

Issaquah History Museums 2006-48-1
Oral History Interview with Ruth Kees
November 21, 2006

Narrator: Ruth Kees
Date: November 21, 2006
Interviewed By: Maria McLeod
Place: Home of Ruth Kees on Tiger Mountain

MARIA MCLEOD: This is Maria McLeod, oral historian, and I'm with Ruth Kees today, at her house on west Tiger Mountain. We're talking a little about environmental issues. This is the second interview for the Issaquah Oral History Project.

So Ruth, let's go backwards a little bit of time, and tell me again, in the late [19]50s and [19]60s, what the 14,000 acres that now make up West Tiger Mountain Natural Resource area and the Tiger Mountain State Forest, was used for at that time?

RUTH KEES: It was logged, and that's how it looked when we bought this place.

MM: Oh, that's pretty bare.

RK: And you'd see the bare mountain tops in the back there.

MM: And who had logged it? Was it Weyerhaeuser then?

RK: Weyerhaeuser owned every other square mile. This dates back to the time when the United States was trying to get this area populated. And they granted the University of Washington every other acre – uh – square mile, and Weyerhaeuser every other square mile.

So Weyerhaeuser had come in and clear cut. And we got involved because they were clear cutting it at the head of Fifteen Mile Creek. And about 200 people came out that weekend and did work.

They had replanted, and they wanted to spray. And so we showed them that hand clearing was the way to go – by people – and it didn't take all that long to do. And it certainly worked.

Well, after it became a State forest, it became a model for a place to try out different methods of logging. In other words, we did make a difference there with just a loose bunch of people.

MM: That's amazing. Was that in the early [19]60s?

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RK: That was in the late [19]60s.

MM: So when you say that Weyerhaeuser owned every other acre, and the University of Washington owned the other acre, what was the University of Washington doing – er, did you say mile, not acre?

RK: Every [other] square mile.

MM: So what was the University of Washington doing with their property? Were they also logging it?

RK: They were having it logged, yeah.

MM: Oh, so they were profiting from the logging of their property.

RK: Right.

MM: So it was a way for the University of Washington to gain money, right?

RK: That's right.

MM: For education. Basically, it was a way of getting money for education. And so how were you able to get those 200 people out there? What did you do?

RK: Well, it was just a case of calling people up and talking to people. And I think it was put in the newspaper back then what was going to happen.

MM: And for people who didn't know about the ill effects of logging, what would you tell them, to teach them what might happen if we continuously log in this way?

RK: Well, trees, with the tree roots, hold the soil. And the greenery also keeps the soil from getting soil-logged, because of transpiration into the atmosphere. In other words, it took a balance of nature. It prevents erosion.

MM: Which in this area is problematic, because it rains so much, the soil could just wash away if there's nothing to hold it there, especially on hillsides. And that's what you were looking at – mountainsides, right? But this had been common practice, not just in Issaquah but in lots of places, right?

RK: Right.

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MM: And so it was sort of the age when you were beginning that environmental education, I guess.

RK: That's right.

MM: OK, let's see ... I've come to learn that the Washington State Department of Natural Resources manages [the] State forest lands of Tiger Mountain, and the city of Issaquah, King County and private ownership. Tell me if I say anything wrong.

However, it was others – Brian Boyle [Washington State Lands Commissioner] and DNR [Department of Natural Resources] and Harvey Manning – of the Issaquah Alps Train Club and other places – and you that brought the Tiger Mountain State Forest into being.

Do you remember what year it was made into a State forest? No? That's OK.

RK: It would have been about 1972, I think.

MM: Yeah. I think it was in the [19]70s somewhere, but I didn't know. Do you know how that happened, that it became a State forest land?

RK: Well, Harvey Manning evidently got to know Brian Boyle, and Brian Boyle came out and took a look at it. And the Rolling Log Tavern had something to do with it. He took him into the [chuckles] Rolling Log Tavern and *by golly*, Tiger Mountain State Forest came into being! [laughter]

MM: I like that story! Now, the Rolling Log Tavern, isn't that right on Sunset there? There's an old tavern, an old Issaquah tavern.

When the designation changed to State forest, what kind of protections did that put in place for the land?

RK: Well, logging was not permitted for a while. And then, limited logging was permitted, with the Tiger Mountain State Forest Advisory Committee. And they're still going. But I've got to resign myself. And, of course, Harvey's gone, too.

