

NRD ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
Interview of John Miyoshi by
Gayle Starr
September 27, 2013

1 PROCEEDINGS, September 27, 2013:

2 MR. STARR: I'm interviewing today John Miyoshi,
3 the manager of the Lower Platte North NRD. The interview is
4 conducted for the Natural Resources District's Oral History
5 Interview Project. The interviewer is Gayle Starr. The
6 interview is being conducted on September 27, 2013, at Mr.
7 Miyoshi's office at the Lower Platte North NRD in Wahoo,
8 Nebraska. And Miyoshi is spelled M-i-y-o-s-h-i. I got that
9 right.

10 So, John if you can give us a little run-down of
11 what your life -- has happened in your life over the last X
12 number of years?

13 MR. MIYOSHI: Okay. Well, I was raised on an
14 orchard south of Nebraska City. I graduated Nebraska City
15 High School. From there, I went to the University, where I
16 received my bachelor's degree in agricultural education with
17 a minor in business and food science and technology. Upon
18 graduation, I taught vocational agriculture and coached
19 basketball for five years at Columbus-Lakeview and then at
20 Exeter. During the summers, I worked on my master's degree,
21 completing my master's degree in six summers, and took a job
22 with the University Cooperative Extension Service, after I
23 received my master's, and was stationed in Cass County as
24 the agricultural extension agent for five years. And in
25 1984, I applied for a position with the Lower Platte North

1 NRD and have been with the NRD since that time.

2 MR. STARR: So, who was the manager when you first
3 came to the Lower Platte North?

4 MR. MIYOSHI: Well, there was a little turmoil at
5 that time. Ray Hartung (phonetic) had just been hired as
6 manager, and I was hired as assistant manager. Just prior
7 to Ray being manager, Al Smith was the original manager for
8 the NRD.

9 MR. STARR: So, when you first started at the NRD,
10 how much knowledge did you have of the NRDs and what was
11 your expectations?

12 MR. MIYOSHI: You know, I had very little
13 knowledge about the NRDs. Of course, growing up in Otoe
14 County, we fished at some of the watershed structures
15 located there, so knew that the NRD had taken that over and
16 ran the soil conservation and flood control programs. But
17 pretty limited knowledge at that time. And, of course, that
18 changed fairly quickly.

19 MR. STARR: Was the NRD office in David City or
20 Wahoo at that time?

21 MR. MIYOSHI: It was in David City, where it had
22 been since the start of the NRDs in 1972. In 1989, the
23 board made a decision to move the office to Wahoo, which
24 occurred in 1990.

25 MR. STARR: Was that a pretty controversial

1 happening and what was the dynamics of that and what were
2 the positives and the negatives as far as the board was
3 concerned?

4 MR. MIYOSHI: If you call an 11 to 10 vote,
5 controversial, yes, it was. There was substantial
6 discussion on that. Some of the reasoning behind that, a
7 lot of the project work looking to the future was going to
8 occur in Wahoo Creek. So, it just -- we were moving to a
9 larger town. We talked and considered Schuyler, Fremont,
10 and, actually, erecting an office at our recreation site
11 near Prague at Czechland Lake. And so, all of this was
12 taken under consideration. We actually looked for potential
13 facilities or building sites in those towns and, when the
14 final vote came down, it was between Wahoo, looking at the
15 building we're in now, or remaining in David City.

16 MR. STARR: So, I think, if my memory serves me
17 correctly, I think only the Nemaha is the only other NRD
18 that actually changed towns as far as the location, and that
19 was kind of a very early thing. But I don't think any other
20 NRD has actually -- they've changed buildings, certainly,
21 but not towns.

22 MR. MIYOSHI: I think you're right on that one.
23 Yes.

24 MR. STARR: I think, but maybe I'm wrong. How,
25 from the time you came on until today, how have your

1 directors, as a group, evolved? I mean, in terms of their
2 thinking and in terms of the types of things that they are
3 willing to do?

4 MR. MIYOSHI: Well, it's fairly interesting. In
5 1984, we spent 90 percent of our time and effort on soil
6 conservation and flood control. Those were the two big
7 items. And over the years, it just evolved that much more
8 emphasis was placed on water quality and, today, water
9 quantity. So, the water issues have really taken over much
10 more of our time than we had ever imagined back in 1984.

