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Ann Hodgson: Okay. Well, today is March 17th, St. Patrick's Day, 2015, and we're here today with Ann Paul. Ann is the regional director, or regional coordinator for the Audubon Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries Program, and thanks so much for being here with us today. I'd like to start our interview by just talking about, as you grew up, how you decided that you were going to become a biologist. Can you think back to your formative childhood years?

Ann Paul: It's quite a time now, but yes. When I grew up in Gainesville, Florida and we lived near the country club and the golf course; and there was a woods behind my house that my brother and I spent a lot of time in. We were cowboys and Indians, we were pioneers, we were Davy Crockett[1] and we just did all kinds of adventures in that little woods.

And then, when I was in junior high, we had a wonderful science teacher with a program that they used to call BSCS[2] and one of the things that we did was we went to a little pond and collected water samples and then looked at them with a microscope and, all of a sudden, there were all these animals to look at and they're eating each other and you could see it right there under the microscope. I was just fascinated by all of the things.

1Davy Crockett was a 19th-century American folk hero and frontiersman. He is commonly referred to in popular culture by the title "King of the Wild Frontier".

2Biological Sciences Curriculum Study. An educational center that develops curricular materials, provides educational support, and conducts research and evaluation in the fields of science and technology.

Then, when I went to college, I was very fortunate to be at Cornell University for the last two years of my college training, and the biology classes were phenomenal; so I just really enjoyed, particularly, animal behavior and the ecology classes were just great. So, that—that really set me on my way, one, two, three, those experiences. I was also a girl scout and you know, fairly active childhood.

AH: Sure. So, you got a lot of early exposure to the natural history of Florida or the natural history of just your local environment. And then when you graduated from college, what were your initial jobs? How did you begin to get experience as a scientist, as a biologist?

AP: Well my first job was as a proofreader for Princeton University Press, and because of my degree from Cornell, they always gave me the science books to read and be the editor for, and so, I loved it. You know, my job was to find the scrivener's errors that the proof setter had set but I loved reading that.

And then I went to work for Biological Abstracts in Philadelphia and so I read, I was supposed to read 35 abstracts a day and write up the keywords so people could find those articles in the literature. And the sections that I got were animal behavior and ecology, so I read all of the animal behavior and ecology papers that were published every year for, I worked there for four years. So, I read every single paper. That was—

AH: And this was in the mid-1970's, about?

AP: Um, yes. Mid-1970's and so that was really great. Then I left that job because I had children, so I was fortunate to be able to stay home and raise my kids while they were little. But about the time they got back into kindergarten, I really needed to do something else. Well, by then we were living in Gainesville, Florida and so I started to take classes as a post-graduate student; I wasn't signed up in the actual graduate program or anything. I just took classes. And I also audited a whole bunch of biology classes.

But—and then we moved to San Antonio, Texas so I took classes there at the University of Texas at San Antonio and Trinity University. And at Trinity I was fortunate because they actually had a graduate program in biology that was not focused on cellular biology; almost— a lot of the stuff at UTSA, University of Texas at San Antonio, was very much cellular biological studies and I was interested in ecology and animal behavior and the

interaction between the way the animals are built and how they live in the environment and that was what I wanted to know about.

So, I took all the ecology courses that they offered at both schools and, every single one. It was great because UTSA, the tuition was $4 a credit hour, so I could afford to take all of those classes. Trinity was more expensive. But I think it was $38 a credit hour.

AH: That was the old days. (laughter)

AP: Well, you know the University of Texas was—is a land grant university, and while the oil boom was going on they sent students to college for very little money; they could afford to do that. It was very nice.

AH: And then you graduated with your master's from Trinity.

AP: Right, and I got a job in San Antonio working for the Texas Nature Conservancy and I loved it. It was a super job. I was in charge of, well, I wasn't in charge of anything; I was the assistant for the land steward in charge of all the preserves. They asked me to coordinate all the volunteer activities that we had on the nature preserves. The conservancy manages preserves for the benefit of endangered species whether they be plants or animals and so we were part of an active acquisition program at that time.

The director of the nature conservancy was working very closely with Texas Parks and Wildlife to acquire large properties in Texas for conservation to be added, both to the US Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Park System or to Texas Parks and Wildlife lands and so on for—because they had endangered species on them. So that was—and I was also assistant to the person who was doing the acquisition appeals and working with the major landowners in Texas. So, I really enjoyed that role a lot.

Then, at the beginning of the 1990s, we moved to Tampa; and while living in San Antonio, I should say, I became active in the Audubon Society and I was conservation chair for Baxer Audubon and that's—if you're from Texas, you know that's B-e-x-a-r because, you know, it's Spanish; you don't say the 'x', it's Bexar.

AH: Um-hm.

AP: But, and so we were working on a lot of really interesting things in terms of conservation of the area in Bexar County, which is where San Antonio is. We were working on water issues, we were working on endangered species issues, particularly with related to the gold—golden-cheeked warbler[3] and the, one of the vireos[4] that's out there so— yeah it was just so much fun.

So, the second phone call that I made after the first one, being, "Where's my furniture?" to the furniture company (AH laughs), the second phone call was actually to the Audubon Society office which was at the Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries and the manager there, who was Rich Paul, who I later worked for and then, even after that, later married and was very happily married to.

So Rich said to me, essentially, "So what?" I said, "I'm here." And the response was "Good." (laughter) But I said, "I just really want to get involved." So, he said, "Well, the meeting, the next meeting of the Tampa Audubon Society" and he told me the date, and he said I should get in touch with Sally Thompson, who is conservation chair for Tampa Audubon Society.

So I called up Sally, I went to the first meeting, they needed a secretary. I knew from my experience in San Antonio, working for the Audubon Society, that if you wanted to know what was going on you got on the board. So I volunteered to be on the board and I served on the board of Tampa Audubon until just a couple of years ago, so about 25 years on the board of Tampa Audubon in one status or another. I think I was everything except for treasurer; nobody wants to put me in charge of money. Math is not being my highest skill; I'm usually off by a factor of ten, and somehow that's important.

