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TIMOTHY "Tim" RESCH

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INTERVIEW

Q: Good afternoon, this is John Pielemeier. This is our first interview with Tim Resch, who was a natural resource management specialist working for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for much of his career predominantly

in Sub-Saharan Africa. Tim, we're going to start this interview by asking where you were brought up, where you went to school, and what led you into international work?

RESCH: Okay, good. I was born in Rush City, Minnesota. My dad was the fourth of eleven children in a farming family. In marriage, mom was a housekeeper and dad was a carpenter. So, from my perspective, a simple rural background. We moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota when I was in about the third grade, which was crucial in getting a career started. If we would have stayed in Rush City, Minnesota, a town of about 800, I probably would not have gone to college. Most of my about sixty-five cousins did not go to college but because of going to the big city, with larger schools with a diverse student body, language classes, swimming pools and academic and sport options, it got me on another track.

Another determining factor was scouting, which probably led me into forestry and environmental activities. As a boy scout, I tested leadership positions, supported a cub scout pack, was elected to the Order of the Arrow, made it to Life status, which is one step below Eagle because I had difficulty swimming, and continued volunteering into my college years. I eventually earned the Red Cross lifesaving certification and was a camp counselor during my college summers in Minnesota and Massachusetts.

Q: This was all in Minneapolis?

RESCH: Yes. I went to the University of Minnesota, St. Paul Campus, College of Forestry.

Q: So, this was your high school. I thought Minneapolis was such a big city, it would not have boy scouts.

RESCH: Yeah, this was in Minneapolis. Boy Scouts were active in rural and urban areas. While in college, I was an assistant scoutmaster with my former troop. Later on in my career, when I was in South Dakota State Forestry, I started a conservation explorer post. We took canoe trips to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, installed wood duck nest houses, went winter camping and hosted lectures and demonstrations. So scouting, through parts of my early life, was important and it did direct me into forestry.

Another formative factor was being in college in the late 1960s. I graduated from high school in 1966, attended the University of Minnesota and graduated in 1970. During the late ‘60s, it was a time of change in the United States, which started out with women's liberation, women's rights, bra burning, and then segued into Vietnam war protests. I had some level of leadership roles in those times. which meant my grades were B's rather than A's. I was also active in our forestry club and outdoor activities club (skiing, camping, canoeing, hiking) on campus.

Another important aspect of the formation was the Peace Corps’ New Directions. In 1968, we had the election of Nixon and his subsequent decision to eliminate and/or change the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps was over 15,000 members in the middle ‘60s and shrank to 5,000 or so in 1969 or 1970. Part of the New Directions was the professionalization of the Peace Corps so there were programs where countries were

matched up with universities. Morocco was identified as the focus country with the St Paul farm campus of the University of Minnesota.

Q: Okay, that change was already there as you were graduating?

RESCH: Yeah, it was. We were the first group of Minnesotans bound for Morocco. I think it was three years that the program was going until we had the 1972 elections. What was perceived lacking with the Peace Corps before Nixon was that the volunteers were often generalists trying to do technical jobs. The new direction was an effort to bring more skilled volunteers into the job. Conditions, which surprised Peace Corps volunteers in the subsequent decades, were that we had non-matrixed spouses. You were allowed to bring your spouse, mostly wives, without a programmed job, because the technical skills were so valuable. You were also allowed to have children because Peace Corps wanted mid-career people.

We had twelve plus four weeks of training up from the traditional eight weeks, mostly language training, prior to the New Directions contraction. In the case of the Minnesota program, the recruitment was in the fall quarter. In the winter quarter, we had Moroccan forestry training and Morocco familiarization training for a three-credit class of the 30–40 Morocco omnibus of agriculturalists and foresters. Ten foresters from my class of a hundred went to Morocco. We had ag (agriculture) engineers and veterinarians going. Then in the spring quarter, we had a three-credit class in French. So as part of my college degree, I actually got six credits preparatory training going into the Peace Corps program.

I guess another thing that would surprise Peace Corps volunteers over the decades is that I was issued a Willys Jeep, first a CJ-5, and then a CJ-7 to get back and forth to the research arboretum I was working at and—

Q: An acronym, what's a CJ-7?

RESCH: Civilian Jeep, a model of jeep. The CJ-5 was the original, almost military form. It's like the hummer moving up to a street thing. So, the CJ-7 was a larger version.

Q: When did you know that you wanted to go into the Peace Corps?

RESCH: Not until the parameters changed. It was the job prospect. So not until I was in my senior year and the Peace Corps was saying there's jobs for foresters or veterinarians or ag engineers or specialists. That was enticing. The traditional/historical volunteer experience wasn't terribly attractive to me.

Q: Back to school in Minnesota, you realized at some point that the Peace Corps was an option. Were there other options you were looking at? Aside from Vietnam?

RESCH: Yeah. For forestry graduates, first of all, there's land management. You can either work for the federal, state and county governments or you can work for private industry. That kind of matches how forest land in the United States is divided with most of the federal land out west. So, your choices were what class of institution you want to work with. At the time, the federal recruitment was limited so there were

fewer jobs. When we started in 1966, there were like three jobs for every forester but when I finished there were like three foresters for every job. When I was told that statistic, in preparation to find the job, curiously, my reflection was that a year from now, only one of you in three will be a forester or practicing forestry. I wondered what the others were going to be doing—I was going to be a forester.

Going to Morocco was a way to practice forestry in an exotic situation. There was nothing you know—like my father wasn't a missionary in Congo, or anything like that, there was nothing in my background that predisposed me to international work. I'd done a little bit of traveling across the United States up to that point in my life but what was really the compelling first goal of the Peace Corps, which is to help out, fill a job and do something technical versus being a t-shirted ambassador for the United States in the country of service; or the underrated third goal which is "bring the world back home".

Q: Did you have any course or any professors that pushed you in that direction?

RESCH: As part of connecting Morocco and the university, a couple of the professors had gone to Morocco to help on the programming activities and so there was that component. Then they actually brought a former Peace Corps surveyor to the International Agricultural Office of the Institute of Agriculture, Phil Morrow, who was a dedicated recruiter who got the 30 to 40 Morocco omnibus volunteers. There was a lot of firsthand information about what Morocco is and even as part of the New Directions formation to help us make an informed choice if we really want to participate. The Peace Corps, like any international organization, knows that if the guy gets off the plane in his destination country and he says, "Oh my goodness, I don't want any of this", and they get back on the plane—there's a significant sunk cost on that so they tried to give us as much information as possible for an informed choice.

After graduation, we were in training. Our first eight weeks of training was in Morrison, Colorado just outside of Denver. Trainers were Moroccan graduate students studying in the US. In that training program, de-selection was a rigorous cloud over the process as Peace Corps staff were anxious that the program and volunteers would be successful. People would disappear in the middle of the night; you wake up in the morning and the bunk was empty as they had been deselected and slunk out of town to the chagrin of those of us that were enduring.

The Peace Corps' New Directions epoch was different from other variations over time. The subsequent Action Corps director, Sam Brown, did bring it back to the second goal and paid attention to make the Peace Corps more culturally sensitive. My group had lived in the capital cities and worked for the national institutions, so we tended to pal around with the expatriate community. Our bosses were frequently young French men working in Morocco in lieu of military service. Our French as a group at the end of our service was generally better than our Moroccan dialectical Arabic.

Q: Oh, really?

RESCH: Well, however, I was posted to manage the Izarene Research Arboretum in a smaller town, Ouezzane, with a strong religious history and, therefore, bypassed by

French Protectorate institutions. I received strong enthusiasm when I spoke Arabic and so my Moroccan dialectical Arabic got much better than many of my compatriots serving in larger cities.

Q: Oh good, where is this town in Morocco?

RESCH: Ouezzane is in the foothills of the Rif Mountains. The Rif Mountains range across the top of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia aligned with the Mediterranean Sea. In addition, there's a chain of three mountain ranges called the Atlas Mountains for which there's the Middle Atlas, the High Atlas, and the Anti-Atlas, all of which separate agricultural Morocco from dry Morocco or Saharan desert pavements or sand dune Morocco.

Another New Directions aspect was we were encouraged to take local language tutors. I had an Arabic tutor because I had about a dozen workers with limited French helping me in the research arboretum, the focus of which was doing species and provenance elimination trials. Side note for the non-foresters, there's genus like oaks and then there's species like red oak and swamp white oak. Then beyond that, there's provenance and that provenance might be the northern limit or the southern limit of the range of a tree species. We were testing trees, both conifers and eucalypts to see what exotic trees from where were going to grow in the cork and green oak forests of the area. Technical enthusiasm during that epoch was the introduction of exotics rather than appreciation of what endemics and native species. The cork oak industry was declining as substitutes, including plastics, were being identified. Cork oak was an important part of the Riffian forest ecosystem, so Morocco was converting its forests to productive exotic species such as pines, eucalyptus and acacias.

Q: Was this all government or was it the private sector as well?

RESCH: Well, it was all government institution on government lands. We didn't get enthusiastic in USAID for another decade or so for forest industry support and private voluntary organizations—NGOs. It was something in the late '80s, I had a role in that. We'll get into this in a little bit but—in my first years, I worked with the USDA Forest Service International Programs Office with USAID financial support as a program coordinator for Africa and then the second five years as food aid and voluntary assistance coordinator. The position helped to provide support to NGOs working in forestry activities. It was also partly linked—this is the same time that the wild lands and human needs program that got started with CARE [Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere] and World Wildlife Fund.

Q: Well, let's not jump ahead too far.

RESCH: Okay yeah but the point is that you asked about industry and NGOs. The U.S. tactical approach in the early 1980s was with government institutions—creating more mini-forest services and plant forests for the good of the people.

Q: So did the Peace Corps keep bringing in other groups of forestry volunteers?

RESCH: Morocco was preceded in forestry volunteers through programs in Chile and Peru. Early leaders in USAID's forestry program had their origins in Peace Corps

service. They included David Joslyn, Tom Catterson, David Harcharik, and Carl Gallegos all with Spanish as an acquired second language. Morocco followed in first producing a cadre of French-speaking American foresters. In addition to myself, compatriots continuing international work included Roy Hagen, Steve Dennison, Leroy Duval and John Paulas.

Morocco volunteers, when USAID or Peace Corps started looking around for who could do the job, were the ones that had the French language capability. After coming out the Sahelian drought, the poor man's energy crisis, and "Hey, amigo don't cut that tree", then we started producing foresters in much of the Sahel - Upper Volta, which became Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad were factories of French speaking Peace Corps volunteers that were the next generation for USAID and the NGO community right behind me. I'll point out on that aspect that Fred Weber, of course, a French forest engineer living in Idaho, was a major designer of the Peace Corps Sahelian programs.

Q: What was your second Peace Corps assignment?

RESCH: Ouezzane was my initial posting for my first two and a half years after which I welcomed a successor Peace Corps volunteer, Leroy Duval and continued into another assignment.

Because of that six-month extension of the normal Peace Corps term of service, I went to my French supervisor and asked, "Do you have a job that needs to be done for another six months, and then I'll qualify for a one-month home leave before I re-up for the rest of the year." He said, "Well, I don't have anything that you can do for six months, but I got something that's taking more time than that, like a year or year and a half", and that was building a national wildland weather station network.

I moved to the capital, Rabat, and continued my work with the national forestry research station. They were interested in installing rain gauges and some meteorological stations at forestry posts across forested Morocco. The forestry posts were one of the few places where there were literate government employees on site who could record rainfall and snowfall amounts.

In 1972, Morocco, the size of California, had about a dozen rain gauges in the capital and other major cities, which were mostly on the coast. There was a very poor knowledge of the rainfall patterns in the country. We designed a pluviometer, a Moroccan rain gauge, based on a German model, and went into production. I then traveled the country with a "agent technique" (technical agent) and a driver installing two or three rain gauges per day across the country. I got a chance to travel through much of the Rif and the forested areas of Morocco including the Middle Atlas and the High Atlas. It was a great job for a year's time which gave me a pretty good foundation in French and an even better qualification in Moroccan dialectical Arabic.

