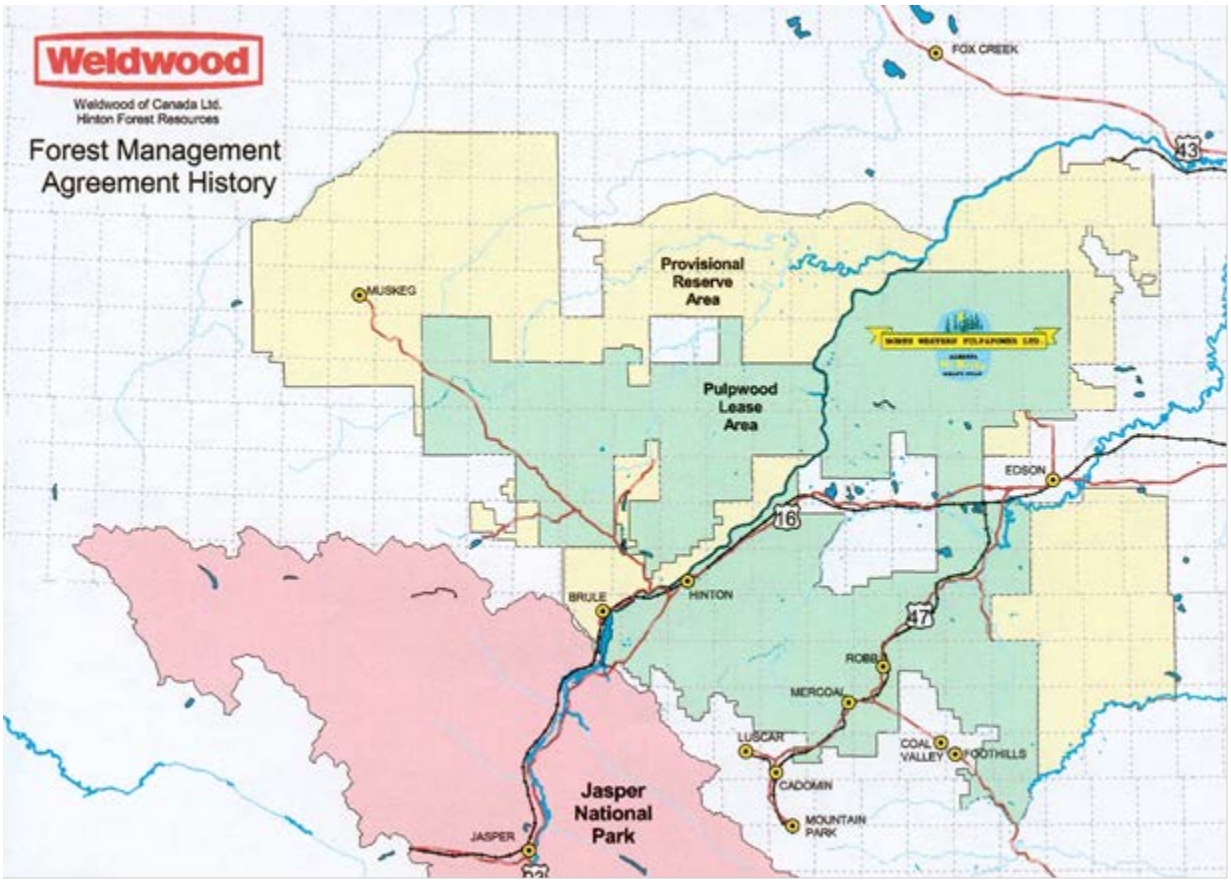
Murphy And you were involved in that process, too?

Wright Because I was in charge of forest management by then, you see.

Murphy When did you become in charge of forest management?

Wright Well, in the spring of 1958 I took over the inventory management section, so I was involved in that.

Murphy Who did you work with? Was it your responsibility to recommend the boundary?



Pulpwood Lease Area and Reserve, 1955 Agreement

Wright Yes, as far as finalizing it. Most of that was done about 1958 in the first year I was here. John Miller pretty well finalized that part of it. From then on, it was mostly Philip Gimbarzevsky dealing with lands. They would come up with acreages, and then they would come up and they would say, "We are going to have to shave another 10,000 acres or so. Where shall we do it?" But really they had pretty well made up their minds. Charlie in 1958 started looking after CFI. Up until 1958, he was still doing that reconnaissance work.

Murphy When you took over forest management, was the boundary fairly well settled?

Wright As I say, we had two townships down here that we put plots in in 1956 and 1957, and we abandoned the area. As a matter of fact those two plots became the sole basis for the inventory of the Edson E2 management area. [6] Ron Fytche phoned me one day to see if I had any information on the Edson

[6] Editor's Note. In 1948, the province of Alberta set up the primarily forested part of the province as a "Green Area" to be restricted from settlement or private land sales. This area was further divided into administrative "Forests" which were then subdivided using primary geographic features into management units. Although the "Forests" boundaries and names have changed over time, the management units have remained relatively stable.

Corridor, and I said, "Yes. We have got two townships of permanent sample plots that you are welcome to have." He and Dennis Cauvin came out, and he saw those plots. He just went through the list, and he wrote that stuff down, and he phoned the hotel in Edson and cancelled the reservation and went back to Edmonton. Those two townships of poplar are what they based their whole management—allowable cut for that E2.

Murphy To recap—you have said this already, but the recorder quit on me. We were talking about Jim Clark's story about how the allowable cut was set—in essence, through negotiation and a few check calculations by Reg Loomis. I wonder if you could repeat your comments about that.

Wright I think that Reg's figures worked out pretty closely. As I say, I don't think he went at them the same way that Jim went at them, but they came up with the same result. Jim knew the answer before he started, so it was easy. But when we did our allowable cut calculations after our first management plan was completed in 1960, it was very close to what Reg had figured. We were on the under-side because we hadn't set this fire allowance at the 0.1% per year. It is what they use now. At that time, it was 0.32% per year, and that was a high deduction. Then subsequent to that, we agreed that we would take a rolling average. They wanted us to take the longest term average from the start, which included the 1956 burn. We had to include the 1956 burn for quite a few years. But then we got to negotiations with Bob Steele—and I don't know just when that was—in the early 1960s. At that time, the government said they would increase their manpower and their firefighting with an objective of keeping it at the 0.1% per year, and that we would start with 0.1% per year and then we would use a running 20-year average. So we reduced it at that point, at the next allowable cut.

It varied around between 320,000 and 370,000 cords a year, which wasn't far from Reg's 350,000 that he had estimated.[7] So it was good enough. We had an area that would support the mill and that was a pretty good guess to start. Then we subsequently reduced the rotation age to 80 in 1964, at the meeting we had in March. That increased the allowable cut at that point. That is when it went up to 373,000 cords, I think. It hovered around there. Then we get into tree length volume, and we switched to cunits and many other things, so it gets harder and harder to relate to the original calculations. Essentially, it has gone up. It went up in the management plan that we did in 1976. It went up in 1986. It went up considerably, and this was based on the growth rates, the actual growth rates instead of using empirical growth rates.

Murphy So this was in 1986?

Wright In 1976 and 1986. We did management plans every ten years. They had gone up considerably. Then, of course, they redid it again in 1989 after the new agreement was signed. Now they are working on the one for 1998.

[7] Jack Wright's Note. In 1966, the AAC was 322,275 cunits, in 1977 the AAC was 357,165.

Murphy Could you talk about how you substantiated the increase in 1989 based on the growth figures?

Wright Yes. We used actual ten-year growth factors.

Murphy Was that from the several years of remeasurement?

Wright From several years of remeasurement. We were able to compare with the aid of the computer. We didn't just have to take the one ten-year period. We could take every time there was a growth between a 70- and an 80-year stand, whether it was this measurement or two measurements ago or whatever. It would be different stands. We were able to take them all and get an average that way. So using those growth indicators it was quite an increase because, as I mentioned earlier, the mean annual increment (MAI) was affected by the stand under the empirical system, the stand structure. Now we were able to compare actual stands growing at various ages, and that is when we found they kept growing. When we would project a volume in the earlier management plans, we only projected to about 120 or 130 years. Now we had actual figures. We were able to keep projecting these figures.

Murphy But with those increased growth rates, would the curves not cross at a higher age than 80 years?

Wright They did. I think it was the spruce that was higher—about 90 years of age. Dick Dempster did a lot of work in the 1980s for the 1986 allowable cut, and he worked up some growth curves for us—growth information from the growth formulas from our data –and that is what we used. The other thing is the second growth stands, and they are starting to come in now. We are starting to get growth figures for the young age stands—those that started at zero and those that started when we first started measuring that were in the 20- and 30-age class. We are starting to get remeasurements on those, so now we have second growth stand measurements.

Murphy How does it look?

Wright Apparently, it is quite encouraging. It is putting up that initial growth rate that I haven't been privy to the information, or I haven't inquired, I guess, on how those growth rates compared. But there is no doubt about it with that database they have here that they have got the ability to use that. That is something that is lacking in every other inventory in the country. They have nothing based on second growth stands, so they have a very narrow range of valid growth information. That will help considerably, and also those plots have the history behind them of what was there before they were cut. They can relate that. So there is some interesting work—if somebody had the time they could do some mighty interesting research into how the present growth rates compare to past growth rates. I don't think they have got into that yet.

Murphy I will pursue that with Bob.

Wright Yes. It is something that if somebody had the time—it is a research project really. It isn't essential for the operations of the management planning.

Murphy I had asked you previously about your negotiations with the Forest Service. Can you comment on usually who was involved in the discussions at your level on each side? Who were the people?

Wright It depended on what we were talking about. If we were talking about boundaries or new areas, we would be dealing with the director and maybe even the minister. Most of our negotiations went on with things like ground rules and that would be the head of Timber Management usually or negotiating with Silviculture. That was usually the level we went to. Much of the negotiations I was doing near the end were dealing with our expansion program and our new boundaries. There we were dealing with Fred McDougall. He was deputy minister at that time. That is the level, and the ministers. The last few years we definitely were moving at a higher level because we were dealing with higher level problems.

Murphy Were you in on those negotiations?

Wright Yes.

Murphy Is that when Ken Hall was there?

Wright Yes. That was full-time negotiations because I succeeded Des in 1975.

Murphy Could you talk about your strategy on that one? What were you trying to achieve?

Wright Well, what we were trying to achieve was to get a balance of an area that we needed to support the allowable cut we needed.

