

Colorado River Water Users Association –WYOMING
Tape # 3
DAN BUDD (TAPE #1)
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
December 9, 2009

db – Dan Budd

ps - interviewer Pam Stevenson, Agave Productions, Inc

bs - videographer Bill Stevenson

ps All right. You're rolling? (bs – I'm rolling.) We'll start by identifying on the tape that I'm Pam Stevenson doing the interview. And, Bill Stevenson is our videographer, running the camera. And, we're doing oral history interviews for the Colorado River Water Users Association for the state of Wyoming. We're here at their conference in Las Vegas. And today is December 9th of 2009. And, I'll let you give me your name so we'll have your full name.

db Dan S. Budd. B-U-D-D.

ps S is for?

db Selon.

ps Is that a family name?

db Yes.

ps How do you spell it?

db S-E-L-O-N.

ps Okay. And, just to start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

db I was born in Kemmerer, Wyoming. On the second month, the 27th day of....20.... No. Second month...the 26th day of 27.

ps 1927. Okay. And, you were born in...what was the town?

db Kemmerer.

ps And where is that?

db It's just below Big Piney. It's where there was a doctor in the hospital. My uncle....my dad's mother's sister married a doctor. Named (can't understand name).

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ps That's convenient. How do you spell the name of that town.

db The name? Stafford.

ps No. The town you were born in.

db Oh. Kemmerer. K-E-M-M-E-R-E-R.

-ps And, so, did your family then live near there?

db My family came into Wyoming in 1879 with a trail herd out of Nevada.

ps They were ranchers.

db Right.

ps And, uh, tell me a little bit about...they came in the 1870s. Um. How big a ranch did they have or what made them come to Wyoming?

db You never ask a cowman how much cattle he's got, or how big his ranch is.

ps I didn't ask you how many cattle. (laughs)

db Well, and they don't tell you how big their land is either.

ps Large, I take.

db An acre or two.

ps Yeah. Okay. Well, what made them come from Nevada up to Wyoming?

db Well, after the War Between the States, uh, he was a guard at...he was in the 7th Kansas Cavalry.

And, after the war he was a guard at Leavenworth. The federal penitentiary. And he got notice that his brother had been shot, in Nevada. So, he went to Nevada to settle the estate. And he had cattle, and, and, he had some land. And, a lot of...(can't understand word) a lot of cattle. He ran, uh...that was all public land in those days, before the Taylor Grazing Act and everything.

ps So the land in Wyoming they got, was that homesteaded?

db When they first came, uh, they homesteaded, and then they used what was called the Desert Land Entry (?). It was a 320, uh, and then 160 they could get additional. But, in those days, they didn't...

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Well, they ran a range operation. And, they controlled it by their cattle and their...what other means they had.

ps So....but they had some land that was...the core part of it?

db And then, when the hard winter hit in 1887, 88, it wiped them all out. All the big cattle barons. That just....they lost all their cattle.

So then, they started over again. And they started the town of Big Piney. And moved down there and used my grandmother's homestead rights, and started the town of Big Piney.

ps So that's your sort of family's home town now? Big Piney?

db Well, they came here in, oh, 1780. John Budd was Aide-de-Camp to General Washington.

ps So...well, then where did you grow up?

db Big Piney.

ps What was it like when you were growing up there?

db It was, uh, during the Depression. Very tough. Couldn't even pay the grocery bills. And, it was, it was tough.

ps You were pretty young. Do you remember those days?

db Oh, certainly.

I left home and joined the Navy when I was rather young, and...because it paid the, (laughs) 21-dollars a month. (laughs) And then they talked me into taking out a bond, and... (laughs)

ps How old were you when you left home then?

db Well, 17 officially.

ps Had you graduated from high school?

db No. I'd never gone to high school.

ps So, how much schooling did you have?

db Well, I had to come back and go one year to get a GUD (sic). And then I went to Utah State two and a quarters. And then Korea came along, and I went back to active duty in Korea.

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ps As, as a child did you go to school? At all?

db Yes, I went on the ranch.

ps You had your own school?

db Yeah, they had a country school. Teachers and... And they boarded them.

ps So, how many kids were in that school?

db Oh, it depends on what it was, and who'd froze out and who'd sold out. And...five, six, seven.

ps And, so there was no high school then?

db Nothing. Not in the country schools. They had to go to town.

ps And you didn't do that?

db No. It was easier to go....plus that, they got my food stamps for....

ps So, you, you stayed then and helped out on the farm, or the ranch, before you joined the Navy?

db Oh, yeah.

ps What kind of work did you do on the farm?

db It was a ranch. (ps – Ranch.) Cowboying. Dug hay. Fed cattle. Whatever.

ps So, tell me again, what made you decide to enlist in the Navy?

db Well, because I thought it was a patriotic thing to do.

ps What year was that?

db 1944.

ps You were just barely old enough then to.... And, uh, where did you go when you enlisted in the Navy?

db Well, I took my boot camp at Farragut, Idaho. And then I was attached to a Navy combat team, (can't understand word) 16, which was attached to the 4th Marine Division. And then I went on a destroyer. In the Second World War.

ps Where did the, the destroyer go?

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db Oh, uh...215,000 miles in South Pacific. And, we were there when they signed the peace treaty. With Japan.

ps Were you in any of the major battles of the South Pacific?

db Oh...well, we saw a little combat.

ps Just a little?

db Yeah.

ps Were you pretty much on the ship?

db Yep.

ps So you were with the Marines when they were landing on some of the islands.

db Yeah.

ps Any of the Navajo Code Talkers on those ships?

db What?

ps Navajo Code Talkers.

db We knew about them. They were Marines.

ps I've interviewed some of them. I know they were on the ship and on the landing. So they could talk back and forth. (laughs)

db Yeah.

ps Of course, it was all secret then. You couldn't talk about it. But, you can talk about it now. (laughs) So, uh, so, how many...how much time did you spend in the Navy?

db Seven years. Active duty.

ps So, you, you went back to Korea then.

db Yeah. I lost a brother, the 1st Marine Division.

ps In Korea? How many kids were in your family?

db Four boys.

ps So, where, where were you?

db I was the oldest.

