

INTERVIEW WITH TERRY WOOLLEN
BY JIM BARR
July 18, 2014

1 MR. BARR: This is Jim Barr. It's July 18th. I'm
2 north of Alma with Terry Woolen and visiting about the NRD's
3 history and evolution. Terry, would you be willing to just
4 go over a little of your own history just to kind of know
5 who you are and that sort of thing?

6 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, I was born in Harlan County or
7 raised in Harlan County, born Holdredge, Nebraska, on a
8 farm. High school at Wilcox High School and then on to UNL
9 for college, and during time of Vietnam. I don't know if
10 you experienced, others probably did, that I had to take a
11 test to stay in college, I think my junior year, because
12 everybody was flocking to college to avoid the draft. And
13 then I joined the Navy, went through OCS, was a naval
14 officer for a little -- just about two years is all, because
15 of the slowdown in Vietnam. I was over there at the time,
16 and they released a bunch of officers and I was one of the
17 fortunate ones that came home in September of '71. We
18 looked for a farm at that point and found this farm north of
19 Alma at a little less price than where I grew up in the
20 Wilcox area. It wasn't developed, and so we did find water
21 and were able to develop for irrigation. And we moved here
22 in March of '72, so we've been here since then. And which,
23 coincidentally, is probably the year, basically, that NRDS
24 started. And we had a good friend that was in the NRCS
25 office down here that helped us a great deal, a distant

1 relative, and he was involved, of course, in the NRD
2 movement. I wasn't particularly enthralled with it because
3 of the conservation district that he was very active in
4 prior to that. So, it stepped on some toes initially. And
5 we've raised a family of four children here and continue to
6 live in the same house. It was built in 1906, and we're
7 only the second family to occupy this farm. The original
8 owners or family that owned it sold it to us in 1972. I
9 think that's a little bit about me.

10 MR. BARR: What sort of a farming operation do you
11 have?

12 MR. WOOLLEN: We're corn, soybeans, wheat. We're
13 expanding a little bit on dryland acres to some peas. And
14 occasionally, we'll raise some oats. I need to harvest some
15 in the next few days. And the peas, hopefully, we'll get to
16 sample them today. We used to have a cow/calf operation. I
17 just sold that about a year and a half ago. And my son
18 rents the pasture. One of our sons does farm nearby. The
19 other is a lawyer in New York City and the other is a doctor
20 in Denison, Iowa. And then our daughter is here. She's the
21 musician of the family, and she keeps mom and dad healthy,
22 wealthy and wise.

23 MR. BARR: Thank you. What sort -- you briefly
24 mentioned a little about your experience or your
25 understanding of the NRDs. Did you have any history with

1 either the preceding Soil and Water Conservation District,
2 and then as it evolved into the NRDs, what sort of
3 involvement, if any, did you have?

4 MR. WOOLLEN: I really didn't, because, you know,
5 I just came in at the tail end of the Soil and Water
6 Conservation District, but the local district
7 conservationist, like I say, we were well acquainted with.
8 And he did a lot of work for us in the conservation aspect
9 on our farm. So, I was closely linked to him and the
10 NRCS -- I guess it wasn't called that at that time.

11 MR. BARR: Probably Soil Conservation Service at
12 that point.

13 MR. WOOLLEN: Yeah. So, I had a connection there,
14 and, you know, I started observing the Natural Resource
15 District. I was acquainted -- got acquainted with Ron at
16 that time. We attended church together. And so, I had some
17 interest just because of his involvement. And then, in, oh,
18 it must have been '82 is when I got on the board. So, about
19 that time period, they put in a road structure that I
20 thought was somewhat unnecessary, just because I had a dam
21 above it and I didn't think there was that much need for it.
22 But that kind of triggered my interest, plus conservation
23 was an interest of mine from the work I'd done, tree
24 planting and things of that sort. So, I ran for the first
25 time in 1982, and it was an at-large position over the whole

1 district. And it was against a banker in Superior,
2 Nebraska. So, it was, you know, each end of the district or
3 somewhat each end of the district that we ran against each
4 other. And I was elected at that time and served for 20
5 years after that.

