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## Anderson, Richard "Dick" oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

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## **Interview with Richard “Dick” Anderson by Andrea L’Hommedieu**

*Summary Sheet and Transcript*

### **Interviewee**

Anderson, Richard “Dick”

### **Interviewer**

L’Hommedieu, Andrea

### **Date**

February 12, 2004

### **Place**

Yarmouth, Maine

### **ID Number**

MOH 427

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### **Biographical Note**

Richard Brewster “Dick” Anderson was born in Brockton, Massachusetts on December 12, 1934. He moved to Maine in 1953 to attend the University of Maine at Orono. Anderson studied wildlife conservation in college and spent time during the summer working for the Fish and Wildlife Department in Sanford, Maine. Anderson helped found the State Biologists Association, an environmental organization based in Maine.

### **Scope and Content Note**

Interview includes discussions of: family and educational background; growing up in Brockton, Massachusetts; State Biologists Association; Maine Fish and Wildlife Department; Edmund Muskie’s early environmental influence; environmental issues in Maine in the 1970s; party for Muskie in 1976; relationship with the National Audubon Society; impressions of George Mitchell; views on the Dickey-Lincoln project; sugar beet experiment and Freddy Vahlsing; end of the State Biologists Association; and working for Barton, Gingold and Anderson.

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## **Transcript**

**Andrea L'Hommedieu:** This is an interview with Richard Anderson in Yarmouth, Maine on February the 12th, the year 2004, and this is Andrea L'Hommedieu. Could I first ask you to say your full name and spell it?

**Richard Anderson:** Richard B. Anderson, R-I-C-H-A-R-D, B for Brewster, Anderson, A-N-D-E-R-S-O-N.

**AL:** And where and when were you born?

**RA:** I was born in Brockton, Massachusetts on December 12th, 1934, Rocky Marciano's home town.

**AL:** Did you grow up there?

**RA:** Yes, I moved to Maine in 1953 to go to the University of Maine.

**AL:** What was it like growing up in Brockton, Mass.? What type of a community was it?

**RA:** Oh, it's a city; I mean it was, it was a city of maybe fifty thousand people. It was the shoe capital of the world; there were a lot of shoe factories there. My father was a food broker and he traveled all over New England, but we had a camp in Washington, Maine and we used to go there all the time. I remember, as far ago as I can remember we used to go to Washington in the summer time for a vacation. And then we built a house there, built a camp there in '47 or '48, and when I went to the University of Maine I moved to Washington and lived in the camp. I started University of Maine in 1953.

**AL:** And was Brockton, Mass., because it was predominantly an economy based on shoe manufacturing, was it heavily Democratic, or did it have a political identity?

**RA:** No, I would say it was heavily Democratic, but my parents were never much into politics. They always wondered how come I was, but, because they weren't. I assume it was Democratic but to be honest with you I don't know.

**AL:** And so you started attending the University of Maine in 1953, and what did you study?

**RA:** Wildlife conservation; and I graduated in '57. And during the time that I was at the university I worked for the Fish and Game Department in the summers and some during the school year. And when I graduated I went to work for the Fish and Wildlife Department as the assistant regional biologist in southern Maine, based in Sanford, Maine. I worked for them until 1969. During that time we, myself and half a dozen other people, organized a group called the State Biologists Association, and we got lots of publicity. We were, in those days, known as the real radical environmental organization in Maine. It was, there was never more than fifty or seventy members, but we got a lot of press. And we did a lot of, I mean it was easier in those days because the rivers were all sewage and stuff so it wasn't talking about all these fine definitions like you are now, I mean, things were really bad.

*(Pause)*

**AL:** You were talking about the State Biologists Association.

**RA:** Oh yeah, the State Biologists Association, it was the first environmental organization in Maine. It was, it was a group of people that were biology teachers, it was kind of an odd group, we had a couple of real gunners. One of them works at Bates and, no, he used to work at Bates,

Bob Chute, but he was one of the original people in the State Biologists Association and he'd certainly remember about it. It was, we did some pretty wild stuff, we did a lot of really wild stuff. But, because I said that was when it was really bad. I think we started in around 1965. One of the things, I worked at Fish and Wildlife, I did research on the salmon population of Sebago Lake and we had a very big thing about this. They were spraying DDT around Sebago Lake for mosquitoes and I got the idea of analyzing some of the salmon population, it was a really bad scene. So we analyzed some of the salmon and found that it had astronomical amounts of DDT, and so we did some press on it. And I've forgotten who was governor then, who was governor? Ron Spears was the commissioner.

**AL:** Ken Curtis?

**RA:** So it must have been Ken Curtis, yeah, it must have been Ken Curtis. And I got myself in all kinds of trouble by releasing this stuff to the press. But it, they stopped -

**AL:** Make a big splash?

**RA:** They stopped spreading DDT anyway. But anyway, the State Biologists Association was, I mean we were big into the clean air (*unintelligible word*) and stuff. Do you have some other questions or do you want me to just keep talking?

