

CATHY CLAIRE

TAPE 5, Side 1

October 15, 1996

M.O'R.: This is Michael O'Rourke for the Washington County Historical Society continuing the oral history with Cathy Claire. Today's session is taking place at the Oregon Historical Society, and it's October 15, 1996.

I think we talked about the fact that you were one of the Riverkeepers that made the trip up into the upper watershed?

C.C.: Yes.

M.O'R.: Was that last year?

C.C.: No. That had to be I think probably two or three years ago.

M.O'R.: Okay. Now, was this the trip where there was an unnamed waterfall?

C.C.: An unnamed waterfall, yes.

M.O'R.: We didn't talk about that part of it, I don't think, so why don't you tell me a little bit about that?

C.C.: Well, traipsing down through this woods what we were told was that this would be a five-mile trek, and so we figured five miles is really nothing, and we could turn that out in a few hours and have a pleasant day of it.

What we found was a rather steep - steep for the Coast Range, sloping canyon heavily vegetated that had been logged in what we think was the early 20's or 30's, and it must have been old growth cedar because the cedar trees were cut and left lying on the ground. So in some areas we had to climb and walk over cedar trees that were, oh, seven, eight feet in diameter.

M.O'R.: That could be hard work.

C.C.: That was very hard work, and at one time we had stopped and were standing and talking to each other and my right leg disappeared. The ground we thought we were standing on was just a lot of vegetation that had collected and looked stable but in fact was an area between two of these large old trees, and so my leg was dangling in the air, and it took two people to help haul me out because I didn't have any pressure points to lift myself out.

The river meandered, and we had to cross back and forth because in some areas you would have sandy bars, or rather gravel bars that would make it a little bit easier. So we found ourselves switching across this river so much that the five-mile trip took us seven hours, and that's a very long time for a simple five-mile walk. And we were getting concerned there towards the end that we would even be making it out before the sunset. It was an incredible trip.

We came upon the waterfall probably halfway through. One of our members did some research, and we have named it Kayacut Falls after the Indian chief, Chief Kayacut who was in the area and chief of - and I can't remember the tribe's name.

M.O'R.: The Atalphi is it? Something like that. I'm probably mispronouncing it.

C.C.: Yes. He was the last of the chiefs of that tribe. So we named the waterfall after him. One of our members did some research and found that it took about five years to do the paperwork to pursue a formal naming of something like this, and so I don't think he followed through on it, but that would be a very good project for the Historical Society to follow through on.

We were not able to find any information that this falls had a name, and people weren't aware of it when we started talking to a variety of water management people who had spent time in that

area because it's a watershed. So it was quite a treat for all of us.

M.O'R.: I would think so. And you mentioned the member that was following up on that; who was that?

C.C.: I can't remember his name right now. He's an engineer.

M.O'R.: Oh, Rob? Rob Bauer?

C.C.: No, not Rob. Lou Scholls.

M.O'R.: Okay. So Kayacut Falls at the moment is a name that is circulating among the Riverkeepers but perhaps not any more widely than that?

C.C.: Perhaps not any more widely than that, yes.

M.O'R.: That does sound like a good project for somebody to follow up on to make it official.

C.C.: Yes.

M.O'R.: Last time we had a very interesting conversation about community building and building organizations and the role of money and so forth and so on, and one of the things that we touched on a little bit was we talked just a bit about the endowment fund, which of course was the result of the lawsuit brought by the Northwest ...

C.C.: ... Environmental Defense Fund and the Tualatin Riverkeepers.

M.O'R.: Right, the original Tualatin Riverkeepers. And I think by the time you had picked up the at that time sort of hibernating Riverkeepers organization and remade it into the organization that it is today that the outcome of that lawsuit was still kind of coming to fruition. I don't think the money was actually on the table until about the time maybe that you got involved with the Riverkeepers.

C.C.: I don't think the money came on the table for two years after we started.

M.O'R.: That sounds about right. It may have made it through the courts in terms of determining the outcome, but they still hadn't figured out exactly what to do with the money.

C.C.: Right. They hadn't figured out how to distribute it, and they tend to - the Oregon Community Foundation, which was the organization chosen to manage the funds is not accustomed to having to be accountable to the public, and part of the original lawsuit was, I think, an acknowledgement that the general public and environmentalists or property owners adjacent to the river did not really trust the Unified Sewerage Agency, its motives and its procedures.

So when the funds were first allotted, they started having what some people referred to as secret meetings as to how to distribute it, and then other individuals became involved, and I think that goes back to Jack Churchill, in saying no, these meetings need to be public, so part of their charter required public meetings as to who received what funds, and these meetings need to be published in papers and open to the public.

