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Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program (ELAPP)  
Oral History Program  
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**Emily Holbrook (EH):** This is Emily Holbrook. I am here with Commissioner [Stacy] White. It is September 19th, 2009 [2019], and we are at the County Center in Tampa, Florida. So first, welcome. Thank you so much for doing this.

**Stacy White (SW):** Thank you, my pleasure.

EH: So my first question for you is how long have you been in the Hillsborough County, Tampa Bay area?

SW: So I recently turned 47, so I've been here my entire life. I've been here for 47 years, and in fact, I'm becoming a rarity, really, in the sense that I'm a deeply rooted native to this area. I can trace my family roots back five or six generations in Hillsborough County and in Florida, so I'm a deeply rooted native, I like to say.

EH: Wow, that's amazing.

SW: Yeah.

EH: So can you then tell me what it—tell me a little bit about growing up in this area?

SW: Well, I grew up in south Hillsborough County, and south Hillsborough County was a bona fide rural area when I was growing up. Much of south Hillsborough County has already become suburbanized. For those areas that haven't, I think planners would use the term "exurban," so

you have some areas that still maybe look a bit rural but they're poised for suburban-scale development. But that wasn't the case when I was a kid. It was a rural area.

EH: Okay. So can you sort of describe that rural area? Like, were there parks or green spaces? What was that like?

SW: Well, there was lots of green space, and much of it at the time was privately owned. We had a lot of ranch land in the area, and a lot of land that was dedicated to row crops, and that's important as well because even though it's really no longer in an ecologically functioning or pristine state, it's still an area that allows wildlife to move around. We talk about wildlife corridors, so you might have an intact ecosystem, but wildlife has the ability to move through row-crop land, to another functioning ecological system, so all of that green space was important. But my favorite, though, as a kid was the ranch land, because our ranches really tended to have intact ecological systems remaining on the ranch, whether it be oak hammocks, pine flatwoods, scrub habitat. It's just absolutely beautiful.

EH: Did you grow up on a ranch?

SW: I grew up on some property—about five acres, but not a ranch, though. But I knew a lot of the farmers and ranchers. I'm still friends with many of them today. My childhood best friend, who I'm still in contact with, was from a prominent farming family in south Hillsborough County, so I was able to spend a lot of time on his land, and some other lease holding that they had further south in a different county. Spent a lot of time at a hunting lease down there that was just absolutely beautiful. It was a ranch that had a lot of functioning ecological systems on it, and it was just absolutely beautiful to ride around out there on what we call a "swamp buggy"—a pickup truck base that has the real big tires and everything.

You're sitting up there on this perch and you're looking down over the land, and obviously, when we were there hunting, we were targeting deer, turkey, and hogs, which is a non-native invasive species, but I just enjoyed looking at the wildlife that we weren't hunting. You know, we used to see big indigo snakes out there, you name it. There were a lot of alligators in the wetlands out there. It was just absolutely beautiful.

EH: That's wonderful. So you said that much of where you grew up is now a suburban area, and obviously Tampa itself has become a metropolitan area. Can you talk about, like, seeing the development of this area?

SW: Yeah, absolutely. So a lot of the large, intact ELAPP holdings are out in my district, because that's where the opportunities were as the county was buying land. Many of the lands that are on the ELAPP list that we have not yet been able to acquire are out in my district. But I

have had so many people tell me that Jan Platt, the commissioner that spearheaded the ELAPP program in particular, was a real visionary, because we are very unique in terms of being now a large metropolitan county but having over 60,000 acres of conservation green space—preserved space.<sup>1</sup>

EH: So how did, I guess, seeing that development and then this conservation effort impact you?

SW: Well, it—seeing what has happened, it makes me sad, in some sense. This may sound kind of silly, but I was speaking with a rancher recently in south county that's very much about conservation like I am, and we both agreed that it'll downright bring a tear to our eyes sometimes when we're driving around south Hillsborough County and looking at the changes down there. And that's shifting a little bit from ELAPP into just the whole land-use and planning issue, but I think that we've just gotten growth management wrong in some of those areas. And that's a legacy in some cases that I'd been dealt with, either through the existing comprehensive plan policies, or rezonings that happened back in the '70s or '80s, or in some cases, a rezoning case that politically I would love to say no to, but legally they check all the boxes. Those are really, really tough. It's a tough pill for me to swallow sometimes, but I'm working very hard to champion changes to our comprehensive plan, to do a better job of growth management in those areas.

