

Colorado River Water Users Association –WYOMING
Tape #9
JOHN ZEBRE (TAPE #1)
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
December 10, 2009

jz– John Zebre

ps - interviewer Pam Stevenson, Agave Productions, Inc

bs - videographer Bill Stevenson

ps To start off, I need to identify on the tape that today is Thursday, December the 10th, of 2009. And we are here in Las Vegas at the Colorado River Water Users Association Annual Conference to do oral histories. And, we're focusing on Wyoming this time. And, I'm Pam Stevenson doing the interview and Bill Stevenson's running the camera. And I'll let you give me your name so we'll be sure it's pronounced correctly

jz I'm John Zebre.

ps That's your full name? Zebra...

jz Zebre. Z-E-B-R-E.

ps Okay. Z-e-b-r-e. And, uh, I always start at the beginning. Tell me when you were born and where you were born.

jz I was born, uh, October 29th, 1948, in Kemmerer, Wyoming. At the South Lincoln County Miners Hospital.

ps So you're a Wyoming native.

jz Yes, I am.

ps And, what was your family doing in Wyoming at that time?

jz My grandfather and grandmother came here from Yugoslavia. My family were stone masons in the old country, and, uh, came here and were coal miners. And then, uh, my father educated himself, and, uh, had various enterprises throughout his lifetime.

ps Well, as you were growing up, what sort of things was, was he doing?

jz He was involved in, uh, insurance, and real estate, and banking and ranching.

ps What about your mother?

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jz She, for most of her life was a housewife and mother, because I had, uh, six other brothers and sisters.

ps That was a full time job for her.

jz And then, uh, later on in her life she worked with my father in his office.

ps So, among...there were seven of you?

jz Yes.

ps And, where did you fall in that?

jz I was the second oldest. The oldest male child.

ps Kind of the leader.

jz No. (laughter)

ps So, uh, what...where did you grow up?

jz I, uh, grew up in Kemmerer, and I was, uh, there until I was,uh,13 years old. And, uh, I went to a, uh, private high school in Pray Dashene, Wisconsin. A Jesuit boarding school called Campion (?).

ps So, what was Kemmerer like when you were growing up?

jz Primarily the income base, the economy base, of that community was, uh, coal mining. Uh. And, uh, as I grew up, the, Food (?) Machinery Corporation, FMC, developed a Coke plant there. There was a power generation facility owned by Utah Power and Light Company, which then became part of Pacific Corp, which is now known as, uh, Rocky Mountain Power.

ps So, what are some of your memories of what kinds of things did you do as a boy?

jz Oh, gosh. Uh. Played some athletics. I liked to fish. I liked to hunt. And, uh...primarily birds. And I, uh, liked making sausage with my uncles. And, helping them make wine. And those kinds of things.

ps A wide variety of things. What kind of sports did you play?

jz Primarily baseball. It was just a, just a summer thing.

ps The winter's were pretty severe I would imagine up there.

jz Yes, they, they could be.

ps Have memories of surviving in the winter?

- jz Yes. And then shoveling snow. And chopping ice and all of those things that go with this climate. Nothing really unusual. You don't think it's unusual...when you're growing up, that's just the way it is. Didn't even know people lived where they didn't have snow.
- ps So, you say you went to school there through the primary grades.
- jz Through eighth grade.
- ps Were you a good student?
- jz I think so. I think so.
- ps Did you like school?
- jz Yes. I did.
- ps Of course, in the wintertime you had to get through that snow to get to school.
- jz No...there was, ...my grade school was one house away from me. And, so I didn't have any problems walking to and from.
- ps Was it a pretty small school?
- jz It's a small community. At the time I think that the population of that town was probably only between, uh, 2500 and 3000 people.
- ps Probably was a pretty small school.
- jz Yes.
- ps Not quite a one-room schoolhouse.
- jz No, no. It wasn't.
- ps Well, why were you sent away for high school?
- jz I wasn't sent away. My, my, uh, father wanted us to, uh, all get good educations. And he wanted us to have, uh, a Catholic educations. My mother concurred in that, as that was the manner in which she had been educated. And, uh, so, uh, all my brothers and sisters and I went to private schools. At that age.
- ps What did you think about that as a boy?
- jz As boy or after I went?
- ps No, when you went.

- jz I thought they were the best four years of my life.
- ps But, was it...a lot different though, living away from home?
- jz Oh, I don't know. Uh. The Jesuits are good educators. They're also, uh, very disciplinarians. Very strict. Uh. So there's, uh, nothing different between that and, and, you know, generically the way I was raised at home.
- ps All boys school?
- jz Yes.
- ps Did you like that?
- jz Yeah, well, there were only like seven private girls schools within a 50-mile radius of my school. So, I mean, that wasn't a problem.
- They, they did manage to occasionally arrange for us to participate in social activities, also. So.
- ps So, as you were in high school, what were your favorite subjects?
- jz English. Uh. Probably English. Uh. Latin. Uh. History.
- ps What were you thinking you were going to do for a career?
- jz Probably at one time I considered a, uh, military career. But when, uh...I didn't have the requisite eyesight I needed for what I wanted to do. I decided I was going to be an attorney. And that was probably...I was probably 17 or something when I made that decision. So, I just did it.
- ps Did you know attorneys at the time?
- jz Yes. Yes. I knew some. Mainly folks that my father would introduce me to when I would travel with him occasionally.
- ps So, where did you go to college?
- jz I went to school at the University of Wyoming. And also to law school there.
- ps Your age would say that you were in school during the Vietnam War period.
- jz Yes, I was.
- ps Were you ever drafted or...

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jz No. I was in, uh, ROTC in, uh, college, as the then preferred method of avoiding the draft. (ps – Did you ever...) The best alternative because I had had high school ROTC, too.

ps While you were considering a military career?

jz Yes.

ps So, did you ever then serve full time in the military?

jz No, I did not. Perhaps for six or eight weeks, active duty time, and that was it.

ps And what branch of the military were you in?

jz Army.

ps So you never had to go and serve in Vietnam?

jz No, I did not. I lost a lot of good friends there, a lot of good friends hurt there, but I never had to go.

ps So, you went to college and law school. So, what was your first job then out of school?

jz I, uh, came from, uh, the university to, uh, Rock Springs, Wyoming, and became, with an associate with another attorney in the community where I still live.

ps And, what brought you to Rock Springs?

jz The attorney I went to work for called me up on day and said , he'd heard about me, and was coming down to, uh, Laramie for something. I don't know if it was a basketball game or something else.