**AL:** Well, I was going to ask you about some of the people you worked with Fish and Wildlife; did you know Ron Green?

**RA:** Ron Green, no, no, Ron Green, I think he was the commissioner of Marine Resources, wasn't he?

**AL:** He might have been.

**RA:** The person who was the commissioner when I worked in the Fish and Game department was, he owned some boys camps on Moose Pond, his name is Roland Cobb.

**AL:** Yes, that's who I meant.

**RA:** Roland Cobb.

**AL:** What was he like?

**RA:** He was quite a character. Was he the commissioner when Muskie was governor?

**AL:** I believe so, he was around that time.

**RA:** I can remember Roland Cobb, he was a real character. He owned a sporting camp on Moose Pond in Bridgton. Not a sporting camp, it was a boys and girls camp. And he was a little guy with a totally bald head, and I always got along with him really well. I think he thought I was a little wild; most of the biologists thought I was a little too wild, because I was always

giving public relations stuff. Most biologists didn't do that kind of stuff. But, Roland Cobb, I always got along pretty good with him, he was quite a guy. I think he was a Republican, though, how come he was working for, oh, that was when we had the executive council, that's right. That was when we had the executive council and every time you wanted to appoint a commissioner you had to make a deal with the executive council. That's how Roland Cobb got to be commissioner, that's right. Yeah, I remember Roland. He was not exactly an activist commissioner, but he didn't, in those days there weren't a lot of people that sort of officially complained about things, about rivers being sewers. It sort of started in like early sixties when people really started to speak out and say, 'this is ridiculous.'

**AL:** Did you have a sense that Muskie, as governor, had laid any of that groundwork?

**DA:** Oh yeah, he got everybody talking about it. I mean, he definitely sort of, he made it sort of, he made it okay to be critical of paper companies mostly. In those days that's what it was, mostly paper companies and municipal sewage treatment systems. One story I remember about that time was probably about 19-, I would say about 1969 or '70. A friend of mine, Laird Heldenbrand, who was a veterinarian in Falmouth and I, and Laird said, he lived near the Presumpscot River and we complained about it a lot.

And one time, Heldenbrand was always a guy to try to get people together. So one time he invited Senator Muskie to come to his house, and he invited the president of S.D. Warren to come to his house, and kind of talking about what we needed to get done to fix the Presumpscot River, which at that time was just a total sewer, it was so dead it was peeling the paint off from people's houses. And I remember Heldenbrand told this story a lot, and he always talked about Muskie saying to the guys at S.D. Warren, "All right you guys, let's cut this shit and get down to business here. How are we going to get this river cleaned up?" And Heldenbrand told that story forever. He died last year, or a couple years ago. But Heldenbrand always said that was one of the great, he was always a guy for getting people together, and he'd always start out with this great example of getting the right people together because it just got things moving on the Presumpscot, which was really bad.

I remember, you know, I hadn't even thought about it until I was thinking about things, when, in 1969 I started working for the Audubon Society and we, you know where the Audubon Society building is in Falmouth? I'm sure that Senator Muskie turned the shovel, turned the first shovel full of dirt for that building. There must be a picture of that somewhere.

**AL:** Do you know what year that was, did you just say?

**DA:** I would say it was seventy, I think it was '74, '73 or '74, but I'm sure that he was there and turned the first shovel. And there must be a shovel around because I remember getting the shovels, and getting, I think I got a gold shovel. How the heck did I ever do that, I've forgotten. But I remember Muskie coming over there and, you know, it was an environmentally sound building and it had a wood furnace and solar energy. You know who'd remember, Sherry Huber I think was the president of the Audubon Society then, and she might even have a picture. But there must be a picture around somewhere. I remember there was a picture in the newspaper with Senator Muskie turning the first shovel full of dirt at the Audubon Society, at the ground

breaking for the Audubon Society. But in those days he was always very supportive of getting those kind of things done, and then the Clean Water Act really put the heat, started putting the heat on people.

In the early '70s the Audubon Society office was on the shore of Back Cove in Portland, when there was, it's hard to imagine some of the things that (*unintelligible word*) this place was thirty years ago, forty years ago. But there was no sewage treatment equipment, none, absolutely none, until about 197-, I don't know, four, five, six, something like that. I mean, there was no sewage in- pipe, everything was straight right into the ocean. There were like twenty-five sewer pipes over three feet in diameter running into the harbor around Portland, and there were fifteen or so that ran into Back Cove.