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ps The oldest, so you lost a younger brother. (db – Yeah.) Sad. So, after all that time in the, the Navy, did you...you must have seen a lot of the world by then.

db Yeah, some.

ps But you decided to come back to Wyoming?

db Yes.

ps Why?

db Cause I wanted....

Well, I was up for re-enlisted, and Kennedy backed out on the Bay of Pigs. And I wouldn't serve under a Commander-In-Chief that would put a man in the water and pull the support out. Pure and simple.

ps So, why did you come back to Wyoming when you could have done a lot of other things?

db Well, because, that was...the ranch was there for me to...

ps And you were the oldest, so, I guess, (db – Yeah.) So, were your parents still running the ranch at that time?

db Oh, yes.

ps So, when you came back then, what...did you just come back and start working on the ranch?

db Yep

ps Had it changed a lot in those years?

db Oh, after every war, things always change. That's when you see the major changes. Yeah. It changed.

And we'd gotten out of (audio glitch) the Depression. It only took six million casualties to do it, but...

ps And you stated you'd gotten some education by then, too. Uh. You...when you went to college, what were you studying there?

db Oh, I just took 101s. (ps – Did you have any....) Basic. What every freshman student takes.

ps Did you have a goal in mind of what you wanted to do with your education?

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- db At that time, uh, that education in agriculture wasn't considered too important.
- ps People in Arizona thought it was pretty important. (laughs)
- db Well. (laughs) some did. But I know some that didn't have any education that did as well or better.
- ps Probably.
- db Way better.
- ps On-the-job education.
- db Right. (can't understand word) of hard knocks.
- ps So, you didn't go ahead and get a degree then?
- db No. I went back to Korea. I got that venereal disease, Gongagrea (sp?) (laughter)
- ps Haven't heard about that one. (laughs) Well, was that because you wanted to or Uncle Sam told you to?
- db Well, I'd lost a brother. And he was written up in the New Braden (??), and recommended for the Medal of Honor. He got the DFC.
- ps So, what year was it then that you came back to Wyoming for the ranch?
- db Oh, 1952. Yeah. I spent 51....50, 51 and 52 I got, got out. January of 52. Re, released in active duty.
- ps What was the ranch like when you came back to it?
- db Well, it was just the same as all ranches. It was....and then, when I came back we added some more to it.
- ps Was business pretty good by then?
- db Business was....in...during the 30s it was terrible. During the war they'd put in price controls, and wouldn't allow us....they (can't understand). But, our expenses weren't near as much as they are today. And, actually it was a much better time than the present time in agriculture.
- ps And was it primarily cattle that you were raising?
- db Yes.
- ps So, uh, well, when did you first get involved in some of the Colorado River issues?

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db Well, I came back and they wanted me to become involved in the local Soil and Water Conservation districts. So, I agreed to serve on the, on the boards. And, of course, in agriculture water's your, it's your lifeblood. So.

And then, one thing led to another, and Governor Hansen appointed me his alternate commissioner on the Colorado River. In...don't remember what year. Been 50 years. I've served under...for every governor, Democrat or Republican.

ps On the Colorado River Water Users Commission?

db No, Colorado River Commission.

ps Oh, Colorado River...the Wyoming-Colorado River Commission.

db The Upper, Upper Basin.

And then I was...served on the salinity control when, when we initiated the standards and everything. So, I'm still a member of the...

ps The Salinity Control Board? Of the Colorado River?

db Yes. On the advisory council.

ps Is that a state...or a Wyoming....

db No, it's federal. (ps – Federal. Oh.) It's to control the salt of the river, so we don't exceed....

See, President Nixon, regardless of the state's (can't understand word) of the water,

Well, President Nixon, uh, gave Mexico 75,000 acre feet of water. Well, first President Roosevelt gave them a million acre feet of water to keep them from going with the Axis Powers. Because they had the (can't understand) ...park in Mexico. It was a German battleship.

So, then Mexico was raising a lot Cain, and they got a lot of public support. And President Nixon initiated Minute 242. And while the first day they initiated the salinity control, and then he signed the Minute 242. Attorney Brownell did, in Phoenix. In 72.

And, uh, they gave them another chunk of water. Placate 'em. And then guaranteed them a certain quality delivered at Imperial Dam.

ps And so, the Salinity Control Board is involved with making sure that happens?

db Yes.

ps And that it's decent water. (laughs) It seems like a lot of times there isn't any water by the time it gets there.

db Well, we've never failed to meet our obligation.

ps One way or another. Um. So, you say you first got involved though in Wyoming, on the, the Upper Colorado River Commission. Is that....? What did you know about the Colorado River at that time?

db Well, I knew money run to the Lower Basin. And, it was money. (laughs)

But, yeah, I was born and raised on it. And, of course, I was familiar with the Upper Basin Compact. And, I served 12 years in the legislature.

ps Had you given a lot of thought though to where the water goes when it's left Wyoming?

db Oh, certainly. Certainly. And, what the problems are and the whole thing. Now we got 30-million people living off that river. And it's not going to get less. It's going to get more. And the problems are going to get more. And we still in 40 years haven't solved that problem.

ps Which problem?

db Of augmenting the river.

ps You say that, uh, you were in the legislature. When were you first elected to the legislature?

db Well, let's see. 80?

ps 1980? (db – Yeah.) Why did you decide to run for the legislature?

db Well, I didn't decide. People asked me.

ps You could have said no.

db Yeah. I could have. But I thought maybe I could do something for water. And for the state of Wyoming. I thought it was kind of like the military. Maybe it was an obligation to give back.

At that time we subsidized the legislature. All of us that served. Now it's a part-time job...or a full-time job. Most legislators and all of them maybe.

ps Isn't it in Wyoming supposed to be a full-time job?

db Well, it wasn't supposed to be but it is. It developed into that.

ps And how much do they pay the legislators up there?