And he asked if he could talk to me that weekend. And, uh, he came down and said, what are you going to do when you get out of school? I said, I haven't decided yet. He said, do you want to come to work for me? And I said, fine. So, I did.

ps You must have liked it then, if you stayed.

jz Yeah.

ps Well, what kind of law did you do in Rock Springs?

jz Oh, I still practice there. Uh. And I have a general small town practice. I do some things more than others, but, uh, I, uh...

It's too small a community to really, uh, specialize in, so you have to do...be able to do a little bit of...more than one thing. I don't know how many things, but, but, uh, a few anyway.

ps So, how did you first get involved with the Colorado River issues?

jz Well, (clears throat) because of my father's agricultural interests, I grew up being aware of water and water issues and water problems. And, uh, the people from the State Engineer's office and then the, the...you know...the water inspectors and the, uh, people who checked on headgates and valves and those kinds of things.

I, uh, ran irrigation pumps. And I dug ditches. You know. Built, uh, worked...did manual work on irrigation systems. Laid out sprinkler pipe and all that kind of stuff. I knew how to do that, from when I was a teenager. Learned how to do those things.

ps Got involved from the ground up. (laughs) Literally.

jz Probably. Probably.

ps When did you first get involved with some of the bigger water issues? Of the Colorado River/

jz Probably with the Colorado per se...well, our homelands is on the Ham's Fork, which flows into the Black Fork, which flows into the Green, which flows into the Colorado.

So. I, I grew up in the basin. But my, my first time professionally working on water issues was, uh, sometime after I graduated from law school. Uh. And I don't know who my first water client was, or, or what have you.

I worked a little bit in it. And then in 19...I don't know... 88 or 89, I went to work for, uh, a water board. And, uh, it has just intensified since then.

ps Which water board were you working for?

jz The, uh, Green River, Rock Springs, Sweetwater County Joint Powers Board.

ps The one with the big name. That was a new board at the time?

jz Yes. I was involved almost from its inception.

The Board had been created, and then, uh, the board hired an engineer, and then hired myself within, within a month of one another. In the spring of the year. And I can't remember if it was 88 or 89. But, but I've been involved ever since that time.

ps What were the kind of issues that they were dealing with, that you were dealing with as an attorney for them?

jz The board had just, uh, acquired the system. They'd purchased it from Pacific Corp. And so, they had absolutely, uh, the board had absolutely no experience in the operation or running of the system. Or any of the issues, uh, that could and did arise pursuant there to.

They were dealing with, uh, new construction projects. Uh. Modification projects. Upgrade projects. Uh. System-wide kinds of problems that any water utility faces in terms of, uh, from the time, you know, the water comes out of, of a, uh, a source or a stream or a river or a lake or whatever, and is delivered ultimately to the customer. All the kinds of issues that can be involved there.

ps You don't remember any particular, specific issues?

jz Well, they, they, they were immense because it was a new entity, and it was a new acquisition. There was a... basically part of it was, uh, even involved familiarization with the system as it existed when they purchased it.

And uh, it was done in a, a funding schematic where certain portions of, of certain monies were allocated towards certain kinds of projects.

There were, uh, state grant applications involved for funding for improvements for... to the system. Uh. There were, uh, there was the expiration of, uh, the... for alternative and new sources of water at the time.

There were personnel issues. There, there was, uh, issues involving the operation of the treatment plant at the time. Uh. Real estate issues such as easements and rights of way. For pipelines or extensions. Uh. For the system.

There were, uh, consulting engineering issues, with respect to, uh, capacities and volumes and, and pressures. Uh. Those kinds of things.

There was the, uh, involvement in the selection of other professionals to assist the board in the tasks it needed to undertake and accomplish.

There were issues that arose internally with the board, with respect to various board, board members, and personnel kinds of matters. And, and all of those kinds of things.

It generally ran the whole gamut of anything and everything you can run into in the field of civil law. So.

ps Sounds like that would have taken up a lot of your practice time then.

jz It did. It did. It took, uh, probably less and less over the years, but it, it was a lot.

ps You mentioned that you came to work there for another attorney when you got out of law school.

jz Uh, huh.

ps So, how large a practice do you have there now?

jz I just...I'm a sole practitioner. With the exception of a, uh, few years that, that I, uh, had one of my younger brothers practicing with me....I've, I've been..... Well, no.

I, I, I went to work for the attorney I came to Rock Springs to help. And then, he and I and another attorney formed a partnership. And that lasted about two years and then I went on my own. In 1976.

And I've been by myself since 1976, with the exception of about, I believe, maybe five....I don't know. I don't know how many years my kid brother was with me. So.

ps But, pretty much you're on your own there.

jz Yes.

ps Sounds like a lot of things you were dealing with. With other clients, also...you must have been busy during that time period.

jz Oh, I'm always busy. So.

ps So, I know one thing that Alan mentioned was an issue came up in the purchase, that they didn't really feel that they were given a full, uh, accurate estimate of the operational costs. And that they had to resolve that with the company they purchased it from. Did you get involved with that?

jz Yes, I did. Yes, I did.

ps Was that a major issue?

jz Yes, it was.

ps Do you want to talk about it a little bit?

jz It involved not only....non-disclosure....full non....full....

It involved not only the issues regarding full disclosure of operational costs, but it also involved, uh....in my opinion, okay?

At the time, uh, non-disclosure of, uh, other kinds of potential liabilities for the board in terms of the actual condition of the system at the time it was purchased.

And, uh, what the vendor, or seller of the system, had agreed to, uh, commit to, and what the then board felt was their, uh, non-compliance with that commitment and covenant under the purchase agreements.

ps Did that end up going to court eventually?

jz No, it did not go to court. Well, there was litigation filed, which was settled out of court. It didn't go to trial. It was in court.

ps Anything else you wanted to talk about with your work with that, uh, entity?

jz Not particularly. I, I, I represented the board for, I think, oh...nine and a half years. And, uh, then ended up, uh, serving on that board for...I can't remember how many years. Until last year anyway. Until 2008.

ps It mentions here four terms that you served on that board. Now, once you served as a board member, could you still be their attorney?

jz No. No, that's a conflict. But, I don't know if I served four terms or not because a term is three years. And I think there was a max of six.

ps So, you couldn't be their attorney. You had to hire another attorney, I guess.

jz Yeah. They, they hired another attorney.

ps That would have been a big change for, for you in your law practice, and also I guess for them to have a new attorney to become familiar with....

jz It was, it was not change really, in my law practice. It was just a, a change in my role a little bit, but I had, uh, you know, of course, a whole bunch of familiarity with all of the issues. Because I had been on the board since Ground Zero. Or, or, served for the board since Ground Zero or something. When I became a board member, it was, it was just a different hat. Dealing with the same issues.

ps But, they were getting you for free.

jz In essence, yeah. Yeah.

ps Now, it mentions here that you also are currently are the Chairman of the Upper Green River Joint Powers Board.

jz Yes. The Upper Green River Basin Join Powers Board.

ps What, what does that board do?

jz That board is comprised and was formed by three counties in the basin. The Sweetwater, Lincoln, and Sublette counties.

