

Huber: My name is Hannah Huber and I'm here with Bob Brown.

Brown: Sure.

Huber: Yeah. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Brown: I was born in 1942 in Olean, NY, in the southern tier. And came up to the Adirondacks with my grandfather once or twice. Once of my aunts and uncles had a camp out near Fish Creek. And came and visited them a couple times. But I really didn't come up here, move up here, until 1969. And North Country Community College was, had just opened in '68, a two-year college, so, I knew their first class. I came up here to teach, I've always hunted and fished, loved hunting and fishing. And had a two-year degree from Orange County Community College, got my four-year degree in Rider College, down in New Jersey, and then my master's degree in Syracuse University. I had one degree in business and one in business administration and always took sociology courses for fun - everyone I could get. I probably would have switched my major as a young guy if I'd had the money, but I didn't and I couldn't afford an extra semester, so I stayed with my business courses but every time there was a sociology course I took then. I worked at Alfred Tech, two-year institution, in Alfred, NY, again in the southern tier. And in the, at that point in time, that was in the early 60s, I think I went there probably about '65. The Vietnam war was hot at that time and I was drafted. I was already married, to my wife Pat, and the draft board in my home town at that point which was Newburg, I had fun out of deferments, and so I got drafted, went into the service. And ended up in the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. as a draftee, I went into the service in '66, got out in '68 and I worked for the Assistant Chief of Staff of Current Intelligence in teh Pentagon. And my job was to get all the secrets around the world, and of course, most of the world is asleep when we're awake, so at night that's when they were all busy, and so that's when I worked, at night, when the secrets came through I took them off the cryptographic machine and transferred them into English and then I would go around to the... they had a different army officer in charge of every part of the world. And so I would take the stuff from Cuba and put it on that guy's desk, and the stuff from Vietnam and Guayos and China and I would go to the different people and put it on their desks. Now when they came in early in the morning they would pick out the most important secrets. I would type them up, I would secure a room in the Pentagon, and then the general staff, the officers, the generals, of the Pentagon would go into a room that I had secured so that it was debugged and everything and they would get from an officer, who was kind of like a newscaster, they would get the secrets from the night before. It was an interesting time to be there because a lot of things happened while I was in there. I guess my claim to fame, if there is any, as a sargent in the middle of the Pentagon, was that I was the first one in the United States to hear that the, that one of our gun ships called the Pueblo, was captured by the North Koreans in their water. And I was the first one to see this. And I had to tell the guy that was in charge of North Korea, "you better get in here early this morning, you're going to be the most important guy in the country." And he came in and I had everything ready for him. It was pretty exciting because here's our ship, by the way, we shouldn't have been where we were, but it was a spy ship. And when these guys started to be captured they had to jettison all their materials. And I felt sorry for them, here they are in water throwing stuff overboard and they're going to be captured and who knows what's going to happen to them and eventually they all got back to the United States and everything and it was fine. I went back to Alfred, worked a year, and then saw the job opening here in the North Country. I loved to hunt and fish, that's my life, I really love to do that. And here was a chance to be in a new college that was just starting in a place where there's a lot of hunting and fishing. And so I applied, and got the job. And my first job here was working in student services doing student activities. That lasted a few years and then a new position opened up that hadn't been in any colleges before and that was a

career counselor. And so my job switched from student activities to being the fella that would help people do resumes, transfer from North Country to other colleges and also to get them set up for job interviews if they weren't going on. That lasted for a few more years. In the meantime, I always taught part-time. At a small college, you wear a lot of hats. So I was either teaching business or sociology, in those two areas. And then the soc professor decided to leave and open a marina. And so he left and opened a marina and I went in to the Dean and said I think that I can give my philosophy over to students, a lot better as a full-time teacher in the classroom than in student services. And at that point in time, they didn't have searches across the world, you know, and he said, "Well, we're in a transition time. Do half and half for a year. Do half student services and half teaching for a year. And if we both agree, at the end of the year, I'll put you full time in the classroom. And at the end of the year, I walked into the office and said "I like the classroom" and he said "I'd like you there" and so from that time on, for the last half of my tenure at North Country Community College, I was their sociology professor and taught sociology and anthropology. Now, students, and I really love to do that, it was a lot of fun. In the meantime, I was an Adirondack Guide, I was involved in the Fish and Game Club, I was the president for a couple of years of the Fish and Game Club. And I've also been a member of the masonic lodge. I did that when I was in Alfred. Knows what's going to happen to them and eventually they all got back to the United States and everything and it was fine. I went back to Alfred, worked a year, and then saw the job opening here in the North Country. I loved to hunt and fish, that's my life, I really love to do that. And here was a chance to be in a new college that was just starting in a place where there's a lot of hunting and fishing. And so I applied, and got the job. And my first job here was working in student services doing student activities. That lasted a few years and then a new position opened up that hadn't been in any colleges before and that was a career counselor. And so my job switched from student activities to being the fella that would help people do resumes, transfer from North Country to other colleges and also to get them set up for job interviews if they weren't going on. That lasted for a few more years. In the meantime, I always taught part-time. At a small college, you wear a lot of hats. So I was either teaching business or sociology, in those two areas. And then the soc professor decided to leave and open a marina. And so he left and opened a marina and I went in to the Dean and said I think that I can give my philosophy over to students, a lot better as a full-time teacher in the classroom than in student services. And at that point in time, they didn't have searches across the world, you know, and he said, "Well, we're in a transition time. Do half and half for a year. Do half student services and half teaching for a year. And if we both agree, at the end of the year, I'll put you full time in the classroom. And at the end of the year, I walked into the office and said "I like the classroom" and he said "I'd like you there" and so from that time on, for the last half of my tenure at North Country Community College, I was their sociology professor and taught sociology and anthropology. Now, students, and I really love to do that, it was a lot of fun. In the meantime, I was an Adirondack Guide, I was involved in the Fish and Game Club, I was the president for a couple of years of the Fish and Game Club. And I've also been a member of the masonic lodge. I did that when I was in Alfred and I switched and got involved in this lodge in Saranac Lake. And throughout my whole career at North Country Community College, I started with them in '69 and then I took a buyout in '96. Through all those years I've been very active in both. In the sporting world, I became president of the Fish and Game Club for a while and then I became the legislative vice president for the county's sportsmen organization. And then became executive program director of the state sportsmen's organization where all the organized sportsmen in all the different counties in New York state get together in a group called the New York State Conservation Council and I've been their program executive for probably eight or nine years at this point. I also got involved in boy

