ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

RON MARCOUX

JULY 2016

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED FOR

FISHERIES DIVISION

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

HELENA MONTANA

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY MARGIE PETERSON

INTERVIEWER: This is Margie Peterson. I am a Certified Oral Historian and will be conducting and transcribing the interviews. Today is Friday, June 10, 2016. I am doing the Oral History Project for Fisheries and I'm interviewing Ron Marcoux at his home in Helena. So Ron would you like to start with your biographical data, when you grew up, where you went to school and a little bit about your parents and family.

MARCOUX: I was born in 1942 in Rochester, New Hampshire. My folks ran country stores through the years. We started in Farmington, New Hampshire and ultimately moved up to Maine when I was 12 years old. Pretty well what I call home was Maine. I lived in a little town of West Minot, Maine with the church steeple, grange hall, and country store that my Dad ran so I had a lot of experience dealing with people at the store. A relatively small one in those days. I had a sister and two brothers which were both younger. Started school, I went to Edward Little High School in Auburn, Maine. Played baseball and hockey. I found during the summer time I always wanted to be outside. I had to work at the store a lot so they gave me a little freedom. So I threw hay bales in the summer and when I could get out in the fall I'd pick Macintosh apples, our favorite for anybody from Maine. In those days I couldn't stay away from fishing and hunting. I fished all the time. These little brook trout, the ones in Maine they have, ice fishing for pickerel and hunt whitetail deer and grouse in the fall. And I spent most of my time, any free time I could get out there doing that. Maine was a great state for that for kids growing up. From there, I helped one project in the summer time where I could work on the Blister Rust control program which affected the white pine in Maine which is a species back there. I got my

initiation in 2,4D and herbicides, and got doused in that and maybe wonder why I'm still alive from those days. I decided I wanted to go to college so I applied to the Forestry school, it was in New York. I was told I was on the waiting list. But I'm a type-A guy and I wasn't about to wait so I went down and joined the Army in December, 1960. I spent three years in the army, Fort Dix, New Jersey and Fort Gordon, Georgia, and I had the choice of going to officer candidate school after I was in the pole lineman school and became an instructor. I elected to want to stay outside and see the world rather than go to Officer Candidate School so they sent me to Germany for two years. So in '61 and '62 I was in Germany and had a chance to see that country and a little bit of Europe. I enjoyed it, but was really happy to come back to the good ol' USA. I went to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. Actually while I was in the service, I took some forestry school, forestry courses for college credit. I knew I wanted to go to college and I had the GI bill at that time I could utilize, it made it possible for me to go. My folks didn't have that many resources to really allow me to have their help. So from there I went to the University of Montana and I went into Fish and Wildlife Technology. I thought I was going to end up in the Forestry school but I ended up in a different curriculum and today I don't regret it. It worked out very well. And I got a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1967. I started college in 1963. I graduated from there but while there, a couple of summers I worked up in, let's see in 1965 and 1966, as a summer helper for Fish, Wildlife and Parks up in Glasgow. I was ready to and realized that I couldn't get a job in Fisheries unless I had a Master's Degree so I applied at Montana State University which was different at that time. So much competition between schools. And while I was in Fisheries, I ended up getting accepted to the Cooperative Fisheries Unit under Dr. Richard Graham. We decided I would do a fish population habitat survey for my Masters on Spring Creek up in Lewistown which covered the years from the summer of 1967 and 1968. I completed my thesis and graduated with a Master's Degree in Fish and Wildlife Management from Montana State University. I applied to Alaska and Montana for a job; I was ready to go see the world.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, a nice part of the world.

MARCOUX: Montana accepted me right off as they were looking for fisheries biologists at that time. So I immediately took that job and began my career with Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, that's a great summary of your background, your growing up. If we can back up a little bit, can you tell us your parents' names.
MARCOUX: My Dad's name was Gideon, Gideon Marcoux. My Mother's name was Helen.

INTERVIEWER: And you had sisters and brothers? What were their names?
MARCOUX: I had one sister and two brothers, all younger. All three years apart. Their names were Judi, Philip (Phil), and Arthur (Art).

INTERVIEWER: And what type of store did your parents have?
MARCOUX: In those days you had, every little town had a general merchandise store. You pumped gas; we even had kerosene in a pump in the store if you can believe that today. Cut meat and a small produce area and the rest was all the canned goods, etc.

INTERVIEWER: That's great. A little bit about when you were in Germany. What was your rank there?
MARCOUX: I started in the service they made me Acting Corporal relatively quickly after I got out of basic training and the pole lineman school. They had me continue as an instructor teaching people how to climb poles, how to do various things from a lineman standpoint. I got promoted to Sergeant and I was a Sergeant when I went over to Germany.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember… you said you liked being outdoors when you were a kid. Do you remember any certain or specific event when you realized that's what you wanted to do for your career in fishing and hunting?
MARCOUX: The earliest I go back, would have been my Mother taking me down to a little, small brook and we sat on a rock and caught brook trout and I caught a number of them. I can remember that day clearly and from that point on I got interested in fishing. I just got interested in anything with water, bugs, turtles, you name it. I was always looking in my early years. And I got to the point when I was 12, I would go catch fish with my hands in the summer when the pools were almost out of water. And tickle the belly of the fish and grab them. I got it down to almost a science.

INTERVIEWER: And how old were you when that was happening?
MARCOUX: Probably between 8 and 12.

INTERVIEWER: Ah, the formative years. We do remember things back then sometimes better than what happened two years ago. They seem to have a mark in our memories. So we talked a little bit about college and your Masters. Did you work anywhere else before you started with Fish, Wildlife and Parks as the summer help?
MARCOUX: When I was in college my first year I had a job with Yellowstone National Park with Blister Rust control, if you can believe that. My Dad called me and he said that he needed help since he was moving to another town nearby to a bigger store. If I could come back to help he'd help me with college. So I did that. Then the next two summers I got a job as a summer helper up in Fort Peck. That job came about with Boyd Opheim who was the fish manager in Missoula. And it was with Jim Posewitz who was up in Glasgow at that time in Fisheries. Poz asked Boyd to hire somebody to find him a summer helper. Well that was my indoctrination with Fisheries. And I started working with Poz.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, how lucky you were and how lucky he was.
MARCOUX: I thought I was going to go into wildlife but then I got out there and touching fish I got to work in fisheries.

INTERVIEWER: Wow, that's quite a start. Very interesting. So Fort Peck was before Dillon, which was 1969.
MARCOUX: When I went up to Fort Peck, there were a couple things that we were involved in that I helped out with. We were surveying Fort Peck Reservoir. Just trying to find the different fish species that were out there. So we did a lot of gill nettings and trap nettings. Spent a lot of days out there, I found out it was one of the hottest places in the world. And I know what sunburn is. There was a lot of boating activity. We would go up and check on paddlefish at Slippery Ann. The other thing that we did, I went with another helper and we surveyed farm ponds throughout the various counties up there in Region 6. I got a chance to see a lot of country and was just amazed at the variety of fisheries in those ponds. When I went there the second year, I was working with Jack Robinson who was doing some graduate student work. We went

down and found the paddlefish that we used in the dredge cuts below Fort Peck Reservoir. We were probably at that time which would have been '66 were the first ones going out there and we'd putt along in our boat and throw treble hooks at the paddlefish as they would take off from sitting there sunning themselves and hook them. I ended up catching a melanistic paddlefish which is a black one and I wrote it up for *Copeia* which was a research publication. So that further engrained me into the fisheries world. I haven't looked at that publication for years.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, we might have to try to get a copy of that.
MARCOUX: Then, that first year Jim thought since we were catching a lot of Goldeye up there and we thought we may be able to get a commercial fishery established at Fork Peck since they were so abundant up there. He had me start smoking them. It was a big business in Canada, popular in Canada but the Canadian fish were bigger by three or four inches than what was in Fort Peck. Although the fish came out tasting really well, they weren't quite big enough to hit the commercial market. We took the fish and we'd take them down to the local taverns and distribute them to see how the local folks reacted to them.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, just give them away?
MARCOUX: We'd give them away. We didn't accomplish a lot but we did get a few free beers out of that.

