

Rawlins: To start out with my standard question, how did you find out about the proposal Wagonwheel project?

Burslander: You know, I don't actually remember how we first found out about it. Except that there was a guy around town asking questions. And we got curious. And starting asking for information, which was nonexistent. They didn't do, they didn't require environmental studies. They just didn't require any of that. And so there was a large group that was interested and we started having public meetings and this would be back, I think we started maybe in '69 because we went to Washington in '73, in February of '73. But we had had many, many, many meetings before that. And public meetings. And there were a lot of people interested, and a lot of people with a lot of professional background, like Mary Ann Steele and Dr. Ken Perry, and people like that, that gave us information that was really good. In fact, Mary Ann wrote up a lot of the thing that we took back to Washington with us. And so we started having these meetings and finally Schlesinger came out here. He heard that there was quite a rumble out here, so he came out here. And that meeting was held in Big Piney. We didn't know how the oil companies down there felt, 'cause this was El Paso and they had Northwest Pipeline down there. And at that time there was a big, well, they had houses and everything out there at the gas plant and Northwest Pipeline. And anyhow, the upshot, and that was a huge meeting, well attended. And at the time he came to that, that was in the fall I think of 1972, he promised us that if we were, you know, if the people up here really didn't want it, why, you know, he'd see. So the way to prove that, we decided, was to have a straw vote. And that was election year. And so we volunteered and took all the polling places in the county, and

strictly adhered to all the rules and regulations: stayed back from the polling spots and, but we stopped everybody that went in and told them what we were doing. And do as they chose, either vote or not vote, or, you know. And Sally and I took on [?] and we sat from seven to seven to get 21 voters. That's all the votes at [?] The interesting thing is, and I think Bernie and somebody took Northwest Pipeline, and of course, they had a lot more people. But the interesting

thing was, that all of our people either were oil company employees, worked for the oil industry in some way, our entire ballot was yeses. They were against it. They just didn't like the idea. And, as I say, we tried and tried and tried and we finally got, Lawrence Livermore Laboratories finally put out a study. And we did not get it in the usual manner. It was sent to us by somebody who, actually kind of a secret thing, they just shipped us a copy of this. And that was where we found out that, they had us, our lives were evaluated at about 250-300,000. There were so few of us that probably, if something happened to us which, of course, it they didn't think it would, that the oil, oil and gas was worth a lot of money. And this was such a sparsely populated area that this was a good place to do it. That same study did indicate that they felt that by blowing off these bombs sequentially like they were going to do, which was going to rock us to a real darn good earthquake, five times in a row, that it would hurt a lot of wells, crack a lot of chimneys and basements if there were such, ruin a lot of bridges, irrigation ditches, possibly dams. And that is when we got people like Swifts. And, of course, Floyd Bousman had been in it a long time. And, but, you know, Boulder Lake, it's already gone out twice. This is the third dam on that. New Fork dam had gone out, has been replaced. And so, there was a lot of, and then I think one of the things that really grabbed agriculture was that they did admit that if there was radiation escaped from this, they couldn't guarantee it wouldn't, that the cattle might have to be dry-fed, with imported hay, for a period of maybe five months. And that really grabbed their attention. So really, truly, and then when we got back to Washington, I happened to sit beside the CEO of El Paso, who came in with his company jet, five or six lawyers, accountants and stuff, and he really was a neat guy. And the interesting thing

was, and I've always felt that that was one of the reasons that it didn't go much further than it went, was because he was not aware that the natives were restless. He did not realize that most of us did not want that. Mr. Randolph, Dr. Randolph, who was the project engineer, had really not enlightened him that we were very, very upset. And, my goodness, we had meetings and meetings and Randolph attended them and tried to soothe us, and

we'd have the AEC people too. And I just think, you know, it was, I said it was sad that you had to end up in Washington, everybody fighting. When told me if he'd known, I don't think it would have ever gone that far. And of course, it proved him out. The little [?] girl asked me the other day about this. She said, "Well, why did it stop?" And I said, "Well, probably a variety of things." El Paso themselves. He found out. And I think that cooled him a lot. And it wasn't successful. I mean, Gas Buggy, Rulison, Rio Blanco, none of them were successful. That last one at Rio Blanco didn't do anything. It was pretty hot and all it did was melt the sand. (Laughs.) You know, and make a, it almost blocked it. Instead of, the idea was that you set off the explosion and it blew these pieces of sand back into these fractures and held them open so this could all run out. And what it did was, it melted it.

