

Gathering Our Voice

Interview with Tina Scull

Interviewer: Nancy Warner

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Transcribed by: Jennifer Riccitelli, AmeriCorps Volunteer

Nancy Warner: Okay this is Nancy Warner. I'm here with Tina Scull. And we're doing a "Gathering our Voice" interview on September the 28th, 2009 and this, Tina, is the actual interview part on the Apple Capital Loop Trail. [as opposed to the previous background interview] And since this is a training interview I'm also going to point out to you that on the list of questions you're going to get we have a whole sort of check list of things to do as you go through the interview. So we've already spent some time talking about the purpose of the project. You've signed your release form. We've checked the recording levels. I've tagged the tape. So then we just thank people for being there to share their story with us and ask for a few introductory questions. There are a few introductory questions that we include in every interview regardless of the topic. So you already answered one of the questions which was how long you've lived in North Central Washington and that was you told me, since 1975.

Tina Scull: Yep. January.

NW: So and you told me you were born in Seattle. So tell me about what brought you to Wenatchee.

TS: My husband. (laughs) Which is often the case. He had a practice opportunity here after he finished his ophthalmology residency and we had been in Vancouver, British Columbia and he rode his bike to work five miles each way in the rain in the dark most of the time. Certainly for half the year. And he wanted to be in a drier, sunnier climate. And I still wanted to be in the Northwest. I'm a Northwest girl and my parents lived in Seattle. So Wenatchee was a good place for us. I wasn't happy about coming, but I learned to really love it here.

NW: So tell me about your first encounter. What it was like when, you know, when you, did you come to house hunt, or did you, had you already accepted the job and then you came to house hunt? How did you get to know the place?

TS: Well I grew up in Seattle and we, my parents and I, we'd come over Snoqualmie Pass, Blewitt Pass, come to Wenatchee, get apples, go up to Leavenworth and hike. And then go back to Seattle. It would be a day trip. So I'd been... my family camped all over Washington State. All over the Northwest. West coast actually, went all the way back to the east coast, but, so I'd camped in a lot of places. And uh, so I knew the area. Not well, but I knew it.

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NW: So then, so then when you and Elliot decided to move here, what was that like? What's memorable about that period of time when you were moving from Vancouver to Wenatchee?

TS: Let me think about that. I remember coming to look for houses before, before we moved. And we were told that the Craft house was... they were building another home so it was going to be available just about the time we were coming. So we looked at it and it was this traditional, Dutch colonial, big trees, big yard, an acre (laughs). But close to town. We wanted; we wanted our children to be able to walk to school. We wanted to be close to the center of town. And Elliot grew up in a similar style house only in Maryland. So we bought it, and uh, we lived there for many, many years; did a big remodel on the kitchen. But it was a wonderful place to raise children.

The other thing I remember is that, there were only, I think Elliot was the number thirty two doctor at the Wenatchee Valley Clinic and everybody knew who we were before we got there. I mean, a new doctor to the clinic was, was, the medical community certainly knew. Um, so there were all these people who seemed to, well they were very friendly. A lot of people had us over for dinner and you know, it was a very warm, welcoming community in the medical community. But I have to say, it's harder to get to know the families who have been here for years who have been orchardists, who are the agricultural part. We certainly have gotten to know some of them in those years we've been here. But it took longer to get further into the community.

NW: So tell me what you thought of the town once you got here. The physical setting.

TS: Well we were instantly, amazingly uh, taken by the fact that there was no access to the river and there were, in fact it was a junk pile down by the river. We'd been in Vancouver, BC- All the waterfront in Vancouver, all of it, is public and there are trails and parks. And there's a lot of waterfront in Vancouver. So we also traveled abroad and especially in Europe, people prize their public spaces, they provided access to the lake fronts, trails into the hills and so, it just felt like a town that was growing up but hadn't really gotten to the point of trying to connect people to each other and to the natural world.

We, um, it wasn't long after we were here that the Exhibit R for the PUD was being debated and so we started paying attention to that cause what they were talking about doing was creating a park along the Wenatchee side and we were very much in favor of that. And that happened. But meanwhile we took pictures and walked the riverfront to document what it had been like and uh, it was a pretty, it was a place that the community had turned its back upon and uh, instead of embracing it. And since we've been here it's just done a hundred and eighty degree turn around and I think everybody loves the river and access to the river on both sides.