So anyway, so starting with the Tampa Audubon Society, one of the things that was going on at that time was the opportunity to volunteer with Rich Paul and be—to do different things out at the bird sanctuaries in the Tampa Bay area. And so I went on a project, it was a salt marsh planting project, and Rich was working with the Florida Marine Research Institute and they were doing some salt marsh planting with, actually, King High School volunteers.

Ted Adams was coordinating the volunteers and so we got together. Marilyn Kershner was the recruiter for the, for Tampa Audubon to get people to sign up to come out and we

3 An endangered species of bird that breeds solely in Central Texas.

4 Any small, insectivorous American birds of the family Vireonidae, usually olive-green or gray in color.

planted Spartina[5] along the north shore of the Alafia bank in 1990. And once we were finished, all the plants were in, we went around to the south side and it was in April. And on the south side of the Alafia bank in the cove on a sunken island was a bird colony that took my breath away.

In my life, I had never seen such a spectacle. I couldn't believe it. And all I could say was—I was in the boat with all of these other people and they're all looking at this colony and I'd say, all I could say was, "Wow, this is spectacular. Look at this, this is spectacular." And, finally, Rich turned around and said to me something about, "Wow, you really like this, don't you?" And I feel that way.

We were, I was out yesterday at the Alafia bank looking at the white ibis that are coming in right now, it's the middle of March and they are flocking. The brown pelicans are in the trees in pairs. They're courting, they're carrying sticks around; most of them don't have nests fully built yet but copulations are happening, love is in the air and it's spectacular.

I feel this as an amazing spectacle that, it's extraordinary that it's so close to civilization. We're right here, essentially within five miles of downtown Tampa; we've got this huge population of humans that live very close to where this bird colony is and it is thriving. It's really quite breathtaking.

AH: Well, you actually, after your initial volunteer activity, began to work for Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries, bring us back to that date and how that transition happened.

AP: Well it was very clear, you know, after that first work event, the volunteer event, to Rich that I was very moved by the opportunity to see this wildlife spectacle that occurs out at the Alafia bank and so when there were other volunteer activities that were available, I usually got the phone call and I made an effort to go. Then, at that point in time, Rich was the sanctuary manager but he would hire a seasonal warden to be out on the weekends and holidays.

He, working seven—five days a week all day, didn't necessarily want to work for every weekend and holiday during the nesting season but he had gotten permission and funding from National Audubon Society to hire an assistant just on a seasonal basis. So, it was a very good job, he did hire me to do that. Think I was making about two thousand dollars a year doing that work, very low paid.

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5 *Spartina alterniflora* (saltmarsh cordgrass) is a type of deciduous grass found in intertidal wetlands and saltmarsh estuaries.

AH: And this would have been 199—

AP: —Ninety-one and for several years after that. It was working every weekend day and every holiday for six months, essentially. Well, let's see, it would be April, May, June, July, pretty much April—four months; so, because mostly the nesting season is over by August, so, or middle August. So, my job was to assist him in making sure the signs, particularly at the Alafia bank, but also at Green Key[6] and Whiskey Stump,[7] were intact. We did some signage, for instance, also over on the Port Authority islands so we would do that.

I remember one day when I was at work, and I would always enlist my family to come along, poor things, or other volunteers. We had some other volunteers along who came—maybe my family, maybe my sons. Anyway, we ended up putting up eight signs on the Alafia bank, which doesn't sound like that much except that they're three feet by—three feet tall by four feet wide, and heavy. And you have to put them together with, put the posthole digger, and dig the holes and build the signs and interchangeable parts. Anyway, they work out fine, except for—eight signs was a big deal.

So then, I come back to drop the boat off and talk to Rich about my day and I said, "Gosh Rich, I put up eight signs" and he was very impressed, because that was a good day. I think I went home and lay on the floor for a while (AH laughs), because that was exhausting. But I think he tried to meet the challenge the next day.

Of course, he didn't realize the eight signs I put up were all in the sand, and the ones I'd left that needed to be put up left were on the rocky shoreline. It's a whole different thing (laughter), and I think that was, it was after that, that his son David didn't want to go out and volunteer out on the Alafia bank anymore (laughs). But—

AH: Well we've been talking about some key place names that some folks who are familiar with Hillsborough Bay by Tampa will recognize, but maybe this is a good place to drop back and explain about the Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries Program of the National Audubon Society. Just give us an overview, all the way back to the foundation history, of this important program.

6Green Key Beach Park, Florida

7Whiskey Stump Key, Florida

AP: Okay, well, I think it's really an important thing to know the history of the bird conservation in this particular section of the world. So, it really starts, I guess, with some of the writings of John James Audubon. When he came to Florida in the mid-1800s, he was already noticing that there were human impacts on the bird populations here. He talks in his writing about his concern for some of the species, specifically roseate spoonbills, which were being slaughtered because their wings were being sold as fans to the tourists, and every spoonbill of course has two fans. So, if you were a cracker living out in the middle of nowhere on almost nothing in Florida, you could make some money by killing some spoonbills like that.

But toward the end of the 1800s, what happened was, there was a fashion craze, centered from Paris, and all the ladies in the world used the fashion designs from the Paris magazine to be at the cutting edge of the fashion. And the fashion was to put feathers, or actually, whole birds, in hats. Every woman who walked out of her house wore a hat. Today none of us wear hats; we don't understand this fashion. But in that day and era, no woman left her home without a hat. The prime thing, if you were at the height of the fashion of the day, would be to have the egret feathers in your hat. These beautiful, frothy plumes from, particularly great egrets, but all the egrets of the world—

AH: And these were the breeding plumes that they develop, in the spring, as the birds start to nest.