EH: Could you maybe speak a little bit more specifically about what that comprehensive plan is, for people who might not really know about that?

SW: Yeah. Yeah. So it's a little bit complex, but we're also unique in Hillsborough County in the sense that we have an independent agency that's called the Planning Commission. It was created by a special act of the legislature. And what we have in Hillsborough County is called the Future of Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan.<sup>2</sup> We call it the “comprehensive plan” for short. But it's basically like a road map for how we envision growth and development looking in the future. And when a rezoning application comes in, we're weighing that application against the comprehensive plan, which is like the governing document to see if that request is consistent with the comprehensive plan.

But the good news is that the board of county commissioners—we own the comprehensive plan. It's our document. It's a legislative document. It can be opened up for amendment at any time. And that's where I really want to—frankly, that's where I have focused my work, is on working

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<sup>1</sup> Jan K. Platt (1936–2017) served four years on the Tampa City Council and 24 years on the Hillsborough County Commission. She was a key figure in the founding of the Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program (ELAPP), which was later renamed in her honor.

<sup>2</sup> The full name is The Future of Hillsborough Comprehensive Plan for Unincorporated Hillsborough County.

on the comprehensive plan. So as it stands today, and this is the good news, we currently have an arbitrary line drawn around the—sort of the outer perimeter of the county—that’s known as the “urban service area.”

Anything outside the urban service area has a rural designation, one unit per five acres, one per 10, or one per 20. We don’t provide water and sewer services out there. So the real battle looking forward is going to be what happens outside the urban service area. Development interests are always wanting to expand the urban service area and have that line move further out, but I think there’s some unique policies [so] we can preserve some rural lands, outside of the existing urban service area, which again is important for those wildlife corridors.

EH: Yeah, absolutely. So correct me if I’m wrong, but you’re the—your commissioner sort of area is the southern Hillsborough County where you grew up?

SW: I like to say east and south Hillsborough. So I—because my—so the four County Commission single-member districts are divided roughly evenly by population. So because mine is the least densely populated, it’s the largest in geographic size. So my district actually touches Pasco, Polk, and Manatee counties.

EH: Wow.

SW: Yeah. So it runs north to south, and then the eastern end of the county, so.

EH: What were your priorities when becoming a commissioner?

SW: That’s an easy one. Better growth management, which I’ve been working hard on, and our ELAPP program—supporting our ELAPP program.

EH: Okay. So then getting into that, can you tell me about your interest in environmental conservation? Like, how you got involved?

SW: Yeah, it’s because I’m so deeply rooted here and I’ve just seen what beautiful assets we have here in terms of our natural assets, our natural resources. It’s been tough to watch the development take place and to watch these lands essentially be gone forever. And I think it’s incredibly important to be able to pass that legacy on to future generations. So I know this is an audio clip and the listeners can’t really see what I’m talking about, but you can see this picture on my wall of a beautiful pine flatwood scene. That was actually the cover of the County Commission’s recommended budget document a couple years ago, and I liked it so much that my

staff had it blown up for me and framed. But that is the kind of legacy that I want to leave behind for future generations.

EH: Those, like, beautiful, natural open spaces.

SW: That is natural Florida right there. You have the palmetto understory cover, the scattered pines. I mean, that is definitely a classic pine flatwood scene that you're looking at there.

EH: So we know you're really passionate about ELAPP. Can you talk to us a little bit about how you got involved in ELAPP itself?

SW: Yeah, so as a commissioner, right from the very beginning, I set that as my passion and my priority. So we have a seven-member board. Of course, any action requires four votes, it has to be the board as a body that takes action, but individual commissioners will sort of carve out their niche, or their passion, and I stake my claim to ELAPP right off the bat, and I've been known as the conservation commissioner from day one.

EH: So what is your role, actually, in ELAPP?

SW: Yeah, so the commission's role in ELAPP is governance of the program, funding of the program. The Conservation and Environmental Lands Management Department with the county—it's a County Commission department. The County Commission could literally do away with that department if it wanted to. Don't worry, I don't think that will ever happen. But it's a County Commission department, so our role is everything from governance of it, funding of it, so on and so forth.

EH: When we were walking in here, your assistant said that you've done a lot to secure a lot of funding for the program. Could you speak about that?