scouts. I was an eagle scout myself and I believe in paying back, I think that was important in my growing up, and so I ran the camporees here for the Bedford District for several years. And that was a lot of fun, that was interesting. I got involved in girl scouts with my wife, as I said, we don't have any kids, but you know. So we ran a girl scout troupe for a while. I'm 72 now. I am still active in the Fish and Game Club, the county organization I'm with [11:13 incoherent]... their legislative vice president and I'm still with the state organization, I go down to Albany and lobby for sportsmen's issues. I'm also active in my local masonic lodge. I've been a past master of the lodge and currently one of the senior and the junior warden in the lodge. And so that organization does a lot to charity for local people and so forth. Every, and on a national basis, the masonic lodge spends two million dollars every single day of the year, every year, on charity. And so, that's important to me. I try to do that. I also have been very involved in the community with stuff and I was the chairman of the River Walk and I physically with two other individuals build the River Walk. I was chairman, and built the River Walk in Saranac Lake. And after the River Walk, my wife and I were involved pretty heavily, I was chairman of the River Walk, and I went on to represent Saranac Lake. That's a grandfather clock that my wife's father made for us that you hear in the background.

Huber: That's awesome. How often does it chime?

Brown: Oh, I forget it goes off except for when we're doing things. You know...

Huber: Well, it's interesting.

Brown: Yeah, you'll hear that every once in a while. But I added up being in charge of the committee that went down to Mobile, Alabama to win the all-America city award for Saranac Lake. And I think that's probably one of my proudest accomplishments. We were, I dunno if the people in Saranac Lake ever understood the importance of that... there's not separation in terms of size of communities. We were against Chicago, we were against River Side, California. We were against Buffalo, NY. You know. And they give about 10 awards a year and it's called an all-America city. It's not "American" it's "America" - it's a trademark name. And you get that by combining business and volunteers and civic organizations together in a community, doing things with the community. And we've built the River Walk. We've redone Mt. Pisgah. And we redid the train depot, all at the same time with all volunteer help and people in our community. And when we got down there, we were little afraid because other communities were putting 50, 60, thousand, hundred-thousand dollars into their programs. We had to put on a, they had like a big auditorium and they'd split it up and everybody, every community that was there competing had put out a booth and there were big neon booths with flashing lights, thousands of dollars put into this, and we were bringing stuff all from [15:31 incoherent. Mammal?]... back home and pine cones and stuff to decorate and but we had followed all the rules carefully and went onstage and presented ourselves and I dressed up as an old Adirondack guide. When these things happen there, Riverside, California for example would have like 50 people there all in the same uniform. They'd have their police chief, their mayor, all these people. And they'd be chanting outside the building and then when they went into the auditorium, all these people are coming in with the same thing. Big productions. We had seven or eight of us and they went up on the stage but I didn't, I hid way in the back of the auditorium, dressed up as an Adirondack guide, and old guide. And I'd noticed when the others went on they had videos that they ran while they were doing things but the judges weren't listening to the videos, they were kind of watching the people and [16:40 incoherent. Listening or missing?]. So all of a sudden, one of our group said that we came from a little tiny town in the Adirondacks and we work hard to do things and there was an old Adirondack guide lost years ago in the mountains and didn't come back and all of a sudden from a guy in the auditorium, I hollered and

everybody turns around and I'm walking up with a basket on my back and an old hat and red flannel shirt. But I pretended I was an old guy and asked questions like, "You still have that party in the winter? What'd they call that, something like a winter carnival." And they said, "Well, yeah, Adirondack Bob, we do." "So is that still helping pay the bills in the wintertime for this community?" and you know, "Keeping houses warm and stuff and doing that and bringing people in?" "Oh yeah." And of course, that was one of the things they were looking for. Now how do you maintain your community, how do you get through crisis areas. With us, a little community in the wintertime, we did tours [incoherent 17:53]. And so we went through and we explained everything just right and at the end, we won it. It was interesting because I talked about the river, "You still got that river in Saranac Lake where everybody was throwing their beer bottles in?" "Yeah, but we don't do that anymore, Adirondack Bob. We've got it all cleaned up and we put a River Walk next to it." And they said, "Well, Adirondack Bob, why don't we show you?" And at that point, the lights went out, we put on this short film showing the River Walk, I packed up next to one of the people next to me. They took the packbasket off, I took the shirt off, they threw my jacket back on me, and when the lights came on, I'm standing with a suit and tie and jacket before them and I say, "Well, ask Adirondack Bob around here to help answer any of your questions," and so it was kinda folksy, you know, a little bit hokey. But it matched our requirements and so this little community of about 7,000 people got an award that communities with 50,000 people in it were trying to get. And that's how important that was. And when we came back, I dunno, we didn't have much money when we came back to tell people about. We didn't have a lot of money to go, I painted a bunch of signs and put them around town and we had a big parade of all the people that came, and the governor came. That's how we got our name on the big sign out on the throughway and around town as an All-America city. We should be proud of that. That was a big accomplishment.

Huber: Yeah, that's awesome. So, when you first came to the Adirondacks, what was your first impression?