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db Oh, I don't know what they get now. When I served we got...the days that we worked, just the days that you worked, you got 75, 75-dollars.

ps A per diem kind of a thing?

db Yeah.

ps No salary or anything. (db – No.) Um. So, let's see. You say you, you were in the legislature from 1980 till...how long? How long did you serve?

db Well, let's see. Nine...90, 90, 92. (ps – So about 12 years.) Twelve years.

ps Is that where you met Ann?

db No, I'd known Ann before. Her husband was a county agent in Sweetwater County. And, course I knew him. And I'd met Ann. And I knew her first husband.

ps The one that passed away in the accident?

db Yes.

ps Oh. So you've known them a long time.

db He made everything from North Africa to the Vulga (??) River.

ps And, you say you spent all those years in the service. Did, did you marry?

db I didn't marry until I was 30. And I have three daugh... One's an attorney. Maybe you've heard of her. Karen Budd Fallon. She was on FOX News couple of weeks ago. And, she's a...public lands attorney. She, like me, she has not much use for the government. Maybe not any use. (hear someone talking off camera)

I have two more daughters. One's married to a veterinarian. And they live in Big Piney. And, another daughter lives in Hastings, Minnesota.

ps Amazing how noisy it is when that door opens. (laughs) So, so, you came back from the service then and married and raised a family and helped run the, the ranch, helped run your ranch. And then you got involved in politics.

db Well, I got involved in the Colorado River. And, I was president of Wyoming's Association of Conservation Districts.

ps What is that?

db Well, they were an outfit that was enacted back in the 30s to help agriculture learn how to run, which most of them knew more than they did. But...

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And then, when...under Nixon...when they changed the, the law, and allowed the conservation districts to start...the federal employees start to control the conservation districts, I left. I got out.

ps Federal employees being the Bureau of Reclamation?

db No, SCS. At that time. ASCS now. Agriculture Stabilization Conservation...

ps Rather than the local people controlling it, the federal employees....

db Basically.

ps Was that when you first got involved with the Colorado River issues was then?

db Oh, been involved because I'm a user. I've got water rights.

ps I imagine if your family's been here that long, you've got a lot of, of early water rights.
(laughs)

db Some.

ps So, uh, let's see. Any particular issues that you were dealing back in those early years that's why you got involved?

db Well, the issues are still...of course, they've grown, but the issues still only realizes it...and the Upper Basin realizes it. When they (can't understand word) the Upper Basin, they divided... The 22 Compact was...that's the law of the river, the 22 Compact.

Then they formed the Upper Basin Compact in 1948. And that divided the basin. And each state was then entitled to so much water.

Wyoming was 14-percent. Utah 23-percent. Uh. and some...Colorado 50-some percent. And Arizona, uh, eight-percent. For us to develop. (someone talking off camera)

ps Everybody always forgets about New Mexico.

db What? (someone off camera – New Mexico.) Yeah, New Mexico. (bs – can't hear)
What?

bs What does California get?

db Oh, California gets their share...under the CAP lawsuit, they get four-million acre feet. And then, Arizona...your nemesis...got...what? Uh. They got 23-million acre feet.

bs That's pretty generous.

db And Nevada got four. And, of course, they got the power off the dam and one thing or another.

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ps Well, looking back over some of the, the water issues in Wyoming, how do you see the, the developments prepared Wyoming for what it has become today?

db Well, energy. Major industrial. Trona. Oil and gas. Uh. Fertilizer. (someone talking off camera) Coal.

ps So energy is the big issue in, in Wyoming. But, of course, a lot of getting that, that energy out of the ground takes water.

db Oh, absolutely. Everything you do takes water. You only live about four days without it, and I've seen people who've tried it.

ps Good point. Although I think sometimes people don't think about, you know, mining coal taking water. Or...you know. (laughs) But, you're right. So, water is pretty critical then to, to the development...

db It's critical to every state. In the West.

ps That's obvious in the desert. But, it doesn't seem as obvious maybe in Wyoming...

db Well, that's what people think until they turn the faucet on and it doesn't run. We get a call on the river, and, under the Compact...see...

Those pre-22 rights will be honored. But, post-22...after 22...those rights...that's basically the cities and towns, because they came...most of them...developed later and, and towns were small, they didn't have much. In fact, some of them didn't even file for water rights.

So, in case the call on the river, and there will be one. It's just a matter of time.

ps How will that impact Wyoming when there's a call on the river?

db Without water...that's your lifeblood, that's, that's the economic engine. In any society. Not only in Wyoming, but everywhere.

ps But Wyoming still will have water. When there's a call, I mean, they'll have to give up more, but they'll...

db Oh, they'll have some. But, in agriculture, in those high mountain valleys, with a second-foot per 70 acres, and you can't supplement it, you can't...it won't go far enough. Those alluvial soil, souls, soils, and that foot per 70 acres won't even start to...

ps And even the ranchers...do you think of the...the cattle range is ranging out for the...

db Well, you have to have, where we live, you have to have a hay base in order to maintain the cow herd.

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ps They can't just live off the land.

db No. (ps – So you're actually....) We're not being subsidized by the federal government as you all think.

ps So, you're raising the hay for them. (db – Yes.) Or, other people raise hay and you buy hay.

db No. Only when....because you can't afford to buy hay and make a cow work.

ps You raise your own. So. That's been a big part of what you've done on your ranch then. Raising cattle, but you're really raising the hay to feed the cattle.

db Yeah. That's exactly right.

ps Dairy farmers do the same.

db Yep. Although we don't have to milk 'em twice a day. (laughter)

ps That's true. A major advantage. (laughs) So, uh, are there any particular parts of the water history over the last 50 years or so, that you've been involved, that you've played a role in?

db Well, I was involved when we set the numeric standards for the salinity. I've been involved in most of the issues.

ps What about the salinity issue? How big an issue is that?

db Very large issue. Because, if we violate those standards, then they would reduce our...use of our water.

What the federal government does....every state, western state, in the constitution, took charge of their water. The water belongs to the state.

The federal government, in their wisdom, picks the Secretary of Interior to go somewhere and sign a treaty. And then our senators ratify the treaty, and they take our water which they're not entitled to.

ps That seems like that's been an issue with some of the Native American lawsuits, too.

db Oh, absolutely.

ps Well, in looking at, uh, the, the water issues that you've been involved with, the salinity or whatever, what were the biggest obstacles that you had to confront there?

db Lack of public support.

ps In what way?

db Well, groceries come from the grocery store. Water runs out of the tap. So, why worry?

ps That's more...

db Until the day comes and they get squeezed. America is a soft society, today.

ps Is that more apathy than actually being opposed to what you were doing?

db Apathy. And, of course, environmental groups are adamantly opposed.

