

Gathering Our Voice

Interview with Larry Tobiska and Eliot Scull

Interviewer: Nancy Warner

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Transcribed by AmeriCorps volunteer Pearl Quigley on May 20, 2013

NW: So this is Nancy Warner and it is November the 9th, 2012, and I'm here in the IRIS office which actually sounds like we're in a trash can. (laughs) It's not really acoustically great. But I'm with Larry Tobiska and Eliot Scull and we're going to do an interview on the early, the beginnings, of what is now known as the Wenatchee Row and Paddle Club. Okay. So we can consider this kind of a scoping interview, 'cause as I listen to this we may need a little bit better audio as we go. Um, but let me ask just to get us started, when did you move to Wenatchee, Larry?

LT: Hmm, about 1979 or 1980, I don't know. One of my problems I have is that I don't remember things that have already happened --

NW: That's okay!

LT: -- very well. I'm more focused on the present and the future.

ES: It's called senility. (laughter)

NW: But you were a young lawyer.

LT: I was.

NW: A young lawyer that moved to Wenatchee and you were also a recreationist?

LT: Yeah. Yeah, we were coming from Twisp where we'd spent five years.

NW: And so, were you into canoeing at that point, or kayaking?

LT: No.

NW: Okay, all right.

LT: No, I wasn't.

NW: Okay, so, Eliot, you came to Wenatchee, you and Tina moved here in '75?

ES: 1975, right. Correct.

NW: '75, yeah. And um, of course you had an interest in the water when you moved here.

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ES: Yeah, I did. I rowed in college on an eight-oar shell and I did a lot of canoeing and some kayaking and I grew up on the water, so the water was a very important sort of recreational outlet for me. I love the water; I love water of all kinds. I grew up on the ocean, but I've always been fascinated by rivers, and particularly a river the significance of the Columbia.

NW: Yeah, okay. And we've talked in a couple previous interviews about some of the early history of getting the Loop Trail started. But today we just want to talk about the Row and Paddle Club, which is part of that whole larger story of the Loop Trail. So, as I said before we started the recorder, you guys teamed up, very early on, on what's now the Row and Paddle Club, so I wanted to kind of get at when you -- relatively speaking -- when you first got to know each other, and how you got to know each other.

LT: Yeah, and we're not entirely clear on when that occurred, but we think it happened through our common relationship to the Cascade Unitarian Fellowship, which got started about in 1982 or -3, somewhere in there. Maybe it was a little later than that, but, and so somewhere in the early '90's, probably, Eliot and I started collaborating on this rowing thing. I had bought a rather tubby rowing shell and Eliot took me out to teach me how to use it up at Lincoln Rock Park, and I just remember him standing on the dock and just laughing his head off at me. (laughter) He wasn't giving me any instruction, it was just, you know, "You are so ridiculous," as I was trying to get in and out of the boat without tipping it over. So...great instructor Eliot was.

ES: You need to know that Larry's recreated history. I was a wonderful instructor, very patient, you know, careful. Anyway, we won't go there. Um...

NW: Was it a single person rowing shell?

ES: Yeah, it was a Graham shell, wasn't it?

LT: Yes, uh huh.

ES: It was made by a guy in Trinidad, right down here by Quincy. Fellow named Steve Graham who for quite a few years built the recreational rowing shells and that was sort of in the early days of recreational rowing shells. It was a pretty viable company, I think, for awhile, and he would have races at Crescent Bar which is not what we're talking about here, but that sort of stimulated the rowing community in this area.

NW: Oh, that's interesting!

ES: We would row around Crescent Bar Island and at some point they had like ten or fifteen boats racing. So, I would agree. I think -- I call him LT, Larry Tobiska -- LT and I met at, I think we both are right, at the Unitarian Fellowship in the very early days of that. Larry was a

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leader in that. And then because of my rowing experience in the past, I forget how it came up, but I used to go down to the cove where the Rowing Club is now, and carry my little boat. 'Cause I had a Graham Shell. I can't remember how I got it -- didn't I?

LT: You had one? When did you get your 24?

ES: Oh, much later.

LT: Oh. Yeah, okay, so you had one, too.