Yeah. It just did the opposite. And we had a lot of information. The fella who had the Roundup when we first came here, his daughter married and lived at Colburn, Colorado. And she had information, they're fairly close to the Rulison one, and it was just a little bitty one, it wasn't a big one. And she gave us information; she told us about a lot of the, and we had her on tape, oh, the wells that it caused problems in and structural damage that it caused when that thing went off. And, of course, the other thing that we never could understand was that they said that, and that was in the environmental, well, it was in a statement, it wasn't really an Environmental Statement, that the gas, of course, would be radioactive. And the way you used that is that you add a lot of good, clean gas to it to a point that the government says it's, can be used.

Mm=hmm. So they would mix it in with supplies  
From--

other places. Well, suppose somebody forgot  
to mix it sometime, and you had a gas range that  
was emitting all kinds. But even that, knowing  
what we know now, 'course hindsight's always  
20/20, but knowing what we know now about the  
radioactivity down in the, where they did all the

atomic bombs and stuff out of St. George and all, we realize that the government was not, they didn't have enough information to be accurate about how much radiation the human body could take. And it wouldn't, I can't see how it would have ever been usable. And, of course, Plowshare was what they were really looking at. They were going to use it to dig harbors and irrigation ditches and all that kind of stuff. And can you imagine the kind of radiation you would have had with it?

Rawlins: Mm-hnun. Yeah, and they will. And then even if they were mixing the gas in, you would still have operational releases like flaring and things like that, I would imagine.

Burzlander: Well, and human error in the whole thing. And even mechanical error. These things don't always operate the way they're supposed to operate. If something shuts down and you've got a whole big bunch of radioactive gas. Well, I think they finally realized it. And then, of course, the big problem is that after you do these things, they still have no place to put all this radioactive waste. And I don't know if they're ever going to have it.

Rawlins: So the, in your mind, you know, when recalling when you were getting involved in the citizens' committee, what seemed like the worse feature of this? What was the thing that you were most against?

Burzlander; Well, we were terribly against, and I guess we were, we probably were made more aware of the problems with radioactivity because we had people like Ken Perry and Mary Ann Steele and people that were aware that some of those things like strontium and plutonium and stuff have such a long

life and they are pretty disastrous. They did know that. And I guess that was one of the things. And then, of course, the other thing that really panicked us was this was not, I mean, the Wagonwheel, we might have even survived Wagonwheel, but had it been successful then they would have developed whole fields in that manner. And who could stand earthquakes. They were talking several hundred a year. So you could have had an earthquake every day. And, of course, the



field, we were pretty upset, because the field, of course, that they really wanted, the El Paso field that they wanted to try it on was the Wagonwheel, of course. Which is, you know where it is.

Rawlins: Yeah, it's just, it's --

Burzlander: Just south, it's on the Big Piney cutoff. And so that would have been a, and particularly for the people in Boulder. And they did say that it probably would ruin the bridge across the East Fork, and the Boulder bridge. And that's our only in and out of this place. Mail, all of our supplies. So it was a variety of things. We were concerned about all of this stuff. And we put this whole thing together. And the interesting thing was that after Schlesinger had said that, you know, he'd meet with us if we came back, and we'd talk it over again if we had the results of a, and we took this poll. And it was really, it was a, it was very much against the, against this, that he would, he'd meet with us. Well, interestingly enough, he was replaced about three days before we got to Washington. And Dixie Lee Ray, who became governor of Washington state, was the head of it. And she refused to meet with us. She didn't have any problem, she hadn't promised us nothing, and she, of course, she is a gung ho nuclear, you know, that kind of thing. She has never seen anything wrong with the, all the stuff. And Hanford, Washington! I mean, it's, they'll never get that place cleaned up. And I can't imagine all the stuff that's going down the Snake River. I don't mean the Snake — the Columbia. And you wonder how much of that's adding to the problem with the fish and all that kind of stuff out there.

Rawlins: So it sounds like you essentially felt that the

impacts of this thing would make it pretty miserable for people who lived around here.

Burzlander: That's right. It would destroy our whole way of life.

Rawlins: And potentially maybe even drive a lot of people out.

Burzlander: I'm sure it would. We didn't have a lot of people to drive out. (Laughs.) At that time we didn't even have 4,000 people in this county.

Rawlins: And you say you're originally from the Eden valley.