6 MR. BARR: What sort of activities was the NRD
7 doing when you came on the board and the sort of things you
8 were involved in?

9 MR. WOOLLEN: As I mentioned, the road structures,
10 the bigger projects that a county or somebody wasn't able to
11 do. Of course, tree planting was a big part of it at that
12 time, and we did our own tree planting at that time. I was
13 involved early on with some reseeding of pasture land.
14 Actually, Ron drove the tractor and reseeded some of it for
15 me as we were experimenting with that. And that has been
16 something that I still enjoy seeing, all those grasses back
17 where they originally were.

18 Other activities, as I recall more cooperation
19 with NRCS and other entities to get things done.
20 Occasionally, we would have flooding problems along the
21 river, and of course, everybody's upset when it floods and
22 the water comes out. And so, we got involved in issues like
23 that. That's most of it. The nitrate level, especially in
24 the eastern part of the district became a concern. And
25 monitoring wells and things of that sort were installed so

1 we could keep an eye on that. And then, it -- you know,
2 this is '82. In the '80s, we started to see some concerns
3 about the water supply, too. And particular areas where
4 water levels were decreasing and so we started to do some
5 investigating in those areas, too. So, it was really a
6 broad mix of things. And then, I think as probably Ron
7 maybe could better tell you, but end of '80s, we had a dry
8 period into a '90-'91, in that area. That's when things
9 kind of come to a head with the Kansas situation.

10 MR. BARR: Would you like to kind of, as much
11 detail as you'd like to, recount your experiences with that
12 general issue from the NRD's standpoint and from the
13 region's standpoint?

14 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, I had been involved in a hot
15 topic just a few years before that, I think sometime in the
16 middle '80s, the low-level nuclear waste issue. And I
17 served as a representative of the NRDs on the Citizens
18 Action Committee, I think it was called. And of course,
19 that went nowhere, and we did a lot of the thought process.
20 I was amazed on how little the engineers and the people that
21 were trying to put something together understood the weather
22 and tornado activity, et cetera, of Nebraska, and how they
23 wanted to build something. And my involvement there
24 was -- or interest was "not in my backyard" type thing,
25 because it was a willing seller, as far as how they were

1 going to find the site, and there was a willing seller just
2 south of the lake down here in Harlan County. So, I had
3 interest there. And my viewpoint was, why not put it right
4 next to nuclear station and keep all the possible problems
5 in one spot, up out of the flood plain, but there was
6 apparently no willing sellers there. We really didn't have
7 that option. So, we went through a process of looking at
8 things and why things work better than others.

9 And so, anyway, from that, I guess, then, as we
10 moved into the Kansas situation, it became more and more
11 apparent that Kansas wasn't going to let the situation die.
12 There was something that needed to be done. And Mike Jess
13 and Jim Cook were very involved in saying, well, if things
14 went the wrong way, we could be restricted to five or six
15 inches of water out here. So, that was an interest. And
16 the process, as far as being involved in the negotiations
17 with Kansas, as I recall, was they asked for volunteers or
18 people that would be willing to serve on that.

19 MR. BARR: What kind of a committee or group was
20 it?

21 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, it was actually just Jim,
22 officially, Jim and Mike Jess and a citizen, I think, is
23 what they originally intended. And I remember having a
24 phone interview with Mike and Jim, and then Ann Bleed was
25 involved, too, just because of her position. And likewise,

1 on Kansas side, they had a legal person, Dave Barfield, and
2 the head waters -- David, I can't think of his last name
3 right now. But I don't know what their criteria and
4 everything. Jim and Mike might better address that. But I
5 was chosen, so we started meetings. And I think this would
6 have been in the middle '90s. I don't know all the dates
7 there. I'm just going by where my kids were at that time.
8 And we started discussing what Kansas needed or thought they
9 needed, and then we would bring it back home and discuss
10 that locally. And, of course, that made me a very unpopular
11 person because of the people involved in Nebraska First, I
12 guess, and other political entities that were indicating
13 Kansas was out of line in asking for what they felt they
14 deserved.