Q: Wow, good for you. So, any other things you were doing, taking any vacations or doing anything to broaden your experience in North Africa?

RESCH: No, other than traveling in Morocco. As part of the New Directions, we were allowed to rent cars. In other Peace Corps countries, sometimes they got motorcycles,

but oftentimes they weren't even allowed to drive a car, let alone rent a car. In other Peace Corps countries, they were just allowed to be on bicycles, which would really keep them homebound. So, I traveled over much of Morocco.

Q: And the University of Minnesota was still doing this?

RESCH: It evolved as a partnership, Minnesota faculty were going to Morocco, first to support the volunteers, check out how we're doing and keep the recruitment going. Moroccan foresters were also looking to do their masters, and, in some cases, PhDs. There was a consortium of midwestern universities as well as other university consortiums. Minnesota was the Morocco coordinator for the consortium, would host some students but also negotiate hosting with other schools. They were the facilitators so the relationship continued, matured and expanded to the rest of the agricultural field. One Moroccan would find a pleasant enough experience in Minnesota. Then when he—politically to say he or she—but it's mostly males at that time, when they went back to Morocco they told their colleagues that Minnesota was a good place to go to school. Sometimes if the head of an institution goes to some university, that relationship continues where the connections are in place. That initial Peace Corps marriage spawned the subsequent University of Minnesota-Morocco connection.

Q: Was that USAID funded?

RESCH: No, it was Peace Corps funded. It was part of the Peace Corps New Directions program. It spawned relationships, university strengthening activities, and the Morocco agricultural project which Minnesota was the lead organization and such. Yes, your point is good, it was a Peace Corps initiative. Then it continued to build that friendship or that experience continued to build with the University of Minnesota eventually implementing an agricultural project in Morocco under USAID support.

Q: You had a long stay there; did you ever get your home leave?

RESCH: Yes, I did. I went for a month around Christmas 1972. I had been active in an outdoor club at the University of Minnesota. I went on a ski trip which was a good ski trip because I had been in Morocco for two and a half years. I had lots of exotic stories to tell so it was ego boosting to be on something like a military home, but a nice home leave for somebody who is doing something interesting, exotic and such. Then I went back to Morocco for about another fifteen months.

Q: At the end of that period, what were your options, what were you considering?

RESCH: Well done, good leading question. I became convinced that I did have certain cross-cultural skills. I was comfortable in those environments. I decided that I needed a master's degree and was interested in forestry in arid and semi-arid zones. Dr. Charles Barney at Colorado State University had written a book on *Forest Tree Planting in Arid Zones* and so I was interested in studying under him and doing a master's in Colorado.

The competition was Dr. Henry Kernan who was teaching a world forestry course at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York. When I came back from Morocco, I stopped at Syracuse in March—it was just black snow and ugly spring and so

Colorado was a place to go skiing. Then it turned out that Dr. Kernan, when I said that I would like to study under him, said, “Well, that's good, you’d be welcomed to come here but I'm leaving to go to teach at the forestry school in Morocco”. That made my choice so I went that fall to Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Summer 1974, I spent a little bit of time back at the University of Minnesota. The USDA Forest Service North Central Forest Experiment Station happened to be based at the university, and I worked there for seven months before I started a program at Colorado State University.
Dr. Charles Barney was my major professor. I looked at container-grown tree seedlings. In much of the developing world, trees are started in thirty-centimeter polyethylene sacks filled with soil, seedlings are grown and subsequently transplanted. Here in the United States at that time, we were also entertaining various kinds of container grown, test tube, tree planting ways. I did a literature review of containerized tree seedlings. When I finished the program in 1978, USAID forestry had not yet struck fire.

I was recruited to work as the forest management specialist for the state of South Dakota. In South Dakota, we would make jokes about Nebraska state forestry, and we'd ask whose turn it is to water the tree. In South Dakota, we did have the Black Hills which is a sixty by 120 mile island of ponderosa pine trees. We provided technical assistance in shelterbelt and windbreak management. In addition, Dutch elm disease was raging across the United States. Dutch elm disease was interesting. In South Dakota, we had these mini city forests that were geographically isolated from other city forests. So if you control the Dutch elm disease and cut the trees out before the beetles could emerge and transmit the fungus to new trees, you could preserve your own population. And so, it was a dead wood control program for Dutch elm disease. That job lasted for five years until 1981 when USAID forestry programs were just getting started.

Q: So how did you enter USAID then?

RESCH: So, in 1981, I was recruited to the forest service international programs to work as their forest management specialist and that was because USAID had discovered or rediscovered forestry as an intervention. It was a tree planting intervention related to growing trees for fuel wood in a projection that there was going to be a fuel wood crisis as the developing world used up their wood to cook their food and heat their homes—

Q: You said you were recruited; you did not look for this job?

RESCH: No, as the Sahelian drought was devastating the livestock industry and massive starvation, and world attention linked with the Arab oil boycotts, the rising long gas lines and the rise of attention to the poor man's energy crisis were stimuli for USAID getting into forestry programs. Dan Deeley, who was a forester by training, created the forest resources management project with two implementers - the Forest Service International Programs and Peace Corps. So that was part of the burst of hiring people to manage forestry activities in the Sahel.

Q: Dan Deeley worked for USAID?

RESCH: Yeah, he was in their central program that was like miscellaneous agricultural projects, somehow it included forestry that was his bias. Dan was a very creative and effective USAID program manager. I mentioned earlier that the next crop of French speaking foresters was a result of a Peace Corps creating forestry programs. To start that program, there was a call for French speaking foresters to be consultants, program designers and managers for the Peace Corps. I was in that group—there must have been about fifteen of us at a three-day joint workshop where we were allowed to play games and do things that would help the Peace Corps decide that we were an appropriate candidate to be a programming consultant.

I misread that process and so with a little bit of too much self-confidence bridging on arrogance, my approach of this role playing was to tell the acting host country nationals what to do. The successful Peace Corps consultants were the touchy-feely guys who said, "Well, what do you think we should do? How about doing this?", and so I got a thanks but no thanks after that group interview.

About three months later, I got a call from Sam Kunkle who has been recruited out of the Food and Agriculture Organization to build the USDA Forest Service Forestry Support Program (FSP). Both Sam and Dan Deeley had visited the Peace Corps group workshop. Sam called me up and said, "We're recruiting for a job in Washington DC—it's the program coordinator for Africa for the forestry support program". And I said, "Well, sounds interesting". I'd been five years in South Dakota at the time. My wife was pregnant. I said, "Well, that's nice. You want to send me the job description and do you want to do an interview on the phone, or do you want me to come to Washington DC?". Sam said, "Well, you don't understand. I'm offering you the job". I said, "Well, then maybe you should send me the job description and I'll get back to you next week". So, of course, I had already decided that that was a great job but I wasn't going to sell out that quickly. So, I said "Send me the job description and I'll talk about it with my wife, and we'll get back to you next week".

So, I joined the Forestry Support Program in August 1981. Sam was the leader. David Harcharik was the Latin America coordinator, who had also worked with FAO in Rome with Sam. Dave was quite successful in his career. He next went on to the head of the Forestry Support Program and the was head of the USDA Forest Service International Forestry program, then went back to FAO and was head of the forestry department at FAO. Les Whitmore, we've done a lot of work in Brazil, was the Asia coordinator. So it was us—a team of four. Also funded were three—Asia, Latin America, and Africa coordinators. Jim Seyler was recruited as the Africa coordinator, Kathleen McNamara, a daughter of McNamara of the World Bank, was the Asia coordinator, and Henry Tschinkel was the Latin America Coordinator. And so that was the burst of forestry activities.

Parallel to that, along with the Peace Corps programming, USAID started recruiting environment natural resources people. George Taylor was recruited as the Sahel regional natural resources advisor. That was his first job in USAID. Then Kevin Mullaly, Wes Fisher and Frances Gulick were recruited in the Africa Bureau as backstops—Kevin on forestry, Wes on energy and Frances on evaluation and design.

Q: I was in the Africa Bureau from '73 to '77. I was the only French speaking project design officer in the Africa Bureau. Of course, I worked almost solely on the Sahel. Bob Winterbottom was there if I remember too.

RESCH: Yeah, Bob came out of Burkina as a Peace Corps volunteer.

Q: Really? The greening of the Sahel was one of the theories—one of the big focuses there. So you took this job and you moved to Washington. You found a place to live somewhere, your wife had a baby, and then you went off traveling and left her with the baby?

RESCH: Yeah, I did. I'll go offline on that one. One of early actions was to work with George Taylor. The early activities, and maybe you had designed those, were remote sensing mapping projects in Mali, Niger, and Senegal. It was great to happen, you know, continuing for the next three to four decades. So, my recollection of the portfolio we inherited that we started with, was maybe like a project of thirty million dollars which was a lot of money at that time. On remote sensing mapping model was a Mali Projet Inventaire des Ressources Terrestres (PIRT). Remember that, John? Somalia Forestry and Natural Resources Sector Assessment

Q: Yes

RESCH: So one of the first things that George did was that he organized a workshop with me on remote sensing in the Sahel in the early two or three years into that activity. We hired a lead organizer whose name is almost on the edge of my memory. I've been trying to think of all these things—[___] the fifty-year-old memory. So that was an early activity. I also went to Somalia. Another aspect of Africa at the time was refugees and so there were refugee projects in Somalia and subsequently in Rwanda and Mozambique and other places, which is a theme of another group of Peace Corps volunteers doing refugee assistance temporary activities.

Q: The remote sensing activity was expanded literally across the world. I was trying to remember the name of it. It was a very common name and people always talked about it. [See https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Xdaam204a.pdf]

RESCH: The U.S. had their Landsat satellites up. They were providing support to try to expand the use of Landsat high altitude remote sensing which had some real serious limitations technologically but was part of the regional remote sensing facility in Burkina. It was a result of that activity.

Q: I think I misspoke. I really was thinking about an early warning system.

RESCH: Oh, right FEWS—Famine Early Warning System.

Q: Yes

RESCH: So that was a post-Sahelian drought thing believing that we should never again be blindsided by emerging famine. There were actually indicators of people selling their cattle at low depressed prices, and how bad things were getting. There were technological, as well as sociological indicators of whether or not we should

start mobilizing so that people don't starve to death—which is a good thing that we mobilized.

Q: So, you moved into this job and was there anybody else working with you at USDA [United States Department of Agriculture]? Where were you physically located?

RESCH: Physically, where were we at that time?

RESCH: Well, I think it was at the Forest Service offices in what is known as the auditor's building, across from the Washington Monument. I think we were initially in that building, and that remains the Forest Service main office here in the Washington DC area. I traveled around sub-Saharan Africa designing and then evaluating USAID forestry interventions.

Q: What was the structure of the relationship between USDA and USAID in the agriculture and forestry area? Is this what we call a RSSA and what was that?

RESCH: There's the RSSA [Resources Services Support Agreement] and PASA [Participating Agency Services Agreement]. I think the PASA is product-designed and is a two-year to a five-year agreement whereas the RSSA is more open ended and it's collegial over a period of time where we will work together to do things as appropriate, so the process was somewhat more flexible. George Mahaffey, the point of contact at Peace Corps for their environment and natural resources programs, was on a PASA that was renewed many times. He had a nice long career at the Peace Corps because he was a national park service PASA to the Peace Corps. He was not subject to the Peace Corps five-year rule and, therefore, became an important institutional memory.

Q: So you and your group would be seen as part of a particular regional bureau (AFR) or the whole of USAID? How does that work?