MM: Well, yeah. And we should mention Harvey just died earlier this month. I think it was November 7 or something, and here it is November 21. So we just lost him.

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But can you tell me about what kind of work you did on this State Forest Advisory Committee?

RK: Well, whenever a proposal was made to log a certain part of it, they would bring the proposal before the advisory committee. And it was judged as to whether it would ... the terrain ... In other words, there were ... it wasn't a square mile that got done, it would be maybe 20 acres logged in an area that could accept logging practices.

MM: Do you believe there are safe logging practices? Do you believe logging can be done in a conscientious way?

RK: Yes, I do.

MM: So you're not against logging *per se*?

RK: No, I have tried to see both sides of the story. And with the increase in population, and the need to keep open space, I think that logging can be done. But they should save a little of the old growth, too [chuckles] which they have done. So we have the big tree that is saved on the northwest corner.

MM: What kind of tree is that?

RK: It's a fir tree. But it's a huge tree. And it's probably the only tree that never got cut down. So it's still there, from days gone by.

MM: How old do you think it is?

RK: Well, I don't know. [chuckles] Now, you might ask Bill Longwell about that.

MM: Yeah.

RK: Or ... yeah, Bill Longwell.

MM: Who is Bill Longwell? What has he done?

RK: He was a teacher, I think. And he has worked with Harvey Manning throughout the years. He's written a lot of trail books, too.

MM: Yeah. You have some other pictures there. What are those?

RK: This is when we started building the house. And it shows a little bit of ...

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MM: That's this house that you're living in now. That's you. And this is May, 1964, or at least that's when this was developed.

RK: Yeah.

MM: You're sitting down. Is that a cat you have in your lap?

RK: That was Pussycat, yeah.

MM: That was your first cat. That's sweet.

RK: Now, this is what our fireplace used to look like. But we found that you couldn't shut the draft on it because when you go to bed, you would get smoke all over your house.

MM: So you had to fix it, huh?

RK: You had to leave it open, and the house would get *awfully* cold. Because all the heat would go up the chimney.

MM: Oh, yeah. That's a problem in my house, too. That's beautiful. You mentioned that – or maybe I did – the Issaquah Alps Club. I'm not sure when that began, but I know Harvey Manning founded it. But also, weren't you one of the original members of the Issaquah Alps Club?

RK: I was.

MM: What kind of activities did you do in that club?

RK: Well, mostly it was educational in that we got new members, and they went on hiking trips. And I think they still do it. They guarantee there's going to be a hiking trip every day. And it'll take place whether anybody shows up or not.

MM: What if it rains really hard?

RK: Well, it still takes place. [laughter] Yeah. I have to tell this story about Harvey. He always dressed in either wool or cotton. Nothing that was artificial or man-made. And he had a beard and long hair. And one of the later members tells a story that the first time she saw Harvey – she met him on one of the trails – and she turned around and walked in the other direction! [laughter] Because he was such a wild-looking person.

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MM: I've heard that about him. That's funny.

RK: I think I've told you that.

MM: No, you didn't tell me that before. I actually was reading – because they have a lot of biographical information about him, and I remember reading he had a long beard and wild hair. This is just recently that I read this, in the past couple days.

I would have liked to have met him, and to have seen him, because it seems like he did quite a bit to protect the Issaquah Alps. And didn't he make a lot of the trails? Wasn't he part of the people who made the trails?

RK: Oh, yeah! He decided that in order to preserve Tiger Mountain, he was going to have to educate people as to the value of the mountain. And so they put trails through it.

And at that time, too, the ATVs – you know, the all-terrain vehicles – were running *rampant* around the place. And we got them – or Harvey got them – forbidden to go up on Tiger. Because they were just ruining all the trails. And the trails were not maintained because ...

MM: Right. Well, it's also, if you're out for a hike and you want to see nature, it's kind of hard to do it when you've got noisy, all-terrain vehicles whipping around the corner really quickly, you know? [chuckles] It doesn't really coincide with the people on foot, I think.

RK: Bicycling is permitted now.

MM: Oh, it is? Mountain biking?

RK: But in certain areas. The eastern part, which is more level. Places suitable. But, of course, they kind of leak over to other areas. And like to jump off logs and stuff like that.

MM: Yeah, it's become quite a phenomenon, mountain biking. You know, I also realized, as I was reading along and talking to folks, that you and your husband formed the Issaquah Environmental Council in 1987?