11 MR. STARR: Uh-huh. All of the changes in the
12 state law in terms of groundwater management and all of the
13 things that are attached to that issue have really been
14 tremendous since 1972, when there was not much groundwater
15 responsibility to the NRDs at that point in time.

16 MR. MIYOSHI: Yeah. Not only the state, but even
17 the federal priorities. Previously, we did conservation
18 work for soil conservation. Keep the soil on the land.
19 Today, we do much the same work, but our justification is
20 water quality. We're trying to keep the sediment, and
21 nutrients, and pesticides on the land where it's applied.

22 MR. STARR: How has the staff changed in terms of
23 what they do and their technical expertise in the, I guess,
24 almost 30 years you've been here?

25 MR. MIYOSHI: Well, when I was hired in 1984,

1 there was four of us: A secretary; a bookkeeper; Ray
2 Hartung that did the management activities; and I was hired
3 as the assistant manager, but really spent more of my time
4 as a field person doing dam inspections, in charge of the
5 tree planting program, and just wildlife programs. Just all
6 the small programs and projects and, you know, construction
7 inspections. Did all that. Today we have 16 full-time
8 people here at the office; of course, some part-time people
9 that run our recreation areas; and then, we still have, of
10 course, the clerks at the NRCS offices.

11 MR. STARR: Has there been a lot of competition
12 for NRD board directors? Have they been -- I've known a lot
13 of NRDs' position went unchallenged. The one that was there
14 before filed and that was it, particularly in some NRDs.
15 Have you had enough issues that there has been a lot of
16 competition for those positions?

17 MR. MIYOSHI: No, there has not been a lot of
18 competition, although the type of person running for the
19 board has changed. And, again, we had mostly farmers and
20 retired farmers on the board. And now, we have a pretty
21 good split, with some urban-type jobs or retired
22 individuals. So, we have a much different flavor on the
23 board today than we did 30 years ago.

24 MR. STARR: How has that changed what the board is
25 interested in doing or willing to do?

1 MR. MIYOSHI: Well, there's much more of a urban
2 presence. While we don't own any trails, we do give money
3 for trail construction, and many of the urban projects when
4 needs come up. I think the board is much more aware of
5 where the tax dollars come from. They used to be most of
6 our dollars were spent in the rural areas, and that's not
7 the case today.

8 MR. STARR: Yeah. What things are the NRDs in
9 total, not just the Lower Platte North, the 23 of you, what
10 types of things are you really wanting to get going now?
11 What, in addition to what you're doing now, are there areas
12 where you'd like to get involved in terms of changing state
13 law, either in terms of developing revenue, developing
14 responsibilities, areas you think you ought to be involved
15 in?

16 MR. MIYOSHI: Well, the transition, like I said,
17 was from soil conservation to water quality to where, today,
18 water quantity is the big issue. And we've watched that
19 progress across the state. Of course, 30 years ago it was
20 just starting to be a problem out west. It got to the point
21 where some districts were declared fully appropriated. Us
22 in the eastern part of the state are fortunate that none of
23 our areas had been declared fully appropriated. But we'd
24 been given the tools to work with to hopefully prevent us
25 from ever reaching that tipping point where our water supply

1 does not exceed our demand.

2 MR. STARR: Are there additional tools that you
3 think you ought to have in terms of state law or other
4 things?

5 MR. MIYOSHI: As we get into this more and more,
6 the water quantity issue, it's different in eastern Nebraska
7 in that not all of our water is connected. And so, there's
8 much more demand for models to be more precise, where the
9 lines between the different aquifers are. We have some
10 lines on maps and, sometimes, we find that they're not as
11 accurate as we had hoped. And so, funding we'd like to see
12 in the eastern part of the state, of course, is more
13 research dollars where groundwater models can be created.
14 Department of Natural Resources is doing work to merge the
15 existing groundwater models together and identify the gap
16 areas where additional work is needed. So, that's kind of a
17 change for us and we'd like to see funding for that.

18 MR. STARR: One of the things that Senator Carlson
19 is looking at is identifying some source of state funds for
20 water development, water research, water education, et
21 cetera. And I don't know how successful that's going to be,
22 but what's your view of that and what's the NARD's view of
23 that?