INTERVIEWER: Sure, I was going to say, probably a little benefit from that.
MARCOUX: So other than that I did go up on vacation and help Poz in the winter time where we used the open prairie ice jigger, I got used to using that. And checking on some of the ponds and put a gill net under the ice and pull it out. And found out, that Glasgow again the land of extremes, you can freeze to death up there. But it was another learning experience. The same time we were up there we were helping collect different fish species for Dr. Bill Gould at Montana State University was collecting so I went out with him a couple of times and we got different fish for the collection at the University. And that was stimulating because it gave me a chance to get more interested in the different species and learn more about them. So those couple years in Glasgow using different equipment and the ability to see different species was really great. What I remember from that was that there were no salmon in the lake, there were a

few northern but not many, the walleye population was very limited. So the world has changed at Fort Peck what it is today.

INTERVIEWER: So were you an employee at that time?
MARCOUX: No just for the summer, I'd take vacation time in the winter. I was a sophomore and junior in college.

INTERVIEWER: So you were going from Missoula to Fort Peck. Nice long drive. So after that you went back to Missoula and you got your degrees which we talked about. And then your first job was at the department?
MARCOUX: So the next thing I went over to Bozeman for my graduate student work. And what they did was hire a helper for me to do my graduate student work. Fish, Wildlife and Parks was involved in that study. Dick Johnson was the fish manager in Great Falls at that time and he was the local overseer and Dr. Graham was the one who assisted me developing the study and working on it. We worked on five sections of Spring Creek. It was another learning experience in fisheries. One of the things that was most notable in those days was the fish coming out of the hatchery had gas bubble disease, 'popeye' as they called it. They couldn't swim very well and ultimately it could kill them. When I went out on Big Spring Creek and walked down the creek just below the hatchery, I saw a fish come out from those big undercut banks and it was a rainbow, I couldn't believe the size of it, it looked like a steelhead. I figured it was 10 to 12 pounds. It just blew me away. I went down by another hole and saw another big one move. Well that was one of my sections that I selected. When we were electrofishing we came up with a number of large number large trout, both rainbows and browns. The biggest we electrofished was a 16 pound brown. Now it took me a while to figure out why they were all big here when the next section down about three miles downstream had smaller fish, the big one would be maybe 18 inches. What it was, it was the 'popeye' fish they were throwing out of the hatcheries, disposing them they used to toss them in the creek and they'd roll down the creek those big fish would come and eat them. So there was a big fish fishery built on those 'popeye' fish. That has changed. Maybe I was partially responsible for it and called the attention to the 'popeye' fish, but we realized that there were other problems with the hatchery at that time. A nitrogen gas bubble disease problem.

INTERVIEWER: This was in Lewistown?
MARCOUX: In the Lewistown hatchery. We had one other section below the sewage treatment plant downstream to see what the impact was on the fish there. That was interesting. The good water coming in, the cold water, there were fish in abundance there, and big numbers of fish come in where the water mixed. And then I was also looking at the cover aspect, trying to draw a correlation of the difference between the amount of cover and the fishery. The vegetation, riparian habitat. So that was part of the study effort as well.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember if you did any reports at that time? Maybe we could get some copies.
MARCOUX: I've got the thesis. It's a full write up. When I was at a Fisheries meeting a couple of years ago and gave a talk on stream preservation act history, I stayed around and listened to the talk on what was going on with Spring Creek in Lewistown, it's still being studied. And work being done. A section of the stream ultimately has been rechanneled and has become a nice fishery. Things have changed over the years but when they put up the chart on all of the studies that had been done in the years and what the populations were, they had my study in there.

INTERVIEWER: Your study - it was probably the basis of all of it, the foundation. That's great.
MARCOUX: So that was my graduate student years. I did remember during that particular period, I went and helped Dick Vincent on a trip over to the Clark Fork River which still sticks in my mind. What they had, they called Red Tide in the old days. Clark Fork between Butte and Drummond. They had big settling ponds and one of the settling ponds broke and the water from the settling pond went down the river. All the metals precipitated out so the river turned red. It went almost all the way down to Missoula. We went there and did some electrofishing to see if there were any fish left there in the river and to see what the impact was. There were so many heavy metals in the water that the electricity couldn't go more than about three inches. So our electrical probes didn't work. Everything was dead at that time. Just another experience in recognizing how polluted we were on some of our rivers at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Sure, from the mining.

MARCOUX: After my graduation and my thesis I then was hired by Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Bud Gaffney was the fish manager in Bozeman who I worked for and Leroy Ellig was the regional supervisor. So I began my fishery biologist career as the regional fisheries biologist in the great city of Dillon, Montana, which I still dearly love. In those days, in the early years, the thing that I remember was that without question, Dick Vincent was one of the pioneers in fisheries. There were others before him that did a lot of work but Dick helped move forward the electrofishing capability.

INTERVIEWER: And he was from Bozeman.

MARCOUX: He was from Bozeman. He was regional fisheries biologist. He's the one that basically taught us how to use the gear. So that the main thing that was occurring at that time was to get a good handle on our fish populations on our streams. When I started out in Dillon there were a couple primary things that I felt were, well more than that, we had the Beaverhead River below Clark Canyon Reservoir which turned into a trophy trout fishery below the dam. And as I reflected on it once I was there, it was something, somewhat like Lewistown. It had again a gas bubble or gas disease that was prevalent and didn't have much reproduction in the stream. Some of the trout were six, seven, eight pounds and were common in the upper reaches there. The other thing that was happening at that same time was the irrigation water being stored at the dam. They would essentially shut the dam off to raise the water and significantly reduce the flows in the Beaverhead River. So we began to develop baseline data and establish some sections on the Beaverhead to monitor what's going on there and try to figure out if there was anything that we could do. The greatest thing was the dewatering aspect of it and trying to work with the dam people and the irrigators too. Try to find a way to get a minimum flow on that river. During those years we were just getting data. We were learning, so we weren't successful immediately, but down the road that has occurred. Now they don't totally shut it off; they leave a minimum flow for the river.

INTERVIEWER: So the ranchers also were just starting to understand how the water flow made the difference.

MARCOUX: The fishing at that time, compared to today, with all the commercial outfitting going on in particular, was considerably less than what you have today. I think with the dam flows, the big fish aren't there because the gas disease ultimately quit over time and the fishery readjusted to the water levels that we could give them and it's a tremendous fishery today. The Clark Canyon Beaverhead area was more focused on the dam and its impact. But over on the Big Hole River, there was a different picture. I want to give credit to the folks that started the Blue Ribbon Trout Stream designation. It gave credibility to our streams back probably in the '50s, I think. The Big Hole was one of them. It was a beautiful stream. Still one of my favorites. So I started electrofishing on the Big Hole and there were a couple of things that were playing out there. Dewatering was one of them. The various irrigation practices, I can remember in the town of Melrose, you'd be lucky you'd have a very minimal flow between holes and the pools barely could keep the fish alive. I saw the lower river down near Twin Bridges totally dry. So that was a big issue.

INTERVIEWER: And that was 1969, 1970?

MARCOUX: That would have been in 1969. Started right off on those two rivers and got the background data. The other things that were playing out there was that hatchery fish were still planted in the rivers in those days. I saw, below Melrose, some of the big fish that were used to eating hatchery fish. Really big trout living off the hatchery fish. And the hatchery fish didn't survive very long on the river. So the populations were relatively low with the same combinations of hatchery fish and dewatering. The same time I was down there the other thing all the biologists did, Al Elser and myself, worked with Dick Vincent. Dick Vincent was doing his pioneering work on hatchery versus wild trout on the Madison. You'd go over there spring, fall and do several sections there along with our sections, so we shared help in those days with the fisheries biologists doing the predominant electrofishing out there.

INTERVIEWER: And that was on the Big Hole River?