RESCH: Yeah, the Forestry Support Program (FSP) was trying to support activities across USAID. I, as the program coordinator for Africa within the U.S. forest service international programs, was trying to link up U.S. forest service expertise with USAID forestry needs. When USAID needed natural resources environmental specialists, then the Forest Service could frequently provide, perhaps not with the right language skills, but it could provide experts—federal agency to federal agency counterparts. USAID, of course, has those kinds of relationships with a lot of federal agencies -health and human services, census, agriculture and such. Federal agencies borrowing from each other was an important part of government operations at the time.

My counterparts that were hired; Kevin Mullaly, Dennis Panther, Wes Fisher and Frances Gulick were my counterparts within the Bureau for Africa. I was part of the cable traffic system and, part of the time, I would have offices or a desk at USAID. My salary was from USAID to the USDA Forest service and they paid my salary. Other people were mostly personal services contractors, rather than USAID direct hires. A career reflection when Kevin Mullaly decided that he was going to pursue a USAID direct hire position and leave his Personal Service Contract [PSC] forestry position. He went on to be mission director in a couple of countries. And he was

really a great guy and he chose to become a science-based generalist or science-formed generalist. Maybe you did too, John.

Q: Not on those programs.

RESCH: And I was a little bit more tied to the forestry field, so I wanted to continue practicing forestry. That was the path I took. In the course of one's forty to fifty year career, you know that you're probably going to work for a dozen different assignments. Sometimes it's all with the same institution and sometimes it's bouncing from institution to institution doing similar jobs. I was never a USAID direct hire and was either a RSSA or a PASA. Later, I was a university RSSA employee and so I spent basically ten years—this is kind of a summary—ten years in the forest service international programs and then another ten as a USDA Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) RSSA. I moved into the Africa Bureau, and I walked like, talked like, and smelled like a USAID officer except that I didn't rotate. I was able to stay in my technical field. The USAID money went to USDA to the Foreign Agriculture Service, and they paid my salary for ten years.

When there was a consolidation of moving technical staff out of the regional bureaus and into a central bureau, I converted to a USDA University RSSA and went to the Asia Near East Bureau [Bureau of Near East and Asian Affairs] under John Wilson, ran the East Asia and Pacific Environmental Initiative (EAPEI) and did that for a little over five years. Then I went back to the Africa bureau when they stepped up technical teams, and again with Foreign Agriculture Service but this time with the University of Missouri. So, all my career after the South Dakota time, from 1981 onward until I fully retired in 2017, all my income was from USAID. I guess I worked for USAID, but I never worked in USAID. I think there are other people who can make that similar claim based on how many people are in USAID who are salaried through some other funding mechanism. We always joked that, you know, there could be twenty people in the room and there might be three direct hires, and everybody else was under another affiliation, and paid for by projects or agreements.

Q: Well, that's a very good summary. Let's walk back a bit and walk through some of these steps here. First was the Africa bureau, what were the kinds of programs you were working on, and then over time, how did those priorities change?

RESCH: We'll do it by decades. I later reflected that in the USAID natural resources management spotlight, we'd go to different parts of Africa. For an initial period of time, we were focused in the Sahel and then we would start programs in Southern Africa based on elephants or refugees. Then another period, we would be in the Congo Basin, at first it was a focus to save the tropical forests a, which was an excellent campaign. We created a U.S. consensus to invest money on something that very few Americans would ever touch, such as tropical forests. There were movements to ban the import—don't buy tropical woods.

Q: I'm learning with all three of those.

RESCH: I know, that's why this is such a good interview. That spotlight shifted over time, and so for a while there were Sahel, East Africa, and Southern Africa programs as a geographic focus. In some cases, technically it went from forestry to agroforestry,

to biodiversity, and to soil and water conservation. The optic for the intervention changed. So, with that context, let me answer and go back to the question about how the Sahel program evolved.

Q: Right.

RESCH: Like we mentioned at first, what I perceive to be a strong remote sensing emphasis. If USAID provided the maps and resources then African governments could respond to deforestation and desertification challenges. The focus was on creating government foresters who would prohibit and keep people from abusing, cutting trees—the forest guardians and that we would do government tree plantations. Solution was irrigated exotic tree fuelwood plantations. The World Bank fell into that trap a little bit more than we did but the initial focus was remote sensing and strengthening national forestry services, providing goods and services for the populations under a contract.

Part of the discovery was that if the new plantations prohibited goats or sheep where they had previously grazed, there was incentive for plantation failure. There was then more work for people to replant the forest a second and third time. Fire and drought also led to plantation failure. It was sometimes not clear to locals who would benefit if the plantation succeeded.

During those five years, we learned some lessons. George Taylor commissioned a collection of essays for *Rural Africana* about 1985. I wrote with Peter Freeman, who had been working with his wife Carol Ulinski in Senegal as a programmer, an essay on fast growing fuelwood plantations and I'd characterize that as the nail in the coffin of government-owned fast growing fuelwood plantations.

Q: Oh, my—nail in the coffin because it wasn't working?

RESCH: It wasn't working, yeah, and that's how we evolved. It was a watershed publication. One can think of a number of documents that led to that kind of shift—this approach is not working, let's try a different approach. Two of the lessons that came out of the Sahel experience; one was agroforestry, and the other was ‘useless brush’. Fred Weber wrote a nice piece and I think it was published by the World Resources Institute compared fuelwood plantations were fenced in order to protect them with fenced native forest. What we discovered is that if you just fence the forest, it will also regenerate.

The other side of that was on the agroforestry side. Nurseries were first producing fuelwood trees, and they also started producing shelterbelt and living fence trees. What started out as eucalyptus nurseries evolved into being fruit and fencing trees, neem plantation or neem seedlings, and a broadening of encouraging people to plant trees in addition to eucalyptus. The discovery was that when eucalyptus matured, they were more valuable pole wood versus fuelwood. There were higher uses for eucalyptus for pole wood and construction material. The fuelwood intention was we're going to eucalyptus because it was fast growing. It may need a lot of water, and it does kill the younger, or shade out the under-growth. People aren't using it for fuel wood—it's got a higher value as polewood. There was a discussion of why nurseries

were good. Many Peace Corps volunteers were active in getting those nurseries growing.

Q: Was acacia part of it?

RESCH: Yeah. Well, the species *Acacia albida* and, today, renamed *Faidherbia albida* known for the reverse foliation:

Q: Why was that valuable?

RESCH: Oh, because it was anti-seasonal. The tree would defoliate opposite other trees, provide important soil enrichment but no shading at the growing periods. So, "useless brush" is an understanding of the value of native species and managing the natural forest and, secondly, the rise of agroforestry in the Sahel. Agroforestry becomes important elsewhere in Africa and in the world. ICRAF (International Center for Research in Agroforestry) origin is about 1978. Carl Gallegos was an important USAID representative to that effort.

Q: Where was the ICRAF?

RESCH: It started in Nairobi, Kenya. The International Center for Research in Agroforestry was a new CGIAR (Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research) center which has its origins in Norman Borlaug, and the maize and rice revolution. So, agroforestry became important enough that it rose as a discipline with USAID and led to the creation of a new CGIAR center for agroforestry.

Q: Can you give an opinion on this, if you look back on the Sahel now, what was the long-term success in these programs?

RESCH: Bob Winterbottom and others will make strong arguments with some fairly strong evidence on the value of protection of the natural forest, the changing and evolving role of the forestry services from guardians of the forest to advisors of the forest and recognizing the utility of shifting forestry agents from guardians to extension agents. Decriminalizing the cutting of trees was an important motivator. If the farmer can't use the tree or can't cut the tree, there's not that much incentive to plant or manage the tree. We can show that forest cover across Sahel and even into Sudan and Ethiopia, has increased over time with some dramatic deforestation in 1972 to current day tree cover.

An important Sahelian lesson was learned in the greening of Africa. It started out as a massive wind break and plantation activity and broadened in scope to more attention to managing the landscape rather than the tree planting site. USAID contributed to an understanding of what was working and what wasn't working.

Another result of the Sahelian forestry experience is the Peace Corps volunteers working in forestry creating a cadre of Africa-experienced environmentalists who permeated throughout USAID and the State Department. I think, without any hard statistics, that the natural resources community at USAID today has strong roots in the Sahelian experience. As the program evolved in the 2000s, to include biodiversity conservation. Illustratively, the CARPE (Central Africa Regional Program for the

Environment) starts out as a tropical forest focus, and then we start paying attention to what we call the "empty forest"—and so that there was forest without animals because they were all being poached - pushed a better understanding of role Central Africa for biodiversity conservation and even later climate change mitigation.

Then a further diversification of the second largest tropical forest in the world—the greenhouse factory, the rain factory attention towards climate change. The communities for biodiversity and climate change are more diverse in their origins. I think the 2000s footprint would have a lot of the community having Sahelian and Peace Corps experience.

Q: We've been going on for an hour and a half. Shall we take a break?

Okay, we're going to continue our discussion with Tim Resch. We were talking about his time in USAID's Bureau for Africa. Tim, you mentioned a request from the Congress to provide information on the number of trees planted. How did that work out?

RESCH: Well, it was interesting. Circa about 1985, the Congress asked, in response to the post-Sahelian drought activities or oversight, "Well, just how many trees is USAID planting?". When we looked at our portfolio, we found we were not directly planting many trees, and it was not one of the indicators we were measuring. The answer is not many. USAID felt that that was probably an inadequate response. We had to explain what we were doing was building capacity to plant and protect trees, particularly by national forestry services in the Sahel.

When we looked around, however, we realized that many trees were planted via our PL480 programs, especially in our contributions for food-for-work activities. Large implementers on the U.S. side were CARE [CARE International] and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) which had active food for work programs where participants would get half of their salary in local currency and half of their salary in U.S. agricultural commodities. Wheat, flour, and cooking oil were important commodities.

Secondly, a lesser-known program, but probably more substantial in size was Title I, where the U.S. agricultural commodities were sold in the in-country open market. The revenue generated was then used to serve various purposes by CARE, Catholic Relief Services, and a couple of other NGOs. Then also significantly, it was the U.S. contribution of commodities to the United Nations World Food Program.

The World Food Program with U.S. commodities was planting a lot of trees and so we calculated those numbers. We had numbers for what was reported planted, and then the other number that we had was the survival rates for those tree plantings where in some cases nursery produces many trees, then how many are living three and five years.

We created a new position in the Forestry Support Program called the food aid and voluntary assistance coordinator to address two things. One, a better understanding of how we could increase the survival rates of PL 480 food aid initiatives in forestry. And the other was a growing skepticism on the part of programmers, USAID administrators and technical people as to whether working with national forest

services was the only way to implement our programs rather than work with the non-governmental community particularly the conservation community that resulted from efforts to increase the support to non-governmental organizations. One of the important keystone actions was the creation of the Wildlands and Human Needs program, which was a partnership between CARE and the World Wildlife Fund.

Mike [Michael] Wright of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and John Michael Kramer of CARE were instrumental in building a relationship where the CARE organization cared more about the environment. At one point, the greatest number of people working for CARE in their various programs, both refugee-related as well as conservation programs, were natural resource management people. Mike [Michael] Wright and others would also claim that that initiative was important in helping WWF and other conservation organizations understand that the impact of conservation policies on people was important and the local people were the stewards or the custodians of the natural resources. Prior to that revelation, the optic was more of a national park service 'lock it up, keep them out' aspect of how we protect biodiversity. We created these national parks and we created strong borders and expelled people from those lands.

I stepped into that role, which was perhaps an interesting career choice and as I had been in the job for about five years. LeRoy Duvall, another Morocco returned Peace Corps volunteer, became my successor. I moved into this position, but it was graded at the same grade salary level so it was not a promotion for me. Accepting that transfer into this new position meant that it probably would take me a couple years to succeed. I was going to step off the career ladder to take a lateral position in a new area which was exciting enough to me—enough to cause me a little bit of reflection. Others were, "Why are you taking a lateral?" and my response was, "Because I want to, and I can, and I am".

The subsequent five years in the Forest Service International Program had an impact on the tactics of both the conservation community and the development community to each pay a little bit more to conservation and development. How I characterized it was, "Are we protecting the environment by helping people?" or "Are we helping people by protecting the environment?". My rhetoric was shaped depending on who the audience was, but in both cases, a growing understanding of the linkages between those two.

