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Bauer, Peter

Interviewed/Transcribed by Hannah Huber

Huber: My name is Hannah Huber and I am here with Peter Bauer of Protect the Adirondacks. Hello!

BAUER: How are you?

HUBER: Good. How are you?

BAUER: Good. Good.

HUBER: Can you just tell me a little bit about yourself?

BAUER: Sure. I have been working with Protect the Adirondacks since the Fall of 2012. It's a merger of the Residents Committee to Protect the Adirondacks and the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks. I worked for about 14 years as the Executive Director of the RCPA from 1994 to 2007. I worked for 5 years after that as the Executive Director with the Fund for Lake George working on Lake George environmental issues and prior to working at the RCPA I was involved in state-wide Adirondack Park Commission, worked ????? (0:01:01.8), variety of different jobs after college when I moved to the Saranac Lake area.

HUBER: Okay. Where'd you go to college?

BAUER: I went to New Paltz undergrad; Albany and Bard for graduate school.

HUBER: What did you study?

BAUER: I studied English and History at New Paltz. I have a Masters in History from Albany and coursework in Environmental Studies, mostly science courses, ecology courses and whatnot in a Bard program - graduate program.

HUBER: Where are you from, originally?

BAUER: Born in Connecticut.

HUBER: Where in Connecticut.

BAUER: Born in New Haven. Lived in Branford until I was in 2nd grade and then my family moved every year through Junior High. We were in Virginia; we were in Pennsylvania; we were in a couple spots in upstate New York. But then finished junior high and high school in central New York in Ithaca.

HUBER: So when did you first come to the Adirondacks?

BAUER: I first came with the Boy Scouts when I was in high school. We would go on camping trips to the High Peaks. It was the first time we would sort of get to a bald mountain summit above the tree lines through the ???? (0:02:40.8) I still remember that. We would haul burlap bags filled with trash from the lean-tos. This was the 70s and it seemed like behind every lean-to there was a pyramid of tin cans because a lot of people had their supplies - their soups and other things - were in tin cans and so my troop leaders were always sort of appalled by that. This was sort of mid-70s, late-70s - you were starting to see a change in the public ethic around these things and so we would spend a few days hiking and then a few days hauling out - with our backpacks - and these big burlap bags of tin cans. And then I came up a bunch in college and actually after college. During college I had a friend who graduated ahead of me who moved to Lake Placid and I came up a bunch to visit him and was really enamored by Saranac Lake and Lake Placid. A couple years after college moved to Saranac Lake.

HUBER: What was your first impression of the Adirondacks? When you first came - what did you think of it?

BAUER: I guess that would be as a kid. It was very different from central New York. There were certainly lots of woods; lots of waters in central NY but it was a very pastoral landscape, a very agricultural, open landscape and the mountains, those mountain peaks, the High Peaks, that was really the focus for a long time when I came up to Lake Placid. You know it was skiing into the High Peaks in the winter, it was hiking and then it was hiking the peaks in the summer. I did that for many years during high school and in college and then after. It was just the "otherness" of the mountains and just the wide open expanse.

HUBER: Are you a 46er?

BAUER: No, I'm somewhere in the 30s. I got to a point and then started doing them all again with my wife and then we started doing them all with our kids so I've never actually. I've left out a couple intentionally as sort of last mountains to do.

HUBER: Which are the last mountains to do?

BAUER: The ones that I've never done ... I've never done Allen, Redfield, East Dix ... that may be it. I guess I'm closer than I thought.

HUBER: Then you're into the 40s.

BAUER: Yea definitely ... I'm into the 40s. But to knock of those would all be serious day trips. I did a bunch when I lived in Keene when I was working at Adirondack Life there as a kid in the neighborhood who was really interested in getting his 46 and there were a bunch he could do locally in Keene but I did a bunch with him because I could drive him. He was always really eager and I would say "Alright if you really want to do this, be at my house at 4:30am and we'll drive and we'll do the Seward Range." and he was there at 4:15, ready to go and so we did a bunch

HUBER: What was this guy's name?

BAUER: Steven Alice ????? (0:06:40.1). He lives in Saranac Lake now. We did a bunch of those mountains. I did a bunch of the outlying mountains - Santanoni, Couchsachraga, the Seward Range, the Dix Range, Whiteface and Esther. It was the only time I hiked Esther was with him. I've since gone back up Santanoni a bunch of times.

HUBER: Is that your favorite?

BAUER: No. Of the High Peaks ... my favorite? I've never thought about it. There were fun hikes going into the High Peaks. Cliff and Nye is fun. It was a challenge. It was before when you had these trail-less mountains. It was in the 80s. But what happened with the trail less mountains - because there wasn't an officially maintained trail - you would have a gazillion false trails that would lead off of a herd trail. The summit as you were trying to find the canister on a mountain like Seward or Nye which didn't have a big bald summit. Didn't have an obvious place for it at the top of the mountain ... there would just be all these herd paths that had become a maze. So you're running around and all of the sudden just sort of walk right into the canister and be like "Oh I guess I'm at the summit." That happened a few times.

HUBER: That's funny! Where your kids born here?

BAUER: Yea. I married my wife, Kathleen Collins. She grew up in Blue Mountain Lake. Her family has been in Blue Mountain for a long time. Our kids were both born in Blue Mountain Lake. We now live in Lake George. My kids have had a real Adirondack upbringing. Spent a lot of time in the woods. They were in canoes, camping really early. They have a great appreciation for the outdoors. They're both very good in the woods. They handle canoes well. They paddle well. They are very good as far as how to manage a campsite and we were hauling coolers and dirty diapers out of the woods with both kids. So we got them out there early. And anybody who has young kids canoe camping is the way to go. They can drag strings in the water. You can wedge them into the canoe and they can bring almost anything they want with them as far as toys or stuffed animals or what have you and it keeps them interested, keeps them occupied. The movement of the canoe. plus their mom and dad are right there. And the dog. I highly recommend.