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RK: Yeah. Before that, I had Friends of Issaquah Creek, because I could see the ... and that was probably a one-person type of thing. [chuckles] I didn't carry it all that far, but I got the school –

That was when I-90 was being put through. One of the streams that ran down the north end of Tiger had fish in it. The highway department put it in a different place, and had about five weirs for the fish to navigate. And the little fish could not navigate down.

MM: Yeah, the salmonoids, right?

RK: So one weekend, I got a whole bunch of school kids, and we took buckets and fished the fish out of the little pools behind the weirs. And took them down to the east fork of Issaquah Creek, where they ...

MM: Because they had hatched and they were trying to swim back out to sea, basically. Yeah. Oh, that's good.

RK: But then the other thing started developing, and we got more people. At that time, the Washington Environmental Council had been formed. So I went to form the Issaquah Environmental Council, and that meant getting processed by the State of Washington and getting permits.

MM: Oh, so you were an official ... because the Washington Environmental Council, was that considered kind of a government organization? That was sort of the precursor to the Department of Ecology, right?

RK: No, huh-uh.

MM: No? Was it a citizens' group?

RK: It was a citizens' group, but it was composed of a lawyer, Dave Bricklin, and I think he's still practicing. You've heard of Dave?

MM: Right. Yeah. You know, I remember reading about the Washington Environmental Council in the [19]70s, and I had forgotten that they were a citizens' group.

But I didn't realize the Issaquah Environmental Council ... so, are there other environmental councils, like Seattle Environmental Council and other towns that have the environmental councils?

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RK: You know, I don't know. Because I worked with Dave Bricklin for a while, and then things got so hot around here. It was a case of paying attention to all the local issues.

MM: Right.

RK: Of saving the Skyport – that's when it really got people involved.

MM: Yeah, and weren't you and your husband involved in a legal suit to save the Skyport land?

RK: Yeah.

MM: You can tell me about that. I don't know very much about it, but I know that the developers waged a countersuit, a SLAPP [Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation] suit, against you. So I wondered what precipitated the lawsuit itself that you waged, and how that all came about?

RK: Because it cost us money, that's what did us in. We were \$86,000 in debt and we didn't see any way out. And they kept processing it. They didn't let anything die.

So finally, we saved the 12 acres and Pickering Barn. At least that was given to us. And, you know, that whole area is designated [a] national monument. It's still a national monument, even though it's built on. Being designated a national monument does not save anything.

MM: I didn't know that. Did you have any models for other lawsuits, people who had done something similar to what you were doing? Or, how did you research it and figure it out?

RK: Well, by that time I was on the groundwater committee. And ... well, I think I had kind of an education from having grown up on a farm! [chuckles] But I really don't know how I ...

And Issaquah Creek seemed to be – since we've got our own little creek out there – seemed to be very important. And this is the reason we bought this property, is because it had the creek on it.

MM: Uh-huh. So when you were trying to save the Skyport, it was really a matter of trying to stop development, right?

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RK: Right. Because that whole area is a wetlands area. It may not be a Class 1 wetlands, but it's a wetland.

Now, along about the time that I-90 went through – and this was in about 1972 – the city of Issaquah until the – since 1923 when they bought the waterworks, which is in the northwest corner of Tiger, and consists of five springs – and they bought that from Gilman – you can find the documents that tell about the city of Issaquah buying in 1923. And until 1972, those five springs served the city of Issaquah with their water supply. They decided about then that they should get safer water.

So part of the deal with the I-90 highway was that they got some money to dig those two wells by Boehm's Candy. And that served until about five years ago, when they dug the well north of Gilman Boulevard behind the clinic. So now, they've got about three producing wells.

And in-between that time, they were going to develop a well, tried to develop a well, where the old gun club was located. The gun club got moved into a different area.

But that well, once they started pumping it, didn't have enough water in it so they abandoned it. And they've used it a little bit since then, but not enough to keep the Department of Ecology permit active.

MM: So how are these wells related to the – or are they? – related to the Skyport, that court case? How are the wells and the water related to that?

RK: Well, water always goes downhill. And this part of the valley is elevated above Lake Sammamish. Lake Sammamish is a big pool. It shows where the aquifer level is.

And Lake Sammamish lately has been – because of the development around, and the water is no longer absorbed in the ground – will go up 6 feet, and all the docks are underwater, and then it goes back down after a rainfall. And so it's definitely connected to getting rid of your surface water. And you can't replenish the aquifer then.