24 MR. MIYOSHI: We think Senator Carlson's water
25 funding task force is an important issue for the state. One

1 of the problems is money has been dedicated to different
2 areas, but the funding for this has grown stagnant. The
3 Resource Development Fund has had only one increase in the
4 last 25 years. And so, just inflation has eaten away at
5 that total number of dollars. So, Senator Carlson is trying
6 to identify the needs for different water issues, whether
7 it's quality, quantity, or too much water, like flood
8 control, and then try to find a source of funding that can
9 stay in pace with inflation. And there's been talk of tying
10 it to the sales tax; the idea of an occupation tax on
11 irrigated acres has come up; a tax on water, which would be
12 very controversial; a tax on bottled water. So, they're
13 looking at a lot of different funding sources. But, again,
14 the key thing here is something that could stay in pace with
15 inflation.

16 MR. STARR: You've mentioned groundwater several
17 times. What programs, controls, and so forth does this NRD
18 have in place that you've been using to deal with
19 groundwater issues?

20 MR. MIYOSHI: Well, since 1986, we've had a
21 groundwater management plan that gets -- has had two major
22 updates since its inception. And then, the rules and
23 regulations that say how we're going to manage our
24 groundwater. As with all the groundwater management plans
25 across the state, we've got triggers on there on quantity.

1 If our three consecutive spring readings fall below the
2 trigger level, we need to take action. What we found out in
3 2012 and '13, maybe the three consecutive years is too
4 liberal. We saw declines in 2012, one year alone, that was
5 equal to the drought years of 2002 through 2006. So, our
6 board's likely going to look at ways to, maybe, bring some
7 of these sub-areas into control a little bit more or likely
8 place a stay on any irrigation development in our district
9 for next year while we try to work out how we can properly
10 manage these sub-areas where, truly, no development should
11 (indiscernible).

12 MR. STARR: The entire district or --

13 MR. MIYOSHI: No. We -- Right now, we could put
14 those controls on district-wide. But what we can't do
15 without the three consecutive years is put control on a
16 sub-basin or an individual aquifer. And we need to be able
17 to do that.

18 MR. STARR: You mentioned, you know, that you have
19 a situation that's different from out west where your
20 aquifers are confined or unconnected or non-existent in some
21 cases. How has that been an issue to deal with or how have
22 you dealt with those problems?

23 MR. MIYOSHI: Well, one, we had a study done by
24 Olsson and Associates to identify our -- what we call our
25 sub-basin delineation study. And so, that's the different

1 aquifers within our district, and came up with 23 different
2 areas within our district. And so, we should be managing
3 those 23 areas separately, and we -- we're set up to do
4 that, based on our trigger levels for three years. And when
5 I talked about some lines might not be as exact, it's some
6 of those that we get challenged on once in a while, and,
7 again, those lines were drawn with the best available data.

8 MR. STARR: Well, the groundwater is -- can change
9 dramatically in just a short distance and you can't always
10 see it because it's underground. You can't see it. But
11 they're -- the Lower Platte South is using some new
12 technology that I don't understand to try to find that out.
13 Are you getting involved in that, or is that --

14 MR. MIYOSHI: The helicopter electromagnetic
15 surveys or HEM work. Actually, the first one of those that
16 were done was done at an area that borders Lower Platte
17 North and Lower Platte South near Swedeburg. And it was
18 kind of amazing, some of the information we got from that.
19 And that was part of an overall study in eastern Nebraska
20 where seven NRDs went together to look at that. And so,
21 it's been interesting. It's fairly expensive. The cost has
22 come down, but we're still looking at about \$160 per section
23 to gain that information. And so, it's just a matter of
24 cost versus what you can afford.

25 MR. STARR: Well, in the big picture, that's not

1 too bad a cost, really.

2 MR. MIYOSHI: Well, where we really need to define
3 those areas, it's invaluable information.

4 MR. STARR: Yes.

5 MR. MIYOSHI: Yes. It's just a matter of finding
6 the cost.

7 MR. STARR: Do you have people on the staff here
8 that are technically savvy enough that they are involved in
9 modeling and that type of thing or do you have to bring in
10 outside consultants for that?

11 MR. MIYOSHI: For any of the modeling work we've
12 done -- worked with outside consultants, whether it be
13 engineering firms or the University. We have two people on
14 staff that have been to the classes, understand modeling.
15 They don't do the modeling themselves, but they do, at
16 least, understand the parameters and how they're put
17 together so they can interpret the results.