Burzlander: Well, I grew up, yeah, I was born in Colorado but my folks came up to Eden valley when I was five. And then I went to the university and Buzz and I were gone, well, he's a Colorado boy, we were gone for ten years and came back here. And there were several things that, Buzz is an engineer. He's an electrical. And we had, he had done work as a consultant all over Colorado. And, of course, we had watched, having grown up in Eden valley and my father was very active in the irrigation system down there and so I was very well aware of water rights and all that kind of stuff. We get back up here, and we bought the lodge because we wanted our kids to grow up in a place like this. And we had two girls, and there the very first thing they're talking about were all these big reclamation dams. Well, we'd seen what had happened in Colorado. And we'd seen Denver steal all the water from the western slope and still trying to continue to do so. They're getting a little smarter now and they're not letting them. But they never consider, and of course it's happened in the state of Wyoming too, they never consider stopping growth. And so we got real active. They were going to build a big dam up on the Green River, and a big dam down on the New Fork narrows. We got active on that. And then hardly had gotten that over and this came up. And we got active in it. And, as I say, we still have a Wagonwheel Committee and we ended up with some money left over. And we decided that there might be another problem one of these days. 'Course we're going to have to get some younger people.

Sal and I are about the only ones who, well, and Pat Jackson. Floyd came in to the meeting the other day. Floyd knows. But we're all getting up in our seventies, you know. And we need people to know that there is some money there, and have some young people to carry it on. Because I'll tell you, having a little bit of money makes a lot of difference in fighting these things. But we all went back primarily, oh, people donated a lot, people gave money, but we all primarily went back

on our own. And it was a well-rounded group. We had young people the age of John Perry Barlow. And then Chrismans and Swifts went, the two couples. And then it was Phyllis Burr, who worked for the Roundup here for quite awhile. And she knew her way around in television and stuff, and she's the one that got Floyd on television back in Washington. But there was Sally and Bernie Gosar and Daphne and Floyd and Ken Perry and Phyllis and I went in Ken's plane. And then Mary Ann Steele and Barlow. The Swifts, I think, flew commercial, and Chrisman had his own plane and they flew back. And so it was a well-rounded group with ranchers and, you know, just a lot of different people in it. And I have to tell you, it's a real experience. Because you truly don't know if you're making any headway at all. And the thing we met up with that at least aggravated me so and I finally popped off about it, was that every meeting we went to the first question you're asked is, "Do you have counsel?" Well, lord, no. Environmental counselors back in Washington get \$300 an hour, hard to get. And we didn't have that kind of money. And here you are, making your pitch to the AEC and all these people. And the AEC has a whole band of lawyers, that we as taxpayers are paying for. We're paying the guy in the AEC. And here comes El Paso. And basically we're paying for that too, because we buy their products. So their whole staff of lawyers and their staff of accountants are all paid for by the public, because that's all in their product. So you go back there and they say, "Do you have counsel?" Well, it would have come out of our pockets if we had, and we said no. We thought, and finally I told this one guy, I said, "You know, I thought this was the United States of America. I thought that it was a democracy, and that if we had something to say we could say it. And somebody would listen." And I told this one

AEC lawyer, I said, "You know, we pay your salary, we taxpayers do. And you are definitely not representing us." And, oh, he was, and of course, you know, that's the other thing. They sent all of the, I think if Schlesinger had been there, he would have been there. But Dixie Lee didn't even second in command, I think we had, you know, way down here, and a bunch of damned lawyers. Floyd got so mad. And we met with Butz, and he was

Agriculture at that point. And I can't remember, I don't think it was the whole bunch of us. I know Floyd, and I think Sally and I, I can't remember, there might, maybe it was the whole, I don't think it was the. We met with him and he was real, real smarty. And he said, "Why are you meeting with me? What have I got to do with it?" And Floyd said, "Well, they tell us that if this puts out radiation that we may have to dry-feed our cows. This is an agricultural area as well as a tourist area. And we certainly can't afford to buy hay from Idaho or someplace else to come in here and feed our cows." He said, "It's a marginal operation." "Oh." Well, then we had these nicely, have you seen one of the little folders that we had, that we took back, that was? We put them in just little plastic folders and it was a whole —

Rawlins: You mean the statement of opposition?

Burzlander: Yeah, why we were opposed to it. Okay. So we had these little, and we had them and we were handing them out. And then he got even worse and he said, "I suppose, how many government dollars did you get," like in a grant or something, "to put this together?" And, boy, I tell you, we fairly well flew at him, and told him there wasn't one penny. And we had done it, you know, Mrs. Hammonds at the, John Mackie, she was working for John, well, she just quit here a while back. She typed all those. I don't know, different people ran them off for us and, you know, gave us the paper to put them together. We put them together on Sally's big table, and we, each one of us had a sheet that went in. That's the way we did it. And we even had a, we spent hours on that. We decided that one picture's worth, you know, all these words. So what we did, we must have gotten, I have no idea how many slides. We asked several of the

photographers around town to give us good slides of the area. And we kept it down to, I think it was ten minutes. And we, you can't believe the brawls we got in over which pictures we were going to take. We finally chose this bunch of pictures, and that was my deal. I gave the little lecture on the, and showed the pictures. And what we were trying to do was show them what our way of life was like here. And --



Rawlins: Well, Daphne, Daphne says that at one point when, heavens, there was some break in a meeting or something like that, and you jumped up and put on the slide show.