NW: We'll talk more about the loop trail in a minute but I had one more question on, in terms of background and um, and I have a sense of what it was like when you came here and I can picture that based on what you've just said. What are you most proud of in terms of your personal family or community achievements in Wenatchee or North Central Washington?

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TS: Probably the Land Trust [Chelan Douglas Land Trust]. Well, and the loop trail. And the foothills. I mean, not that we're, we're just part of a much larger community in those endeavors. But the fact that the foothills are, to a large part, going to be open to people to walk and bike, and, and to get a perspective of the valley and the beautiful views and exercise and then the fact that you can actually, we have completely, a complete loop. There were so many people involved and so many chapters in that. It's a long story which you're going to be getting. But those are all, and, and just a whole group of people who care about the environment and connecting to nature. And open space and good planning.

NW: Lots of accomplishments in 1974, 75?

TS: 5.

NW: And now, wow. Okay, now let's go specifically to the loop trail. And um, I think you've already answered this question but um, maybe you can pinpoint it a little bit more for me. How'd you first get involved in the loop trail project? You just told me how you found the river. And do you have those photos by any chance that you took?

TS: We'd have to search back cause they were all slides and we got slide trays.

NW: Okay.

TS: But I think we could probably locate them. So it started with this, the, the uh highway DOT proposing to build in their right of way and picturing the entire east side cut off from people forever. And that was natural and people loved it. And then they, uh, Save the Riverfront group formed and they hired Mickey Gintler, a lawyer, to um, work for them. And Elliot was more involved than I. We supported hiring Mickey financially and we went to some of the meetings. Elliot was more involved. But we kind of, we stayed out of it because it was very controversial and it was very political and our roots were with the Land Trust and the Land Trust is not supposed to be political. I mean it has its goals and its views but it's nonpolitical. It reaches across all the political lines. And that's a tricky balance. But uh, particularly Elliot followed every step of that and we got to know those people and they're really (laughs) it was a very controversial time. A very tough thing for them to do. But, it opened up the possibility for the east side of the river to be something other than a highway.

NW: So other than giving money, were you involved in going to public meetings or..?

TS: We usually went to the public meetings.

NW: Did you speak out at the public meetings?

TS: Elliot did more than I. I'm not the public speaker.

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NW: Um, so did you're, we're trying to understand how people first got involved and how their first involvement grew or changed. And so for you, um, it sounds like you were kind of involved somewhat from a distance but monitoring it- that sounds like.

TS: Yes.

NW: And so was there a time when you got more involved with the Save the Riverfront Committee?

TS: Um, the real involvement came when it, the uh, the DOT lost its legal battle to build a highway and it opened the door to saving that land and having a trail. That was, I think, the pivotal time. It kind of opened the door. The land trust at that point, it never had had any money (laughs) to speak of. It never had a hired staff. It was all volunteer. And some of the energy, that had, there was still a really wonderful core group but the uh, goals and direction and energy were a little bit diffused at this point and quite frankly, Elliot had sort of been the leader for that for so many years, he was getting, he was getting a little bit worn out. So what we struggled with was should the land trust continue? That was one question. And then two: Who is going to lead the charge for this trail? Does the land trust have the energy to do it? Is it too political, too complicated? So Elliot called a meeting and it was set up in a big round circle. And so most of the supporters and key members who cared about the Land Trust, cared about the trail, were there. And Elliot put it in two parts: Should the land trust continue to exist? And there was a resounding "yes." And the other part was "who was going to take the charge for the trail?" And just spontaneously, Gordon Congdon Sr. and Bob Parlette both said they would and they said they would partner, they'd do it together. And then a whole bunch of people volunteered to be on the committee.

NW: This is to Complete the Loop Coalition right?

TS: Yes. The complete the loop coalition is formed.

NW: Okay. So your involvement, um, you really kinda started rolling up your sleeves after the highway had been defeated, after they had decided that it wasn't...

TS: We were more than just tracking it. Elliot was pretty, he was...

NW: But you personally...