MARCOUX: On the Big Hole River and others. When I was in Dillon, that was during that period of '69 and '70 Dick was really involved in his Madison River hatchery fish studies. So we assisted as much as we possibly could. And the results have paid off in spades. The other projects I worked on at that time, there were grayling in the Upper Red Rock River area and Elk

Lake and on the Big Hole. When you went to work, mainly the lower reaches in the Big Hole, you didn't do a lot of grayling work there, just to see what was there in the Upper Big Hole. But grayling was an interest to us because they were unique down in that country. And the surveys you did on the Red Rock River, above Upper Red Rock Lake, we found grayling coming out of the upper lake and spawning in the river. They were big grayling, 17, 16 inches. So we monitored them to some degree to get baseline data on them as well. On Elk Lake I did a study as they were using a little tributary stream that wasn't even a foot wide for spawning. I put traps in there and monitored the grayling coming out. What was interesting at that point is that the little grayling would migrate out at night and stay in the little creek during the day. So that was just an interest to see if we couldn't continue to have grayling down there.

INTERVIEWER: So is this about the time when you first started thinking about not planting in the rivers, or is that a little bit later?
MARCOUX: That was a little bit later. Dick was still in the middle of his studies which showed the need but we weren't ready to decide how to deal with it. Later we had an opportunity to do that.

INTERVIEWER: We can get to that part later. Good. I want to make sure we do.
[End of Recording #1, 6/10/2016]

[Beginning of Recording #2, 6/10/2016]
MARCOUX: Well, talking about the Big Hole River, the other thing that was occurring at that time and was pronounced I think throughout most of our trout streams at varying degrees was stream alteration. The ranchers didn't like to see the river move and their solution to it was to riprap the streams, put the big rock in and try to contain it so it wouldn't eat up their banks but it would push it over to others, they didn't realize that. Or on the other side of their places. They'd get the bulldozer in to get the irrigation water and essentially cut off all water going down streams like the Big Hole. And other places, and trying to get the water away from the banks they'd just go in and scoop out the streambed. That was happening on the Big Hole. There was a lot of money available in those days from the Corps of Engineers to riprap the streams. They basically had the Conservation Districts administering the program. Free money, in essence, to

put rock in our rivers to keep the stream between its banks. It was incredible the amount of activity that was taking place on the Lower Big Hole. One of the things I did, I was fighting just to save a tree one time on the banks and it turned into an uproar, and the folks, Jim Posewitz, Ralph Boland and John Peters came down from Helena to give me a hand with the local folks who were about ready to lynch me, I was wondering if I was still going to have a job six months into my fisheries career.

INTERVIEWER: Oh dear, well you were standing your ground.
MARCOUX: I was standing my ground at a time it was tenuous to do so, I think. It was something that was so prevalent that you just couldn't turn your head to it. There was federal dollars coming in for the program. The other thing we did was sample streams, Blacktail Creek, Ruby River and get a feel for those streams. And then I worked on Poindexter Slough. Poindexter was a spring creek right outside of Dillon and had one of the highest fish populations that we found. Beautiful, beautiful stream. As a result of those studies, what ended up happening-years later I got a chance to have a hand in it as well; we purchased Poindexter Slough for a fishing access site, a good size one down there now. I'm told that they've now done some rehabilitative work on it. It was a stream well worth taking time on it and taking care of. But we didn't recognize the value of it until we did the electrofishing on it. The early years was a lot of just getting baseline data; learning what you had in the streams and figuring out what you needed to do to make it better – either curtail practices or enhance it one way or another.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, gave you a good basis. And in those days we kept the data by hand, we didn't have the laptops and software like we do now. So I suppose you went from field work into the office to write it all up.
MARCOUX: You had to write it all up. The benefit was, I don't know if they are doing it today, but you had to write up reports for the federal aid funds you were receiving. What it forced you to do was to put down and show where you'd been, what you'd done, what you were finding that could be useful in other years. I heard they curtailed that later down the road; I don't know if they are still requiring it. That was a real benefit, I felt, to have to do it; we had to do it and it forced us to make sure we got that data out there.

INTERVIEWER: And of course since you were in the beginning in engineering the tests and data you probably did need to do it.
MARCOUX: One of the other things that I observed while I was out there learning my area, etc., cattle grazing was really denuding the banks. And sheep raising was big in Beaverhead County at that time. What played out through that particular period was sage brush spraying became the mantra; let's spray sagebrush and we'll get more grass and therefore we can put more cows out there. That was something I called attention to all the time and took pictures of. You didn't really have any hard tools to deal with it. There was a guy named Gus Hormay, that the wildlife folks brought out to deal with grazing, a professor from California and he put on a workshop in Dillon. I was the only fisheries person to go to it. He and the work he did with the rest-rotation grazing systems showed that if done right you could graze and enhance aquatic vegetation. That was an education for me. I became a believer that it had a lot of merits down the road in fisheries as well as wildlife. Well I was busy enough in those years. Then I moved on to thinking about a job which opened up in Missoula. And loving fisheries, maybe one day I'd even like to be the chief of fisheries. Maybe it was a goal set back that early, gain experience here and see if I can ever do that. A job opened up in Missoula and I thought here's an opportunity for enhanced experience. I'd gone to college there and knew the area reasonably well. I decided I'd apply and give it a try. It was under Boyd Opheim, the fisheries manager who originally hired me to be the summer help back in the '60's.

INTERVIEWER: So I didn't ask you, were you married at that time?
MARCOUX: I got married when I was down in Dillon but we divorced eventually.

INTERVIEWER: So you applied for the job in Missoula.
MARCOUX: So I applied for the job in Missoula and was accepted and began in Missoula about 1972. There were a lot of opportunities. I was the only fisheries biologist. There was a fish manager and one fisheries biologist in Region 2. So I had the whole world at my fingertips to figure out working with Boyd Opheim what to do. One the big issues down there was pollution from the pulp mill. Hoerner Waldorf was the pulp mill. In the spring, they had these huge settling ponds and they would discharge into the river. And it was under the mantra that the 'solution to pollution is dilution'. But the amount they put in the river was incredible. Two

huge pipes dumping into the river and the river would turn black where it was coming in. And brown below it. During the high flow they'd just pump it out.

INTERVIEWER: So this was the Clark Fork?
MARCOUX: This was the Clark Fork below the mouth of the Bitterroot. So I got involved working with Clancy Gordon, Dr. Gordon, from the University of Montana, a very environmentally-oriented advocate and trying to figure out what impacts were there. I did some electrofishing to see what the fishery was doing but it was a big river and our electrofishing gear at that time and the way we did it didn't lend itself to easily doing it. Did some crayfish studies to see if the crayfish were making it. I did some fish taste testing to see if there was a difference above and below which there was. But I think the most significant event was one night I went out overnight and I took oxygen samples in the river above and below where it was being discharged. And the oxygen level, because of all the fiber and so forth coming from the mill, was depleting the oxygen significantly in the river below. We did have some water quality standards but I got that information out and the dialogue was just starting, Dr. Gordon was pushing really hard. It just showed that the more we could find the impacts, the better chance we had to do something about it. Today you don't have to worry about it from the pumping standpoint, the pulp mill is gone. Things do change overtime. But they did do a much better job over time with their releases then they had previously.

INTERVIEWER: Goodness. And they were allowed to put it in the river?
MARCOUX: Yes, they were allowed to put it in the river. That's where we were on that. We still had the Upper Clark Fork River with the mining pollution coming down. The Anaconda Company had the big red tides, as we called them. Started doing better work with their settling ponds up there. Slowly the fisheries started to come back on the upper reach. But what had happened, a couple things that most people weren't aware of, all those tailings that washed down in the river would wash up on the banks, along the river in the Drummond country. I'd occasionally get a call that they'd see dead fish in the river. And I'd go out and on a nice day I could check and I could see where it started and where it stopped. There was a lot of work being done by department folks, looking at aquatic insects, Al Wipperman, Ralph Boland. They were very aggressive working on the Clark Fork River for water quality. But I'd go up and it took me

a while to figure out what was going on. We'd get a huge thunderstorm, heavy rain; it would wash some of the stuff in from the sides and sediment coming down from the tailings. And you'd have fish kill for a mile of the river. But if you walked up there thinking you'd find a source there wouldn't be one. But it took some creative thinking to recognize that's what's occurring up there. Today they are still talking about trying to pick up some sediments deposits along the river.

INTERVIEWER: Like for cleanup?

MARCOUX: But the other thing that occurred was that the red tides used to go to Missoula, the red water, the sediments would fall out at Milltown Dam and be deposited there. I hadn't been there very long and they had to do some work on the dam, drop the level of the dam. When they did, I went out and the river started coursing through several layers of different sediments. I got bottles of the sediments from the different levels. And you can go to different levels and some of the bottles would be heavy and others would be light. When you'd have a huge event like high water and would deposit significant amount of heavy metals there.