I mean, people now don't even believe it now. You see people that are new around here, they can't believe it. I mean, you can't even believe even if you've been, when I think about it a lot of times, when I think about, I like... I worked a lot last year, for the last four or five years, getting the Smelto Dam up, that was one of the projects of the Coastal Conservation Association, and I like just walking up there and thinking what it was like in 1970. You can't, you just can't describe it. You take younger people up there and they can't imagine, they can't picture what the Presumpscot River was like in 1970. It is amazing how things have changed in the state of Maine in the last thirty years.

And Muskie really got it started, because he was the first one to criticize paper companies, where before that nobody dared to criticize them because they thought if they criticized them they'd go away. And once the governor started criticizing them, it sort of made it okay to say bad things about them, and it sort of started, it started the environmental movement in Maine when it became okay to say bad things about paper companies. And it was after, it was easier to say, easy to say bad things about paper companies; it got more difficult when you had to start talking about cities, because after all the Presumpscot wasn't only S.D. Warren, it was all of Gorham, all of Windham, all of Westbrook, so there was a tremendous amount of sewage, municipal sewage, in the Presumpscot as well as all the effluent from S.D. Warren. I mean, the effluent from S.D. Warren, it used to just go right down through the floor, I mean it wasn't, there was nothing there. It was built over the river and things just, pipes went down through the floor and out into the river.

I remember one time, it's a little off the subject but it's Democratic politics, I remember one time in about 1970 Peter Kyros called me up and said -

**AL:** Senior?

**DA:** He said, "Dick", he said, we got to, what do we, "we ought to talk about some of these environmental problems." I said, "Peter," I said, "how about letting me take you for a canoe trip on the Presumpscot River?" He said, "Yeah, yeah, okay, we'll try that." It was like, Peter couldn't believe it, but we put in at Washington Avenue and paddled upstream to where the mill is. And Peter described it as like being in what he thought might be what hell might be like, because the dump was right on the shore of the river, and the rubbish, and the dump was burning, and this was a combination dump between S.D. Warren and Westbrook. And they bulldozed the

stuff out towards the river and then burned it, and so it was smoking and smoldering with little flames here and there, and it kind of rolled down over the bank and hit the river down here, and the river was just nothing but sewage. And we're paddling up through it and Peter, Jesus, he was, I mean we were both sick by the time we got back. It was really bad. And there was a big story in the paper, because the cameras were all waiting for us when we got back down to Washington Avenue. I don't remember what year it was, but it must have been, it was somewhere between 1970 and 1974.

**AL:** Did you get the impression that he didn't have a real feel for it until he took that trip with you?

**DA:** I think that it energized him, let's put it that way. I mean, everybody knew how bad it was because when you drove over the river you could smell it for a mile in either direction. But it was really appalling. But Muskie, I mean Muskie lived long enough to see the fruits of his labor. I mean, that's always good, to live long enough to see the fruits of your labor. And it had to be pretty satisfying for him to be able to drive over rivers like the Androscoggin and the Presumpscot and actually know that they had fish in them and that the water had oxygen and that there were treatment plants in Lewiston and Bethel, and Rumford and Mexico, and that the paper mills had treatment plants and they had to meet standards. But he got a lot of things done, he got a lot of things done and he got a lot of, it was... He got a lot of stuff in the legislature. Legislators were the same way, I mean nobody ever went, in those days people didn't want to say anything bad about paper companies. But Muskie said it, got everybody thinking that maybe it's all right to do that kind of stuff, anyways.

**AL:** Now, when you, still today when you go through Jay, it smells real bad. Is that not from the river; is it just from the process?

**DA:** It's from the, the smell that you smelling there now is the vapor that's evaporating from the sewage treatment plant. There might be a little bit of smoke. There's no, when you drive by a paper mill today there's a lot of steam, but there's damn little smoke. I mean, in the old days it used to be smoke. Now it's, there may be a small amount of smoke. Not too much in Jay any more, because they're burning natural gas most of the time or wood, but in the old days... When you went through Rumford in the old days, down in the valley, it was just, the whole valley was just smoke. And nowadays they burn wood and natural gas, I mean, and they have to meet all kinds of tough standards. The people that lived there, you must have interviewed some old people that used to live in Rumford and Mexico. I mean, it was appalling, I mean you just couldn't believe that people would put up with it. But before Muskie, hey, nobody ever did anything. I mean, it was like, hey, you have to have them around here because we need to have jobs, and if we make it too tough for them they go away.

I mean, the Clean Water Act really was a big bonanza because it made all the paper mills conform to the same standards, I mean all over the United States, not just Maine. Before that, you know, everybody would always argue that if you make it really tough for us we'll go to Georgia or something. And then once you had the Clean Air Act, it sort of, it leveled the playing field and then everybody in the United States had to pretty much follow the same standards, so that they couldn't say that they would move if you made them do certain things.