AP: Right. So, the breeding plumes of the egrets were specifically sought after by all of the fashionable women of the day, and as a result, hunters went out into the wilds and particularly in Florida, where so many egrets were nesting, and went out to the bird islands and would sit in the bird islands with little guns, very quiet little guns, and just kill the adult egrets that were coming back to feed their young and raise their young. And they would do this during the nesting season when the feathers were at their most prolific and beautiful. When the new breeding feathers had just grown in, and they were really beautiful.

So then, at the end of the day, they'd collect all the carcasses of the birds they had killed and just skin off the skin on the shoulders where those feathers attach and put them in big barrels and send them by rail to markets in Paris, Boston, London, New York, Chicago, all the places. And the egret feathers, the plumes of the egrets were called aigrettes. So any herons that had marketable plume feathers came to be known as egrets. So, they were, at that time, worth twice their weight in gold, and again, if you were a Florida cracker or someone who lived here and really were a pioneer and you had a little tiny gun, you could make a fortune by going and shooting the egret feathers.

Billy Burdine[8], for instance, was a plume hunter and he made enough money, he could open a store. He could stake it. The man who, another plume hunter from South Florida made so much money he bought an island; it's called Marco Island. I mean, imagine, you have nothing, you shoot some birds now you have enough to open a store, make a difference in your life.

AP: You could buy real estate.

AH: You could buy real estate. There was a man who hired a lot of the plume hunters, he actually hired somewhere between 30 and 60 plume hunters so, and they would bring him the plumes, and he would pay them and then he would send them to New York and he'd get paid; and his name was Lechevalier. And he lived over in Pinellas County, which was then Hillsborough County and on a place near Boca Ciega Bay where Eckerd College is now. And if you look up on the maps of Pinellas County, you'll see that there is a creek just south of Eckerd College called Frenchman's Creek, named after Lechevalier.

He was the first person who put down a deed for ownership of any property in Pinellas County, because he could afford to buy land. Everybody else there was just kind of living on the land and they didn't have a deed. So, he owned land there and he hired hunters to go out and kill the birds, specifically, the egrets and spoonbills to some extent, but they were killing a lot of different birds. They were killing terns and gulls and essentially everything that moved because all of it was fodder for the hat trade.

So, interestingly enough, there was a biologist, an ornithologist, from Princeton University who came to Florida on several trips. He was also here to kill birds for the museum at Princeton University, for the special collection there, and he was killing birds and gutting them out and preparing the skins for the museum. So, he came to Florida in the, in early 1880 and he rented a sailboat and he sailed from Clearwater down into the Florida Bay and he shot birds all along the way, and he made notes of what he saw on his way. And he was a member of the American Ornithologists' Union, and so he made notes and he wrote up what he saw and submitted it to that journal.

He came back in 1886, after Lechevalier and his people had been busy, and he writes that the spectacular bird colonies that were so prominent along the West Florida Coast were

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8 William Burdine founded W. M. Burdine and Son store in Miami in 1898, which later became the Burdines department store chain. They sold work clothes, shoes, hats and bolts of calico cloth. The Miccosukee and Seminole Indians sold egret plumes and alligator skins in order to buy goods at the Burdine store.

no longer in existence, and he wrote this up and he described what had happened; he talked about how much each bird was worth to the market and how much these different pioneers were making by exploiting the natural ecology of the area and he published it in the American Ornithologists' Union magazine journal called *The Auk*.

Well, the American Ornithologists became really concerned when they realized that the populations of birds in Florida were absolutely being decimated for the fashion of ladies' hats and various people talked about this at various meetings and one of the people that heard this talk was Mrs. Hemenway in Boston. And Mrs. Hemenway was a leader of the garden club and the ladies club and Boston society in general and she started the original Audubon Society there. And I think it was 1896 that that started and then Audubon, an Audubon Society was started in Florida in 1900.

The work that W. E. D. Scott's[9] notations over the next 20 years started to build a momentum. There was a real understanding across the United States that the resources of this country were indeed not limitless. We were shooting out the buffalo, we were cutting down the forest, we were really making an impact on what was the future for, in terms of the natural resources, that would no longer be available to future generations. Our leaders listened to this, or some of them did, specifically Teddy Roosevelt.

Teddy Roosevelt was president of course, of the United States. He got there accidentally. Nobody really expected him to ever become president but when McKinley was assassinated, very shortly after he was elected, Teddy became president. And he came into his presidency owing nobody anything. So he was extremely independent and he had grown up as a person who was very interested in birds in New York State and he wrote up monographs about that and he had done (inaudible) himself, collections and so forth. His family was very interested in natural history and actually started the Museum of Natural History in New York and so on.

So he was very involved in that stuff. So when he comes to Florida before he was president, as a rough rider I think, he, it's very likely that when they sailed out past Passage Key, there was a bird colony there and he saw it. Anyway so when he came to be president he set aside some properties called Federal Bird Reservations: Pelican Island, 1904, Passage Key, 1905, the second one to protect the bird colonies, very important places.

But getting back to what really happened at the beginning of the Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries, in the early 1900s the National Audubon Society, working with Audubon

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9 William Earle Dodge Scott (1852-1910), a Princeton University ornithologist and curator of the Princeton Museum of Biology, studied birds in Jamaica, most of the United States, England, Patagonia, and finally his home in Saranac, New York. Dr. Scott was a prolific author of field notes and scientific papers contributing generously to the study of birds.

Florida, or Florida Audubon Society at that time, hired some wardens and the wardens were hired specifically to protect important bird colonies. Two of the ones in Florida were murdered because of the fact that they were telling people, cracker-type people, that they couldn't make money, they couldn't get their stake by killing the birds anymore. So that's the law.

AH: They were taking away their livelihood.