TS: Well, we were both, you know, cared a lot about it.

NW: Right.

TS: But you're right. I don't know if he would say he was part of the Save the River Committee. I don't think he would. But we sure knew them.

NW: Yeah.

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TS: And they knew us.

NW: Yeah you were just waiting for your face to...

TS: Yes

NW: ...your time to plug in and make a difference.

TS: Exactly.

NW: Okay. And so the loop trail really became the first project that the land trust kind of sunk its teeth into.

TS: Well, it, it was a separate group that complete the loop coalition... It was made up of land trust people or, and others. It was larger and it reached out into the community. The recreational community and uh, it was a separate thing but very close again. Um, and I signed up to be on the committee cause I worked part time. And Elliot, Elliot would come. He's sort of the senior kind of advisor type. He'd come once in a while. But he wasn't on the ground all the time working, like Bob and Gordon and there were other really hard workers.

NW: So um how many years were you involved in that? What kept you going during that time?

TS: Well it was very dynamic. I mean leadership alone was dynamic. And it started to gain a lot of strength. Cause the highway was no longer going to be there so the door was open and um, and those guys were really dynamic. Gordon and Bob were really dynamic guys. So Bob, because he's a lawyer and because he knows the ins and outs of government, understood what had to be done all the way along and where the grant money was and you just uh, he really was a terrific leader and put amazing energy into it. And so, and there were times um, when we could plug in. One thing that was happening was there was a lot of resistance in the newspaper and in the street and the power structure of our, of the community really want... Those huge groups of people really want that highway and they were not happy and they did not want a trail. Um, and, Wilfred and Cathy Woods just lived down the street from us although we didn't know them. I knew Cathy and you know I biked with her a little bit and I knew she loved biking and she's just this really fun, positive woman. And of course Wilfred was such a fan of public power and he was such an influential person and his family had been for years and years. He's a little bit intimidating but what happened is that a young woman from Cashmere... I think this is true. I'm not be totally accurate... was an architecture student at WSU and had done a drawing of, a conceptual drawing, of what the riverfront if it were developed for recreation and a trail system, what it would look like and it was much more than what we were really intending for but it just gave a vision and so Elliot and I decided to call up Cathy and Wilfred and ask if we could come show them. And it was a big long, um, um, you know, drawing of the entire riverfront. So we spent an evening with them and went down there and told them what our vision was, what we thought would be good for the community and what it might look like. And of course you could see Cathy was just right there, eyes twinkling. And Wilfred was very attentive and he listened to

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it very carefully and he is not a slow person. I think he sort of, not sure if we had any effect but I'll tell you what he was... the newspaper came around and was much more supportive.

NW: Not too long after you had that meeting with him?

TS: Well I'm not going to say that that meeting was pivotal, but I think, I think it had some effect, yes.

NW: We'll be talking to Wilfred.

TS: He might not remember that (laughs) I don't know. But I just, I, the, the newspaper is a real positive leader in this community. It still is right now.

NW: Hm, that's interesting. Well now, we've got a few questions on cooperating. Can you tell me how people use the river when you came to the area? You already sorta talked about that a little bit. About your own experiences.

TS: Right.

NW: But what did you hear from people when you met them or what did you see around the river besides trash?

TS: We saw that it wasn't being used for recreation which was astounding. I mean look (unrecognizable), why aren't people out there? And of course that changed over the years. And when they did the um, when they did the park on the west side in Wenatchee... that's another story and it's Elliot's story... But Rich Congdon owned a big piece of property and it had a house and a barn. And Elliot always did a lot of kayaking and he also was a rower and the river was great for that because the current actually smoothes out the waves and it's just a lovely, lovely place. So there was a whole group of people who wanted a, uh, a rowing club. And they sort of had one but they had no facility. And, so, there was no rowing club actually (laughs). Shouldn't even say this. Elliot should be telling this story. But they basically, Elliot was interviewed by the newspaper and he said the rowing club would like to preserve this barn as a possible house for shells; rowing shells, and canoes and kayaks for the rowing club. And so instantly the rowing club started (laughs) at that point. And it happened.

NW: Who owned that property? Rich Congdon?