Brown: Well, as I told you I like to hunt and fish. It's a lot different than in the southern tier. And when I first went out, I thought I'd go out for some gray squirrels like around. And of course we have gray squirrels in town but if you go outside around here [20:10 incoherent]... don't have a lot of gray squirrels outside of town. I hunted for three or four different days and I couldn't see any animals. And I came back [20:26 incoherent]... with tears in my eyes. I finally had seen a squirrel and I didn't shoot it because it was the only one I'd seen. I came back with tears in my eyes, and Pat said, "What's the matter?" She'd thought I'd wrecked the car or something, she knew something was wrong. And it was just that feeling that it was different. And so then I got to understand the woods up here and understand things and things were better. It's a different hunt in the big woods than it is in the southern tier where there's more fields and stuff. And I started up on north ridge 'cause that kinda looked more like home to me, and then I got used to the big woods and I got used to where things lived and how they worked. And we didn't have as many trout up there, got into the trout fishing here. And stuff like that. The Delancey brothers, back in 1969, '70, '71, taught hunter's safety training to the Fish and Game Club. And I was new and young at that point. And they were getting old. They decided they were not going to do that and so I picked it up. I figured with my expertise in education, and my love of hunting and fishing, I could do a lot of good by hunter's safety training. I've now taught hunter's safety training in this community for about 42 years. I taught about 35 students a year, every year, for 42 years. And at the college, I have taught at least three full generations of people. So a lot of people know me in town, but I've had so many people that I have trouble with names. And I get people that come up to me, say "Gee, Bob, how you doing?" and I'm kind of embarrassed because you know, gee, you don't know if they were

hunter's safety training or if they knew you when you were a kid, or you know. Of if it was a young lady that went to a college when she was 19 or 20 and now she's 45 and changed her hair color six times, you know. So I think more people know me than I know them and then I feel bad about that but I kind of pretend.

Huber: Cool. Do you want to talk more about some of your most memorable wildlife encounters?

Brown: Well, yeah, yeah, I would. I guess one of the things before I do that, I want to think of the education program is I started a, I think it's the only one, I started a three-credit class in hunting and fishing. And of course it'd be liberal arts. That went towards graduation. Students would take that and think "Boy, this is gonna be easy, I know how to hunt and fish." And I'd start off talking about the philosophy of hunting and fishing and have them read essays, Kangas Khan I think was the first person that ever had a pheasant preserve. And it turned out to be more than they thought it might be. My marriage in family classes, I taught nontraditionally. My wife would come into the classes with me and I would pair students up as husband and wife, as teams. They took tests together, where he went to... I would bring in financial aid people and talk about how you keep a check book, how do you those kinds of things. We went to the hospital, looked at newborn babies, talked about that. I would take them to the funeral home and we would go in and see, you know, how you would prepare someone for a funeral. What are the price of caskets? How do you do these things? The funeral home was always a tough one for my students. A lot of them really didn't want to go, particularly girls didn't want to go. Pat would always have couple wanna faint and she'd get them in the big room. But within six months after teaching that class, and this happened over and over, students would come to me and say, "You know, Bob, I didn't really want to the funeral home but my uncle or my grandfather died and nobody in the family know how to do it, how to take care of that whole situation, and I went in and I was, I could walk them through the process, show them the forms, help them pick out the different things and help my family." And so, I always felt good about that. My hunting experiences around here, there's always been a lot of things that happened to me and in fact I write now for the state-wide organization I'm in, called the Grassroots News. I write articles for them every month. And I talk about the stories and things that happened to me when I went hunting. And fishing. And I have a lot of them. On the wall behind you is a black bear that I, it was about a 500 pound black bear. And I got that in Raybrook and my wife's cousin was living with us at that time. He was going to school at North Country Community College and he was sitting up behind me, reading his english book in the woods and I'm down below him and at that point in time there was a bear that was going through that area, feeding in that area, and so I said, "Look, if happen to see one," 'cause they don't have very good eyesight, but they have extremely good hearing. I said, "If you see one, 'cause you're a bit higher than I am, drop a twig down on me." So I went on waiting, and he's reading, and all of a sudden a twig falls on me, well, it was a little bird that went by and dropped the twig, he didn't even know it, and I look up and here comes this bear, and he's walking sideways to us. And I carefully aimed and shot, the bear went down, the bear got up, and started going in another direction. I shot again and the bear turned and started running right toward me. Now, the bear did not know, he did, he was trying to get away, he didn't know where the shots were coming. Both of those shots were killing shots. They were both almost [28:01 - 28:07 incoherent due to grandfather clock]... I don't take a shot unless I'm sure that I can do it. And I was using a shotgun with a slug end. The third shot, now the bear's running toward me, third shot, I don't know where it went, but the bear's still going.

Huber: You don't know where the bear went?

Brown: Coming right toward me, okay. And so I threw that down, I had a 3-foot 27 handgun and I picked that up and I shot the bear and that dropped. And so now, we're excited, we're out of breath. We go down to the bear and all three shots, it was just adrenaline that he was going on, all three shots were killing shots. And so the cousin says, "Okay, Bob, I found my camera, I'm going to take a picture. You go, you know, over by the bear and I'll take a picture of you." So, I get over to the bear and I decide I'm going to kind of hold his head up and sit on the bear. Well, two of those shots had gone through his lung. I sit on the bear, I'm a pretty heavy fella. All the air comes out of the bear and he goes "Aairgh!" and it scared the living bejesus, I mean, I was afraid. Well, you never saw a fat guy run so fast... and he turned around too, we both ran and then we looked back, the bear's dead, it was just all the air got pushed down. So that was my bear story. It weighed about 500 pounds. The head and feet and skin was a 125 pounds I put in the backpack, basketpack and then tried to get out of the woods, and it was so heavy, you know, I had to take a stick and just go, you know, one at a time and prop myself up and get out of the woods. But the bear meat was very good. The tallow I used for my boots. The bear meat was fine, I really liked it, we enjoyed it, it was a good. Done a lot of the waterfowl hunting, I really enjoy calling in, I like using gatecalls, calling them in. And so I do a lot of goose, I did more duck hunting in the past, I do more goose hunting now in the fields. And my favorite type of hunting I would say at this point is turkey hunting. You get all in camouflage, the turkeys have probably 10 to 15 times better eyesight than we do, and hearing, same with the hearing. They can't smell a thing. And so I a pipe or cigar once in a while, they don't know about that, but they can see you 2, 300 yards away, you have completely camouflaged and face mask, everything. You have to sit there quiet. And then you try to call them in. And they roost in trees. So if you get in early in the morning where the roosting is, and then you can sit back, cuddle down in, and then you little yelps *Bob makes turkey call*. And then you'll hear them *louder turkey call* and then they're gonna come down, and when they come down, they're going to be walking, looking for you. And you've completely still and not move, sometimes I put one decoy up. And then you wanna, when you shoot a turkey, you want to aim for, you shoot them with a shotgun, and you want to aim for the head. And because the pellets will, because their feathers are like [32:18 iron?], pellets bounce off them. And so you know, then you get your turkey. You can only hunt them in the morning and the spring. And the spring is a wonderful time 'cause you're all camouflaged in the woods and the deer go by and the birds are singing and no one can see you and it's warm, it's beautiful, and so that's my favorite thing anyway.