Burzlander: I did.

Rawlins: What meeting was that?

Burzlander: Well, that was, that was the final meeting with the AEC that, see, we had to have a chance. We tried to work this in but they weren't interested, you know. And they asked for a little break, and that's exactly what I did. I jumped up and I gave them the little show. And it at least had quite an impact on El Paso. And I think, he was very apologetic. He said, "Here I fly back with all these lawyers, and you people are here representing yourselves." And I said, "Well, we thought we could." You know. And he said, "You know," and that was the one thing he said that I will always remember, he said, "you know, you're right." He said, "We used to get together and you could talk these things out. You didn't have to have a lawyer." "Now," he said, "the very first thing you do is to gather up a whole bunch of lawyers and statisticians and all these people, and go ready to fight." And you don't need that. You just don't need that. We even redressed, that was one of the funny ones, Floyd went back and Joe and Brad told him that he had to go back looking like a Washingtonian. And you can't imagine Floyd looking like a Washingtonian. You know, he had a suit. We look at him down at the airport and he's walking like he's crippled because he's in dress shoes. And we said, "What are you doing in those, Floyd?" Well, the kids said he had to. We said, "Come on, haven't you got any of your western," you know, a western cut jacket. Because Floyd always has nice clothes. Oh, yes, and he had his

boots because he didn't figure he could wear those dress-up shoes very long. So when we, when he got ready to go to the, to talk on television with the, with Randolph, they had Dr. Randolph on for El Paso, and interview him, we said, "Go looking like a rancher!" And, of course, that was the best thing he ever did. Because when they, when they talked about it, they said, well, something about ranchers obviously were not dumb. 'Cause Floyd is good, I'll tell you. You know, he

doesn't have a lot to say but he's, he's not stupid and he's not bashful or shy and he says it. And it was good. He made a real, I think he was the chairman of the, he was chairman of Wagonwheel.

Rawlins: So what do you think was the most, you know, you obviously went out and did your homework and got a lot of facts assembled about it. And then you put them in a form where you could get them out. What do you think was the most effective thing that you did? Do you think it was the back home, do you think it was going to Washington, was it getting Floyd on tv, what was it?

Burslander: We did. We did. I think, I don't know, it probably, it all added up. But —

Rawlins: Or just the fact that you were willing to represent yourselves like that?

Burslander: I think that had a big lot to do with it. I think that had a lot to do with it. Then I think the very fact that like I told you, El Paso, the higher ups at El Paso were not aware because this was a little pet project of Dr. Randolph's. He wanted to see it go. The AEC wanted to get it going. I don't think Schlesinger was aware of the opposition or what was going on until you talked to him. Because this is a little group of people that have got this little project they're going to do. And they make it sound so good when you read, "We'll going to do all these industrial things with atomic energy. And no problems. No problems." Well, they probably never even looked at that. I'll bet you Schlesinger didn't know what Plowshare was until we brought it to his attention. And the same thing, and, of course, we also had people like Chrisman. Chrisman, as an oil man, had sat in on the one down in New Mexico.

And he was not impressed with it. And, of course, you're less impressed when you realize the dire results. And I don't know. Actually, we had a lot of help from Teno Roncalio. He was real good. And I did not remember that Hansen did anything. But Floyd said Hansen did get pretty active after he found out that the oil people themselves, a lot of these oil companies here, were not happy about it. And, of course, Hansen's constituency was ranchers. I mean, we're the ones that put Hansen

in, you know. The ranch community. He always got a lot of votes from Pinedale. He was, and so you just, I don't, really, what we, we came away wondering if we'd done any good at all. Because, you know, outside of what the CEO said to me, you didn't get an idea that anybody was even listening to you. Particularly the AEG. You didn't even know if they were listening to you. And I did kind of chuckle, because I think Randolph probably got his ear bent after that last meeting. The funny thing was, that was the last meeting and we all went to a local bar. And there were two guys from, at least two, from the Lawrence Livermore Laboratories there. And, of course, they had been pushing this thing. And they got kind of mellow after a while and kind of admitted that, you know, there were a lot of things they didn't know and stuff like that. But, of course, they never admitted it in the meeting. And, but, we said, "Well, we should have taped that conversation." (Laughs.) Come back and haunt them. But it died. And then, of course, El Paso came in here. Well, my daughter took over the lodge in the summer of '73.

Rawlins: Now which, is this the —

Burzlander: Rivera.

Rawlins: Rivera.