TS: I think so, yeah. And he was in with one other person. And I'm not sure if it wasn't John Jacobson. I'm trying to think. So the two of them owned it. But it was being bought by the PUD as part of the park.

NW: Okay, so are we talking about Rich Congdon the architect?

TS: Yeah.

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NW: Okay, okay. Alright. Yeah I talked to Rich last week about this project and he's digging some information out. I did not realize that was his property. I thought it was Gordon Sr.'s property.

TS: I may not be right.

NW: Well I, we'll find out.

TS: But Rich can tell you...

NW: Yeah.

TS: Okay. And if Elliot was here, we can kind of the two of us usually get it right but anyway. I think that's true. He owned it with somebody else.

NW: Okay. We can find out.

TS: I think it was John Jacobson.

NW: So a little bit more about the river then. Were there... You said that there were a number of people there into rowing? Beyond that, were there events that brought people together around the river? Were there any special groups associated with the river prior to the rowing club or the trail project?

TS: Well people fished. Seasonally. Not much was happening by the river. Especially when we first got here. There was a boat launch at the end of Orondo. And it was just kind of dirt. And so people would launch their boats. But it wasn't a big facility and there weren't a lot of boats.

NW: When you moved here and were welcomed by the medical community, did people take you water skiing or anything like that?

TS: No.

NW: That's kind of interesting.

TS: No Lake Chelan was the recreational water. It was a whole different picture. It's so different now. Now there were people building... they started building homes along the river above the dam by (inaudible) Island. But there weren't even any homes on the river. It's all been pretty much since we came.

NW: It's going to be great seeing some of those old photos. Okay. Talk about what it was like to work with others on the trail project. What worked well?

TS: What worked well? I was going to... I have a few things, a couple of things that were really highlighted for me in my memory. But I can't say it follows your question exactly. One of them was the, toward the last year of fundraising, trying, as I said Bob was able to get all these grants

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and other monies coming in. One of the biggest grants was, I think it was from the IAC [Interagency Committee] and it required a match. I can't remember if it was \$100,000 or \$200,000. I think it was \$200,000. It was a big amount and it had to come from the community. And so the big push for that last year, the grant had to be matched I think by June. And I can't what year (inaudible) that was a pivotal time. I'm losing track of exactly the year. I think it was '94. But later, maybe it was '98? I can't, I don't know the timelines...

NW: I think the trail was dedicated in '98 so...

TS: It was so maybe it was '94. And so there had been a lot of activity around fundraising. And it had gone along and then we were down to the last couple of months and we still had a fair amount to raise. And it was starting to get tight and I remember Skip Johnson did a lot of work to bring in... And I'd need to talk to Skip. If I remember, I thought it was the remnants of Jefferson Airplane or something. A rock band. It was to be an evening concert in a field over in East Wenatchee. And several things happened. There was some strike in the LA Airport so the planes weren't running. The flights weren't taking off. There was only one guy that was able to get out, out of the whole group. So one guy, one performer showed up. I don't know whether it wasn't well advertised or it was a cold evening but we worked so hard to make that thing happen. We had all our volunteers there, we had you know, all everything set up. Nobody came. I think there may have been ten people that came. But I had rounded up all the volunteers to be ushers and to greet people and all this kind of stuff. And so we lost a ton of money. And Skip had worked so hard on multiple things for the fundraising part of the Complete the Loop. And so that was... the next meeting was really sad. And so that was really hard and but what we realized was that we just had to step up the asking for money. And so I went to my good friend Pat Laudner and she said "you need to go to Bart Lan and he knows everybody and he's just really good at that." And I was not used to this at all and so it was intimidating for me. And so I went to Bart. And Bart's just the warmest, most positive person. And he right away said oh yeah I can do that, I know all these people so I can talk to them. He said "but you know the Thomas' so why don't you talk to Dalton Thomas of (inaudible)? And I knew him just as a friend, socially. You know, Pam's husband, all that. But so I had never gone to anybody or asked for any money ever in my life but I called up... screwed up my courage, called up made an appointment to see Dalton and he was very cordial. And I went into his little board room, private board room, and then he grilled me. He took it very seriously and it was, I was really, he found all kinds of things about the project and he was very businesslike and he wasn't the person I, he had on a very different hat totally. And it was pretty intimidating. But Oneonta obviously came through with a generous donation. But I didn't know it at the time. I went out of there thinking "oh I survived it but I don't know what's going to come of it." It was... he was very generous.