The first meeting I was the only one there - no, Rob and I were the only people there. The second meeting I think Rob couldn't make it, so I was the only person there. The third meeting I was the only person there. The fourth meeting someone else went - either that or the fourth meeting was last year. I think the fourth meeting was last year, at which time they had their meeting, but it was at seven o'clock in the morning in their own offices. So they seem to be going away from the requirement that these meetings be public and leaning more towards trying to get the meetings over with.

They have a board, the money is managed by the Oregon Community Foundation, but certain individuals are appointed through the community and the organizations which utilize the river to

distribute the funds, and I know some of these board members have been on this team for a rather long time, and they're getting a bit tired of it. I think they're having a hard time finding replacements and finding people who are enthusiastic for this once-a-year project.

M.O'R.: Now, you described those first four meetings when the attendance was rather sparse. I assume that Oregon Community Foundation people were at these meetings, the program officers and whatnot?

C.C.: Yes. The Oregon Community Foundation was there. Several of the people on the board who determined who was to receive the grants were there, but not all of them.

M.O'R.: That was where I was leading to with my next question; the actual decision of how to spend the money was pretty much set up in advance of these meetings, then; is that right?

C.C.: Yes. Yes. These meetings only then came to say what they had decided.

What did come of - in the early years, maybe the second time that grants were accepted, the Riverkeepers made an application for funds for a seminar, and their idea was to get everyone who was applying for these funds together to start talking and stop competing because if you have so many organizations in the watershed and you have so many ideas, why should - if you have ten, why should you get ten grants all for the same idea when perhaps one of those organizations was better suited towards accomplishing that and another organization, knowing that that grant was applied for, could take up some other issue.

They liked it, and so in February prior to sending out the applications for the grants, rather than funding us, they retained a certain portion of the money and had their own conference. And these conferences have been a wonderful success. With a changeover

in their staff, the Oregon Community Foundation staff, and a changeover I expect this year in some of the members who are on this committee, I'm not sure that they will realize how valuable these conferences have become. It's a chance for environmentalists, water managers and land managers within the watershed, to get together and discuss issues. What happens then is that the Community Foundation and this group of people take their guidance as to what direction the people are going towards and try to let everyone know, "We want to focus our attention on certain grants in these areas," and then they name the areas which they found came out of this conference.

Last year they were uncertain, they had a staff change, they weren't going to put it on. The Riverkeepers had to do some pushing, and it came through. Because I'm not on the board of the Riverkeepers this year, I don't know if that's going to continue and the Riverkeepers will have to keep doing the pushing, but it's turned out to be a very important conference.

M.O'R.: It sounds like the impetus to do this conference came out of one of the Riverkeepers' ideas, but in the end it was the Oregon Community Foundation that put it together. So I'm wondering if you think they've done a good job overall in managing the money, or what would you say about their tackling this task and how well have they managed to do it?

C.C.: You know, I'm not privy to what goes on within their conferences, and I'm not privy to all of the grant applications, but I would say that we have had a lot of influence in what direction these grants come from. Your grant that you're receiving now is because of the influence of the Riverkeepers. One of the people on the board said they'd be interested in seeing some kind of history of the Tualatin.

The Riverkeepers contacted a grade school, and the grade school instructor applied for an oral history grant involving her children and older community members to get some kind of oral history. That grant was rejected on the basis that children would not be capable of fishing, if you know what I mean, drawing the right questions or answers out. And from that the Washington County Historical Society became involved.

So we have indirectly been responsible for the direction that everything's been going in.

M.O'R.: So if nothing else, you'd at least say that the Oregon Community Foundation's process has been open enough so that you've been able to exert some real influence and direction in this?

C.C.: I think the greatest thing that's come from the Oregon Community Foundation's involvement is - it's funny, it's the side effect. It's not their main objective of giving out money, but the main thing that they've done without knowing it is brought all the players together and put them on a first name basis. People are working together. We know each other by first names. We see each other on a yearly basis at these conferences. And so the entire tone of working in the watershed has gone from one of adversaries to one of cooperative "let's get the job done."

I can't make any negative comments about the Oregon Community Foundation. I would like it if they had a little bit more polish or concern with, you know, meeting some of the requirements, but it's rare that you know the people who are on that committee by their first names and can actually call them up and chat with them about some of these issues, so in that way they've done an excellent job as well.

M.O'R.: Who are the people at the Community Foundation that you've dealt with most often?