And, uh, the, the mission of that board is to identify and hopefully develop, uh, new, uh, storage projects for water within the basin, together with any kinds of, uh, pertinent facilities. A distribution systems that are attenent (?) to those kinds of storage projects. Or, or things like that.

And, I've been on that board about, I think about four or five years. Since it was formed.

ps I was going to ask you if it was new. Why was it formed?

jz To do just what I suggested. To focus on new storage projects within the basin. And to alleviate shortages of water, uh, where they appear from, from existing records.

And, to hopefully support and assist the state in, uh, new methods of assessing actual quantities available. Sources of those quantities. The, the, uh, inter-relationships between ground and surface water within the basin. Uh. Cost estimates. And basically how to alleviate, uh, existing shortages and to make sure that, uh, we're ready in anticipi...and can, to the maximum extent possibly, anticipi, anticipate future needs, so that, that the, uh, systems within the basin are, are prepared and ready when those needs occur rather than having to, to, uh, fight a reactive kind of battle with the existing demands and, and shortages.

It's, it's, uh...the board's function is really to be proactive.

ps And why was it felt that they needed a new...to create a new board to do that? That the existing organization couldn't handle that?

jz To my knowledge there were not organizations in Lincoln and Sublette County. Uh. Just Sweetwater County. That Green River, Rock Springs Water County Board, is strictly limited to Sweetwater County.

So this was, uh...this was a regionalization of the approach toward water issues, uh, in the basin. An, an attempt and an effort to have all of the interested stakeholders or players, uh, functioning together, uh, and utilizing their, their common interests and their common needs, to, to perhaps...and through consolidation of efforts, through working together...to hopefully, uh, have a better opportunity to accomplish what needs to be done on a basin-wide basis.

ps And you're the current Chairman of that?

jz Yes. I have been since the board's inception.

ps Okay. The one and only chairman. Um. So, what are the (can't understand). Are you making progress? Do you have any major projects on the, on the, on the boards now?

jz Yes we do. We, uh, we're looking at a project that right now is in the, uh, an extended, uh, what the State Engin....or, what the State Water Development Commission would call, uh, a, a...Phase Two of the project.

What they're doing is, they're doing and completing, at the current time, geo-technical work, uh, to, uh, do one of two alternatives. Either raise the height of the existing Viva Naughton Reservoir, uh, north of Kemmerer, Wyoming. Or go north of that, and build an alternative reservoir in what is called Dempsey Basin.

There are various scenarios and alternatives associated with those two projects and how they might, uh, supplement one another, or be operated together. Because Viva

Naughton is entirely owned by Pacific Corp, now Rocky Mountain Power. And, uh, they basically own the water.

And, what they're talking about...even the possibilities of pumping water out of Viva Naughton upstream to, to, uh, the Dempsey Basin Site, and using down flows and turbines to add a hydropower component, uh, to the...an increased hydropower component to the, uh, operation of those facilities.

Whether we have one enlarged reservoir or whether we have the old reservoir together with the supplemental reservoir.

There are some environmental issues. They're also still doing work on, is the geo-technical. And there is the environmental assessments.

I believe, in my own mind, that there, that the site that will ultimately be selected will be the Dempsey Basin Site, because in that location there are only, uh, I believe, 30-some acres of impacted wetlands. Uh. That would be impacted by the construction of the reservoir. Although there are also some issues about, uh, Oregon Trail. (laughs) Uh. Flooding.

ps Oregon Trail goes through there.

jz Yes. Through parts of that site. Well, one of the cut-offs to the Oregon Trail. It's actually called the Dempsey-Hockady Trail

It goes through a portion of it, but, but I think that can be handled and addressed. And I think that's going to be okay, even though the Bureau of Reclamation panics every time they talk about the trails people. I don't, I don't think it's really going to be that big an issue.

But, the wetlands are because, uh, there's only like 30 acres that would be impacted by the Dempsey Site as opposed to, uh, 10 times that many by raising the height of Viva Naughton. So, I think it's going to end up being the preferred alternative.

ps When you say wetlands, what is it about the wetlands that...

jz The wetlands, and the folks in the Fish and Wildlife Service, that, that focus on those kinds of issues, they're concerned about the, uh, habitat and the fact that the (can't understand) are usually artificial and naturally created wetlands.

They've concluded they're naturally occurring wetlands. And, and, they look a species that grow there. The types of wildlife, uh, that, that inhabit those wetlands. What they're used for. For instance, migratory water fowls. An obvious one. Uh. And they look at...under the Corps of Engineers standards, fore-sighting and permitting.

They, they look for the least environmentally damaging alternative. And, and I suspect that they're going to find the Dempsey Basin Site to be that as opposed to the Viva Naughton Site.

ps So, how long do you think it will be before we might actually see something being built there?

jz I think that the latest time table for the submission of the last studies, on the geo-technical and the environmental stuff, is, uh, this month. The end of this month. Maybe a little longer.

And I'm hoping to see, uh, a solicitation for proposals from contractors for final engineering and design, uh, in May of 2010.

And by the time that, uh, walks the Wyoming legislative track, I assume that it would be probably, uh, at the earliest, the, uh....I'm going to say the spring of 2011. But, more than likely, it (can't understand word) in the February session, February 2012 session of the legislature for construction. For actual construction.

ps It takes awhile to get these things through.

jz Yes it does. But, uh, our timeline on that project is, is not near that which you will have seen on other projects throughout the basin. I mean...

Some 20 years, and millions and millions and millions spent, and ultimately the project doesn't go. So....

It's actually, as far as I can see and determine...and it helps the fact that there's an existing facility there....but it's, it's really, as far as I can perceive, on a fast-track basis.

ps Any other major things you're working on?

jz The thing that's nifty about that project is it's a win-win for everybody. Because it will, uh, increase the reliability of the water supplies for the towns of Kemmerer, Diamondville, and the little community of Opal, uh, 15 miles west of...or east...of Kemmerer.

It will improve the flood control through those communities.

It would allow, uh, Rocky Mountain Power, should they wish to construct and build an additional unit at the, uh, Viva Naughton Power Plant, uh, coal-fired...you know...electrical generation unit. Uh. As unpopular as coal-fired facilities are these days, and, and it's kind of in a hold pattern right now.