15 MR. BARR: Who were the negotiators on the Kansas
16 side?

17 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, David Pope.

18 MR. BARR: David Pope, that's right. I remember
19 him.

20 MR. WOOLLEN: That's the name. And Dave Barfield.
21 And then they usually had a legal person there and I think
22 that changed. It originally was maybe a lady and later a
23 man that -- with legal expertise within their organization
24 there. But David Barfield and David Pope were the primary
25 ones.

1 MR. BARR: Did they have citizen representation,
2 too?

3 MR. WOOLLEN: I don't think they did. And so,
4 that was unique and I was somewhat overwhelmed a little bit,
5 because they obviously had much greater knowledge of the
6 technical aspects of what we were talking about.

7 MR. BARR: What were some of the things they
8 brought up and --

9 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, they wanted to maintain, and
10 still do, a steady supply of water. And, of course, one of
11 their points was that the Republican and the Smoky River --
12 I think it's Smoky, that come together down in Kansas, and
13 then they provide water for, I think, two thirds or so of
14 the population of Kansas. And the Smoky is very -- has a
15 high mineral content, so they really rely on the Republican
16 to freshen that water and supply the water down there. Now,
17 they obviously use the irrigators as a reason for the water,
18 but for a large extent, it's for human consumption and use
19 down in those larger cities on the bottom end of the stream.
20 So, that plus, they kind of used the same argument that
21 Nebraska used against Wyoming. You made this Compact,
22 contract, whatever, and said you were going to do this and
23 this, and we're not getting our share that you've said we
24 were going to get. And so, it was hard to overcome, because
25 we're arguing out of two sides of our mouth whether we are

1 south or west part of Nebraska.

2 MR. BARR: They had had some success legally with
3 Colorado, hadn't they?

4 MR. WOOLLEN: Yes, that's another incentive on
5 their part. They had not only won there, but I think a
6 fairly large monetary settlement. So, they were planning on
7 using that money to get their -- what they considered their
8 rightful water from Nebraska. It was difficult in my
9 aspect, to come home and give information or talk to people
10 about this when they had so much information on the other
11 side about ignoring it and don't do anything, don't even put
12 meters on. That was one thing we were trying to do, just
13 put meters on, so we would know where we were at. And I
14 think most farmers nowadays see that as a positive. But at
15 that point, it was intrusion by Kansas and local NRD, that
16 idea. And a moratorium early on just to stop development
17 and wait and see what would happen, in retrospect, probably
18 would have been a good idea. Off the record, I'd mention
19 that at NRD meetings, and it didn't -- it fell like a lead
20 balloon. And I understand why. I wasn't anxious to do it,
21 but that would have been one of the things that we would
22 have probably limited the number of acres that we have to
23 spread our water out at this point. But nobody -- if they
24 saw it, they didn't want to agree with it.

25 MR. BARR: In the early years of the discussions

1 with Kansas, what was the involvement of the other
2 Republican NRDs?

3 MR. WOOLLEN: In my position, I reported to them,
4 I don't know how often, but I made my rounds to the
5 different NRDs and just kind of reported our process. Now,
6 I couldn't tell them everything that was going on and tried
7 to keep most things out of the paper. We had a good
8 reporter at our NRD meetings that when I said, "Off the
9 record," she put her pen down and that worked well. Our
10 local meetings, when we tried to present some of this stuff,
11 actually, there were some outside agitators. Somebody from
12 Kearney, in particular that came down and tried to raise
13 questions and things. So, it was contentious all along.
14 And I was told at one time that -- from a lady that she was
15 just passing on, I don't know if she meant it, that I would
16 probably find myself in a ditch somewhere. I never asked
17 her if I was going to be alive or not when that happened.
18 So, there was a lot of antagonistic viewpoints, and still
19 is, probably. But little by little, people learned to
20 accept it. And the Supreme Court, when they made their
21 judgment, there wasn't too much beyond that that we could
22 do.