While they were discharging, where it was rolling through there I did some work putting in live cages. Another year they did the same thing again and I saw some fish swimming on top of the water and their gills were coated which was indicative of heavy metal pollution. So the poor old Clark Fork was suffering. That one hit the paper; see if fish would survive in the Blackfoot and in the upper river and below to see where it was coming from. The hatchery fish down below the dam all died. We put hatchery fish in and they all died. And played it out and there was a huge meeting with the University. In those days, Montana Power was king and you didn't win, you just didn't win. Since then they've taken the dam out; the town couldn't use their water because they finally recognized the degree of pollution that was there. They put in a new channel and did a lot of work. So I credit a lot of people from what we had in the early days that I saw then and tried to be able to deal with it, to stay with it and following it through and making things considerably better. You can look back and say, wow, there's an impact here and we've had a chance to rectify it.

INTERVIEWER: Sure, we've made some good choices. I can imagine the hatchery fish were going from pristine environment in the raceways to going to these heavy metals.

MARCOUX: But they were okay above the dam and the Blackfoot River as well. They all died below the dam. So that just tells you how bad it was. Plus we had some data on water too; we were looking at water quality that was telling you essentially the same thing. You just don't recognize the degree. One thing that really struck me during that one particular event, I went down the Rattlesnake Creek coming in and that river was just stacked with fish that had come out of the Clark Fork to get out of that pollution. They moved up into the Rattlesnake just to get out of it.

INTERVIEWER: So again when was this?

MARCOUX: This was in 1972 and 1973. So I'll probably talk about 1972 -1974 at this time. The other thing that was very prevalent, like I saw on the Big Hole was all the activity with bulldozing the streams and using car bodies. It was incredible. The Upper East Fork of the Bitterroot for several miles it was just scooped out and it blew my mind. At that time there was a movement to get the word out on what was happening. And I got involved in those days about Lolo Creek and there is a federal aid report that showed about the third of the steam had been altered significantly. The stream had been shortened considerably in the lower reach. You could give talks and just show on slides what was occurring. It was extremely beneficial. There was a move to get the bill, SB 310, in place during those years. It was in recognition of the problem, a lot of biologists getting out and talking about it and finally getting others to buy in. I think all our fisheries people in the trout stream country had a hand in making the case on that and doing some work and showing how badly the streams were degraded.

INTERVIEWER: I know I can get a copy of SB 310. Can we back up for one second? Where I live in Bozeman, I live right near Bridger Creek and there are, of course, still car bodies in the bank. Do you know how and why that came to be, where they thought these car bodies were heavy enough to keep the banks from eroding?

MARCOUX: The history on it was gain back to this mentality that we've got to stop the stream from moving. We don't want to lose, the ranchers lose any of their land. So we're going to stop that stream. Car bodies were cheap. They could just push them in and they felt they would stay and hold and they were filled with gravel. But ultimately with the higher flows, it'd leak out underneath them. Bury them in some cases. Some are still visible today. They're still out there,

remnants of those days. But it was purely to fight the river. It was the way they grew up. They couldn't fight it. When you talked to them, it was in their blood from their Dad and it was very strong in their feelings. It became more of education and understanding of the other values of the streams that had to come to the forefront.

INTERVIEWER: And those old cars, you didn't have to buy them, you'd just find them and use them.

MARCOUX: I'd see banks that would have thirty or so on them. The other thing they'd try would be to tie in trees and anchor them to other trees but the water would come in under the trees and scoop out and there'd be cables and trees down the river. That was all the kind of activity that was taking place. We all got involved in making a case for that. The Stream Preservation Act prior had helped make a strong case for the streams. This added to it and the recognition of it I think moved us forward to ultimately legislation. It was frustrating times but educational times to show the issue. That's part of what you did.

INTERVIEWER: And the ranchers, like you were saying, the land is part of them and they could be like third generation on this ranch and…

MARCOUX: If you had a crop right along the river and you'd start to see ten, thirty acres go out and go down the Clark Fork that was difficult to swallow. It was their livelihood. That was difficult for them. You couldn't blame them, it was an educational thing.

INTERVIEWER: It was something to work together to find the common solutions.

MARCOUX: But in those days it was adversarial.

INTERVIEWER: It was them and us. Sure.

MARCOUX: Very much so. In those days, that was at the time that Earth Day came about in recognition of the planet. You had a chance to get more information out but you had what seemed like an audience that was ready if they could understand it to help support it.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, that's great.

MARCOUX: So working towards SB 310 was important. To get to that, one of the hearings we were at, I was with the fish manager, Boyd Opheim. Boyd was a tough old bugger. We were sitting there and they said how many irrigators do not support the legislation, raise your hand. Every landowner raised their hands which was most of the people there. They then asked how many irrigators support the legislation and Opie, we called him Opie, raised his hand. I nudged him afterwards and asked him, Opie, why did you raise your hand? And he said I irrigate my lawn don't I? He said I'm as much an irrigator as they are.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, of course.

MARCOUX: You felt like you had to be engaged. And at that same time, there was Stream Preservation Act activity going on and you as a biologist would go out and help. We were dealing with the St. Regis River and the Interstate went up through there. And trying not to straighten it out and you go up there today and you'd see the river go through bridges and so forth. Lot of credit to Ralph Boland and John Peters really a catalyst in getting the legislation but Ralph in implementing it. He'd work with us and I'd get out with the forest biologist and try to put some stream enhancement measures in -- big rocks, for example, to create holes and pools so forth on the St. Regis. Our knowledge at that time was relatively limited on what really worked out there so we'd do the best we can. With today's science they would do things differently than we did back then.

INTERVIEWER: So that was a federal biologist who was with you?

MARCOUX: That was Forest Service biologist. There was Forest Service land near the river. Gordon Haugen, was a biologist I worked with, great to work with and very helpful. The other thing that happened, some of the work on the interstate up around Drummond, when it was put in they made some man-made meanders to compensate where they had to straighten along the Interstate. I did a little study on the straight areas versus the man-made meanders to show there were significantly more fish in the man-made meanders than there were in the straight sections. Which gave credibility again just documenting what you did was better. The negative that I saw was there was big rock, no dirt or anything to get vegetation established. And it's taken thirty years to get the vegetation back. And today they do things differently with adding vegetation and soil with it when they do it to get things established.

INTERVIEWER: So when it's straight there's not as many pools for the fish?
MARCOUX: When it's straight there's a couple things that happen. The water pools down through it, blasts out below it and starts changing the channel and sucks it down from up above changing the channel as well. It becomes a moving system trying to regain the length. When you have a straight section you don't have that diversity in habitat you do with the meanders.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, thank you for that. That's very interesting.
MARCOUX: A lot of that information is buried somewhere in the federal aid reports.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, we'll see what we can find. It would be nice to have some of those.
MARCOUX: One of the other things, we were still doing mountain lake survey work and during that particular period I went in with helicopter and surveyed seventy-seven lakes in the Rock Creek drainage and the Flint Creek Range. Near Drummond, Region 2, and documented what was in and wasn't in, in size and so forth. Some lakes were planted and some weren't. You had a chance to set how you were doing things. Another element of the job. Georgetown Lake was a significant fishery. The Anaconda Company had a lot of people employed. They liked to fish when they were off. They'd go out there at night and literally Georgetown Lake was aglow with the lanterns with the ice fishing, a lot of ice fishing going on. It was planted with hatchery rainbow and had brook trout and salmon. I did a creel census up there to get a handle on how things were going. Rock Creek was another one of the blue ribbon trout streams and it became a dominant target that we needed to work on. I set up several sections on Rock Creek to get baseline data on what was in there. There was a lot of potential logging activity that the Forest Service was involved in. And a lot of people didn't want to see Rock Creek change. We just helped get the visibility of Rock Creek out. What's funny in some respect and I'll talk about it later, but to get the support you need to protect something, you have to advertise how good it is and you kill it to save it. You could see more non-residents coming into Rock Creek in abundance. I found on Rock Creek that the fishermen were selective towards the larger fish. So that's something to tuck away because you're only there for three years. That's what was happening out there and I dealt with it later on when I went to Bozeman as fish manager to provide an opportunity to let fish grow in some of the streams.