ES: I had a Graham shell that I had sold, I can't remember the date, but anyway I had a Graham shell and I would carry it down to that cove and basically walk into the water and the mud down there. And uh, I was, I got to know the river by walking along the river, and that cove was the best place to launch a boat, 'cause you were out of the current.

LT: And that cove that you're referring to is the one at the foot of Ninth Street, which is now the site where we have our dock and our boathouse.

ES: Exactly.

NW: So you were talking earlier, Larry, about your memories of that site. Could you describe what it looked like then?

LT: Well, it didn't have any improvements at all, and as I was exploring the river after I got comfortable in this Graham shell I would go up along that shoreline and come to that little cove and it was a place of respite because it has kind of an eddy, it's sort of sheltered in there, and kind of pretty, you know, with the trees and everything. And there was old barn building in there and I went in there, and I thought "Geez, this'd be really neat. I wonder if we could possibly get a hold of that barn somehow," and I, Eliot and I don't remember who said what to whom when in there, but we talked about it and collaborated in then approaching the powers that were controlling the waterfront at that time. But to answer your question, it was kind of almost a pastoral lovely quiet little lagoon-like place that seemed like a good place to put a dock and watch rowing boats.

NW: So who owned the property then? Did you know?

LT: The PUD owned it, but I believe the City Parks Department had responsibility for it at that moment in time and this brings us back to my failed memory, but the moment in time must have been early in the 1990's.

ES: Yeah, and before that John Jacobsen owned it and Rich Congdon lived there, and John had a double, was it a pair or a double? I can't remember. He had a rowing shell down there and he

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actually kept it in the barn. So the barn even before it belonged to the city or the PUD or any public agency, it actually was being used a little bit as a boat house, and I think he just carried – I remember I rowed in his shell. In fact, we used it at Crescent Bar once. It was an old Pollock fiberglass shell. It weighed about 4,000 pounds and it had a seat for a coxswain in it.

LT: Ah, geez, for a double?

ES: For a double! I don't want to get too far off this but when Howie Walls and I raced at Crescent Bar with his double we took his daughter as the coxswain who was about seven at the time. And then we ran onto the sandbar at the edge of Crescent Bar and we were yelling at Amy so it was quite a traumatic experience for this sweet little girl.

LT: That's hilarious.

ES: Anyway. We won the race, anyway.

LT: You won it?

ES: The competition wasn't too tough.

NW: So you're talking about Dr. Jacobsen had a rowing shell in that barn?

ES: Yes. John Jacobsen was an anesthesiologist at the hospital.

NW: Yes, and he does not live in the area anymore and did he in fact pass away, or is he still--?

ES: No, he's still very much alive. He moved to Palm Springs where, I think he's been there for twenty years now. But, he's still practicing part time. He's a few years older than I am.

NW: Okay, all right. So a little bit more on what the property looked like. You talked about the fishpond?

LT: Oh well yes, there was still this house; I remember it was a white house kind of near where the restroom is now. It wasn't there, it was kind of out more where the trail is on that hill and then there was also a big concrete wading pool and I guess it was a fishpond. It wasn't being used, full of water at that time, it was empty and it just gathered debris. And then there was the old, what we're calling the barn. I don't think it ever was a barn, I think it was a machine shed. But it was kind of dilapidated and run down there as well.

NW: Okay. So you had the barn, you both had used the cove area. It was this nice quiet little stretch and then you know Dr. Jacobsen and knew that he was already using that barn, so then what was the next sequence of events?

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ES: Well, I think, and again, my memory isn't any better than Larry's, but at some point in there, Larry and I, the two of us, said we needed to see if we could somehow preserve this structure which we called the barn. So I forget the sequence. My recollection is we went to the PUD, but I think you're right in that we went to the city council first or the Wenatchee Parks Board. I think it was the Parks Board first, because they owned the property and basically went to them and said, you know, "We're Larry Tobiska and Eliot Scull and we represent the Wenatchee Rowing Club. And they looked at us saying, you know, "Where'd you come from?"

LT: And, "What is that?"