It would make wet, uh, an eight mile stretch of river, that, uh, the Game and Fish has applied for in-stream flow protection on. And the state could adjudicate that in-stream flow right with plenty of water, which would restore that eight-mile stretch of the Hams-Fork River to a Blue (?) River fishery. Uh.

I think that, uh, it would improve or increase the amount of water available for the irrigators in the Lower Ham's Fork River Basin, from the dam site north of Kemmerer,

all the way to the confluence, uh, with the Black's Fork, over by Granger and Little America. It would do all of those things in one fell swoop.

And I hope, when we get to the point where we can submit an application for permitting based upon the construction plans, that we'll have all the players, all the stakeholders signing on the applications. With nobody objecting.

ps That would be unique, wouldn't it?

Jz Yeah. Because it....

It's a way, I think, that more projects should go. You know, you think that this traditional black-and-white engineers approach, and, and, and, it has to do with going in for your permit and, and, uh, you're anticipating problems. And you file the application and you say, well, let's just see what happens. And there you are, responding to objections from so-and-so.

This entity. That entity. You didn't consider this. You didn't consider that. I really think that the way that those projects should be done is to bring all the potential stakeholders from everywhere at the table together. And, and, uh, and get them to cooperatively and collaboratively decide what they can all agree to. What the common thread is. What's in there for them? Is that enough? What more would they want? You know. Why?

Well, if you don't like it here, where would you be agreeable to having it? Or, if, if it wasn't going to be a, a 10-foot increase in height, a 10-foot increase in height of a dam, will you take eight? Cause we can do this with eight, you know, and we don't really need the 10. But that's the way I think that these projects should be approached, and I think it would save time, save costs. And get everybody on the same page. From the outset.

ps That's what you're trying to accomplish as the Chairman of the Board?

jz That is what...that is the approach I would like to see the Wyoming Water Development Commission, who would probably end up funding the majority of the project, that's the approach I would like to see them take in attempting to permit or promulgate all of the projects.

I, I just think it makes more sense, and it's a better use of the state's dollar than, than doing the traditional approach.

ps Logical. Um. I've got some sort of general questions I try to ask everyone. And one of them here is...looking back over the history of water in Wyoming, what projects or, of legal developments do you think has been important for making Wyoming what it is today?

jz From making Wyoming what it is today. Uh. Projects you're looking for?

ps Or legal developments. Projects or legal developments.

jz They aren't really legal developments.

There's the existence of the Prior Appropriation Doctrine. And, and, uh,....I suppose, in terms with its association with water, the development in Wyoming of the extractive industries, particularly as they involve coal-bed methane, uh, which produces vast volumes of water as a by-product.

The, the, the use by other extractive industries, of quantities of water, in terms of doing their things. And, just, uh....consciousness by everybody in general of the importance of water and how much we do depend upon it and need it.

ps You think people in Wyoming are more conscious of their need for water or the use of water than others?

jz Oh, I think so, because more and more they, they read more about it every day. Or hear about it on TV. Or radio, or, you know, the newspapers, and various conflicts and controversies. And, and, uh, they become well aware of the importance of it.

The vast majority of the public doesn't understand water issues and how they work, but they are concerned about it. And they, they end up, uh, voicing their opinions about things. And, and, uh, sometimes It may not be from what I would consider the proper perspective, or the proper approach, but they're there. And, uh, they're voicing their concern.

They're expressing their interest. They're, they're expressing the, uh, values that they hold dear, that they somehow feel that water is essential to the presser, preservation of. And, and, uh, they're, they're....people are doing what they should be doing as citizens and members of a community.

ps Are there any particular parts of the history of water in Wyoming, or the West, that you feel that you've played a part in?

jz Oh, not really. Uh. Not really.

I've had some involvement in some things, and I've got to participate with some things, uh, through my involvement with the Colorado River Water Users Association. But not that I really, directly, hands-on, you know, uh, worked on or developed or engendered.

ps It's, it's more recent history, but I guess this new Upper Green River Board is something that people, looking back, would say you were a part of. Since you've been the president since it started.

jz The Chairman. Yeah. Yeah.

ps So, that, that's....I guess later people can look back and say you were a part of that.

jz Yeah, I really, I really....compared to a lot of the folks...what do they call them? Water buffalos around here....I started in this thing as a pup, and I still am. (laughter) But, uh...even after 20 years. So, that, uh....

ps Those water buffalos go way back.

jz Uh, huh.

ps So, today what are the problems that, that you're confronting that you're feeling are your biggest obstacles to moving forward, that you want to accomplish?

jz I, I think....I think conceptually, uh, what I see as the big picture in terms of needs and where we want to go, and what we need to do....

In the Green River Basin in Wyoming, we just have to make sure that, as we develop Wyoming's water, for whatever purpose and need, uh, that we ultimately direct our efforts at, uh, that we do that with balance.

And that we take into account, uh, all of the stakeholders, uh, all of the interests. All different kinds of users, and do this in a fashion that does not denigrate or damage the, the, uh, values, uh, that we have, uh, as a people in this state.

And I don't think those values are defined by state boundary. They might be the same values we have throughout the basin. They may be the same values, uh, we have throughout the nation. And they might be the same values that we should have and should espouse and advocate on the (can't understand word) state.

ps As they expand things. I was going to ask you about who were your greatest allies in working through these issues?. And then, again, who are your greatest opponents?

jz My greatest allies are, are....uh...reasonable, down-to-earth, practical people. (laughs) And my greatest opponents are, are, are those of an opposing ilk. The close-minded, uh, narrow-thinking, opinionated, uh, types of folks.

\ps A very broad way of putting it. (laughs) Without giving any names. How do you see your role in, in solving these issues?

jz Well, each of us is a part of the whole. And I guess, in my own little way, my own little role, and my own little corner, uh, all I can do is, is to facilitate and encourage that kind of attitude and response from others around me and others I work with. And others I can communicate with.

Because, uh, none of us can do it alone. None of us can do it alone. And we have to, to one extent or another, depend upon somebody else, or others. Plural.

And, and, uh, we need to be cooperatively creative, and we need to, uh, be flexible. And, we need to keep listening. And we need to keep learning. And, and, uh.....

Focusing our efforts on, on, uh, what is going to be the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

I think we have to avoid the, uh, parochial and patronizing and, and, and selfish attitudes. We, uh, need to truly and actually identify what things are worth that we value. We, we need to be willing to at least sit down with others and talk about, talk to them about, what we perceive as to be, uh, some god-awful halacious (?) line of thought, that there's no way we can agree with in any shape or form.

We, we need to, uh, just make sure that there is always balance. And that no interest or, or, uh, concern is forgotten and left totally unprotected.