NW: Oh that's great. That's a good story.

TS: But it pushes you to do things you think you can't do but somehow you do them.

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NW: That's good Tina. That's a good one. Well we have a couple questions here on learning cause we think learning is a really important part of sustainability. So how would you define good stewardship? And how does the loop trail contribute to good stewardship of the environment, the economy and the community?

TS: Good stewardship requires everybody understanding the value of what they have and coming together to take care of it. And I think the loop trail does it physically and does it in terms of the view of the entire valley. And the fact that we're all, we're all in this together. Both sides of the river. And it brings people closer together. And boy, you know, you can be a professional but you need to know what it's like to be a farmer. You need to know the stresses and strains and you need to know what it's like out there on the land trying to make your living growing things, at the whim of nature, and fruit prices and transportation costs and all the competition. All the rest. But I think, I think having the open space and having particularly the loop trail has been something that has really made people aware of how beautiful the natural riverfront is. There was a lot of stewardship trying to pull weeds and have the natural plants and trees and shrubs back. It brought people together. And it made it a better place. And now they value it. A lot of people value it very much. And I love seeing families out there and the children and all the different ethnic groups... everybody.

NW: So how did you learn about stewardship? What are some of your earliest memories?

TS: My father was an environmentalist and he taught biology and health education. And he also had a degree in botany and he loved that natural world. And so I, we did a lot of camping. And hiking and being in the natural environment. So that was something that was just part of my heritage.

NW: Give me a couple examples of things that he taught you, or both your parents taught you, while you were on camping trips or a hike. Any specific things your parents taught you that maybe you've passed down to Jenny and Grant?

TS: Yeah I think your understanding of the natural world comes, seeps in almost unperceptively over the years and it just builds and builds til you're sort of seeing it in a more holistic way. And I think just being out there and appreciating it and seeing it the way it should function gives you a foundation of understanding. That when threats or conflicts or changes of use or whatever come up, you understand better what the impact is going to be. And what's worth saving. Of course he knew all the plants and all the Latin names and he, but I think just seeing a lot of variety... and we traveled down to California and we went on both sides of the mountains. We traveled all over the west. We went to Yellowstone, we went to the Badlands. You know, we just really saw a lot. I think the more you see, the more you appreciate.

NW: How has your notion of stewardship changed over time?

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TS: Well you live long enough, you see a lot of the natural areas disappearing. And you know how important they are to everybody; your children, yourself, the future generations, how important it is these natural processes continue. And so, not that development is not going to happen. It's going to happen. It's just how it happens and what's spared and where development goes and what its impact is on the land. I certainly, I learned a lot being involved in The Nature Conservancy, reading their magazines and being on the board. You see it not just for your area but for the whole country, the whole world.

NW: Okay. We think appreciating is one of the very fundamental characteristics in sustainability. So what do you most appreciate about the loop trail? What images, feelings and thoughts come to your mind when you think about it if there's anything beyond what you've already shared?

TS: Well, if I picture myself biking around it, you know, it's so phenomenal we've got a bike path across that, the Odabastian Bridge. That is awesome. And then you go down into that natural area. If you're going counterclockwise down into the east side trail and you go across the little stream and it's all wooded. And then you come out and you've got the sand dunes and if you stop and walk out there... all of the beautiful rocks and you can look down into the river and you can see all the bird life. It's just really beautiful. And you keep going, and then you see people that start to build houses. And they've got gorgeous views. And the loop trail is still there and it's all natural all the way down to the river. And you get into those areas of Porter's Pond and the fact that they're going to be saved, and the wonderful habitat that is. And a little bit more developed at 19th Street and we've got the plaza and the fountain and that's nice. People can sit there and appreciate what everyone contributed and they can appreciate the fountain in the middle and kids can play there. It's a lovely place to sit. It's a very nice amenity at 19th Street, parking and the plaza. And you go past these huge cotton trees. One of them, the biggest ones I've ever seen, is down further south on that trail and it winds through all that. There used to be wild yellow roses but I think something happened, either the trail was rerouted or something. They're not there anymore. But I bet if anybody sprinkled some seeds they'd come again. And then the bridge over the irrigation - I mean the bike path over the irrigation bridge, which is amazing, that that is even there and that it's still functioning. It's going to be maintained. And then you go over and you're in the developed part on the west side, on the Wenatchee side. And that's very pretty and there are lots of people enjoying the developed part of the park. From playing fields to picnic areas to you know, coffee shops. You know everything that's along there. The xeriscape gardening, the sculptures, it's just a really nice blending of the riverfront right into the community. It seems to be a nice transition there.