18 MR. STARR: That's probably a good way to go, in
19 my view anyway. Getting back to the history, when you came
20 on board, the levy was probably much less than it is now.
21 And where's your levy, your mill levy now?

22 MR. MIYOSHI: Well, if we go back historically,
23 when I started with the district in 1984, looking back at
24 the records then, we had taxed the maximum mill levy the
25 NRDs could, which was three and a half cents. In the late

1 '80s, that was increased to four and a half cents. And
2 then, with the groundwater issues across the state, the
3 legislature allowed us to tax an additional one cent for our
4 groundwater needs, which would be a total of five and a half
5 cents. Our levy has been one of the higher across the
6 state. This next year, we're at 5.2 cents, and our maximum
7 would be 5.5 cents. So, we're one of the few that's above
8 five cents.

9 MR. STARR: What is your total budget, your annual
10 budget?

11 MR. MIYOSHI: We're at about \$7.5 million.

12 MR. STARR: That's from all sources.

13 MR. MIYOSHI: Yes. And about half of that money
14 comes from a property tax. And I think that's one thing you
15 have to say about the NRDs, is they've been -- we have been
16 very aggressive about going after outside funds, whether it
17 be state, federal, or other local dollars.

18 MR. STARR: Do you do a lot of cost sharing in
19 terms of conservation practices, water meters, tree
20 planting, or whatever it might be? Do you do that?

21 MR. MIYOSHI: Yes. All of those programs you
22 mentioned, we do have cost share from -- we do receive some
23 direct cost share money from the state. The state cost
24 shares with the landowners and we administer the program,
25 and that's the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program.

1 On top of that, we have our own cost share programs for soil
2 conservation practices, water meters, wildlife habitat, just
3 a whole series of programs like that. One of the newer
4 items is the federal 319 program. That was done to -- for
5 non-point source pollution and watershed protection. In the
6 past, we haven't been able to use that money for best
7 management practices. There's been a change with the 319
8 program, and you do an initial study. Once that study is
9 approved, there's a substantial amount of money available
10 for BMPs. So, we've taken advantage of that money.

11 MR. STARR: Do you require water meters on all
12 irrigation wells?

13 MR. MIYOSHI: No, we don't. However, any well
14 drilled since 2007 is required to put a meter on. And
15 that's new wells as well as replacement wells must have a
16 water meter.

17 MR. STARR: What has been the progression of
18 irrigation development in the last five to 10 years? Has it
19 been pretty rapid or has there been much?

20 MR. MIYOSHI: You know, there -- we went -- the
21 last 10 years, we've averaged about 2500 acres a year. And
22 we were marching along at about that pace and then, with the
23 drought in -- well, first the part -- we had a preliminary
24 determination of fully appropriated in 2008, which
25 subsequently was overturned. But when that occurred, we saw

1 a large demand for irrigated acres at that time. The
2 legislature had put a bill in place which only -- which
3 limited the districts to 2500 acres, which, fortunately, was
4 about what we'd done prior to that. So, we kept going at
5 that pace. And the demand for expanded acres was fairly
6 close for most of that time for the demand. With 2012,
7 though, we saw an extreme drought in that year and huge
8 demand for increasing irrigated acres. Along with that,
9 there was some fairly good crop prices at the time, so
10 farmers had money to invest. And so, a lot of demand there.
11 And, again, here in 2013 there's been a large demand. We
12 had 2500 acres to give out, and we've received about 8000
13 acres in applications. And we really think the board
14 probably will not allow any of those acres to be developed,
15 just because the feeling is we need to take a timeout right
16 now and assess where we are and which sub-areas we don't
17 want to allow expansion in.

18 MR. STARR: How do you deal with it in terms of
19 where those applications come from? In the Todd Valley area
20 you've got a lot better situation than you do over here in
21 the so-called Bohemian Alps (indiscernible).

22 MR. MIYOSHI: That's a very good question. We
23 have a ranking system, and it takes into account if there's
24 water there, the transmissivity, and several features like
25 that. And one of them is the type of soil and the slope

1 that you have on that land. How -- Is there any cost to the
2 environment to allowing irrigation to occur on that land?
3 And so, with that ranking system, we actually rank each of
4 the applications that come in and would give the irrigation
5 out to whoever ranked the highest.