And, and, to the extent possible, when we develop a plan, I don't think it should necessarily be written in stone.

I think the plan should be flexible. To take into account and consider the things that we don't know today that we might know tomorrow.

That, uh...or, or development or changes that can occur from, from whatever sector, whatever category, whatever point of view. And, and, basically, I think, continue to do what the Seven States have done since 1922, is to, to the maximum extent possible, except when you get to Arizona, stay out of court, (laughs) and, and, and, uh, function these collaborative, creative solutions together. To, to, to develop those together.

ps Sounds like a good goal. Um. What accomplishment related to water are you proudest of?

jz Related to water. That's a tough question. First of all, it assumes I have accomplishments.

I think, I think, uh, one of the things that I was involved with that is going to become more and more important over the years, uh, is back in 1996 or 1997...maybe shortly thereafter. I can't remember the year exactly.

There was an issue that nobody wanted to touch with a 10-foot pole. They didn't want to express their minds because they were afraid of being called racist. Uh. And, uh, they didn't want to take any position for fear of what their friends or associates from other areas might think of them. And that was, uh....

I think I played a fairly large role in having the, uh, Ten Tribes Partnership, uh, added to the board of the Colorado River Water Users Association.

ps And why did you want to do that?

jz Because...I don't think that any society, uh...and again...or any people, whether we're talking worldwide or nationally or regionally or statewide or locally or whatever. I don't think that any system, or any way of doing things, should be based upon disenfranchisement.

The Colorado River Compact was silent. Was specifically silent to not addressing these, uh, water rights of the Ten Tribes, or those Ten Tribes, I think, having adjudicated water rights on the main stem of the river. But I think there are some...maybe 27 other tribes in the basin, that don't have adjudicated rights on the main stem. And, and the Compact is silent about those folks.

And the states, over the years, have been going through the process of making Indian water rights settlements. And, and I think that's wonderful that they've been doing that.

I've never evaluated them to see how fair, how adequate they are, or what have you. But, but, uh, the Ten Tribes and the other tribes, have some excellent representatives and some excellent voices, in that, uh....

At one time, uh, I had heard that if we had to look at Indian water rights claims from a quantitative standpoint, in terms of how much they potentially are, I've heard assertions at one time that we might be talking five-million acre feet a year, which is half the flow of the river. Uh. So, uh, I don't know that quantification. I know a lot of, I have a lot of friends, who could tell that to you, or, or certainly argue it.

But, but, I think it's important that they be at the table, and, and that, that, uh, we work together. And I'm, I'm excited, uh, a little bit, for the next two years, because I hope to, in whatever way I can, really assist the Ten Tribes partnership to, uh, move into the leadership of this organization in 2012.

ps That would be a big change for this organization, wouldn't it?

jz Well, I can't speak for the other states. But...and, and, and, uh, there are no tribes situated within the basin within the confines of the state of Wyoming. But, I, I....

I just have always felt, or perceived, this underlying, unspoken, uh, kind of attitudes that the, the cowboys must win and the Indians must lose. And, if it happens otherwise, there's something wrong. And, and, I, I can't buy into that.

So, I'm glad they have all the help that they do. The federal folks, and their legal teams and that. And, and we need that.

You know, sometimes, uh...you know, even in Wyoming you might think, well, I'm not a miner, and, uh, I'm, uh, not industry. And, uh, I'm not a major land owner. And, I'm not this, that or the other, uh....

When you consider the traditional kinds of tags that you would put on people to, uh, say who's who or who's in control or who has the power.

And, and, uh, and this is a probably a tremendously unpopular thing, but sometimes in Wyoming, I think that our states, in terms of true values and where they ought to be, and where we ought to be going, sometimes I think that, uh, our state's strongest allies are environmentalists from the east and west coast.

And other people, who really don't have a large enough presence within our state to secure the balance that I think we need. And to, to, to have a, a, uh....

Power is a voting block, if you will. And to change the composition of the legislature. Or to, uh, change the mayor or city council, or, or, uh, anything like that. And, it's, it's, again...

They're common threads in, in their needs, and somehow, we as a people...I think....somehow we as human beings have some faith, uh, ultimate faith in, in our over-riding intelligence and ability to create. So, I, I think, somehow we in time will find a way to bring all of these influences and all of these pressures and all of these interests together for the greatest common good. And I, I think that is, uh, what....uh.... And, and it could be a time and space thing.

It may be just right today, and we need it today, and it might be totally wrong, you know, tomorrow. But, I have faith that things are going to work out, because, you know, uh...I don't think God makes bad people.

ps Yeah, we need to change tapes here.

Colorado River Water Users Association –WYOMING
Tape #10
JOHN ZEBRE (TAPE #2)
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
December 10, 2009

ps I'll just identify on the tape, this is Tape Number Two with John Zebre. You were talking about one of the things you're proudest of was getting the Indian community involved with this organization.

jz That wasn't...it's not really a pride thing. I think it was a contribution that was positive.

ps Okay. Some people I've talked to don't think that that's such a wonderful thing.

jz That doesn't surprise me. (laughter)

ps So, you don't care what they think?

jz No, I, I think they'll get used to it, and I think they'll recognize, in the long run...I didn't think so at the time, but I can see why we had to do that. And why it was important that that got done. Because, if it hadn't gotten done, look at the mess we could be in today.

ps I guess they were thinking they could have come in through their own state. Whichever state they lived and worked in.

jz Well, the difference there is though thatyou know...and I guess if you have any respect at all, you have to recognize that the Indians are sovereign nations. They're sovereign nations.

They aren't citizens of a state necessarily, they're sovereign nations. And to some extent, they have their.... And they have to be treated as such and our unwillingness to treat them as such, is part of what built all the inequities and inadequacies into the system.

ps As an attorney have you worked with any of the Indian water rights issues?

jz Not directly. No, I have not.

ps You haven't represented any of the tribes?

jz No, I have now.

pa Okay. Then....the opposite of what you're proudest of....is there anything that you would have done differently through the years in water issues?

jz Oh, probably, no differently than what I should have done differently in my whole life, and that's sometimes count to three before I say something. Answer a question. I mean, that isn't just limited to water or the practice of law or my family or anything else. It's, it's just the general, you know....better policy and practice. Especially if you....

Well, if you take the time to consider the impacts or effects you might have on whoever hears or sees or, or reacts to something you do or say or what have you, then you'd never do it anyway. But, but, uh, sometimes the first part of that is opening your mouth. It's...you know.

ps How have you seen the, the western water issues change during your career?

jz I haven't. There, there's always one issue.

Water has , you know, it's way worse than an octopus. It's got all these tentacles or rivulets or streams or springs, of each branch. Little arms. Tributaries.