SW: Yeah. So I actually recently championed over \$60 million of funding for the ELAPP program. I've just been unrelenting in pushing for that, and our financial administrator sat down with the county administrator. They took a hard look at the numbers, because we have a dedicated millage rate towards our ELAPP program. So they took a close look at it, and they said, Okay, what do we have left in terms of bonding capacity with this millage rate? And they've determined that we have over 60 million in capacity.

I think the number was 63 million, is what it ended up totaling, and I said, "Great," and I made a motion to issue the debt service and allow for the bond issue and it passed unanimously, so ELAPP literally just a couple of months ago had this 60-plus-million-dollar infusion into the program that will allow us to continue on with our acquisition activities. Because they were just about out of money, they were basically—they had reached a point to where they had no more money for acquisition, and it was just managing what we have looking forward. But this 60-plus-

million-dollar infusion will allow us to increase our conservation footprint in Hillsborough County.

EH: So are there specific areas of concern for you, with that 60-plus million?

SW: There are. So in fact, I've also been a champion of acquiring a conservation easement over the Two Rivers Ranch, which is actually outside of my district, but that's okay because it's such an important ecological system for us to preserve.<sup>3</sup> It's been a top priority of mine. So Two Rivers Ranch—and I'm going to describe it to you. It's a privately held ranch, but it's owned by a conservation-minded family, the Thomas family, that's been in Hillsborough County for a long, long time.

And it's in the north end of the county, and it's sandwiched in between the Hillsborough River State Park, and Hillsborough County's Lower Green Swamp Preserve, formerly known as the Cone Ranch, to the east. So if we can make that connection through acquiring that conservation easement on Two Rivers Ranch, that alone will add up to a conservation corridor, a wildlife corridor, that's tens of thousands of acres, on the north end of the county. And we're in active negotiations with the Thomas family to acquire a conservation easement over the Two Rivers Ranch.

EH: That's amazing. Wow.

SW: Yeah. It's great.

EH: So in your mind, what are the main goals of ELAPP?

SW: Okay. In my mind, the main goal is to preserve ecosystems, green space, and to have that legacy to pass on to future generations, but you can also look to—I hate to use the term “ancillary benefits,” but stormwater control, and when we're better able to preserve wetlands and stormwater systems on ELAPP properties. I mean, it can affect people's property insurance rates, for the better. We're selling some carbon credits off of our ELAPP properties. I mean, the list just goes on and on and on, when you start looking at the value of these ELAPP lands. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention passive-use recreation. People like to go hiking on our ELAPP properties, bird watching, photography, you name it.

EH: So you've been involved in ELAPP for a really long time. Can you talk a little bit about any changes you've seen since you've been involved?

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<sup>3</sup> Two Rivers Ranch is a privately owned cattle operation in Thonotosassa, Florida. It covers more than 17,000 acres and is the largest privately owned undeveloped property in Hillsborough County. It provides a habitat for a wide variety of species.

SW: Well, I'd like to say that the changes have been for the better since I've been involved. I've secured funding for the acquisition, I've championed increased funding for the operations, and there are operations involved, because many of Florida's ecosystems are fire dependent. So before the Europeans arrived, that would happen naturally through lightning strikes and things like that. We—because of all the homes and everything in the area, we now control fires, right, so in our conservation lands we have to do prescribed burns where experts go out there and they properly, appropriately set fire to the land, and burn it according to scientifically established protocols. And that—that gets rid of plant material that's dead, it causes it to go away, and then you have sort of this regrowth of new plant material.

Pine trees are dependent on fire, certain flowers that you see in our ecosystems are fire dependent, so when I talk about the operational budget, it's money to pay our team that does the prescribed burns. We have invasive species that we're constantly dealing with, like Brazilian pepper, so sometimes they have to manually remove it, they're digging it out, they're spraying it in some cases to keep it from overtaking the natural ecosystem. So I've been a champion for making sure they have an appropriate operational budget as well.

EH: So you talked about the Two Rivers Ranch. Are there any other current concerns or projects that are really high on the priority list for ELAPP?

SW: There are. So we actually have an ELAPP approve list, and we have properties ranked A, B, C, or D, with A being the highest priority. And as you can well imagine, a lot of those are out in my district, so extensions to existing preserves, ecosystems that we want to preserve like the scrub ecosystem—that's very much an endangered ecosystem in Florida, because scrublands are well drained, they're high and dry, which means they are prime lands for developers. They're ideal to build homes on. So you've probably heard of the scrub jay, that's a bird that functions within that scrub ecosystem. That's an endangered bird, so when we can save scrub habitat, we can help protect critters like the scrub jay.