MM: And when development happened on the Skyport land, that was quite a lot of acreage, wasn't it? Is that about 100 acres or something?

RK: Well, there was a square mile there.

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MM: When that development took place, isn't that where a shopping center went, in that Skyport land?

RK: Yeah.

MM: And so that creates all these impervious surfaces, which cannot replenish. And also it robs the water of another place to go, so it contributes to, I guess, flooding problems. As you said, the lake is overflowing, and things like that.

RK: You bet. In 1984, we had a bad flood, when we got 24 inches of rainfall in 24 hours. And that's not happened again. Even our last flooding of this year, the rainfall has occurred over two days time. And we've gotten 4 inches, I think, but it occurred over a longer period of time.

But back in 1990 ... 1990, I think, we had a flood. And in [19]93, we had a flood. And Tibbetts Creek floodwaters met Issaquah Creek floodwaters on Gilman Boulevard. This never happened before.

MM: Why do you think that happened?

RK: Because the ground could not absorb the water fast enough.

MM: Oh, yeah. There wasn't enough surface for it. Yeah, that's terrible. Do you know, back when these developers waged a SLAPP suit against you – and I'm forgetting what SLAPP stands for – anyway, it's to slow you down. It's to stop the people who they perceive are slowing them down.

RK: Right.

MM: And generally it's waged against people without a lot of financial means, as compared to the developer, which is just about everyone.

So how did you and your husband – as you said, you were \$86,000 in debt. You must have had a lot to lose. How did you respond to it? Did you just keep fighting or what did you do?

RK: We quit! [laughter] And we settled with them. In other words, they paid off our lawyer fees, and we swore that we would not say a word against this development.

His name was Lang Sly, and ... aptly named. So I don't know how you're going to handle that.

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MM: Yeah, because I guess you can't talk about it much further or you'd get into some kind of trouble.

Ruth, you know, I know that you probably said most of the things that you would need to say in response to this question. But I know you've been an advocate for water quality and water conservation, and I know that you've been on water advisory boards. Tell me, in regard to Issaquah's water supply – you mentioned these wells that they've dug, and some of them didn't sustain Issaquah and then they would dig another well – what can you tell me about what the common person doesn't know, and should know, about Issaquah's water supply?

RK: Well, about 26 percent of the recharge for Issaquah's aquifer came from Pine Lake Plateau, or the Sammamish Plateau, or as it is now known as, the Issaquah Highlands. And groundwater goes straight down. But traveling sideways, it takes only tens of feet per year, so you won't notice this becoming less all the time.

MM: The diminishing ...

RK: It'll take a long time before that happens. And an illustration of what happens when you take groundcover off of someplace is that two years ago, when they had that blowout on the Sunset Interchange. That was because of a buildup of water behind, in the ground, with no place to go.

MM: Oh, you mean when the bridges blew out and all that?

RK: Yeah.

MM: Because it just overflowed. Yeah, exactly. Regarding the wetlands bordering 96th Street and Front Street, how were you able to successfully protect that area?

RK: Well ... we're at a dead end up here, I guess. We had bought 20 acres, and kept it without development. All the other houses developed at a time when there were 2-acre lots available. So they just developed at the right time.

And then the church bought the acreage just south of SE 96th, and they've been very good about putting boundaries on development. And they've got just a wide-open space there, so I imagine they could – that now has been designated as a wetlands area, which it is.

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MM: Does that mean people can't build on it?

RK: So they have to keep a 100-foot setback, I think, on a Class 1 – and it is a Class 1 – wetlands there.

MM: Yeah, that's good. That's right down there. That's right when you come in.

RK: Yeah.

MM: I should say that's the road – as I come up the hill, up Tiger Mountain from your property, that's where we start, 96th and Front Street. Let's see ... why is important?

I know, last time I talked to you – I think you mentioned this last time I talked to you; if not, I read it somewhere – that Issaquah has begun to import water from Seattle and elsewhere. And why is that not a good solution?

RK: Well, the quality of the water is not the same as what people are used to having here, because our water is totally untreated. And it is just permitting more development on the hillsides that wouldn't be permitted, because the water isn't there.

And, it's permitting development ever-encroaching upon Cougar Mountain and the Highlands. The Highlands was going to be an urban village, and look what it's turned into. It's nothing but a bunch of houses up there!