Burzlander: And she took that over in '73. And it was about seventy-, maybe '74 El Paso came in and they wanted to stay someplace like that, down on the creek. A whole bunch of these engineers and stuff. And they were going to use hydro[?] down here at the Wagonwheel. And when they came in to rent the rooms, they asked, they said to Barb, "Well, now, we know that El Paso's not very popular up here. Maybe we better tell you that

we're from El Paso." And Barb said, "Well, before you rent my rooms, maybe you'd better know that my mother was one of the ones that went back and fought you guys back in Washington." (Laughs.) So she said, "We're even." But the other funny thing is, 'course Buzz is a, was doing all kinds of servicing and stuff around here. And they don't have central power down there, so they had a big diesel. And they've got a 2,000 foot water well down there at Wagonwheel. And they had to

get it running because that's the water, that was their water source that they were going to use. So Busby and the one person who did a lot of that stuff, they called him and gave him a key to Wagonwheel to go down there and start those pumps. Well, it got to be a big pain in the neck 'cause you had start them every day, turn them off. So he taught me how to do it. So I went down with my little key and went into Wagonwheel. (Laughs.) Started the pumps for them so that it would pump every day so that they would know that it was working when they got it. Then they invited a bunch of us, and Sal and I went down the day they hydro[?] and they put that water under that intense pressure. The noise is absolutely, you can't believe that noise. And it was unsuccessful. And I really, truly believe that the hydro[?]ing probably would be just as successful as the atomic energy stuff was, because it at least pushed its way in and didn't create glass. And then Floyd and, I didn't get to go that year, but Floyd and Sally went to, when they did the Rio Blanco. They went down to Rio Blanco. [Portion of blank tape.] People aren't allowed different walks of life. And one of our, and still coming, in fact. He started out coming with us, oh, way early on. He's a great fisherman and he worked for the federal Fish and Wildlife, and was all over this area. And did a lot of things, you know, studies and stuff for the Fish and Wildlife. He was a fish biologist. And he was a great fisherman. And he came for years. Well, right after we ended up in Washington, when we came home he was called back to Washington. All the Fish and Wildlife, or a lot of the heads of the different management areas, were called back. And they were informed that since this little bunch of people from Sublette County in Wyoming had come and created such a stink about

environmental studies, that they were worthless, that they didn't mean the paper that they were written on. That they were going to have to make their environmental studies mean something; there was going to have to be some meat in them. And that they were to give it some thought. And he, 'course he's a very quiet fella, doesn't talk much. And he said he sat through. And he said if they said it once, they said it all kinds of times. He was back there a month while they learned how to do the kind of environmental



better. And now they, see, they're trying to get El Paso, or not El Paso, they're trying to Exxon to build that pipeline to some of the old fields because, you see, that's the only way that you can recover a lot of this oil and gas is by putting it under pressure. It flows for a while, and then there's still a lot of reserve there, but you've got to push it out. And so a lot of these old fields, for a long time, they used water, what they call a water flooding. And they develop water wells and then they pump the water in the ground, which floats the oil up. And oil, and pushes the gas out. And now they claim that this, the carbon dioxide that they're just putting out in the, you know, throwing off down there at Shute Creek, can be used for that oil recovery. And they've been trying to encourage them to build a pipeline to the eastern part of the state where there are a lot of old lines, a lot of old fields.

Rawlins: Yeah, I'd, I'm pretty familiar with that set of discussions.

BURzlander: Yeah, well, and, see, actually I don't understand, if they built that kind of a line there'd be no problem with, they were going to go primarily right across, someplace across South Pass, you know, to take it up in there. Looks to me like it wouldn't be anything to, if the Wagonwheel, see there are five wells drilled in Wagonwheel. And if those are as good as they seemed to think they were when they were going to use the radiation stuff on them, then I would think there'd be no problem with running a little carbon dioxide up there and see if you couldn't blow them loose. And there's something else, we did learn that, there was something else that we really learned. And I learned part of that on Wagonwheel and part of it I learned, see, we used Mr. Hammond. He was a well driller. And we used a lot of his welling

logs to show how deep they were and what the formations were and that kind of stuff.

Rawlins: Where the aquifers were and things?

Burzlander: What was that?

Rawlins: Where the aquifers were?