Murphy For the expansion?

Wright For the expansion of the mill and taking into consideration all the available supply of chips that we could guarantee. That was very difficult. Finally, the government agreed to direct chips—that they would guarantee us X number of chips. And we said—if you can guarantee it that you are going to continue to direct those chips, then we can reduce the area we require. So we reduced it. We had several options of which way to go, but the government obviously had agendas of its own—from people like Alberta Newsprint and so on and so forth. So it had to be kind of fitting around that type of thing. You mentioned before the problems. I can say that two of the biggest problems we had were number one—when the Conservatives came in and Minister Allan Warrack cancelled our forest management expansion plans, they (the company) had proposed and had done the first stage of it. We were already building the sawmill, and he cancelled the whole thing. He cancelled the expanded area and left us with a big deficit, and that was the first real problem. That was conflict of personalities between Ivan Sutherland and Allan Warrack. No doubt about that.

Murphy Jack, we are talking around 1972?

Wright About that, yes, when the Conservatives came in. That first time we had ever really had what I would call "no cooperation". The opposite to cooperation. The other time was in that Berland proposal

where the politics really came in there, and they gave it to somebody that hadn't even submitted a proposal by the deadline and had a ridiculous proposal. They were going to build a mill at Obed.

Murphy A pulpmill?

Wright Sure. That is what British Columbia Forest Products (BCFP) proposed to build—a pulpmill at Obed. The government accepted it, and they said BCFP could give them whatever they wanted, so they did. They took BCFP. The problem was we wanted some of it. We didn't need all of it. What really started it all was Canfor needed some area, and they wanted a piece of the reserve area. We talked to them, and we said we don't need it all. Simpson Timber at that time wanted a bit, and we worked with Murray Summers and said, "Yes, we can share that area." What happened is Canfor was one of the ones who put it up. They were going to build their mill and move it out of the city, out of Grande Prairie, and they wanted a forest management area that would support a mill south of Grande Prairie. So they were the ones that wanted it. They ended up with nothing. We needed some and so did Simpson, so the three of us that were here could have shared that whole area.

Instead of that, they gave it to BCFP on the most ridiculous proposal, which, of course, they couldn't live up to. It didn't make sense at all. They built a sawmill based on their experience in the BC interior, and they knew better than that. Jack Toovey had been over here. We had been back and forth with them to their operations at MacKenzie. He knew what our stuff was like. He wondered how we ever managed our stuff (timber)—and here they were putting in for an area that was far worse than we had in our FMA—and they built this three-line sawmill. It was so ridiculous. And their whole business of the pulpmill—anyone that had a pencil and paper could work out that it didn't make sense. As a matter of fact, Des and Gerry Burch were good friends up until that time. They had asked Des to give them an estimate on the AAC of the Berland area. Des gave them an estimate, and it was a pretty fair estimate. He based it on what we had for allowable cut here per unit area and downgraded for that location. They completely ignored it, and they proposed something that was based on about twice the allowable cut that was actually there. Then they had the nerve—to list Des as one of the forest consultants—and Des blew up right at that Grande Cache meeting he said, "I want you to know that my expertise was not involved in this decision whatsoever."

That is the kind of thing that happened. That was one of the worst. And, of course, they pulled out, and then the area became available again. Then we started from scratch. But we had proposed, our company, to build a world-scale lightweight coated (LWC) paper mill in the province of Alberta. They probably are never going to get one of that scale in this province. I don't know what Grand Alberta Paper is going to put in, but you know that mill was being built in Canada for this site. They ended up putting it in Sartell, Minnesota, and they could have had it built in the US, but most of it was being built in the Thunder Bay area. That was just ridiculous right from day one.

Murphy What kind of advice were they getting from the Forest Service? Were the allowable cuts out of line?

Wright No. The Forest Service had an inventory, and they said they would not guarantee that inventory. Everybody that proposed to go in there was supposed to do their own inventory. Murray Summers and ours were so close. We compared them, and, for that one area (E7), I think we had 73,000 cunits and they had 74,000.[8] We were amazingly close on these estimates. CANFOR were not that close, but they only wanted a small area. But they were forced into looking at this whole 2,000 square miles, and all they wanted was a chunk to build a mill up in the E8 management unit. It just didn't make sense. That was really one of the low points, I would think. If I was Champion, I would never build a papermill in this province. They don't deserve it. They may never do it because it would take some lower grade hardwood pulp (chemical thermal mechanical pulp [CTMP]) to justify putting it in here, as well as putting in a mechanical operation for the hardwood to mix with the softwood kraft. And if you are not going to get that, then they might as well take this softwood fibre and mix it somewhere else. So that is what they are doing. This is with the expansion here—this is an excellent pulp, and it commands top price and there is a good market for it.

Murphy And traditionally it has been that, too.

Wright Sure it has. But there is really not much incentive for them to have to put paper here. It is only to the advantage of the Alberta government to have the finished product here. This was the opportunity, and they blew it and in grand style—for an iffy newsprint mill that BCFP were going to put in, and it didn't make any economic sense whatsoever. So that was the one big disappointment in all the years I was here.

Murphy Do you have any insights as to why the decision was made like that?

Wright Well it is kind of interesting. I heard that one of the reasons was they didn't want too much control in Alberta by any one company—that was when Fred McDougall was the deputy minister. When Fred McDougall went to work for Weyerhaeuser, they bought out half the country. Funny how the objectives changed all of a sudden. Sometimes, it makes me wonder if maybe Fred wasn't in it. Ian Reid was probably one of our worst enemies. He became part of the big picture, and he was so smart he didn't need to learn anything from anybody else. Although he purported to support the mill, I am sure he didn't support us in the final decisions. So I don't know. I really don't know. Everybody blames somebody else. You will probably never know really who made the decision. Fred always says that wasn't their recommendation. And then the cabinet committee says it did come from the Forest Service, so I don't know who made the decision. But it was a lousy one, obviously.

It was typical of what happened in that whole era because every one of those areas that the government put up for proposal failed. There wasn't one success story in the whole bunch. Simpson didn't do what they said they were going to do. BCFP folded. They got nothing out of Rocky

[8] Jack Wight's Note. I believe our figures were 89 M cunits compared to theirs of 87 M, or similar figures.

Mountain House. The only times it works is if a company says, "We are prepared to do this, and, based on economics, this is the way it would go." It wasn't until Premier Getty came that they reverted to that system, and that is when we got our Daishowas and all the rest of them. Whether they are right or whether they are wrong, at least we got somebody in that did what they said they were going to do. But then Getty gave all that to Mac Millar (president and CEO of Millar Western) for nothing!

Murphy That is politics?

Wright I hit up Duco Van Binsbergen), as soon as he got elected MLA for West Yellowhead. Duco Van Binsbergen was in. I said, "Find out what is going on in Millar Western because that guy has got no money invested, and, as far as I know, he hasn't paid the government back any. And now he is building a mill in Meadow Lake. What is coming off?" So Duco went to the government, and I got a copy of the letter from him, where they said they wanted to assure him that none of Alberta government money went into the Meadow Lake mill. Well, sure it didn't go into the Meadow Lake mill, but the money they were supposed to pay back to the Alberta government went into the Meadow Lake mill. Duco was too nice of a guy. He didn't follow it up. And, of course, as soon as he quit, somebody else started making hay on it, his successor, Ivan Strang. That is ridiculous. That Mac Millar, I lost respect for him because he had some good years, and he never paid a cent back to the government. They wrote down the loan, but he still owes them money.

Murphy Their newspaper response was that they were essentially forced into investing in the pulpmill—they really didn't want to.

Wright That is no reason why they shouldn't pay back their debt, and why they should build one in Meadow Lake. I just don't swallow that. Mac cried. So every time there was somebody that got something, he went and cried that they had been in the business for years and never got anything. So when he got it, he made sure he was going to get the whole kit and caboodle, I guess.

Murphy Well, given that background, when you negotiated the boundary for the lease that you have now, what was your approach?

Wright Well, at that time we were in the Getty days when they said, "What do you need?" So we started working from there instead of the government saying, "This is what you have got to bid on, whether you need it or not." That was a screwy system because you were getting people that would have to fudge to utilize the allowable cut. So when we dealt with this, there were some changes. It was finalized when I retired. Then there was a little strip across the Berland that they took out, and it went to Alberta Newsprint. I kind of cried because it was a really nice chunk of timber, but the Berland was a good boundary. By taking it out, they didn't have quite the volume they needed, and, now of, course, the government is reneging on this chip direction that the whole thing was based on. Now the government is saying, "No, we are no longer going to guarantee that chip direction

anymore." So the company is actually getting into negotiations with the other individual companies and making trades and long-term agreements with them. So, like "we will give you this if you give us that." We are taking some certain sized logs that are going to Edson, for instance, that suit their operation, and certain other sized logs are coming here in exchange in equivalent volumes, but better utilized. The companies have to do it themselves.

Murphy Are these your strategic alliances amongst yourselves?

Wright That is right. Amongst themselves. I am not involved in that. But that chip direction was the whole basis for deciding. We had a guarantee of X number of chips. Therefore, all we needed was the additional wood. We had to have enough roundwood that you could run the sawmill on it, and the sawmill can't run on chips. So, if they give you more chips, you have designed a sawmill for the roundwood that you have assigned to you. And then they would say, "Well, you are going to have to pick it up with more chips somewhere." That takes a lot of glue to make good lumber out of chips.

Murphy But we are purchasing a large amount of wood here?

Wright They are purchasing chips. They are making some swaps on roundwood but very limited. They are supplying some. I think they are supplying some sawlogs to Grande Cache to try to keep their operation going. And, in exchange, we are getting pulpwood from them. But I don't know how long that is going to last because I think Weyerhaeuser are thinking of taking their chips from Grande Cache to Grande Prairie now that the highway is finished. There will be no more exchange on that one. That is a long tough haul to Grande Prairie. There are lot of hills on the other side of the river. They no doubt have the same squeeze, and they are getting squeezed from the north. And if Grand Alberta Paper goes in, that will squeeze Weyerhaeuser out that much more. Because every time you put something up, you have the allowable cut, but you have lost that extra purchase wood that you had. I think it is squeezed pretty tightly. The chips are coming—there are agreements coming out with Sunpine but that is a long-haul down from Sundre and Drayton Valley, and they are getting some from Whitecourt. They are making some exchanges there.