That also meant that we attempted to get Peace Corps volunteers to work with food-for-work activities, did studies and held a couple of workshops. Bruce Burwell led the program for Peace Corps. We did a couple of different workshops on food aid and improving the developmental impact of food aid-assisted forestry projects. Then working with the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the Jane Goodall Institute. Working with people was an evolution but that was part of the sparkplug of lobbying by the NGO community to say, "We're doing this and we're doing it in a more effective way in the development community", and USAID understanding that. I had a role in working in those early stages.

Q: I remember you being involved as a major accelerator for community based natural resource management (CBNRM) programs in Southern Africa based on a model, I guess from Zimbabwe. Is that right?

RESCH: Right, yeah. It was called the Southern Africa Regional Program for the Environment (SARPE) that started first in the Zimbabwe CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources) program which USAID decided that that was a useful thing to do. The nature of the regional program was that Zimbabwe became the caretaker for spreading the campfire mission to the rest of southern Africa. SARPE extended CAMPFIRE program aspects and variations of that to Namibia, Botswana, and Zambia with little tweaks that were geographically appropriate. The major success of which in my mind was the Namibia program which in contrast to the Zimbabwe program, which remained governmental both at the federal and local level, while Namibia devolved wildlife management authority to communities.

An aspect of the CAMPFIRE program is the benefits associated with local participation and wildlife management, part of which was elephant hunting. That became a dirty little secret for which other people had opinions on whether Southern Africa elephant populations can be managed compared to East Africa elephant populations. East Africa elephants being threatened by corruption and poaching and an asset for wildlife viewing.

The relatively thriving elephant populations in Southern Africa and substantial private land ownership in game conservancies prompted CBNRM concept migration to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, which made progress in anti-poaching law enforcement. Then subsequently, the conservancies movement spread up to East Africa, but the point of the conservancies is a pastiche of a federal, communal and individual lands where politically appropriate formula communities could benefit in whole and part from wildlife tourism. East Africa tourism in Tanzania went from photo tourism to sport hunting, a component of which was elephant hunting, big bucks for elephants and smaller bucks for other species.

Namibia emerged from its independence movement from Southern Africa and its newly created country of Namibia that was formerly Southwest Africa. As such, the Namibian constitution provided a better foundation for local participation and the benefits as well which then were able to scale up in Namibia to game ranches. So, Namibia, among others, were able to establish a thriving game animal industry, and give value and experience in translocating various species and growing rhino populations. South Africa began rescuing the white rhino and then growing those populations. I think the Southern Africa wildlife management experience contributed to helping the conservation community, and the development agencies understood that working with local populations was going to be critical to achieving conservation goals.

Q: I happened to visit one of the Namibia projects as a tourist. I was familiar with what was going on and had spent four and a half years living in Botswana working regionally. I think those were very successful programs.

RESCH: Politics got in the way of CAMPFIRE though with President Robert Mugabe and friends breaking up some of the larger private game ranches. And shifting the allocation formula, the compensation for who gets what from the revenue along with controlling the international ivory market to protect elephants across the continent in

East Africa and Southern Africa which then created a little bit of a Southern Africa problem—but even in Uganda, elephants as invaders of agricultural land and having local people accept elephant predation or lion predation as a component of a wildlife tourism industry.

Q: I believe recently the relatively new Botswana president said they can now kill elephants. So how —

RESCH: —as I mentioned, there's a constituency for that.

Q: For sure there is. Are those programs still going on? Do you think they're still successful?

RESCH: They've evolved. Namibia, I think, remains a solid success in part because of the contributions of the World Wildlife Fund and Chris Weaver, the long-time World Wildlife Fund Namibia coordinator. When they wrote their management contracts where a tourism company was mostly South African, but others would come in and set up a tourist lodge in an area, part of the contract was local hires and a succession agreement where leadership in the local community would maintain at some point time in the lodges and the industry. I think that's been successful there. The game animal auctions in Namibia continue to be successful as there is a demand for wildlife for tourism, both photographic and sport hunting as well as domestication of some wild animals for the domestic meat market, high-end boutique meat market, and local needs.

Q: Very interesting. Shall we move to CARPE in Central Africa?

RESCH: Yes, we can. That's a fun topic. It's one of those—

Q: I happened to be asked to lead a team to evaluate CARPE 1.

RESCH: Yes.

Q: And so, John Flynn was the director then.

RESCH: Yeah, I remember that evaluation. I think Roy Hagen did the next evaluation. In his prelude to that executive summary, he said that CARPE was an audacious experiment.

Q: Yes. I know the history of that, do you?

RESCH: I know, I mean, I was the history. We had a small projects program in two central African countries managed by desk officer Bob Heller and implemented by WWF and WCS. That was a CARPE antecedent that gave us a little bit of experience, interest in tropical forest protection and contacts. I wrote the Project Identification Document (PID) for CARPE, building on the experiences of this project. Then we hired Jim Graham to shepherd the project paper. We made a proposal and during the review for the PID, we had Jerry Wolgin of the Office of Sustainable Development add a donor coordination function. We made a successful argument to Jerry that this was a situation where we were not going to make much success in five years beyond

understanding the region and testing approaches and that we really needed to make a ten, twenty, twenty-five-year commitment to the region of USAID non-presence countries. All we could do in the initial five years was gain some knowledge, initiate some institutions, then we would toggle on and toggle off countries as appropriate.

We started in Gabon because that was the most stable country. You know, we really couldn't even get into the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Cameroon which were among the five main countries. Equatorial Guinea was added a little bit later, and Rwanda as CARPE developed. Then we needed to work with non-governmental organizations—for profit-making and consulting firms were not the appropriate implementation vehicles at that initial time.

So as you mentioned, John Flynn was hired as the personal services contractor. We did a series of geographic, little islands of development. An important finding of which is that we could create a development center where we could provide education, schooling, health clinics, and infrastructure that might achieve conservation success in a little island even in an environment that was hostile to all those things. But that was not going to be a long-term solution and that we needed to work with governments.

And I should pay attention also to congressional support for CARPE. Tim Rieser, who recently retired from the Senate Foreign Relations Appropriation Committee, was an important conservation advocate in combination with Jerry Wolgin in USAID and Bob Pringle in the Department of State. Taking a long view of the first couple of years was going to be just finding out and some testing and demonstration of small-scale interventions, expanding and diversifying the experience and concretizing, upping the conservation status of areas were all part of an evolution from almost nothing, a zero international presence.

One of the things that Jerry added during the project paper review was that you need to build actions by other donors. At the beginning, USAID was a one-man show but because of that mandate, Fred Swartzendruber was hired here in Washington as the donor coordination facilitator and we gradually got the World Bank, and the Europeans involved and the CARPE Secretariat going. So with all of that, CARPE continues, although we had a lot of detractors periodically threatening continuation.

We also had a good crusader in the form of Bob [Robert] Pringle over at the State Department who supported a non-presence country with an intervention of scale similar to a presence country where it acted in coordination with the embassies, but not with USAID as it was not bilaterally active in the countries. We had a substantial regional program implemented by U.S. conservation organizations talking to other donors. Eventually peace kind of breaks out in the DRC [Democratic Republic of the Congo] and we can move the center of our action to the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Kinshasa.

Q: That's a great history and it is very important. One thing that I'll add, when I was preparing to lead the evaluation of this project later on, I remember the World Wildlife person who's responsible for Africa is Richard Carroll.

RESCH: It's Carroll, yeah.

Q: He told me that they got the initial funding for CARPE because there was soon going to be at an international conservation congress, in Durban. Colin Powell was going to be the main representative from the United States. He said, "I gotta have something to say, I've got to have something to offer". Carroll said, "Well, I've got something for you". He pulled out the CARPE project paper and Powell said, "You know, let's make this a fifty-million U.S. dollars program". Extraordinarily more than people had been talking about. And all of a sudden, you had a huge program?

RESCH: Yeah, so the combination of the State Department, Congress, the conservation community and some creative and progressive USAID staff was the congruence that overwhelmed traditional USAID practitioners. This was a regional non-presence conservation program managed out of Washington in Central Africa where the USAID footprint was fairly light. This was a region rife with political instability. A regional program in non-presence countries was a new thing, "This is not how we do it.".

We had a couple of evacuations. We had what I called, toggle on and toggle off countries and had to be nimble in what the portfolio was. We had a lot of skeptics along the line that have tried to kill CARPE. I think some of those externalities have allowed it to flourish, and so that there's now a substantial international community portfolio. It's an important part of the USAID forestry, biodiversity, and climate change portfolio.

I'll make just a quick reference, tie that back to an earlier comment. We start with an attention towards tropical forestry. Then somebody points out that, "Well, you preserved the forest, but the forest is a result of its bio fauna. What you've got is an empty forest that will not regenerate itself and you gotta pay attention to the animals there.". So, CARPE starts as a climate change and tropical forestry focus, and then evolves into a biodiversity focus and then returns to a climate change focus. With the exception of Gabon and Cameroon, the countries still are not major timber exporting countries. The timber industry, the infrastructure, the roads' structure, was that really valuable stuff could come out, but not as substantial as the international market for Congolese woods.

Q: I think it's been extraordinarily difficult and challenging, and I think it's a successful program. Shall we move to your—

RESCH: So I did the five years as Coordinator for Africa and five years as Food Aid and Voluntary Assistance Coordinator at the Forest Service International Programs. Then the for-profit consulting firms, conservation community, as well as some people in USAID thought the dependence on the Forest Service International Programs was too domineering or that we needed to diversify the USAID natural resources implementation base. There was some evidence of those two communities also achieving good success. Therefore, there was reduced support for the forestry support program and I moved from the Forest Service International Programs into the State Department and then in a Rosslyn, Virginia office and worked under a USDA Foreign Agriculture Service RSSA within the Bureau for Africa.

There, we had an analytic agenda. We were a triumvirate of Tony, Tim and Mike: Tony Pryor, Mike McGahuey, and myself. Paul Bartell and John Gaudet were also players for a time. We were a think-tank under Jerry Wolgin. Jerry Wolgin is one among the smarter development professionals with whom I've had the pleasure of working with. George Taylor and David Joslyn would also be among the intellectual giants that I've had the pleasure of working with.

Q: I agree totally.

RESCH: What Jerry did in the project paper creating and enabling the Office of Sustainable Development is he identified some tasks that Africa bureau leadership endorsed. The Bureau needed research, analysis and technical support for successful evolving programs. He put office functions into allegorical tasks easy to understand. One of which was emissaries of the king, somebody who could take decisions and messages to the field. We also needed a reporter, somebody that could report on what was happening, who was doing well, and who was not doing well.

There were other tasks, but the important one was a word that Jerry taught us—it was 'necromancer'. Necromancer is a fortune teller who reads the entrails of sacrificed animals, or the inside of an egg and foretells the future. Jerry said, "We need a team of people, we need people who can look at failures and successes." Mike McGahuey was a real crusader that we learned more from the failures than we do from the successes. I think military commanders often say that, "You learn more by studying why battles failed than why they succeeded".

So that gave us what we called an analytic agenda: Tony on energy, Mike on agriculture, John Gaudet on energy, Paul Bartel on measurement and me on natural resources management. Empowering to think about what we were learning and how we could improve our activities. Many of those that became part of my contribution was to think about different aspects when these things happened in my timeline. One of the studies that comes to mind is that we had Carolyn Shumway who did a study on the forgotten waters of Africa. Many of the rivers and lakes throughout Africa across borders were nonetheless important for biodiversity, economic, transport and cross government coordination activities. She did a really good analysis of forgotten waters and that was one of the first times that I did an approach that served me well into the future.

I justified the forgotten waters report as we needed to understand this resource so we could identify appropriate interventions, if any. I sent the document out for peer review to about fifty people giving them an opportunity to review the document.