6 MR. STARR: Do you do anything in terms of dealing
7 with how they're going to irrigate, whether it be a pivot or
8 a gravity or all the other things that are out there?

9 MR. MIYOSHI: Yes. If you're going to go,
10 depending on the type of irrigation, you get bonus points.
11 The lowest, of course, is gravity. You get bonus points if
12 you go to a pivot. To a low-pressure pivot is even more.
13 And if you go sub-surface drip, you get the highest number
14 of bonus points. And then, we have people that want to
15 convert from gravity to pivot, is fairly common. Many of
16 those, of course, the size of your field changes because of
17 the pivot, and we give a priority to any of those that want
18 to convert from a low-efficiency to a high-efficiency
19 system.

20 MR. STARR: With all this technology farmers are
21 dealing with, you're dealing with, and so forth, how has
22 your board come along in this progression of technology?
23 You know, in 1972, which was before your time, but in 1972,
24 there were very few pivots, very few water meters, very few
25 of those types of technologies and the board, I assume, kind

1 of had to be -- come along with that progression of
2 technology as well?

3 MR. MIYOSHI: Well, many of our board members are
4 people that have the time to spend on it, and many of those
5 tend to be older farmers. But as we see younger farmers
6 come on board, we're seeing much more buy-in to the
7 precision agriculture, which now is leading to the precision
8 application of water with your center-pivot. And so, we
9 have a new generation out there, and it's very exciting to
10 look at some of the technologies they're using for
11 deficiency irrigation, meaning cutting back on your water,
12 to a pivot that will actually put more water on the parts of
13 your field that have more ability to produce.

14 MR. STARR: So, as you progress in this, I think
15 when I talked to you the other day, you said that you were
16 thinking that your board at the next meeting would make some
17 changes in terms of limitations on irrigators. Is that
18 going to happen? Or maybe that board meeting has already
19 happened.

20 MR. MIYOSHI: No. Our water committee, actually,
21 is next week where we'll make the decision for 2014. And
22 that's just a recommendation to the board, which meets
23 October 14th. But right now I'm fairly sure we're going to
24 put a stay in place district-wide. And then, probably, make
25 some changes to our rules and regulations which would allow

1 us to not allow development in some of the sub-basins on a
2 decision other than the three-year trigger level and,
3 specifically, when we look in the eastern part of Butler
4 County and the western edge of Saunders County is where
5 we're having the most conflicts between irrigators and
6 domestic users. We will likely slow or stop any development
7 in that area. But we do have areas that are very well
8 connected, like the Todd Valley and the Platte Valley, that
9 can handle additional irrigation. I don't know if that will
10 happen in 2014, but I think the goal of the directors is to
11 identify these areas that should be shut off and which ones
12 could allow development to occur.

13 MR. STARR: Do you read meters or do the farmers
14 report what their -- the amount of water they've used or --

15 MR. MIYOSHI: The only areas we do that, we have
16 two control areas, and both of those control areas are for
17 quality, not quantity. But those areas, they do need to
18 report that on an annual basis. And then, again, since any
19 well that's gone in since 2007 that's required to have a
20 meter, there's a reporting requirement on those wells. So,
21 that's about 12 to 15 percent of our wells have a reporting
22 requirement on it right now.

23 MR. STARR: As farmers, landowners, and operators
24 have gone to new technology, meters, all the other
25 technologies that are out there, do you find that they have

1 progressed a lot in terms of how much water they use and how
2 they operate their system and are a lot more efficient than
3 they were at one time?

4 MR. MIYOSHI: Well, it's a small number that
5 starts with this and that spreads. You know, there used to
6 be, I would say, a high number of water abusers, meaning
7 they were pumping much more than what they needed. Fuel
8 costs today, and our farmers have just become more aware, I
9 think that number of abusers is a small percent today, but
10 you still have those out there that you worry about. On the
11 opposite end, we've got this small group that's being
12 ultra-conservative and managing the water to a fine degree,
13 and those are the guys we're trying to work with and promote
14 what they're doing because those people are using 10, 20
15 percent less water than many of our producers out there.
16 That is spreading among the community.