Huber: Awesome. Have you every seen a moose in the Adirondacks?

Brown: Yes, I have. I've seen one moose in the Adirondacks. It was just before you get to Garbriels. It was crossing there where Hawkeye lives. I don't know if you've heard of hawkeye, he's a guy that lives out there. I was on my way hunting, going up toward Malone and it was about 5:30 in the morning and it was dark out. It was late fall, and the moose, was a big bull moose, it had a nice rack on it, and it was crossing the road, just before you come to Garbriels and it was crossing the road in front of my and I slowed up, watched it go up in the field. And with moose, I've moose hunted, and I've harvested a moose.

Huber: In the Adirondacks?

Brown: Not in the Adirondacks, only in Alaska. But when a moose walks, his feet... his stride is so big, it looks like he's walking, but he's really covering a lot of ground, you know, and he wasn't stopping for me, he was just headed straight on through. I wasn't excited, that was the first one I've seen. I've seen tracks, but that's the only moose that I've seen. Try to do a lot of the hunter's safety training, I try to do a lot with sportsmen's organizations in terms of access. I'm very concerned about the fact that older

people, I feel that the DEC sometimes says they want access for everybody but they really don't. And it's too bad because older people that don't have handicap access, they don't need it. But they can't walk as far as they used to be. And so when you go to fish a little pond, instead of being able to drop your boat at the water and then take your car back up in the parking lot and walk down, they make you walk three or 400 yards down. Well, I guess, with your equipment. So if you have a boat on the back of your car or something or on the roof, probably not on the roof anyway, it's not a big boat, be like a rowboat. You walk it down, then you've got to go back and get your oars, then the equipment, then you've probably got to get a grandkid or niece or nephew with you because both parents are working and can't afford to take them because they're busy. And you can't go back and forth that much. So I think we need to do more about access for elderly people that are not handicapped. You know, one of the things I try to work on, try to improve on.

Huber: What is your sense of where the balance currently lies between preservation and conservation and development in the Park?

Brown: It, we don't, we're pretty much on the same side. We're both afraid of what the other one does. What I see is you should be able to use without misuse. I think there's a lot of different recreational opportunities involved but I think the preservationists at this time don't want you to have anything that's motorized and I think there should be a place for those things. It maybe even seasonal differences. I think that there needs to be, everybody that pays through their taxes for every land to be bought, it needs to be also accessible to them. And one of the problems with the land classification is if it goes to wilderness, these trees grow up and they form a canopy. And that means there's less wildlife. It means that if biologists, fisheries people, can't go in and survey a pond because they have to bring equipment in or fly a helicopter over and bring it down and stuff and you're not allowed to do those kinds of things. Who wants to walk all the way in and see a beautiful lake, realize that there's no fish in it, because they haven't been able to maintain the thermocline within the lake. There maybe problems that they can't handle because they can't get equipment in. You know, woods always evolve, you know. Whether it be old trees that fall down and new trees come up or whether there's a fire that goes through, whether... even the forestry stuff, the foresters go in and take out big trees and they planted other trees. And I think these people that are just interested in big woods, to me, forever wild is also forever wildlife. And mature forests don't have hardly any wildlife in them because there's nothing for them to eat because the sun blocks out... the grasses because the food isn't available. And I think everyone wants to see wildlife as well. And I don't think that preservationists always understand that this needs to be recycled. Some places will go in and they'll say, okay, we'll do a cut here, and they'll say oh, you're cutting those beautiful trees. You have to if you want to maintain, and not all, but in different cycles, you need to have water, you need to have cover, you need to have sunlight, and you need to have food for wildlife to live. And if you have a whole section that just has mature forest, then you won't find wildlife. And I think that that's part of regeneration that preservationists probably miss out on.

Huber: What are your thoughts on the state of the economy in the Park?

Brown: The economy of the Park, because of the vastness of the forest preserve, probably needs to come from tourism. If you don't maintain a good hatchery system, that can replenish a fish, so that when a person comes up to a trout stream in the Adirondacks to fish and he doesn't find fish there, he probably won't come back. And so to me, maintaining the conservation department's fisheries, wildlife, for cameras for hunting for fishing, whatever, if you don't have access to that nature then you're going to have less tourists. They're going to go someplace else. So, to me, it's really important that for example, the conservation department, maintains a hatchery for Brook trout and salmon and those

kinds of things so that recreationalists and in this example, fishermen, can come up and be able to utilize that, you know, see how beautiful is and everything and I'm not suggesting in any way that, you know, we should eliminate the forests or decimate them or, I think we need to do everything in moderation. I think that to get the people up here, people down in New York City, don't believe that there's anything between Albany and Montreal. It's true, I mean, they may get up to Albany but boy, going past that, I can remember some students at the college, I remember some foreign exchange students that... Oh, New York state, State University of New York, gee, we'll come up to Saranac Lake and go to North Country Community College. I found them on doorsteps from other countries where they left New York city to get on the bus to go up to the college that they've signed up for. And five or six hours later they're left off downtown here and they figured they were probably 45 minutes from the college from they got on the bus in New York city. I mean I've brought them into my home, I've seen people like this who just can't believe, you know, once they acclimate to it, it's wonderful, but [43:06 - 43:4:12]... I think it's important that we maintain the beautiful area that we have but that we're able to keep the economy going and not only tourism but again, for the goods and the woods and everything, logging, I'd like to see the state buy less lands in fee, which means actually buying the land, and put more in conservation easements where you can continue logging, okay, and then you lease out the recreational rights and then the county still logs in there so some of the roads you can't use 'cause they're doing that and then later on when those start grow up to logging a different part then you switch over. And that seems to be, I think, better than the state buying land in fee. I think at this point in time we should do more easements and I think that would be better for the economy as well. And the Kushqua tract which we've just talked about is up now as an easement thing with the lumber company is a good way to go.