ES: "What is that?" And we said, "Oh, it's a rowing club and the cove is perfect and this building would be perfect." And, I forget exactly what they said. LT, can you remember?

LT: Well, they wondered were we really a club and at that time I think I described us as an unincorporated non-profit association, which sounds really cool except that it doesn't mean anything. It was a small group of people who were collaborating for a non-profit purpose, you know. And that was true. I think we'd had a gathering and I have a list of people who attended but it was like five to ten people that showed up and sort of an organizational meeting and so we could say "Yeah, we've got a group." And I think maybe we even had a hierarchic leadership established at that point.

ES: I don't remember it being that well-organized. But, maybe it was. You know, only lawyers can think of names for situations like that. And maybe it was that organized. I just remember really the two of us and some friends that had sort of talked about this. Anyway, we said we were the Wenatchee Rowing Club, and they said "Oh wonderful!" after my friend here convinced them it was a bona fide organization.

LT: Maybe we had our organizational meeting after what you're describing. I don't remember for sure, either.

ES: Yeah, I don't either.

NW: So, they must have been impressed, because didn't things go your way?

ES: They did, they did.

NW: So, talk about that.

LT: So it was partly because we knew a couple people on the City Parks board. Namely, Eliot's wife Tina and her good friend Barb Hume and they liked our idea and.

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ES: The others did too. It wasn't just nepotism.

LT: I'm sure that's true. It was a good idea. It was a great idea. I mean, there you've got the waterfront, and what better use to make of it than form a group that would promote public access through non-motorized, no impact, really, use of the waterfront. And that's what we set out to do. We wanted to open it up and make it available to lots of people.

ES: This coincided with the whole growing consciousness of the community in terms of turning back to the river. I mean this is when the Walla Walla Point Park was first being planned, and the community was realizing the value of the river and the riverfront as a really positive amenity to the community. So, our discussion with the Parks Board and with the PUD and the city council sort of dove-tailed perfectly with what was happening in the larger conception of how to approach the river.

NW: Was Chuck Largent the head of the Parks Department then?

ES: Yeah, I think he was, wasn't he?

LT: I believe so.

ES: Yeah.

NW: Okay.

ES: And he was quite, he was sympathetic.

LT: Yeah, he was good.

ES: In fact he was enthusiastic. Yeah, he was great.

NW: So then you walked out with approval, or, not exactly approval? How did that go from an idea to—

LT: Well, they gave us use of the building, I guess.

ES: See I remember... Okay, I remember that coming from PUD.

LT: Well, eventually, yeah. See, I don't know. Did we have our agreement with the city parks board? I don't recall that. Eventually we certainly did with the PUD and then it may have been just sort of an assignment of that agreement over to the PUD. Because it was not long after that, a year or so, that the PUD assumed much greater, maybe complete responsibility for that area. And, but we had already made this arrangement with the city and they honored it.

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ES: As I said earlier, I remember Larry and I going before the PUD commission, and basically saying the same thing again, that we represent the Rowing Club and I think maybe we did have a few members at the point, but I'll be the first to admit that it was a very embryotic organization. And the PUD again, recognized the value, I think, of having a facility like that there and our whole purpose at that point was to get them not to tear the barn down. That was the original plan, and the design of Walla Walla Point Park.

NW: So, did you know it as the Lindstrom barn then? Did you guys refer to it by that name?

ES: No. I think I knew it was referred to as the Lindstrom barn.

LT: I didn't hear that name until just a few years ago when they put up that sign and had that ceremony and the name Lindstrom came into play. I didn't know that name.

ES: I didn't know any of the real history prior to the John Jacobsen/Rich Congdon part of it. I wasn't aware of anything prior to that.

NW: Yeah, okay. So then once you went before the Parks Board and the PUD commission and you had approval to use it, then you guys used it for your boats and you had to lock them up in there and...?

LT: Well, we started making some changes on the building. I remember I wrote a letter to interested people, to Eliot in particular, and others, saying – or maybe it was – golly! I'm sorry, I don't know to whom I sent that, but the content was the interesting thing because it said, "Well, we've reviewed the situation," (and I think you and I had reviewed the situation) "and it looks like we can store up to maybe fifteen, sixteen, seventeen boats in there, if we work it right." You know? Which is just kind of a joke now, because we've got seventy-five or eighty boats in there. So we set out to make use of it, and we just stored boats I think mostly in the middle level. There are three levels and maybe some in the basement. But the basement had a problem. It needed another door arrangement.