AP: And it was on the order of what some people are facing trying to stop drug dealers today. It was on that kind of a scale and so when the concept of, "Let's protect places where birds nest", became very difficult and the National Audubon Society kind of pulled back from sending human beings into the face of what was, at that point, an illegal trade in birds, in bird skins, in bird feathers and so on.

Well in 1934, here in Tampa, there was a doctor, Dr. Herbert Mills and he had come to Tampa to be the pathologist for the region. He was the first, actually the first pathologist ever hired by Hillsborough County. Hillsborough County, at that time, included Pinellas County too, so it was a large area that he was responsible for. He was the first CSI guy if you want to think about that. And he had been to France during World War I as a captain in the Army, as a doctor. He was very interested in birds and he was a member of the Florida Audubon Society.

So in 1933 he had heard a rumor of a large bird colony in the wilderness of Tampa Bay so he got his sailboat and he sailed down and he found in Southeast Hillsborough Bay an island where there had been a bird colony and the birds were shot up and the young birds were dying in the nest. This was in April of 1933 and he just thought that was really terrible. So he was a man of action. I start to think about 1933, the Depression is going on, there's no email, faxes, telephones are working but you know, we don't have cell phones. Communication is very difficult.

Between spring of 1933 and 1934 he accomplished a lot, a lot. He got in touch with the owner of Green Key, where the bird colony was, and he got permission for it to be managed as a bird sanctuary. He got in touch with the people who, actually it was the State of Florida that owned Whiskey Stump Key, which was very close to Green Key, and got permission for an Audubon sanctuary warden to live on Whiskey Stump Key.

He got, he hired someone, to be the seasonal warden, to be the warden out at Green Key and he got that person to be allowed to be a sworn officer of the law. And he got in touch with the Audubon Society and said it'll all be under the purview of the National and Florida Audubon Society.

This was a huge amount of work and I just have to take my hat off to Dr. Mills because he also funded the position. So in March 31st 1934 Fred Schultz comes to work for the Tampa Bay Sanctuaries and his job is to live on Whiskey Stump Key and stop the plunder of birds that are nesting on Green Key and so Fred shows up, he builds a tent on Whiskey Stump Key. He and his wife Ida live out there rough, you know it's kind of tough, there are mosquitos, it's hot, all the stuff about living, generally, in the wilds in Florida except they're on an island, too.

He has a rowboat that first year and he uses his rowboat to row over to Green Key. He puts up signs, you know, it's a bird colony protected by the Audubon Society and state and federal law. He gets his badge, he— I don't know if he carries a gun or not. But he does intercept a number of people who were planning, on their way, to come out to Green Key and collect the birds for feathers. There were people who came out to collect the birds for food and then there were a number of, particularly kids, who were just shooting the birds, flying back to the colony, for target practice.

So, he had a very active year and Fred worked for, as the sanctuary manager for Green Key for the next 29 years. Immediately, that same year Fred and Dr. Mills understood that a spoil bank at the mouth of the Alafia River created by the fertilizer plant then, was a big bird place. It was, they called it "Lumps" because the dredge to straighten the channels so the big barges coming in and the freighters coming in to get the fertilizer from the fertilizer plant at the mouth of the Alafia River, which is now the Mosaic Company Plant, needed a straight shot to get safely out of the river. They didn't want to have to do bendy delta exit from the river and they didn't want to hit any sandbars on the way in and out.

So they made two islands to the south of the channel and they were sandy islands and, lo and behold, what nested on them? Well, my goodness, thousands of birds. It was least terns, black skimmers, and American oystercatchers mostly, but I think some of the other terns might have been there too, royal terns, I'm not sure about caspians.

In any event, immediately, as soon as Fred starts to work on Green Key, he and Dr. Mills start to think, Well, I'm out here, why don't I protect these other sights too? So they went to the owners of the fertilizer company and they got permission to post and manage those islands and they also start to explore the other islands around Tampa Bay, and that's the beginning of the sanctuary.

AH: That's a tremendous history and tremendous initiative by Dr. Mills—

AP: And Fred.

AH: And, I was going to say, and Fred, such a, such a really innovative approach at that time of history. Now what were some of the key things that Fred learned in his long tenure?

AP: Well he was a very interesting man and I think a spectacular hire on the part of Dr. Mills because he—

AH: Was he a local resident?

AP: He was. He had a little farm over near Bloomingdale, not far from the high school and he and his wife, Ida, lived there most of the year except for when they were actually camped out on Whiskey Stump Key. And one of the things that he did was, he never actually arrested anybody, at least with—as far as I know, with regard to the Tampa Bay sanctuaries and the protection of the birds on the Alafia spoil banks, the Alafia bank islands, or Green Key.

But what he did was, he talked to everybody, and he explained to them, "Look, you know, in the past you might have been able to do what you think you want to do now, but the laws—It's against the law to bother these birds during the time when they're nesting, and if we want to have these birds be a part of our ecosystem into the future, we have to let them breed." And so he talked to the parents of the kids who were shooting the birds, just flying, for target practice.

He talked to the people who pretended they were fishermen but didn't have any poles in their fishing poles, they had, you know, guns in their boat; they were clearly there to collect ibis, I mean, egret plumes. They were clearly there for the egret plumes, and then when the people came out and wanted to collect ibis for food, he wouldn't let them do it either.

In the nicest possible way: You might have been able to do this in the past but we can't continue to do this because one, it's against the law, and two, we care about the wildlife don't we? We care. I care and you care; together we think this is important. And people would nod their heads, "Yes Fred, that's exactly how we feel." And they'd go away. So,

or the ones that wanted to camp out on the Alafia bank, “Sorry, Miss and Sir, you can’t do that anymore. You can’t camp here; these birds are trying to nest here. If you’re here, they can’t live, so you have to leave.”