Huber: What conflicts in the Park, social or environmental, have you been most passionate about?

Brown: I think I find the preservationists particularly the extreme preservationist groups to be ignorant of the fact that you need multi-recreational areas. They want everything closed up with the strictest feelings of... my feeling is that there should be use without misuse. And I think that they feel that should be very little use. And I'm most passionate about that. One of the things I do is I go to public hearings and I represent regional and state-wide sportmen's issues at public hearings. I find that's the biggest problem. I find that people are duped into joining organizations. They're well intended, feeling that these people are preserving the land for them, but they're locking up the land and by not being able to let the land go through its normal progression of change by saying that you can't do this, can't do that and so forth, not only does it hurt the economy, but I think it hurts the land. On the other hand, my second biggest concern is... and the people I'm talking about are very interested in not so much conservation, but preseveration. Okay, I feel it should be conservation, not preservation. But I'm very concerned about invasive species. I think, to me, letting the, keeping everything pristine doesn't work and I think, so that's one thing that I hate, I like to see multiple-use. On the other hand, we really have to look into invasive species. Invasive species is probably costing townships, villages, more than anything else to keep them out. The changes I see in fishing alone bother me. Because I'm seeing milfoil all over the place. In the summertime, those plants give off more oxygen, that's true; in the wintertime, there's no oxygen. And I'm seeing that on Lake Colby, for example. I'm seeing a change in the fishes, I'm seeing more bass, perch in Lake Colby, less trout, and it's because of invasive species. I've seen, for example, now they want to put a marina...the Duso's marina has always been there but it's been run down. Everybody in town would like to see that marina back and in good shape. But the person that has bought it is interested in bringing the marina back wants to triple the size of everything, want so bring big boats. Now already, we have a lot of milfoil down in Ampersand Bay. When you have big boats, not

small fishing boats, but big boats running all over with skiers and stuff on it, what they're doing is they're cutting up milfoil. When you cut up milfoil, it exceeds its growth. It makes it grow more more more.

Huber: Fragmentation.

Brown: Fragmentation. And that is a big problem. I have worked closely with biologists, the DEC on different kinds of invasive species and I don't know what we gotta do. I think a lot of people think well, the fishermen rig them in. We try not to. We work very hard to make sure that our boats aren't carrying stuff around when we go into places and out of places because we want the water to be pristine, we want the water to the way.... Lake Champlain now does not have the smelt that it once had because of alewives, and now they're getting perch. That's not the smelt, I remember the smelt dinners. And so I would think the two biggest problems, environmental that we have is 1, buying land and making the classification wilderness, because it doesn't prevent [50:47 ?] the continuing turnover, and number 2 is the invasion of invasive species in the state. And if you look at the emerald ash-borer for example. When the state has this wilderness areas classified you can't touch them you can't go in with anything. Well, they aren't even ready to know what's going to happen. I mean, they are willing to give up this idea if the ash-borers come through. Well, once they get through that, where are they going to go, they're going to the other areas of the Park that we can use and where are they gonna bring things, but by the time they get there they're going to be in such, these ash-borers as an example are just going to have, I mean once they've gone through the place where you can't touch them there's going to be so many of them, how are you going to work in the places where you can do something? I worry about that, you know, and I often ask, I asked DEC one time, it seems like, all the invasive species come to us. Do we ever give anybody else invasive species? And the answer was yes. And guess what it was.

Huber: What?

Brown: It was brook trout! The eastern brook trout they bring out west will bother [52:21] the trout out there called cut-throat out west. I guess that we always thought that brook trout were pretty fragile but I guess they're pretty tough compared to the cut-throats out in Colorado. So, you know, I guess we give them to other people too. Invasive species... awful. You can always take those mature forests someday and change maybe and start doing some selective cutting so that you have regrowth and that kind of thing. Invasive species you can't do it there. I found out, I had the distinction of finding the eastern most growth of black swallow wort which is also called dog strangler. And I found it out of Malone. I was in charge of for the Franklin County Federation of Fish and Game Club of developing a handicapped fishermen access site up in Malone at the Salmon River. And we were excited about this because most people put handicapped fishing sites where there's not many fish! I mean it's great for the handicapped person to get out at that spot but it's not where the fish grow. But what we found was a little spot that was going up for taxes. There was a little waterfall there and there was a lot of air in the water and trout around, it was a perfect spot, but it wasn't a very good building spot because it would have been sometimes have some flooding in there. And so we got it off the tax rolls, we said don't put it up for auction. Federation got in there and we threw some grants. I was able to get handicapped fishing access that was cantilevered over right where the falls was. So and in doing that, once we'd secured the land and went in to check it, first thing I found was Japanese knotweed. And I went, oh, I gotta deal with Japanese knotweed. Well, I went down and talked to Hillary Smith, she sent a guy up, and he told us how to handle this and we got rid of that. And the next thing I found, I went into the woods there to look at the creek and I'm come stumbling over, getting caught on stuff, and it had this beautiful flower on it and I said what is this and I cut a section of it and brought it back to DEC and said what is this and Rich Beal said I think it's swallow wort. I said what the hell is swallow wort? He said, oh they call it dog

strangler, it's not good. So let's look it up, we look it up, and sure enough, I found swallow wort. So I called Hillary again and she sends an expert up and he goes you found the farthest east this swallow wort's ever been, you found it right here. This is bad stuff. I'll take care of it. And it's kind of a pretty flower but it kind of comes down and over trees and stuff. I mean if you leave it alone, it just covers it all and with the wind there, the river going down, when the seeds came up they would fall into the river and really cause problems. So he said, I'll take care of this, you take the other. So we eradicated quite a bit of that so now I have to go back and check out somebody said he thought he saw some of it. I have to go back and check it, see if he did. But invasive species is going to be a problem in the future. I don't want to get snakehead fish down there, that's not good. You know, you have, just, wherever you go, Asian clams... the other thing that's interesting is purple swallow wort and... er, not purple swallow wort, pardon me... purple loosestrife and there's another plant, what's that other plant called... common pickerelweed.