I don't remember, I don't think I ever met Muskie when he was governor. I might have, but I don't think so. The first governor I can remember dealing with was John Reed, and he was right after Muskie, right?

**AL:** Well, yeah, sort of. Clint Clauson actually won but he died in office and John Reed was in line.

**DA:** I always remember John Reed, because I do a thing called the International Appalachian Trail, and our trail goes over Mars Hill Mountain. And you know people in Maine always are debating about where the sun hits the earth first; well, Mars Hill Mountain is where it hits the earth first, in the summer time, between March and September. And John Reed flew the first fifty star flag from the top of Mars Hill Mountain. And the flag pole is still there; I guess the flag isn't, but the flag pole is. The flag must be in some archives somewhere, but he flew it there because it was the first place that the sun was going to hit the United States on the 4th of July in 1951, or was it -

**AL:** Fifty-nine.

**DA:** Was it that late, in '59?

**AL:** Fifty-eight, fifty-nine, '59 I think.

**DA:** Anyway, and Elizabeth [Swain] can tell you more about her connection with Muskie. But I remember going over to the office a lot when Larry Benoit was king, but I don't remember what I was doing. I mean, I was stirring the pot doing something but I don't remember what I was doing.

**AL:** Which office was this?

**DA:** When Muskie's office was in the post office building. I think it was Muskie's. But didn't Larry, Larry started working for Muskie, didn't he? And then when George Mitchell got elected he worked for George Mitchell. And he must have started working for Muskie in 1970, or something like that, didn't he?

**AL:** I don't know the year for sure.

**DA:** Seventy-one, '72? Somewhere in there. I can't remember either. And I remember going over there, but I can't remember what I was doing. I mean, I probably did all kinds of things, but I've forgotten, to be honest with you, I've forgotten.

**AL:** You mean like on a volunteer basis?

**DA:** No, because back then I was running the Audubon Society and I had all kinds of environmental stuff that I was doing, but I don't remember much about it.

**AL:** Do you remember Larry Benoit?

**DA:** Oh, I can remember Larry Benoit when he was a kid, yeah, but I don't remember what I did with him. I mean, I did stuff with him but I've forgotten what it was. I do remember that Elizabeth, that was how I met Elizabeth, but I did a bunch of different stuff, and I, I don't know, I can't, I couldn't think of any of the things that I did. I do, oh, I remember a good story. When, this must have been about 1972 or '3. When did Carter get elected?

**AL:** Seventy-six.

**DA:** Okay, you're the expert. I got the idea, the industry people always figure out how to get their people in to run the EPA in this region, the Boston office, and I had this crazy idea that I was going to get Bill Adams the job. At the time Adams was the commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection. They didn't call it that then, they called it the, oh, what was it, the Air and Water Improvement Commission, or something like that.

And I was on the board, I was appointed to the board by Curtis when I was the director of the Audubon Society, nobody could believe it. But it was one of those deals, it was one of those executive kinds of deals where Curtis had some points, because he gave the Republicans something else, somebody else. And I remember, it was quite funny because I was on a canoe trip out in Washington County, and I got out of the woods and I called the office. And they said, "Dick, for Christ's sakes, where have you been? Ken Curtis has been trying to get a hold of you for days." So I called him from, I remember, I called him from a lunch counter in Jonesboro and he said, "Dick," he said, "we're appointing you to the Board of Environmental Protection." I said, "Oh, that's great, Ken, jeez, that's terrific."

So anyway, after that, when this, when Carter got elected, I decided I was going to try to figure out if I could get my own person to run that EPA, regionally. So - this gets to Muskie - so I called Harold Pachios and I said, "Harold, what do you think? I mean, gee, is it okay if I do this?" He said, "Sure, jeez, go ahead, take a shot at it." So I went to talk to Adams and he said he'd like to do it. And so I made up a couple of phony little meetings that I brought Adams to, without telling anybody what the agenda was, but I got him to meet some of these environmental people. And then I got an invitation to Muskie's, whatever that big bash they had in Washington when he, what was it, when he, I can't remember, it was a big environmental thing. It must have been 197-, it was like a couple or three months after Carter got elected, so it would have been in February or in March of 1976, '77.

**AL:** Yeah, it could have been the amendments of the -

**DA:** No, this was an award ceremony, it might have been the Wildlife, the National Wildlife Federation or, it was some, there was some reason.

**AL:** With Gaylord Nelson? Earth Day?

**DA:** No, it was some reason for this party, it was a big party, oh wow, there were a thousand people there. And it was specifically for Muskie. You must have, somebody else must have

talked about that.