But, but, the issues are really the same. And the issues all involve, and have for decades, on the Colorado River, the, uh, increasing demand and need for a resource. And all the issues come out of that.

The issues in Wyoming today...they're no different than the issues that were in California 50 years ago. It's just a different phase and time.

The, the issues stay the same. And, and, uh, and it's, uh, basically a limited supply with an increasing demand. It's been that way, and it's going to continue to that...be that way. And I don't, I don't see any change in that.

ps What about just looking at Wyoming? Have there been surprises for you regarding water in Wyoming?

jz I was disappointed in the, uh, lack of foresight...or perhaps lack of willingness...maybe courage...on the part of the Wyoming Water Development Commission, the Wyoming State Engineer's Office, and the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, to deal in advance and anticipation of the issues they know, or knew, or should have known, were going to arise involving the waters generated by coal-bed methane. Which is...

With coal-bed methane production, and, and the salinity and the chemical composition of some of those waters, and where they're good and where they're bad. And, uh, and a consistent permitting process. And, and, an intelligible set of, uh, regulatory standards which would have, uh, allowed the development of that resource, the coal-bed methane, in a more sensible and rational fashion.

I'm sure it would have been less revenue to the state of Wyoming. And then it was generated by, uh, letting it go, uh, you know, pell-mell, full blast ahead, with nothing and we'll learn as we go sort of thing. But, but that extra income, I suspect over the years, will be eaten up and, and, and, disappear in terms of cost that it takes to correct the problems. That they engendered by, by the approach they took.

ps Something very unique to Wyoming, I'm sure.

jz Well, not really. They have coal-bed methane in Colorado and in Utah, and in other of the basin states, too.

ps Have those states handled it any differently than Wyoming?

jz I'm not sure to what extent.

You have to understand the, uh...I think the last estimate I saw of the water, uh, to be generated by, uh, coal-bed methane development, in the state of Wyoming, if the full fields were developed in the whole state, were something like seven and a half million acre feet. (laughs) So, uh...you know, it's important.

If we get into coal gasification and that process, uh, you're going to see a consumption for vast quantities of water. And you, you need to consume vast quantities of water to carry out that process.

The question is, uh...and one of the questions...and we have to address it under the Compact and other fashions, too...well, what can we do with that excess water in Wyoming? Could we allow the states who want...should we allow them to come into Wyoming and treat it and transport it to their states?

ps Which would be probably Colorado, since they're the closest state.

jz Or, or it could get in the North Platte system. And, and go to Eastern Wyoming and then Nebraska and down to Missouri. Maybe it goes in there. Maybe that's part of the solution to the, uh, four endangered species in the North Platte system. I don't know.

You know, what are we going to do with that excess water? Or could we...maybe it's just a short haul. Maybe it goes from the Big Horn Basin to Casper. Maybe it goes over to Torrington. I don't know where it's going to go. I don't know what's in the works.

But, when you visit with our, uh, State Engineer...former State Engineers...uh...maybe they would address that, and tell you what they see as some of the potential uses for excess coal-bed methane water.

ps You mentioned there was a quality, um, issue of the quality of that water.

jz In some of it. Some of it is like drinking out of your tap. Others, it's horrid. It's very toxic. It seems as a general rule, the deeper you go, and the deeper the formations you're drilling from, the more toxic the water.

So far there's been such a plethora, that, that the methane gas they have in the Big Horn Basin, haven't had to drill, uh, as deep a wells. But, as they get over into, uh, Southwest Wyoming, I suspect that those wells are going to be deeper, and the water's going to be more toxic. And that's one of the reasons it's important to understand the relationship between your ground and surface waters.

ps How do you dispose of toxic water?

jz Well, what they like to do and what their preference is, is, because it's the cheapest, for the oil and gas industry, is to pump it back down into the ground. But, we don't know if that's going to contaminate. Particularly if there's been an fracking, or things like that, or any mixing of, of, uh, aquifers.

And so, I, I, I would like to see it, uh, treated and utilized. Treat it anyway. But, it's a, it's a cost that right now the industry isn't willing to pay, so it's being re-injected. Rather than...and that's preferential to letting it flood all over the surface of the ground, and have so much salt, no vegetation can grow.

ps Complex issue. (laughs) I was going to ask you the next question...maybe you've already answered this. What problems relating to Wyoming's water resources do you think are most critical today?

jz Making sure than when we do whatever we're going to do, that we achieve that balance so that we can, uh, preserve and protect our values as we develop our water resources, and the, the other resources that are creating the demands for that water in Wyoming.

It's not just the water. It's the other resources that are creating the demand for the water.

I think you have to pay attention in the same fashion to resource development, no matter what the resource is. And also to resource preservation.

ps And what about dealing with shortages of the Colorado River water?

jz That's...we've, we've had that question. I, I, I think that's the basis for all that shortage.

You know, as we go on in each state...for instance, when we started with Babbitt's plan...the 4-4 point 4 plan, and that wasn't really his plan, but he got the credit for it. But, that...

It, it's, uh...every state, every person, every water district, every board...becomes more and more every day about the true nature. And they see a new definition or a re-definition of their scarcity. It happens on a regular basis.

And of their need. Because of increasing demand, and limited amount of supply. It gets re-defined every day.

And the solution is the same. And, and to cooperatively, uh, collaborate in achieving flexible solutions that can provide the...well, we need for everybody...who know.

I mean, they've been talked about before. Not recently, in recent years. But, one day, you know, we might see a pipeline from the Seven Basin States from the Columbia River.

ps That was very controversial. About four years ago.

jz Yeah. I mean, who's, who's to say that's dead forever? Or, or...you know. The Mississippi.

ps That was the one I've been hearing more about is the Mississippi.

jz Yeah. I mean, uh, I don't know that any of those are dead. I don't know...or think that anything is dead.

And I would not want to be the one to say anything is born dead or dead forever. Because we never know what set of forces and circumstances may come together to compel reconsideration of what we at one time thought were ridiculous ideas.

And, when that need, again, gets so great and the demand is so great, then, uh, that is when people will change attitudes again. And, all of a sudden, things that were, uh, absolutely impermissible and taboo, will be on the table again. Because of, of the need and demand.

ps What about augmenting and developing new water supplies in Wyoming? You mentioned the methane gas water. What about other...somebody mentioned cloud-seeding.

jz Wyoming...uh....there, there's a, there's a, there's a cooperative and collaborative effort currently on-going between...involving several of the basin states, on cloud-seeding. And, uh, it's going to be interesting to watch. And, it's on-going as we speak. And, and, uh....