Burzlander: Right. Right. But then after that I got on the Upper Green River Water Committee, and that was to stop the big dams up here. And I was on that, I can't remember, we were supposed to be working with the Bureau of Reclamation. And it was a matter of a good many years. And we had a lot of meetings on that. Jim [?], Floyd Bousman, (laughs), and I were actually the ones that were very active in it. And we had a guy from Big Piney and he had all those wonderful logs that the oil companies use. And you just cannot believe the water aquifers that are under this area. And, of course, one of the big ones is the well that Wagonwheel tapped for their. That pump, when we'd go down there and start that thing, that had a three-inch pipe in it. And that thing, you could pump that thing and it would just come out full of that, you know. And I was curious about it, because it was deep. That's a deep well. And I was really curious about it, as to how good the water was. Well, I saw the cows drinking it so one day I decided, heck, I'll take a little sip. Pretty salty. It wasn't what you'd really want to drink for dinner. But the cows were drinking it, and they didn't seem to have any bad effects. See, it would, it ran out and just ran down into a little pond, and there were cows all around that. There was a fence around the wells, but where this drained off down into ponds and stuff, why, the cows were drinking it. So I just thought I'd try it and see, because, you know, they can take all that out. And when you stop —

The salt and things.

But it was interesting to realize how much water there is under this area. And of course, it's all re-fed by our mountains up here. And do you take the Denver Post by any chance?

Oh, I see it on and off, [?].

Well, we get it. Yesterday's, we get it on Sunday, and yesterday they were talking about the water down in the Navajo-Hopi area. Peabody Coal Company who furnishes the coal for the, it's a big plant down there, not the one at Page. It's the one down at [?], down on the, well, it's below, in that Havasu area, is where it is. It's on the California-Arizona border. They have a pipeline

and they slurry that coal from that big Peabody mine up on the reservations, and it's a joint agreement between the Hopis and the Navajos. And of course, they're having a conniption fit because they've been draining, they've been pumping that thing for, I think, twenty, twenty-five years now. And they are, they realize that all the springs are going dry, the creeks are not. And, of course, I thought it was such a funny thing for them to say. The guys with Peabody Coal, of course, are saying, "Hey, ours doesn't make any difference because we take it out so deep." And I thought, well, where did they think that water comes from, that deep water? And it soaks down from the surface. And it's just like the Ogallala, all down through western Nebraska and Kansas and into Texas. They've only been pumping that thing for thirty years and they've just about pumped it dry. And now they claim it will take 300 for it to regenerate her if they quit tomorrow! So these water things are really, and that's one thing that we did, you know, we learned quite a bit about that.

Rawlins: So the, this business with the Bureau of Reclamation, the dams on the upper Green, that was following the Wagonwheel? That was sort of the same time?

Burzlander: No. Actually, no, actually, they came in here and tarted, and they ran out of money. And they built Fontenelle in the early '60s. But they were looking at building the one. And, of course, this whole area up here, we were adamant against that. Flooding a bunch more ranches, flooding that whole upper Green habitat, clear to the lake. And then, of course, this one down here on the New Fork narrows, years when that reservoir was full, it, they'd have had to change the highway. It would

have flooded the highway. It would have taken that whole Boulder valley down there, where [?] and those people are, it would have taken all those wonderful ranches. And so we were all against it, and Buzz and I were pretty vocal about it. (Laughs.) One rancher who was not, it was Dean Benny, he thought that would probably be a good thing, you know. And he came to our house one night and told us we were newcomers, and either shut up or get out. And he'd see to it we never got any more business in town. Well, of

course, we had the lodge, but Buzz also had [?] Electric. He and Jim Greenwood, they had a Farm Bureau meeting out at Daniel. And after the Farm Bureau meeting [?] up, why, they came in and he told Buzz and I. I said, "You mean this isn't America anymore? We can't voice an opinion?" And, oh, he was just awful. And so then, they built Fontenelle. And, of course, that's the biggest farce that ever was. My father advised them against that years ago. He said, "First place you haven't got any decent soil over there." And see, they always, when they build these things they always, in the economics, they put in a farming, agriculture thing. Which is a bunch of baloney. 'Cause no farmer can afford the cost of that water, ever. They never have been able to, but they. And my dad said, "You'll never grow anything." He said, "If after several hundred years you've got a sagebrush this high, and you dig off this much topsoil and then it's shale, you're not going to have any kind of agriculture over there." But they went ahead anyway. I mean, they asked their opinion but then they never listened, see. And they built Fontenelle. Well, then the Bureau of Reclamation, because we were so adamant up here, said, "Okay, you guys come up with some plans for the water up there." And what we wanted was to have small, the Fremont Lake increase on the side, the foot, of extra that we put on, came out of that committee. We advised them. Now, there was so much fighting that it took forever to build the darn thing. But it came out of that committee. And we did an entire study, this committee did, of all the areas where we thought there might be a satisfactory impoundment, a small [End side one] one, not these huge things that inundate ranches, but a small impoundment. And the place that needs the water the worst is over here on the west side, because once their creeks quit running in the summer, it's

through. They don't have any reservoir water. And so what we were trying to do was find places where maybe you could have three weeks of stored water. And in a place where you aren't doing a lot of damage. Just a small, well, like these little ponds that the BLM builds around for irrigation, for watering. That kind of an idea.