HUBER: How old are they now?

BAUER: 16 and 17

HUBER: So they go to high school in Lake George?

BAUER: Yep. They're both in high school. A junior and a sophomore in Lake George and trying to figure out what the next step it.

HUBER: Do you think they'll stay in the area?

BAUER: I don't know. They've both talked about it. They both talk about the areas where they want to go. They used to talk about when we lived in NYC. We have friends in NYC. they have cousins in NYC. they've been to the city a lot. They feel comfortable in that environment. But where they'll end up, I don't know. My approach to parenting has been to try and develop ... grow kids, raise kids to have a

healthy conception of who they are and can go wherever they want to go and be whoever they want to be. If they have all that, who knows, I guess we'll see but I don't feel like the Park owes them a living or an occupation or anything like that just because they were born here. I guess through their mother's family they're like 7th generation Park residents - whatever that means - but, we'll see. Certainly if they do choose to come back to the Adirondacks they'll have to do what their mom did, what I did and that's to think hard about the occupation that they want and are interested in doing that can be done in the Adirondacks. My wife worked for several years doing production work for books and publishing and editing and the actual managing the production of a series of books and we found that was a job that she could easily do from afar. And her goal was to live in Blue Mountain Lake. The economic opportunities in Blue Mountain Lake are not that many but she thought that if she had a job that she could do from Blue Mountain Lake that connected to the outside world. And publishing was great for a number of years. The job that I was able to do from Blue Mountain Lake for many years was working at the RCPA. And then, hopefully when the kids graduate from high school we'll move back to Blue and be able to do Protect from Blue. So they would have to figure out an occupation that they can either do in the Park - and there are a number of those - or try and figure out an occupation that they can do from the Park but connect to the outer world,

HUBER: Interesting. Generally, what are a few of your favorite places in the Adirondacks?

BAUER: I've since moved away from "bagging peaks" to doing a lot of bushwacking. Rather than having a view of many miles, I'm more interested in the view of individual trees and assemblages of plants and understory and communities of trees. The Blue Ridge wilderness is right there. The north flank of the Blue Ridge is beautiful. I hunt through there; I like walking through there; I like walking our dogs through that area. The lakes in the central part of the Adirondacks - Little Tupper Lake, Round Lake, Lake Lila are beautiful - Quebec Brook and the Madawaska Bog is a special spot. Some of that I guess is because certainly that was part of the advocacy efforts that we had to see those places protected and see those places managed as motorless area - there's probably something to that that makes them special but they're also just stunningly beautiful.

HUBER: What are some of your most memorable wildlife encounters?

BAUER: Well, you know, Blue Mountain Lake we have lots of bears. For years we had lots of bears. We used to put bells on our bird feeders so that we knew when the bears were going to be there. That was always a big treat when the kids were younger. So, there were lots of bears around. In or backyard at Blue Mountain we had foxes with pieces of raccoon, we had sharp-shinned hawks eating smaller birds in our yard. Most memorable, my son and I were hunting a couple years ago and there were big coyote tracks, fresh snow, just perfect conditions, it was early in the season and you'd see one track cross so you'd split up and then the coyote tracks would come together and then there'd be two tracks and then there were three sets of tracks and they were coming and going and then this group was coming together and then Jake saw one, my son, and it was massive, just massive coyote-wolf hybrid - you know, who knows? It was massive. Much bigger than the smaller coyotes that we'd seen. And I've seen lots of coyotes running across the roads over the years but was huge. And I saw either the same one or a different one twenty minutes later again - just massive beautiful creature. I have seen a moose for the first time. He just ran across the road - a big bull moose - that was pretty cool.

HUBER: Where was this?

BAUER: That was east of Newcomb and North Hudson, early one morning in the fall and, boom, there it was. I tried to follow it through the woods

HUBER: You were walking?

BAUER: No I was driving in a car and I stopped. I saw the track on the side of the road. The woods seemed almost impenetrable to me. It was amazing how this moose with this huge set of antlers could just disappear in this thick woods. We've watched them since then. We've seen half a dozen over the years - several times with the kids and that's been fun.

HUBER: What would you say is the most treasured - the most important thing - you've learned about living in the Adirondacks?

BAUER: It's an interesting place. The thing that's always attracted me to the park has sort of been the sheer, raw beauty of the place. When I lived in Keene, up on east hill, I used to go out at night when there was snow and there was a moon and you could pick out the lines of the High Peaks 20 miles away in the moonlight. I remember the first winter I lived in Saranac Lake, it was about 30 below and hiking at night down to McKenzie Pond from this cabin that I rented off McKenzie Pond Road and just sort of being out on this frozen lake at midnight under the stars in just this raw open space. It was very thrilling. And, over the years driving from Blue Mountain to North Creek and watching the very granular subtle changes in elevation as you gain 8-900 feet in that daily drive and just watching the changes on the side of Moxham Mountain. Just the stunning beauty of the place - it's captivated me.

HUBER: What changes in the Adirondacks have stood out most to you?

BAUER: You know every town has the house here, the house there that change, businesses change. In Keene if you step out of the Noonmark Diner and you look up at these houses on the ridgelines on the ridge sides. They weren't there in the 80s. A lot of them. It's very different. You know, you drive around Saranac Lake and you see the houses in the some of the hillsides and, again, those weren't there. If you drive down some of the roads, McKenzie Pond Road, it's very different than it was 30 years ago. But, at the same time, there's a tremendous amount of places that are wilder and more beautiful. To be able to watch the "rewilding" of those places through the state acquisition. The time it first came into the public domain I was at Adirondack Life and it was a big deal. It was very different 25 years ago than it is now. It doesn't take long for roads to start to grow over; for building locations - it doesn't take long for the forest to reassert over logging landing sites and former parking areas and old roads. That's been really cool to watch that process unfold in a number of places. Madawaska, even 10 years, going back there. It's a very different place that it was even 10 years ago and it's fascinating to watch that process. 0:21:30.09

HUBER: What is your sense of where the balance currently lies between preservation or conservation and development in the Park.