**AL:** The only party I can recall is the huge eightieth party they threw for him.

**DA:** No, no, no, no.

**AL:** Because that's way longer, later.

**DA:** No, no, no, it was way before that. What was this thing? It was in 1976, I'm sure. Anyway, the story was that I got an invitation. And in those days the Audubon Society didn't have any money, so a few three or four of us at the Audubon Society got together and drove to Washington. And what I did was I called, I knew who was going to, I had a pretty good lead on who was going to get to be appointed to run the EPA. It was a guy from Connecticut, but I can't remember his name right now. He ran the EPA anyway in 70-, in Carter's administration. But I found out he was going to be at this party. I don't remember how I found out.

So I called Adams, I said, "Adams, you got to go Washington next weekend and I'm going to introduce you to the new director of the EPA," who I had never met, I didn't know the guy from Adam. But I knew he was going to be at this party and I knew what he looked like. So I got to the, we drove from here, we left here at like two o'clock in the morning, drove the rest of the night, got there like four o'clock in the afternoon, the party's at seven o'clock, we get to where the party is going to be. It was just an incredible, I've forgotten where it was but it was a wicked big room.

And I saw this person who I knew was going to be, or I was pretty sure. He wouldn't have known how I knew it, and I don't remember how I knew it either, but I went up to him and I said, "Hey, I've got this guy, my name's Dick Anderson, I'm with the Audubon Society of Maine and I've got this guy I want you to meet." So I go get Adams and I bring Adams over and I introduce him to this guy and say, I wish I could think of that guy's name, I say, you know, "This guy is from Maine, he runs the DEP in Maine, he'd be a great regional administrator." And I'm thinking, holy shit, Anderson, what the hell are you doing, you don't even, Christ, what the hell's going on. Anyway, he got to be the regional administrator.

But what was that party? I mean, somebody gave Muskie a national award, it must have been the National Wildlife Federation that gave Muskie the award that night, but it was a big party. You know who'd know? Marshall Burke, who ran the Natural Resources Council in the seventies.

**AL:** I was just going to ask you about that.

**DA:** I just saw him last week.

**AL:** I interviewed him just a few months ago, and I wondered what your relationship at the Audubon Society, if it had a direct relationship with his organization.

**DA:** It was after him, no, we did the thing, I mean we had, we ran a sort of joint lobbying

operation called CRAC, the Coastal Resources Action Committee, and we, Hoddy Hildreth concocted this organization that had a real list of heavies as directors. I think Douglas Dillon was one of the directors, but there were some real heavies, E.B. White. But, we never had any meetings or anything, but it was the system that we used to lobby with, and then we hired a lobbyist, the Audubon Society, Natural Resources Council and there were a couple other organizations. But Marshall would remember that meeting in Washington. I'm positive that Marshall must have been there. It might, well, I don't know, you don't think it was when Marshall was running the organization?

**AL:** I'll give him a call and see if I can, I'll let you know if I find out.

**DA:** Cliff Goodall is the other person, Cliff Goodall came down to Washington.

**AL:** Do you know where he lives?

**DA:** He lives in Freeport. But no, this was some, I can't believe you haven't run into anybody that's told you about this because it was a big, I mean there were a thousand people there at least. It was a massive event in Washington, people came from all over the country to honor Muskie. But I don't remember whether he was changing jobs. When did he -?

**AL:** He became secretary of state in 1980, in Jimmy Carter's last year as president, during the Iran hostage . . . .

**DA:** So what would he have been doing, what was this for? I can't remember what it could have been for. But it was definitely an award that he got, and it was a big time, it was a really big time thing. I'm trying to think of somebody else that would remember it. I can remember a couple people I rode down there with: Erica Morgan, who is probably somebody you haven't interviewed, she worked at the Audubon Society. And I remember driving, Erica was one of the people that went to this thing with me. But she's the only one I can remember. Jonathan Gorham, who lives in Connecticut. Adams would probably know, Adams is still living. I mean, Adams will remember, Adams will remember it, he'll remember that the, the guy that was the head of the EPA, too. I don't know where Adams lives now, though. I think he's moved back to Lewiston.

**AL:** I've heard the name Bill Adams a lot, and I don't know if there's two or three of them, or if, you know, that he was very active.

**DA:** No, there was only one environmentalist, environmental person, who was Bill Adams.

**AL:** I need to find him, but I don't know how. There's so many.

**DA:** He lives, I can tell you, his son-in-law is Lloyd Irland who lives in Readfield, someplace out that way. I just talked to him a couple weeks ago. We were talking about Bill and he told me what had happened to him. I think he moved back to Maine. He was living in North Carolina.

**AL:** Lloyd Irland of the Irland Group, which is an environmental -?

**DA:** Yes, yeah.

**AL:** Yes, okay.

**DA:** Lloyd's his son-in-law. You ask Adams. If you call Lloyd he can tell you how to get hold of Bill, but ask Bill what the hell was that, I think his last name began with C, the EPA director. But Adams would, I think Adams would remember this Muskie thing. Anyway, you should definitely have that in your archives because they gave him all kinds of stuff. I mean, they gave him plaques and I think there was another, there was some kind of a sculpture that they gave him. And all the environmental people were there.