The...it's my understanding that the folks at the, uh....in Wyoming, are really pioneering this effort. And have the equipment and the labs to really.... You know.

The problem with cloud-seeding always in the past has been some kind of a speculative thing, where you go up and you shoot all these chemicals out of your airplane, and if it snows, well, maybe it was good, but nobody knew if, if the snow was the result of the cloud seeding, and how much you got or how much you didn't get. Or what have you. Or if it fell in the right place. Nobody really knew.

But, it's my understanding that with current technology, and I'm not a technical person, that they can actually measure the amount of the contribution that the artificial seeding, uh, did. And what it gave, and what it generated. And if they can do it that scientifically, to know, then they'll know how to, uh, advance money towards it.

I think that Wyoming's initial shot, a couple years ago, was like eight-million dollars, uh, for one winter. And I don't know what they've spent since then, or what lab results they've had.

I've never heard anybody talk about it. There's a fellow from the Utah lab who's going to talk about it during our program here this week. But, I've never heard him speak before, so I don't know.

ps I've heard a lot of issues about cloud-seeding. You know, some people don't want the water where it might end up. Or....what if it caused a flood?

jz Somebody told me yesterday that, uh, Russia was doing a lot of, of, uh, work in that area. And so, I don't know.

ps What do see as the future challenge....water challenges...for Wyoming?

jz To achieve that balance that we've been talking about. To, to approach all projects with that, that need for that balance.

And, to, to, uh, develop our water resources in a reasonable, cogent, practical fashion. That, that, that, uh, will allow for the preservation and the non-impairment of the values and other resources that we have. I don't care whether it's a Brook Trout in a stream or, or what have you.

ps What advice do you have for people who are dealing with the Colorado River water today, that are running the system?

jz Be patient. Keep learning. Keep your minds open. Keep listening. Uh. And, uh, talk to everybody. And, uh...have everybody at the table.

Be humble, regardless of the strength of their positions. Uh. Not, not...I'm not just talking legally. But, their...maybe popularity or whatever. Be humble, and just make sure that they, uh...everything into consideration. And, and, uh, that they, uh, allow themselves room to continue to grow, also.

ps Looking at the big picture of western water, how do you see the, uh, direction that western water is taking in the very near future and then in the more long-term future?

jz I don't see it changing. I, I see 'em trying to do more and more with the same finite amount of resources. And that's going to be the focus.

And, we're going to bring all the human effort, and, and, uh, whether it be science, whether it be law, whether it be whatever other kind of creative force we can bring, we're going to bring 'em increasingly to bear on it. And, and, people, long after I'm gone, will be doing the same thing.

ps Some people say that we've seen the end of the big water projects. What do you think? (jz coughing) ...caused the big water projects to come to an end? Do you think we'll ever see big water projects again?

jz Last time I saw...or last time I looked at any statistics from, uh...was it the Corps of Engineers? It may not have been the Corps, but I know it started with the TVA, the Tennessee Valley Authority. But I saw a compilation... compilation...maybe it was Congressional Budget Office, of the projects, water projects, that have been approved by Congress, but funded.

And I'm thinking, we're into billions and billions of dollars. And not...I mean, they didn't have any money. When, when....

Maybe people just got tired of talking about it, and Congress, and never seen anything happening. I don't know what caused the end of that. So all of a sudden the Bureau gets its mode and attitude that we're no longer in the construction business. We're in the management business, and we're going to manage water now.

But, but...I think that, uh, when that need and demand again, has so out-paced and so exceeded available supply, we could see big water projects again. And funding for those. On a, on a, on a relatively immediate basis. Not like a long-term wish list.

Like (can't understand word) Forty down here needs this much more water to irrigate. Or, you know, another so many inches of flood control for this little town in...wherever. You know, when, when....

When you're talking to millions of people in dire needs and, and, and, uh, when it relates to the economy and well-being of not just states and regions, but the nation as a whole, I think you'll see big water projects again.

ps Meaning dams and canals and...

jz Well, I don't know. Or, or, or pipelines or...you know.

I don't know how many dam sites we have left that are any good, uh, in this country.

But, who knows, maybe they'll be building artificial dam sites. (laughs) Uh. Chinese...what they have....

I mean we do that to an extent when you construct a dam anyway. You accentuate a natural feature to create your (can't understand word), but maybe that'll even get more extreme. Maybe we'll be back to the Columbia River. I don't know. Or the Mississippi.

ps They could have an electro-electric component which would be, they call reasonable energy.

jz Possibly. I don't know much about power at all.

I understand that there are groups right now back in Washington, D.C., that want to pass laws that would inhibit and prohibit for the Federal Energy Regulatory Agency from permitting any pipeline, period, unless it hauls renewable energy. Renewable sources. Renewable resources.

No, no oil and gas.

ps Coal.

jz So.

ps Well, some of these questions I've asked everyone....about the Appropriation Doctrine, first in time, first in right. Do you think that's going to survive the next 100 years of demands.

jz Yes.

ps Why?

Jz Because, because, uh, instead of a legal (can't understand word) where you've got a bunch of, you know, cowboys sitting back and talking about their cows or whatever. What you're going to have is the, uh...you'll see increasing changes of use.

When they decide that we can still feed enough people, or find new scientific or better ways to create food for people, so we aren't going to run out of food, you're going to see transfers of water uses from one user to another. To, to meet those needs. And, then, one of the things they'll be buying, and it's going to create market value, is the priority.

And, it'll just become a, a, a function of the market. The Free Market Place. As, as opposed to a just on-the-ground, you know...who gets how much water when? It's going to be, be a function of the market, I think.

ps I guess we've already....

jz It is already to some extent.

ps Well, the Indian water rights, I know that some of them are selling that water to communities that don't have any water. In Arizona at least....it's a fairly remote little desert tribe.

jz The interesting question about that, and I haven't talked to any of the Arizona, or, or...New Mexico lawyers....or the people who deal with the tribes or any water rights more than I do.

But, the question I always had is whether the, uh, preferential right in time that's afforded Indian water rights, going back to the (burps) date of the creation of the reservation, whether then if, if they, if the ultimate use of the water is outside the limits and property boundaries of the reservation...uh...whether it keeps that same priority. Or whether it loses that.

ps Interesting legal issues....

jz I'd have to talk to some of my colleagues who deal with those...to, to know where they're at on that issue. Or how they're addressing it, cause I don't know.

ps I know that the Ak-Chin tribe in Arizona has gained water rights. And, CAP water is being used for a community far away from the Ak-Chin tribe's homes. But, they sold the water rights to that...the water...they sold the rights. They sold the water. (laughs) Their water. The CAP water. And the canal goes right by where this community is, so it's easy for that community to access that water. So they bought it for the Indians were further away and don't need it right now.

jz I don't know what...that'd be a matter of Arizona law.

ps Kind of an interesting legal case. And people have said, most people who buying their homes, they don't realize where their water's coming from. (laughs) The other groups that have, uh, more recently been involved with the... appropriation of the recreational use of the water, and the environmental groups. Do you see that continuing to be an important part of the appropriation use, or are there other groups out there that we should be thinking about?

jz Well, I think if, if there are other groups that, that feel the need to be recognized, we're going to hear about it. We'll know who they are. I mean, they aren't going to keep quiet about it. If they want attention...they never do. So.