So, it was a gentle approach. It was reasoned and it was steady, and it was ongoing and he didn’t stop. And that was how Fred worked. And his wife, Ida, supported him entirely because she went and made sure he had food when he got back. She was the one living out on Whiskey Stump Key with him. After the first year, they built a cabin so they would be more comfortable. They actually cut down some of the trees on their own property near, pine trees, near Bloomingdale, had them milled and brought them over and built the cabin themselves.

And what’s really interesting to think about is, what I think a lot about is how difficult a time this was. This was, this was the Depression and just even moving around Florida was not easy. Hard to get gas, hard to get supplies, hard to get everything, and I think Fred was grateful for the job that he had with the Audubon Society, but it was a part time job. So I think we always say, Well, the old days, things were easier then. No, things were not easier, they were different. We had different problems than today, but they were not less complicated and they were not easier.

AH: And Dr. Mills was the funding source for the, for Fred’s position?

AP: He did, he, he funded the sanctuary manager’s position. The next year he bought a boat that had a little motor on it. I think it was a 4-15 horsepower motor. Wow, once Fred had a 15 horsepower motor he could go everywhere and he did. He went down into Sarasota Bay, he was over in Boca Ciega Bay. He really explored the area and he came across a very nice bird colony down nearer to the mouth of Tampa Bay and spoke with Fred, or Fred spoke with Dr. Mills and the result was that Nina Griffith Washburn donated her island, that she owned, to the Audubon Society. So—

AH: And that’s located where?

AP: It’s in Terra Ceia Bay. It’s called Bird Island. Actually if you look at the map there are a whole lot of bird islands, it’s very unhelpful. So, you can call it Terra Ceia Bay Bird Island, that helps, but we call it the Nina Griffith Washburn Sanctuary.

AH: Now, as Dr. Mills and Fred form this partnership, they really established our first knowledge of bird colonies in the Tampa Bay area. Would that be fair to say?

AP: Absolutely, because nobody was concerned about them, nobody was doing any research or science or counting and so on. Nobody was protecting these places. They were being plundered across the whole community. People were hungry, people needed resources, the area around Green Key and Whiskey Stump is locally known as "The Kitchen" because when pioneers from the Adamsville, Riverview, Gibsonton area needed something to eat, they would go there to get food and it was well known that the oysters and crabs and fish were very abundant, and of course so were the birds. But with Fred there, they couldn't get birds anymore.

Whiskey Stump Key has an interesting background. The still was located, actually, originally on Green Key, but after Fred they had to move it and the idea was if somebody wanted to—you know, this was also during Prohibition, so if somebody wanted some moonshine they would go out to Whiskey Stump Key and leave the money on a stump and then go off and fish for a while and when they came back the bottle of moonshine would be there, and so that was how come it's called Whiskey Stump Key. But of course, once Fred was there, they had to go somewhere else, they figured, had to figure that out differently, very interesting time.

AH: How does the establishment of the first National Wildlife Refuges, how does that interact with or play along with the Coastal Islands Sanctuaries?

AP: Well back when TR, good old Teddy Roosevelt, my hero, established the federal bird reservations, he was able to do that because of his presidential powers but what he couldn't do was fund wardens to protect the birds on the federal bird reservations. He could set them aside but it was meaningless if he didn't have staff to stop people plundering the wildlife there.

So, what happened was, he worked out an arrangement with the National Audubon Society, actually at that time called the National Association of Audubon Societies, to fund and manage the wardens on these places. So the wardens were Audubon wardens right from the start. The one over in Pelican Island was a man, again of the community, Passage Key was, I think it was Asa Pillsbury who was the original warden over there.

So, Paul Kruger was over at Pelican Island, and these were people who were avid defenders of the birds in a time where everybody else was just like, 'It's just part of the ecosystem that is partly supposed to support me as a body, me to be able to take as much fish or anything else from the natural system as I wanted to.' Back in those days it was illegal to hunt anything unless you had a license for it. So you could hunt for ducks, if you had a duck license or fish, if you had fish license or doves, et cetera, et cetera. But the rest of the birds of North America have, under national treaty, been protected.

AH: As the program continued, Fred was there for about 29 years, that brings us into about 1963, if I'm doing the math right. What was the next step in the development of the sanctuaries?

AP: Well, since Fred worked for the Coastal Islands Sanctuaries, which were originally called the Tampa Bay Sanctuaries but the name was changed as the spectrum of colonies that we worked on were changed, overall 31 people have worked for those sanctuaries. Fred ended up hiring some seasonal people to help him, as a sworn officer the state would ask Fred to come and do sting operations where somebody was being involved, where they knew somebody was doing wildlife misbehavior and they would, Fred would have to go to the Keys or the panhandle or somewhere else.

So he would be called away from his Audubon duties, so he had assistants who came and helped him. But, over the years, we've had 31 people to be in charge of the sanctuary, including me, including you, Ann Hodgson, and today Mark Rochelle is the sanctuary manager. All very dedicated, most of us who've worked there have worked there for many years. So it's, I think it's because it's, although the work is physically demanding and there's a lot of it, every day is different.

We don't really know what we're going to do tomorrow necessarily. I mean, we have a general plan and there are some things we have to do, but the privilege of being able to go out to where these birds are nesting and protect them by posting the islands or talking to people who are trespassing or even doing things like this, talking to people about what it is we do and why it's important, is special. It's a very unique role and I think it's just so important that people understand.

If you don't protect the renewable resource into the future, if you don't let these animals reproduce, then we won't have them. One thing that we should know is that egrets were almost eliminated from the state by the plume hunting trade. Reddish egrets were hunted out of the state, that's one of the really rare, today, populations of herons in the world, and they were very populous in this section of the world, and they remain very rare still to this day.

