

GENE SEIBEL

TAPE 2, Side 1

August 8, 1996

M.O'R.: This is Michael O'Rourke for the Washington County Historical Society continuing the interview with Gene Seibel on August 8th, 1996.

G.S.: Yeah, when you were in Aloha, that's when they had everything torn up when that contractor from California came up and put trunk lines and transmission lines everyplace in Aloha. Yeah, I remember that.

M.O'R.: That's right.

G.S.: I remember that. Yeah.

M.O'R.: Yeah, it was torn up.

G.S.: Everything was torn up. They just went through and put sewer lines everyplace.

M.O'R.: And I believe, if I'm not mistaken, that that was actually an improvement that was launched by the Aloha Sanitary District?

G.S.: I think you're right. It was.

M.O'R.: Before USA ...

G.S.: It was.

M.O'R.: ... took over.

G.S.: You're right.

M.O'R.: So it was almost ironic; I think they had just upgraded and had actually at least a better system in place, and then got condemned with all the rest of them.

G.S.: Yeah. I agree.

M.O'R.: Well, of course, then USA, as you say, did over the space of a few years after that build, you know, the bigger plants. I guess it was maybe, you know, the better part of the 70's that they were working on that. And then we had in the mid-80's this lawsuit that was filed against USA and against ...

G.S.: DEQ.

M.O'R.: Yeah, DEQ and the Environmental Protection Agency, too, to enforce the Clean Water Act on the Tualatin. What do you remember about that?

G.S.: Well, I remember quite a bit about it.

M.O'R.: Were you directly involved in some of this?

G.S.: No, not directly. Again, indirectly, because it was probably the first major suit that any utility in the Northwest was hit with, and I've got some personal feelings on it that I think people have got to go back and look and see the improvements that were made over those years in the area.

M.O'R.: The years before the suit?

G.S.: The years before the suit was filed. And there's not one of us that have been in the business that couldn't visually see the difference, let alone knowing the technology that USA was working with.

Then you wonder, you know, how fast can things change, when you've got 25 or 30 years of things that weren't working right, you can't change them overnight. And I - you know, I guess I felt sorry for USA and the people involved because they were hit with this lawsuit on some issues that were pretty hard to solve.

Working as partners on a few projects with USA in the past, I've felt that they were doing a magnificent job with what they had

to work with. So I was a little bit upset that the lawsuit was filed, and I guess I was very surprised when it turned out the way it did - what, \$150 million or something like that set aside for projects and improvements and studies. You know, USA is a public - quasi-judicial government, so where is that money coming from? It's coming out of our pockets.

M.O'R.: Although I guess some of the money that was mandated by the settlement was going to be spent by USA anyway, probably. I think some of it ...

G.S.: Some of it. Some of it. The District was asked to put a member on the board that granted the money for different projects and stuff, so we did. Up until just a very short time ago there was a member of our water district board that was on that group, and you know, the detail that got into that I wasn't aware of, but I do know that there was quite a few meetings and quite a bit of interest in how that money was going to be spent.

M.O'R.: So from your perspective, then, USA already was aware of many of the issues in the lawsuit and was working to - you know, with what they had to ...

G.S.: Yeah, my perspective is that they were working towards an end [and] that they just weren't able to get there yet. You know, they picked up a system that was - with a lot of loose ends, just like an octopus, and they tried to get it all together, and I think they've done a good job. Tualatin Valley Water District, as it's called now, has partnershiped with USA in the near past.

Two or three years ago - I can't remember now - we started building for them on the water bill. We're looking into all different things that we can work together and do things, because as

I said, it's a major issue when you've got 60 percent, 65 percent of the water that comes into the Washington County area is imported from outside the area. So all of a sudden you've got an agency that has to treat water that does not come from its own boundaries.

So we kind of formed a partnership with USA when I was still at the District, and I presume it's still going, that - you know, how can we handle these issues together?

The more water we use, as a domestic water supplier, the more water USA has to treat, so we do have a direct effect on them. And not only do we have a direct effect on the amount of treated water, we should have a direct effect on how that water is being treated and where it's going to be used. Like I say, I'm a firm believer that we ought to be able to use some of that treated water back in irrigation or something, but at the same time we've got to do enough studies to find out that we don't take enough away from river that we dry that river up in the summertime.

And that's some of the trade-offs I talked about earlier. If - and it's a big if - if there can be water reallocated out of the Scoggins Project they can use to augment the Tualatin River, then more water could be used from the sewage treatment plants for domestic use and irrigation.

So there's - the management of the water in Washington County has got to be changed in the future. It can't be done - the management of the resources that we have in this county can't be done by 25 different agencies. It's got to - the responsibility's got to fall under one person - or one agency. And I feel very strongly that water and sewer ought to be combined into the same agency, and that would be a big step.