C.C.: You know, there was one woman named Jackie, and I can't remember her last name, and she was the woman who was employed by the Oregon Community Foundation to actually act sort of as a secretary, keeping everybody in touch. Last year she left the organization and there's someone new there now. I don't know who that is.

The people who are on this small board who are choosing, there's a woman named Victoria, you know, who is a politician from the Forest Grove area. There's a fellow from Portland State. I'm terrible at names; I'm sorry. There's a fellow from Portland State, there's actually been a couple of them. Jack Broome has been on the - you must have this list somewhere. If you don't, you're falling short.

M.O'R.: Well, I actually don't have the list in my possession.

C.C.: No, not in your possession, but you really need to have this list of people.

M.O'R.: Okay. It's a list that's definitely obtainable, I would guess. I was just curious, you know, in terms of your own relationships and who you worked with most often, and it sounds like ...

C.C.: And there's one fellow who has been most helpful and I probably have the closest relationship with, but I can't even remember his first name.

We've taken all of these folks on canoe trips on the river, which they have not had an opportunity for. Oh, there's a County Commissioner on the board, too, and we went once and we took this particular County Commissioner and discovered a patch of pot, marijuana, growing on the side of the river, which I think she called the sheriff's office and they went and cleaned up.



So we've actively worked at getting to know these folks and finding out more about them and letting them know more about us.

M.O'R.: Was this a cultivated garden, or was it growing wild?

C.C.: We have no control as to who goes where, who gets on this board. We have no say. So in that it's not a cultivated garden, but we're lobbyists, I suppose, you know. But we're not just lobbyists with the people with the money. I mean, they've turned down a large number of grants for us.

The thorn in my side, I guess, is they keep turning down grants for canoes, and they keep saying that if they were to purchase canoes, canoes are for recreation. Canoes are for education, and it's very difficult to put somebody on a river and give them ownership of it if they don't own a canoe, and it's very difficult for an organization with limited funds to purchase these. So they keep turning us down on that point, even though those canoes would be open to any organization which wanted to take a river trip, whether that be schools or Unified Sewerage Agency, whoever. So it's cultivated, but I mean, they can say no.

M.O'R.: Well, I'm glad you interpreted my question that way because ...

C.C.: ... it wasn't meant that way.

M.O'R.: Well, I actually was referring to the pot.

C.C.: Oh, the pot. Oh, well. It had to be - somebody had to put it there.

M.O'R.: Right.

C.C.: Sorry. [laughs]

M.O'R.: That's okay. That's quite all right. I liked the answer anyway.

At least part of why I was exploring this with you about the Oregon Community Foundation and the fund, the endowment, was because I sensed from some of our earlier conversations that you

had real ambivalence about money and its place in running an organization such as the Riverkeepers, or even its place in building community. We had a conversation where you said that the Tualatin Riverkeepers made this transition from being a completely stand-alone self-sufficient organization back in the days when you founded it and then wound up, you know, hiring staff that spends most of its time not building community but instead writing grants.

C.C.: And I think that's where they are now. They spend less time - Tualatin River Discovery Day was based with an idea that you would go out and continue to expand the event within the community, bringing in new organizations so that every city became a participant. We went and we would go to every meetings of every City Council; we would invite the members of the City Council to join us, and we would ask them to declare it Tualatin River Discovery Day. They don't do that anymore, and the person who's been in charge of it focuses more on getting the job done and doing some of it themselves and getting the same people that did it last year rather than going out and expanding the event to have other aspects.

Now, it's a bit unfair of me to say that because I'm not on the board because after five or six years, seven years, I'm sort of burnt out and needed a break, but most of their focus is directed on some money and some structural things that make them look like everybody else. Rather than the actual knocking on doors and, you know, getting the community involved, it's sending out letters asking people to be involved by donating money, not going out and doing things.

M.O'R.: You just mentioned that you're no longer on the board, and I guess that's been true - what? - for less than a year or about a year?

C.C.: Less than a year.

M.O'R.: I'm wondering if you could tell me what your own evolution has been with the Riverkeepers. It sounds like in the beginning you were kind of it, you and maybe Rob and a couple of other people, plus the STOP people were more involved in the first year.

C.C.: In the first year, and after that it was me, Rob, and a woman named April Ulbrech.

M.O'R.: And then at what point did you start becoming a little less involved, or would you say that your involvement remained pretty much at the same level until you got off the board?

C.C.: I would say that I started becoming less involved two years ago when I gave up the overall managing of Discovery Day and let somebody else start doing that.

M.O'R.: And that was Sue or ...