But in the 1910s the chairman of the National Association of Audubon Societies wrote a letter to the editors, or a letter to all the magazines, excuse me, a letter to all the newspapers in the whole Southeast United States, and to "Does anybody, anywhere, know if there are any egret colonies in your region?" and he had one person write back and that was Oscar Baynard[10], who wrote back from near Gainesville.

10Oscar Baynard was a renowned ornithologist and park manager.

He said, "Near Micanopy between Gainesville and Micanopy, on Orange Lake, there's a bird island that has egrets nesting on it." And for less than 200 dollars, the National Audubon Society bought Bird Island, Orange Lake, you always have to say where it is: Bird Island, it's a bird island definitely, that's the name of it but, in Orange Lake, and hired Oscar Baynard to be the manager, the sanctuary manager for that site. And otherwise, there would be no egrets in Florida. Nobody else knew of any colonies anywhere.

AH: And that was the result of the intense hunting pressure at the turn of the century, either for food, for the feather trade, the plume trade, or just subsistence—

AP: That's right. Subsistence life.

AH: Subsistence of life. And thinking about Tampa Bay, you know, clearly Fred had a tremendous impact on the recovery of the bird population. If we look back to that time, what do we know about the dynamics of the bird population, over the long history, from the time when protection had started initially?

AP: Well when Fred started to protect the bird colony at Green Key, the species that nested there included cormorants, double-crested cormorants, brown pelicans, great blue herons, great egrets, and the small herons, and white ibis. And that, that was all. Since then we've had three species that are now nesting in the Tampa Bay area that didn't nest here during that time frame, actually four. Wood storks didn't nest in this part of Florida, reddish egrets had been eliminated from the state, so they weren't here. Roseate spoonbills were reduced to a remnant population down in Florida Bay of about, less than 30 pairs, and glossy ibis only at that time, only nested near Lake Okeechobee.

So all of those species now do nest in this area. In addition, the population of brown pelicans was able to expand under Fred's protection and the egrets, the great blue herons, and great blue— great egrets and snowy egrets and tricolored [herons] and little blue herons have also moved out across to nesting islands, particularly in the estuary. So we have reasonable bird populations across the area that, and I really do think that a lot of the sustainability of those bird populations is related to the fact that the colonies where they nest are posted and monitored by the Audubon Society staff, like me, or our volunteers. So I think without this kind of care, we wouldn't have these populations.

AH: One of the things that I suspect some folks might be familiar with is how much development has gone on around Tampa Bay and maybe you can comment, just a little bit, on how that's affected bird populations in the bay?

AP: Well, the bird populations have been highly affected by the development in this region, specifically, the birds that depend upon the shorelines, the grass flats, the sand flats, have really been impacted due to the huge dredging and filling efforts, particularly, say, over near Boca Ciega Bay, the backside of Madeira Beach, and all of those beach areas where there used to be very broad grass and sand flats which provided foraging for so many of the wading birds, are now eliminated.

Birds only can wade where the water is shallow enough that their legs can reach, and when the water is deep enough for boats to get into peoples' docks, that's habitat that's gone forever.

So those flats have been permanently impacted and we can expect not to see those back. Florida, though, has decided that dredging and filling has happened enough and we don't do that anymore in the state and that's huge. That means that those habitats that remain are protected by the state, and this was very innovative by the state and it happened in the view of many, including maybe me, far past the time it should have gone into effect. But very grateful that it, that is the case now, that further destruction of those habitats won't happen.

The other thing is, when European man first got to the state, we had twice as many wetlands in the state as we do now. We very actively have dredged and filled wetlands as quickly as we can, including the Everglades, but not discounting the wetlands that we have in this part of the world. If you look at the Tampa Bay area and Hillsborough County, particularly from satellites, you'll see that it is pocked with depressions all across it. It's like the top of a golf ball with dimples of wetlands all across and about, almost all of those—

I'm not going to give a percentage number because other people that you interview will have that information for you likely, but almost every single wetland in this area has been impacted, one way or another, by the housing, by the development, by the construction activities that have happened. Either the drainage of water that goes into them is more polluted, or the wetlands themself are drained so that the water moves off them faster, or the sides are steeper or something. They've been ditched and drained and impacted, and those are where the birds would feed otherwise.

AH: Water quality, of course, is a very key issue in the Tampa Bay area, and I hope we'll have a chance to explore that a little bit further.

Track 1 ends; track 2 begins.

AH: You gave us a fabulous background on the history of the sanctuaries in our commun—conversation and I wonder if you can just talk a little bit now, maybe we fast forward and talk about the transitions and habitat management and what has happened in the bay over the last several decades as the Coastal Islands Sanctuaries has been involved in community education, in conservation leadership, and in trying to keep the community sensitive to the value of this important resource.

AP: Well, I think that the greater Tampa Bay community really deserves a lot of credit for its interest in protecting the environment and really trying to figure out, How do we get a handle on this question? One of the things that happened as the city of Tampa grew up was, there wasn't very, there was terrible management, particularly of the affluent from the sewage treatment plant and this really affected the water quality in the Tampa Bay system.

Fortunately, in 1972, President Nixon signed the Clean Water Act and he actually did a lot of amazing things that year: he signed the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and the Environmental Protection Agency for the US government went into effect. So it was a lot of really important initiatives with regard to protecting resources on a federal scale, but one of the things that really was important for the Tampa Bay system was the Clean Water Act because it forced the city of Tampa to create an advanced wastewater treatment plant.

Up until then, homes along Bayshore, although they were, had been, originally built as really spectacular mansions. But Bayshore was so uninviting because of the absolute stench that from that part of Tampa Bay. Nobody really wanted to be anywhere close to that. But after the Clean Water Act went into effect, the city of Tampa was forced, pretty much over its dead body, into putting in an advanced wastewater treatment plant and that has had a huge effect because the water now entering Tampa Bay, from the sewage treatment plant, is highly cleaned and that area of Bayshore is also highly desirable these days.