Matter of fact, I'll go so far as to say I think domestic water, irrigation water and sewerage ought to be one agency. And I think then you can trade Scoggins water for augmentation, you can trade re-use water for irrigation water. You can - you know, you can open the gate when it's needed and where it's needed, instead of having to fight the political battles all the time.

M.O'R.: Would you have supported it being one agency back when you might have lost your ...

G.S.: You bet. Matter of fact, I did. I did all the way. And the District board at that time felt very strongly the same way I do, that we've got - at one time we had 28 different agencies that had something to do with water in Washington County. That's probably down to 22 or 23 now. But 15 years ago, our board met with the County Commissioners and starting working towards this idea that one agency has got to handle it.

You've got some political problems, and I'm not going to spend a lot of time on political problems, but I'm not sure - and it's as positive as it is negative - that the County Commissioners have time to be the elected officials to manage the water. I mean, they've got land use, they've got the crime, the judicial, they've got the social services and everything. And whether the County Commission has time to adequately do a job on water, sewer, irrigation, I'm not sure of that. So somehow through the state legislature, we've got to get some bills passed that allows either the County to appoint or to elect - the public elects board members to operate this agency or something. But it can't be done without some legislative changes.

M.O'R.: So you think that it just could not be done if you put it under the present County setup?

G.S.: No, it probably could be. I think the County could do it, but I'm not sure that something else would last. You've got to realize, we've got five part-time commissioners, and we've got one - we've got four part-time commissioners and one chair that's supposed to be full-time, and I see the operations of the agency I'm talking about, plus everything else, taking more time than that. There are big decisions to be made.

For instance, a major transmission line from the Willamette for irrigators isn't - you know, you're talking a lot of money and a lot of environmental issues. Policy has to be set, and whether anybody that's already got all the other issues coming up has got that time, I'm concerned about that.

M.O'R.: So it needs some dedicated attention?

G.S.: You bet. Needs a lot of dedicated attention. I think we in Washington County are very fortunate. I don't think there's a better water utility than Tualatin Valley Water District. I don't think there's a better sewage agency than USA. And I think we've got the combination of putting those together, and the Irrigation District just had a lot of successes. They work together. I mean, they're not at each other's side all the time, but they work very close together, that we have the possibility of putting an agency together that can better manage the resource.

M.O'R.: And there's enough cooperation so that you maybe wouldn't run into these problems of fiefdoms or ...

G.S.: I think so. You're going to have some. We still have some small water utilities in this county. But I think they can see the light, too, that they can see the need for this.

You know, water, whether it's sewage or domestic water, there's hardly ever a day where you don't pick up the *Oregonian* or the *Argus* or the *Valley Times* or some paper there isn't an issue on water. So the public is more perceptive on water issues now than they ever have been, also.

So I think the leaders in the industry can take a lesson from the public on this. I think in a lot of cases, maybe not so much Washington County, but in a lot of cases the public is further advanced on water than some of the elected officials are.

M.O'R.: Well, as long as we're talking about some of these political problems, I guess in a way at the root of it all is just the huge amount of development that's taking place out here in the county, housing development and just the population growth.

Do you have any thoughts about that in terms of whether or not that growth has been managed effectively and if there's anything that can be done to just reduce the pressure on all of these systems?

G.S.: Well, I feel very strongly that the growth has been managed, and I'm for the growth. I don't think this county or this region can survive without growth.

I think growth has probably come faster than some of us thought it would, and I think we've caught some agencies - not all of them, but some agencies have been caught not looking into the future and seeing what the needs are going to be, and I think that's a direct fault of some of the local officials. I mean, you

don't have to be a rocket scientist to see what was happening in here. The projections have been made for years and years and years what's going to happen. Maybe it's happening a little sooner, and I think it's the responsibility of any utility to be able to meet those needs.

Now, again, I tie that to the management of the resource, and I think we have enough water here to go around for everybody without hurting anything. It's got to be managed better. I'll go even one farther, I don't think we need - after the Barney Project is built, I don't think we need another water project for 30 to 50 years, the Willamette included. But I think we do have to manage what we have a lot better than we have been.

And I don't mean just conservation, but we've got excess water some times of year in the Clackamas River. We've got excess water in Bull Run. We've got excess water in Barney. So there's no reason for the Wilsonvilles, the Tigards, the Lake Oswegos not to be able to use some of that if we build the transmission mains to it and manage what we have better.

But politics has entered into it. I mean, right now Portland could serve Wilsonville nine months a year, but Portland is worried that if they expand too far that the Bull Run is going to be - some major disaster again happen on the Bull Run that, you know, they've left their shirttail out, that they're going to be the ones that are going to be fried because they're expanding it too much.

But I think it needs a management plan. I think we have the resource; we just have to manage it better.

And there's a real - something that I've really got to get out, Michael, is there's a real feeling with the public that these



high-tech firms use a lot of water. I was involved in a legislative hearing recently where we wanted - we in Hillsboro wanted to bring a 72-inch water line through the agricultural community.