BAUER: Finding that balance is always the challenge and people measure and evaluate balance in very different ways. One person's balance is another person's crisis point, it seems. So, I guess I look at it, consciously, with a ledger. In the times that I've been watching the Adirondacks since the mid 80s, since moving here, working here, being involved in environmental protection efforts but also having lots of friends across the Park in many different communities that were doing many different things, running businesses, working in different occupations, working in the trades, working as school teachers, lawyers, whathaveyou. I think the Park, in general, works pretty well. We have some really big wild areas. If you look at the Park and you look at the main road systems, the paved road systems and then you look at the places that don't have a lot of paved roads - you have the big High Peaks Wilderness and surrounding areas in between...that network of roads that surround it. The Blue Ridge Highway, the Northway, Route 73, Route 30 in the west ... big chunk of land. The same is true with the central Adirondacks everything north of Route 28 between Blue Mountain Lake and really the far western edge of the Park, going down into Remsen in the South - and then Route 3 running from Tupper Lake all the way over to Star Lake and out towards Watertown. In the north, Route 30 running north-south from Blue to Loon to Tupper - a huge chunk - nearly a 1/2 million acres of land. You've got a railroad through the middle of it but it's not used very much - there's some dirt roads here and there but it's largely one massive chunk of open space. You sort of walk across the Route 28 highway corridor and you walk into another massive place between the Moose River Plains and the West Canada Lakes Wilderness Area. Again Route 30 on the east and Route on the south and, again, another huge area in the Park. And, yea, there's some areas that are slightly smaller - the Wilcox Lake, Lake George Wild Forest complex in the southeast and finally you've got all the conservation easement lands, some forest preserves north of Route 3, west of Route 56, boreal lands sort of east of Route 56, east of the Carry Falls Reservoir going all the way over to Route 30 again a huge assemblage of open space. So, we've got a fairly robust amalgam of really big forested areas that are largely dominated by high canopy forest, largely dominated by intact forest. There's been some heavy cutting and conservation easement lands and even on some private lands but when you look at the patchwork between forest preserve and easement lands and some of the big chunks of

private lands that are out there and you look at places that can't be cut - river corridors, stream corridors, being wetlands - that sort of thing there's 4- 4 1/2 million acres of really wild area in the Park. You just don't find that kind of landscape in other places. That said, we've seen, since the APA was created 40 years ago, we've seen 35,000 new houses. Another thousand - more than a 1,000 - commercial buildings. Hundreds of millions of dollars of assessed value wrapped in those buildings to dwarf the amount of money that's been spent on open space protection. So, I look at the amount of development that's occurred; I look at the amount of land protection that occurred; and I think there's gonna be more development in the future, no doubt about it. We'll live - we're 90-some thousand houses now, we'll certainly see another - we'll cross that 100,000 house mark within the next several years. We did a big report on development in the 90s when I was at the RCPA. We asked where will the next 10,000 house go because they're coming and by 2012 10,000 had been built - new ones - in the Park. They're scattered all over the place. The real issue is around managing the built environment so that it does not diminish the environmental integrity and quality of the protected landscape. And that's trying to find that balance point. We depend on science for that. Part of it is also the public recreational experience is built into that too. What does it mean for the public to be on a wild lake vs. one where there's motorized access. What does that mean to the forest preserved to have snowmobile trails of certain widths. But it's balance. There's a lot of different factors. Coming back to the original question that factor into the balance - wildlife, motor vehicles, perceptions of the built environment, the realities of the built environment, perceptions of motorized or unmotorized access. There's a lot that goes into this question of balance. Is it economic; is it population; is it demographics; is it purely recreation with the motorized or unmotorized. That balance point - that perfect equilibrium is always going to be elusive because the factors that go into that are highly subjective and they're different people.

HUBER: What do you consider the importance of preservation vs. conservation?

BAUER: I have lots of folks who get on their high horse about whether they're preservationists or whether they're conservationists. I haven't found a real value in aligning myself or an environment position movement in whether you're a conservationist or a preservationist. I understand the distinction that folks make. Would a conservationist manage the High Peaks differently than a preservationist? What would that mean? Does that mean that you're gonna let people drive to Marcy Dam because you're a conservationist vs. a preservationist? Does that mean you're going to allow logging in lower elevation areas because you're a conservationist, not a preservationist? That sort of thing. As people's understanding of how to manage, or try to manage a very dynamic landscape, and what that really means, that's changed a lot of folks thinking about what intervention really means. Some of our biggest challenges now for wilderness are the atmospheric impacts that are beyond the control of any of us here in the Park. We saw that for years with acid rain where the forest composition was changing, the soils were being degraded, lakes and ponds were dying off and that was due to factors beyond the control of any Adirondack Park resource manager, conservationist, preservationist, what have you. We see that today. We see massive changes already occurring in the Park and potentially even greater changes coming down the line due to climate change. All largely beyond scope of what can be dealt with here in the Park. There's also been a major change in state land acquisition policy in the last 30 years with the conservation easement program. Is that a victory for the conservation vs. preservationists? I don't know. But if you're looking to protect vast swaths of forest, for the wildlife that go between those two systems or maintaining high levels of biological diversity - which the Park has because it has both older forest with different assemblages of species at every level vs. different assemblages of species that you'll see in the younger forest or the forest that are more heavily cut on conservation easement lands. It sort of blends together this idea of conservation and preservation. We have both going on in abundance. We also have raw exploitation going on in abundance.

HUBER: Raw exploitation.

BAUER: Yea, raw exploitation.

HUBER: Talk about that.