So it was the right thing to do, environmentally, with huge economic benefits for the city and for the wildlife in the Tampa Bay system. The community working through a very interesting project called the Agency on Bay Management, which is something set up by the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council to bring leaders who are involved with city,

county, and other government agencies and other people like the Audubon Society who are, Audubon being a non-profit conservation organization, not a government agency, but with expertise on what can we do to manage this Tampa Bay resource that we have.

And this has really been an important group to get together on a monthly basis, talk about one issue or another issue, Let's see as a group what's a scientific approach, how can we manage this in a cooperative positive fashion, and what do we, as ecological leaders, where do we want this bay to be in the future. And this really has been great, because the Agency on Bay Management was working. We, the Tampa Bay area group, were also able to get one of the first estuary programs in the nation to focus here. So now we have the Tampa Bay Estuary Program. They bring an extra level of expertise and focus on the bay management and conservation initiatives.

Audubon and our leaders, here, are scientifically-based biologists speaking only for the purposes of bird expertise, avian needs, coming to those meetings with the specific focus, and that's not to say that we're not interested in the water, because we are. Because why? The birds need the water. Our concept at Audubon is that if an area of the world is safe for birds to live in, where birds can live, then that's also a good area for people, and literally, the birds are our canary in the mine. If the birds can live, then the people will be healthy too, and that is really a major focus of the National Audubon Society and the local chapters and our sanctuary.

So, where we speak to what is good for the birds, it's also good for the ecosystem and it's good for the economy of our community, and the Agency on Bay Management, the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, and the participation as avian consultants to that work that the Audubon Society has provided, have made a real difference for the economy as well as the ecology of this region.

AH: What are some of the key success stories that you could describe for the Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuary, for the Audubon programs in the Tampa Bay area, if we roll back the clock, look back several decades and you know, just find the milestones there?

AP: Well, I spoke about the Alafia banks bird sanctuary. Way back in the day Green Key was the focus of where the bird sanctuary was, but as trees grew up on the spoil islands south of the Alafia River, birds that had been nesting on Green Key relocated, then started to nest up on the Alafia bank and mangroves were there, other trees, palm trees and so on and so forth. And so the big colony that used to be at Green Key is now up at the Alafia bank.

The protection that Audubon has been able to offer this privately owned island, because it's owned by the fertilizer company that built it way back in the day, has been very important as sort of bird sources that can, birds that grow up on the Alafia bank that hatch out and are raised on the Alafia bank, some of those birds have colonized other islands. So it's been a very important focal point for the entire area and remains so. We know this because of the distribution of two particular species, reddish egrets and roseate spoonbills.

I mentioned that, originally, the Green Key colony didn't have either of those species; reddish egrets had been eliminated from the state of Florida by the plume hunting trade, and roseate spoonbills were down to a very small population of less than 30 pairs located in Florida Bay. But in the mid-1970s those populations from Florida Bay, due to protection by Audubon activities down in that area, were large enough that the first nesting in Tampa Bay was found on the Alafia bank, mid-1970s, for both roseate spoonbills and reddish egrets, and since then we've been carefully monitoring where those birds occur.

Today, the National Audubon Society actually manages 29 bird islands ourselves. Many of them are nesting islands, some of them are just bird habitat islands. We also work on another 30 plus islands that other agencies manage, where birds nest. The National Wildlife Refuges has very important bird colonies, state parks have Three-Rooker Island and some other very important places, the water management district does, several private landowners own properties where birds nest, and so forth.

So overall, the Florida Coastal Island Sanctuaries is managing over 60, closer to 75, islands that are really, really important for birds in— along this coast of Florida, mostly in the estuary, but some inland colonies too and it's close to 80,000 pairs of colonial water birds, birds that nest in colonies. The reason that birds nest in colonies is related to the fact that they're big, takes a long time for the parents to raise them, they stink, lots of guano, lots of dead fish getting dropped on the islands. So the islands are a bit smelly and the other thing is, they're noisy, they make a lot of noise when they're active.

So, it's not a question of hiding from the mammals, the mammalian predators. The birds have to go to someplace where those animals are not going to eat their chicks and eggs. So they go to islands; they nest on islands. If they're inland colonies, the islands are protected by the dinosaur we call alligators, that lives with us, not actually dinosaur, but in any event, a very fierce predator that keeps the raccoons away from the islands. On the coast, it's the tidal currents that discourage the mammalian predators from getting to the islands. Usually they're small islands so they don't support populations of predators outside of the nesting season; there's just not enough food for most of the year, except for when the birds nest and then it's a super bonanza.

So, we work on protecting these bird islands along the coast by posting them or talking to people who maybe get too close, whether they're fishermen or people just getting out of the boat to use the bushes or beach combers or whatever reason, they get too close, we talk to them. We ask them to give these birds a special few yards. Thirty extra yards, what's the big deal, 100 feet, no big thing.

AH: You were just telling us about some of the transitions that had happened and some of the success stories that Audubon has participated in. Can you talk a little bit about what are the current activities the Coastal Island Sanctuaries is leading in the conservation community. How are you influencing decision-making in the Tampa Bay area?

AP: Well again, we are actively participants, active participants, in the Agency in Bay Management and the estuary program work and we think that that's very important. Also, we're working on, we're very concerned about erosion of our bird nesting islands, so we're working on various kinds of breakwaters where we can build a structure that takes the energy of incoming waves or wakes and creates a quiet shoreline. The reason that that's important is it's, a lot of times it's the shoreline, that are particularly valuable for the wildlife.

Transition zones are so important, whether they're a transition zone between the edge of a wetland and the forest, or in our case, the shoreline of the estuary. So we're working on those. Those projects are extremely expensive so we don't want to put in an erosion control effort that is either not sufficient to absorb that wave impact energy, but we want it to be as economical as possible so we're trying to gauge, through scientific studies, wave studies, and incoming energy analysis, bathymetry[11] and all other kinds of stuff, how big to make these wave breaks. So that's been very interesting.