NW: Okay. I think you've already addressed this a couple of different times. But I'll just ask you this in case there is anything else you want to add. How does the loop trail help you feel connected to this place and to the community and are there any specific examples of this connectedness that stand out in your memory?

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TS: I'm trying to think of if there had been events or things. Oh, well, Ridge to River for years and years. We did it for twenty years. What a wonderful event and so, there's huge gatherings down there every spring. And more recently the children's Ridge to River was down there. And our granddaughters were doing that. But I'd say Elliot and I go out and walk the east side trail fairly frequently. And we bike the loop. Every time we go out we see friends, we see people we don't know. And we say hi and sometimes we talk with them. All different ages. We see... I love seeing young families out there... little kids riding their bikes and they're out there with their dogs. It's just a wonderful place. You feel connected when you're down there.

NW: It's like a community center.

TS: It is. A moving community center.

NW: I'm just going to stop this for a second.

NW: Okay we'll just ask a couple, we'll just do a couple more questions and then we'll take a break. I would like to ask you what aspects of the community and the economy here have contributed to your personal and professional achievements.

TS: Well I guess I would have to talk about the medical part of our community. And the environmental part. I guess those are the two. And certainly as a medical community, Wenatchee is just outstanding. Really outstanding. Both in talent and integrity and commitment. And it's just a really positive part of our community. Recreation and the environment kind of go together. And we've just done so many wonderful things and we met so many wonderful people through that- those two areas.

NW: In what ways do you feel you, your family, or your work have contributed to the community life and spirit of this place? And again, you've touched on quite a bit but if there's anything else you can add to that.

TS: That's a hard... that's so global. I don't know how to kind of address that. You mean my life and my family?

NW: You've talked about how you and Elliot were, you know, you got involved in the Complete the Loop Coalition and the Land Trust and so, you've made huge contributions you know, in both of those areas.

TS: I would say, well yes. I would say Elliot has been a committed environmentalist. I just sort of, it was part of my core being so I resonated with it. But he's the instigator. He's the proactive person. He's out there you know, putting his, walking his talk. And I'm more the support person that comes through and kind of carries things through, and does you know, plugs in where I think I can be effective.

NW: Well you did the big ask for...

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TS: (laughs) I did the big ask...

NW: That's not exactly sitting on the side lines.

TS: But I think... it's hard to say about in terms of family. Unfortunately both our kids are now living in Seattle but Grant was here and his family for six years and they were just great contributors to the community. And so many of the next generation are wonderful contributors - so many of his friends have stayed here that I've known since they were little and they're just outstanding. And their families... the guys and their wives. So it's nice to see that passing on. That leadership and that caring and that spirit moving to the next generation.

NW: Very nice. Well the last question is what do you see here in the Wenatchee Valley or in the whole region that gives you hope that we're moving towards a thriving future? What is inspiring the younger generation?

TS: Well I see the community less polarized. Much less polarized. I think almost everybody can envision or seize the assets that we have or that their building a community and making it a healthier place to live. And it's less contentious. I think both because of crowding and people moving here and there's a sprawl and we're just realizing how important it is to save open space and habitat and take care of those precious lands. And direct development in a healthy direction. I think we still have a ways to go but I think we've come a very long way and I'm very... I'm quite hopeful for this area where there's so many wonderful assets. Both the people and the land and the river and the mountains. There's just... and I think we're building on it.

NW: Okay, that's great.

TS: That's kind of global.

NW: No, that's good. Was there anything else that you wanted to add at this point?

TS: I don't think so. I think we can stop.

NW: Well thank you Tina. That was great.