23 MR. BARR: How much was the lack of discussion in
24 the original compact with groundwater a factor in the
25 negotiations and the discussions?

1 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, at home, to the average Joe,
2 it was a big concern, but to water people that knew the
3 interconnection of the groundwater and surface water, it was
4 less of an issue. I think Mike and Jim understood it, so it
5 was hard -- and they knew the people on the other side
6 understood water and the models that they had to determine
7 where the water came from, understood that, so it was less
8 of an issue in the negotiations itself than it was in
9 presenting that to an average person on the street.

10 MR. BARR: What was the involvement of the
11 Nebraska Attorney General's Office?

12 MR. WOOLLEN: Later on, they, of course, had a big
13 involvement. But early on in those negotiations, I don't
14 recall a lot of involvement there. Jim and Mike could
15 probably tell you more about that, but I just -- you know,
16 we were kind of on our own and just kind of fishing around
17 for ways that we might do some things. And a lot of those
18 ideas originated with Mike just from his experience, and Jim
19 and Ann, you know, those three. But a lot of it was just
20 getting meters on wells so Kansas could verify, yes, you're
21 only using this much, and things of that sort. And, you
22 know, I was kind of emissary that came back and said, "Can
23 we do this?" And, you know, kind of a brick wall as far as
24 that type of suggestion or measure to take.

25 MR. BARR: How did you see the evolution or the

1 development of the attitudes in the Republican NRDs or the
2 basin as a whole evolve over this 10- or 15- or 20-year
3 period, just --

4 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, you know, I really didn't talk
5 to a relative or anybody that agreed with what I was doing.

6 (Laughter.)

7 And, you know, nowadays, I mean, I'm just the
8 contrast from totally against any kind of control of the
9 water I own under my land, which wasn't in statute, but, you
10 know, in their mind, to, yeah, the whole state needs to get
11 on board with this. We need to control the use so our
12 grandchildren have the water available in the future. So,
13 it's been a remarkable evolution, but you think about other
14 things in the political process, our country, whatever,
15 we've had the same type of evolution, not always good, but a
16 tremendous evolution. And it just was step by step, I
17 guess. First of all, I would say, meters and people
18 threatening people that wanted to put meters on or read
19 meters or just wouldn't put meters on. That small number,
20 and then we go to, after I was on the board, some controls
21 and things. So, it's just been a little by little, and the
22 general feelings. Once the issue went to the courts, and
23 Nebraska was on the losing side in some aspects, that, I
24 think, really turned the events. People realized that their
25 opinion may be totally different. And you know, the example

1 I always used is, if you enter into a contract, whether it's
2 marriage or whatever it is, you are obligated to abide by
3 that contract. And you wouldn't want the elevator to
4 contract your corn and at the last minute walk away from it
5 and say, no, we'll only take half of that. And, you know,
6 it's hard for people on this side of the state line to see
7 what the people on the other state line thought process was
8 and their feelings about the issue. Then, the lack of
9 connection in many people's mind of underground water and
10 surface water. That's probably one of the last things that
11 people started accepting.

12 MR. BARR: How much did it contribute to this
13 discussion the fact that we have two different legal
14 underpinnings to this on the surface water, appropriation
15 rights, and correlative rights on the groundwater, and at
16 least at the beginning of your discussion, there was no
17 legislative linkage between those two philosophies? And to
18 some extent it's developed as we've evolved in the
19 legislation, but it's still not directly addressed? Do you
20 have any thoughts on that?

21 MR. WOOLLEN: It was always kind of a -- something
22 sitting there in the corner, because Kansas -- David Pope
23 was "it." And Mike wasn't "it." He was half "it."