EH: So to you, why is environmental conservation, or programs like ELAPP, so important?

SW: You know, in Florida, because of our flat terrain, it's relatively easy to develop here, so I'll point to scrub habitat again, or oak hammocks that are dry—all a developer really has to do in that case is acquire the land, plow everything over, and build the houses. So our upland habitats, in my mind, are just doomed. And these are my words, it's not a government designation, but critically endangered in my mind, because they're just in the path of development. The ELAPP program, you know, if we have a willing seller and we're able to acquire those lands, it keeps them out of the path of development, and it allows us to pass that natural legacy on to the next generation.

EH: Why should Hillsborough voters support ELAPP or other programs? Like, what would you tell someone if you were trying to convince them that ELAPP is important?

SW: Well, voters have overwhelmingly supported ELAPP, thank goodness, but you know, I would tell them that it protects important green space for passive-use recreational activities. It protects scenic corridors around their homes, and one of the ancillary benefits that I didn't mention is, if you have this, you know, ELAPP parcel that's thousands of acres and it's not developed, that means that you aren't putting all of those automobile trips on the local roads, so it can help with traffic congestion as well. It can be an important tool.

EH: So you mentioned that ELAPP has been historically really popular with voters. Can you recall any instances of political resistance or resistance from people?

SW: Absolutely. There is definitely a constituency of people that like to say, "How much is enough?" When have you reached that point with the ELAPP program, to where we've preserved enough land and we can turn it off, and I know that supporters of ELAPP like myself like to say, "Well, the real question is how much is left?" Because we're growing at a rapid pace in Hillsborough County, and we are unique in the sense of having our ELAPP program in such a large metropolitan county.

EH: So what do you see as the future of ELAPP?

SW: I see the future of ELAPP as the county acquiring a lot of additional outstanding properties with that 60-plus-million-dollar infusion that I championed. There will come a time when we'll be like a Pinellas County, and we're fully developed. So there will come a time when we are no longer acquiring ELAPP lands, and from there it's just seeing it through and making sure that those operational dollars are there to adequately manage the lands.

EH: And what about environmental conservation in Florida in general? Where do you see that going?

SW: Well, Florida is a very developer-friendly state. I am seeing some glimmers of hope from our new governor. I think he is serious about his environmental agenda, and I hope a conservation agenda as well. But certainly we have opportunities in the state of Florida.

EH: What in your mind is sort of the best strategy for conservation efforts?

SW: Well, I think the best strategy is twofold. I think that fee-simple acquisition like we've traditionally done with our ELAPP program is great, but I think that conservation easements can play a critical role as well. And that's what we're seeking with Two Rivers Ranch. So essentially what a conservation easement amounts to is you may have a family, and this is the case with the Thomas family—so the kids want to continue to be able to ranch on the property and earn a living off the property, and sort of keep those family traditions going.

But with a conservation easement, they sell off all of the development rights. So the property's never able to be divided up and developed, so that's a win-win situation. So you have a family that will continue ranching, they'll continue to manage the property, which can be very expensive on a property of that size. But they've sold off those development rights, and in our case, it will be the county that will have acquired those development rights, and we know that in perpetuity that that property is preserved as green space.

EH: So you actually have a very sort of unique—you're a unique interview for us as being a commissioner and being really on the political side for it. So what do you see as sort of the main concerns from your constituents, in regards to the environment?

SW: Well, again, the overwhelming majority of my constituents are supportive of the program. We're talking about everyday citizens that want that huge swath of land to be able to go to for hiking—we allow horseback riding on some of our ELAPP properties, certainly the sightseeing, bird watching, all those things. But again, there is that constituency that says, "How much is enough? Do we need to continue to acquire these lands?" And I just always very politely tell them that my opinion is yes, we have to keep the program moving along, and keep it alive and well.

SW: Are you or your constituents or anyone concerned with some other environmental issues outside of conservation, like red tide or climate change or anything like that?

EH: Absolutely. All of the above. I don't have a lot of the coastal area in my district. I do touch the coast south of the Little Manatee River, and that's not a real heavily developed area at this point in time. But certainly residents in our coastal areas are concerned about resiliency, which is directly related to sea-level rise, climate change, that kind of thing. You know, certainly air quality, water quality, so yes, my constituents are very much interested in broader environmental issues.