MM: Yeah. When you talk about an urban village, I guess the definition of an urban village is supposed to be homes, where there's also places to work and places to shop, that reduces the amount of traffic back and forth.

RK: Because people can walk.

MM: Yeah, because people can walk. [chuckles] *Boy*, isn't that a new idea, to walk somewhere!

But what's happened instead, what you're saying – and I think, on average – I think that Barbara Shelton [Issaquah Environmental Council] told me this – the average number of trips from a home per day for a single dwelling is six. Six trips by car per day.

So what you're saying is that you have this quote-unquote “urban village” that's not really an urban village, and you have all this traffic back and forth.

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RK: Yeah. Somehow they have taken it piece by piece, and added it to the village concept, and the city of Issaquah has gone along with it. They haven't said "Enough's enough!" They just say, "Well, we've got to accommodate the people."

MM: Yeah, but what about city services, and what about environmental issues, and what about water?

RK: The environmental issues, they are ignoring pretty much. They talk it, but it doesn't mean anything.

MM: Yeah, that's frustrating. Can you tell me about this issue – and I think this happened near you, I'm not sure – but can you explain to me the potential negative impact of six-pack rural housing developments, and what's happening in this regard in Issaquah?

RK: Well, in the Tahoma-Raven Heights study, all the area south of me has been designated as one house per 5 acres. And this is not a bad type of development because on steep hillsides, they still can't develop.

However, it will permit a person to put in as many houses as he could have put in with the present zoning, plus one or two more. So this is the carrot to get them to cluster the houses all together, so that the development isn't spread out.

MM: But do they just use one well, or how does it work?

RK: One well. Because they're supposed to be able to – each house – I've forgotten now – they're permitted to withdraw 5,000 gallons a day [for the cluster].

And when you consider that the houses up on the Highlands, each house up there uses – they're big houses, and I'm sure he's going to put big houses in, too– use more than 1,000 gallons a day.

MM: Oh, one house? One house uses more than 1,000 gallons a day?

RK: Yeah.

MM: And they're not supposed to draw more than 5,000 gallons?

RK: For all six of them.

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MM: For all six, yeah. So if we do the math, they're easily drawing over that much a day.

RK: Right.

MM: But there's some kind of regulation, isn't there, that allows that to happen? How are they exempt from regulations, and what regulations are they exempt from?

RK: Well, each well, if they're not going and withdraw more than 5,000 gallons a day, and they get a permit for that, but they can go ahead and withdraw more ...

Now, the well that they have is with a 100-foot setback from our little stream. And the stream is down in the gulley, about 30 feet below the top of the ground. And the top of the well is 30 feet above the creek.

And the creek gets fed from the side, the slope of it. And when they start pumping that well, the cone of influence, the well is 80 feet deep. Water has risen to within 30 feet of the top of it, which is the same height of the stream. I think they're going to suck that stream dry.

MM: Yeah. And that's probably a salmon stream.

RK: It's classified as a salmon stream down below. Not up in this gulley, because it's too steep, but down below it's a salmon stream, and Barbara has found salmon there.

MM: Right. And I guess you need to maintain minimum flows in these streams. But somehow, they're exempt from that, it seems. It seems like that's not being monitored, the impact of these six-pack housing developments upon these streams, right? That's part of the problem, I guess.

RK: Yeah.

MM: And where has that happened in Issaquah, these little units? Is it around here, or where has that happened?

RK: Well, there are many places outside of Mirrormont and Tahoma-Raven Heights ... not Tahoma, but ... Enumclaw.

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MM: Yeah, right. And that's one thing that you don't want to see a proliferation of, when the whole town is dependent upon one aquifer, right?

RK: Right.

MM: Yeah. Was there a case here where eight homes were being built near each other requiring two wells, and did you engage in a citizen's appeal against that?

RK: Well, they dug two wells, and he was planning on putting a lot more in. And it wasn't a fight, it was kind of a case of pointing it out to the Department of Ecology. And they told them they had to shut the extra well down and just utilize one well. So, they chose the well that's right next to the stream.

MM: That's good. Do people need to get permission before they drill a well, before they dig a well?

RK: No.

MM: Oh, they don't?

RK: Huh-uh.

MM: So they can do it right next to a stream if they want to?

RK: No, because they could shut the well down if they find it's been drilled too close to a stream.

MM: Oh, I see, yeah. So where is this that this took place? Where did this happen?