**AL:** I'm sure that possibly Don Nicoll has interviewed people who talked about it in Washington, D.C., and I just don't know yet.

**DA:** He might know, he might know. After that, let's see, I never did, I probably did something politically when Muskie was running for vice president, but I don't really remember. I do remember going to the lobster thing a few times, but I don't remember any particular events. But, there must have been some, but I don't remember what they were. I mean, he might have cut the ribbon to open the Audubon Society, but I don't remember that.

**AL:** Do you have impressions of meeting him, though? A sense of his presence and that sort of thing?

**DA:** No, I don't really think I do. I mean, I always sort of admired him from a distance by, from what he said or what he did, or how he dealt with things. I'm not sure that I would have really met him long enough to really relate to him. I sort of knew him by reputation more than I did actually doing things with him. But I knew George when George was running, Mitchell. A long time ago. And I remember when George ran for governor, when he'd just gotten through, what was he doing, he'd worked for Muskie and then he, what did George do, was he secretary, no, he wasn't a secretary of state before he ran for governor was he? And I remember the night he lost to Jim Longley.

**AL:** He was state chair of the Democratic Party at one point, it might have been during that.

**DA:** When he lost to Longley I can remember being in the ballroom at the Eastland saying, no, this is impossible, holy shit, this can't be happening, oh my God. And I see Jim Longley's kid all the time; he's one of the board members of the International Appalachian Trail, but I don't talk about his father very much. But anyway, no, I never really did anything sort of, I never worked on any particular project with him. It was mostly that I saw him as a person who would, who was going to be up front and say outrageous stuff, you know, and you knew you were pretty safe if you were sort of following what he said or doing what he thought ought to get done. So he really built environmental organizations, I mean before that, before Muskie, you know there really weren't any environmental organizations. I can't remember whether, actually Marshall might have told you, but I can't remember whether the Natural Resources Council started before the State Biologists Association or not, I've forgotten. But it was, they were about the same

time, like '63 or '4 or something like that, when Muskie was pushing the dam. What was the big dam that Muskie really liked? Dickey-Lincoln, yes.

**AL:** And what were your views on that project?

**DA:** I got, I never got into the, I don't think I ever said anything about Dickey-Lincoln. I was never a big fan of public power. I guess I was like... I was never a big fan of public power, because I thought, it created more problems than it solved, but I didn't, I mean I wasn't in favor of flooding the Allagash River either, but I don't remember ever getting into the Dickey-Lincoln argument. There was, there was something that Muskie was, oh, I know one of the things, I mean the- One of the worst things that Muskie ever did, you know what it was, and you've had other people say it.

**AL:** The sugar beet?

**DA:** That sugar beet. What a boondoggle that was, oh, Christ Almighty, that was bad. It was appalling, it was absolutely appalling. It was, it's the only, I think it's the only time in the history of the state of Maine that anybody ever lowered the classification of a river. How, what was that guy's name?

**AL:** Freddy Vahlsing?

**DA:** Freddy Vahlsing. How Freddy Vahlsing ever convinced Muskie to let him run that stuff into the Prestile Stream is beyond me. But anyway, I remember going up there in probably '69, '68, '69, somewhere in there, and I couldn't believe it, I couldn't believe it. I came back and I really, I said totally outrageous stuff about it. Yeah, I can remember, Jesus. But now I go to Mars Hill all the time, because the International Appalachian Trail goes through Mars Hill. And most of the people there don't even remember what it was like. But that pond in Mars Hill, it was unbelievable, it was like a giant cesspool.

And that was when the Canadians, did anybody ever tell you about the story where the Canadians got really upset? They actually sandbagged, they made a sandbag dam just downstream from the border where the Prestile Stream went across the border, and flooded all this crap back onto the farmlands in the state of Maine. And that caused quite a stir. I can't remember the outcome, but I remember that it was ugly, it was in the paper everywhere. Because what they did is they built the dam about a, I don't know what, fifty yards downstream from the border, and it just flooded up and it was just total sewage coming out of this sugar beet factory. That was a pretty bad decision, but I'm sure that everybody, I mean... I never heard Muskie say that he screwed up and he really should have, he should have said that sometime. I mean, maybe he did but I never heard him say it. He should have said, "This was a dumb idea." I like to pride myself on, when I had dumb ideas, admitting that they were dumb ideas, but Muskie would never admit this shouldn't be, that it was dumb. But, it was bad. And Curtis bought into that shit, too, Curtis bought into it. I mean, Curtis was just as bad, same as Muskie was on the sugar beets. But it's fixed now, the river was cleaned and it's full of trout. It always was full of trout, I mean this wasn't just some dead water stream that ran from Mars Hill, or Easton to the St. John River. I mean it was a wicked good trout stream. It was one of the best

trout streams up there. And, you know, overnight, it was, it went from a really good trout stream to a sewer. And it ran right across the border right into the St. John. In fact the (*unintelligible phrase*) goes right across the border at St. John's, only a few hundred yards. But that was pretty bad. But I'm sure you've had other people recount that (*unintelligible word*).