Murphy Roundwood is moving great distances, too?

Wright Yes. Most of it is moving to BC.

Murphy Unfortunately.

Wright Yes. You hear people saying our government is going to have to smarten up and make these forest companies pay more for their wood, but the problem is not how much you pay for your wood. It is that BC is desperate. There are a lot of mills that, when this wood dries up, are going down. That is the only thing that is keeping them going. If we ever get like that, we might as well throw in the sponge right now. They have got a sad situation. They are back to the old days. Ontario and Quebec

governments are responsible for reforestation—forest renewal. It is whether they do it or whether they build schools or roads that has been the story in BC.

Murphy Yes.

Wright And they are already taking a big chunk out of the Forest Renewal Program to balance their budget last year. With Premier Glen Clark, it's back to the same old tricks, you know. That is what happened before. The companies had to pay a high stumpage, but they would get credits for it for roads and what not, but the money wasn't there when they wanted their credits. The government owed the companies millions and millions of dollars. They built schools and everything else, so they haven't changed. They are doing the same thing.

Murphy Just a question on the directed chip sales. Did you run into problems with operators (chip sellers) from outside since they were captive vendors? How did you negotiate the payment schedules?

Wright No. That was never a problem. There was a chip price agreed on.

Murphy Agreed on by?

Wright Between the seller and the buyer.

Murphy Did you do that each year?

Wright I don't know. I imagine they do each year.

Murphy Who would have done that? The woodlands?

Wright Yes. Brian Allen was in charge of it. It would come directly under whoever the resource manager is, and Allen is the chip recruitment guy. But they make these reciprocal agreements now. Our company gives a lot of technical advice to these suppliers to make sure their chip qualities are up to specification because they can't take inferior chips. I remember one time we got some from Svedberg, and we were getting plastic in it, and nothing rectified. We finally tied it down to chips coming from Svedberg. And what it was that he had plastic lifts on his conveyor, and somehow or other these were rubbing on the sides of his conveyor and peeling off, and he would just replace his lifts as they wore out. But they kept chip sizes, thickness, and dimensions, which are critical and species. So it is a continuous job. Brian will take somebody from technical up to advise them on chip quality wherever there are problems.

Murphy Thank you again. It is time for you to go.

Wright Yes, it is.

End of First interview.

Interview 2: May 8, 1998 (Tape 1, Side 1)

Murphy This is a second interview with Jack Wright on May 8, 1998 at his home in Hinton. Good morning, Jack.

Wright Good morning, Pete.

Murphy Jack, one of the key things we want to identify, besides the detail of the history, is what were the major decision points? What were the major issues that arose? I would like to get your opinion of what you saw them to be, particularly during your career, and perhaps even afterwards, as you have watched events unfold.

Wright Well, that is a big agenda because there were lots of turning points. Of course, the main thing was when the mill started to perform and the market picked up. It was gloomy in 1958. We shut down the bush operation because we had more wood than the mill could use.

Murphy When did the markets pick up?

Wright They picked up at the end of 1958 and into 1959. It was just that, as usual, the mill came on just at the wrong time, and the mill wasn't running that well, anyway. They had to go and search out markets, and it was a poor time to search out markets. I imagine that was the reason. But I know in 1958 we shut down the bush operation in the spring, and we didn't start it up until—I think it was probably the end of the year—December or so. So it was quite a hiatus in the logging.

Murphy It was. What was the woodlands group doing during that time?

Wright Well, we had lots to do with road development and camp development, both of which were going full tilt at that time.

Murphy So the company was still making investments?

Wright Yes. The inventories and forest management planning were underway—we didn't need the interruption of having to cut wood.

Murphy No. That is right.

Wright We had a couple of camps where our crews could stay in when we were working. Then, I suppose, one of the important things was that 1968 agreement in which the company was recognized as an occupier of Crown land. Up to that point, it was open as far as whether oil companies and other users had to recognize us. Because, although we had a forest management agreement (FMA) under the lands policy, they only had to contact occupants of Crown land, and in our pre-1968 agreement we were not defined as an occupant of Crown Land.

Murphy Could you elaborate on that? What was the problem?

Wright The problem was we had no control over the people coming onto our area.

Murphy In this case, it was oil companies?

Wright It was oil companies, and, while some of them did stop in to see us, it was mainly to find out how they could get to some place. They were not under any obligation to compensate us. Once we were recognized as an occupant of Crown Land in our agreement, from then on they had to deal with us.

Murphy When you say they had to deal with you, what dealings did you have?

Wright That is when we got into the big arguments on compensation before timber destruction.

Murphy For timber destruction?

Wright Yes. Destruction of timber—timber loss.

Murphy Did they have to negotiate with you for use of your roads?

Wright Yes. They always had to do that.

Murphy That was a given process?

Wright Yes because we had licenses of occupation on our roads, so we were covered under that part of it. But as far as destruction of timber or going through cutting operations, they were just more or less ignoring us. It also applied to powerlines and pipelines, and everyone else using the land. That was quite a change.

Murphy So it was 1968, then, that you got the recognition?

Wright Yes.

Murphy And then you talked about compensation. Was that another story?

Wright That was a long story. It didn't get to court, but we were under litigation. The oil companies—we had charged them a fee based on—I just forget now, we went through so many scenarios. One scenario was cost value, and the other was present worth. The oil companies got together, and they hired, I think it was Harry Smith[9], or somebody from BC to come up with a figure, and they purposely came up with a figure which was very low. So we hired an expert to come up with the cost value approach. I am trying to think of the name of the fellow—he was at the University of British Columbia (UBC), and I think he was an economist. I think it was the cost value approach because halfway through we changed. The problem was there was no precedent set for the value of wood on Crown land in the province. The Province didn't sell wood from Crown land; they sold cutting rights. Since there wasn't any precedent in Alberta like there were in other parts of the country, we had to come up with some figures. In Harry Smith's case, he produced some low figures because

[9] Editor's Note. JHG Smith was a forestry professor at the University of British Columbia, whose specialty was forest growth and yield. He was informally known by colleagues and students as J Harry God Smith.

that is what his clients wanted. We put in documented figures. But both approaches resulted in sizeable compensation packages.

After we got through it partway, the government decided that maybe they better get in on it because they also were losing land. So they adopted the system or method that we were proposing and prepared the timber value table. They compromised a bit on reforestation costs using some of their costs and some of our costs and so on. But, at least, we came up with a figure that we accepted, and the government accepted. The oil company had no option but to accept it, and so we didn't have to go to court. That was a major one because they were running roughshod over our FMA. There was no question, a lot of timber was being wasted. There was no reason for this waste because, at that time, we said that if you salvage it, we won't charge you for it. If it is marginal wood that comes into the mill, you just deck it outside, and we bring it in, and we won't charge you for the timber loss. It took a while before they took that seriously, but that was quite a major change. We were losing a lot of timber, and it was being recorded in our drain records, and it was getting quite alarming. We would measure the number of new seismic lines and pipelines developed each year and calculate the volume losses, which were sizeable drains charged against our allowable annual cut, and we had to do something to slow that down.

Murphy Were the damages based on the present value of the timber, then, or did you have another factor for young growth?

Wright If it was regeneration that we had established, we charged them for the cost of establishing the regeneration. To do this we took our scarification costs and our planting and reseeding costs, and we charged them that plus interest from the time we did it. We didn't have to use the timber value table for that. But then the value for immature timber was pretty low. It didn't really reflect the value as far as contribution to allowable cut. The majority of the older timber was from that 1889 burn or older, so it was fair compensation. The government table was quite acceptable at that time.

Murphy In your dealings with the government, was there ever a question about to whom the payment should be made, whether it be the company or the government?

Wright No. There was never any question about that. What we charged them for was the timber, and I believe the government charged them for base stumpage.

Murphy I see. So the charges went both ways.

Wright I think that is the way it worked. There was no question in the government's mind that we were compensable. Our original agreement said we were compensable, but it didn't recognize us an occupier, so under the Lands Act, which the oil companies were interpreting, they didn't have to deal with us. That was quite a deal. We spent a lot of money on legal fees, which saved the government a lot of money, because they were able to use the figures we developed. By then, we had reached a bit of compromise on the oil company's part because what happened when we were

using their figures and we put the proper values in, their figures were sky high. So we were able to show them that our approach was a better approach. Besides being a better approach, they were more realistic figures, too.

So that was quite a turning point as far as the forestry end of it was concerned, to get some control over that. After that, the oil companies made sure that if they had to put a road in somewhere, and, if we had a road going in the same area, they would use it, and it would save them the compensation charges. We actually got to the point where we would tell them where to put their roads if it was an area we intended to operate in within the next 15–20 years. We would say "no", we want that to come in off our road, and there wouldn't be any difference cost-wise to them, usually.

Murphy That is interesting. So, as an occupier, you had the authority to negotiate with the companies, too, with respect to road location?

Wright Yes.

Murphy How about location of seismic lines themselves?

Wright No. We had no control over seismic lines, but I think the timber value table led them to narrow their lines and seek alternative methods because there were a number of lines that were going in that period. Seismic activities in the 1970s was just fantastic, you know.

Murphy Do you recall what their widths of lines would have been?

Wright They were supposed to be 25 feet in those days, and that is what we billed them on.

Murphy Then they came down from there?

Wright Some of them came down as low as about 12 feet. I don't know what the width is now, but it is closer to 12 feet for a seismic line. There were some areas that they experimented with hand-cut lines using ATVs (all-terrain vehicles) and things. There was one group working for Texaco up in the Hay River, in about 1969 or 1970. They were doing a survey at the mouth of the Pinto, using quads in the summer, and then snowmobiles in the winter with little hand-held recorders. It was quite interesting, and we were quite interested to see how it worked. Unfortunately, while they were doing this type of exploration, two other companies came in the same areas with conventional seismic. They came in, got their data, and got out while the Texaco people were still doing this experimental work. It would have been fine if the government had said, "OK, Texaco is trying something new. Let's keep the others out until we see how it works." But they let two other companies come in and do conventional seismic in the same area where Texaco was testing this new system to save line development. And they were using existing lines most of the time.

Murphy That was too bad.

Wright But it showed that they started taking it seriously, looking at ways to save timber.

Murphy Did you give me a year on that one?