BAUER: We've got some exceedingly poorly developed areas in the Park where if you look at the historic

development trends in the Park you've got a lot of communities that formed on lakeshores because those were the early travel routes. Post Civil War the lakeshores became, and remain to this day, places that were the most attractive for development. People want to be on those lakeshores during the summer. It's beautiful, wonderful being out on those lakes. As a consequence we've channelled a lot of the development most intensively in the Adirondacks on lakeshores and does it make sense to have such a disproportionate amount of intensive development on our ecologically most sensitive areas? That's the reality if you look at where the hamlets are in the Park. If you look at where a lot of the most intensive development is in the Park as far as shoulder to shoulder piano-key type development. Lots of cleared areas sort of suburban landscape of urban landscape of big lawns, few trees, that sort of thing - it's on the lakeshores. So, that's what I mean by raw exploitation and as all of that produces lots of storm water which degrades water quality and changes water quality over time we've done a pretty good job of protecting the forests of the Adirondacks - one of our challenges moving ahead is protecting the water resources in the Park.

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

BAUER: I have lots of thoughts on the state of the economy in the Park. Part of that is just sort of looking at the raw numbers. It's constantly mischaracterized and part of it is in watching my friends who, many of whom, moved here after college and how they have made adjustments and figured out a way to make it economically in the Park and have watched local families who we've gotten to know who have stayed in the Park and built careers in the Park. We are a rural area and when I moved to the Adirondacks, I did a lot of things to be able to pay the rent and that sort of thing. When I made a decision that I wanted to try and move just beyond basic subsistence I had to figure out what was gonna be some type of career path. I had to figure that out. There's a lot of folks that have to figure it out. There are a lot of people that do jobs that are not necessarily their preferred job because they wanted to live in a really rural area. My father-in-law grew up in Blue Mountain Lake, wanted to figure out a way to live in Blue Mountain Lake. He had had grown up in a tourism facility. He didn't want to work in it. He had grown up in that business and he saw what that business was about. He had worked all summer long, day in and day out. he didn't want to do that so he decided he was going to become a school teacher and provided him an opportunity. My mother-in-law wanted, clearly, to live with my father-in-law and make a life in Blue Mountain Lake. She looked at different things and she ended up working at the Post Office. Her career path in the Adirondacks - was that what she thought she was she was going to be doing while she was in college? No, but it provided her with a satisfying occupation at the same time that enabled her to live the Adirondack lifestyle that she wanted to live - raise a family and that sort of thing. So people make those trade-offs. and you have to do that if you're going to live in a rural area where there are a limited number of jobs where there's a very sparse population. You have to do some hard thinking about what's it's going to take to build a career here. The national demographic trends are not positive for the Adirondacks. We're going to continue to see our population shrink for reasons largely beyond our control. Rural America - the population is lessening all across rural America. Rural America is overwhelmingly white. The places that are growing in the US - where the population is growing - are all metropolitan areas - they're all racially diverse areas. 80% of people over 65 are white people. The Adirondacks is 98.5% a white population. We're an older population, by virtue of how the white population in America is arrayed a tremendous amount of the white population is moving into their retirement years. The Adirondack population went up during the 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, 2000s largely because you were starting to see the baby boomers, the white baby boomers, some of whom wanted to retire to the Adirondacks, come into the Adirondacks. We're now starting to see the first group of the baby boom, the oldest of the baby boom years, the first ones to reach retirement in the late 70s, they're starting to die off. When you look at young people in the Adirondacks - our high school graduation rates are generally significantly higher than the state average which means we send more kids to college than the state average. These are trends that we generally see in rural America - especially white rural America - small classrooms, that sort of thing. Oftentimes parents don't see a lot of economic opportunities for their kids, or you had parents that wanted to live in these rural communities that did

occupations that they didn't necessarily find tremendously satisfying but it was an occupation that they did in order to live where they wanted to live. They don't want their kids to make that same choice but if you want to be an engineer, you're going to go into computer science, you're going to go into medicine, you're going to go into any number of fields, you're probably going to be doing that in a metropolitan area. The stats now are like 90% of people with graduate degrees - the jobs for those folks are in metropolitan areas, not in rural areas. So it's a complicated factor but there's often a lot of very clumsy unscientific, politically-motivated, grandstanding about it's the forest preserve, or it's the Adirondack Park Agency Act, it's environmental controls, it's environmental regulations, or it's environmentalists period, that are limiting economic opportunities in the Park, are driving people from the Park when, you know, a lot of that is crazy. Look at birth rates. At 18 a woman is considered to be in a period where birth rate is measured - like 18-40. Overwhelmingly in this day and age, overwhelmingly the highest number of births occur to women between 18 and 23. The places that are growing in the US - metropolitan areas - very racially diverse areas are seeing a huge amount of births in women between 18 and 23. In the Adirondacks our 18-23 year old women are overwhelmingly away at college. There are some here that are having kids at 18-23 but the overwhelming majority are away at college. Do we want our 18-23 year old women to be in the Adirondacks having babies or do we want them to be off in college? Personally, I think they should go to college. When you sort of crunch the numbers and look at reality there's a lot of demographic factors that are facing the Park and are going to shape things far beyond the forest preserve, far beyond the APA Act, far beyond any kind of environmental control. It's a rural area. In many ways the population growth post World War II all the way until 2010 was aided and supported by environmental controls that kept this place a beautiful place that people wanted to move to to retire to.

HUBER: What conflicts in the Park have you been most passionate about?