Huber: Pickerelweed?

Brown: Yeah. They look a lot alike.

Huber: Yeah, it is purple.

Brown: Yeah, they look a lot alike.

Huber: Yeah, but the pickerelweed's native.

Brown: Now, the pickerelweed is more in water. And purple loosestrife is more in marshy, grassy wet stuff. But we don't look at the pickerelweed as being invasive because it's already been here but that's not too helpful either. But that's big, yeah, you hit on two things, and that's the two things boy, I'll tell you right off the bat.

Huber: Okay. Well, have you participated in any activism in the Park, for social or...

Brown: Activism?

Huber: Yeah. [57:43 - 57:47 incoherent due to grandfather clock]

Brown: I... they were trying to, one of the things that the state does is they buy all this land and then they reduce the number of workers that they have to take care of it. So, because they don't have the workers to take care of it, but the people who bought it, they put a gate across it and chain across it because they figure if they let people in there then they'll mess it up and they don't have the people to use it. Don't buy if it you can't take care of it, you know. And so there was a time... down where Fred Monro lives, Monro, he's a supervisor downstate in the Adirondack Park, down near Herkimer County, I forget what village. And they weren't going to open some roads. They were important across east to west for, they were going to close up the roads for state land that they bought. So we got our picket signs and went down and notified everybody that we were going to do it and see those roads opened.

Huber: When was this?

Brown: This was about four or five years ago. They opened the right away soon after that. So, you know, I get involved in those things. I'm upset with the SAFE Act of course. I don't own a single AR-15, you know, I use the old-fashioned, you know. But I really feel that there's part of that act that my second amendment rights are being violated and so on April 1st I'll be down in Albany at the next rally. I was there at the last one. One of my jobs at the New York State Conservation Council is to go down and lobby for sportsmen's issues. As a sociology professor, I've been able to tip those scales and use those in the sportsmen world to advocate for sportsmen's issues and so, in the springtime, April, May, I'll make five or six trips down to Albany. I was at a meeting in Utica two weeks ago where we went over 200 bills. Which would affect sportsmen one way or another and I'm very active with politicians in the Adirondacks in particular. I'm in Janet Duprey, Betty Little, Teresa Sayward, and Dan Stec's office, a lot at

home on the phone. I've got their home phones, you know, and when there's issues, I'm there. I met just two days ago with the commissioner of DEC and commissioner of our tent, in Raybrook, in fact it was yesterday. With an attorney from down there with Patti Reisinger [?] who's in charge of the fish and wildlife division. I brought in that other friend of mine over in region 6 from South Cole [?]. He came, so, there were probably seven or eight of us there to sit down and go over issues of access, go over issues of SAFE Act, go over issues of licensing, sportsmen's issues, stocking, setting of seasons, all those kinds of things. So I stay very active. And it's nice because I'm not teaching anymore so it keeps me sharp, keeps me involved. So, you know, and like I say, a month ago, I spent a full day down at Herkimer Community College going over 200 bills. You know, what's the story in this bill, where did this come... well, this bill doesn't have, it has a sponsored senate, there's no sponsored assembly... okay, put that on the back of our worry list, chances of it getting sponsored this year in the assembly are gonna be slim. We'll watch it but we aren't going to worry about it. We'll just keep, you know, monitoring it if it tries to get through a committee we'll be on it. Now, let's look at this next one. This next one's gonna be a problem. Yeah, one of the problems we have with sportsmen is that we're fighting against ourselves a lot, okay. The bow people, the archers, don't want to see crossbows. I can remember when we didn't have archery, we just had firearms. We let them come in and gave them a special season ahead of us so that they can do it. They aren't willing to give the crossbow people it. So, now you've got a state organization that has people that harvest through firearms, people that harvest through longbows and people that harvest through crossbows. Well, what's going to be your stand on this legislation? So I get a lot of [1:04:12.6 incoherent], and that hurts our cause, if we were all together on it we wouldn't have so much of a problem. So I had to work out those differences between it. Mostly what we try to do is to say the DEC are the experts are the experts in managing fish and wildlife. Let them decide what implements can be used or not. Let's let them, keep it away from the politicians; they don't understand half of the problems and they get into trouble when they do because they Oh, well we didn't know that. So, that's kind of my goal is to be.... keep your integrity, you know, and let the DEC handle the things that they're experts in. If a politician gets in, chances are he's trying to help his constituency. But if there's more people voting in New York city than there is upstate, and that's true. You don't want them telling you what you're going to use because they don't understand it. Good example, the mute swan. The mute swan looks like all these pretty swans that you see, okay? It looks very very close to swans that are okay. The mute swan is awful. First of all, it's nasty, and second of all it keeps away all other kinds of waterfowl. I mean, it just decimates the habitats of other waterfowl. It's like the Canadian you'll find on your fields up here. Only, this mute swan is a real terror. But people down in New York city that have three or four mute swans sitting in their little park or the pond and they look beautiful don't want DEC to put them on the This-is-a-Bad-Invasive-Species list. Okay, so, you know, DEC is all ready to exterminate the mute swans. And other countries are all saying, we've got to get rid of these mute swans. We got people in New York city: I know but they look so nice... So, a big talk, yesterday, in Raybrook was on something we don't even have up here, it was the mute swan. And I'm saying, okay you backed off, you were going to eradicate them, now because you've got the governor running for office and he's got a lot of people in New York city, you backed off on this, what are you going to do? And the lady in charge of fish and wildlife says well, we're going after the mute swans but maybe not the way we did before but you know, we find some mute swans, they better not be having eggs 'cause we're going to roll those eggs or get rid of them, you know, when they die they're going to die of natural cause... we're gonna, you know, where we can go in and get them we'll go in and get them. But that's, you know, you have experts and you

have people who have feelings, but you really should leave those to the experts and it's hard to be consistent with that if you're passionate about one particular sport or another.