And I can understand their feelings; they were afraid as soon as the water went through the agricultural area that it's going to be available for development and all this type of thing, so you know, I understand that, and I - I don't agree with it, but I understand the feelings, and if I was on that side, I might have the same argument.

But the argument that came up in front of the legislature was that this 72-inch line was just to meet the needs for Intel and all those places, all the high-tech firms. Well, the regional study - regional steering committee did a study on the amount of water being used by high-tech, and right now it's like seven percent of all the water used in the metropolitan area, with a projection to go maybe as high as 15 percent. They use the water a lot more efficiently than we as homeowners do, a lot more efficiently. So high-tech isn't the thing that's driving the need for water.

In the water business, if you can get a user like a high-tech user that uses the same amount of water 365 days a year, that's the kind of customer you want. As I said earlier, when a homeowner uses two-and-a-half times as much in the summertime as it does in the wintertime, that's the thing that's hard to plan for, when you've got 40,000 homes and their increase goes up two-and-a-half times.

M.O'R.: Of course it's the presence of the high-tech firms that is contributing to the population explosion out here.

G.S.: You bet. You bet. And we were successful in some legislation that's going to help that, too. We won't see it in our generation, but we'll see it in the next two generations, and that's, you know, the two-and-a-half gallon per minute faucets in your sink, and the conservation issues. And I think people are getting way more educated in conservation.

We formed a group called the Columbia-Willamette Conservation Group of water utilities that puts out material and, you know, the tuna fish can in your yard, one inch a week is enough, and that type of thing. People are starting to understand that, and they're starting to see that, and I really believe that most water utilities - I'll go farther - all water utilities have seen a decrease in the per capita use over the last five years, and I think we've just begun to start that.

Yeah, water's been too cheap. Water's been very, very cheap in the Pacific Northwest, that there's things that we haven't thought about that have been going on for quite a while on the East Coast that's probably going to come here, and that's - you know, we talk about conservation and water loss, but in the water utility, if it goes through the meters it's not water loss.

All of us who have been in a junior high school or a grade school or a high school, and the urinals are running, and there's leaks and that type of thing. Well, maybe we've got to think about offering some type of survey to institutions where we go in and find their water loss. It will be a decline in revenue to the utility, but it's also going to stop the wastefulness that's going on in - I don't want to say private, but I'm sure private companies, the same thing. Water audits are something that we haven't

talked about, but I'm not so sure that we don't need them out here now, too.

M.O'R.: There's one other thing that historically speaking - well, it has a lot to do with some of these things we're talking about right now, but at least in terms of keeping the district supplied, and that was the construction of Scoggins. We didn't talk about that. That was another milestone on the Tualatin.

G.S.: Scoggins was a big milestone.

M.O'R.: Yeah. 1973?

G.S.: Yeah. Huge milestone.

M.O'R.: So you undoubtedly were a less than casual observer of those events, as well?

G.S.: Oh, yeah. Matter of fact, the district was a partner of that for a while, and in 1973 or '75, I've forgotten, somewhere in there, a number of the districts in East Washington County, Tigard Water District, West Slope, Metzger, Wolf Creek, went together and we hired Andy Klein - and by the way, he'd be a good one for you to interview. I don't know if you have yet or not.

M.O'R.: I haven't, no.

G.S.: Andy Klein's an engineer out at Forest Grove that was a city engineer for Forest Grove at one time before he went in private practice.

... hired Andy Klein to do a study on where we should go for future water. Now, this was 20 years ago, and we looked at wells down on Sauvies Island, we looked at the Scoggins, and we looked at Bull Run. And the conclusion of that study was that for us in East Washington County, we ought to stay with Bull Run and negotiate a

better contract for the Bull Run. And that's what instigated the 25-year contract and the 60-inch water main and stuff.

So we dropped out of the Scoggins issue. Matter of fact, I can remember the then Chairman of the Board, who's since passed away, and Eldon Mills having one hell of a heated discussion when we decided not to go with that project. Of course, hindsight's 20/20; we should have jumped into that pile and been a part of it whether we use the water or not, but we backed out. We decided to go with Bull Run at that time.

But we were involved up until it came to sign on the dotted line.

M.O'R.: And why were the others so upset? Were they afraid it would jeopardize the project if you pulled out?

G.S.: Well, yeah. It was - it made them come up with more money. I mean, our share - I mean, I have forgot the percentages back then, but I do know that we had the rights for - I was going to say 1200 acre-feet or something like that that we relinquished, and that probably would have been 10 or 12 percent of that project, and that made the Hillsboros and the Forest Groves come up with more dollars. So I'm sure it was a financial burden on them.

M.O'R.: And of course it did turn out to be quite a successful project.

G.S.: You bet. It was very successful.

M.O'R.: Were you involved at all in the effort to get it off the ground?