INTERVIEWER: Isn't there a lot of private land on Rock Creek too? It's hard to get on?
MARCOUX: Just the lower end; first twelve miles. The other issue associated was the road. There was a big discussion. Should the road be improved all the way up through Rock Creek or should it be left gravel. There was a large fight to keep it gravel, to keep the pressure down to some degree. It lasted for a long time before they finally paved the lower stretch. They still haven't paved the upper end. I think it lets Rock Creek be Rock Creek, at the same time it would have a very negative impact.

INTERVIEWER: Of course, the easier you can get to it…
MARCOUX: I think that gives you a rough idea of what was happening at that time. There were plenty of things to do back then.
[End of Recording #2, 6/10/2016]

[Beginning of Recording #1, 6/30/2016]
INTERVIEWER: This is Margie Peterson. Today is Thursday, June 30, 2016. I am conducting the second session with Ron Marcoux at his home in Helena. So Ron I think we ended your first session with your employment in 1974 in Missoula. And from there you went to Bozeman, is that correct?
MARCOUX: That's right. I really enjoyed working over there in Region 2. I had gone to college there. But I was gaining experience there; it gave me a whole new opportunity to look at the project activity that we talked about – the Hoerner Waldorf Pulp Mill, Rock Creek, Georgetown Lake, stream disturbance, etc.. When I saw the job open up in Region 3, I thought, well, I'd spent some time down there previously working on the Beaverhead and Big Hole and that country and thought it'd be a great opportunity to go back there. I felt the streams and rivers in Region 3 were some of the very best in the country if not the world. So I applied and I was fortunate enough to get accepted, so I moved over to Bozeman and began my adventures in Region 3 as Fish Manager. As Fish Manager, the job is to work with your biologists and figure out what you wanted to work on; what's important, what you need to do, listen to them, see where they need help, back them where they need backing. Probably the biggest thing is just making sure you develop a good plan of action so everyone knows what they need to do. So I

worked on that aspect of it and again, what great people to work with. As I look back now between working first down in the Dillon country, then in the Missoula country and then in Region 3 as Fish Manager those were probably some of the happiest years that I had when I was working. I've heard the same come from my fellow biologists. To talk about what I was involved in – when I say I, a lot of times, I means you do it all yourself, but working in the fisheries business, it's not just I, it's me and working with lots of other people – your biologists are critical to you, the bosses are critical to you, the support from the private organizations might be underestimated how they help you out. The landowners you work with and other professionals you worked with - all of these are complementary to getting a good job done. One of the biggest issues that probably played out through that period was that of stream access. It all began back in the Dillon country on the Beaverhead River. A gentleman by the name of Lowell Hildreth believed he owned the stream going through his property and he could control who went there and didn't think people had the right to float the river. I talked to him several times about it, what could we do as an alternative to take that concern off his shoulders and allow the public to utilize the river and fish it. I worked with him on a proposal to purchase a portion of the stream through his property of his property and put up a fence on the river on each side, we would pay for it, the department, so people would stay within the fences and floaters could float. But that was unacceptable to him. He continued to challenge it and ultimately the Fish and Game Commission got involved in it. I had one, a couple different trips, one Fish and Game Commissioner, Spencer Hegsted, was local and he tried to work with Mr. Hildreth as well. Then we got a rancher on the Fish and Game Commission, Don Bailey. He came down and met with me and Mr. Hildreth and Mr. Hildreth's attorney to talk about what could be done. After that discussion, even Mr. Bailey the rancher Commissioner agreed this was one issue we weren't going to be able to resolve.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell us the name of the river again?
MARCOUX: Beaverhead. Below Clark Canyon Dam.

INTERVIEWER: And he thought he owned the stream as well as the land on both sides.

MARCOUX: Well, he didn't believe the public had the right to go through his property; it became more a floating issue probably than creek bottom although that got involved as we moved forward on the issue.

INTERVIEWER: So what was his lawsuit specifying?
MARCOUX: Ultimately what happened… the next step, Mr. Hildreth tried to curtail floating and put a cable across the river, which was dangerous for floaters and clearly antagonized a lot of folks who had been using the river. That triggered a reaction with some of the private groups -- Trout Unlimited was very active in it, the Skyline Sportsmen's Association, but out of it came a Coalition for Stream Access. Jerry Manley in Butte, Tony Schoonen in Butte, Tom Bugni and many others got actively involved in it and they started raising funds to address it. The Coalition for Stream Access filed a lawsuit and asserted that the public had the right to go through that property.
[End of Recording #1, 6/30/2016]

[Beginning of Recording #2, 6/30/2016]
MARCOUX: So the Stream Access Coalition filed a lawsuit. Jim Getz from Bozeman was the attorney for the group. The issue went to court. Not only was Mr. Hildreth trying to stop floating, Mike Curran over on the Dearborn did as well so it became a very significant issue beyond Beaverhead and a very significant use of our rivers. I've often thought what would life be like if you went to float the river and had to go ask each landowner along the river for permission to take my kids on a float trip. It became very personal to me, even though I did my darndest to try to alleviate the problem; it seemed to be that it had to go to court. As we progressed on the lawsuit, there was another lawsuit that was filed by Lowell Hildreth against Spence Hegsted and Jerry Wells who was the fisheries biologist down there and myself that basically said we were complicit in the stream access issue as public employees. There was a law at that time, an ethics law that had been passed and it was brought forward by the Lieutenant Governor and we were in trouble, we were headed for court. It was a scary time for me because you didn't know if you were going to get hit financially, affect your family, and it was very political. Ultimately, we were successful, that issue went to the Supreme Court as well as the stream access legislation, separately, and fortunately on both of those it was a win for all of us

able to utilize the rivers and we were able to get out from under, what I call in my mind, a political lawsuit.

INTERVIEWER: So this was a big deal back then because the stream access hadn't been dealt with before, hadn't been an issue.
MARCOUX: No it hadn't been an issue previously. People asked permission most of the time and they'd get permission. A lot of people, you didn't have the tremendous amounts of commercial activity occurring that you've got today. It was a different period of time. But the significance of it is phenomenal as to our uses today.

INTERVIEWER: Yes it is, very much so.
MARCOUX: Well once the Supreme Court decision on stream access was made, in the Legislature then it was time to address how the law would be in effect, implemented or addressed. There was a lot of activity relative to, how do you use the stream, where you could go in defining that and it was politically charged. But there were some good legislators that could work across the aisle. I felt that at that time there were some reasonable landowners but it became a landowner sportsman's issue. However, through the diligent work of all the folks what I felt ended up was a reasonable stream access law that has basically been challenged through the legislature in the past. It's come through and it's been utilized by the public and reasonably accepted by most of the landowners out there.
INTERVIEWER: So it's been challenged since then, when new people move to the state and buy land?
MARCOUX: Right. There are out of state interests that have come in and want to challenge the law and tried to take it back to where they have their own private stream. And I think that will probably continue. And the folks who use the river today will have to stand vigilant and be ready to protect their interests in our streams.

INTERVIEWER: So the law has a good foundation in court.
MARCOUX: The law, so far, we've been successfully defending that opportunity and we've got more and more people using our rivers and appreciating that value.

INTERVIEWER: Of course they are. Wow, you should feel good about that.
MARCOUX: So that was something you did as a fish manager, you tried to resolve and when you can't, you get involved but you've got all the help from all the other folks out there who are working with you or on their own to help protect Montana streams. I take pride that we've got that number of folks who truly care about Montana and the opportunities on our streams.