RK: Right south of our place here.

MM: Oh, right down there?

RK: Right on the other side of that stream.

MM: Oh, Kees Creek. Your creek.

RK: Yeah.

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MM: As I drive up here, you see a sign that says the zoning has changed. Is that where Park Pointe is proposed to go in, that housing development?

RK: No, Park Pointe is towards the north. It's behind the schoolhouse.

MM: Oh, OK.

RK: And if you go to the end our road, and then you hit the [inaudible], Park Pointe goes all the way down to SE 96th Street.

Now, the city of Issaquah, the section line, runs right up SE 96th, and down the middle of it. So we got 30 feet on the north side and 30 feet on the south side. So the city of Issaquah didn't want our road to maintain, so they jogged their boundaries 30 feet north of the section line, and took in all of the area that was going to be Park Pointe.

Now, Park Pointe is not going to be able to build on the southern part of their property. But only up by the schoolhouse.

MM: Is that considered an urban village?

RK: They applied for an urban village, but the city of Issaquah has yanked the urban village designation, and it's just a development.

MM: And how many houses? About a hundred?

RK: Oh ... too many. [laughing] I don't know, I haven't been there since ... well, they are just starting to propose again. And they're going to have to reorganize the Citizens Advisory Board, because two of us are gone. I'm not able to go.

MM: What are your concerns for the Park Pointe property development?

RK: It's steep. It's a recharge area. West Tiger gives – well, it contributes – I started telling you that the Highlands was built 26 percent. And the conservancy area on Tiger, the steep area, contributes some 40 percent. And it shouldn't be developed.

MM: Is there any way to stop that kind of development?

RK: People have been protesting twenty years.

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MM: Uh-huh. The other thing that I wanted to ask you, and we started talking about before, what happened down here just south of your property, in that area where it's be rezoned? What has that been rezoned for?

RK: Well, that was what I was telling you, for a six-pack.

MM: Oh, that's the kind of development that can go in there.

RK: That's for a six-pack.

MM: That's the area about the two wells and the eight houses that you engaged in a citizen's appeal and talked to Ecology.

RK: Yeah.

MM: OK. You know, I understand that you sold – and you talked to me about this last time a little bit, too – but you designated 15 of your 20 acres to the Washington State Department of Natural Resources through an agreement with Cascade Land Conservancy, the organization that will provide stewardship over your former land.

And so, in what ways does this agreement that you've made with Cascade Land Conservancy and the Department of Natural Resources, how does that protect your land and what do you get from it?

RK: Well, when you put it in – the west side of Tiger is in conservancy because it's too steep. And this just hooks onto the conservancy area. So there shouldn't be any radical changes.

MM: It just can't be developed, right?

RK: It can't be developed, right.

MM: So this property will stay as is.

RK: In perpetuity, yes. And you know what perpetuity means anymore.

MM: Yeah. [chuckles] I'm glad for that, Ruth. I wondered if you could help us just get a general sense of the environmental organizations and activities that have happened in Issaquah?

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So, I started to list some of the groups. I have the Issaquah Alps Club, which I know you were part of. And the Issaquah Environmental Council, I actually know you were part of. And the Tiger Mountain State Forest Advisory Committee. And then I have the King County Issaquah Creek Basin Groundwater Advisory Committee, which is a citizens group, is it? Or is it?

RK: No. That hasn't been active. That was active quite some time ago.

MM: Oh. What is the Groundwater Advisory Committee now?

RK: I don't think there is any groundwater committee.

MM: Are there other water quality committees in particular? Or is that just something that these other organizations are handling? What are the other environmental groups that I've missed, or historically? You mentioned Friends of Issaquah before, a really early precursor to –

RK: Well, I think you've got quite a few of them. And I'm wondering if maybe you'd like to keep some of these archives?

MM: *Wow*, that's incredible.

RK: Is that the Centennial?

MM: Let's see.

RK: I don't know what that is. You don't want the *Beatrice Daily Sun*?

MM: I'd love to see it. This is from when you were growing up in Beatrice [Nebraska]?

RK: Well, it was ... our first year out here, they celebrated their Centennial, which is 200 years, isn't it?

MM: So they sent this to you. This is dated 1957! *Ohmygosh*. I don't even feel like I should be touching it. This is amazing.

So, you're showing me the old newspapers from your old town. And it's like from your home town. And so is this just a large edition just for the Centennial? Or is it normally this big?