G.S.: A little bit. Oscar Hagg, I spent a lot of time with Oscar, and was on the blue-ribbon committee that the County put in to take a look at it.

I was very enthusiastic. You know, I could see the need for that project back then.

M.O'R.: And I guess Wendall Wyatt was your representative then, and he was the one that carried the water, so to speak, back in Washington?

G.S.: Wendall Wyatt and - who was the other one? Long, long-term Congressional person from Oregon. I've forgotten his name. Had one arm.

M.O'R.: Ulman? Al Ulman?

G.S.: Al Ulman, yeah. He was involved pretty heavily, too, if I remember right.

M.O'R.: Even though it wasn't in his district?

G.S.: It wasn't in his district, but he was a very big supporter.

M.O'R.: And so then the Scoggins, of course, also helped a little bit in terms of the Tualatin, especially in the summertime?

G.S.: You bet. The flow augmentation. You bet.

Yeah, I think that the Scoggins has done more for flow augmentation of the Tualatin than anything that's happened. That was a great project. And it came at a time where it was the biggest bang for the buck on the Tualatin.

M.O'R.: Of course it changed things a little bit in terms of especially how farmers that, you know, were on the river or had access to the river did business. They were all of a sudden asked to start paying for water that they withdrew from the river, whereas prior to that time I guess they didn't have to pay anything for that water. Although that was all irrigation water, I would guess?

G.S.: Right. All irrigation water.

There's been a real difference in cost in this nation between irrigation water or agricultural water and domestic water, and some of us in the domestic field feel that it's been - it needs to be changed.

For instance, and I can't talk directly about the Tualatin because I don't know what the costs to the farmers are there, but I can tell you that there's 13 dams on the Willamette system. Those dams have been set up mainly for irrigation water and recreation and flood control.

The irrigation water is approximately \$2 to \$2.50 per acre-foot, but the domestic water is \$1500 per acre-foot. So we have been looking at trying to get some of that water reallocated in the Willamette system, and the biggest opposition we have is the agricultural community because they're afraid that their prices will go up also if we open that whole can of worms up.

And again, I was born and raised in this area, and I'm very sympathetic to the agricultural community, but there's got to be a better balance. There's got to be a better balance. The urban area can pay for a lot of it, but they can't pay for all of it.

M.O'R.: Yeah, that's quite a differential in price. And you're talking just the untreated water as it comes out of the source?

G.S.: That's exactly right. And there's over a million acre-feet of unallocated - of irrigation water that's not being used on the Willamette system.

And it's the same thing with Scoggins. The figure that sticks in my mind, although don't quote me on this, that there's something like 12,000 acre-feet in Scoggins that's unallocated for irrigation

use. Well, 12,000 acre-feet is a lot of water for domestic use. So if that could be managed differently, as I say, there's no need for another water supply.

M.O'R.: Another thing that just occurred to me as we were talking here is the fact that - well, you were talking a little bit earlier about one unified agency to take care of waste water as well as domestic water and irrigation water, and that brought to mind - well, you also mentioned some smaller systems that were out in the County, but there's at least one bigger water system that's out there, too, and that's the Hillsboro system. Has there ever been any conversations about merging the Hillsboro Water District with the Tualatin?

G.S.: Yeah, a little bit, and just starting to. There's - hydraulically, the two would fit in real good together, and we've - we had gone together and had an engineering firm out of Olympia, Washington in engineering and economics take a look on the possibility of a merger of three: Beaverton, Tualatin Valley and Hillsboro. That's very do-able technically. Hillsboro and Beaverton could run off in some of the District's reservoirs. They could be pumped to the reservoirs and they could float off gravity and do that. We have not done an economic study, or hadn't when I left.

And in talking to some of the politicians, they can see the need for it. Matter of fact, in a public meeting the Mayor of Hillsboro said that, you know, that's one of the issues in the future that's got to be looked at real soon, is merging the three major water utilities in this county because it would be more economical to the users. It doesn't mean that they would have

decreases in water rates, but I think they could hold back water rate increases in the future to a minimum if they were joined.

M.O'R.: Because there would be greater efficiencies?

G.S.: There would be greater efficiencies, and I think we could get out of building some of the capital. You'd have to put some interties, but you would not have to build major reservoirs for quite some time because you could - Tualatin Valley Water District has got a number of major reservoirs that Hillsboro and Beaverton could both use and benefit from.

So yeah, that's been talked about. Matter of fact, Beaverton has said that that's one of the major issues they want to look at. But again, it's bigger than just what the local governments want. Cities get revenue sharing from the State, and they have to provide five services to be able to get that revenue sharing.

For instance, take Beaverton that's giving up the fire; they've merged now into Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue. If they would merge into Tualatin Valley Water District, that would drop them - they would have a considerable loss in revenue sharing. Now there's some talk the revenue sharing's going to be gone anyway, and that would probably help the merger issue.