Wright It was when we working up in the Hay, and I think it was 1969 or 1970 or somewhere in that area. Wayne Mayan and I were working up there on that initial expansion program, which we had figured we were going to be doing in 1971. That was at that time, so it was probably just a year or two after that.

Murphy Crossley's journal refers to timber damage estimates quite frequently. That would be this particular exercise?

Wright Yes. We dealt with Stabsky and Company, with the lawyers working on it. I am just trying to think of the name of the guy we hired from UBC.

Murphy If you think about it, we can put it later.

Wright We were quite disillusioned with him many years later because we tried to get him to do something else, and we just couldn't pin him down. So I don't know what happened.

Murphy Other significant points? We will be interviewing again.

Wright At the same time, of course, was our whole expansion program, which started with the sawmill and then ended with Allan Warrack's letter.

Murphy Yes. The 4th of February 1972[10].

Wright In 1972, a few months before the sawmill was completed.

Murphy It was under construction.

Wright It was under construction as part of the first phase of the development.

Murphy I don't think I have got the date that the sawmill was actually started—the first one.

Wright It started up in 1972.

Murphy But when did the construction start?

Wright I don't know. It was probably 1971. It would be at least the year before that we would have started construction. Construction started well before we got the letter because they were sitting with this sawmill that was going to produce 65 million feet a lumber a year and had no allowable cut to support it. We were not in very good shape there for a while.

[10] Editor's note. In 1972, Minister Allan Warrack wrote to the company advising that since the promised expansion contained in the 1968 agreement had not proceeded, the expanded landbase in the agreement was reverting to the Crown and the landbase was reduced to the original boundaries in the 1954 agreement.

Murphy Can you recall the events that led to the 1968 decision to expand? That was a major thing.

Wright The major thing was that our 1954 agreement gave us 14 years to hold onto the reserve.

Murphy So that was the year.

Wright We had to expand in 1968, or at least make a commitment. We had quite a time getting a commitment. We had no problem getting a commitment out of St. Regis, but we had a tough time getting a commitment out of our great leader here, Ivan Sutherland. He didn't really want to get involved, particularly in lumber in which he had no interest whatsoever. The expansion was his baby, and I don't think he had the confidence that he could carry through the pulp expansion end of it. He didn't have the engineering background. This was the problem, I think. But finally I think that the decision was made to go ahead, but it was delayed by another market downturn at the time expansion should have been underway. So the company said we will start with the sawmill, and then we will develop the pulpmill because by then markets will be picking up.

I am sure the design was underway at St. Regis, but there was certainly no activity here on the pulpmill. It was just the sawmill. We had meetings with the government on it, and they were aware of what we were doing. Donovan Ross was the minister at the time, and he agreed to the strategy, but there was no documentation. I know Ivan hadn't got formal acceptance of the revised plans and timings. They just talked about it, and the Province recognized why we were doing this. That was kind of the way the Social Credit government worked—you talked to people, you developed your plans, and you got consensus on what you were going to do. This was an old boy's club at that time, and they had been in a long time, and that was the way they worked. It worked quite well, and they were satisfied that we were going ahead with it. But they had to admit when we asked them that, no, they didn't have any formal agreement to do it. So that was one of the major turning points.

And then we went on and we decided that we would keep planning for a development later, just before the Berland situation came up[11]. We had told the government that we were still planning for expanding, and by then we had Ken Hall who just loved that type of thing. Planning was right up his alley, and he would stay up all night to find something. At the same time, Canfor was looking for more wood because they wanted to get their mill out of Grande Prairie. They had a forest management agreement on the—I am trying to think of the name of the creek whether it is the Simonette but near the Smoky tower—Valley Creek they called it. That was where they had a small

[11] Editor's note. In 1979, the Province of Alberta called for proposals for the Berland Timber Development Area, much of which was the old Reserve Area of NWP&P/St. Regis. St. Regis supported the Hinton group to prepare a proposal which would include a lightweight coated papermill at Hinton, an expanded sawmill and a sawmill at Grande Cache. It was not approved, unfortunately.

FMA. They decided they would like to put their plant down in that area somewhere along the Smoky, but they needed more timber. They were really looking at the Bowden Creek area and Simonette, which was in our old reserve. So the government decided that, no, they were going to give them a chunk and give us a chunk of that old reserve. Instead, they were going to put it up for bids. Given that decision, we really went ahead with the plans, and decided that we were going to put in the lightweight coated paper machine. That would have been a major change here; something we probably will never see again.

Murphy That was really a lost opportunity.

Wright Yes. It was a disgrace about the way it was handled, the whole thing. They were just determined that they were not going to let any of the companies already here develop. They wanted to bring somebody new in. We had already talked by that time, but Canfor was kind of quiet about it. They felt kind of intimidated by the fact that they had to put in a bid for the whole thing, and they only wanted a small part. We talked to Simpson, and they said they wanted a small part, so we said, "Well, maybe we can get together and we can divvy it up." We were quite interested in that, and, in our presentation, we showed how this collaboration could use the whole area and what we would do to use it, but we were quite prepared to do some swapping.

Murphy That is interesting—to accommodate the area.

Wright So we would have had Simpson, Canfor, and St. Regis all accommodated because we had said at that time, "Well, OK, we can give up some of the north." We could get an additional area from down in R3 to satisfy what we lost to Simpson. And we were not particularly interested in that whole E8, anyway. It was garbage, most of it. And even to run a small sawmill at Basin Creek, we were going to have to back-haul wood from here, which the company is doing now, anyway. Hinton is selling wood to Weyerhaeuser in exchange for chips because there isn't enough decent wood in that country.[12]

Murphy That was a pretty badly chosen location for a sawmill.

Wright Particularly ridiculous was the kind of sawmill that British Columbia Forest Products (BCFP) put in there. They should have known better because Jack Toovey and his people had been on a lot of exchanges back between Mackenzie and here. Four of us went up there for four or five days, and Jack and Don MacMillan and the others would come down here, and Stan Nichols and they would spend a week here with us. They knew what kind of wood there was around here. They always commented on the Berland and how terrible the wood was up in that country, and then they just went ahead. They didn't do any inventory. They ignored Des' estimate. They just said whatever the

[12] Editor's note. When British Columbia Forest Products pulled out of the Grande Cache sawmill, they sold their interests to Weyerhaueser who later sold it again to Foothills Forest Products.

government wants, we will give them. They came in late and got the FMA. We lost a lot of respect for the government.

Murphy That was strange all around.

Wright It was. Really strange. So that was certainly a turning point. Then Peter Lougheed left, and Don Getty became premier. His philosophy was quite different. He wanted to encourage people that were in business, who had a proven track record. He made some pretty poor moves—Millar Western. I will never forgive him for that. So our company said we want to double this mill. We knew how much land we needed to support it, and we were prepared to go down to R3 and R4, which are on the Brazeau. Then the government said, "If we could direct chips, could you make up a certain amount of the fibre that way?" We agreed, so we scaled back on our inventory data, and we worked it to see how much lumber we could get off our area, and then the rest could be made up in chips. And so they guaranteed the delivery of the direction of chips in our agreement. So that was another major turning point.

Murphy Yes, it was. I interviewed Ken Hall, and he was very positive about that part of the experience.

Wright Yes, it was. But now they are reneging on the chip direction.

Murphy What is the question there?

Wright Well, the government just doesn't want to direct chips any more. But the company is taking the initiative and is dealing with each of the suppliers directly and making reciprocal agreements with them. We will give you certain pecks of wood, and you bring us certain pecks of wood. I am not sure that there is the net gain that there was before. It is one thing to get, you know, 40,000 bone dry units (bdu) of chips and another thing to get 40,000 units of chips but give them X-number of cubic metres of roundwood. I do not know how their balance is working out.

Murphy I will have to check on that.

Wright That is something to check on. It gets kind of vague. They say they are alright, but I am kind of concerned that they are making it up as their future wood—the allowable cut effect. That should be used for expansion or for replacing losses, not to stand still. That is the one incentive you have to do intensive management, so that you have got some place to move. I think it is going to be tight, especially with fires and what not.

Murphy Yes. That is always a threat.

Wright So that is where they are today, and that is a new change. Of course, the other change is public interest, if you can call it that, in the operation, which started with our friend Arnim Zimmer, with

STOP (Save Tomorrow Oppose Pollution).[13] What year was that? About 1972? I can't remember what year it was in. You know. You have got that.

Murphy Yes. We can add it in there.

Wright I think that ended up being kind of a plus because Kare Hellum was able to document his stops to show that they really had fudged the whole deal and that had they done a good job, they would have shown that things weren't bad at all. I think that discredited the environmental movement for a while, but it is certainly back in full swing now.

Zimmer Photo: Block 139, McL 6, 1971

Same Block, aerial view 2005—Zimmer got it wrong!

Murphy The environmental movement?

Wright Yes.

Murphy Do you know what the environmental movement's concerns are?

Wright The one that we are working on now is this thing with the Black Cat Ranch that the Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) got involved in –although they officially aren't involved. I guess the Black Cat are dealing with the company on the logging plans, and somehow the AWA got in and took over the agenda pretty well. Who is going to negotiate with the AWA? They don't have any proprietary rights, but it is difficult to deal directly with the operators of the Black Cat Ranch. But that is a situation where people moved into an area that had a disposition on it before the present owner bought it, and they used old logging trails for ski trails and hiking trails. Now when the company wants to operate there, they don't want the company to operate anywhere near them. I

[13] Editor's note. In 1972, Armin Zimmer and his environmental organization STOP submitted a report to the minister which included a number of black and white photos of cut blocks on the FMA, which purported to show widespread environmental damage and poor regeneration. Kare Hellum visited the same sites the next year and refuted Zimmer's claims. The company later took colour photos from the same locations as Zimmer's pictures. These images revealed that the original photos were misleading and that proper regeneration was occurring.

have got a copy of the stuff they passed out. It is just ridiculous—you know, the information that they are passing out that really has no justification at all. There are stories about the history of the place and the trails and about how the company had set it aside as a buffer zone, but now they are going to operate in it. Well, we never set that as a buffer zone. It was always shown as a second-cycle compartment. As a matter of fact, the forestry school used to use that area down there for the forest management planning.

Murphy I remember we cruised in there.

Wright Sure. That is the area. It was an old logging area that had been partially cut. To say that it wasn't in the plans to log is ridiculous. Also they talked about the history of the Solomon Valley. I said, "You know, there isn't any real history of the Solomon Valley until in the 1940s when Brule Lumber decided they were going to build a sawmill up on the Wild Hay and had a planer mill down near Brule. They put a road up to Solomon Valley.