I discovered that the quality of the manuscript improved. Secondly, if I sent the document to somebody to review, as I really would value their opinion, they would read it while it was in draft and even make grammar corrections. Also, I would get a key community to read a document. When a document is done and we slap the cover on it, mail it out and with a note saying, "I think you might enjoy this publication we just completed". Oftentimes it would just go into the bookshelf with the reader intention to read later. I did the same thing for many of our research papers. John, you were one of my reviewers on the paper we did on the Madagascar experience.

The other discovery on getting documents read was an attractive cover. I fought with the Africa bureau on having a pretty cover. The Office of Sustainable Development wanted a standardized drab cover so that they could say “This is the series, this is what SD is producing”.

I was operating generally under grants rather than contracts. We could go into an interesting sidelight on understanding the difference between grants and contracts. Contract officers understand fully what the difference is, but some USAID people treated grants as contracts. Contracts are delivery of services. Grants are cost-sharing mechanisms where we support a partner’s program.

I was able to argue that “No, these are grants and we are buying into an NGO that is co-financing this activity. I want this to be a WWF, African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), WCS or Biodiversity Support Program (BSP) publication. I can't impose on what the document says and how it's presented but we can have USAID credit. Both of those resulted in some sense candor and an attractive paper.

During that time, I remember we created the Biodiversity Support Program. The Biodiversity Support Program was a spin off from FSP when USAID started to pay attention to the enthusiasm of Congress to biodiversity conservation, the first question was, “Should we add biodiversity conservation to the FSP and make it a forestry and biodiversity program? Or should we do something different?”. The Biodiversity Support Program was created in the late 1980s.

BSP was a central program implemented by the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, and Experiment in International Living. It ran for about ten years and did a number of good publications, some of which were co-financed by the Bureau for Africa. And when USAID lost interest in that, the NGO community working in Africa decided that the coordination was useful. They created the African Biodiversity Consultative Group (ABCG). It's been around for another ten years and was a consortium of the seven conservation organizations. It was supported by the USAID Bureau for Africa and partner contributions, and continues to be, and has been a useful way for the conservation organizations to communicate among themselves.

Another example of influencing the development perspective was learning from how well the health community was communicating with people. We saw that their communications were much better. We used a fellows program at USAID under the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) where people can spend some time at USAID and USAID benefits from fresh scientific perspectives. Bruce Byers did a series of studies on managing public opinion in the conservation community. I think that was useful.

Another example would be faith in conservation working with faith communities which were frequently doing agroforestry and tree planting. A lot of tree planting and conservation activities were associated with missionaries, universities. That was another way that we were trying to advance science. I think there's some further examples of how the Office of Sustainable Development achieved that mission of looking at what we were doing and changing approaches towards activities.

Well, also under Tony Pryor enthusiasm and Al Gore efforts at reinventing government, we made some real progress in log frames thinking through development approaches and working with people.

Q: We've got about, we could go on for another 15 minutes or so or we can start on—

RESCH: I'm ready to close right now. I think I'm going to have to drive myself to update my resume and the publication dates as to what was created over what time period. In closing, let me just note where we still have to go yet after we flourished for about ten years in the Office of Sustainable Development. Then, somebody from the International Rice Research Institute came into USAID to create the Central Bureau called Bureau for Science and Technology. All the regional technical programs were subsumed over into a new Central Bureau.

Q: Is that Nyle Brady?

RESCH: Nyle Brady is the name I was looking for. Tony Pryor went to the International Resources Group and then advised the PPC (Policy and Program Coordination). Mike McGahuey rolled over to the new Science and Technology Bureau. I moved to the Asia and Near East Bureau and managed the East Africa environmental initiative. We had a closing wake for SD as we reminisced about all our accomplishments and failures and—dispersed.

Then after circa five years the Bureau for Africa natural resources programs started to come back. During that interim period, Brian Hirsch was the one-man environment compliance program. The one thing that could not be centralized was the Reg. 216 environmental compliance requirement. Brian hired me back to the Africa bureau where I spent the next ten years in the Africa bureau as the tropical forestry and biodiversity coordinator and advising the portfolio. A lot of ways that role is similar to what I first had when I started with Forest Service International Forestry. That was design, evaluation, monitoring and reporting of bilateral and regional portfolio activities. The think tanks aspects similar to the earlier SD under Jerry Wolgin including design of CARPE were implemented by ABCG, IRG and the Environmental Law Institute (ELI).

The East Asia and Pacific Environmental Initiative (EAPEI) was a three to six million U.S. dollars annual program from Department of State Economic Support Funds granted to USAID and managed by me. When we phased down EAPEI the new regional development mission or Asia RDMA [Regional Development Mission for Asia] was created, and they continued the program.

Q: So, we'll come to that next time, Tim.

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Q: This is John Pielemeier, doing a second round of interviews with Tim Resch. It is August 7, 2023. Tim, we've covered a lot of time when you were in the Africa Bureau and working with Africa. Now you're moving on to a program in Southeast Asia. So please, help us move through what you were doing in Southeast Asia.

RESCH: Okay. So, I did ten years with the USDA [United States Department of Agriculture] Forestry Support Program, which was under a USAID [United States Agency for International Development] Forest Resources Management Project, which had two implementers: the Forest Service International Program and the Peace Corps. Then about ten years supporting USAID Bureau for Africa natural resource management programs until technical staff were subsumed into a new Bureau for Science and Technology, which was not attractive to me, and so I was looking for a new assignment.

Concurrently with that time, there were forest fires raging in Indonesia. They were initially characterized as naturally occurring events. The subtext was the fires were clearing forests for oil palm plantations and associated peat fires. So, while they were characterized as natural and the USDA Forest Service was flying water bombers over, they really did have a corrupt organization. Those smoke plumes are not unlike what we hear today on the Canadian forest fires coming into the United States. The State Department with Economic Support Funds (ESF) funds allocated about three million U.S. dollars to fight the causes of the forest fires and impacts of the forest fire smoke.

Ben Stoner was given the task of initially setting up the program and because of the urgency of it, almost all the money went to federal agencies such as the USGS [U.S. Geological Survey] and their surface mining people, the Forest Service, the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], and Health and Human Services (HHS). I was asked to come in to manage those interagency transfers. A curious anecdote on that is at my interview with the State Department coming in, they said, “But you all your experiences in Africa, what makes you think you can manage basically an environmental program in Asia, rather than necessarily a forestry intervention”. The good answer was, “Well, about half of the people working in the region also have experience in Africa, and really, you don't need a technical forester. What you need is a grant management specialist, and I am experienced in managing grants and so it's an administrative thing.”. That was a persuasive argument, so I got that job. That program continued on for a couple of years.

Q: What year was that when you started, Tim?

RESCH: 1991? Yeah, right, about 1991. Over time, we transformed it into an NGO grants program because there are some limitations on interagency transfer. In addition, as we started to understand the problems in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, the State Department was open to diversifying the portfolio. The USAID environmental, forestry and biodiversity footprint at that time in Southeast Asia was fairly light.

The East Asia and Pacific Environmental Initiative was the initial grants program to several initiatives lasting circa five years in Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, and in the Pacific. One of the things that happened at that time was USAID was getting out of specific bilateral Pacific Island countries and going to regional programs so same with—what I think that was part of the Brian Atwood simplification where we reduced the number of field units and did new regional

programs in Indo Pacific and Southeast Asia and the Caribbean and Central America. Those programs continued on.

We did get two years of congressional earmarks for EAPEI as the NGO community liked the activities which were, you know, as a way of grants programs, were co-funded by both the NGOs and the U.S. government. Politics changed at the State Department under John Bolton, but USAID then continued that regional growth program with RDMA [Regional Development Mission for Asia] and that grant program. So, that was a run of about six years and then handed it over to RMDA when the ESF funding stopped. Then I returned to the Africa Bureau as a University of Missouri RSSA under the USDA.

Q: Before we go there, let's go back. Did you travel often to Southeast Asia?

RESCH: Not often, maybe like one to three trips annually over the course of that time. One of the constraints was that it was only a three to six million U.S. dollars program over time and the travel expense allocation was insufficient. I was able to leverage the Biodiversity and Forestry team of USAID to do evaluations and follow up. In addition to the mission and Embassy staff in various countries, we hired a PSC Trigeany Linggoatmodjo. She was the field backstop, because at the early grants were focused on Indonesia then we extended programs to the rest of East Asia and Pacific region. So, I had a host country national contractor who then joined USAID and continues today. There was a real cost effectiveness.

Q: How successful do you think the program was?

RESCH: It was successful in a couple of different ways. The program created a constituency that provided the basis for the RDMA regional program, and it provided a foothold for many NGOs in the region. It broadened out to Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam where there was very little previous USAID environmental presence in those countries. So to the degree that follows on is the success or more activities, you know, building on experiences.

We got a better understanding of what were the causes of the Indonesia forest fires. One thing we didn't anticipate when we gave the grant is that we had a grant for whether there were negative health impacts on people in the smoke zone. The process was going to be blood testing and that launched us into U.S. protocols on human subjects testing. There's a reasonable protocol associated with conducting health experiments in developing countries, and we didn't quite understand that when the grant was given.

Q: I haven't heard anything about fires there recently. I don't think they've probably gone away, but palm oil plantations are certainly everywhere.

RESCH: Yeah. The coal-seam fires—because of the coal seam fires after a couple years I think we were successful in teaching Indonesians how to deal with fire systems.

Q: All right.

RESCH: Deanna Donovan was an important Forest Service technical consultant on fire causes and management. In addition, a substantial bilateral program emerged in Indonesia that dealt with some of those issues

Q: Oh, good. Anybody else in the missions that was important?

RESCH: Ben Stoner was important. He kicked off the program.

Q: Where was he located?

RESCH: Well, he was in Washington DC when he started the program. He'd been a direct hire, but I knew him as a PSC. Then he subsequently went back to Indonesia to manage programs there. So, he hired me to follow up on the grants.

There's an interesting cycle associated with giving grants. If you start a grant program, a two-year or maybe three-year with extension activity, prior to that happening you have some sort of solicitation process. We're interested in people addressing these problems or causes. That grant is given and then it runs for two or three years where you might have midterm evaluation, you will have a final evaluation. And if there's a problem, there can sometimes be a geographic, "Well it worked in this province, let's put it in this province". So, it succeeds in one place and demonstrates a proof of concept, and then it moves to another geographic thing, or alternately a more level of effort is needed. So at year three of the EAPEI program, I had initial grants that were finishing, grants that were at its midterm, and I was soliciting for new grants.

Nearing the end of that program, USAID and the State Department were less interested in following up. We no longer started giving new grants. We had a portfolio of ten to fifteen million U.S. dollars of grant activity that needed to be monitored and reported on and verifying the accountability. Sometimes people think, "Well, I'll just give a grant" without fully understanding that grant management is beyond writing the first check, which is normally a reimbursable agreement. The nonprofit spends the money sometimes out of a bank loan based on the grant, much like a contract firm, and then they spend the money and then they voucher for it, and then they get reimbursed.

Q: Was the Philippines part of the program?

RESCH: Yes, it was. We did some important fisheries activities. So basically, community-based fisheries management was kicked off under the EAPEI program and then picked up ultimately by the USAID mission, that whole concept of no catch zones, and community reserves. What we discovered was that having these little fish factories where the community would decide that no stranger fishers were allowed, would work. Then that place could be a seed source for fish to grow in and migrate or move out of that zone. Also, that whole process coincided with good feelings about community based natural resource management. So, while community-based management and NRM [Natural Resource Management] had important beginnings in land and trees, we extended that concept to the fisheries and oceanic resources.

Q: I had a moment with a couple of those in the Philippines where there were environmental trust funds established that provided small grants to NGOs. There was

another program called the Population-Environment program, population environment cross sectoral programs.