And we had all kinds of, we spent a lot of time. And went to all these. And, of course, we didn't know if they were satisfactory for dams. They



would have to make an engineering determination on that. And I'm not sure sometimes they know. Because if they'd done real good soil tests they wouldn't have ever built Fontenelle. (Laughs.) Ever, ever built Fontenelle. That's what we tried to tell them about this whole area. You see, all these dams have gone out. They're all built on glacial moraine. Every one of these lakes is a glacial lake. And you do not have the kind of a base that you need, for instance where they built the Hoover Dam, or the one at Page, you know, Lake Powell. Those dams are built into solid rock.

Rawlins: Bedrock.

Burzlander: Right. These are not. And shale. And the water bypasses them. That water hits a certain level, and it hits those shale levels, and it runs right around the dam and it comes out down below like a bridal veil falls. Anyhow, that was when we, and that was done after Wagonwheel that we worked on that. And the same bunch of us have been all so active in trying to keep the Forest Service from clearcutting. And you name it, I've been on all of the nasties.

Rawlins: So you feel like, I guess that sort of ties into something I was interested in. Do you feel like when you all did this Wagonwheel Information Committee, you sort of created a, something in the community that's carried on?

Burzlander: I think we did. I do think that we did, because more people have been, a lot of the same people but I think more people, because you find a different group of people, maybe. It has combined groups that wouldn't ordinarily combine. For instance, on the, on, when we were real active and trying to fight the clearcutting up on the upper Green.

Rawlins: The Union Pass?

Burzlander: Yeah. Yeah. That combined the people who have cows on that up there. That combined that group with environmentalists. And, I mean, that was, it was really unheard of. And when you put us all together in there. And, of course, you know, that's the interesting thing is, that I've always considered myself an environmentalist. Not the

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prepared, because they'll say, "Oh, hey, there's a wonderful dam site on the old Lecki ranch." It's the Big Sandy ranch I think now, or whatever they call it. I worked on that ranch. It was a dude ranch. And I worked on that two years when I was in college. I worked on it in summertimes. And they were looking at it then!

Rawlins: Mm-hmm. Just flood that whole valley.

Burzlander: Yeah. Oh, sure! You see, Big Sandy and Squaw Creek come through there and they'd just flood that whole thing. And the funny thing is that when Jack Gage, his son, and who was the other one? Well, there were quite a few politicians that were active in the state legislature. They went around and a lot of these old filings had gone by the wayside and they hadn't renewed them. Those guys filed on every cottonpicking site in the country. And we became aware of that, because that can be a bad thing too, you know. And Jack Gage, here he was working for the state so he was, had an in. Well, we, anyhow I was going to say, we got, they decided then, they had a plan once to make electricity up here. This is a real wild one. Real fantastic. They were going to put a tunnel between, not Meadow, Burnt Lake, between Burnt Lake and Boulder Lake. The water would run through, and run through a turbine. Because, see, Burnt Lake's higher than Boulder. And it would create peak power. Then during the off time, they'd pump the water back. Well, of course, I mean the economics of those things is ridiculous. It costs as much to pump the water back as you get peak power out of the thing. And you never get back your initial cost. Well, we laughed them out of the hills on that forty years ago. And after all of this, the big dams and stuff was done, they send up a guy, and this is after the Green River Water Commission had met and we had recommended

they not do any big dams up here, if they did anything small impoundments. And the only thing that's gotten built is the little one on, and of course, that was a prime project.

Rawlins: At Fremont Lake?

Burzlander: Sure. You got an extra foot up there, that's 5,000 acre feet, and you got it for 300,000. I mean, that's the cheapest water in the state of

Wyoming. And it'll pay off. But anyway, old, so they sent this guy up here and he was a guy who had not dealt with any of us. He was new and young, and they dug this little thing out, and they called for a public meeting. And this guy came in. That courthouse, it was up at the courthouse room, and that place was filled with all of we real radicals on this thing. (Laughs.) Jim Noble, Floyd Bousman, Buzz and I, I mean, and at this point, Dean Benning had decided he didn't like it either. It was just filled with people. We laughed the guy out of here. He left and never came back, and we haven't heard another word about it. But don't ever think they ever forget, because you see, one of the things about that upper Green River that they were going to do, I don't know, they were going to have, a canal was going to come right down along the face of the mountains. Then they would have to pump it a little ways, but put it in the Sweetwater for eastern Wyoming. And Fontenelle kind of stopped that, because now all that surplus water is in storage. And they haven't, there's 60,000 acre feet that they haven't ever sold down there. And so, you know, there isn't the need for it. 'Course —

Rawlins: Or at least, you couldn't, you couldn't —

Burzlander: Justify.