ES: At that point, we had the help of some wonderful handy-men, and Bob Derry was a major player in that.

NW: Bob Derry?

ES: Bob Derry, from East Wenatchee. You know, "Bob the Burner", who was a great iron man at Ridge to River and he's still alive, and still active.

LT: Yeah, he has the berth underneath mine at the boathouse, and he signed out today to go paddle, and he—

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ES: Well into his eighties.

NW: Oh, that's great!

ES: Anyway, as I remember what happened, we did start to talk about that and then we realized we needed a dock of some kind -- and I love thinking about this now with all the restrictions and the permits and the regulations you have to go through. I don't remember getting any permit. Do you remember getting a permit?

LT: No.

ES: Okay, I don't either. Anyway, a group of us, um, Len Pugsley and a lot of other people, and right now I can't remember all their names. Bob Derry and Len Pugsley and Larry and I and Tom File, and at this point it was becoming a real club, in a sense, in a very loosely organized way. And Len Pugsley donated some of his property in East Wenatchee, and we started building this dock on a trailer, on an orchard trailer, and basically the dock was made out of 4 by 4's and 2 by 4's and some flotation, Styrofoam for flotation. And I won't draw this out too much, but when I look back on it, it really was a wonderful effort. And then, not me, but some of these guys knew what they were doing. I was just sort of helping out, and when we finished the dock, we took Glenn, or Len took his tractor and backed down the road that goes down to the river on Len Pugsley's property over there by Twenty-third, I think, in East Wenatchee. And we backed it with this ramp with the tractor and this big heavy trailer, and almost lost the tractor in the river, but we got the dock off the trailer, floated it just in time. Pulled the tractor back up and then Tom File put an outboard motor on the back of this dock, a square dock, okay? And the river's flowing, so a group of us -- at that point I had my kayak, I remember we had about four kayakers paddling along with the dock. I'm not sure what we would have done, but we were hustling the dock, and so we tried to plan the time of day when there was the least current. So we started to cross over like a 24-horse motor, from Bob [sic] File's boats and motors, and we headed way up river as much as we could, and then ferried across the river and barely made it to the shore by the time we got to the cove. Otherwise, we would have ended up down at Rock Island Dam. But anyway, we got there, and I can't remember who built a ramp there --

LT: Well, gee, that was a club project, uh, and yeah, built a ramp, and tethered the dock to ramp, and this dock was well inside the cove from where the present dock is. Well inside, and in fact when the water, you know, when the level of the river went down, it ended up standing high and dry in the mud, so that even if you could bring your boat down to the dock, down the ramp and onto the dock, you might have to wait out in the mud for awhile to get to the water. And my poor daughters have some stories about how I persuaded them to do that. Freezing cold weather, mud, and they just wondered why in the world they'd ever... (laughter) So that dock lasted for quite a number of years. It wasn't replaced until 2006. I was looking back at our dock permit for the new dock, and I think it was in 2006.

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ES: No, the dock lasted a long time –

LT: 2004, maybe.

ES: It actually worked remarkably well considering its origins.

NW: Right.

ES: And luckily there were some people who really knew how to build things, and it worked fine, but as Larry said, when the river went down, you often had to put your boat in the mud and then walk it across the mud for...

LT: I think it was 2004, maybe, when the new dock –

ES: Was it?

NW: Well, we moved here in 2000, and we launched off of that dock a few times.

ES: The old dock.

NW: Yeah. And boy, I think it was more like 2006 or -7 that the new one came in.

LT: Yeah. “Cause it’s not really all that old.

ES: It isn’t, no.

NW: And um, I didn’t know how you got it there. That’s a great story, man. Good thing it wasn’t windy. I mean...

ES: No. There was a lot of nervousness ‘cause this motor was not strong enough to push this very heavy, square object against the current. If we’d once gotten it below the cove it would have been quite a challenge.