M.O'R.: So if Beaverton goes ahead and meets their population's needs through consolidation, that doesn't count for the purpose of revenue sharing?

G.S.: Right. That's - well, Beaverton has asked for an AG's opinion on that.

[end of side one]



GENE SEIBEL

TAPE 2, Side 2

August 8, 1996

G.S.: So there's a number of things. But I think the feeling with today's elected officials is towards mergers.

M.O'R.: Now, we were talking about the lawsuit a minute ago, and you were telling me about how you felt that it was sort of unfair that USA got slapped with that, since they were trying as hard as they were.

One thing, though, that was identified in that lawsuit was the phosphorus level, and I guess that USA with their modern plants had decided not to put in any facilities to treat phosphorus, at least partly because they thought that it was not economically or technically feasible to do it, at least at the levels that were called for in the lawsuit. But then they subsequently did do it, and wound up actually being able to carry that out. So I guess at least in that respect the lawsuit did ...

G.S.: Well, I think we'd argue about that one.

M.O'R.: Okay.

G.S.: I'm under the impression that the natural phosphorus that's here naturally in the ground is going to be over what the standards in the Environmental Protection Agency standards are now. So I'm not so sure that it was still not economical for them to treat. I don't have the figures off the top of my head, but I have seen some reports that show the water in the ground that Scoggins is flooded over is higher - the natural phosphorus is higher than what the EPA standards are to begin with.

So sure, you know, I'm sure USA can do some things to it, but I still don't think by the time that water gets to Lake Oswego it's going to be below the standards.

M.O'R.: Yeah. Well, I've heard that argument, too, and you might be right about that, although - well, the figures that I'm aware of is that before USA started treated for phosphorus I think they had 35 parts per million, approximately, in the river. And then they started treating for phosphorus, and it's dropped down to about eight parts per million. So there's been a substantial reduction, although, as you say, still not sufficient to meet the EPA standard.

G.S.: I guess the issue that I - and this is a philosophy thing, you know - how much money can we spend on an issue before it becomes something we can't afford to do?

The money that USA has spent on the phosphorus issue, how far would that go to building a system that would handle re-use water for irrigation, for instance? I don't know those answers, but I just wonder sometimes if the regulations don't make us spend money unwisely.

M.O'R.: That things just haven't been looked at with as broad a perspective as ...

G.S.: Mm-hmm.

M.O'R.: You made a reference to it just a minute ago, a lot of the impetus for that lawsuit came from Lake Oswego.

G.S.: You bet. I think it was one of the City Councilors was - ended up being a City Councilor for Lake Oswego that filed that suit.

M.O'R.: Yeah, that's right. Jack Churchill.

G.S.: Jack Churchill, yeah.

M.O'R.: Right. Did you know Jack?

G.S.: Oh, yeah.

M.O'R.: How would you describe him?

G.S.: [laughs] Well, I guess I'd say he played to his own drummer; he did his own thing.

Jack Churchill and Jack Smith, wasn't it?

M.O'R.: That's right. Jack Smith was the engineer, and then Churchill was the politician, I guess.

G.S.: I thought Jack Churchill was - how do I say this without getting my foot in my mouth? - had an ulterior motive behind the lawsuit. I think there's some vindictiveness there. It's my understanding Jack did work for the EPA at one time, and DEQ. Matter of fact, I think he worked for [indiscernible] and ended up being the Director of the Health Division, the water side, for a while.

And you know, I don't know enough of Jack Churchill's background, but I felt from the beginning there was something bigger in his personal life than this lawsuit that caused him to do it.

M.O'R.: Well, Jack Smith, interestingly enough, then, wound up doing some consulting for USA once they felt that they had to go ahead and do something about the phosphorus.

G.S.: It's surprising to me that those two fellows had enough power to get that kind of money set aside.

M.O'R.: Well, of course, it wasn't just the two of them.

G.S.: No, I realize that was the Northwest Environmental Defense Council that pushed it, but they were the mainstays.

M.O'R.: Right.

G.S.: They were the mainstays.

M.O'R.: There were other groups, I think, though that probably also were involved, at least on the sidelines.

G.S.: Oh, yeah. I agree. You know, that's something, I guess, that we haven't talked about that I think is an important issue is the environmental community.

There's got to be ways that there can be partnerships brought together with the water and sanitary utilities with the environmental groups. I have a picture in my mind that we go this way because we don't know each other's issues, and if we can come together with an under - not even an understanding, but with some type of mutual interests where we can discuss issues, I think most of the things can be negotiated out early on, before they run into hassles. And I think, again, that's one of the public agencies' faults, that they've got to spend more time with the environmental people, and up front let them know what they're doing and why they're doing it, and get their views on it and stuff. I think we oppose each other more than we work together.

M.O'R.: I think somebody else from the environmental side that has similar ideas is Mike Houck. Have you ...

G.S.: I know Mike.