BAUER: Well, clearly, open space protection and developments. Water quality, forest preserve management, a little bit of private forest/commercial forestry management logging - that sort of thing. It's mostly been around those issues of what parts of the Park do we preserve and how do we preserve them, forest preserve conservation easement. What parts of the Park do we develop and how do we develop those? We develop in a way that uses the best types of conservation subdivision principles and practices or do we just sort of build roads, power lines, put houses here and there throughout the Park. How do we develop areas around water? There's clearly an enormous appetite for beautiful houses on lakeshores in the Adirondacks. Up and down the East Coast, I can't stop that from happening - I don't think anybody can - so we have to figure out a way to develop that does not pollute. We need to figure out how to develop a forested landscape in a way that doesn't fragment the forest and really devalue and undermine the ecological complexity. Those are the flash points. Because it's the Adirondacks, that is this checkerboard of public and private land - because it's the Adirondacks it has 90-some town and over 100 hamlets, because we have lakes everywhere these flash points for these conflicts are here, there - they're all over the Park. It's not like they come to one area. But usually that flash point is that line between public and private uses and how we are going to develop this landscape. We've tried to influence the Park Agency in how it goes about regulating big open space projects by trying to get them to adopt policies that we think are more scientific based on new things that have been learned in planning and conservation subdivision and just, sort of how the science has developed over the past 40 years. In many ways the APA Act is frozen in time. There's been a ton that we've learned about as far as managing storm water and low-impact developments and in mitigating the most negative impacts of different types of development. Again, the Park Agency is largely frozen in time on these issues. We've learned a lot about the impacts of motor vehicles on wild areas; the impacts of roads and trails - roads especially - through a forested area can change the ecologic complexity and change wildlife routes - even change the composition of the forest and the understory. Do we see that put into practice? A lot of times with the management of the forest preserve, no. So, we use different tactics whether it's doing expose reports on development trends, or ATV abuse, whether it's illegal actions such as what we're embroiled in now with the snowmobile lawsuit or the lawsuit over the APA approval of the ACR project.

We've been in lawsuits over ATV trails in the past. We've been in lawsuits to keep Loew's lake as wilderness. Different forest preserve management issues - that's certainly a tool of an activist. And then sort of communications - constant communications and constant public pressure to protect the beauty of the Adirondacks.

HUBER: What is your personal definition of activism and how are you an activist?

BAUER: The way I've approached my work has been very much to provide a vanguard; to create an opportunity point for people to get involved. What we have to do as people who are providing that opportunity for action and are providing that leadership is we have to assemble the necessary information that people can rally around. And that's going out and mastering the political terrain to not only identify what the problem is but to identify what the solution is - to identify what the preferred future could be. And then to be able to effectively communicate all of that so that you can build support - whether it's sort of grass roots rank and file support then you can build that support to project a level of support and a level of force and a level of influence on political leaders. Folks that manage state agencies, local officials, state and elected officials, and the legislature and the governor and the governor's staff - that sort of thing. As an activist you have to be able to, if you want to be successful, to be able, really, to provide leadership on issues around what the Adirondack Park could be in the future. To some extent the challenge is to adapt to changing political circumstances and to adapt to what the possibilities are at different times. You're not always going to be able to get this 20,000 acre acquisition, 50,000 acre acquisition, or to defeat a bad proposal in any given year. So you have to see what the opportunities are for incremental change and opportunities for bigger landscape-level changes.

HUBER: How long have you been an activist? When did it start? Why?

BAUER: In college I was active in political things, political campaigns and in sort of different causes. When I was in college there was a big project that was proposed up on the Minesaska Ridge outside New Paltz and it was really interesting to watch how that unfolded for years. These different developers would propose these sort of outrageous scenarios and slowly they would get picked apart as far as what the viability was and they were held up, there were delays, there were multiple public hearings but in the end the land that was scheduled for development was protected and it's now a beautiful state park. When I was a kid my father was a pretty conservative, my mother was pretty liberal, they always talked about the issues of the day when my aunts and uncles got together when I was a little kid growing up in the 70s they had knock down drag out arguments all night long about the war in Vietnam. That sort of being involved in public life was always around and when I moved to the Adirondacks there was clearly an opportunity starting as a reporter to write about these events and watch these events and I thought it would be more fun to help shape these events rather than simply write about them. That's when I neat opportunities that I had to learn. I spend a couple years at Adirondack Life writing stories about the Park and the people and the landscape. Then I went to work for the commissioner in the Adirondacks through connections that I'd made at Adirondack Life and then had a couple years of incredible education about the policy and the law and what-all that means, and different visions that folks had for the Park. and really what the debates were. Just sitting as a back-bencher watching a very diverse set of people at the Adirondack Commission, early commission - first governor Cuomo's commission on the Adirondacks - hash out all these issues. It was fascinating. But it is tremendously eye-opening, interesting and it really gave me a good foundation, I think, to then help organize a local voice in the park. I did that for many years in the RCPA.

HUBER: How has activism been, historically/typically manifested in the Park in terms of environmental conflicts?

BAUER: Oh, well, historically it's been overwhelmingly people from outside the Park organizing a position of trying to protect different parts of the Park - from the 1850s there were hotbeds - very famous hotbed - create a Central Park for the world in the Adirondacks. Advocacy around creating the forest preserve in the first place was very much steeped in protecting, trying to protect the beauty of the Park. People had been, after the Civil War, there was really an explosion of tourism in the Park. There were hotels built all over the Park. At the same time there are these hotels ... the Park was sort of slowly

being taken apart by bad forestry practices, forest preserve - the state would buy and sell land. They did that for close to 30 years before they stopped selling land in the 1880s and they stopped logging with the state constitution but there was a 50 year effort organized sporadically largely led by leadership within NYC to protect the Park. Then, once the forest preserve was created and Forever Wild was passed you had a more organized, ongoing presence. The Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, was formed in the first years of the 20th century - 1910, 1908 - something like that. ADK was formed in 1925. And any of those organizations provided at least a steady parallel vision, alternative vision, for what the Park could be. That's really what activists do and can do better than politicians, better than regulators or officials, the leaders of different environmental agencies - the DEC, the APA - the leaders are there for 5, 10, 15 years maybe and then their gone. Even the staff people who sort of give their professional careers to those agencies, generally move around from position to position, so continuity of vision really comes from the activist community for what the Park could be - providing that consistent narrative to whatever immediate events come up but also providing a long-term measurement of how we're doing at protecting this amazing place. That's really what the activist community - the advocacy community - creates and you're not going to get that from the political leadership at the local level, at the state level - you're not going to get it from state agencies. That's really something that comes from the volunteer boards of directors, the paid staff, the membership - all of that coming together to, again, mobilize a vision and then be able to communicate that.