I don't know whether you saw it or not, but, environmentalists have sued the federal government on endangered species issues. They've collected four-point-seven billion dollars in attorney fees.

And I asked today, the Fish and Wildlife, if they were involved in that, and, of course, they didn't know anything about it. But certainly they are. Because, what they do is they file so many of these suits that they can't respond in the 45 days. And then they sue 'em, and collect attorney fees.

Those attorneys are only making 600 and 800-dollars an hour. Plus their Executive Directors are making from 350 to 400-thousand.

And they've collected 4.7-billion dollars in four years. (someone off camera says something) Three years.

ps They've collected it on...what suits are you talking about?

db I'm talking about endangered species suits. (ps – Just all in general?) All of them.

And this is, this is only the Department of Agricultural. This doesn't include the others.

ps The suits have against the Department of Agriculture?

db Yep.

ps Do you see any solutions to, um, some of these issues?

db Well, not really. Not as long as we've got the Congress that we've got. We've got the best Congress money can buy. And that's true.

ps You, you think that's different than it used to be, 50 years or 60 years ago?

db Oh, certainly.

ps How do you think that's changed?

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db Apathy. Who we elect. Who we send back there for careers. Serve 40 or 50...80 years. A hundred years. Until they're 100.

ps Is there anything you think could be done to change that?

db Oh, certainly. Vote the bastards out.

ps People don't.

db Yeah. But, if he's mine, he's all right. If he's yours...

ps I've heard that.

db But, we could (can't understand word) term limits.

ps Do you have term limits for your legislators in Wyoming?

db They did, but, what it did in Wyoming, it destroyed the inner-structure of the legislature. Because, then in the House, the Senate retained its seniority position. The House (clears throat) shifted to a popularity (can't understand word.) So now, House members (clears throat), in order to be...move up the chain to be Speaker and Chairman and the power structure of the legislature. They do anything to buy that position.

We've got people with three years in the legislature that have been Speaker.

When I served, when Ann served, hey, you were lucky if you was...three years...if you even allowed you to, to get an amendment on the floor. And then they caucused on it. Made damn sure you were... (laughs)

ps So you think that the term limits have changed a lot?

db Well, it did, and it wasn't structured right. But, in Wyoming, it's a small town really with long streets, because, up until a few years ago, you either knew somebody or knew somebody that knew everybody in the state. Really.

ps What changed three years ago?

db Well, term limits. They voted in term limits, and then they saw what a disaster it was, and then they voted it out. Except for the governor. And we had a Democrat governor, which was a personal friend of mine. Rancher. From Lincoln County. Neighbor. And he served three terms, and, of course, he was a Democrat and the Republicans couldn't, couldn't stand that. Even though he was a good governor.

But I didn't support.... So, when it came up for re-apportionment, they re-apportioned my seat out.

ps I was going to ask why you left the legislature. (laughs) So, you've seen a lot of political maneuvering.

db Oh, certainly.

ps In the work that you've done on the Colorado River and other water issues, who did you find as your greatest ally?

db Well, I guess I'm a rebel, and I always thought you ought to fight when you were mad. And, I was not in favor of when we allowed Arizona to bank that water. That's beneficial...and declared it beneficial consumptive use.

That changed the philosophy of the river. And, I was not in favor of that. But, I was (can't understand) It wasn't my decision.

And, of course, not being very noisy, I...did make a few comments on it though. That's one of the major issues.

Now one of the major issues is that...violation of the Compact actually.

That we're giving to the Lower Basin, measuring that water at, (burps) uh, Lake Powell, and, uh, the delivery point is at Lee (sic) Ferry. The dam is bypassing over a million acre feet of water which the Lower Basin is not entitled to.

And yet, we're still talking about it. Whether we gotta placate them a little. And, uh, oh, we don't want to make 'em mad. But, it's a million acre feet of water.

ps How are they bypassing it?

db It's leaking around the dam. It's coming around...coming up...we think, in the springs. And, the pressure of the dam through the formations.

ps So, it goes under and then it comes up in the springs.

db Comes up....

ps From...the water from the...Lake Powell.

db Yep.

bs The aquifers, right? (db – The what?) The aquifers. It's coming through the aquifers. (db – Yep.)

ps Hadn't heard anybody else mention that issues. Of course, the lake is so much lower now, too, than it had been.

db Well, there's still...a lot of water.

ps Yeah. (laughs) There's still a lot of water. (hear people talking off camera) And the releases are measured at Lee's Ferry?

db That's where they're supposed to be measured. Now, they're measuring it at the releases out at the dam.

And then, of course, Fish and Wildlife, uh, and the Park Service, are making us release those flushing flows, that tremendous amounts of water, which bypass the turbines, which puts the western and the power companies out on the...out on the market to buy power, which raises your rates. And...I wasn't very happy about that either. But...environmentalists got...

ps The releases that they're doing to try to restore the Grand Canyon?

db Yeah, supposedly. But, they're always going to have one that proves everything, and they've yet to have one that proved anything.

ps Well, I was going to ask you about who your opponents were. (laughs) But I think, (laughs) you've somewhat mentioned that. Anyone you want to mention?

db Well, wildlife people been...and there's a lot of them in our area.

See, Wyoming doesn't have an income tax. So, those people come in and buy those ranches and live. And whatever. And they live there for six months and a day, and they don't pay any....

When I first served in the legislature on the Appropriations Committee, we run out of money. And a shipbuilder out of Florida lived in Jackson, and his share of the federal state...Wyoming's share of the federalist (?) state...was 23-million. That's just Wyoming's share of the federalist (?) state.

So we get some pretty heavy hitters up there. Baker. Secretary of State. And Kendall (?). Had the Pepsi-Cola. Swaubacker (sp?). Levi Strauss. And, they can...they got a lot of power. Otis Carney.

ps But, most of those people are part-time residents?

db Oh, yeah. But, they lived there long enough so they get their... And we furnish them all with goods and services.

ps So, you've never had state income tax in Wyoming?

db No.

ps Well, I imagine that does attract some people. (laughs) How have you seen your role in seeking solutions to some of the water issues?

db Well, just to offer my advice to the State Engineer, which is the Commissioner. Hope I can convince him.