M.O'R.: Have you worked with Mike?

G.S.: Mm-hmm. Mike and I spent some time together Metro's [indiscernible] committee on issues. And Mike's got some good ideas, and the thing I always enjoyed about Mike, he'll listen. He wants - matter of fact, I don't know if you've been by the Water District; we put those demonstration gardens in front for water conservation. The whole front is landscaped in five different

zoned just to show people how you can do different types of irrigation.

Well, when we decided to develop a plan for that and had different landscapers apply for it, Mike Houck was one of the committee that made the selection. So I got to know Mike pretty well. We brought three outsiders in to be our experts, and Mike was one of them. So I got to know Mike pretty well there. Then we've been on a couple committees together.

And Mike and I always don't agree, but the thing I really do admire about Mike, he listens to you, anyway. And if there's an issue that - he's willing to change his mind.

Another one we've worked pretty hard with is - gee, the name escapes me. John - just resigned ...

M.O'R.: Just resigned from -?

G.S.: From one of the environmental groups. Oh, the Environmental Council. John - I've forgotten his last name. But John and I batted heads together in the legislature. John tried to push a bill that escalated water rates; the more you use, the more you pay, as a conservation measure. And although it has some effect, the water industry has found throughout the nation that we're not able to get to the level where people are concerned about water.

M.O'R.: To the price that will ...

G.S.: Yeah. You can't get it that high where it's a conservation measure. What happens, you raise - you double the rates, and sure, you'll see a dip in the water use maybe the first year, but then it gradually gets up again. So it's just kind of an interim type of thing.

So we agreed to try it. The Water District three years ago put a higher rate for anything over a certain amount. And I tell the story that the meter readers went out and read a meter, and came back and the water bill was \$1600 for two months on a residential house. And the finance officer went to talk to the people to let them know that they had a huge water bill and, you know, something was wrong.

The lady of the house's answer was, "I was told to keep my yard green, and we don't care what it costs." So they paid the \$1600, no questions asked.

We had estimated that we would hit - ten percent of the homeowners would pay the higher rate. We ended up hitting about 12 percent of the homeowners, but we had estimated that they would pay an added - say \$300,000 in this higher rate. Ended up paying \$600,000 a year. It didn't affect them, so it was not a conservation measure.

M.O'R.: Resulted in just some extra revenue for the District, though?

G.S.: Right. Extra revenue, and that revenue is turned back into conservation programs. But it did not do what we had hoped to do.

M.O'R.: So did you leave it in place, then?

G.S.: Oh, yeah. It's still in place. Matter of fact, you're seeing some of the other utilities do it now as a way to fund conservation programs.

M.O'R.: We were talking about the lawsuit and about how it came out of Lake Oswego, although really it was associated, as you pointed out, with certain specific individuals from that area, too.

But in general has there been any kind of tension between Washington County out here with the agricultural use of the river and ...

G.S.: Sure, there has.

M.O'R.: ... between them and the sort of upscale Lake Oswego population?

G.S.: Sure there has, and I don't know if you're ever going to solve that. I don't think you're going - it's ever going to end. When we've got the river that probably doesn't drop four feet the last four miles, it's going to - you know, the temperature outside affects the water quality; everything affects it. Plus the farmers. I mean, when you have to - if I remember right now they have to go to a hundred foot berm along the river. Land's awful valuable to have to give up 100 feet of farmland, and you're not going to solve those tensions. They're going to be there.

We're going to have to work around them, but I don't think you're ever going to solve the tension between the agricultural community and the Lake Oswego residents.

You know, I kind of tongue in cheek have said a couple times the way to solve the water quality problem in the Tualatin River is to get rid the dam in Lake Oswego. I think it would go a long ways to change the water quality.

M.O'R.: Because it would move faster?

G.S.: It would move faster. And we've got a real problem; it doesn't move very fast at that end, and that dam doesn't help. But you know, that's out of the question. That's out of the question, and we're going to have to work around that issue. But tensions aren't going to get any better. There's going to be some hard feelings, there's no doubt in my mind.

M.O'R.: And it's going to continue?

G.S.: It's going to continue.

You know, everybody's got the idea that Washington County farmers are - since they got irrigation they're all rich farmers and all this sort of stuff. But they've got the same expenses that you and I have, only greater when you go out and buy a combine and do this sort of stuff. Their expenses have gone up, too. And you see most farmers now - you don't - very seldom do you see a hedge-row for a fence. I mean, that land is cleared right up to the fence and the crops planted right up next to the fence, and when you get - if you've got some river land, why, you've got a hundred feet where you can't farm next to, that's a big issue with those people. That's a big issue.

I can tell you by experience when we wanted to run - a huge mistake in my thinking - when we bought into Scoggins - or to Barney, we needed - we wanted around a 72-inch water line from the treatment plant at Spring Hill out through the city of Forest Grove and then out to the Bonneville Power line. So we contacted the BPA, and they gave us the right to use that easement that they're already on. Well, the reason we chose that, or I chose that, was thinking that we would be the least disruptive to the farming community because they already had poles there, and we didn't want another easement, and we could get through there, in and out, without much problem.