HUBER: What do you think are the differences between the activists in the Adirondacks and activists that do a lot of, like, 350.org stuff and go to D.C. and things like that? Besides, say location and scale?

BAUER: You know I think about activists a lot and I know a lot of the 350 folks. I've known McKibben for a long time, and others. They're trying to change. They're trying to bring dramatic change to what a lot of people see as one of the biggest issues we have - which is global climate change. As McKibben says it's not sort of the "50 Easy Things You Can Do To Change the Environment" or to protect the environment, it's the "5 Really Hard Things We Have To Do" as far as changing how we travel, changing how we eat, changing how we shelter ourselves, changing how we power a modern society. It's really, really major things. In many ways there's a constellation of organizations working on climate change and they employ many different tactics. If you look at where the Environmental Defense Fund is and trying to find market solutions to sort of bring the real costs of carbon control. Where some of the NRDC's different tactics and you see that in the Adirondacks too - the way ADK goes about business is very different from Protect. There's room for lots of different tactics and i've always seen 350 as bringing to the climate change activism and advocacy effort a sense of urgency - not unlike what Act Up brought to the crisis around AIDS. If you'll look at the direct confrontational - lots of theatre, lots of stunts, lots of people willing to get arrested over and over again - highly, sort of combative, highly visual things that Act Up did it also had a direct causal connection to changing policy - which eventually led to a health remedy for people with HIV and AIDS. It led to innovations in the medicines that people were able to get to market for people to use together in a way that people have been able to survive. In a lot of ways 350 is playing that role. In every movement, you look at the abolitionist movement - there were a gazillion tactics that were being used for 75 years in the battle against slavery. Look at the Women's Rights movement - the 120 year campaign for the vote and all the different methods that were used and a lot of disharmony amongst the advocates. Some of them could barely stand to be in the same room with one another. You see a lot of those tensions in the climate change movement. Not everyone agrees with the tactics of the different organizations. You see that within the Adirondacks - not everyone agrees on the tactics. You assume too much, you are too quick to agree to something and we get this watered-down piecemeal legislations. You know, you'll support this but won't support that. There's always going to be those tensions so my personal philosophy is there are never enough groups. There are never enough people; there are never enough resources to do the important work that we have to do to protect the Adirondacks to protect planet from climate change. The more energy you have, the better.

HUBER: Do you think there are some tactics that shouldn't be used?

BAUER: Like what?

HUBER: Well, I'm wondering what are, like, the best tactics?

BAUER: In the Adirondacks we clearly, unlike other places, never has there ever been an embrace of going out and destroying private property. That's been an issue. You go out west there are ski lodges that have been burned down. There are developments that were torched. There was lots of spiking of tree - all through the National Forest there was damage to logging equipment. Clearly that has never - outside of the one incident where the fire tower on Pharoah Mountain where the cable was cut and it toppled - we really haven't had that type of direct damage to private property in the Adirondacks.

HUBER: That's like violent action.

BAUER: Clearly, I would say, that crosses a line of what's acceptable. But, that said, clearly in the Adirondacks we have used the courts, over and over again, all the groups have used the courts, all the advocacy groups. People on the other side, the developers have used the courts, the local government officials have used the courts, everybody has used the courts. So, that's clearly an avenue in this day and age that is open to just about everyone. Everybody has advocated for different types of legislation in the Park. But as far as what's acceptable and what's not acceptable, outside of violence, outside of destruction of property - any type of creative advocacy is certainly acceptable. Sometimes it's touch, you get up in a public hearing and you're heavily boo-ed, people are jeering you and calling you all sorts of names and following you out to the parking lot and saying "We know where you live." And, you know, that's not the best night. But there are lots of other wonderful nights doing this kind of work.

HUBER: What do your friends and family and other acquaintances think of your activism.

BAUER: Oh, generally they're very supportive. I have some, my conservative friends are happy to argue about things and pick fights but they'll do that over non-Adirondack Park issues too. But generally, I have friends across the political spectrum but generally they all share a healthy appreciation for what the Park is all about. People always have lots of ideas for how a position should be stated and like "you should have gotten involved in this issue" and that sort of thing. There's a lot going on and there's only so much you can do. One of the things about being an activist in the Park, I could run out to get a gallon of milk and it'll take me 45 minutes because somebody will come up and start talking about something and you can't blow them off. Anytime anybody stops me to talk about something I've always talked and explained exactly what we're doing and why we're doing. But you run into that reality. I'd be out with my kids when they were younger and they'd be like "somebody always has to say something to you, or you always have talk to people, why do you always have to talk to people" whether you're at the Enchanted Forest on the water slides in Old Forge, or who knows where. I would get that

HUBER: Are your kids interested in activism?

BAUER: They've sort of grown up around it. They make jokes now that they're older in high school. "Are you gonna get boo-ed tonight? What unpopular thing are you going to say tonight? You weren't with us for dinner last night but we heard you on the radio this morning." That kind of stuff. You know, kids don't want to do what their parents want to do. The parent could be a rockstar and you're not gonna want to do what your parent wants to do. It's probably something that they come to. That said, we've tried to raise them to stand up for what they believe in, to follow their heart, to do what they're passionate about - things like that. But, where they end up, politically ... like my son is really into hunting. He doesn't like the governor's gun control legislation. I hunt too but I'm perfectly in support of gun control. None of the guns that we have ... I don't have automatic weapons or anything like that ... I have guns that you use to hunt ducks or to hunt deer.

HUBER: What are your thoughts on mining, garnet or wollastonite?