24 (Laughter.)

25 And then you had, what, 23 times seven or

1 whatever, they were the "it" on the other side, or just
2 within the basin there was at least probably 15 to 20 "its"
3 on the other side. So, it was difficult. When you have two
4 people that their word is pretty much final, negotiations
5 are much easier than if you've got one person that
6 represents a side and can express the views of that side,
7 but then on the other side, you have kind of a wishy-washy
8 situation, because I got to go back and talk to other people
9 about this. So, I think it affected it, but Kansas
10 understood it. I mean, they didn't agree with it, I don't
11 think, but they understood somewhat of what we were going
12 through on this side. And I think it's frustrating for Mike
13 and Jim and everybody involved with it, because they had to
14 present to a farmer board, or group of boards, how they
15 wanted to take something of their God-given right in the
16 opinion of some of those board members. It was a difficult
17 situation all the way through. And in some ways, not the
18 most efficient, but I really agree with the local control
19 and it has taken a lot of pressure from the state for the
20 local control to work or to come up with a plan that will
21 work for Kansas and Nebraska.

22 MR. BARR: How much is the financing portion of
23 this involved in the --

24 MR. WOOLLEN: Discussion?

25 MR. BARR: -- discussion, and how's that kind of

1 evolved?

2 MR. WOOLLEN: Yeah. Early on, I don't think there
3 was a lot of financial consideration other than finding
4 enough money to negotiate and get kind of things done. I
5 think the original thoughts were guaranteeing Kansas a
6 certain amount of water at a certain gauging station. And
7 frankly, I think -- you'd have to talk to Mike about that,
8 but I would ask him, if we would have went through with some
9 of those ideas and then went through a drought, could we
10 have actually done it? And modeling and information within
11 the Republican was limited at that time. So, it's hard for
12 them to come up with that. But I think as, just as
13 anything, if you involve a major consideration, the State or
14 local entities are doing, funding has to kind of come along
15 with it, because you start bringing in experts, you start
16 looking at the basin and what needs to be done to put proper
17 numbers into a model, so when you do come to some
18 conclusion, you're assured that that will be the case. I'm
19 not totally convinced that we ever came up with those
20 numbers. And even our agreement and what we're working with
21 now is the last say. And whether N-CORPE and all the water
22 is coming down, whether that's going to be the final
23 solution to issues or not it's something that's relieving
24 right now, but how long will it be there?

25 MR. BARR: I suppose some of the complication came

1 about because of the dry weather that hit about the time we
2 started this process.

3 MR. WOOLLEN: Right. Well, actually, it's pretty
4 much instigated by the dry weather just prior to. The early
5 '90s was a time when there were busloads of Kansas people
6 that came up to the auditorium at the school here in Alma,
7 concerned about -- and I think it was some kind of meeting
8 with the Corps or the Bureau, probably be the Bureau, the
9 control of the dam. And the dam was low at that time -- or
10 the lake, and so there was a huge concern and that really
11 triggered everybody around here. Well, we got a lot of
12 angry farmers down in -- just across the border. So, it was
13 an evolution. I guess it would have been nice to keep a
14 journal, because a lot of these dates and times and what
15 happened are kind of fuzzy in my mind other than the fact of
16 a ten-year span that I guess I would put them in.

17 MR. BARR: I remember going to a meeting in
18 Bellevue or somewhere with the Corps on Harlan County and
19 how it was going to take many years to fill, and then all of
20 a sudden it fills that next year.

21 MR. WOOLLEN: Yeah.

22 MR. BARR: It's really been an interesting --

23 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, it was -- that happened again
24 here not too long ago, and everybody's hoping it will happen
25 one more time.

1 MR. BARR: How much did the discussions with
2 Kansas, et cetera, affect the operations of the Lower
3 Republican NRD or all three Republican NRDs, during this
4 period, in terms of other projects or activities?