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- ps Your advice as a perspective...as a rancher and a member....
- db Well, as a member of the Commission.
- ps That's the Upper Colorado River Commission?
- db Right.
- ps How long have you been on that Commission?
- db Oh...Governor Hansen appointed me, and I've served for every governor since. I guess....over 40, 45, or close to 50 years.
- ps So, you were appointed then in 1959 or 60? (db – Yep.) For the Colorado River Commission? That's a long time. Are there any other commissioner.... how many commissioners are there?
- db There....State Engineer is a commissioner, and two alternates. Ben Bracken. I think you, you know Ben. He's the other alternate commissioner. He just was appointed the...what? About six years ago? Hmm? Four years ago.
- ps So, you're a commissioner?
- db What?
- ps You're still a Commissioner? (db – Yes.) I guess the alternates though....The alternates fill in when you can't go to a meeting?
- db Right.
- ps And what about the Salinity, uh, Board? Are you still on that?
- db Yes.
- ps You were on that from the beginning? (db – Yes.) And when did it start?
- db Started in 72. And we set the standards. The numeric standards of the quality of water we would deliver at Mex...to old Mexico.
- ps How many people are on that board?
- db Well, in Wyoming, there are three. But each state, and California...and that's the Seven Basin states.
- ps So, each state has their own (db – Yeah.) members? Do some of them have more cause they're bigger states?

CRWUA - Wyoming
Dan Budd Oral History

db No. They generally have...some of them only have two. Some of them....three....is, is the most.

ps And then you also were a commissioner on the Wyoming Water Development Commission? Tell me about that.

db Well, the governor called me up one day and asked me if I'd serve, and I told him I'd think about it. And, I finally got inaugurated and he said, Dan, how hard am I going to twist your arm? And I said, well, I thought about it, and I guess if we can develop water, of which I've decided that we can't, I'd serve. And that's, uh, six....uh...eight year appointment.

ps You were appointed...it says here, 2004?

db Yeah. When Freeden (?) Bowle (?) was elected.

When I first went on the Salinity...no. On Water Development, you mean? (ps – Yeah.) Water Development. When did....five years I've served on there.

ps Is that the one that has an eight year term?

db Yes.

ps You've got three more years. At least. (laughs) Now, what is the Water Development Commission? What is their goal? What are they trying to do?

db Well, it was first established under Governor Herschler. It was to store every drop of water in the state of Wyoming that we possibly could.

And, it's recent configuration, all we are is contributing to urban sprawl. Any subdivider, developer, or anything, starts it...and he doesn't have any water. So, he comes to the Water Development Commission, the Dudley Do-Little Committee, and....they and their bleeding hearts give them whatever they want.

ps That doesn't sound like the way it's supposed to be.

db Of course, the legislature changed the law, so it allowed them to do it. So.

ps Allowed who to do it? Do. what?

db What?

ps :They changed the law to allow who, who to do it?

db So we could develop these...water for these subdivisions.

ps How do you develop the water? Where does it come from.

CRWUA - Wyoming
Dan Budd Oral History

- db Oh, wells, and pipelines and whatever. Not anything basically to do with storage. Mostly wells.
- ps So, most of the people up there. they get their water from wells?
- db Lot of them do. Yeah. A big percentage.
- ps What...when the commission was formed, what did you think it was going to be? Or, what did you want it to be?
- db Well, what Governor Herschler, and I was in the legislature...right after I was on the Conservation Districts Board. And I supported that 100-percent and helped him get it passed. And we thought we could tie up Wyoming's share of the Colorado River, and other water in the state of Wyoming. For the people.
- ps Tie it up how?
- db By putting it to consumptive beneficial use.
- ps What does that mean?
- db That means, you've been a, appropriated. Consumptive beneficial use, means to put it to use. And you get a permit from the State Engineer. And you get a water right.
- ps What kind of use would you put it to?
- db Oh, many uses. Agriculture. Over where I live, one of the largest agriculture lands in the Wyoming range, and we've been through a 10-year drought, tremendous amount. The North Platte's over-appropriated. And, with the water that has to go to Cheyenne, doesn't have any water. Uh. There's a lot of....
- ps So the Water Development Commission was going to....
- db That's what it was supposed...originally supposed to do. But it didn't take the legislature long to change the legislation, so...because the boys could go back home and tell all the sub-dividers that were giving them campaign money to get re-elected. And I never was...took any campaign money. Ever.
- ps How, how did you run your campaign?
- db Just what I could finance it.
- ps Pretty unusual these days.
- db Well, that's the way I felt. I felt if you didn't...you couldn't afford to serve, then maybe you didn't need to.
- ps So, how did they change the law?

- db Allowed us, allowed us to develop water for these subdivisions.
- ps So, by developing money...is that just moving it around?
- db Well, when they don't have any wells or anything, and they can't afford...they can't bond for enough to, to build a project, then we go in and finance 'em.
- ps So, you're financing their water. (db – Yeah.) For development. And most of that water development is just groundwater.
- db Yep.
- ps So, this isn't involved with any kind of, uh, reservoirs or any....storage?
- db Very little of it.
- ps Did you think it would do that?
- db When he first proposed the legislation, I had high hopes.
- ps So, what is your role then in, in trying to find solutions to the problems of water, water development?
- db Well, one of them is storage. And, I haven't been able to get that done. Yet.
- ps What would you like to see done in that area?
- db I'd like to see a dam built on the main span of the Green River. Warren Bridge.
- ps Where would it be built?
- db On Warren Bridge. About a mile above Warren Bridge. It's on the main stem of the Green River. One thing about dams and water, it has to be where there's water. It can't be anywhere else. (ps – That's true.) And they talk about all stem and everything else, but....that's just a ploy.
- ps And, why hasn't that happened?
- db Because, people haven't demanded it yet. And, once there's a call on the river, then there will never be any further development. Even though the Compact says we're entitled to it.
- ps So, what do you think needs to be done to get people to, to demand...
- db Get people, get people interested.
- ps Have you tried to do that?