RESCH: Yeah. The grant managing institutions and the trust fund establishment was an interesting line of activity for USAID. One, it flowed a little bit from blocked currency and controlled currency situations. For blocked currency, the U.S. government, based on concessional loans, was getting reimbursed for those loans in local currency they couldn't export. So, what are we going to do with this? One, was we'll create a national grant-making institution that will use these funds to make small grants and manage them. That was very useful in the formation of small NGOs that can move at a small scale. The grant managing or uber institution had to strengthen their incipient NGOs so that they could make good proposals and manage their grants well. Those trust fund activities were a way of creating a vigorous NGO community in countries.

The trust funds were a good way for USAID to transition out of NGO support by creating a trust fund, an endowment (which Congress ultimately had problems with). USAID said, "We'll take this ten-million U.S. dollars and we will create a declining endowment ("a sinking fund"). We'll spend this over the next five or ten years". Or even say, "This will be a perpetual endowment, we will take ten million U.S. dollars, invest it and then we'll spend five-hundred-thousand U.S. dollars a year, and we'll always have nine point five million U.S. dollars in the bank ready to fund indefinitely into the future". Congress ultimately put some limitations on the creation of endowments within USAID. That was a part of the experience.

Q: Happily, the Global Environment Facility did not have those limitations. I was part of a team that evaluated the first generation of Conservation Trust Funds, which were very successful. I think they continued that kind of funding.

Well, it sounds like an interesting change for you.

RESCH: Yeah. Well, it was to the degree that the initial Forestry Support Program activities were designing forestry interventions then broadening out to natural resources, and agroforestry interventions. The next five years was grant management and diversifying out beyond land-based natural resources forestry to marine conservation, coral reefs, coal seam fires, and weather activities. It became more of an environmental activity, and then understanding the grant cycle.

The reporting side, one of the challenges is you can do a specific intervention, but you really want to share those proof of concept, sharing of experiences, publishing and dissemination. Websites were also an important part of my lesson learned and had a real impact later on in my career when I was managing the African Biodiversity Consultative Group grants.

Q: 1991 was when the first National Environment Congress was held in Rio. That was the same year that this was going on.

RESCH: Yeah.

Q: You moved on to another program, how did that happen?

RESCH: Okay, so funding eventually stopped. Basically, we moved the program to RDMA [Regional Development Mission in Asia] in Bangkok. In the new regional mission, we no longer needed a DC [Washington DC] based grants manager. I was doing like three to five million U.S. dollars a year with EAPEI covering Southeast Asia and the Pacific and I think the RDMA budget must have been in the ten to fifteen million U.S. dollars. So, it's a much bigger scale of activity but we didn't need an in-house grant management person. So, I was looking for another assignment.

During the period of EAPEI, one of the reasons I left the African bureau is that Nyle Brady came in and reduced the staff in the regional bureaus and centralized the activity. Part of the team in the Africa bureau, Walter [Knausenberger] went to be a regional Reg. 216 advisor in Nairobi. Tony Pryor went to work with IRG (International Resources Group), consulting, working on reinventing, supporting the PPC [Policy and Program Coordination] and its iterations. I moved to the Asia and Near East bureau funded by State Department ESF funds.

After five years, the only thing that had survived during that period of time in the Africa bureau was the Reg. 216 activities that Brian Hirsch was managing. The regional bureaus were feeling that they didn't have a voice in the regional programs, and so we started to staff up in the Africa bureau. I came back a little bit later; Walter came back to support mission Reg. 216 activity. We started a climate change program and brought in AAAS fellows and started to build up the African bureau program. I think I'm trying to remember when the DFA [Development Fund for Africa] got established, I think the DFA (Development Fund for Africa) was earlier than that. Part of what the DFA did was to give the Africa bureau more flexibility on multi-year funding and more accountability and reporting responsibilities.

Q: Could we just take a second here, briefly explain what Reg. 216 is?

RESCH: Oh, Reg. 216 is a lovely consent decree. USAID was doing agriculture supporting activities, and there were some instances of people getting harmed by pesticide use. I think it was the Sierra Club that sued USAID and said that the NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) also covered U.S. government investments overseas. Judge Sirica [John Sirica], who then went on in a later part of his career to the Nixon's Watergate hearings said, "Actually the Sierra Club is right, and you have the responsibility to make sure that all USAID activities are environmentally sound".

It's a little bit like an EPA ruling and whether that was road building, building construction, hospital waste, pesticide use, herbicides it needed an environmental determination. All USAID interventions overseas, and remembering that it's a host government transfer or contractor or a NGO that is using U.S. dollars, we are accountable for the environmental impacts associated with that investment. It's a consent decree and a set of policies.

By the nature of the consent decree and subsequent regulations, the bureaus were given the oversight responsibility of writing those determinations. Walter Knausenberger and Brian Hirsch were quite influential in providing processes to simplify those activities, and to train NGOs in environmental compliance. In my mind, the net result of all that Africa Bureau activity is that the overall USAID

interventions are more environmentally sound than they were, and we had an impact on other international agencies. One of the things that USAID did is that we funded a regional advisor to sit at the African Development Bank to help staff up their environmental activities, and also some coordination with the World Bank environmental program.

Q: As I recall it, before any new project could be authorized in USAID, someone had to do an environmental review. The first step was fairly simple. Often, if you didn't have any construction going on, you just had to get your environmental 216 advisor to sign off on it. If it were more difficult and construction was involved, you might have a full-scale environmental assessment.

RESCH: Right or even an environmental impact statement and looking at alternatives, including doing nothing.

Q: I can think of some countries where we worked where we successfully encouraged those countries to incorporate similar environmental review policies into their regulations.

RESCH: Yeah, you're exactly right.

Q: All right. So, you went back then to the African Bureau, and you mentioned the DFA. Let's explain that a little bit. Development Fund for Africa.

RESCH: Yeah. The Development Fund for Africa was born in about 1987 out of a frustration of how difficult it was to do development in Africa. At the beginning, we still had African big men - a lack of democratic transition, presidents for life Idi Amin and Obote [Apollo Milton Obote], and conflict and corruption. Congress finally recognized some of those challenges. It may have been—my sense is that it was a congressional latitude rather than some forward-looking administrator of USAID saying you know, “Timeout, we've got some difficulties here. We would like to amend the Foreign Assistance Act and have some special provisions for managing our annual appropriations". I don't recall that, but rather, congress giving USAID that kind of flexibility and accountability, “We’re going to give you some multi-year funding, increased flexibility and reporting responsibilities.”. We didn't have to spend it all in one year. [See https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pcaaa226.pdf]

One of the challenges particularly when congress was not appropriating funds on a timely basis, so we operated under continuing resolutions. Part of the challenge of operating under a continuing resolution as you can spend no more than the previous years’ allocation. Even if Congress was considering an increase which would result if the appropriation finally happened, trying to obligate funds in the last couple of months of last month, the last days of the end of the fiscal year—that was a timing challenge. But with that flexibility then came, we need an annual report of how things are going. Jerry, who's one of the sharpest economists that I've had the pleasure of working with, understood that and built up the Office of Sustainable Development within the Africa bureau, and I was part of that for the forestry and biodiversity aspects of that.

Q: One major element of the DFA, as I recall, was not-withstanding legislation. So, one didn't have to go through all the legislative hoops, and limitations that other programs did.

RESCH: Yeah.

Q: You have a great deal of flexibility to the programs in Africa. I know, they started doing program assistance, as opposed to project assistance.

RESCH: Right. Yeah.

Q: Because they had that flexibility.

RESCH: Right. Jerry was a macro-economist and was also key on that. That was especially useful for middle income countries. The countries that were doing better the program assistance said, "No, you don't need a team of American advisors doing three-to-five-year million U.S dollars interventions. We would like you to work in the health sector and we will provide program assistance for you to deal with malaria or some other big challenge". Those countries that were more advanced, were able to do that.

Q: Right. Sounds like an exciting atmosphere to come back to.

RESCH: It was, part of it, was understanding our lessons learned. Mike McGahuey was a very good crusader and "What are the exceptions? Where are the anomalies? What are the lessons learned? Why did people do this rather than that? Why did this intervention spread?" He was doing that when he was in the African bureau. He continued to be a good person when he moved to the global bureau.

The other aspect of that optic was the over the horizon activities -what the future trends are, some level of strategic thinking about what the future trends were—one of the ones that I'm happy about was faith in conservation. Growing from some very small activities and at least the recognition of faith-based organizations in Africa. Faith-based communities were doing a lot of conservation and agroforestry in many African countries. The universities, just like in the United States, were sometimes faith-based. Many mid-level schools and high schools had nurseries and tree planting. Agriculture was part of their portfolio and care for the earth activities.

There's an office of faith-based initiatives within USAID. The separation of church and state optic scared a lot of USAID staff. They thought "We can't give money to faith-based organizations who will use part of that money to proselytize, and we can't be accused of proselytization.". At the same time, Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Relief and similar were doing major development and conservation activities. USAID did engage with food for work activities, Reg. 216 Public Law 480 activities were frequently implemented by faith-based organizations. We tried to increase and help USAID understand how to work with faith-based organizations - what aren't we doing and how can we be more effective.

Jerry helped to address some of the hard subjects of conflict in the environment. I looked at my book locker at home. One of the watershed publications that came out of

the Biodiversity Support Program was *Trampled Grass: Mitigating the Impacts of Armed Conflict on the Environment* from which Africa suffered. We later worked with the Environmental Law Institute on management of mineral resources, oil resources, fisheries resources, wood resources in addressing conflict over those activities. So, that was another interesting intervention.

When drones first got invented, started appearing and being used in applications here in the United States, we looked at the use of drones for managing natural resources in Africa, which was largely taken up with the ivory and rhino problems and the anti-poaching activities. It was useful to understand what populations were and to test whether places were safe, advanced activity. So, we looked at drones as another study that came out of that period.

Under Al Gore with Clinton, Reinventing Government became a priority. Tony Pryor and Drew Lent worked to help USAID with log frames and results-based programming. Tony ultimately got a Hammer Award from Al Gore and got caught up in the whole Reinventing Government initiative and became a real leader in that. The Africa Bureau environment was a torchbearer and advance point of the spear to bring along the rest of the agency, in my opinion. So that was another thing that I think came out of the DFA, Al Gore and reinventing government.

Al Gore had a thing about "If it's something that you care about, something that you're taking responsibility for and will be accountable for, don't ask permission just do it". It became an important optic, I think, for USAID. I didn't get inculcated as much as I'd like to, because it's human nature for supervisors if an employee says, "Can I do this?", the gut reaction by a supervisor, the default, is "No, probably not. Or why would you want to do that? Or why can't you—why is this different?". But if you just did it and met those criteria, it opened the way for innovation and action.

One of the rebukes that I got once which was a backhanded compliment, in my opinion, is that it's easier to apologize than to get permission. One of my supervisors said, "Your problem, Resch, is that you actually believe that.". So, I think he thought I was a little bit too independent.

Q: Were you traveling much to Africa during this period?

RESCH: Yeah. I think I was on about the twenty-five percent bracket during the end of my first time with the Africa bureau. It popped up to about fifty percent of the time when I was designing, evaluating midterm, and, basically, a portfolio manager or a counselor to portfolio implementation. And that's one of the downsides, I think, of being USAID Washington staffer, is that if you're doing fifty percent travel, you're a month in and month out and you cease to have a U.S. footprint. It's hard to be a member of clubs and social activities. What you're doing is, in the month that you're in the United States, you're reporting on the last two trips and planning the next three. I suppose the life of a US-based international consultant.

That's the downside of being a Washington-based technical adviser. You're the counselor, the policeman, and the troubleshooter. It was like, "If you don't see one of us, that's a good thing because that means you're not having any problems. From what

we can see in Washington, things are going okay.". If we're coming out to evaluate or figure out why your Chief of Party is failing, or how to get a new Chief of Party, you need an objective third party to come out and do an assessment as to whether this activity is on track when in fact it's not on track. You are the legitimizer of a decision that's probably already getting ready to be made. It was just simply a lot of travel but getting experience across the Africa bureau's natural resources management portfolio.