5 MR. WOOLLEN: It probably negated from many of the
6 other activities just because of the time and effort. And
7 of course, during that time, organization was formed with
8 the surface water districts and the NRDs that was kind of
9 ongoing. I don't know the status of those type of things
10 now, but it was good for me, because I was hearing a lot
11 more from the surface waters there than I would around here,
12 because we're right on the tail end of surface water. We
13 don't have much involvement. And then it goes farther east.
14 But it took its toll, because there were just a lot of time
15 and effort spent that way. It probably started to increase
16 the asking for taxes of the NRD because of what they were
17 asked to input. And if you're going to be in the game as a
18 decision maker, you have to have facts and information in
19 front of you to make a good decision. So, it just forced
20 the NRDs to kind of reprioritize their mission, basically,
21 at that time, because this was an overwhelming question
22 compared to trees or wildlife habitat or any other
23 conservation type issues.

24 MR. BARR: Have you had to do any rural water
25 districts in this area?

1 MR. WOOLLEN: No. The NRD has been involved,
2 though, but it's east of here. They buy water from Franklin
3 and then go on down towards Guide Rock and Superior area
4 with (indiscernible), and that just happened at the end of
5 the -- around 2000, I guess, when I was just leaving the
6 board.

7 MR. BARR: Looking at particularly the Kansas
8 negotiations and the court decisions and where we're at
9 today, what do you see as the next 10, 20 years and the
10 sorts of things that might be needed or may become big
11 issues or things like that?

12 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, N-CORPE, whether that will
13 satisfy our deficit of water. It would be very difficult, I
14 think, for the NRD to impose lower pumping rates than we are
15 now, because we saw last year that that was a bare minimum.
16 Irrigated crops sometimes only 150 to 60 bushel because
17 of -- versus 200 or better because of lack of moisture. So,
18 there's going to be a huge cost if that number does go down.
19 And the best alternative, according to Mike, and I heard
20 other places, too, is to start shutting off those fast
21 response wells next to creeks. And now, they've got enough
22 modeling in place to know where they get the biggest bang
23 for restricting water. And, you know, I would feel sorry
24 for those people that -- because, I don't irrigate all my
25 farm, but I irrigate enough of it to have something green in

1 those bad years. So, that would be real tough. And, you
2 know, the weather patterns, if global warming and everything
3 does move us to a drier, more arid region, or our storms are
4 more frequent and harder where we can't -- the soil won't
5 catch all the water, so we may get the same rainfall, but
6 not be an effective rainfall, those things could just make
7 that restriction even more difficult to overcome.

8 MR. BARR: What sort of effect would it have on
9 either the cropping system or the economy? How do you see
10 that evolving if that happened?

11 MR. WOOLLEN: Yeah, and it will be a gradual
12 change, and crops, say, in 1980, there wasn't really much of
13 a market for soybeans here. We didn't really start raising
14 soybeans until the '80s, '90s. And so, you see that
15 evolving. I started raising peas last year. And
16 there's -- right now, our market -- I'm raising mine for
17 seed, but the market is in Gering, Nebraska. So, that's a
18 long distance. But as more peas are raised, and it's
19 successful, I think there'll be markets that move in. And I
20 think the issue of water, people will start utilizing their
21 water much better. Just the meters that the NRD are doing
22 now, the water mark meters are a great tool if people use
23 them correctly. A lot of people will start irrigation
24 systems long before they need it, because my meter's just
25 like their land, because it's gotten the same rainfall and

1 they start pumping water before it's actually necessary.

2 So, there's going to be management changes.

3 There will be cropping changes, and to a certain extent,
4 there will be changes in expectations. And probably along
5 with that, likely -- it's probably already in place, is a
6 change in the value of the land that we farm. You know, we
7 have inflated, terribly inflated land prices right now, so
8 it's hard to judge that. And we really haven't had good
9 irrigated land sell in this area. But if you cross the line
10 into Phelps County, I'm sure you could get \$2- to \$3,000
11 more per acre because they're not worried about a restricted
12 water use up there compared to Harlan County. I think it'll
13 be just a slow evolution to adapt to whatever we have, which
14 is typical of a farmer, just like the mentality has changed
15 from 1990 to 2014. And that's the way it should be, I
16 think. You know, I don't think we should go off in this
17 direction and know that that's going to work. I think a
18 gradual shifting of resources over long term is probably the
19 proper way to do it. The government is really the only one
20 that can shift resources immediately and make a fool of
21 themselves.