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RK: Well, I don't know why I – all those others are at the same time. They're all big.

MM: *Wow.* This is from July 21, 1957.

RK: Look at this. That came from [inaudible].

MM: *Seattle Times* ...

RK: Turn it over.

MM: It's a Nordstrom's ad. [laughing] That is so funny. What year is this?

RK: I don't know.

MM: Oh, 1981. That's funny, yeah. I love that ad, it's great. There was one more thing that I was going to ask you. Oh, what do you have there?

RK: *Issaquah Press.* You might find some interesting ...

MM: If you've saved them, it probably has something to do with an environmental thing.

RK: There's something in it here ... [papers rattling]

MM: What happened? Oh, "Anti-development groups claim Grand Ridge study is biased." Here we go. What's the date on this? This is September 25, 1991.

RK: That's not too long ago, is it?

MM: No.

RK: We've been [sound of bell ringing] ... I wonder if this isn't the Cougar Mountain picture, you know, that picture of that cougar.

MM: Oh, yeah.

RK: This is not Beatrice, this has got to be from out here.

MM: Yeah, it is.

RK: And that Nordstrom would put something like that in ...

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MM: That's really funny. Let's see ... I'm going to pause this for a second. [tape recorder turned off]

RK: You can take the –

MM: I just remembered one thing that I wanted to ask you. I know that you've done a lot of letter-writing campaigns. I wanted to ask you if you remember some of your letter-writing campaigns, and what those were about, through your time here?

RK: Well, the latest ones mostly have been for the Southeast Bypass. Because that's been going on for twenty years. Now, Barbara, I'm sure, has all of those.

MM: Barbara Shelton?

RK: Yeah. So ask her.

MM: Yeah, you know, she told me a little bit about it. And you showed me a letter before we began here, about this Southeast Bypass to I-90; and that there's been – I know there's been some \$4M that have already been spent in feasibility studies, and that the Environmental Council opposes the bypass and that they're not alone.

So can you tell me, what are your central concerns regarding this bypass on I-90?

RK: It's going to be a six-lane – at least a four-[lane road], but I think they're proposing a six-lane. And it's going to bring –

The reason for having the bypass is to take the traffic off Front Street. Now, that's kind of silly, because we don't get all that much. We get traffic, but then it goes through. And it is not truck traffic. Trucks are forbidden.

And you put that bypass and you're going to have a whole bunch more cars – and trucks – going down this valley, with more smog in this valley. And with our terrain, we're going to be a little Los Angeles.

MM: So because it's a valley – there's all these mountains on the side – do you think you're going to see that kind of inversion that Los Angeles sees?

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RK: I'm sure. And the noise pollution! People don't talk about noise pollution, but it affects the nerves of a person so that it's an – they've subjected animals and people to continuous noise, and their blood pressure went up. And their blood pressure never came down! So it causes physiological changes.

MM: I did not know that. *Boy*, I had no idea that that happened.

RK: And it would also result in this part of the valley being developed, too.

MM: Uh-huh. Where would it come off, the Southeast Bypass? Where does it come off?

RK: It would come out just back of these other houses over here.

MM: So, very near your house.

RK: And it would go into [Issaquah]-Hobart Road, about where SE 96th takes off of Hobart Road.

MM: *Oh no*. So that's been proposed for twenty years? What's kept it from being developed? I mean, if it's been talked about for twenty years, and they've been doing feasibility studies, something's wrong that they haven't been able to make it happen. So what is it? What have they been finding out?

RK: Well, I think that is one case where citizen ... and Park Pointe had not developed far enough, and they'd given no reason for traffic concurrency, and the citizens have done enough to ...

Like at the Development Commission, I don't know if you attended it, but I watched it over TV. And there were a whole *slew* of people that *all* spoke out against it. And the Development Commission said that they had to go back to the drawing board.

MM: And these were people who were educated about the effects of it, right? That's good. Were Issaquah Environmental Council people there?

RK: Yeah.

MM: That's good.

RK: Yeah. Barbara was there, and Connie Marshall, too.

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MM: That must have made you feel good.

RK: Yeah.

MM: It's in good hands.

RK: Hopefully, yeah.

MM: That's great. Well, Ruth, I thank you so much for this day. You've been a really good job. I know I interviewed you twice, and so you've done more than your part, I think.

END OF INTERVIEW WITH RUTH KEES