Murphy That was the lumber company?

Wright Sure. Brule Lumber themselves had a mill, and Archie Radcliff operated on one creek. He was a sub-contractor for Brule Lumber. So he built that road. And Harvey Kennedy used that road right up until the late 1950s and 1960s when he operated on Rowe Creek up north of the Pinto towards the Little Berland. It was all his operations there, and he had a sawmill down near Brule, so he hauled in that road. Then about in the early 1960s, the bridge got blown up by the army engineers, and Fish and Wildlife were quite incensed. As an exercise, they decided they would blow up this old bridge.

Murphy They went on the Hay?

Wright The Hay.

Murphy I didn't know that. I thought it had washed out.

Wright They blew all the piers out and dynamited it, and killed fish all down that river. I guess it was abandoned, and they probably asked the Forest Service if they could use it for demolition or something, and they went ahead and blasted it out because we used to use that bridge.

Murphy That was the way to go to Rock Lake.

Wright Yes. You could cut up and hit the Rock Lake Road. The upper bridge washed out. There was another one that they used, and a ford that was closer to Rock Lake. I think it was still there the first time I was up. We could go in there, but it had washed out. But the main bridge led downstream to hook up with the lower road going up north because that is where their operations were. And the other roads from there were from the Nelson cut over near Jarvis Lake or Jarvis Creek. Those were all logging roads there. Anyway that is the current environmental one now.

And we also had the Special Places 2000, which a lot of the groups are using as an opportunity to tie up half the country. I am on the Sundance Local Committee. We just had an interesting meeting on Monday because there were three nominations. One was from the Boy Scouts, which was just for the lakes area that is developed. One company had proposed extending it right down to the lower southern boundary of the Marlboro Working Circle to our lease boundary. A third one came from the Edson equestrian group, and they wanted to tie up half the country. Their whole reasoning was they like to ride up in that country, and they didn't want logging or oil and gas development at all. This wasn't in the valley. It was outside the valley. It went several miles east and west. Last Monday, we just said we had enough of this BS, and we said there is presently a PTN designation on the valley.

Murphy The PTN?

Wright The latest terminology is Protective Notation[14], or something, in the government. We just have a recreation reserve on the lake part of it, and they changed that to some new terminology, which doesn't give the same protection. It just means there is a notation if somebody wants to go in there. It extended to cover the water, including the area that the company had developed plus an extension down Sundance Creek to the FMA boundary. We (the local committee) suggested that we could use that as the boundary, that is to say roughly the same area the company had originally proposed, rather than the Provincial Coordinating Committee (PCC) nomination, which was just taken it right off of their ecological significant inventory map that they had at the Foothills Forest. They just used the map to draw a rough boundary that extended up on the plateau, which didn't tie into the valley bottom at all.

So, anyway, we suggested they go back to the original PTN map and use that as the starting point. It also includes Emerson Lakes because Emerson Lakes, although it has a designation on it, it was as a recreation reservation. They couldn't include it in the areas that were allocated for Special Places because it was less than 5,000 hectares, and we said we will add it to the Sundance as an annex because all they were interested in was making up area. We said we will include it with the Sundance, so they may as well add that 3,000 or 4,000 hectares to it. That is how we are starting now.

But Mavis Holroyd (Mavis Edgecombe) was very unhappy because she was representing the equestrian group, and she was most disgusted that they were not going to prevent logging in all of the rest of the area. They just wanted their own private wilderness. I was upset with the horseback riders anyway because they had started in the last five or six years riding on the hiking trails and just

[14] Editor's Note. Protective Notations (PNT), usually called reservations, are placed by public agencies in consultation with the public land manager. They identify land and resources that are managed to achieve particular land use or conservation objectives.

destroyed them. We had steps going down to the steep areas and side cuts, and they would go in there in the spring when it was soft. It was particularly bad in the springs around the north end of the lake where we had logs to walk on. Of course, the horses split the logs apart, and it is really a disaster. And they had the nerve to show that on their nomination as part of their horse trails. We didn't have much sympathy for them.

Murphy Where does it stand now? Is that the final decision?

Wright No. At least we got a starting point. So what we did at that point is we identified, "OK, what area are we talking about? " Now we are starting to talk about what restrictions should we allow to each of them. And we went through the first cut of that on Monday, and we made good progress. But we were not going to make any good progress the other way because they were talking about pie in the sky kind of stuff. They didn't accept the fact that the Special Places 2000 were going to honour existing commitments. They want to change that. As a matter of fact, they actually wrote in their (I have it downstairs) nomination recommendations that any logging that would take place be horse logging to a minimum diameter of 14 inches—you know, the old high grade logging rules. They had a couple of old timers on that group that wanted to go back to the 1950s. We said we just can't accept that. Why waste time talking about this kind of thing? It is a given that the government is going to honour prior commitments. So anyway, I think we were making good headway. There were only the two main opponents: the equestrian group and a fellow that has got a lodge—a commercial guy—that wanted to save the whole area so he could run his people in there.

Murphy Where is the lodge? Is it out of the area?

Wright It is outside the forest management area. It is in the Edson corridor—somewhere in there. I don't know exactly where it is, but it is somewhere north of Highway 16 between there and Edson. But anyway the environmental movement is unpredictable, but it is getting more predictable, I guess.

This Cheviot business has really brought them in. The Sierra Club is backing these things. I had quite a discussion last night with Nancy—that girl from LA on the radio communications—and she has done a lot of things on forestry and anti-clear cutting and so on and so forth. She had been very interested because the first two stops of hers were in British Columbia at the Bella Coola. That was what she expected to see—big cuts on the hillside. Then she came here, and she said she had no idea that all Canadian forestry wasn't what she had heard about in BC. She felt she was in Sweden when she came here. She went out on some of these cuts, and she said they reminded her so much of the Swedish system she had used as the model of what Canada should be doing. And she said when she came here, she went for a walk behind Camp 1 and felt she was in some of their areas, you know, the narrow cuts. We had some good discussions. We told her what we thought about some of the environmental demands. That is one of the problems out there.

Murphy Perception.

Wright Perception. We get this thrown at us, this old growth timber. I showed her last night. You talk about old growth timber. You see those trees right there. That is old growth timber. That end of the strip that comes right to it is 500 years old. I said that is not what people think of us, but that is old growth timber. That is what we have. That is the story. So she was quite surprised.

Murphy Jack, I would like to go back, and we will cut it off whenever you are ready. Going back to 1957 in the timeline, I've got a reference. I had Jim Clark's story about setting the allowable cut, an apparently out-of-the-air figure, in a discussion with the government. But your note indicated that the allowable cut figure had already been used previously in your first …

Wright Well, I think they came up with that idea about the time when they changed the boundary. I don't argue with the fact that Reg Loomis came up with this 350,000 cord figure. But he didn't come at it that way. That is not a logical way of doing it. He came at it by looking at the number of productive acres and the average mean annual increment (MAI), and that is how he came up with it. He came up with 350,000, and you could see how he did it. Jim took the figures and came up with another way that isn't a realistic way at all of coming up with that figure. But it came from those negotiations, and I think Reg came up with the figure. The 350,000.

Murphy So you don't think it …

Wright He had some good stories but …

Murphy But you have to have factual basis. In 1958, then, I think it was your reference that you started the three-year FMA age class project. Can you talk about how that came to be? What was the idea of doing it?

Wright We needed to a really good figure on inventory. Everybody had their own ideas of how old the timber was. The government had coloured all the over-mature timber red. They called all the younger timber brush on their maps.

Murphy This was back in the forest inventory?

Wright Yes. In the provincial forest inventory. So we wanted to know how old the timber was because of the management system that we developed in 1957. The stand projection method required the timber to be inventoried by ten-year age classes, so it was critical to the management system to know what our age classes were. Even our inventory crews had been using an increment borer to find an age, but it depends which trees you bore. Really we were dealing with fire origin stands. The only thing that is important is the date of origin. To use an average age of a stand is irrelevant when you are talking about putting it into ten-year age classes. We said the only thing to do is find out what the years the fires were because in terms of fire origin we knew it wasn't an infinite number of age classes.

It turned out we had about six major age classes other than the older age classes. We really didn't care when they were over 300 years old. That is fine. That is over-mature, but we were interested in up to 150 years old in the actual age classes. We thought the only way to do that was to have somebody just take photographs and put the fire lines on it and go to those boundaries and find out how old the timber was. So that is why we did it. I worked with John Miller, and, actually, he was in charge of management. He would get all these books, and he would read stuff up on different methods. Finally, he came out one day, and he was so excited. He'd found a system. What do you think? I brought this book (bronze book—a Forest Management text). He had found this Judeich stand method[15], and we kicked it around. That is the one that suits the even-aged management system that we got here.

Junior Forest Warden Bob Crossley (son of Des) looks at the Marlboro WC Age Class Map (date unknown)

So that is when we decided we got to tie down the age class and to make sure that when they give us an age on the inventory plots that it is the actual age. If it fits into one of the age class patterns, we can check it and make sure that is what it is. If you wanted to use an increment borer to tell which age class it is, that is fine. But we are going to tie the age down to the fire that originated it. Of course, there are always spots where there were little fires that you can miss, but there is no doubt about the overall validity. We picked up a lot of those little patches. We picked up some that weren't fire originated, which are really tough. I think there are things like hail damage and this kind

[15] Editor's note. Named after the German forester, Johann Friedrich Judeich (1828–1894). He is best known for his classic work on *Die Forsteinrichtung* (*Forestry Management*) published in 1871.

of stuff. We found it years later. Because we'd find an area on a photograph that obviously had some damage in it, but there were no fire strips. We would go around the border and find nothing. When we got some hail damage in places and we started looking there, we said this is the kind of thing that it probably was. They were just small patches, so that was interesting. But it was puzzling. You would try and find what caused it, and you couldn't pin it down.

Murphy There is a reference to Dick Corser doing some scarification trials in 1958. Do you recall if that was the first attempt at scarification?

Wright No. They did some trials in 1956.

There were some at Camp 5, and some Camp 8 and Camp 10. They used FLECO rakes, Rowen discs, and various things. One of the first things I did when I came here in 1957 (because they hadn't mapped these areas) was to go out and see if I could locate where these trial areas had been windrowed. We didn't have much snow at that time, so I went out and found Camp 5 and mapped where they had done it in the fall of 1956. It was 1958 when we developed that blade of Corser's.