CRWUA - Wyoming
Dan Budd Oral History

db Well, I talked the State Engineer into forming an advisory group for the Colorado River. And we met, tried to get people involved. And then I fought for a state water plan, which we didn't have one. And it took me six years to get that through the legislature.

ps But, you did get it through?

db Yep.

ps And when was that?

db Oh, eight years ago?

ps So, where does that state water plan stand today?

db Well, we've done the first one, and now we're up-dating it.

ps So how long a plan is it for?

db Well, any water plan has to be updated because of the changes, because of the...of whatever. You know, needs.

ps So, so you've done one plan and you're updating it?

db Yes. And they divided it into the river basins. A plan for each river basin. Of which I insisted upon.

ps So, which one...you work on all of them, or you....

db No, I'm just on the Colorado River. On the Green River.

ps And how, how have you been working on that? To get people involved....

db Well, it's very hard to get people involved because they don't seem to know the importance. Industry is just like a dog in a manger. You know, they can't eat that hay, but they can lay on it. They want the water, but they don't want to tell anybody how much they're going to use because it might give their competitor.... And they're a bunch of....

ps So, are you continuing to work on that issue?

db Well, I've been working on it. Every meeting I attend.

ps You're not...you're not still in the legislature?

db No.

ps So, what years did you serve in the legislature?

db Oh, I served from 80 to 92. Twelve years.

ps So, you've been out for awhile. (db – Yeah.) But you're still on all these boards and commissions. Overall, what accomplishment related to water are you proudest of?

db I can't think of any major... The water plan.

ps Was there anything in relations to....

db And the Salinity Control when we set the numeric standards because the Environmental Protection Agency wanted to take over all of the water. (hear children playing in background...some kind of yelling.) So...but they don't even attend the meetings anymore. The EPA.

ps Is there anything that you would have done differently?

db I wouldn't have allowed Arizona to bank that water underground and call it beneficial consumptive use. I'll tell you that. (laughs) For one.

ps Well, that's a sore point with you.

db And I wouldn't have been there to wheel Hayden in for the CAP, so he could make the vote in, in a stretcher.

ps I haven't heard he was in a stretcher.

db He was.

ps Maybe a wheelchair. All right. I think we need to change tapes. I've still got a few more questions.

Colorado River Water Users Association –WYOMING

Tape # 4

DAN BUDD (TAPE #2) ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW December 9, 2009

ps Well, why don't you talk a little bit about how the water issues have changed during your career? Some 60 years.

db Well, the demands have changed. And we were aware of this 50 years ago.

We talked about it one time, what was called the (can't understand...Wenatta?) Project. And that was to bring water down out of Alaska. And bring it down the trench with poke-backs and everything.

And, there's been a lot of proposals. De-salinization. Now, of course, California Coastal Commission won't allow de-salinization plants, except one in California that's very limited. For Mexico. They're talking with Mexico about putting a de-sal plant down there in Mexico. Of course, they'll want a pound of flesh and a little blood, too. And. So.

ps Well, there is a de-salinization plant down by Yuma.

db Oh, yes. That's for the river.

ps That's for the river.

db That was because of the Wellton-Mohawk. And...but we've never used it. I mean.... And that was...came about when we established a minute 242. So, to make sure we could meet the water quality standards.

ps And they built it. Spent a lot of money building it.

db Oh, yes. Four billion. Million. I think then that was, uh, billions now.

ps Never really operated it. Just for tests.

db Just for tests.

ps They say it does work. They did another test on it last year.

db Yeah. They've run tests every...oh, ever so often they run tests. So (can't understand word) can update it and everything so they can keep their jobs. Job security.

ps You think it'll ever be operated?

db Oh. It won't be to solve the problem, of augmenting the river. But, it could be to...so that, if we get in trouble with Mexico. Uh. But the problem is, it's not salinity, it's, it's volume of water. Of...that 30 million people on the river. And, it's increasing.

ps Seems like a lot of times, a lot of times during the year, there's no water by the time it gets that far South.

db No. Of course, we've always met our commitment. Always. And we meet our commitment in the Lower Basin, which is 750 and then they saddled us with half the Mexican....which now we're delivering eight-two-three.

ps Eight-two-three. Eight hundred....

db Eight, eight million.

ps Eight million. Okay. (laughs) Eight million and 23....thousand acre feet? Okay.

db Yeah.

ps Have there been any surprises for you regarding how water has worked out in Wyoming?

db Oh, I don't...think....

Well, the legislature today, they've made some changes on Wyoming water law that I certainly wouldn't have supported. But, uh, they don't have anybody serving in the legislature anymore that's familiar with water.

ps How can that be?

db Because the people don't see the need.

ps Well, legislators need to educate themselves about water?

db I would think so. They all talk a good game. But, when you come with a campaign donation, you know....

ps So, did you think that things would work out like they have for Wyoming with water?

db I would have hoped they would have been better.

ps What would you like to have had different?

db Well, I'd like to see them support storage. I'd like to see them put it to beneficial consumptive use. So we got a title to it.

ps What kind of use would that be?

db Agriculture. Whatever we need. Cities, towns. Agriculture. Industry.

Good water in the Green River and Wyoming furnishes a fourth of the industrial tax base for the state of Wyoming. It's all based on Colorado River water.

ps Pretty important. Um. What's been the issues relating to the.... Wyoming's water resources do you think are most critical today?

db Developing our "un-apportioned amount of water. It's the most vital issue. Because, they'll get the call on the river. Then there'll be a suit, and they'll probably break the Compact.

ps Are people working on that today?

db Oh, certainly.

ps How are they doing that?

db Well, we've got legal counsel. We've got a...in the Upper Basin...we've got staff, and... You know, we....

But, to get four states to agree sometimes is not the easiest thing to do.

ps Well, what about dealing with the shortages? With the drought and things. How is that....

db Well, that's the problem that we're facing.