17 MR. STARR: Do you work very much with the
18 commercial folks, the people that sell meters, the people
19 that sell pivots, and so forth to try to get them to
20 encourage farmers to be more efficient, to be a better --

21 MR. MIYOSHI: We do have some education meetings
22 and we try to target those people to get them at -- for
23 nitrogen and irrigation certification meetings. Our largest
24 outreach is working cooperatively with the Extension
25 Service, and the meetings we put on, they assist us with

1 that. They do part of the education program. So, it's kind
2 of a cooperative effort with us and the Extension Service on
3 that education.

4 MR. STARR: You work with them on chemigation and
5 the whole realm of activities (indiscernible) --

6 MR. MIYOSHI: Yes, chemigation is another big one.

7 MR. STARR: That's a big water quality issue, too,
8 I would think. Do you do anything in terms of fertilizer
9 application and -- either in terms of quantity or timing or
10 what they have to do to --

11 MR. MIYOSHI: All of our producers are supposed to
12 be nitrogen-certified, meaning once each four years, they
13 have to attend a class and go through the most modern
14 methods. In our quality areas, and we have two areas, one
15 around Bellewood, one near Schuyler, where our groundwater
16 nitrate levels exceed eight parts per million in over half
17 of our wells. And that's a trigger for us that we put
18 forced education in these areas, meaning they need to test
19 their groundwater for nitrate, they need to say how much
20 pumping they're doing, and actually figure how many pounds
21 of nitrogen is coming on with the water. They're required
22 to do a soil test, and then they're required to do a
23 nitrogen budget for how much commercial fertilizer or
24 manure -- and/or manure needs to be put on. And so, they
25 have to do the paperwork. Ultimately, they don't have to

1 follow that -- the University's recommendation. But all the
2 information is there in front of them at that point.

3 MR. STARR: You've mentioned water quality several
4 times. Is nitrates the main -- I assume it's the main
5 issue, but is it the only issue that you deal with?

6 MR. MIYOSHI: It is -- we spend most of our time
7 looking at nitrate/nitrogen. That's the culprit we have
8 that's exceeding the maximum contaminant level at places in
9 our district. When we do our water samples, and we do
10 between 60 to 300 water samples each summer, about one out
11 of every 10 or 15, we do a full screen on, meaning we're
12 looking at pesticides, volatiles, anything like that that
13 shouldn't be in the water. And we've done those for over 15
14 years now, close to 20 years. And in 20 years, we have
15 never had a pesticide exceed the maximum contaminant level
16 for groundwater. We've received -- and, again, on all of
17 these that we do, less than five percent we have received
18 detects of pesticides in the water. So, extremely low
19 amount of pesticide actually being detected in the water
20 and, when it is, it's -- we've never had one at the maximum
21 contaminant level.

22 MR. STARR: Do any surface water testing?

23 MR. MIYOSHI: No, we don't.

24 MR. STARR: No. I know, some years ago, there was
25 a -- Shell Creek was a big issue in terms of atrazine.

1 There would be, you know, everybody used atrazine at that
2 time and everybody planted their corn and then a big rain
3 came and Shell Creek had a load of atrazine. And then, two
4 or three days, it was all gone. But that's a, you know, a
5 past issue. I guess there's all kinds of new products out
6 there that I don't understand or even know the names of.

7 MR. MIYOSHI: Now, we did have some suspected
8 manure dumping occurring in Shell Creek. And, actually, the
9 NRD and DEQ and USGS has joined forces and put some
10 detection gauges along Shell Creek. And that was a
11 three-year project. And year two and three, we don't
12 believe any dumping occurred. Prior to that, we would have
13 several instances where it was highly suspected. Oddly
14 enough, these dumpings would almost always be tied to a
15 three-day weekend that was coming up. And if there
16 was -- especially if there was a rain event in the forecast,
17 it seems like those were the times when that would happen,
18 and it happened on numerous occasions. We actually detected
19 two of those during our first year of sampling. Year two and
20 three, there was none. And so, we think maybe, just with
21 the awareness in the area and the extra eyes watching,
22 hopefully we had some producers change their --

23 MR. STARR: What were they doing? They just
24 taking a truckload or a wagon load out there and dumping it
25 in the stream or --

1 MR. MIYOSHI: And, again, you get citizens
2 reporting things to me, but actually proving it is another
3 thing. But the reporting we were getting was people loading
4 up a honey wagon and just stopping on the bridge and
5 unloading that into the creek.

6 MR. STARR: I see. Yeah. Well, things happen.
7 And it's not always hard to deal with.

8 Well, John, is there anything else that you want
9 to put on the record that you've observed that we haven't
10 talked about over the, I guess, almost 30 years that you've
11 been involved?