C.C.: No. You know, I can't remember who took it over that year. It must have been three years ago - no, two years ago. And someone else is in charge. No, Sue's never been in charge of any management things like that. She's been more involved with the structural changes of the organization and the grant writing and that kind of stuff.

M.O'R.: But you remained on the board, though, and continued to be pretty active until ...

C.C.: Right.

M.O'R.: When did you get off the board, then?

C.C.: Must have been last spring. Last March, I think. February or March.

M.O'R.: And what do you imagine that your future involvement will be with the Riverkeepers?

C.C.: You know, I'm not sure. I'm not sure. At this point I don't think that they need me specifically. I think they have enough momentum of their own, and as one of the new board members

pointed out, when you lose the people who founded the organization there's always a transition period. Things start changing a bit. So they're probably re-identifying themselves. Any organization within the watershed that works towards having people communicate and work cooperatively has my support, and therefore the Riverkeepers are one of those.

I think one of the organizations that will probably be moving - hopefully will be moving more into the forefront is the new watershed - what are they? What's their formal name? There's a watershed committee, a watershed board that is made up of a variety of organizations - Watershed Council. It's the Watershed Council, and I think right now they have a better opportunity for communicating. The Riverkeepers still have an opportunity to educate the citizens at large, but the managers and more of the changes in real focus is going to be on the Watershed Council.

You know, there is a Measure 38 that is coming up at this next election concerning clean water, and there was a debate on OPS last night, an hour-long debate between somebody on the ag. committee who was against this initiative and someone from - I think it was a high desert organization in Bend that put the initiative on the ballot, and they were arguing back and forth the pro's and con's, and they used the Tualatin River as an example of an area that had managed to put together an agricultural practices agreement which was going to help the community start working better with the river and to have a clean water from the ag. point of view.

I wish I'd been near a phone because this thing that he was talking about has taken four years to put together, and it has been peeled down and peeled down every time it's gone before a different ag. committee so that it really doesn't have much guts to it, and I think something like the Watershed Council is going to be in a better position to start making some of these advances in getting

the ag. community to work cooperatively with the cities, who have already picked up a large part of their burden.

[End of Tape 5, Side 1]

CATHY CLAIRE

TAPE 5, Side 2

October 15, 1996

M.O'R.: So are you saying that you think that the ag. community is the piece of the puzzle, then, that's still lagging behind, that they haven't done as much as other organizations?

C.C.: Oh, sure. The ag. community is still behind, and the timber community is even further behind them.

M.O'R.: How big are these impacts on the river, though, compared to urbanization and the other impacts?

C.C.: Well, when you consider that Hagg Lake prior to last year's flooding had a 100-year reserve, had room to hold water and expand for the next hundred years, enough water to supply the agricultural community for a hundred years, and they lost all of that reserve - not some of it, but all of it, due to poor timber practices, and that's just Hagg Lake, which is Scoggins Creek, which is one of the main water providers for the Tualatin River, I think that the timber community has a real major impact on the river.

Also, the ag. community - you know, this is still an agricultural river. The bulk of it is in rural areas, and when you're talking about people who are still taking their horse manure or their cow manure and piling it in the wetlands and the water areas that when the high water comes they're relying on that high water to wash this stuff away, I think those are still very major problems.

There's not a person in Washington County and portions of Clackamas, urban areas, that isn't paying a Unified Sewerage Agency tax, you know, monthly or bimonthly, on their sewer bills that Unified Sewerage Agency has some of the top sewage facilities in

the world. I mean, they have received award after award for their facilities. True, it took a lawsuit and a lot of kicks in the pants to get them where they are, but they've worked hard and they've really accomplished a lot. So now it's up to the rest of the watershed to catch up.

M.O'R.: You mentioned the timber practices and the wiping out of the reserve. How exactly did this happen?

C.C.: You know, they go in and they clear cut. And they'll clear cut 40 acres and they'll clear cut another 40 acres that's rather close, and you just clear cut so much that when it rains, you know, you're required to go in afterwards, scarf the land with a bulldozer, take it down to bare dirt, and then somebody goes by in January or February and starts planting trees.

So you have a huge naked area of ground with dirt exposed with someone having the intention of coming in February through, say, April to plant little trees with small root systems that don't hold diddly, and then you get heavy rains, and we had torrential rains last year, plus melting snow.

Now, rumor has it there was a tour of the forest lands by Stimson and Willamette Timber Companies up in the Hagg Lake watershed this fall, and I was unable to attend, but someone very sarcastically came back to me after that meeting and said, "You know, what they claimed? That the dirt up there has such large granules that the water manages to slip between the grains of dirt." Now, that's stupid, you know, and if any timber person is trying to represent that, that's stupid. That's poor PR because the people you're talking to aren't idiots, and it's not true.