22 MR. BARR: In terms of the funding that might be
23 necessary for the NRD to deal with that and other problems,
24 what do you see as possible solutions or what should happen
25 or that sort of thing?

1 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, I haven't talked to Mike or
2 Brian, I talk to Bryan Lubeck a lot because he had been
3 there as long as I had. But right now, the \$10 an acre that
4 we pay per irrigated acre, as I understand it, they feel is
5 going to be sufficient for paying off N-CORPE. And I don't
6 know if there's funds beyond that available from that \$10 an
7 acre, but I would think the funding would be available on a
8 local basis, especially with that provision there, because
9 that, I think rightfully so, taxes an irrigated farmer for
10 the issues that come up because of his pumping that water.
11 So, I don't like it, but I think it's a fair and just way to
12 compensate.

13 MR. BARR: We don't like high fuel prices either.

14 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, there's all kinds of things we
15 don't like about input costs.

16 MR. BARR: At this point, I just -- we have a last
17 question is just a reflective sort of question of any
18 thoughts you might have in this general area or anything
19 you'd like to offer.

20 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, I think you've covered most
21 things. I really did enjoy the time that I was on the NRD.
22 I probably took away some time from my family, from my
23 farming operation, but I guess, in general, I feel good
24 about the organization and what I was able to contribute in
25 20 years to it. It, I think, will continue to be one of the

1 more hotspots as we continue to evolve in the use of
2 groundwater, particularly. Now, I think they farm out out
3 the tree planting. You know, and almost -- I would say a
4 large percentage, Mike could probably tell you the
5 percentage, of the mission is involved in water, whether its
6 water meters, volume meters, or water mark meters to measure
7 the water in the ground or measuring well depths to see what
8 the water level is doing. You know, you just say water, and
9 I bet it takes a large percentage of time and budget for
10 that. And I foresee that as continuing. And it may even be
11 more of a, you know, on dryland, rain fed, I guess the
12 University likes to call it now, land of best management
13 practices to capture all the water we can, especially those
14 larger events.

15 I still see people working their summer fallow
16 instead of cropping every year or no-till their summer
17 fallow. And I think there's room -- and cover crops that's
18 kind of controversial. When there's plenty of rain, I like
19 them. When there isn't, I don't plant them. But I think
20 there are a lot of other issues, but they pretty much all
21 evolve around water and will continue to be an important
22 one.

23 I think what the Legislature does or don't do,
24 early on in the discussion, I probably didn't mention this,
25 but there was a fear amongst a lot of people that the

1 Legislature wouldn't be very supportive of the Republican
2 River problems, because there's a limited area, only a
3 couple representatives out here -- Owen Elmer was one of
4 them at that time that was going on, that it might be an
5 issue. Now we -- I was pleasantly surprised on how
6 cooperative the Legislature was in helping this issue,
7 because it's been millions of dollars through the lawsuit
8 and helping buy out water and all kinds of things.