EH: So you touched really briefly on sort of the new government and administration in place, and I would like—from your perspective, what is the political support like for ELAPP or other conservation efforts from the state level?

SW: So the state level definitely likes to see the locals really carry the lion's share of it, and we've done a great job of that in Hillsborough. Candidly, I think that the state could do a better job with respect to conservation. We have a lot of minds up there that just—they subscribe to that “How much is enough?” argument, and they make the argument that we don't need to acquire a lot more land, and maybe they have a point if you're talking about acquiring it fee simple, but I think conservation easements can really be a critical factor, and we do have some leaders in Tallahassee that I know are proponents of the conservation-easement model for land preservation.

EH: And you said you saw a glimmer of hope with this new administration, so are you thinking that you'll get more support statewide?

SW: I do. I absolutely do. Yeah.

EH: What about from the federal level?

SW: I think that the feds have done a pretty good job and I guess this interview would be an appropriate time for me to mention this. I've recently championed a request that the Little Manatee River be designated as a wild and scenic river under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. So I approached Congressman [Vern] Buchanan. The entire river's in his congressional district. He asked me to get support from the Manatee County Commission as well, because the river briefly dips into Manatee County. It's in Hillsborough, for a very short stretch it's in Manatee, and then it's back up in Hillsborough. But I worked that angle really hard, I met face to face with a bunch of the Manatee County commissioners.

I actually got resolutions from both boards, the Hillsborough County Commission and the Manatee County Commission to pass unanimously resolutions requesting that the Little Manatee River be designated as a wild and scenic river, so we've sent all that up to Congressman Buchanan, along with a nice letter. We have our federal lobbyists on top of it, so that's a way that I can personally say that I've interacted with the feds, and it's been positive thus far.

EH: So what happens when a river is designated as a wildlife [sic] and scenic river?

SW: So the short answer is other than creating a comprehensive management plan for the river, the feds don't really do anything in terms of using their regulatory hammer, or their police powers. But when a river is designated as a wild and scenic river, it allows the local governments, like Hillsborough County, through our comprehensive plan to start to do work on things like increasing setbacks along the river corridor to preserve a natural corridor and not have development encroach onto the river, and it does allow us to seek federal funding for conservation lands along the Little Manatee River. And we already have thousands of acres along the Little Manatee River on our ELAPP approved list.

So if it's designated as a wild and scenic river, we can go to the feds and say, "Hey, will you either (a) just acquire these pieces yourselves out of your own budget, or (b) will you partner with us? If we pledge  $x$  number of ELAPP dollars, will you match that to help us acquire these parcels?" So that's a very important piece to the designation.

EH: That's great. So you've spoken a little about bit about this, sort of the "When is enough enough?" mentality, but what to you are the biggest challenges to political support?

SW: The biggest political challenge is—obviously, funding comes to the forefront. But I would say dealing with the development community. They're a special interest group, they have their own interests in mind, and you know, obviously any time we acquire an ELAPP parcel fee simple or we acquire a conservation easement, that's land that's no longer available for development, so it's always a little tug of war with the development community on ELAPP issues, on drumming up political support.

EH: So, what is the plan for when ELAPP does have to be renewed?

SW: Well, so we've just given them this 60-million-plus infusion—and I think the director would agree with me—I think we're good for a minimum of five years in terms of acquisition, maybe as long as 10 years. A lot can change in five to 10 years, especially in such a rapidly growing county, so I think we'll just have to reassess the situation at that time.

EH: Have Hillsborough residents ever contacted you with concerns over ELAPP?

SW: Not all, not at all. So we'll get an occasional call to the office about smoke from a prescribed burn, and nine times out of 10 that's just us just educating the citizen about what's going on, but the county does a good job on the front end of the news outlets and through social media [and] email alerting folks in the area that we're about to do a prescribed burn, so oftentimes they're already up to speed, they know what's going on. But there is that rare occurrence where we'll get the phone call and we'll just let the citizen know what's going on. We do acquire agricultural buffers around some of our ELAPP properties so that development doesn't encroach right onto the border of the ecologically pristine land, so we may get an occasional phone call of an ag buffer that maybe needs to be mowed or plowed, or something like that. But really the calls are few and far between. People are just so supportive of the ELAPP program.

EH: So can you tell me about memorable moments for you, like, good memorable moments in your involvement in ELAPP?