INTERVIEWER: We've got some great rivers because of that, the people working hard and good fishing. So as fish manager, even though you had this team of people to work with, you probably had a vision of where you wanted to go and how to get there.
MARCOUX: Once you've worked on something, you know I talked about the streambed being disturbed with bulldozers and riprap of car bodies and the days I was working in Missoula country and in the Dillon area. And then seeing that people work towards trying to come up with legislation so you had a chance to influence what was going on out on the streambeds, particularly if it is a habitat issue, a significant one in those days. So through that same period when I was working in Missoula and there were people actively working towards getting legislation and then when I went to Bozeman in 1975, Senate Bill 310 was passed and that was the legislation to protect our streambeds. It did not provide total authority to Fish, Wildlife and Parks to curtail activity on rivers but what it did do is provide us an opportunity to work with the Soil and Water Conservation District folks to go out where we could make recommendations on how they might do the job that had to be done or that they wanted to do in such a way that it could be more beneficial in protecting the stream instead of destroying it. So initially this was another political issue of major significance because it was about property rights, - you can't tell us what to do and we need to get our water. A lot of issues coincided with it. My job, I'd been active in promoting legislation and getting information out about what was going on amongst our biologists who were working on it, Norm Peterson, Jerry Wells and many others who were deeply involved. Once the legislation was implemented and my job was to go back and start working with our biologists and trying to do a good job of implementation. Being reasonable. Trying to educate ourselves on better ways to do projects. In particular even involving other folks to help us to convince landowners that maybe this other way might be best for the stream and them. One gentleman I worked closely with while I was there and he worked with our

biologists on what I call fairly significant projects, contentious projects and the solutions weren't easy was

Dr. Don Reichmuth, a hydrologist from Montana State University. He was particularly adept at showing cause and effect and understanding the system and what was really happening out there. And he was also adept at coming up with solutions that could be workable with both sides. We utilized him on some very major projects on the Big Hole, the Yellowstone, even some of the smaller streams to give us ideas on how to deal with some of these particular new SB 310 efforts. It wasn't easy, it wasn't easy for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts but overtime we established a relationship, our biologists did, and trust. We may have wanted to recommend more stringent ways to do it and perhaps allowed things to go forward that may not have been the very best. But when I look back on it, it was a time of building that trust; it was a time again getting expertise out there to help us define better ways to protect that stream. Overall, it was another monumental piece of legislation that had extreme significance to our streams.

INTERVIEWER: And so the Soil and Conservation District people were probably landowners as well? And they could maybe speak the language with the property owners that were fighting against.

MARCOUX: I think the Soil and Water Conservation Districts folks it was a challenge for them. In their minds their constituents were the ranchers and farmers and private landowners and on the other side we were trying to protect fisheries and fish which when they tried to equate that, the livelihood, it was a challenge. They were concerned they'd be shut down on many things they were doing. I think ultimately it worked out that we found middle ground and continued to work together.

INTERVIEWER: I'm sure. I'm sure. It was a great piece of legislation.

MARCOUX: So kudos to those folks in my mind that in earlier years recognized the damage that was being done on the streams. Biologists well before my time. Others who developed studies or made up slide series to be able to go show people what was really happening out there. Kudos to both sides, to the Soil and Water Conservation folks and Fish, Wildlife and Parks folks, our biologists who were involved in implementing SB 310. Norm Peterson was the coordinator

for a while and did a great job. I know my biologists worked their hearts out trying to bridge that gap and I couldn't be more proud of them.

INTERVIEWER: I suppose there was a lot of PR going on maybe with public comment meetings. Did they do much of that at that time?
MARCOUX: At that time there was opportunity for public comment, but I think that came prior to when the legislation was being developed. There were huge meetings and hearings and many people attended and very contested for the legislation.

INTERVIEWER: I know that the department tries very hard now for public comment. They're always asking for comments and ideas.
MARCOUX: So those two big issues were playing out when I was there and I was involved in both situations. I think most folks in the fisheries field were involved.

INTERVIEWER: Did it make you wonder why you went to Bozeman because you had these two very big issues to deal with?
MARCOUX: It didn't. I think that was where I was supposed to be at that time, I was younger. I was energized. I believed in our streams and trying to take care of them, deeply. Again, I wasn't alone in that.

INTERVIEWER: Two big issues. Very good.
MARCOUX: Now another issue that was a part of a continuum -- when I came in as fish manager I had the opportunity to help formulate a plan and articulate that plan both to the public and the agency -- that was to take the efforts, again monumental efforts, of Dick Vincent who had done the hatchery studies, the hatchery-wild trout studies on the Madison earlier in the late '60s and into the '70s. Where he was successful and had the opportunity in 1973 to address the hatchery wild trout issue. Wild trout management began another step, and I worked with Dick and we developed a program on the Madison to see what the impact of fishermen was on the trout fishery. One of the reasons I did it, I had the opportunity to meet Bud Lilly when I was fish manager, he was out of West Yellowstone, very conservation oriented. He took me down the Madison one day, he said I'm going to row you down Ron, I want you to fish and we'll talk

about it when we are through. So I loved to fly fish and I was enjoying myself. We got through the trip and at the end he said, Ron, don't you believe that the Madison River can have larger trout than what you've caught on this trip. And I said yes, I believe it should be capable of larger fish. So the Madison was well known, heavily fished. We actually went in and closed a section of the Madison to fishing which was significant.

INTERVIEWER: Ha. And you're alive to talk about it.
MARCOUX: Studies to see what happened. I learned in Rock Creek earlier that fisherman selected towards larger trout. They keep more of those. So if you are going to have larger trout you have to protect that segment of the population. So we came up with a plan, I called it in some respects, quality trout management. Quality wild trout management. Again it was wild trout and we would manage our streams and try to manage them in a couple different ways. One, we would try to provide the opportunity to catch some of the larger fish and allow them to get older. The second was still wherever we could to provide opportunities for the fisherman so they could fish the streams, the other big objective. So we developed a slot limit program based on the data we were gathering on our streams, on the major rivers like the Big Hole, Beaverhead, Madison and Yellowstone. The significance of using the information was important. We'd been gathering information ever since before I was down in Dillon back in 1969 on the streams. So we had a good idea what was there. We had a fair idea of what the capability was but we wouldn't know until we tested it. So we implemented the slot limit, you could only keep fish under a certain size and throw back fish in the middle and larger size but the big ones you may be able to take one of the trophies if you ever got one that reached that size. It was well accepted. Trout Unlimited was active in that area. Fly fishing was being utilized more and more on the streams. Wild trout program developed and evolved, there were more fishermen out there. So we had the opportunity to evaluate these regs and fine tune them if we needed to based on the good scientific data we had.

INTERVIEWER: So was the slot limit just on that particular section?
MARCOUX: What we did, you mixed and matched depending on the river itself. How big it was. It's capability to handle a large number of fishermen and try to design it as such based on the river. And based on the potential use there. It wasn't equal across the board for the most

part. The other thing we did, as kind of a prelude, was go from a ten fish limit down to a five limit fish on just our regular streams. Most people didn't catch their limit anyway. You are spreading the resource out amongst many more folks. That was not readily received; some people were used to catch as much as they can. But for the benefit of the stream itself and if we were going to have wild trout populations we were signaling where we were.

INTERVIEWER: No I don't suppose.
MARCOUX: Overall the major groups, particularly Trout Unlimited were very supportive for the implementation of quality wild trout fishery program. The rest of the state, the other regions were waiting and watching to see how successful we were and whether or not ultimately the data would show we were. Well we were successful and the data did show that what we were trying to achieve we were achieving. The public acceptance was certainly there.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, a big part of it.
MARCOUX: All the biologists were monitoring their streams. Meeting with their local groups, talking about what we're trying to do and why. Guys like Jerry Wells, Bruce Rehwinkle, Dennis Workman. As a fish manager, I had some of the best biologists in the world. And they were very people-oriented and very capable.
End of Recording #2, 6/30/2016

Beginning of Recording #3, 6/30/2016
MARCOUX: So continuing with what I felt were significant programs I was involved in, fishing access and fishing access sites. Question in those days was, we didn't have a lot of floating going on, maybe the Madison and some on the Big Hole, but relatively modest but you could see the increase of the use. It was increasing and you needed to come up with a plan to try to address it. So what we did was basically try to come up and find an access site that would allow a floater to float for four hours straight down the river and if you wanted to get out and make a day trip of it. But to have that opportunity on the rivers like the Yellowstone. So when you thought about fishing access site program, you also needed the funding to be able to accomplish it. One gentleman we worked closely with was Bud Lilly and Bud was very aggressive on the need for access sites. In 1977 there was legislation passed that allowed for a percentage of the fees

coming from fishing licenses would go towards acquiring fishing access sites. That was a breakthrough, what you were wanting to try to do and the ability to get the job done. An example would be on the Big Hole River near Melrose. There really wasn't a public access site there and limited opportunity to get a site but you needed one because it was a key location because of the volume of use. I strongly supported the acquisition and helped identify the owner. We worked with the people in the lands department to acquire what ultimately has become the Salmon Fly Fishing Access Site. Why did it get named that? Why not? The Big Hole River is noted for the salmon fly hatch that they have, people from around the country, world now, have the opportunity to fish it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, and it tells them exactly what is there.
MARCOUX: It helps identify the value of the salmon fly to our fishery.