9 MR. BARR: Has there been any specific legislators
10 who have been particularly influential in this process?

11 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, I think Ed Schrock did a lot
12 at the time. Owen Elmer was kind of in the beginning. And
13 I'm not sure there was a lot of legislative work that he was
14 associated with. But Ed brought that bill -- I can't
15 remember the name of the bill, that you could treat land
16 differently that was developed after a certain date. I
17 think 2001. I don't remember the date for sure. But that
18 has never been used. And so, the Johnny-come-latelies that
19 threw in development just before the moratorium went on. It
20 could be treated differently. That's still on the books,
21 but it's never been taken place. I see arguments on both
22 sides, and I don't have any -- I didn't develop afterwards,
23 but I have a brother that did. So, I would probably -- you
24 know, I understand he should have the right to the water,
25 too, but then again, he helped create a problem. I think it

1 seems to me, 30,000 acres or so was developed after that or
2 something. I don't remember those numbers for sure, but a
3 large chunk that would give everybody else a little bit more
4 water. It would be one less straw in the milkshake, I
5 guess. So --

6 Go ahead.

7 MR. BARR: I was just going to say, on the
8 administration of the NRDs, Ron Wunibald was the first
9 manager. Is Mike the only other manager, or was there
10 somebody in between?

11 MR. WOOLLEN: No, that's it.

12 MR. BARR: I couldn't remember.

13 MR. WOOLLEN: Yeah, Mike -- we heard Mike
14 just -- oh he can tell you, 2000-2001, I was on the board
15 just a short time while he came on. And Bryan was there
16 since -- he told me, too, 27 years -- or 29, because he
17 thought he'd retire next year at this time at 30, but then
18 his wife passed away not too long ago, and he found out that
19 he could take her social security now and put his social
20 security on hold for a while and make it that way as far as
21 retiring, so he went ahead and did it. I really enjoyed
22 Bryan. And there are a lot of other NRD people that have
23 come and went that I really enjoyed within the basin. That
24 was probably one of the pluses for me is just the people
25 that I got to interact with within the basin. And that was

1 a real plus for me.

2 MR. BARR: That's pretty much the questions I
3 have, unless you have something, particularly if you'd want
4 to go into the upper -- anything with your upper districts
5 that you had involvement with.

6 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, they were kind of the odd
7 ones, because -- and not odd in that negative, but a
8 positive, because they had started to address this issue
9 even before. Now, a lot of people here said, well, yeah,
10 they did, but they just overdid it as far as their
11 development and everything. And they dropped this water
12 level and then they're complaining about problems. And
13 then, too, there's some animosity between the eastern end of
14 Lower Republican and the western end, because of rainfall
15 differential and how that should be treated. We, I guess I
16 hear from people say, "Well, they knew when they bought that
17 land that they had less rain than we did. We invested more
18 money in this land. There's no reason to change the water
19 allocation." But there is that water allocation
20 differential. I think it's a compromise that everybody can
21 live with and has lived with. (Upper Republican NRD) is a
22 very active NRD up in that area and much more politically
23 motivated. I served with people who came and went because
24 of the tide of feelings. I think, just a much more
25 political thing because of what had taken place, their

1 declining groundwater, the controls they tried to put on,
2 all those things. They were probably five years ahead of
3 anybody else, or ten years, because of the problem, not
4 necessarily because they were that aggressive in their
5 approach to it. And a lot of people took a lot of heat out
6 there on both sides.

7 Now there is one -- Dean Large, I think may still
8 be on the board out there.

9 MR. BARR: I talked to his father, Marvin.

10 MR. WOOLLEN: Okay.

11 MR. BARR: And then we interviewed him and Don
12 Roberts and Wayne Heathers and --

13 MR. WOOLLEN: Oh, Wayne? Yeah, that's somebody I
14 really enjoy, too. He grew up in this area.

15 MR. BARR: Oh, sure, that's right.

16 MR. WOOLLEN: But Dean Large, he kind of weathered
17 the ups and downs of the political situation out there. And
18 so, I enjoyed being around Dean, too.

19 MR. BARR: Well, if there's anything else, I'd be
20 glad to hear it, otherwise, thank you very much for doing
21 this.

22 MR. WOOLLEN: Well, I'd like to see what mistakes
23 I made, but -- a lot of the fill-in blanks are dates that I
24 can't really recall exactly where everything went in.

25 MR. BARR: Well, and if people really want to dig

1 into it, there'll be a place they can go to find the record.

2 Thank you again.