BAUER: Clearly it's been going on a long time we have no objections to mining garnet or mining wollastonite in the Park. Those two mines in particular, Barton Mines or NYCO have both been pretty effective operations for a long, long time. Barton Mines has sort of made a corporate decision that they stay out of the fray and they keep their heads down and they do their business and hope that nobody notices. But they are extractive businesses, they have an impact on those pits - I've been through both of mine sites - for years. The issue around the NYCO constitutional amendment was that NYCO had, and I went through this process with NYCO in the late 90s, is they have a second mine. The whole idea was

that they would eventually leave the Lewis line, which they are now expanding into the forest preserve, and go to this other mine two miles away. That had better road access, had fewer neighbors to impact, was not on the edge of the forest preserve, that sort of thing. And for years they said that that site was better; though they disavow their studies have shown that the % of wollastonite is better at the new mine. The issue is that operating two mines for them is very financially attractive and they have been able to lease the new mine that they were supposed to move to in the early 2000s - they've been able to lease it to another company and they've been able to continue to stay in their existing mine. So, when we went through this full blown APA adjudicatory hearing it was never supposed to be that two mines would be operating simultaneously for the long term - and that's exactly what we have now is two mines operating for the long term. So, there was that issue where we felt betrayed from what had been the original agreement with NYCO. And then the issue of course of should we get into the business of selling the forest preserve and this was really through that constitutional amendment this is really the first time that the State of New York has sold the forest preserve for private, commercial benefit. Never before has a developer/corporation/whomever approached the State with "I want to buy this piece of forest preserve, how much?" and we've sold it. We just thought that was a terrible business to get into.

HUBER: ADK and the Adirondack Council approved of it.

BAUER: They did. They did. And we think that was a mistake. It was shortsighted. They did it for reasons that they were not aware of the history of NYCO's mining operations. They were not aware that there should be just one mine, not two. And they took the position that selling old growth forest is acceptable. As I talked about before, there's a constellation of different advocacy groups that aren't always going to agree. Sometimes they're going to be vigorously opposed and you see that in the climate change advocacy now. There are groups that say "why are you wasting your time on the XL Pipeline, that's not the issue" and 350 will say "absolutely it is the issue - the XL Pipeline is gonna enable the extraction of all this fossil fuel which will get burned and put in the atmosphere so we have to stop the points". You know you saw with the anti-nuclear groups for years, there were groups that went around and they oppose every single radioactive waste site - on principle - and their position was you can't allow sites to be opened because it makes no sense to build a site that is gonna have to be managed for 10,000 years until the waste - we have to stop producing this type of waste. You can't ask the planet to support radioactive materials for 10,000 years - it's crazy. And there are others that are like "well we just have to give 'em their site to use somewhere. We can't have one radioactive waste site in the state. But look, we're producing all this waste, we have to have one - it's only responsible that we have one place where we can put it. So, here's where there is a real difference of opinion. The vote was very close - 53:47 - the closest constitutional amendment that passed - ever. And, for groups that say ADK and the Council are pretty fond of saying they're the biggest and most powerful and all this, but, you know, what'd they get? 53% of the vote? Clearly, when all the groups work together like we did on the other constitutional amendment it passed by 78% of something so, when everybody's on the same page things are much more successful

HUBER: The other constitutional amendment?

BAUER: Well there was one on Raquette Lake that ?????? 1:17:04.2 that passed by a much higher margin. Had it not been for the opposition NYCO probably would have passed by that high a margin too?

HUBER: What about the land that we got in return?

BAUER: Well we haven't gotten any land in return - yet. And we don't even know what land we're going to get. that was a lot of smoke and mirrors.

HUBER: Really?

BAUER: Yea. There's a number of problems. The land that has been talked about that we're getting in return - 1500 or 2000 acres - nobody knows because NYCO hasn't come up with a value of what the land is worth because they don't know what the wollastonite supply is underneath that land and until they complete the mineral excavation phase all they constitutional amendment allowed was a two-step process. 1) NYCO would be allowed to go into the mineral exploration phase to ascertain what the value

of wollastonite is on this forest preserve parcel. Based upon what they find they would then negotiate a price with the DEC and then there are lands that are around the Jay Mountain wilderness, some of which NYCO owns, some of which other land owners own, some of which abutt the Jay Mountain Wilderness, some of which are across the street from the Jay Mountain Wilderness, some of which are miles away from the Jay Mountain Wilderness. So, again, we didn't think that, when you look at those lands - heavily, recently logged lands.

HUBER: Had they been mined?

BAUER: They weren't mined but they had been recently logged. Some, only a small portion of which are contiguous to the Jay Mountain Wilderness and could actually be incorporated into the Jay Mountain Wilderness - the others are going to be wild forest areas separated from the Jay Mountain Wilderness by roads or by several miles of distance. We didn't think that this land - Lewis Lot 8 - the land that was given away in the forest preserve in the 1890s by the State of New York and that New York taxpayers have been paying taxes on that land for 100 years or more - they have done that for the express purpose of letting this land return to a wild state - to grow older and wilder and my dynamic over time - which it has done and to then turn your back on that 120 year history and say "Eh, let's just let it mined." That's not what the forest preserve is all about and I'm sure that the folks you talk to at the other groups will give you 10 reasons why it was a great idea.

HUBER: You don't think they regret their vote on it.

BAUER: I don't know. No, I think some of them are extremely pleased with their position; they're extremely pleased that they won; they're extremely pleased that they were able to take a very visible, sort of pro-development position for whatever purposes that gains them. Clearly they won a lot of favors, brownie points, that sort of thing - government officials with the Cuomo administration, with leaders at State agencies. What they're able to do with that, who knows. We haven't seen any dramatic environmental protection action as a consequence of giving away the store with the NYCO vote. We haven't seen any dramatic environmental benefits for the Park as a result of that.

HUBER: What do you think of NYCO's practices? Their technology?