But it didn't take me long where I was flooded with phone calls and letters and everything else that, you know, the size of ditch that we would have to build, and the crop being - and we were willing to buy the crop with that land being out of production for



a year, which was a lot of money to those folks. You know, we don't have the 3,000 acre farmers anymore. If we've got three or four or five hundred acres, that's a big farm. And to lose a swath 20 feet wide for the length of their field was an economic concern that they just didn't feel they could live with.

So the decision was made to change that line and go - at least the eastern portion to stay on public right-of-way, to help the agricultural community out because it had been a real problem to them. Even though it's going to cost the urban people a little bit more money, but -.

And it's the same thing with the Lake Oswego issue. You know, the types of insecticides and stuff that they use now, and the concern, again, that we read in the paper and everything. I'm sure the Lake Oswego people think that the farmers are unjustly causing them harm, and the farmers feel the same thing, since they can't farm right up to the creek bank that Lake Oswego's causing them harm. So that's going to be a tough one. I wouldn't want to be a mediator in that one.

M.O'R.: I've heard the argument with respect to some of the clean-up measures that have been imposed on the Tualatin, including of course the phosphorus limit for USA and some of the other things that - even though they appeared at first like they would be - that the expense of implementing them would be such that it would be onerous and that people wouldn't go along with it, or would have trouble going along with it, some people have argued that now that some of these changes have been made and we know what the costs are, that actually it was worth it just from an economic development point of view, because the quality of the environment affects

quality of life and affects the price people are willing to pay for land and affects the way that people - the desire of people to move into an area, so that it's actually had a positive rather than the original predicted negative effect on economic development out here.

Would you go along with that?

G.S.: The majority of people that are moving in here are moving in from out of state, and they don't know a damn thing about the Tualatin River, so I have a hard time that the Tualatin River - changes in the Tualatin River has had anything to do with land prices. I guess I don't buy that.

I think for some of the natives - but I think you've got to go back and have lived here a long time - a long-time native - to realize the changes in the Tualatin River. I don't believe that the people moving into Washington County today know very much about the Tualatin River's past. So I don't think that the Tualatin River has had much economic development tied to it.

M.O'R.: Okay. Well, I suppose you wouldn't need to know necessarily about the river's past to appreciate ...

G.S.: Yeah. I mean, the river hasn't changed. The river's still the Tualatin River, the longest lake in Washington County.

I think what's happened is we've publicized more of recreation that can be done on the river. You know, society's changed. Used to be that everybody wanted a power boat and - you know, ski boat and all that sort of stuff, and I think the public's changed a little bit. Now the public like to canoe, they like to go in a drift boat, they like the quietness and stuff. And that river is excellent for that, and I think we've pushed it more, and we've

made the public more aware that we've got that resource in Washington County that can be used that way. And you've got wildlife; you can take pictures; you can view things.

I think that's helped a lot, but I think it's been a public perception more than anything else.

M.O'R.: So you don't really think there have been very large changes ...

G.S.: No, I don't.

M.O'R.: ... in the river?

G.S.: No, I don't. I think flow-wise, you know, we've controlled it better. But I personally don't feel there's been that many changes on it.

As a kid, we used to put in behind Twin Oaks Tavern on the Tualatin and drift and hunt ducks in the wintertime. I did that about three years ago with a fellow, just to do it again. You know, I hadn't done it for 20 years. Some of the same log jams are there. I have to admit we saw probably more wildlife. I'm not sure that's - by wildlife I mean deer and birds and stuff. But I didn't see a lot of changes. I mean, I couldn't tell - and of course, wintertime we had the highest flow we've got so I couldn't tell a lot of changes.

But probably from the time I was 18 years old till the time I was 50 years old, I'd have never thought about going on the river if I had to row, you know. Now, I enjoy it. I mean, I've got a drift boat. But I think we as a society have changed a little bit towards that aspect.

M.O'R.: To where we nowadays compared to the past maybe value something like the Tualatin more than we did?

G.S.: Yeah, I agree. I think we value it a lot more than we did 20 years ago. A lot more. I mean, I'd much rather go on the Tualatin in a canoe or drift boat than I would go up to Scoggins Lake with all the motorboats now.

M.O'R.: Maybe one other thing we might talk about just for future history is the flood of '96. I know that - well, we talked earlier about Scoggins and about how the management of the flow has been so much better and how it's really made an impact on the river, and of course part of the idea was, I think, that the management of the flow would extend to flood control, and yet I was just told this morning by some people who live on the river that they thought that the flood of '96 is the worst flood they've seen on the river for a period of, oh, 60-some odd years.

G.S.: I believe that.