Part of getting to become the historian of USAID conservation is that in the course of my career in Africa, Latin America and Asia, the U.S. government sent me to a lot of countries. I got a chance to travel much of Africa and get out of the capital cities. We learn whether that was workshops, symposiums or project design and assessment or troubleshooting. We sometimes think that we go to school to learn, "Oh, I have a master's in blah blah.". That's just what gets you kicked off. What helps your career go is, in fact, the things you learn while doing your job and so that once you've done this job for five or ten years, you have a lot of experience that didn't come from books and lectures, but rather experience.

A couple of papers I would recommend for a historical perspective of the evolution of USAID's forestry, biodiversity and natural resources management experience include: USAID Lessons Learned in Community-based Natural Forest Management and Protecting Hard-Won Ground: USAID Experience and Prospects for Biodiversity Conservation In Africa.

In the course of a thirty-forty year career, one has like ten to twelve jobs and each job helps you build on the former. If it's a pyramid that keeps on going. If you decide you don't like the pyramid and you decide you want to be a university lecturer or something like that then or you want to go domestic, then you go back down the pyramid and start up again.

Q: Go ahead.

RESCH: So just after ten years—so my time in EAPEI was RSSA with the University of Minnesota. Then, when I came back to the Africa Bureau, I was a university RSSA with the University of Missouri and worked there for nine years. When I was about sixty-seven, 2015 or thereabouts, the Obama-Trump election was coming up. One of the things I'd seen in my experience was the impact of presidential transitions. New administrations and even when it was the same president now for an eight-year term, the second four years was different from the first four years and a new team would come in with new visions. I didn't want to go through another administration change. I decided that it was time to bail and I did.

One of the good things that somebody told me is, "When you retire from USAID, don't quit on Friday and start a job on Monday with a new institution, but take six to nine months to think about what you want to do in the next transition". So, I addressed some much-needed rehabbing [rehabilitating] of my house and my garden. That was in the springtime and then in the fall, I started doing two things that I think are good things to do for retirement transition.

Most people, however, don't go cold turkey. Two transition categories that I suggest to people are either part time or short term. I did both during that transition. Part-time was you work Monday, or you do Monday and Thursdays for a consulting firm and write proposals or whatever needs to be done or you manage some proposals. Short term is that you do the leadership of a workshop or symposium, or leadership of an NGO in an acting role.

I did about seven weeks in Tanzania supporting a Reg. 216 transition from one FSN to another FSN. I did a little bit of consulting and worked for a fee. Then, a close friend got ovarian cancer and her death helped convince me that life can be short and to enjoy my remainder. I also lost some other cohorts in my age group that died, in my mind, prematurely: Jim Seyler, Dennis Panther, David Harcharik, and Dan Deely. I left work and have been retired now since about 2018. No longer working for fee but for free with some NGOs.

Q: That's sort of five years, that's not bad.

RESCH: Yeah, so it's been good. That transition does happen, and people need to think about how to do theirs.

Q: Did they give you a goodbye party?

RESCH: I had two. Interestingly, I had two goodbye parties. One, the NGO community put on a very nice party for me. Then a couple months later Walter Knausenberger and Brian Hirsch put on a retirement party for the USAID community. I had a good reputation within the NGO community as a point of contact for USAID. I supported the African Biodiversity Collaborative Group, and other interventions. So that was all—all very nice. Yeah, two parties.

Q: Explain what the African Biodiversity Collaborative Group was.

RESCH: The Forestry Support Program was the organization that I worked at continues at a similar function within the Forest Service International Office with some USAID support. When biodiversity became an intervention by the U.S. government, we started to—

Q: —and an earmark.

RESCH: Yes, that helped too, supported by the NGOs which would benefit from the earmark. So that's why the Biodiversity Support Program was created and that was implemented by TNC [The Nature Conservancy], World Wildlife Fund and Experiment in International Living. I think it was a triumvirate that was created in the bidding process. That ran for about ten years and its success was almost a factor in its demise in that the consortium became a *de facto* implementer and competitor not necessarily management of activities but for studies and analysis.

When some in USAID decided, with the support of some of the NGO community, to stop the Biodiversity Support Program. I was convinced that that relationship was a good thing of getting the NGOs to be talking to each other and encouraged Kate Newman and others, with the financial support of USAID Africa bureau to continue

Biodiversity Support Program functions in Africa. They decided that they wanted other implementers to join the group. The Africa Ws: World Wildlife Fund, The Wildlife Conservation Society, African Wildlife Fund, World Resources Institute, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy and Jane Goodall Institute. There were seven NGOs that formed the African Biodiversity Consultative Group in 1999. I supported this in the dying stages of my time in the Africa bureau before I went to the Asia bureau. Then when I came back to the Africa bureau, we started funding ABCG which was a coordinating group of these seven NGOs doing mutually determined research on various aspects. USAID, now more than twenty years later, continues to support ABCG now with offices in Africa and in the U.S..

Q: When you retired from USAID, after working on your house, you did some short-term consulting and part time work. Are you still doing that?

RESCH: No, that friend's health emergency convinced me that life is short. I had done some testing of retirement options. Prior to retiring, I had done two sabbaticals. Instead of taking a two-three-week vacations, I saved up my vacation time and took seven- and eight-week sabbaticals. I did one, my first sabbatical was the southwest parks of the United States in a tent and my Subaru Forester, and then I returned to work.

Q: No dog?

RESCH: No dog. Then I accumulated leave for about two years and with a little bit of additional leave without pay I did the Canadian Rockies and Pacific Northwest parks. Both were easy within USAID because the agency is organized for people to disappear for a month or two at a time. They're just acting for somebody else between rotations or they're doing evaluations or they're handling some sort of special project. So, institutionally, it was actually quite easy for us at USAID to disappear for a chunk of time.

Q: Like going on home leave?

RESCH: Going on home leave, yeah, exactly both in Washington as well as in the missions. I did one southwest parks tour and then another Canadian Rockies Tour. And that all was pleasant enough that when I retired in 2015, I bought a Winnebago Travato Class B Van and sold it in 2021 with 53,000 miles on it. That's trips around the US. I visited all fifty states. I flew to Hawaii and flew to Alaska, but a lot of the other trips were in the van, and so travel is part of my hobby, my retirement activities.

Q: Right. I know from your earlier discussions, you still have some non-remunerative activities, you are head of Friends of Morocco?

RESCH: Yeah.

Q: What is that?

RESCH: Okay so part of Humphrey and Kennedy's view of creating the Peace Corps was to diversify the State Department and humanize gray suit diplomats believing what we needed were people that were linguistically strong and sympathetic. Sixty

years later, the Peace Corps footprint within the State Department and USAID and many NGOs is part of the Peace Corps origins. So, the Peace Corps was a big internship and was one of the reasons that I, as a French speaking forester, was able to get a job within USAID. Coming off the Sahel drought, there really were not many French speaking foresters. The early Morocco volunteers Steve Dennison, Roy Hagen, Doug Teschner and Leroy Duvall, among others, were compatriots of mine in Peace Corps Morocco. Peace Corps Morocco was the part of the foundation of my international career.

Within the returned Peace Corps community, part of the mythology of Peace Corps is that you're a Peace Corps volunteer for the rest of your life. You have a sworn obligation to do the third goal of the Peace Corps, even though the Peace Corps agency frequently doesn't pay sufficient attention to it, and that's to bring the world back home. You know, one can say "I've lived in the Muslim world, I've lived in developing countries, I've lived in North Africa, I've lived in, you know, whatever, and to be an advocate or somebody knowledgeable about the outside world.". There are about 250,000 returned Peace Corps volunteers out there. Among the associations that are part of the National Peace Corps Association, are country of service groups uniting people who are tracking the country with some connection to the Peace Corps.

There are also RPCV [Returned Peace Corps Volunteers] communities at USAID and RPCVs at the State Department or USDA. There are also geographic groups which have RPCVs of Washington DC and of Colorado and Chicago and every place that has former volunteers. I've been active, since 1988, with the Friends of Morocco which is the RPCV affinity group for Morocco. We have a website, lots of Facebook groups and periodically—reunions. I have led about ten tours to Morocco for other RPCVs. These are people who served in other countries to travel to Morocco, and to see what Peace Corps volunteers are currently doing or what they've done. There's some RPCVs who never returned to the US. They went to their host country and home was redefined and now they visit the United States.

Because of the Friends of Morocco connection, I also got connected with the Tangier American Legation Museum, which was the U.S. Embassy equivalent in Tangier, Morocco in the international zone for 140 years. In 1956, when Morocco got independence, the building stayed in U.S. government hands. It was a Foreign Language Learning Center and then a Peace Corps training center in the early 1970s. In 1976, the NGO Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies [TALIM] was formed. I'm on the board of directors and the executive committee and serve as the treasurer. So that's another Moroccan affinity group.

Then because of those two associations trying to unite the community in the US, I've also been active in the Moroccan American diaspora. One illustrative example is once upon a time I introduced one of my Moroccan-born friends to another as a Moroccan and he said, "No, I'm not Moroccan anymore, I became an American citizen. I am now a Moroccan American. I was born in Morocco. I have family in Morocco but I am an American.", the same way that you're an Irish American. So, I'm very careful when I talk about the diaspora to recognize that there are Americans who are either naturalized or the child of Moroccan immigrants.

There are Moroccans who have green cards, and who have a residency here in the United States, but they're still Moroccan. Then, there are also visitors who are graduate students who are here on tourist visas, learning exchanges—Fulbright fellows. I'm connected with that diaspora and a bit of a linkage between that community and the Peace Corps community that the Moroccan American, or the Peace Corps volunteers who served in Morocco. I changed the fee to free. Part of my retirement, not unlike you John, doing this history. I don't think we're paying you too much to do all of this.

Q: Recently, you went back to Morocco.

RESCH: Yeah. I took my new wife. I had a small health emergency for a couple of months in January to March 2021. I was in a wheelchair—herniated disk, and sciatic nerve. So, I was in bed for a month, wheelchair for a month and rehab for a month. That helped convince me that that life is short, live it with gusto. We know not the day nor the hour. I had met a woman at the beginning of COVID [Coronavirus disease COVID-19]. We didn't live together but we had contact. Well, the theaters and restaurants and parks were even closed in 2020. You couldn't even go out and walk. Senior citizens had early access to grocery stores.

I think we're forgetting how bad or how interesting the pandemic was. So, she stood by me in early 2021 and I married her. I bought a new house near her family, and I took her to Morocco in 2022. As my sister said, "It's good that you're doing that because Morocco is so important to you, and she needs to understand that part of you.". She was surprised that my Arabic, after fifty years, was so good, which made our trip very pleasant.

Q: Had she lived in Morocco?

RESCH: No, no she's a Iranian American resident here in the States for about twenty six years.

Q: I see.

RESCH: In my age cohort.

Q: Okay, shall we move on to our summary questions?

RESCH: Yes please, that would be lovely.

Q: So, let's just continue. I have a few wrap-up questions, Tim. Some of these relate to USAID's interest in conflict resolution and USAID had a role in that. So, my first question is, have forestry conservation issues played a negative role in bringing on internal conflicts in countries you've worked with? Or external conflicts across borders in countries you've worked with?

RESCH: That was a fun question because when we were designing CARPE, one of the questions was, "How will you work there and will CARPE evolve?". CARPE started basically, as a centrally-managed activity, because there was very little USAID presence in the DRC [Democratic Republic of the Congo]. Gabon was the most stable

country. One of the concepts that we came up with was that we would toggle on and toggle off countries as politics and safety made possible. When I think of my forty years from 1980 to 2020, we've toggled on and toggled off countries as they became able to host developmental activities.

In Niger, we were quite effective with the Majjia valley tree windbreaks. Same with the Guesselbodi natural forest management activities in Burkina Faso. That experience in the Sahel led into some really interesting community-based activity, some transformation of the forestry guards into forestry extension agents and extended to the rest of Africa and the world. Because of conflict and politics we do not work in some of those countries now but the advances continue.