Murphy That was to test a specific blade?

Wright That was when we developed the forerunner—or what they now call the Crossley Plough. That was on Dick Corser's D9. We tried D8s, but they couldn't handle the heavy slash in a continuous forward movement without backing up, and they said you can't make money going back. You can only make money going forward, and Dick had this D9.

Murphy It was a D9?

Wright It was a D9. One of the first D9s.

Murphy That is major.

Wright We have lots of documents and pictures of that.

(Tape 1, Side 2)

Murphy After the tape ran out, you were saying that this Bill, who did the trials for Corser in 1958, was still scarifying buck timbers.

Wright He was doing road work at that time but still using the same Cat—the old D9.

Murphy Ten years later?

Wright No, that was about 1985.

Murphy You got a lot of mileage out of that.

Wright That old Cat was still going.

Murphy You mentioned the Crossley Plough. I dimly remember that one. Did that lead to anything or was that later abandoned?

Wright That is what was developed. When it started it off, it just had two, I guess they were like Kelly bars, welded on the blade.

Murphy These were vertical bars sticking down here.

Wright To create furrows and break up the slash. But they were too narrow, and so then they developed into bigger ploughs. Through the years, they developed a plough that gave you about a two-foot wide flat furrow. Then in 1958 or 1959, we had a wet year. I think it was 1958. Up in the Berland, we weren't getting the cones back and there were not many cones anyway in the Berland. With that old timber, the branches were just being pushed away. And they weren't breaking off until Bob Ackerman with the Dominion Forestry thought, "Maybe you should drag something behind to push the cone-bearing branches back onto the furrows." So that is when we made our first dragged-an-anchor chain. It was just a loop hung up on all this. We did lot of scarifying to it. It would pull stumps out that you missed.

First anchor chain drag, a loop of chain behind the spreader bar.

That developed into anchor-chain drags, and we used D7 pads for short stretch and then pulled the chain behind them. Then we had welded on D7 pins on it. And then it got to the point that we got into younger stands, and they developed new ploughs. This was getting into the late 1970s, and they were pulling these drags and we were getting darn near 100% scarification, and it was just dog hair stuff, almost as bad as the burn.

Murphy The generation was too dense?

Wright Sure. They had eight pads, and I had them drop it to take every second one out for a while. And then I said, "Well, look we did studies in the Berland with drags only, with blades only, and with combinations and really we found the best results were without the drags because other than places

where there weren't many cones, it was better without the drags. This was after Des had retired. He kind of liked the drags, but it made a nice looking site.

Murphy Yes, even it out again.

Wright But we just had them to kick the drags, so, when they went into a block, the first thing they would do is take the drag and crisscross the road to drag cones onto the in-block road. They had to get the cones onto the roads, and they brought them up and then dropped the drags and just used the teeth. It worked 100%, and Steve Ferdinand and I are both kind of cheesed off that they don't use them anymore, and it is for environmental reasons. People don't like the disturbance. But you need the disturbance. If you want to get those microsites, you have got to have a rough site, and that is why they have gone now to so much more planting because they are not using those teeth anymore, and they instead using disc trenchers and things just for planting site preparation. I think it is kind of sad because there is certainly a lot better genetic variation in an area in which you have got natural regeneration when you are planting. But that was it. There is no doubt about it, they made ruts, but you can go back in those old blocks and those ruts have all healed, and you can see the regeneration that follows those furrows, both spruce and pine.

Murphy Is that an issue that should be readdressed, do you think?

Wright I keep bringing it up and saying, "Why don't you?" They wouldn't let us do it. They wouldn't let you use those big Cats up there. It does too much damage, according to the Forest Service.

Murphy The Forest Service!

Wright Yes. They claim it does too much damage. And Steve says the same thing. He wanted to use it, but he got overruled too. He said, "Boy, when you look at the results we got with those D9s and those ploughs." Because the government did the same thing after they developed the same kind of thing. Proctor & Gamble (P & G) started using them. I think it is a shame because they are so sensitive now, and I think it is good. For instance, in the logging, we used to have quite a bit of skidder damage, and we advocated getting the big forestry tires for our skidders on our seedling supply. We finally talked them into it because we are the last ones on the site, and we didn't want to make ruts. Then with those narrow tires, those big 18-38 tires or whatever they were, if it was soft at all, they made ruts and the big wide ones didn't. Now all the skidders have wide tires, and, if they start making a rut, they shut it down. They are so strict about it. So that is good.

Murphy That is good.

Wright But, when it comes to the reforestation, I don't want to see it rutted out. You have got to make furrows. You have got to get some protection. When you go to some of these places now where they have full tree logged the landings, and especially where they have the chipper sites where they take all the small stuff, it is just smooth. Then they take back the debris from the barker and the

chipper over at the site, but it is just smooth. There are just no microsites there at all. Even for planting, they could have problems in some of the areas where you get dry falls and wind. So they have gone overboard the other way.

Murphy That is interesting—to have a satisfying aesthetic.

Wright Yes. I was entering some of your pictures last night. I was talking to this Nancy, and I said, "There is the alternative to clear cutting." Some of your pictures of the burns. The Cache Percotte Trail was the summer trail across to the Athabasca Pass. When you got to the height of land sloping down to the Athabasca, the trails just keep branching. I know where one of the main trails goes, and then it branches to two and each of those branch. With Brulé[16], once they could see where the valley was, they just picked a different route, so the trails just fan out. I had to give up. I spent a couple of days, and I followed the trails. You could see them definitely, and then they would branch and you would follow one, and then you would have to go back and follow the other one. They would branch, and they would peter out. The closer they got, they didn't use the same trails. And you could tell in the old historical diaries, where they would say they hit the valley in a different place than they had hit. We were a couple miles west of the XXX (Gramophone), so they all took different routes coming down and so it is really only the old pack trail that I am able to locate. I located it, and it is on the photos, and they are transferring it for a map.

Murphy Good.

Wright Dominic Hart is really interested in it.

Murphy That was his dad who logged in there.

Wright He logged in there, and Dominic said during the Depression they had nothing to do. They would get on their horses and go over to the McLeod and go on down to the McLeod Cabin, and they would go fishing. He said he would like to go and see some of those. I said, "Well, you know, we can drive to most of it, if I can just find where it was." And we are going to probably mark where it crosses the roads, and pick the trails that more or less follow it, but the important thing would be just to identify those crossings and major roads. So we are waiting for Dave Presslee to get me the cutover maps with the trail on it. The old trail map is not accurate because I knew where the trail was in several places, and it is as much as half a mile out on the old forestry map. So it makes it impossible to find it in the cutover.

Murphy Yes. Some of those trail locations were estimated.

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[16] Editor's Note: Brulé is a term adopted from eastern Canada, meaning a burned-over area with standing and downed timber making for difficult access. Early travellers, to avoid excessive chopping and sawing, would pick their way around and through it as best they could.

Wright Yes. That is right. They just went A to B.

Murphy Sketched in.

Wright Sure. But Dominic, I just talked to him on the phone. I said, "You know, I got such and such a place and it looks like it ..." "Yes, that is where it went." He remembered the spots.

Murphy Another reference in 1957 was that the company began cruising the Gregg Burn. Why would you cruise the burn?

Wright It was cruised before I came.

Murphy It was.

Wright It was in the fall of 1956 that they cruised it.

Murphy They cruised it in the fall of 1956?

Wright Yes. I corrected that because it had been cruised.

Murphy I didn't get that correction.

Wright They were talking about how dirty they were.

Murphy For what purpose?

Wright I don't know whether they were cruising it to look for pockets that were missed or what, but I could never figure out why they cruised it. It didn't make sense.

Murphy It would be conjecturing. I wonder if they thought they could use some of it.

Wright Well, they may have thought they could salvage some of it, but they were camped in the Gregg Cabin, all those guys. But the guys that were on the crew by the time I got here they were out in the woodlands like Bob MacKellar and Ozzie Hanson and those people, and they weren't even in forestry anymore.

Murphy So MacKellar was one was he?

Wright Yes.

Murphy I should phone him and find out.

Wright There were quite a lot of them.

Murphy How are we doing for time?

Wright It is fine. As long as I finish before 11:00.

Murphy In 1960, there was a reference to "defining the sawlog tree" and that is something that is not too clear to me. What was a sawlog tree?

Wright A definition of a sawlog in the reserve was in the first agreement (1954 agreement). There was a definition that a sawlog is a reserved over 14 inch for pine, and 16 inch or something like this. I can remember some discussion on the sawlog, but I can't see why it was a discussion on the forest management area because there was no such distinction, only in the reserve. And the discussion came because they were issuing licenses for sawlogs, and, of course, what was happening is most of the people in the lease—any of the quota holders—just converted the strip cutting at our request, and we bought the pulp. They paid us $1.00 a thousand[17] for a silviculture fee. Stan Hart would know that because he made the deal, and then we took over the responsibility for reforesting. So the only money made in many cases was in pulp.

What had happened is they had all gone to the maps. There was this period between signing the agreement in 1954 and the start of operations where they were given an opportunity for the present operators to select areas they wanted to keep logging in. They went to this map the government had with the red for over-mature and just slapped them in without looking at the timber, and a lot of it was really decadent stuff, especially north of the river where Micheaux cut at Clearwater. Imperial had a big timber berth there, and there was no way they could run a sawmill on what they were cutting. So I think it was dealing with new dispositions on the reserve, but the definition was in the 1954 agreement.

Murphy It is interesting that Des Crossley was evidently quite concerned about what was going on in the reserve area. It was only in anticipation of the 1968 decision to expand, when you would need to go into the reserve area.

Wright That is right. And because we were planning on doing it, going in there in 1968. We were quite concerned about how much wood was available in the sizes that were in the reserve forest. That was the definition of a sawlog. I can remember some discussion. I really can't remember why the discussion seemed to take so much importance at that time.

Murphy Yes. It seemed to be an ongoing thing.

Wright I could never get very excited about it.

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[17] Editor's Note. While the company had exclusive rights to the timber on the original lease area, the Forest Service continued to issue permits on the reserve area until such time as the company took it up for an expansion. The operators on the reserve area paid a reforestation levy based on the amount of lumber sawn expressed as "board foot measure", with a board foot being a piece of sawn lumber one foot square and 1 inch thick (rough measure). Lumber is sold on the basis of thousands of board feet.