INTERVIEWER: So when you were fish manager were you lucky enough to name that site?
MARCOUX: I think I did because I started calling it the Salmon Fly Fishing Access Site from the beginning and it just took hold. I think the river itself had earned it and the location had earned it and today it is still appropriate.

INTERVIEWER: So can I back up and ask you the percentage of fees from the fishing licenses, that had to go through the legislature, didn't it?
MARCOUX: Yes, it did. The question was, did you just focus on the bigger rivers or did you look at the small rivers as well. Example of what might be viewed as smaller you can compare the Big Hole to the Ruby. Should you have fishing access sites on the Ruby. Again you were limited by funding. Initially while I was there our biggest focus was on the larger rivers. We tried to look at that four-hour float opportunity. And again have adequate room for people to park and camp. You had to factor that in so it became a bigger issue, how much you were going to develop those sites. Would you have just parking, put in, take out, no camping. All of those issues began to play out during that period. And today I'd say that access and access site programs and distributing people on the river, not only fishermen but all the recreational floaters who don't fish and tubers who like to go down the rivers, has become a huge reality that needs to

be addressed. Looking into the future. How are we going to manage our rivers. The number of people that ultimately use the outdoors.

INTERVIEWER: Right. And we're getting crowded already.
MARCOUX: A good example of more management is the Blackfoot River. Working with the private landowners. You have to develop a program that's comprehensive.

INTERVIEWER: Very important.
MARCOUX: So thanks to a lot of folks, Bud Lilly, Trout Unlimited, all the folks in the sportsman's groups, Skyline Sportsman's Association, all those groups that supported that legislation have all helped make this a reality.

INTERVIEWER: Sure, all working towards the same objectives and goals.
MARCOUX: Now the one river that was unique with the amount of use at that time was the Madison. All the studies, the wild trout rebounded, fishing improved, the slot limit program, quality trout program. The Madison actually got to a point where there were conflicts between bank fishermen and people floating. The outfitter industry was continuing to grow. The issue was one of, can't we respect each other on the rivers? Are we capable of respecting each other on the rivers with the amount of use that we've got? It got intense enough that we recommended that there be a moratorium on the outfitter use on the Madison.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I bet that went over well.
MARCOUX: For about a three year period, everybody get their act together, started recognizing the river belongs to everybody and they all need to respect each other out there. If you do a good job, you don't have to have legislation. We can be respectful with the use on our streams. That was implemented. The negative that came out of it, some of the outfitters saw it… it limited them to their existing use in their prior year. So they couldn't grow use. We talked about ethics out there. But they started selling their licenses, marketing them. A few of them. So there was value to the number of days they could use the rivers with their clients. When money enters into it like that it gets confusing and you weren't set up in the legislation to address that. That remains today. Floating use is regulated on some rivers. While in Bozeman, on the upper

Gallatin, recognizing what was happening on the Madison we got the regulation in to curtail fishing from boats in the Gallatin Canyon area, water levels were a certain set level and then you couldn't float and fish which is a relatively small stream except during high water. Small river with lots of use. Rock Creek is another example, in later years they implemented a program to allow certain periods when fishing from a boat. So we were trying to address those issues and that's a continuing effort today as part of the overall use of the rivers and how they are going to be managed both for fishing and recreation.

INTERVIEWER: So can outfitters and guides can still sell their licenses?
MARCOUX: We didn't address it then and at this point, I think it is administered by the Outfitter Board but I'm not up to speed on the details on that. I've had my day.

INTERVIEWER: I can remember doing some commission meetings when the outfitters were trying to get something started. This was about that time wasn't it?
MARCOUX: They established an outfitter board, I can't remember what year it was. It is part of another agency. Later on when I was Deputy Director, we supported the Outfitter Board moving over to Department of Administration and now I can't remember much about it.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.
MARCOUX: During this particular period, 1975 to 1980, one of the issues was instream flows. We were recognizing many streams were dewatered. We were seeing what the impacts were on the trout populations. Seeking ways to be able to protect our streams. The catalyst in our department was Jim Posewitz who was very aggressive, had his own Bureau that did a lot of the surveys related to instream flows. When we were in Region 3, we worked and helped to assist as much as we could to provide information where needed to get the background data that they needed in the future to defend the opportunity for instream flows. They had the Yellowstone flow reservation hearings and I was called on to testify and they decided they weren't going to ask me any questions so I didn't feel bad about it and that was okay with me. We were very successful. All the folks pitched in together but there was real leadership with Jim Posewitz that carried that instream flow movement to fruition.

INTERVIEWER: So had he moved on to Bozeman?
MARCOUX: He moved on into Helena after being fish manager. I think he was a bureau chief.

INTERVIEWER: When you were fish manager in Bozeman, where was he?
MARCOUX: I worked on the Yellowstone flow reservation with Jim as part of a very broad instream flow team. My folks, we in the Region 3 fish group, also helped. It was a significant issue and we were tied into it and it was a political hot spot at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Lots going on in Fisheries when you were fish manager.
MARCOUX: So from that point, you dealt with a myriad of other smaller issues and working with your people and being extremely proud of them and everyone working way beyond normal hours to get the information needed, get out to the meetings, get to the stream with the landowners, you name it, whatever was needed at that time. The next step for me, and I still carry on in fisheries at some degree, because things are on a continuum they don't always fall on a clear path. Ted Schwinden was elected Governor and he brought in Jim Flynn as the Director of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. He was probably the first, if you want to call it, political appointee as Director rather than folks coming up through the agency. I'd known Jim when I first went down to Dillon. He was very active in organizations. And he asked me to come in and be the Associate Director and work with him on managing the organization. For me that was a major decision. For a long time I thought I wanted to be the chief of fisheries. And here I was asked to move above it. So I accepted the job. Came in as this naïve fish manager, coming in to the big world of Helena. Some things stay with you – stream access was still continuing to some degree. In fact, as Associate Director it was still bubbling with Michael Curran, the Dearborn issue. I went to a Stockgrower meeting and talked about where we were on stream access. And Mr. Curran said I was nothing but a Communist. And I smiled as best I could and said, sorry sir, you can't take me that far. It made me feel good as some of the ranchers in the meeting came up and apologized for what he said. So I knew I had gained some trust and credibility.

INTERVIEWER: And that was 1981?
MARCOUX: Yes, or '80.

INTERVIEWER: Who was the fisheries chief in Helena at that time?
MARCOUX: Art Whitney. That's where I made a generic comment in talking about the leadership. The leadership in Helena didn't try to hold you back, didn't try to lead you, they gave you the rope and let you take it out there, and pulled as you needed to to get things done. Another one was George Holton that allowed you to get things done as you needed. I look at some of the older fish managers who've been around like Dick Johnson, Boyd Opheim, marveled what they'd been through with limited help, and the issues like DDT and all those other things, they paved the way. I look at the folks who established the Blue Ribbon Trout Stream. They were taking care of us. Being a fisheries biologist, it's history, understanding what your challenges are, recognition that you're probably working in the greatest state with some of the greatest wild trout fisheries known. A focus on wild trout ~~a~~nd a place where you've got strong support, public support, because they're using the resources and respect them.