I've been on the regulations...in fact, for nine years. In fact, they even regulated my territorial water rights.

ps How did they do that?

db Come up and shut your headgate down to what you're entitled to.

ps Back to what your territorial rights were?

db Yep.

ps So, they've already made reductions then?

db Oh, yes. All that Wyoming range...all of that Wyoming range.

ps Are people aware that the water's been cut back to the ranchers?

db Well, in Wyoming, most of the ranches are fairly good-sized. And, a lot of them are on the main stem of the river, so they haven't really had to face it. And, uh...so, there's not really many people really left in agriculture. Very few. And, most of those ranches are six or seven...five or six generations. They're pretty substantial.

And then we've got the multi-millionaires that have come in there and they've bought them up. And they don't....

In fact, a guy out of Colorado, came in there and bought a ranch. Asked me who I recommended that he get ahold of so he could bribe 'em.

ps Bribe him. How? Why?

db With money. So he got his water....so he got more than his water right.

ps Well, what did you tell him?

db I told him I didn't think anybody would sell out that cheap.

CRWUA - Wyoming
Dan Budd Oral History

ps So, you say you don't have as many ranches...people in ranching...and that's because they're bigger now?

db Well, they been big for a long time. And they've got little territorial rights. And there's not many left. And these multi-millionaires that come in there out of Jackson or wherever. Bought 'em up.

ps Now, when they buy them buy them up, are they still working ranches?

db Well, just for tax purposes.

ps So, if they lose some of the water it's not as critical for them. Is that what you're saying? They're not going to make a big deal about it.

db Nope. In fact, most of them are environmentally inclined.

ps Interesting. The change in the ranch life. (laughs)

db Oh, yeah.

See, at one time, there weren't very many of them. There were a few up there, and, (burps) we could intercourse with them. But now there's gotten to be so many, that, we, we have no contact with them anymore. But, at one time, there were just three or four of them...multo-millionaires...that had ranches up there. And, they were neighbors, and, and you, you knew them. But not now.

ps Because there's more of them?

db Oh, yes. And even much richer. Hobb. Probably the third or fourth richest man in the world. Uh. Don Kendall. Pepsi-Cola. Oh...they've just.... And, Washington, D.C. Uh. Baker. There's a whole bunch of...those people moved in three.

ps Now do they actually live there?

db Oh, yeah. Sure.

ps So, they are neighbors.

db Yeah, well, but they don't, they don't talk to us peons.

One time they did because there weren't anybody else to....but now, when they throw their parties, they're exclusive. And they fly the hors d'oeuvres in from Hawaii in their 747s or 727s.

ps They have their own landing strips?

db Oh, yes. Certainly. Had a U.S. surgical....you know. Absolutely.

CRWUA - Wyoming
Dan Budd Oral History

ps That's a different perspective on Wyoming I hadn't heard. Changes in the lifestyle there.

db Yep. Certainly did.

ps Used to be that ranchers all over the West were the, the community leaders, the legislators, and that sort of thing. Like yourself. Have you seen that change?

db Oh, yes. Certainly. Changed a lot.

ps In Arizona I think the last rancher in the legislature passed away. (can't hear) The ranch. Old-time (can't hear) The legislature, the legislature itself has changed with the kinds of people that serve.

db Yep.

ps What about the augmenting and developing new water supplies. You talked about you being on the Development Commission.

db Well, it's got to come from somewhere. They've talked about pipelines plans out of the Mississippi. They've talked about...I told you, the Wenatta Project, which would bring it out of Alaska, down the trench. They talked about everything in the world, but so far it's just talk.

ps What about the cloud seeding?

db They're doing some cloud seeding, but the Forest Service won't give them...won't allow them to get a permit on the Wyoming Range, which is one of the most critical.

They're building, and they're having to cut...this is government. They're having to cut Wyoming's budget. Of course, Wyoming's a very rich state, but they need to cut their budget.

And Cimarex is building a 150-billion-dollar plant. They've held them up for a year and a half or two years now, on permits, on everything....Fish and Wildlife. Everything.

ps What kind of plant would that be?

db Helium.

ps They're building it in Wyoming? (db - Yeah.) Where?

db Up close to me.

ps You think they'll get it built?

db Oh, yes. They gotta pay-or-take contract. Damn right they'll....

They paid a million and a half to the Game and Fish blackmail money.

But that isn't near as much as the environmentalists got in attorney fees. Four-point-seven-billion in three, four years.

ps Why are people opposed to a helium plant?

db Well, you've got to deal...you no doubt deal with environmentalists. They've got the whole world by the tail.

ps Why is helium something they'd be opposed to?

db No, I'm not opposed to it.

ps No, I mean, why would the environmentalists be opposed to it?

db Because they're opposed to everything.

ps They must have a different reason than that.

db They're opposed to any development of any kind. They're opposed to....well, I can't think of anything that.... Except for them.

ps I just didn't see what their objection would be to helium. I thought that would be a clean form of energy.

db Tis. But they're opposed.

And they filed lawsuits over building the power line, because of the sage grouse. Everything else. And there never was a sage grouse ever flew as high as a power, power line.

ps So it's the construction that they're opposed to?

db Oh, yeah. Well, that's just a way to kill....

ps Well, what do you think will be the future challenges facing Wyoming?

db Well, water will be a major challenge.

Wyoming now is the richest state in the nation. And, uh, the legislature has no concept of how to institute O & M, operation and maintenance, money all of these things like the building, and especially in my county. My county evaluation now///the evaluation is four-point...what? Seven or eight-billion. Just the county evaluation.

ps That's the evaluation of property?

db Yep. That's what the tax income is. That's as much as some state's total budget.