**AL:** Did you meet Freddy Vahlsing at all?

**DA:** No, I never met Freddy Vahlsing. I said a lot of nasty things about him, but I never met him. Have you interviewed everybody in that group?

**AL:** Yeah, yes. He was a character. Are there others up in -?

**DA:** I was just going to say, have you interviewed a guy named Jim Beressi from Aroostook County? Oh, he'd be one of the great interviews you could possibly (*unintelligible word*).

**AL:** Could you tell me the name again?

**DA:** Beressi, Jesus, don't ask me how to spell it. Beressi, B-E-R-E-S-S-I, something like that, Jim. He is a character and a half. He knows everything, he ran the Northern Maine Development Corporation for years. He knows everything that goes on in Aroostook County. He could tell you more stories about Freddy Vahlsing. I don't know how to find Beressi, but I was just talking with a friend of mine, and I was speaking of someone else, I was speaking of the person who owns the North Eastland Hotel, Greg, Greg Hendrick. And when I was talking to Hendrick, Beressi was in his office, and Hendrick's telephone number is 764-3747. And they were, he was, Beressi was in Hendrick's office and they're doing some Atlantic salmon thing, so I know that he can tell you, Hendrick can definitely tell you how to get a hold of Beressi. But Beressi can tell you some great stories about both the Dickey-Lincoln dam and Freddy Vahlsing and sugar beets. And he is a wicked talker, he could drive you nuts, I mean that guy can keep you going for at least two or three hours. It'll be a long interview. I mean, it's a long haul but if you haven't interviewed, have you interviewed any other really good interviews from Aroostook County?

**AL:** Chubb Clark, Elmer Violette, well, Elmer Violette, I didn't do that one but we interviewed him.

**DA:** Oh, you did? Before he died? Oh, great.

**AL:** Floyd Harding, John Cancelarich.

**DA:** Oh, you got some of those, great.

**AL:** Oh, I went up there for a whole weekend and interviewed people so we've got -

**DA:** Oh, you got some good ones, you got some good ones. Floyd Harding, he knew everything about Dickey-Lincoln, he must have been able to tell you some good stories. But Beressi, Beressi would be a great interview, I'll tell you that. He can talk. And he never has, he's

the only person I know that's willing to publicly criticize John Martin. And he and John Martin have been feuding with each other for a long time, and he's still alive so, it's pretty good.  
Anyway -

**AL:** Let me go flip the tape.

*End of Side A*  
*Side B*

**DA:** . . . the old MGA, the MGA is a bad idea, but Brennan fixed the MGA.

**AL:** You don't mean the Maine Grocer's Association?

**DA:** Maine Guaranty Authority. It was the old, it was the forerunner of the, of FAME, the Finance Authority of Maine. It was a really dumb organization, I mean it lent state money to various things. They didn't have any good plans and they didn't any good program, and they guaranteed a lot of the sugar beet thing. Then Brennan rewrote the law and turned it into FAME, and combined two or three other state loan funds into one organization. Anyway, I had forgotten about going up there. I wrote some bad stuff about that when I got back too, I wrote some really bad stuff. We used to do, I wonder if there's any, actually the State Biologists Association had a newsletter. But I have no idea if anybody ever preserved any of the newsletters. I doubt it. It would take somebody looking through the newspapers in the mid to late sixties.

**AL:** Did the State Biologists Association dissolve?

**DA:** Yeah. Yup, it dissolved. I don't exactly remember when it dissolved, but it dissolved. But we had a lot of fun with that. Who else worked, who else do I know that worked with Muskie? Did Allen Pease work with Muskie?

**AL:** Yes.

**DA:** Yeah, I think so. I saw Allen a couple months ago. He and his wife, Dot, what's her name?

**AL:** Vi. I interviewed them a couple years ago.

**DA:** She's a talker and a half, too, she's quite a character. I get a kick out of her. I can't think of any other interesting anecdotes.

**AL:** Now, how did you come, did you, how did you go, become a member of Barton, Giugold and Anderson, and what exactly, is that a PR firm?

**DA:** Oh yeah, what happened was I, when I got through working, right near the end of, I worked at, when I said I would go work for the Audubon Society, when I took that job I said, I think six years is enough for anybody to do this. When six years was up, I was trying to get the job of being fish and game commissioner, which is the job I always wanted. And Curtis had



actually asked me to do it years before that, and I decided, I had just gone to work for the Audubon Society and I decided, Jesus, I can't do that, I just started this job, I can't just all of a sudden after six months decide I'm going to do something else. So I didn't do it.