Murphy You also added the comment in 1960 about Crossley finally "breaking down" and buying a trailer for you guys to use. Was he quite adamant that you had to take that out?

The New CFI Trailers—Rock Creek 1961

Wright It was quite comical because Des had never worked in the wintertime in the bush. He had no idea how to work in the bush. As a matter of fact, before he left the CFS (Canadian Forest Service)—when he took the NWP&P job—he was asking the guys down at the office in Calgary, "What do you wear in the wintertime?" So anyway, he had ideas that guys could tent in the wintertime. We stayed in Forest Service cabins and old logging cabins, and some of them were in terrible conditions. He was adamant that we didn't need anything better than that. He never went out in the bush in the wintertime.

Murphy He didn't? So he wasn't drawing on his experiences?

Wright He had no idea.

Murphy Was it a budgetary thing, do you think?

Wright Yes. I think it was. I don't know whether it was budgetary or an image of what wood workers or timber cruisers were supposed to be like. But they stayed in terrible places.

Murphy Was there a catalytic event that caused him to change his mind?

Wright Well, we talked him into it in 1958 or 1959. I think 1959 was the year that the Canadian Institute of Forestry (CIF) meeting was in Prince George, and the year before that we had convinced him to get

some real lumber to make some floors and frames for our tents, and we also put two tents over them and had stoves with oil heaters. We had a budget of about $200.00 to build the camp down on the Hay River Road. We got some green lumber from Riverview, which never really dried out all winter, and so you smelled of diesel fuel and what not. It was better than we had had before but not much. So at the CIF annual meeting in Prince George their crews had these trailers, and we took Des to show him these trailers. "Well," he thought "maybe". Of course, they were big trailers, about 30/40 footers. So we said, "Well, this is what we need Des. The days of living in a tent are over. Let's face it. It is ridiculous. We have alternatives now. We have got roads. We can pull these trailers." So he finally broke down and got the budget so that we got it through for the 1960 year, the next year, that we could buy two trailers. We designed two for the inventory crew. One was a cook trailer, with four bunks in the end, and kind of an office, and the other was just a sleeping trailer. They were pretty small. The sleeping trailer was 8 x 16 and it slept eight people.

Murphy Wow. It was stacked.

Wright The two stacks on each end. The other one was a 10 x 20 and it had a small bedroom on one end with four bunks, but there was normally only two people in there at the most, and the upper bunk was for visitors. You could seat about six or eight people in it. So that was the start of it, but he was adamant. He had guys going out pulling a toboggan with all their gear to tent out up in Springs Flat from the northeast corner of the area.

Murphy On foot on snowshoes?

Wright On snowshoes.

Murphy Dragging a toboggan.

Wright Dragging a toboggan in deep snow, and John Miller was in charge of the crew and he said, "He is crazy. These guys can't do it, you know." Then this one trip they all came down with jaundice, and there were guys passing out with their big packs on because they couldn't pull this toboggan. It was a huge toboggan he bought. He had this idea. It must have been about a ten-footer. If you had dog teams, you might pull it on packed snow, but they would have guys going ahead and breaking trail and trying to pull this toboggan. Two of the guys even volunteered to take a fly trip and walk around to do some of the plots around the boundary because the rest were too sick. Ray Ranger was on that crew. They all came down with stories, and the pictures of the guys lying with the packs on the side of the trails. But he was pretty cheap, boy. We didn't have much equipment in those days.

Murphy In 1961, then, there were two firsts listed. One was the first forest management plan (FMP). Were you involved in the preparation of that?

Wright Yes. Steve was here. He came in the fall of 1960. He was in on it. But what we did is we prepared management plans for each working circle, as we finished the inventory. So we did the Marlboro

and the McLeod and the Embarras and the Athabasca-Berland. We completed the last one in 1960—the Athabasca Berland. Then, in 1961, there was a summation of the first one for the whole pulpwood lease area. So it was really a summary of the four.

Murphy Do you recall what the response to it was from the Forest Service?

Wright Yes. They were quite pleased, but the funny thing is after we got it done, they sent us an outline of what should be in a forest management plan.

Murphy After it was cut?

Wright Yes. And they just took what we had, and they reorganized it and said, "You had to have this." So that was kind of comical, and they had no guidelines at all to start with. We prepared them a management plan, and they were quite happy with it. But then a year or two later, they came up with the guidelines for a forest management plan, which we kind of ignored to a certain extent. We did reorganize some things they wanted, but they really had nothing new we wanted. They only knew us when Evelynne Wrangler came on the scene, and Evelynne had all kinds of great ideas of what she wanted in a forest management plan. We argued pretty strenuously against some of them because of the costs.

Murphy What year would that have been?

Wright I interviewed her for a planting program supervisor in the late 1970s, I guess, and she graduated, I think, a year or so later. I don't know. Early 1980s.

Murphy But in 1961, would that have been the first formal forest management plan in the province?

Wright There was a preliminary one put in 1957.

Murphy It did have a preliminary one?

Wright It was even earlier than that I guess. No. John was working on it when I came, so I would say probably in 1957 he put it in. It was just a preliminary management plan. They had to do it within three years of signing the agreement. It was a general plan. We were still working on forest management area boundaries at that time. Charlie Jackson was still there.

Murphy But that would probably have been the first formal forest management plan in the province because the province would have not completed any of theirs.

Wright No. They had no guidelines, and they were quite open. We worked with Charlie Jackson and Reg on it, and they were quite happy with what we produced for them. We produced quite a bit. In the McLeod, we had taken the inventories and worked them out by ten-year age classes, and we had fire drafts and inventories by ten-year age classes. It was a lot of work because the compilation was done by IBM, but most of the work was done by hand. All the cut projections were done with an old

Marchant calculator. We got the empirical growth data from the permanent sample plots (PSPs). Of course, it was based on the first measurements, so it was empirical. We just had the inventories by ten-year age class, and we projected them with the ten-year growth factors to the time of harvest, you know, each one of them. We would project them through again after harvest and start from scratch. We had to show the volumes by 20-year periods. We had to show the effect of harvest and of the fall-down. It was a lot of work, but we did it on time.

Now they got all this fancy stuff, and they are having trouble meeting deadlines. They don't seem to realize you have to sign off some time. You can't keep making changes. You are going to have a plan this year. The year before you have got to make the decisions about how you are going to operate and how you are going to do it, but they keep changing their minds. They say, "Oh well, there is more information coming." They have inventory on visual sensitivities and all that stuff. That stuff is going to keep coming forever. You have got to get a management plan this year. I think they've got so many consultants doing so many things and the deadlines are all mixed up. The important thing is to get the management plan. Somebody is supposed to. We are supposed to have a meeting at the end of April on it. Then they planned to postpone it until the 4th, and we couldn't because that was the day we had that Special Places 2000. So it is probably going to be June, and we really need two meetings in June on this forest management plan because we want to get it done by the end of September. There won't be much going on in the summer.

Murphy The other first in 1961 was the first seedling tree planted. Do you remember that occasion or where it was?

Wright It wasn't really the first seedling planted, but it was the first seedling that was at the start of the continuing program, more or less, because we planted trees in 1957.

Murphy You did?

Wright Yes. We planted experimental. We got them out of Edmonton from Oliver. We planted some spruce and pine down right across from Folding Mountain Resort –both right on the highway in kind of a borrow pit that was still frozen and then across on the old highway. It was mostly pine planted. The deer ate them all. Years later, I went in and found two. They were just a stock with the odd little tuft of green left on it. But Camp 1was a poor place to do it as it turned out later, because pine wouldn't grow there. We also planted some Douglas-fir up on the hill at that same area, and they had to chop it out of the ground because, of course, they were flushed in Edmonton and the ground was still frozen here. We did some under-planting down on the old road here near the Athabasca River—Douglas-fir that same year—and I went back years later and I couldn't find a single survivor. It was under-planting. I don't know why they wanted to under-plant, but this was under aspen.

Murphy What was the compelling reason to plant? Was it just to try to get your experience?

Wright I think it was just to see what you could do with bare-root and see what would grow in. As I say, the choice of areas was very poor. That was the poorest place to do it. We also did some transplanting. Ferdinand did. That would be about 1958. He transplanted from the Gregg Burn to Camp 1.

Murphy To Camp 1?

Wright Yes. Pine. And some of that survived for several years.

Murphy It is still there?

Wright I haven't been there lately. I guess if I could find the block, but I am sure there probably wasn't much that survived.

Murphy It is really not a pine site.

Wright No. It is not a pine site. We had a couple of pine plantations right on the pipeline, but remarkably it did pretty good. It wasn't enough. As a matter of fact, Peter[18] and I walked in to look at some areas he had planted. This was about eight years ago or so, and we walked in there and here was some of this old pine still growing, but very poor survival and very chlorotic. That high pH was just too much for it.

In 1961, that we actually started working with the Walter's bullet[19]. That is what got us trying things. They grew seedlings at Oliver. The Canadian Forest Service (CFS) were in on it, and somebody else too, and they grew small seedlings. Then they transplanted them into bullets and we planted them out. But they wouldn't break the bullets. They were heavy pointed bullets. I have a sample downstairs. We did just a couple thousand, I guess, and planted them out, but they never broke out of the bullet and they lived for a while.

So that is when we started experimenting with other kinds of containers and what not. We did broadcast seeding about that same time in 1961. You see that was a result of the five-year surveys, and it turned out that five-year surveys were too early because the areas we went in and planted didn't need planting after. So we did quite a bit of broadcast seeding in various places in the Athabasca, Camp 1, and the McLeod. We had crews. I have pictures of that. That would be about the same time in 1961. That is when we started because we already had our first five-year survey. We knew there were areas that we thought needed stocking, and we started an active program. So it wasn't until we built our nursery in 1965 that we went into it in a big way.

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[18] Editor's note. Jack's son, Peter Wright is also a forester and worked as a summer tree planting supervisor for the company while attending university.

[19] Editor's note. In the early 1960s, John Walters invented a containerized seedling for planting that resembled a bullet in shape.

Murphy I would like to explore this seeding planting a bit a little more. The next reference I have got is in 1962. I have got initiated a seeding and planting program, and that was in a Des Crossley reference. Was that a major program?