Huber: So in the Adirondacks, what are the biggest changes you've seen? [1:07:48.6 CUT here before phone rings]

Brown: Environmental, political, what are you talking about?

Huber: Whichever. Just, like, big changes.

Brown: Okay. We advertise Saranac Lake as being a great place to retire. So when people from lower part of the United States, or not the United States, New York state, mostly. Come up here and visit up here, say boy, I want to retire when I come here. So they come up here and retire. When they come up they bring who they are with them. If you left here and decided that you were going to move to Colorado you would take who you are with you when you go and so most of the people that come up here, there's always been a very conservative Republican group here, pretty much. That's changed. And when people move up, they move up from the city. Cities... Republicans are mostly rural. Democrats are mostly city. When they come up from the city they bring their politics with them as I would do if I left here and moved to the city. I wouldn't politics and I don't expect that they would. But it changes the view of how they see governance, how they see, how the area looks from a political view which affects economics and all kinds of things so I see that since I've been there I've seen us go from Republican, very conservative, to a much more liberal, Democrat political environment. And I don't if that's a good thing or a bad thing but I see it a different thing. It's just different. I think that's a big one locally. I see more people recognizing this area, as in volume, [grandfather clock] more people see it as a recreational area than they did several years ago. Skiing's always been big up here. But since Whiteface has gotten bigger, since we've had a 1932 Olympics but then the 1980 Olympics. People will travel up here by bus and places for that which you didn't see so much before. Also, people come here, another reason, change I see because of changes in population, is when people come here they like it for all the things that we like it for. But then they want the comforts and conveniences that they had at home. I'll give you the, a funny example. We had a guy that moved up here, he was president of the Fish and Game Club for a few years too. Moved up here with his wife. They're from down near New York city. And they bought a house. And he comes home one day and she's all upset. This is just after they moved in. There's no peephole in the door. So she made this comment at dinner one night. People here are going, what do you mean? Well, if you live down in the city, you've got this little door on your front door that you look through when somebody knocks on your door, you look through to see who it is. We seldom have our doors locked, let alone have a place to look to see who's out standing on the porch. So she sent him out to find a peephole. Well, let me tell you, Hannah, this guy went everywhere, Plattsburgh, I mean, he went everywhere to find a peephole. Finally he had to wait until he went down to visit her parents, you know, in the city somewhere, and bought a peephole down there and brought it up and put it in. And to my knowledge, Saranac Lake, there's still only one peephole in the whole village. But let's move that up to a Wal-Mart. People come up here, well, where's your closest Wal-Mart? Well, it's 50 miles north or 50 miles east. You can either go to Malone or go to Plattsburgh. Well, what do you do? Well, we go to Plattsburgh... if we want to stop there, we do. Well, when you first move up here, people are going back and forth to Plattsburgh every week because they can't find what they want. Then it turned out to be every two or three weeks, then it turns out to be every month and then finally they're satisfied. The last thing we would want here, at least most of the people that have grown up here, is Wal-Mart. Because that's not why we live here! We live here because we don't have it! We live here because we go to Blueline or something. So, Saranac Lake, went out and decided we would have a community store. I'm a

stock holder in the community store. When I see somebody on the street or around there I say well come into my store and we'll talk for a little bit and I walk in the store and the clerk looks at me and says "Can I help you?" "No, I own part of the store and I'm just here to have a conversation with somebody. You know, they laugh at me but, you know. She says, "You mean you're one of the 600?" "Oh yeah, that's me."

Some data lost

4/22/14:

Huber: Happy Earth Day!

Brown: It is, it is Earth Day, that's great.

Huber: Do you have any plans for Earth Day?

Brown: Nothing special other than to work around the yard and get some lime and stuff in before the rain comes.

Huber: Yeah. Yeah, it might be a pretty rainy day.

Brown: Yeah.

Huber: So, this is a question that you wanted me to ask you after you'd thought about our interview for a little while, and I think it's a great question. The question is, who influenced you?

Brown: Well, everybody had several people that influenced them but I think just a couple when I was a young boy, I think probably my most influential person in my life probably in the influence of my direction was my father. His name was Emett Everett Brown and we lived in a little town called Olean, oh, about the size of Saranac Lake. And he's the one who got me started hunting and out to the outdoors. And I would go squirrel hunting with him and he would have me walk behind him. I was too young to hunt myself. And I had to mimic everything he did. He'd take three steps and stop. I took three steps and stopped. We looked around and had to be very quiet. And then we'd find a big open forest with a lot of acorns and stuff in it and squirrels were around and we'd sit there under a tree and we'd listen. We'd be perfectly quiet and he told me to be quiet and patient. And you could hear the squirrels rustling in the leaves coming toward us and he'd point one out and he'd hand me the old shotgun and I'd shoot the squirrel and then we'd go and get them. If we didn't see anything, we always had our sandwiches in brown paper bags and we'd have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich each. And if didn't get one he'd put the empty bag up on a bush and I would shoot at the bag and then we'd go over and look at the pattern and everything of the bb's in the bag and see if I'd shoot it well. And so I got a chance to shoot every time. That was about, I've hunted everything, that was about, the squirrel hunting with my father, I'd never deer-hunted with him, but the squirrel hunting with my father got me started. And as he got older, had a heart attack, he didn't go out hunting anymore, he learned how to play golf, so my younger brother followed him at that time, playing golf, while I went out the back door with the old shotgun [3:21.4 incoherent - still and high?]. The other thing that he did was, I had a favorite aunt, my Aunt Nellie and she lived in Ithaca and I would say I was about eight years old. And back in the 50s, early 50s, I'd say just around 1950, 1951, in the summer I would go and stay two weeks with my aunt in Ithaca. And while I was there I got to see the soap box derby. The soap box derby back in those days was a big thing. Home base was Akron, Ohio, and there were all these rules and we went every city, every big town had a soap box derby and everything was very precise. And I went to that as an eight year old kid and I was fascinated with it. So I came back home to Olean and I said to my dad, you know, I'm not old enough yet to be in the soap box derby but we don't have one in our town and so is there a way we can start one so that when I get old enough, I could be in it? And he said, well, there's several things you have to do. He said you have to first of all, find people that will sponsor it. So you need to go around to