And, it, it...and it's a question about who's going to be at the table at what time, and when?

CRWUA – Wyoming
John Zebre – Oral History

ps The question I ask everyone...should Wy...should Wyoming advocate to reopen the 1922 Colorado River Compact?

jz Never.

ps Talk a little bit more about your involvement with the Colorado River Water Users Association. When did you become involved...and, you're president?

jz I became a board member in, uh, I don't know...I'm thinking maybe 1989. But, I can't remember. 80, 88 or 89. Some where's in there.

So then, a trustee since then. And, uh, I served on various committees over the years. Uh. Spent a couple years on resolutions. Uh. Did, uh...I'm currently on program, housing and arrangements, and, uh, exhibits.

I served as...I served on that Program Committee. I've been on it for probably 15 years.

ps What does the Program Committee do?

jz It puts together the program for this annual meeting.

They've got a whole big committee now. For a, a lot of years myself and another individual kind of just did it ourselves. But, uh, Alvin Laird, from, from the Central Utah Water Conservancy District did that. But, but, uh, I worked, I worked closely with him since 19...I think 93. And then in 94, 95, I was a vice, became vice president. 96, 97, I was the president. And then I was a trustee since then again. And the last two years served as vice president again. And I served two years as president.

ps You'll be president again.

jz The end of this year. I mean, well, they elected me this morning. So.

ps And it's a two year term?

jz Yes.

ps What do you do as president? What is the role of the president?

jz Oh, it's somebody who's willing to come down here and chair the meetings. They've, they've got a defined role and the, the duties of the president. It's, uh...like the president of any other organizations. Make sure your committees are functioning, and that you're meeting deadlines. And you're putting together what you have to do, for the organization.

ps You've done it before, so I guess you know what you're getting into.

jz Yes. So.

ps Why do, why do you...be so active with this?

jz Oh, I enjoy it. And, and, I've done it for so many years. And a lot of it's second nature. And I like the people. I like the interchange and the, the interplay and networking that goes on between the different folks involved.

I met some wonderful, wonderful people through this organization. From all the Seven States and the tribes. And, uh, I enjoy being around them and working with them. It's not...that's not to say I'm always pleased with what they do. Or excited about it, or endorse it, or don't think negatively about some things. But, as a general rule, that's how I feel about it. I, I just, uh...overall, it's been a wonderful experience for me.

ps Why do you think this organization is important?

jz I think because of the less formal, fluid, more relaxed opportunity it gives for the water players in the Seven States and the tribes to meet more formally. Perhaps to be able to, uh, cast aside or discard a little bit of their political posturing they ordinarily have to do. And, and, to, uh, visit face to face on a one-on-one basis, and get some questions answered.

Ask somebody a question they'd be afraid to ask him in a meeting in front of their boss, or in front of a colleague or an associate. Uh. Or be able to give an answer that they wouldn't ordinarily give in a meeting or that....or say, well, you know, we say this, this and this. Here's where our real problem is with this.

And to have those kinds of honest, uh, down-to-earth, direct interchanges with one another, I think is a major, major value of this organization. I think that's what the recent surveys that we've done reflected that a lot of people feel that way. And then, they do try, the program committee does try...those folks work awfully hard. To, to have current topical matter on the agenda that's going to be of general interest to everybody to hear where something's coming from

34:25 You still once in awhile hear, we don't want to hear any environmental stuff.. We, we don't want that on the program. But, you know, that's like....we're going to sit here and, you know, chant and sing together. Preach into the choir?

You know, it's important that everybody in this field understand where everybody else is coming from, and what they're doing, and what they're thinking. Uh. If for no other reason than, you know, forewarned is forearmed. And to be prepared. So that's, that's how I view it anyway.

ps So, you invite the Sierra Club to come and make a presentation.

jz I've had 'em before. I've had 'em before.

And in fact, one of the greatest things, in terms of programs that I've seen. And David Brower from the Sierra Club died before he could come. And so, he had his surrogate show up at...

He was, he was to have come here within a couple months of his death. And talk about how, uh...when he...got Dinosaur National Monument, in Utah...how that was a trade-off for him caving in and allowing them to build Hoover Dam. Not Hoover Dam. To build Lake Powell. Uh. Yeah.

ps Glen Canyon Dam.

jz Glen Canyon Dam. That that was the biggest mistake, and the biggest disappointment in his life.

And, he, he was going to talk about that and why. And on the other side, we had the... We had the then Secretary of Interior, who did show up. And talked about it. And he talked about the same thing. And how David and he were such good friends. That, that...you know, we've had them before.

ps Was that Stewart Udall?

jz No. He's the, he's the one with, uh...he's a hard-core character, uh, kind of...lives in Virginia now. Uh. Domini. I think. Floyd Domini?

ps Bureau of Reclamation. Was he a Secretary? (hear his phone buzzing in his pocket) Have you seen the Colorado River Water Users Association...how has it changed over the last 20 years or so since you've been involved?

jz There are more younger people and I think that's good. There's more people the age I was when I started. (laughs) There's a bigger percentage of those. And I think that's good.

ps The water buffalos that you mentioned.

jz Well, I'm glad...or they might say I'm one now. But, I'm glad that they're doing these oral histories. I wish they could...would go back and get some of those characters. Like Domini, before they pass away. That were, you know, former Secretaries of Interior. Get them on tape to talk about the river experiences, too. (hear someone talking off camera)

ps But Domini's name keeps coming up, but they don't want to spend the money to go to Washington.

jz I'll tell you after we're done here, I'll tell you what he'll tell you on the phone.

ps Okay. Anything that we haven't talked about this morning that you'd like to be sure is on this tape?

jz Not that I can think of.

CRWUA – Wyoming
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ps One other question I try to ask if I have time is, what advice do you have for young people today who are trying to decide what they want to do with their lives?

jz Find something you like and stick with what they like and let that take them where it goes. No matter what it is. They need to enjoy what they do.

ps Well, good. Then I guess, if you don't have anything you'd like to add....

jz I don't.