INTERVIEWER: Right, they respect the resources. And with your issues you dealt with in Bozeman, I'm sure Jim Flynn knew you would be an asset to him in his office.
[End of Recording #3, 6/30/2016]

[Beginning of Recording #1, 7/29/2016]
INTERVIEWER: This is Margie Peterson. Today is Friday, July 29, 2016. I'm at the home of Ron Marcoux in Helena and we are continuing the Oral History Project for Fisheries. So, Ron I think we ended around 1980, do you want to fill in any gaps?
MARCOUX: I think the last time we talked, we talked about what we did with Fisheries beyond just being the fisheries biologist, fish manager. As I moved into the Associate Deputy Director position in the department, you got farther away from one the ground activity and more involved in the political legislative arena. What I found myself doing through those years was working with the fisheries folks in the Fisheries Division and looking at the programs, going over them with them so I understood them well and set the stage to go to the legislature. Obviously key to keeping the fisheries going was getting the funding to be able to do the work. I worked through the legislative process with the Fisheries folks and we'd get approval for our budgets and get them finalized for the legislative Appropriations Committees and back to work and wait for the next legislative session. It seemed they were all too quick coming together. You also worked

with the Fish and Game Commission and the various organizations on the issues. I spent a lot of time doing that and communicating as much as possible with them and the private landowners were affected too and tried to maintain good contact with that community as well. At one point, I drifted back into the fisheries arena. I was selected to represent the state, I was the state representative with the Forest Service which was set up by the Forest Service to develop the "Rise to the Future" program. It was designed to provide more focus to Fisheries within the Forest Service. It was educational and there were some pretty high powered players involved in it. I think, it did, in many ways change some of the direction of the Forest Service particularly with the management of fish. After I got through being Deputy Director for several years, I felt it was time to make a change. The other part of my life was hunting and wildlife. I'd been watching the Elk Foundation grow, began as a fledgling organization in Troy, Montana. In the department I had worked with them on an acquisition effort on Robb Creek down in the Dillon area up in the Ruby Mountains so I was familiar with them. I was looking around a little and mentioned that I was interested... I visited with Bob Munson who was the Executive Director at the time. He indicated if I was interested in a job, he'd like to interview me. I said, let's do it. And I was immediately hired after the interview to be in charge of their new lands program purchasing winter ranges for elk. Right there I was back and I could put on the wildlife hat and the fisheries hat. Because when you worked on projects in a lot of cases there were fisheries benefits. I didn't seek them out but when they were there I sure acknowledged them. Particular projects at that time I felt made a huge difference in the fisheries world and recognizing the value in our streams, one was the Royal Teton Ranch acquisition conservation easement effort down there near Gardiner, Montana.

Other conservation organizations had tried to put together packages with the Church Universal and Triumphant and I engaged in discussions with them and ultimately moved forward on what I felt was a very successful effort on putting a lot of it into public ownership, primarily working with the Forest Service.

I looked at it, part of it was you go up in that area now and there's a lot of area that won't have homes on it right along the banks of the river, there are tributary streams that are still flowing clear from the headwaters down to the Yellowstone and Yellowstone Cutthroat trout can still spawn. So Fisheries again was right there in the forefront and the value of our streams and the scenic aspects as well were with me at that time. Same held true in a big acquisition in the

Taylor Fork-Porcupine country up in the Gallatin. Instead of having subdivisions like you see up in the Big Sky country and all the home sites, you can go up today still and look up into the Porcupine country and it's natural. The stream flows through, the Gallatin River is beautiful. People can still use it and I view it as another fisheries success in the wildlife world. One of the rivers that was important when I was in fisheries was the Smith River. Not only in fisheries values, but in scenic values, recreational values. I had the opportunity when I was with the Elk Foundation to work with the Bair Ranch Foundation to acquire substantial acreage in the Tenderfoot Drainage which is the major drainage on the Smith. Anybody who floats the Smith River can see that tributary come in as clear and clean water. That one was special because I floated the stream so much and because as we worked at it and some additional fisheries studies were done they found that rainbow trout came all the way up to the Tenderfoot from the Missouri River to spawn. So even more significant. So fisheries stayed with me on these projects. That took several years. I didn't completely finish it; I left before it was finally completed. But today it sits there for the public to use and the streams are protected. One of my memorable ones related to fisheries but wasn't in Montana when I was with the Elk Foundation but had special meaning was working at Afognak Island up in Alaska. What we were trying to do was work with the native corporations to protect some key elk range on Afognak Island; one of the key places in Alaska that has elk. When I got there and I got out on the streams… (phone rang)

[End of Recording #1, 7/29/2016]

[Beginning of Recording #2, 7/29/2016]

MARCOUX: I was looking at the streams and I'd go out there during the spawning period and I saw tens of thousands of salmon moving up those tributaries, watching the bears feeding on them, the eagles. It was phenomenal to see. Being there in true wilderness country. Scenery was unbelievable. You could just feel nature all around you. I thought, boy, this has brought me full circle. I've really seen it all. I can see the value of the fishery. I can see the value of the wildlands. The value of nature. We just need to continue to try to protect our fish and wildlife resources for the enjoyment of our public. From there, the next stage I was involved in, once I left the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation thinking I could retire. I went to work with the Prickly Pear Land Trust. They asked me to help identify how they might expand their land protection

effort. I got involved. I looked around the area and what struck me again was what were the focal points. The focal points around Helena valley and the Helena country area were the streams, our rivers and streams. A value to the landowners, to the public. I began on potential areas that could be worked on. I jumped in on one project on Prickly Pear Creek. We completed one acquisition there and it is now a fishing access site. In a year of time working with them the focus began again, our streams and rivers and had success in continuing this kind of effort.

INTERVIEWER: Was that near Wolf Creek?
MARCOUX: Prickly Pear Creek was right here at East Helena.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, that part. Okay. Nice.
MARCOUX: During this same period when I was working with the Elk Foundation and then with Prickly Pear Land Trust where I was also on the Board of the Prickly Pear Land Trust for three more years. I was still involved in some land preservation efforts and this was in the private sector where I worked with the landowner himself. He asked if I would help him with his land conservation easement program. He wanted to place his land under an easement; he had some beautiful spring creeks on his property and also some frontage on the Clark Fork River. So I helped him with the project over the years; it took a long time to get there but we did complete an easement and part of the river bottom on the Clark Fork protected and some beautiful areas for wildlife. He actually gave me the opportunity to become involved with other local landowners, part of the community, there's trust there so now I'm still involved. Still working now with another major landowner who is interested in putting his property in, which is significant, again on the Clark Fork. So where am I? Still dealing with rivers and streams in Montana and fisheries. While working, there are special folks as I said before that mean a lot to you. Grant Parker, an attorney at the Elk Foundation. A special guy very talented and committed. So it continues to be a journey. I have to especially thank my family, my wife Barb who has stood by me for many years supporting what I was doing. My children who wondered many times when Dad would come home. But the many good times I've had with them. They all helped share in the fun and the challenging times throughout the years. Probably the most lasting memory I have related to fisheries, I have three grandchildren, my granddaughter, Bromley is 23, grandson Kellen is 21, the latest addition to the family is little granddaughter

Gracie who is 3. As I look back as each of the grandchildren turning three years old, I would take them to a little creek called Telegraph Creek. A small little stream. Put a little fishing rod in their hands. Put a little worm on their hook. I'd toss it in for them and give them the pole and help hold it up and wait for the bite. And then watch their eyes when the tip of the rod would start jiggling. Tell them to yank a little. And they got it in. And each one of them you could see the look in their eyes when the fish came out of the water and they held it up. And I've got photos of each one of them when they were three with a fish in their hands. Well it doesn't take more than a five or six in brook trout to amaze a kid. To bring them to the stream. Let them feel what fisheries is all about. I just wish every kid in the country could have the opportunity to be out there to do that and share in that world. From my perspective I've enjoyed being in fisheries, I've enjoyed working in fish and wildlife and I don't think I could have picked anything better.

INTERVIEWER: Well, it's your interests, your knowledge and your skillsets that probably make it so enjoyable. Plus how successful you were in keeping fisheries as good as it is. Anything going on right now that you'd like to end with.
MARCOUX: Well, the perch are biting at Holter Lake. It isn't all trout. I'm also headed back up to Alaska to Afognak Island with my daughter this summer. I continue to get out there to experience it.

INTERVIEWER: Well that's just great. Thank you for your time. Thank you for your wonderful stories. I am honored to have been able to conduct the interviews and transcribe the recordings.
[End of Recording #2, 7/29/2016]

- End –

INDEX TO RON MARCOUX

ORAL HISTORY