BAUER: I mean what's there to technology. I mean it's open pit. It's pretty classic open pit mining. They rig a wall of the mine with dynamite and they blow up a section. It all comes crumbling down. They use really huge machinery to smash it up as best they can. They load it all into trucks and it's driven into Willsboro where further separation takes place and then they ship it off to customers in bags. I mean it's not West Virginia mountaintop mining. It's not tar sands - just scraping the surface of the earth and then bringing out the oil through chemical process. It's not hydrofracking so on the scale of those things it's more benign. But what the State is going to get back in return, when they reclaim this property, in 15 or 20 years - and I'll be very surprised if I live long enough to see ... I think NYCO will continue to find a way to continue to operate this site for the long term because why would they want to pay the millions of dollars to reclaim this property if they can figure out a way to keep mining it. But, any mine reclamation lands that I've ever seen have all the biological diversity of a soccer field. They're flat, they're grassed, they're treeless. We think of this old growth dynamic forest with vernal pools and bear scratches on trees and pileated woodpeckers - that's not what will be returned to forest preserve in the future. Any new lands that we get as a mitigation it's gonna take a hundred years for them to become as ecologically complex as the lands that we've lost.

HUBER: How about climate denial in the Adirondacks.

BAUER: Yea, you know, it's there. Climate denial has become sort of a cornerstone of Republican Party orthodoxy so you see it. The congressional candidates, the Republicans, don't think a lot about climate change. You see this in the race that's now underway to replace Bill Owens, who was a pretty conservative Democrat. the Republicans, none of them are going to break from the dominant mold of basic GOP house majority down in Washington - sort of the Baynor/Cantor faction of "climate change is not real" and, you know, the Adirondacks is a pretty conservative place. It's interesting, a number these counties that voted Democratic in recent presidential elections but they still elect pretty conservative people at the local level. There's a lot of climate change denial. You hear it a lot this winter. It's been

sort of a constant refrain ever time I'm in the Post Office "What d'ya think about climate change - all this snow?" I mean it's out there. But you could point to a gazillion other long term factors. There's going to be all sorts of climatic events. Weather is very different than long term climate trends and that's oftentimes. You look at the IPCC report that came out yesterday and you look at 25 years of that effort and you look at the overwhelming scientific consensus of 97% of climate scientists and 1000s of individual peer reviewed scholarly articles and the data is overwhelming. As McKibben says: the planet has peer-reviewed that data with all sorts of events, and droughts and floods.

HUBER: Who have been your influences in activism, in your appreciation of nature, etc.?

BAUER: In activism I studied a lot of abolitionists when I was in grad school and came away with a real appreciation. I was profoundly struck at not only how much the abolitionists hated slavery but I was also profoundly struck by how much they hated each other and that was eye-opening to me. You see that in environmental activism. You see that in the Adirondacks. But nevertheless you can work on this shared landscape on these shared issues and everybody doing their own thing adds up to a really big and powerful effort. In many ways that oftentimes leads to greater outcome instead of if everybody was lined up on the same page, endorsing the same set of tactics. I always really liked Elizabeth Cady Stanton. One, she worked her whole life and she didn't live to see her greatest ambition achieved which was women's suffrage. But I always like how she put things in perspective. She wrote a letter when she was in her 50s - my kids are grown, I'm done with my husband, we've got enough money in the bank and I've got 20 good years left and I'm gonna win this things. And then she wrote an essay called The Solitude of Self which no matter all the partnerships you have, the people you fall in love with, the kids that you have, the material things that you surround yourself with - how well you play the piano, what paintings you may paint, the gardens that you garden, the trees that you plant, the house that you have - in the end, all you really have is yourself, and you have to be true to yourself and you have to do what you think is right because, in the end, that's all you have. I was always really struck by that essay and I re-read it regularly. And there are a lot of people who said, you know, she's full of it. You know, you have to have dynamic relationships and you have to have dynamic partnerships. If you just go through as this individual you're missing all these valuable connections. And, you know, maybe, but I'm not sure she was discounting any of that - but still, that's always helped me as an activist and as an advocate because you have to sort of stick your neck out - you have to point to outcomes that are not always the sort of easiest outcomes politically. you have take a stand against things that, oftentimes, have a lot of people supporting them. You have to, especially in the Adirondacks, you have to defend things that people don't always see worth defending - whether it's rattlesnakes, or just vast swampy wetlands, blackfly infested lands that are not inviting, are not attractive but are places that, if left alone, are really sort of magnificent ecologically complex places. and, you know, people would rather, a lot of people would say it'd be better to drain this swamp, fill it, pave it over, put a building there. We've done that in so many other parts of the country and what's important about the Adirondacks is that so much is protected. A lot of people say, well jeez if the APA Act is such a good idea how come we don't have the whole State under the APA land use and development plan and I always say - you should. I mean if half of New York State was zoned resource management - a house every 42 acres - we'd be much better off as a state.

HUBER: What are some of your admired environmentalists?

BAUER: Oh, David Brower, he's big time, he's important. Groups that were out there, sort of different efforts around the way different groups have impacted major issues. You look at what the constellation of groups did around the Florida Everglades - it was truly amazing work. You look at the roadless areas campaign that was undertaken successfully - Bush then gutted it - that was an impressive amount of work. You look at some of the early NRDC work around the Anwar Project and the designation up in Alaska. That was really impressive. And it was decried for a long time but I think it's worked out pretty well when you look at the national pollution indexes and the dramatic drop in sulfates and in nitrous oxides. The Cap and Trade Program. No one can say Cap and Trade anymore because the Republicans saying 'Cap and Trade oh no it's bad - all Cap and Trade is bad' but you look at the 1990 Clear Air Act -

George Bush the 1st - the Environment Defense Fund - bringing market forces into environmental regulation. We have lakes that are recovering from acid rain today in the Adirondacks. We have lakes that were fishless for years and now have fish. Our water quality monitoring work that we do, the sulfate levels are way down from where they used to be. So that was an impressive amount of work there too.

HUBER: Nice. Is there anything else that you think should have asked you?

BAUER: No. Interesting project.

HUBER: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you so much for speaking with me.

BAUER: No problem.