CRWUA - Wyoming
Dan Budd Oral History

- ps Well, that sounds like a good thing to have that for an evaluation.
- db Yeah. It is if they know how to spend it. But, you can't buy yourself rich. Nobody ever did.
- ps So, so, you're saying the legislature doesn't know how to spend it?
- db And the County Commissioners. The legislature.
- ps You don't have people working in the government that know how to spend it, that you can direct them?
- db Sure. But what do, what do those people care? I mean, they're, they're living on your money. They don't care. It's not their money. They're not going to be....
- They've got their retirement, and it's secure. Unless this thing would collapse, totally collapse. And then they'd start paying them with...like they did when the Budd outfit came in. Because nobody would take the money. They called it a Continental, and said, it wasn't worth a Continental. Nobody would take it. So that's the way they drifted up there to sweat out the panic.
- ps You don't sound very optimistic about the future of Wyoming.
- db I'm not very enthusiastic about the future of this nation.
- ps That's too bad.
- db Yeah. That isn't what I fought for.
- ps Well, if you could give some advice to people that are dealing with the Colorado River issues today, what would you advise them?
- db Well, the thing that we've, we've got to do is...some way...to get enough water so that we can meet the obligations of the river.
- ps And how would you want them to do that?
- db Well, there are several proposals. They're all expensive. And, and one we can agree on. De-salinization out of the...but the environmentalists say, oh, we'll destroy the sea with... the balance of the salt and the sea. Uh. You can't bring it out of Alaska...that 200-inch rain belt, because of the environmental concerns. You can't build a pipeline because you can't get the easements from the Mississippi.
- ps So you think they should put more, like those big projects, like bringing water from the Mississippi to the West?
- db They've talked about it, but that's as far as it's gotten so far.

CRWUA - Wyoming
Dan Budd Oral History

ps I've heard...several people have mentioned that to me. But, it 's more as a dream.

db Yep. That's what it is.

ps So, so, I guess if they run out of water, then maybe not.

db Yeah,.

ps So, um...well, how do you see then the, the...first the near future for the western water issues?

db The near future? Well, the Upper Basin is going to be stagnated before too long because of the demands in the Lower Basin.

ps What about the long-term future?

db Well, I don't know that I can predict that or not. But, it doesn't look too....

We now are controlled by this One World, New World order, of which is, the tri-laterals (?), the CFR, Rockefellers. All those people that control the world...world finances. That's who controls us.

ps What about the, the big water projects that we used to see?

db Well, Jimmy Carter put the hit list out and killed them all. And never had a Congress with any fortitude to reinstate it.

ps They tried to kill the Central Arizona Project, but he didn't succeed.

db Well, Central Arizona was already done by the time he became president.

ps It wasn't done, but it was underway.

db Well, he'd a liked to (burps), but he, he was a mediocre president if there ever was one.

ps Do you think we'll ever see big water projects again?

db Doubt it.

ps Why?

db Cause the desire's not there, and the deficit we've got, trillions of dollars of deficit. What are you going to finance it?

ps Wyoming's got lots of money.

db But, with these project today..

CRWUA - Wyoming
Dan Budd Oral History

- ps Ann says, you know, Wyoming could finance their own....
- db Yep. Well, I'm working on it.
- ps How are you doing that?
- db By attending Colorado River Commissions. Talking to the State Engineer. Serving on the Water Development Commission. And, know a few legislators.
- ps Well, you are busy. What about the Appropriations Doctrine, first in time, first in right? Do you think that will survive?
- db Oh, yeah.
- ps Why?
- db That's the basis.
- ps So, you don't think that, no matter what happens, that'll never change?
- db Well, I won't say "never." Anything is never. But...no, that's the basic...basis....of Wyoming's water. Colorado's is not that way. Colorado says the market can be sold. (shifts in seat) And Arizona can sell theirs, too. And they underground and subsidize the farmers and ranchers. And they, their well fields. And sell it to Nevada, which has got an unlimited amount of water. Or, money.
- ps Pretty sure it's not water!
- db Yep.
- ps So you think that the water will continue to go to the money?
- db Certainly.
- ps Well, what about some of the...you talked about the environmental groups that have come into play with the different water law. With the Appropriation Doctrine, do you think that will.... The Indians claimed their water rights based upon that whole doctrine...first in time....
- db Right. And they go back in the 1860s, 1840s.
- ps They kind of go back to the 13s, 14s and 16s.
- db Some of them do.
- ps Do you think...are there any other issues or groups that will be coming up?

CRWUA - Wyoming
Dan Budd Oral History

- db Oh, well. As the dynamics of the, of the country changes. And...certainly. There'll be other issues. Always are.
- ps What about the Colorado River Compact? Do you think that should be reopened.
- db No. Absolutely not. Not only no, but hell no. (laughter)
- ps That's pretty clear. Now, you've been involved with the, the Colorado River Water Users Association here since....when did you first start coming to these meetings?
- db Well, the first time I came, I guess Floyd Bishop was State Engineer, and they had it down at the El Rancho.
- ps When was that?
- db I don't remember.
- ps In the 60s sometime?
- db And....70s. Early 70s.
- ps Why, why have you stayed active with this group?
- db Well, because this is where you find out what the issues are and what the opposition...you need to know what the opposition is.
- ps How...what kind of activities or offices have you held with this group?
- db I don't remember. I didn't want to.
- ps You come and learn what you can.
- db That's...basically.
- ps How important do you think this group is?
- db Well, it could be a lot more effective than it is, but, it's, it's important. I mean, they have some input to the Secretary, whoever he is. Interior. Uh. They have some input....they have political stroke. Some.
- ps Anything else that you wanted to talk about that I didn't ask you?
- db No, I don't know of anything.
- ps Do you have advice for young people today who are trying to decide what to do with their lives?

CRWUA - Wyoming
Dan Budd Oral History

- db Well, I guess the main thing is find something that you like. And pursue it. So, when you get up in the morning you're not dreading it.
- ps Sounds like what Ann just told us.
- db Well, I think that's damn good advice.
- ps Have you done that yourself?
- db Yeah. Pretty much.
- ps Are you still actively running the ranch?
- db Yeah, I still am. We sold our cow herd because of, of the drought. We had to...we've been through nine years of drought. And, it got so... the freight got so high you couldn't buy hay and bring it in. And these cattle prices have gone way down.
- ps So, you don't have any cattle now?
- db No, I been selling pasture.
- ps That's different. (db – Yep.) Do you miss the cattle? (db – What?) Do you miss the cattle?
- db Certainly.
- ps You keep a few around?
- db Nope. Haven't got any. (someone off camera) Yeah. I've got a few horses.
- ps Are those, those are just to keep though. You're not selling those off.
- db Nope
- ps Well, I think I've covered the questions I had for you, unless there was anything else you wanted to bring up.
- db No, I don't. It's like I told you, fool's names....fool's faces are seen in public places, and... (laughs)
- ps Okay.