merchants to see who will sponsor prizes. You need to talk to an organization who might sponsor the thing for the town and that kind of thing. Well how do you do that? Well you take a pencil and paper and go through town and talk to people. And if you want one, then that's what you need to do. So, with a paper and pencil at eight and nine years old I went down and talked to merchants and so they see this kid come in and said sure. And then I went to, I dunno, the rotary club or quanas or something like that. I talked to them. And I got everybody excited as an eight year old kid and they decided they were going to have a soap box derby. And I knew this because my dad didn't do it for me. He told me how you go about it and if I was interested, I would have to go do that. So I learned how to talk to people and go out and get things started and it was with one at a time. I do one, I say I need to talk to an attorney, there's a guy on the second floor that's a nice man, go out and talk to him. And so I did all these things. Well, they call me the father of the soap box derby in Olean, NY, and so when the first derby came I was supposed to lead the parade. I was too young to be in the soap box derby, I had about a year and a half or two years for it to be old enough to get in but I was going to do that. And my father got transferred and we moved from Olean to Baltimore, Maryland for a year. And I missed that. I was never able to get in that parade and do it. And I never lived in a place where a soap box derby was so I never actually got into one. But although I felt bad that I couldn't be there for that, at the same time I was really proud that I had started something for that town and they had big newspaper clippings and our friends back home sent them all to us and stuff. So I was pretty proud that I did that. I think those kinds of things are part of what we're missing today where you teach somebody by having them learn how to do it, showing them how to do it rather than doing it for them. I soon got into boy scouts and they started up a troupe and I became the patrol leader right off the bat. Pretty soon I became the senior patrol leader, and scout masters come and go but I was in the troupe so I went through about five scout masters and they would come in and not know much but the senior patrol leader had two or three patrols under me and so I kind of ran the boy scout troupe with new scout masters. I did that for several years and then realized I wasn't going to be able to get my eagle scout because I was spending all my time trying to help everybody get their first and second class scout [8:23 incoherent]. So I finally left the troupe with, there was about six or seven of us and we had joined an explorer [?] troupe and we all worked on our eagle scouts, we all became eagle scouts as a result of that. But again here was a change for me to do leadership skills and learn how to do it along the way. As I went to high school, there was a teacher that helped me. I wanted to go to college but I wasn't that bright and but I talked a lot, that was for sure. I was thinking of becoming a conservation officer because I like hunting and fishing stuff and he said yeah, but then, when hunting and fishing is going out, the conservation officers are working. You want to do something so you can be off at those times. And he said maybe I should go into business and try business. I got in that, and went to college with a business degree, took a course in sociology as an elective, liked that better. Couldn't change 'cause I didn't have enough money to change so I got a degree in business but spent all my electives in social science. Realized I liked college better than the courses, and wanted to become of college so took a masters in student services and graduated and ended up running student services at North Country Community College for several years before I became a full-time faculty member and in the sociology and business professions so, rest of my life kind of organizing lectures, helping other people, planning things as I did I guess when I first started out, in the soap box derby.

Huber: Yeah. What was your masters in?

Brown: I got a masters in student personnel work from Syracuse University which is kind of like applying to be an administrator, like a dean of students. And I realized that I liked college more than anything else, but I didn't like tests.

Huber: Of course not.

Brown: So I decided I wanted to work at a college, helping other students in a college atmosphere. So I never did go into business or sociology but ended up teaching those part-time while I was full time in student services. And then when the sociology professor left at North Country Community College, I took his place and the last part of my professional career was in the classroom and I think I could get my philosophy of life and my points across better in the classroom than I could in student services. I could help more people in a different way, and I had that opportunity here and so I did that. And so between teaching there and teaching hunter's safety training for 40 years, I became a teacher, helping other people.

Huber: Cool. Was there anyone else that influenced you?

Brown: Oh, yeah, along the way you have people that you respect and what they do and people you don't. There were several of them, I guess, I took something from each one. I had a soc prof for myself but, was a great soc teacher. He was of Jewish faith and lived down in New York city. He was single and after class on Wednesday nights, so the kids didn't go out drinking, he would invite them over to his apartment and I went to his apartment and there'd be another student in there painting, there'd be somebody else doing something else. He liked jazz, he was in the jazz club the, I was doing that. I had a high school teacher by the name of Mr. Parrot. I never had him for a course but he was a debate coach and so when I was in high school I got involved in debating. Where other people were into sports, I got into the debate society and I became president of our debate society. And so again my public speaking and stuff, I would go out with another fella, and we were on the debating team and we around New York state with different tournaments with different high schools. I ended up representing New York state as the, an extemporary of speaking in a national contest, I went out to California. In fact I was given a choice, [14:03 - 14:05 incoherent - On the one side?] I was given the opportunity to represent the state. My guidance counselor said would you rather have a Regent's diploma or do this because they both happen on the same weekend. I said, I'd rather go to California. So I never got a Regent's diploma but I went to California and participated out there and you realize very quickly that you might be the big shot back home but when you get in a national thing, boy I got eliminated pretty quick. But it was another good experience for me and the public speaking in the debate society, doing the debates with the high school, it was wonderful. I would sit on Saturday afternoons with my partner in the library and prepare cases. Now we knew both positive and negative and we could go on each side of an issue and we were a team. We carried around our briefcases and did our debate thing as a team. So, again, I learned to do my public speaking, to work with other people, and think on my feet by being part of the debate team too.

Huber: That's really cool. [15:26]