M.O'R.: So the argument is that the soil has no real water holding capacity anyway, so it doesn't matter what they do with it?

C.C.: I suppose that's part of it, yeah. And they had major landslides on Scoggins Creek, and other creeks, then, have just -

there has been so much logging and there's nothing left. It's not selective logging, it's clear cutting, and there's a lot of clear cutting that still goes on.

You know, the latest trend I think is allowing a few mature trees to stay in an otherwise clear cut area to seed. Well, it takes years, and the trees that they're leaving are the spindly, genetically less viable trees, so it's sort of a joke. You know - what is it? - the new name for clear cuts is "engineered meadows." It doesn't work.

M.O'R.: If you were to try to identify what might be the toughest problems or the things that threaten the river the most, say, in the next 10 or 20 years, would it be this timber issue, or are there others as well that you think deserve mention?

C.C.: I think there's others as well.

I think that the pressure will be more and more to destroy Cherry Grove and the upper portions of the Tualatin with another dam and create a lake similar to Hagg Lake; I think that's going to be as the metropolitan area grows and water becomes more scarce. I think that the pressure that's going to be put on farmers for them to make their living, be environmentally sound, and the pressures that the people who live in rural areas are going to face with the encroaching cities and the urban growth boundary are going to put a lot of pressure on the river. Finding money, you know, to make some of these areas parks, and the more people you have, the harder it becomes to communicate. So I think we have a challenge to take some of the small sparks that we've already created of communication and make sure they stay alive.

M.O'R.: What about that second water project that might go in there at Cherry Grove? I've heard a lot of talk about it, and it was a site that was identified way back when, even before Hagg Lake.



C.C.: It's sort of like the western bypass freeway, you know, that they want to stick from Sherwood to Hillsboro, and then they want to go from Hillsboro over Cornelius Pass across the north tip of Sauvie Island and hit Vancouver. This thing has been on the books for years, decades. And it comes and it goes, and I think that this proposed dam for Cherry Grove has come and gone for years.

There is an organization called the Patton Valley Coalition, who's recently dissolved. They took what funds were left, and they donated them to the Riverkeepers. They were very effective at drawing attention to the valley, which - you know, Cherry Grove is small, comprised most of lower- to medium-income homes that would be next to impossible to replace. For some of these properties and homes you can't take what the State would give you and be able to go anyplace else to find a place. I think that it's real serious. I think eventually with the growth of this area, there's a good chance it will go through.

M.O'R.: Well, given the fact that - well, maybe we haven't even talked about Hagg Lake that much, but by most accounts that was a real plus for the area and especially a plus for the river because it augments the flow in the summertime. So presumably a second water project would also have some benefits for the river and some benefits for all of the other communities that have benefitted from the first one. On the other side of it, of course, there's people that are displaced, and there's environmental damage.

C.C.: There's people that are displaced, there's environmental damage, there's Lee Falls, Little Lee Falls, Kayacut Falls that will be wiped out.

M.O'R.: Oh, those falls are low enough so they would be underneath the water?

C.C.: Oh, yeah. They'd be gone. There's petroglyphs that would be wiped out. There's a lot of history that is there that we haven't looked at. You know, if you find one petroglyph there's a chance there are others there, too, and we just haven't found them. So it's a major change.

Are there benefits? Sure. You know, are there minuses? Sure.

M.O'R.: But on balance you'd prefer not to see it happen?

C.C.: I'm going to stay silent on that one.

M.O'R.: Okay.

C.C.: I don't think I know enough. It's easy for me to say no from an emotional point of view, and it's easy for me to say yes from an economic point of view, but I'm not going to play with those peoples' lives. It's up to them.

M.O'R.: Is there anything else that - we've had a pretty wide-ranging conversation here about lots of different things, not just the Tualatin, but I'm wondering if there's any aspect of things having to do with the Tualatin that we haven't touched on yet that you might like to bring up now?

C.C.: You know, I don't know that there is. I think that we've probably done a pretty good round of addressing most ...

M.O'R.: Okay. Well, then, another somewhat similar question: Is there anything that we have talked about that you'd like to add anything to?

C.C.: No, I think that we've been thorough enough.

M.O'R.: Okay. Well, I want to thank you for taking the time to really do a good job on this interview. It will be a valuable addition to the Tualatin project.

C.C.: I hope so. Thank you.

[End of Tape 5, Side 2]