SW: Yeah, so, definitely. The memorable moments would be just recently when I was able to champion that funding infusion. Another memorable moment is taking Robert Thomas out to lunch. We sat down and talked, and I asked him about Two Rivers, and right there on the spot he gave me the good news that the Thomas kids have an interest in preserving the ranch and

preserving that legacy, so that was just overwhelming. I was expecting to make the pitch and him say, “Well, let me think about it,” and maybe I’d hear back in a couple months, maybe not, but just on the spot, he said, “Well, in fact, the kids do want to preserve the ranch, so let’s talk.” So I connected him with ELAPP staff and got that ball rolling. Another memorable moment is—I do these work days, I kind of took that idea—you might be too young to remember Governor Bob Graham.

EH: Oh yeah, not from Florida either.

SW: So he used to go out once in a while and do these work days where he would go out and work the front line in a Florida agency—department under his leadership. So I’ve sort of taken that idea as a commissioner and I go out and do these work days, just like Governor Graham used to do. So one of my work days was to go out and do a prescribed burn with the ELAPP team. I had to have on the proper boots, the proper burn suit, and they literally have these—it’s almost like a gas can that creates the torch, where you go and set fire to the palmettos and everything. I was literally out there with my can, setting the fire. The crew was explaining the science of how they base it all on the winds and they want the fire moving a certain direction. They can even control the speed of the fire. Sometimes you want a slower moving fire, sometimes you want it to move swiftly through the woodlands.

So that was obviously a very memorable experience, being out there on the front line with the team. And it’s hard work, too. You really have to keep safety in mind, and you really have to know what you’re doing. And then I guess the final thing that I can point to, and this is—it’s sort of directed to the ELAPP program, but it’s really about conservation in general. About three years ago, I championed the creation of an award that the County Commission gives once a year, and it’s a conservation award. I actually had it named in honor of President Theodore Roosevelt, for a couple of reasons. One is he has some ties to the Tampa Bay area through his time here with his Rough Riders unit, and he’s also known as “the conservation president.”<sup>4</sup> He did so much on the conservation front. I can show you the plaque on the way out, but I championed the creation of the Theodore Roosevelt conservation award, and we just recently had our—time flies, but we had our third recipient here just a few months ago.<sup>5</sup>

EH: That’s great.

SW: And we’ve certainly had some environmental legends that have—or conservation legends that have been given that award so far. The inaugural winner was Joe Guidry. He was an editorial writer for the *Tampa Tribune*. Through his position on the *Trib*’s editorial board, [he] really pushed a conservation agenda. Second recipient was Ann Paul, with the Audubon Society,

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<sup>4</sup> Theodore Roosevelt and the 1st US Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, known as the Rough Riders, traveled to Tampa and stayed for two weeks before traveling to Cuba to fight in the Spanish–American War.

<sup>5</sup> The full name of the award is the Theodore Roosevelt Hillsborough Forever Conservation Award.

and then we had Dr. Brandt Henningsen. I think I got—I hope I got his last name right, but he was the last winner, the most recent winner. We will be presenting the fourth one before we know it.

JD: And we have oral histories with all of them.

EH: All three of them, yes.

SW: Excellent. Very good. I'm glad that I was able to put that on the record. So you know they're conservation champions and very deserving of the award. But we have a plaque that I'll show you on the way out that memorializes them here at County Center, but then they're given an individual award that they keep in their possession as well.

EH: So I guess to wrap this up, this oral history will be hosted on the USF Library site for students or faculty or other people to listen to it anytime and to access if they have an interest in environmental work in Florida. So I guess—is there anything you really want to leave the listeners with? Maybe if they're interested in getting involved, or if there's just something you really would like them to know—

SW: Yes. With respect to getting involved, local conservation programs are always in need of assistance. Whether that be just through volunteerism, cleanups, and whatever help the staff might need, certainly monetary gifts—I don't know whether or not you had a chance to interview Gus Muench before he passed, but he's generously given to the ELAPP program. In fact, he gave a substantial gift that supports the Theodore Roosevelt conservation award such that each year's winner is given \$2,000 from the fund that Gus created for a project of their choice, at an environmental lands site. So volunteerism, monetary gifts, connecting with not only elected officials but opinion leaders in the environmental conservation movement as well. There are just tremendous opportunities out there.

EH: Thank you so much for sitting down with us.

SW: This was a real pleasure. This was great. Thank you.

*End of interview.*