I can almost go through almost every country, even Kenya, Mozambique, Madagascar, DRC, Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Gambia, and there were times where we were present and times when we were not. We were able to see where natural resources were the cause of the conflict. I remember blood diamonds, coltan and charcoal, for example, the charcoal mafia in Senegal. Both were the cause of the conflict as well as the potential for resolution of the conflict. So, that natural resources have been a tool in the negotiation of power.

So, we didn't spend too much time on the nature, wealth, and power concept. That whole area focus is that when you understand the nature, wealth, and power dynamic of the locality and natural resource base, one can manage development more effectively. That concept spread from our experiences in Africa to the rest of the agency, to the World Bank and World Resources Institute and into other bilateral programs. So yes, corruption and control of natural resources—minerals, oil, timber, fish, and water, have all been reasons for conflict and, in some cases, the impetus for resolution or revolution.

Two examples as we did not spend a lot of time on peace parks, transboundary natural resource management. There are a number of instances where, for example, Ugandan refugees went to Rwanda and, later, Rwandan refugees went to Uganda, depending on the period of time. The whole mountain guerrilla tourism activity is a testament to the wealth associated, and the importance of managing mountain gorillas. So, that transboundary park management in Uganda, Rwanda and DRC is part of the glue that keeps people at the table.

Control of natural resources can result in conflict but also serve as the basis for the resolution of conflict. The thing that people are trying to resolve is who's going to manage and who's going to benefit from, how do we compromise on these natural resources. I can start as a forestry and biodiversity practitioner, but through my career, I was really a natural resources management specialist trained as a forester and then evolved—or changed to have the NRM focus.

Q: Right. Any examples that you can recall where there was a direct influence that one of your projects had on resolving conflict?

RESCH: Well, the mountain gorilla project you know was specifically a transboundary gorilla activity. The Community-based Natural Resources Management

(CBNRM) program in Southern Africa dealing with ivory and rhino horn poaching brought people to the table and allowed countries such as Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Zambia and Mozambique to share experiences and that helped resolve conflict. I think the CBNRM activities in the Sahel with herders and farmers would be providing a voice to those populations to help resolve the conflicts.

I'm not coming up with a good example. Maybe you have one from your experiences, particularly in armed conflict, that when there is a coup and change of government, natural resource management is a subtext, blood diamonds for example but it's a bigger dynamic. Christian and Muslim or north and south or other ethnic groups that use natural resources to finance conflict. That's just an exploitation thing and it's not about necessarily controlling the resource.

Q: Well, the introduction of arms, you know, I remember it's really changed the nature of conflict in the Sahel for example.

RESCH: Yeah, I think in Sudan, we're seeing that today.

Q: Let's talk about management of people who work for USAID and management of programs. Did you have role models, as managers?

RESCH: Yeah, let me preface that with an understanding about "who works for USAID" because there's an interesting dichotomy between USAID direct hires and implementers of USAID programs and the revolving door dynamic. I spent the last forty years of my career salaried by USAID through intermediaries. I was never a USAID Direct Hire employee. So, one of the interesting revelations I had once upon a time was in a global bureau meeting with about twenty-five people. We looked around and noted that there were like three direct hires, including the chair of the meeting, but almost everybody else was a combination of personal services contractors, RSSAs, PSSAs, AAAS [American Association for the Advancement of Science] fellows, contractors and university partnerships. So, work for USAID is an interesting split kind of, "What do you mean, you know, was I USAID direct hire, or was my existence funded by USAID?" and I was in that latter category, and much of the community is in that category and, to a certain degree, there's even a before and after.

People will maybe start at the Peace Corps or start as a Fulbright or AAAS fellow, work as a PSC and be financed by USAID. Then, they will convert to direct hire, join the intern program and become a USAID employee. They start as a specialist who becomes a generalist then rise to be an administrator such as a mission director. They can start out as a forester and then manage an agricultural project and then be in charge of the health project, they're the deputy mission director and then mission director then they're a bureau administrator of one program within USAID. Then they retire, they leave USAID, and they go to a consulting firm, or the World Bank and such. It's a very fluid classification.

What is an USAID employee? And what does he or she do? Many of the technical people that I started with then went on to join USAID as either a mid-career hire or an intern ceased to become a technical specialist and become an AID administrator which is a good thing because we need those kinds of people too. Having people with

some foundation on a technical basis in the sciences is useful. Although English majors and History majors can have a role within USAID. So, I guess that was the perspective, I wanted to put that into that question.

Q: Did you find any that you thought did a particularly good job of that?

RESCH: People?

Q: Yes

RESCH: Yeah. I mentioned a couple of them, and this will probably repeat. Tony Pryor starts as an energy advisor in Nairobi, and then comes into the Africa bureau, gets into a program of planning coordination and reinventing government, then has a significant role in helping USAID manage for results.

Asif Shaik serves as the Energy Initiatives in Africa advisor based in Abidjan then goes on to establish the IRG [International Resources Group], sells it and now is president of another group. One of the smartest strategic thinkers, I know, and an economist by background. Peter Veit, starts out as a mountain gorilla researcher as an intern, I think with Diane Fossey then goes on to the World Resources Institute and becomes one of the best strategic thinkers and reviewers of natural resource experiences, particularly in Africa.

George Taylor was an International Development Intern (IDI) who went on to be mission director. Dave Joslyn was a Peace Corps Chile volunteer who then held many senior positions within USAID. Tom Catterson was also a Chile volunteer forester and then had a substantial role with FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization] then came to USAID for several years and subsequent consulting with IRG [International Resources Group) and other entities.

One of the pleasurable things of my existence—I think of anybody's existence, and one of the reasons to be nice to as many people as possible when you're young, because a substantial number of them are going to rise to the levels of positions of impact and responsibility, and God willing, you do too. You just keep connecting with old friends, it becomes a community. That's part of why we work. People will tolerate low salaries and even bad bosses, because bad bosses are normally temporary, for the joy of working with coworkers. So, what drives us to work is the belief in mission. My early adopted mantra was helping people through wise use of natural resources or conservation—or managing natural resources to help people. So, depending on whether or not my audience was focused on people, or on wildlife, or natural resources, one begets another. I, of course, by implication, was interested in both those of protecting natural resources through working with people, benefiting people.

Q: One of the programs that I was not very aware of, until recently, as you may have run across, especially in terms of the CARPE programs, is the Fish and Wildlife Service in the United States as a player in the international game, and potentially even a competitor for money from the congress. How did you see them?

RESCH: Well, that varied over time. The International Programs Office of the Fish and Wildlife Service [Fish and Wildlife Service's International Affairs Program]

manages their congressional appropriations, and, in some cases, through interagency transfers. They established a wildlife stamp program which provided funding and gave generally annual grants but renewed them for several years. NGOs would have multiple years of funding and a new grant every year, is the nature of the process. The focus was pretty hard towards the wildlife aspect of course.

Congress at one point in time, became frustrated with USAID management of CARPE. So, one year, and whether it was just to get USAID attention, they said, “Well, we'll have Fish and Wildlife Service manage CARPE, rather than USAID.". That resulted in some back and forth conversations. Others within Congress thought that wasn't a good idea. The net result was the Fish and Wildlife Service got more money than it had for its activities in central Africa, and USAID kept its level of resources. The experience had a function of almost doubling the level of effort in the countries, but it did get the intention of USAID, and how to keep Tim Rieser satisfied.

Tim Rieser, who recently retired from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was the godfather of mountain gorillas and elephants and CARPE, and responsible for a growing biodiversity earmark. How the agency is currently dealing with that I'm not completely sure, but I know Tim did retire and whether somebody else is taking up that torch or not.

Just like USAID, the Fish and Wildlife Service Program has had its ups and downs over time, with staff changes, and program focus over time. I'm five years out of the loop here. The history is that the Fish and Wildlife Service thought they could do it better. Not everybody in congress agreed.

Q: May I ask you one last question. That is, if you go back to the University of Minnesota to people graduating from the forestry program and they're interested in international work, what would you encourage them to think about?

RESCH: Peace Corps if there are environmental programs out there. Peace Corps experience is a little bit like being an eagle scout or a Fulbright fellow. It has got a certain halo effect as kindred souls, and it may be some of that same emotion that helps with Harvard and Yale and university affinity groups. So, it's a shared experience. Those of us that have done the Peace Corps thing think that that is a useful experience.

For the interns, if you will, when interns enter USAID, they're in their late thirties and forties. I'm unsure what the current situation is, but mid careers and internships kind of have some level of training, a probationary language training. The thing is how USAID hires the generalists, the direct hires to manage programs or the senior scientists that manage programs to AD (administratively determined) appointments who rise and fall with the administration that they're associated with. So, the pathway to USAID is Peace Corps or university research, foundations, NGOs, or consulting firms.

Some consulting firms do a very good job of taking bright, young, eager people on to manage the backstop programs. One because they're eager, bright, young and cheap. That provides levels of responsibility and authority that they become competitive to join USAID and be interesting to do a resume analysis of the successful applicants to

USAID first hires. But it's not. “Oh, I have a bachelor's degree in political science or grant management or conflict resolution, I'd like to work for USAID.” It used to be that. Well, go find someplace else to work, and if your interest is conflict and peacebuilding, it's much more interesting to work for an NGO or a consulting firm. That's to be managing a grant or contract on peacebuilding, and they're doing all the interesting TDY [temporary duty assignment] or temporary duty and such. Yeah, so that's the path. The path is probably ten to fifteen years of prior experience to come into USAID, to be competitive to come into USAID successfully.

Q: All right. There must be other things I should have asked you, but I didn't.

RESCH: I don't regret my career. I feel like I made contributions over time. There were periods of time where I was working fifty to sixty hours. I would fly home on a Friday night after consultancy, and spent Saturday transiting Europe to get home so that I could go back to work on Monday. Prior to the internet, in my first cycle with the Africa bureau, Tony Pryor, Mike McGahuey, Walter Knausenberger and I would be at the office on Saturday and Sunday—because what we were doing was important in the design and evaluation of natural resource interventions. Sometimes I felt that I liked my job, and even if I was independently wealthy, this was something that I would be doing. I thought with my French language skills and Arabic language, understanding Islam, some level of cultural sensitivity and sympathy, that I was a good person to be in that place at that time of my life in programs when things were happening.

On the other side, I turned seventy-five in July. I've seen some of my colleagues die, never having a retirement. One of my sharpest memories is when Dan Deely passed, people had to go into his office, figure out what all the balls were in the air and how to box up his stuff and send it home to his widow. Ruth Bader Ginsburg worked until she died doing something that was important. Those people who want to work until they die, should keep on doing that as long as we're able, and can make contributions.

On the other side, life is short and I'm glad I got married at age seventy-four. Whether we have five, ten, twenty, or twenty-five years together, that's good. I'm going to be active with the Moroccan American diaspora. I've joined a billiards league. I became a birder which has become a motivation for travel. I took those two sabbaticals to the southwest parks and the Canadian Rockies with that nagging fear that I would be really pissed if I died young. Garrison Keillor says when you're eighty years old, you're now too old to die young.

So, part of the conclusion is to work on your passion and do good—the Boy Scouts motto, “Leave your campsite in a better condition than when you found it.”. Pay back those gifts that you've been given from each according to his ability, to each according to who is in need. Use the gifts that God gave you. You have a responsibility to use those gifts, whatever they are. For too many people including myself, the health emergency was a wakeup call. It's a shame that we have to conclude that after a heart attack or stroke. The disability or the disappearance of your vocation, helps us to walk away. Walking away is also very rewarding. Enjoy working but don't work so hard that you lose the other parts of life. I mean I don't know where the original quote

comes from, but it is: No person has ever said on their deathbed, “I wish I would have spent more time at work”. So, that's the conclusion.

Q: All right.

End of interview