And then was at the Audubon Society, about 1976 when Maynard Marsh was the chief, he was the commissioner, I was trying to get Longley to unload Maynard Marsh because he was half in the bag most of the time, and I couldn't talk him into it. I tried everything and I couldn't talk him into it. And so Maynard finished his term, and I took a job working for Hildebrand in the scrap business and we did industrial recycling at S.D. Warren. And I was working on Brennan's campaign in '77 or '78. Brennan got elected governor in '79, right, or '78, '79, and I was working on his campaign, I was doing a lot of environmental conservation stuff for him.

When he got elected, I had just been running this company, the Hildebrand, the company was owned by Hildebrand and Ken Curtis and a little bit by me, and I had been running it and I had gotten in debt and got him into (*unintelligible phrase*) this piece of equipment, and then Joe asked me to be the commissioner of Fish and Wildlife. And again I thought, I can't do it, I can't do it, I got these guys both depending on, they're both depending on me to try to make this thing work, it's going pretty good, I got them in debt, I can't do it. And so Bill Troubh and John Menario and Harvey Devane worked on me for months, John Menario. I kept saying, "No, I'm not doing it, I'm not doing it." That was when Glenn Manuel got picked as commissioner. And then a little while after that, a couple years after that, was when I got to be the commissioner of the Department of Conservation, because I found out that Barringer was leaving and going to the State Planning Office way before anybody else knew about it, and by the time people knew about it I already had it sewed up. And there were a lot of other people that were trying to get it, but they didn't know, I already had it for sure.

**AL:** Did you say Barringer?

**DA:** Barringer, yeah.

**AL:** Dick Barringer?

**DA:** Yeah. And so I did that. And then when I got through doing that I did consulting at Barton, Gingold. I mean, I took a shot at a few other crazy jobs, and after campaigning against Angus in '92 for Brennan, I tried to get Angus to appoint me as Fish and Game commissioner. I mean, if Brennan had won, in the time he ran for governor, I would have gotten to be Fish and Game commissioner, but he just lost by a little bit, he lost to Angus by a few thousand votes. So anyway, that was the job I didn't get.

But anyway, and then I just, when I was, when you do consulting you're always looking for something else, some other interesting thing come along and I just, I mean I did consulting for a while and then I thought of the International Appalachian Trail and then I agreed to do something in Caribou, and then I got at this organization. And so when I was doing consulting I always had plenty of other things to do. And when I retired, I said, (*unintelligible word*) I figured this out, just why I should be president of the Coastal Conservation Association after I retired, and it worked. But that was a long range plan, that was like a five year plan, that's not

what I usually, the way I usually do it.

**AL:** I have a question for you. You mentioned Bill Troubh, John Menario, and one other person.

**DA:** Harvey Devane.

**AL:** Harvey?

**DA:** Harvey Devane, he lives in, he lives in Hallowell, he lives in Hallowell or Gardiner.

**AL:** And who is he? I haven't come across his name.

**DA:** Oh, he was a big Democrat. He used to be, he was a big buddy of Brennan's. I think he was, I think he came from Portland, he came from Munjoy Hill. He was the town manager of Bucksport I think, and Brennan hired him to be the commissioner of Labor or something, I think he was commissioner of Labor. But he was a big democratic operative for a while.

**AL:** Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you think -?

**DA:** There are probably all kinds of things in there, I just haven't, I'm not thinking of them. I mean, I must have done all kinds of things but I can't remember. This is a great idea to actually get people to talk about, because I'm sure they've thought of all kinds of things that wouldn't have thought of otherwise, and they would have never written down. But now I'm really excited about you finding out about that thing in Washington, because Bill Adams would never have gotten to be the commissioner of, I mean the regional administrator of EPA if it hadn't been for that night that I introduced him to the new director of EPA, who hadn't been appointed, nothing had been in the newspaper. I don't know how I found that out; Harold must have told me, or Severin [Beliveau], but I, somebody told me. And I knew if I got Adams down there and introduced him to this guy it would work.

**AL:** I will definitely get in touch with you -

**DA:** But it was a big thing.

**AL:** If I get (*unintelligible phrase*).

**DA:** Yeah, yeah, you should be able to find somebody who, Marshall will know, because I'm pretty sure it was the National Wildlife Federation that gave him the award, and I can't remember, but I do remember that he was retiring from something I thought, or, but he wouldn't have been because he was a senator. And it was way after that that he ran for vice president and got to be ambassador, it was a long time after that. So I don't know what it was, but you should have it in the archives, I mean you should have the plaque or something, or the award or whatever the award was.

**AL:** Great, thank you very much.

*End of Interview*