M.O'R.: And that there was high water, I guess, in the 30's, also. '36, '37.

G.S.: I've heard of that, too. Matter of fact, I've seen pictures.

M.O'R.: It was about the same as '96. But these folks maintain that '96 was even worse.

So it was a big flood. I'm wondering - and you were still with the Water District at that point. What did it mean for you and the Water District?

G.S.: Well, the flood causes some problems. Nothing major, but it did cause us some problems. You know, we had a few slides where we had water lines go out. The wind causes more problems. Not just power problems, but trees toppling, taking out service

lines to homes and this sort of stuff. There weren't any major issues for the Water District.

But to go back on the Tualatin itself, I think something people don't realize, and we're finding it out big time on the Barney Project, and maybe Eldon mentioned this to you, the difference in rainfall in the Coast Range where Scoggins and Barney are is like three times as much as here. I mean, it's a big, big difference in rainfall. So you know, I heard some comments about Scoggins wasn't handled right, they shouldn't have released that much water out of it, and this sort of thing. People didn't realize how much more water there was up there, either. I mean, some of the slides in Scoggins - and matter of fact, one of the creeks - I've forgotten the name of it now - one of the creeks slid so much that the turbidity in the lake was a real quality issue. The feeling was that the water wasn't going to clear up for over a year. It was going to take like a foot a year for the sediment to fall out of this suspended material that came in from the slide.

Well, I think they did a pretty good job on Scoggins in releasing it. I think the other thing we've got to realize is we've got so much more water running off of blacktop now that we never had back in the 30's - so it's hard to compare the 30 and the '96 floods, because we've got different circumstances.

You know, one of the issues that I think we overlook on the Tualatin is run-off water. I mean, I know we've hit the agricultural community real hard on runoff, but we're not doing a whole lot yet besides giving it a lot of lip service on runoff in the urban area. I mean, you drive to where you shop for groceries and look at the blacktop you park on. We get six inches of rain in a

day, where's that water going to go? Out here it's going to go in the Tualatin River. And I think we've got a real problem with urban runoff.

So you know, you go back to the agricultural community, I think they've had the onus put on them to solve the problem, and we haven't done enough in the urban area to solve a lot of the problem. I don't know how much water would come off of five acres of blacktop, six inches of rain, but I'm sure it would be a hell of a lot that caused a lot more water on the lower end of the Tualatin than it did back in the 30's.

M.O'R.: I'm sure that was a factor.

G.S.: Well, the issue with the City of Tualatin, you know. We sent some crews down there to help them out during their major floods, and yeah, our guys came back and they were just astonished as to how much damage was done down there.

M.O'R.: Another issue having to do with that is that oftentimes the blacktop that you're talking about the paving has gone over an area that was maybe formerly a wetland.

G.S.: You bet. I have a hard time understanding that whole issue, Michael. My wife and I have a little house over on the Deschutes, south of Bend, between Bend and Sunriver. Just a little house, but it's right on the river. I drive Santiam a lot, and the first month when I retired we spent the first month over there on the river.

And they're doing a lot of highway work. I don't know if you've been over the Santiam recently, but they're widening it, and there's huge wetlands that they've gone in and they've taken the

vegetation off and put the fabric down and just loading up like with three feet of rock, and then blacktop over it.

Well, I was involved with the Barney Project enough to realize how hard it was to get anything approved without mitigating the wetlands issue and how much money we spent to mitigate wetlands. And I see this happening down there, and I'm wondering, "How in the hell can they do this?" I mean, there's miles of wetlands that they're just going to be filling in.

And it's the same thing you said, blacktop has gone over the wetlands. And I'm not sure, maybe they did mitigate, maybe they are building a wetlands someplace. I don't know. But it's sure not going to help that situation right there.

I mean, I don't know if you read the morning *Oregonian* on the Barney Project, but Eldon's comment that we had to build wetlands even though there was no wetlands in the first project.

M.O'R.: Yeah, he talked to me about that on tape. Was it in today's paper?

G.S.: Yeah. On the Metro West section, the front page, is the Barney Project.

M.O'R.: Oh, okay.

G.S.: So I don't know what happens, you know, where wetlands is a big issue to some projects and seems to be able to slip by on others.

We've got a situation right down here in our own community. I don't know when you came up off of Phillips Road if you noticed on the - well, it would be on your right-hand side when you came up, one of the neighbors - and I'm not knocking him; he got everything done right - he got a permit to put 165,000 yards of dirt in.

They tore our road up terribly, but the contractor agreed to fix it. 165,000, and the bottom portion of that's wetlands.

Now, how can the County offer a permit to fill that much in when other projects you've got to fight like hell to even get them approved? I don't understand the wetlands issue at all.

I know when I was with the Water District, anytime we had to lay a water line under a creek or through a creek or anything, you know, if it was more than ten yards you had to excavate, you had to mitigate wetlands.

[end of tape]