12 MR. MIYOSHI: Well, we have a unique system in the
13 state, and we have the opportunity to go to national
14 conferences once in a while. And it's -- there's always a
15 lot of questions from other states on how we got the NRDS
16 set up. How did this happen, you know? And, you know, I
17 wasn't part of that, but there had to be almost wars over
18 that because you're eliminating some political subdivisions,
19 you're creating new ones, giving them authorities that was
20 never there before. But other states looking at Nebraska
21 are envious of how we're able to handle these issues at a
22 local level rather than having the state come out and
23 mandate.

24 MR. STARR: You know, earlier this week, I think I
25 mentioned to you, I met with Jerry Vap, and, of course,

1 Jerry was involved at the national level, was national
2 president for one term. And we talked about some of that
3 and how he had to deal with that in terms of people asking
4 what we were doing and -- as opposed to I know there were
5 some people in Nebraska with national conventions were
6 telling people, you know, "This is great. You all ought to
7 do this." And that didn't always go over very well. And he
8 mentioned some of the things that he faced when he was the
9 national president in that regard.

10 And I faced too. One time in the mid-90s, I
11 worked with NACD on a team of us went to various states. I
12 don't know, I participated in maybe eight or 10 states. And
13 we talked about their programs, trying to get them a little
14 more active in what they were doing. And, of course, some
15 of them were extremely minimal. I remember New Mexico, as
16 an example, was -- well, they were hardly, they hardly
17 existed. And they were all good folks, but they just, you
18 know, "Well, we couldn't possibly do that. We couldn't get
19 that through our legislature." You know, and, well, maybe
20 they couldn't. I don't know.

21 And I think that, when this did happen, and, of
22 course, the original law was passed in '69 and then various
23 amendments until it went into effect in '72, but it had to
24 be a case of the right people at the right time, you know.
25 A Maurice Kremer, a Warren Fairchild, and some of the state

1 people that were involved. Warren (indiscernible), Chet
2 Ellis, and so forth, that were -- really pushed it. And, of
3 course, there were -- certainly, there was a lot of
4 opposition. And even the -- even at the commission,
5 the -- Maurice Kremer came up one day to the commission
6 meeting and said, "Do you really want me to go ahead with
7 this?" You know, "What do you think, commission?" And the
8 commission voted, and it was, you know, shades of your 11 to
9 10 vote. I think it was five to four. And so, he went
10 ahead. And, of course, there were -- you know, he obviously
11 had to have 25 votes to get it through, and Governor Tiemann
12 was a supporter. He would sign it. There was no problem
13 there, but he had to have 25 votes and, so, he was only one
14 of 25. But he was certainly the leader, and your
15 organization recognized him the other day as -- What do you
16 call it? Hall of Fame or whatever you call it.

17 MR. MIYOSHI: Yes, first inductee.

18 MR. STARR: And he was -- that was certainly
19 appropriate that he was the first inductee. In fact, I
20 guess if I'd have been suggesting it, he'd have been the
21 only inductee the first time.

22 MR. MIYOSHI: Yeah.

23 MR. STARR: Not that Ron Bishop and Dick Mercer
24 didn't deserve it. They certainly do. But Maurice Kremer
25 really deserved it.

1 MR. MIYOSHI: It took some strong, positive
2 leadership to make that happen.

3 MR. STARR: Well, it took a lot of compromise and
4 a lot of politics.

5 MR. MIYOSHI: When I started with the NRD, the
6 first NACD meeting I went to was in 1985, and there was
7 reports from several of the -- from the districts. And I'll
8 never forget sitting through that and listening to a few of
9 the conservation districts give their report. And Don Gath
10 (phonetic), a board member from Schuyler, was sitting next
11 to me, and Don leaned over when they were talking about
12 their budget and said, "Didn't we just approve a bone budget
13 that was more than their entire budget?" And it was true.

14 MR. STARR: Yeah. I remember in New Mexico one of
15 the directors asked me, he said, "Is it true in Nebraska
16 that you have districts that have a million-dollar budget?"
17 And I said, "Yeah, we do, but all the rest of them are
18 bigger than that."

19 So, okay, John, I sure thank you for your time and
20 your input and I'll get this turned off.

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