Another thing that we do is we request the community to help us with some of this bird nesting colony work. We have a *Project Colony Watch Handbook* which you can find on the Audubon Florida website and it enlists people to help us watch bird colonies in their neighborhood, because frankly, what do bird watchers do best? Well, watch birds. So by watching the birds nesting in their neighborhood they get to know about the timing of the nesting, what do the birds do.

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11 Bathymetry is the study of the beds or floors of oceans, rivers, streams, and lakes. Originally bathymetry focused on the depth of the body of water compared to sea level, but it has more recently become the study of the topography of the underwater floor.

With binoculars you can absolutely observe all the intimate details of their lives, watch them mate, build their nest, raise their chicks, watch the chicks grow up— extremely interesting and very beautiful actually. So we're very excited about [Project] Colony Watch. We have a lot of people, particularly in the Tampa Bay area, who are adopting bird colonies in their neighborhood and monitoring their progress during the year and we also do a lot of outreach, in terms of boater's guides.

We've written up a number of boater's guides. We have the *Hillsborough Bay Boater's Guide* that is, are available in English and Spanish. You can get them on the Audubon Florida website or the estuary program website or the Tampa Water Atlas or the Hillsborough County Planning Commission website, so that one, and then the *Boca Ciega Bay Boater's Guide*, which looks at the resources for boaters and specifically a lot about the wildlife in Boca Ciega Bay. That includes South St. Petersburg, Fort De Soto, and the National Wildlife Refuge Islands down there, and then Clearwater Harbor and St. Joseph Sound, which includes Anclote Key and Three-Rooker Island and Honeymoon and Caladesi. Just, and they're really nicely done I think, even though I wrote it myself, or me and my team worked on it together, so with the help of a lot of really good nature photographers.

Then another thing that we've done recently that we're very encouraged about is an effort to reach out to fishermen to ask them to do better when they actually catch a bird. Think in the course of a fisherman's career, out on the water, one day, everybody, everybody is going to catch a bird accidentally, but they thing to do is to reel it in, cut the barb off the hook, take it out, and let that bird fly away, and that's what we're encouraging people to do. Also, don't feed the birds, you know. Don't teach these birds to come to fishermen expecting an easy handout. Let's let these birds be wild.

AP: And that's been a problem at many of the fishing piers?

AH: It's been a major problem and we've worked really in a very cooperative way with the Sunshine Skyway State Park Fishing Pier and one of the things that they've done, is they've actually taken off the cleaning stations off the pier, which means that nobody is throwing the pieces of the carcasses that are left after the fillets are off, and so the number of pelicans that are hanging around the pier is greatly reduced. We still have some issues with, particularly in the winter, when this last winter we had a flock of 300 common loons come around the end of the pier and a number of them were getting caught by the fishermen. So that, that's still a problem. It's not as though everything's solved there.

But it, a lot of it is just not attracting the birds to where you're fishing, and if you're fishing and you have birds around you, maybe you go find a different spot. It's easier than trying to disconnect this bird off your line once you've caught it. The one thing we really encourage fishermen to stop doing, is to cut the line and let the bird fly away with a long line trailing behind it, because then it goes back to an island and the line gets tangled in the vegetation and the bird dies. But the line stays there and it catches another bird and another bird and another bird and it becomes a snare with a wildlife legacy that is very destructive. So we really don't want that to happen either.

So, we're working on that. We're working on some special projects with—having to do with some of our rarest species in the area. Spoonbills, we had very active spoonbill banding project at the Alafia bank, so we're still asking people to read the bands on the spoonbills and turn this information in. We found out some really important basic biological information about spoonbills that nobody knew before, from that project and we're working on our reddish egret survey for the state right now, very interesting, and we're really looking forward to getting that work done. We're working with wood storks and American oystercatchers, some of the beach nesting birds.

We assist the Tampa Port Authority and the Army Corps of Engineers when they're doing dredging projects out on their spoil islands. Spoil islands after dredging are beautiful for beach nesting birds; they look like a beach, they act like a beach, no predators, everything's great until other spoil gets added. So we're working with them, with these agencies so that they can add material to the islands and not destroy any bird nests. This is a very important project they we're working on.

There are a number of initiatives and we're excited about many of them. A lot of it is local outreach, just speaking with people. A lot of times it's the choir, you know, we talk to a lot of Audubon groups, but everyone that we speak with are people that are interested in what it is that we do. We have a seasonal warden who goes out to the Alafia bank and the other islands in Hillsborough Bay, every weekend and holiday day, that was the work that I did when I first started with Audubon, thank goodness I don't have to do it anymore.

Carol Cassels has done this, she's in her thirteenth year, bless his [her] heart she's an angel and she can go out and speak with somebody who is trespassing on our islands, give them a boater's guide, they go away understanding that she's not just being mean and nasty to them, but there's a biological reason why they shouldn't be here and this is a better place for them to be. So, we're trying to increase the sense within the community of, Let's all work on this together, because this wildlife is our heritage; it's our—it's part of the special world that was given to us.

This part of Florida is unique in what the components of that world are and if we don't work together as a community, whether we're Audubon members or fishermen or we're nature lovers or kayakers or whatever, just members of the society. If all of us appreciate when we see a roseate spoonbill fly across the blue sky on a beautiful March day, the way I saw one today, this is a gift. And this is a gift that we cannot afford to squander. It is our job, our responsibility; it's a sacred trust to protect this wildlife and you know I've done, this is what I've done for my life and I've enjoyed it every day, except for budget day, so okay, whatever. But it's been good.

AH: Thanks so much for being with us here today. We really appreciate all of your comments about Tampa Bay's wildlife. It's been a pleasure to be able to interview you, and congratulations on all the work you're doing.

End of Interview