Wright That is the one I am talking about. That is the seeding and planting one. You see 1961 is when we did our surveys, so it would be 1962 we really got serious. We did first experimenting probably in 1961, but 1962 was when we really got into it.

Murphy When you were planting seedlings, then, where was the source of those?

Wright The seedlings were grown in Oliver.

Murphy So the Forest Service was providing those?

Wright Yes.

Murphy That was a lease agreement, wasn't it?

Wright Actually, I don't know what the story was. It was kind of a experimental thing, so I don't know whether we paid for those first seedling, but they came from Oliver.

Murphy Spruce and pine?

Wright Yes. They weren't very good ones. I mean we weren't very happy with the quality. They were outside in the bare-root planting. Then we get into this transplanting in the containers, and, you know, we thought that was the way to go maybe in the containers. We never planted any great amount of seedlings. I could actually look up in those same records to tell you when the first seeding was.

Murphy How about we do that, then, and you can check later?

Wright That is something you would have to do quite a bit to look at because you would have to know the blocks and where we started. But you could just look down because the year of seeding or planting would be there

Murphy But the planting initially was largely of bare-root stock that you got from Oliver, and then just looking ahead, the greenhouse.

Wright The federal group were involved too. They were quite interested in the Forestry Branch.

Murphy Were they bringing planting stock themselves?

Wright No. They are the ones that transplanted them into the bullets and set up the trials.

Murphy These are experimental bullets?

Wright Yes. They set up trials down in the Gregg, I think, is where they did them. They followed those for a couple of years, and we had them on the old ski hill road. There were plots in there, right at the junction of the ski hill road.

Murphy I remember.

Wright Up on the hill there.

Murphy I wonder if you have checked any of those?

Wright No, I haven't checked them. They all had stakes beside them—pins. Those were some of Ackerman's trials that were on the first planting.

Murphy Were those trials of containers or bare-root?

Wright Most of those were containers.

Murphy The original?

Wright The original Walter's bullet, and then they did some more when we got the Ontario tubes and tried some of those, too.

Murphy Then just jumping ahead a little bit—in 1965 I had the reference that the greenhouse was built.

Wright We built the greenhouse.

Murphy Was that for container stock primarily?

Wright Strictly container stock. We used Ontario tubes. We started with the small Ontario ½ inch tubes, and we just planted those one year, I think, and then they came out with a ¾ inch, and we tried those for a couple years. We tried those right through until about 1969, I guess. I am trying to think what year we started the Spencer-Lemaire. I think that was 1972, so it was about 1969 or 1970, and then we quit. We were having no success with them.

Murphy The tublings or the containers?

Wright The Ontario tublings. It was several years later that we found out that there were some really good success areas up on the seepage sites up here on this area going up Fish Creek Road. We were flying over one day coming back from some place, and I saw all these rows of seedlings and I said, "My God. Some of those plantations worked." And so we went back into them. You have probably been on tours where you stopped and looked at those container plantings along that road.

Murphy I don't recall.

Wright There are lots of them. You can still see the old containers around the base of the trees, and they just shattered the container. They were the ¾ inch container. But that is the only place that it was really successful.

Murphy Why would it have worked there?

Wright The problem was, particularly in spruce if you had it, that the roots didn't get into the surrounding area. The container was completely around them, and so they didn't get the moisture. You know, they were 4 inch deep, and, when you only get moisture from rainfall, that is as far as you got.

Murphy I see.

Wright But in these seeping sites, moisture wasn't a problem. It was continually flowing, and so they survived. But at Camp 1, there was no survival, and, places in the Berland, we didn't get any survival. There was a bit down on the flats right near the Gregg Cabin, and, on one of the ski trails that we had going through there (walking trail), we had a couple stops. But, of course, down there, it was one of the places they planted that they shouldn't have planted. They were still on a five-year survey, and you can find trees that have containers but the better trees don't have containers—they are the natural ones that came in.

Murphy Was it almost from 1965 when the greenhouse was built, that you would have got the first crop? Did you plant seedlings in 1965? I suppose you could have planted that fall.

Wright We might have planted some in 1965.

Murphy But then was it about five or six years where essentially your planting was failure?

Wright Yes. It was spotty. There were some survivors but not enough, and we finally quit, I think, about 1970.Then they started looking at other methods of containers. We wanted stick containers, and that is when Steve worked with Hank Spencer and came up with the books—the root trainers—and they called the first ones "Ferdinands". I think 1972 were the first we planted out. It may have been 1971. I am not sure. That would be documented. Then, in 1972, we got the first Pottiputkis because we weren't happy with the dibbles. They were compacting the soil too much, and we used the Pottiputkis and the first lot we did was up on the top of the hill on Fish Creek Road. We watched those because Bill Mattes himself went out and took the Pottiputkis and planted some of the furrows that were in the bladed areas that were going east-west. All the others that were north-south were planted with mattocks that time; we switched to mattocks.

Murphy With tublings still?

Wright No. When we went to the Spencer-Lemaire. When we were taking them out, we went to mattocks because the dibbles were too small, and you couldn't jam the trees in the holes. The tube you could put in the hole, but, when we went to the others, we went to mattocks. So you got mattock planting

and the Pottiputkis, but there were so many people that were interested in seeing the different root formation I said that there wouldn't be any of them left. The end of the Pottiputkis. I remember the Swedes were really interested. Stig Hagner and his crew were up, and they wanted to see because they had developed the Pottiputkis in Finland. They were starting to use them, so they were interested in how they compared to the mattocks and shovels, and there was no comparison. Of course, you get one-plane root development with the mattock planting, same as using a shovel. With the Pottiputkis the roots grow out in 360° radius.

Murphy Was that kind of a flat plastic bag, the Pottiputki?

Wright No. It is a tube that has jaws with a foot lever, and you push down on the lever and it opens the jaw, and you drop the tube seedling down. You stick it in the ground, open it, and drop the seedling. Then you pull it up, and it pushes the spring and it closes the jaw in. But it didn't compact the sod when it pushed it away because the jaws were wider, and it had a much better root system. We have a couple plantations of mattocks that I doubt are going to stand up. I guess it is just the type of soil, and it just compacted in two directions. You can take those trees, and you can bend them right over. So I can't see when they get bigger unless they set out a tap root that goes down and it improves it. But at ten feet you could still bend them right over.

Murphy A problem with some of the British furrow planting was that they usually got lateral root development in only two directions, and you could blow them off to the side.

Wright Yes. They had a lot of that problem in northern England and Scotland. The whole plantations blew down. Forty years was as long as they would stand up.

Murphy So with the development of the Ferdinand with the root trainer, did that set the norm for the rest of the planting? Is that essentially what you are doing now?

Wright No. We experimented with all the others, too. We had Domtar tubes—Tampax tubes we called them—and they had fibre in them. And, of course, the styro blocks. With the BC influence in the company, we went back to styro blocks. After I left, they got out of Spencer-Lemaire because they said, "No. Spencer-Lemaire are too much bother to clean," and so on and so forth.

So they went to these 2-11 small ones, and, at the same time, the government came out with the new specs on calliper that they needed. So here they are trying to grow great big seedlings, 6 inch plus, in those dinky little containers. And what we need here is a big root ball and a small top because of the fall roots. So it was only last year, I think, that they started using the bigger containers. But they are still in the styro blocks which give a much better container. I have no objection to using a bigger root ball, but I sure remember Ken Clark showing me them in the smaller ones. He said, "Look. There is just a little shred that goes down here. If you shake it out, there are no lateral roots in these things." And they planted a couple piles. They were planting eight million seedlings a year in these stupid little things.

Murphy You don't know what the survival was like?

Wright I don't think anybody even looked because they contract plant, and everything is going the BC way. The contractor planters grow seedlings all over the countryside, and they try and plant all of them by the middle of July. The planting is all done. I don't know why. We planted right through to the end of August and had excellent results. They just ignored everything and went to the BC styro blocks. Everybody in BC does. It was the planting contractors. They wanted the seedlings all bundled like they get them in BC. They insisted that the greenhouse would bundle them for them. So when they did that, they had to take them out, so they wanted to use the BC system for blowing them out of the tubes. So they are still using styro blocks. I quit going to them. When they went to the small ones, I quit going to the greenhouse. Bill Mattes and I used to get so mad, we just said to heck with it. Last week was the first time I had been in for a couple of years. They had gone to the bigger ones, but they hadn't told me. I said I would go and take a look at the bigger ones.

Murphy They looked better?

Wright They looked better. I just lost interest. When they got into this you-can-produce-more-seedlings-by–doing-this attitude, the contractors were setting the specs. They didn't give a hoot whether the trees survived or not. It was just what kind of price you can get from a contractor to plant them.

Murphy It was tail wagging the dog.

Wright The tail wagging the dog, so I lost interest. But they got Diane Renaud, and she is taking more interest in it. She went to the bigger ones, but that puts their production down to 1.3 million, so they have got a lot of overhead for 1.3 million seedlings.

Murphy Wasn't it Des's philosophy? Maybe it was yours and his both that what counted is survival in the ground?

Wright Survival. That is the only reason you plant trees is to get a crop.

Murphy He was always appalled at the Ontario figures. We planted so many.

Wright We planted so many millions. If you had to plant more trees, that is more failure. That is the way I looked at it. You did a poor job. We had a tough time when our surveys came in to plant over 2.5 million a year. When Don Laishley took over he said, "We want to do state of the art planting." I said, "Planting isn't state of the art. Planting is admission of failure." And the only reason you plant a tree is to get a crop back. You don't plant it to satisfy the government or satisfy the regulations.

They were laughing yesterday. They went down to one of the ones to look at, and here was this crew planting in this block. It was the first year after I retired. I came in and I said, "What the hell are they planting?" All around it was beautiful natural regeneration, and they planted this block and it was full of cones. I said, "What did you plant that for?" Well, they weren't sure there were enough

cones. I said, "That is what you call a guard-your-ass forestry." So they stuck these seedlings in there, and you go in there now and the best seedlings are the natural ones. But that is what happened. They have a state of the art. We plant right away. We take the jump on everything. There was no sense putting junk in the ground just to do it. That is the way they went. The planters stick to the tainted "what was going to happen", and they were only interested in making money.

The one guy—what is the name of that fellow that did a lot of planting in BC and I used to talk to him all the time? Brinkman. Yes. He was interested in doing a good job, and one of his things was he would go back and follow up with the survey to make sure that they did. And they had him the first year. I said, "If you want…"