Rawlins: Convincingly argue [?].

Burzlander: Well, you couldn't, you couldn't justify the cost. And, of course, I don't know why that little valley down there, why they ever let Cheyenne come in and build that Cheyenne water project. It's been a boondoggle. Overruns. It's the same thing. You destroy all this land. And, of

course, my feeling is, and I told a couple, I was, 'course, politically active then and on the, I told the water board, I said, "You know, if these towns don't have ample supply of water then they better curtail their growth. Put the towns where the water is. And of course, that's the way I feel about Denver. You can't just let these population places just grow and grow and grow and grab up everybody else's water. You just can't do that. Do you take the High Country News?"

Rawlins: Yeah, actually I'm, I've been a contributing editor since 1986. I get it.

Burzlander: You have. That's right. Well, I've been taking it since it started. And I don't always agree with them but I, by and large they're probably the most even-minded, best environmental magazine. But I really laugh because Madeline Murdock, and of course she was a teacher but she's been married to Stan long enough that now she's a rancher. And she thinks that our, she thinks that the High Country News is just radical and against ranching. And I says, "You know, that's not true, Mad. If you read the thing, they always give the rancher his side. He can talk." You know. But I remember how radical we all were. And Stan was on that group. On the clearcutting. Janie Wardell. And you want to get somebody who's radical, get Janie on something. And we had all these meetings. And there again, you have these meetings and you work your head off on recommendations of what they should do, and then the next thing you know. In fact, Jim Straley was just so steamed. We had a three-day meeting at White Pine with the Forest Service, and the main thing was to stop this clearcutting. I got in an argument with a hydrologist, who said, "Well, the water runs off better." And I said, "It sure does. It runs off in three weeks. Because there's nothing there to hold it, and it takes the mountain with it when it goes. You can't replant 'cause there's no mountain left. We have, you know, we've clearcut too many steep slopes." And anyhow, they assured us that they were going to, there was two clearcuts that they were looking at up in, oh, around the Hoback and back off in the Jim Creek and that area. And they were going to, they said they'd kind of hold off on it. Jim Straley was on that group. The third morning we



go up, and I watched, we all stayed at home and just drove up. I watched Jim walk in that thing and I thought, what in the world's wrong with Jim? I've never seen him look like that. He just looked like a thundercloud. Well, he used the choicest words in his vocabulary. And he informed them that they were a bunch of double, deceitful, lying SOBs and a few other things, choice words thrown in. Because he had just received in the mail that morning a thing sent to the Game and Fish that they were planning on clearcutting. And

it was going to go up for bid. Boy, if that didn't blow that meeting sky high, I'll tell you. (Laughs.) And that's, you know, that has been, and that's what I say, you're right about that, because I think all these different things have brought the public together. And, of course, the only thing that has stopped the forest thing is that Louisiana Pacific clearcut so dadgum much that there's nothing left to cut. And their regrowth, there's darn little regrowth up there. And, of course, they wasted so much. They didn't do anything but make studs out of the thing over there in Dubois. And you know, the funny thing is, Dubois, oh, those people, well, the night that Bob Jackson died we were having a big meeting on that. And these people, the loggers came over from Louisiana Pacific, and said, "Well, you're ruining our jobs and you're so forth and so on." And we had this great, Bob died at that meeting. He was making a statement, and he just suddenly just collapsed and he was dead. Right there. He had a heart attack. Yeah, really. And I said, Pat of course, is one of my dear friends. And I said, "Pat, I was, Bob had kind of quit going to those meetings and I was instrumental in conning him into going." And she said, "It would have happened, that the doctor said." She said, "You didn't, he wanted to go and he did." But anyhow, some of us suggested that they might be better off. And, you know, really, truly they have been. They're doing other things; they're branching out. And it isn't just a, and I see that —

Rawlins: It's not just a one-horse town, so to speak.

Burzlander: Buzz and I travel quite a bit, and we do it by car or camper and stuff. And I see that, we see that all, we saw that all through British Columbia. And, of course, LP's gone up there, and the

Georgia Pacific is up in there. And that's what they do. They just clearcut and they make waferboard and they ship most of it to the, oh, in fact the last High Country News was talking about the stuff going to Asia. And Buzz and I were on the coast of Oregon here a couple of years ago. And we were watching them load a bunch of those big green logs into the ships, right on the, in one of the little harbors there. And they didn't want us taking pictures of it. We were standing there taking pictures, and they came over and

asked us, "Please cease and desist." But we already had some. (Laughs.) They didn't take our film. I don't think they could've and I don't think Buzz would've let them have it. [End of tape.]