NW: So it seems to me like you guys had a few interested people. There was momentum, this rowing club down in Trinidad, and then the sort of changing complexion of the riverfront and everything. Um, it would be really helpful to not play with those papers.

LT: Oh, sorry.

NW: So having the building and access to the building seems like it must’ve really brought people together.

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ES: It did.

NW: So could you talk about that a little bit, 'cause that's an important part of the Row and Paddle Club.

ES: Sure. I think, as I said earlier before the interview, that Larry's been a major player in taking the club to a very larger, higher level. But, you know, from the very beginning it became a focus for people who were interested in water recreation and staying in shape, and it evolved from – it originally was a few rowing shells, and then people started bringing their kayaks and their canoes and then as the whole sport has evolved into these far more high performance surf-skis and racing kayaks and this sort of thing. But from the very beginning there was a core of maybe ten or twenty people and then Larry and other folks began to make it much more of an organization, and it became a non-profit and with articles of incorporation, and Larry should be telling this, but from my perspective it to a whole higher level of organization, and the word got out in the community and they had a treasurer, and people could... One of the things that made it possible was because we had the barn and people could keep their boats in there, we had a source of revenue, which we charged rent for having the boats in there. And that really made it into much more of a viable organization, because it had a budget.

NW: Yeah. That's a good thing. So you had a service you could offer.

LT: Right. And our focus and philosophy was to make it so that the membership fees and rental fees were not really a barrier for most people for usage. It was supposed to be real user-friendly so that there was no possibility that it could be regarded as an exclusive club. And so it was \$25 a year for membership for a long time and I think our storage fee is \$50 a year or something. That's now evolved to where I think it's \$75 per year for single membership but \$100 for family and then \$85 per boat per year to store and so it's still pretty low. You can pay that per month to be a member of a club in the Seattle area. But it was in I think 1994 that we officially incorporated, and I made up the papers for that and so forth, and we got ourselves incorporated. We didn't become a non-profit organization though until later, in the 2000's, under the tax code and all that, but we officially incorporated and set up our roster of officers and directors and all the jazz in the '90's, and then just proceeded to build and improve. Bob Derry and others proved to be really important in making improvements. I mean, first thing we did, we put a new roof on the barn building as a major improvement, and then later we became aware that people were concerned that the building might fall down, because it wasn't very strong, and we were putting more and more weight and boats and stuff into it. And so we had a civil engineering study done, and built some beams to reinforce it in different ways, and so it's really, I think, very solid and very safe now, structurally sound.

NW: So, when did you actually take title to the building, or do you have title to the building?

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LT: Oh, we don't have title. We have a lease arrangement with the PUD for a dollar a year plus maintenance for that building, and that's what we've always had for that building, and as you know we also have an annex building now, the metal building, and that's an entirely different story and a different arrangement.

NW: Yeah, there's a lot going on recently. Well, so you had this lease agreement, then, with the PUD, and then would you raise money to like, repair the roof and so on? Did you do fundraisers, ever?

LT: Well, no, we had built up a certain amount of money from our dues, and we've been pretty conservative, lived within our means the entire way, you know.

ES: With a lot of volunteer work.

LT: That's right.

ES: All the building and construction work there was all done by volunteers with donated material.

LT: Yeah. So we haven't had big expenses.

NW: Yeah. Okay. All right. So when we moved here in 2000, you and others introduced us to the boat club and I remember thinking, "Oh, of course we're gonna join." We were gonna get a canoe and everything. But the boat, the barn was so full you couldn't store another boat in there. That's what I remember, that being an issue, which is now alleviated by the annex. So you can take more and more members now.

LT: Yes.

NW: And yeah, so how many boats did you say you could get in there at the height of the –

LT: Well, it's not precise, but I think it's somewhere around 75 to 80 boats that we have stored in there now.

ES: They're really, they're really packed in there. They're all nested on top of – it's still much too crowded. So that, you know, if your boat is on the inside you have to take another boat out to get at it and stuff like so... We're, I think, Larry and crew are trying to accommodate as many people as possible. The annex has helped, helped a lot, but it's still pretty crowded. And the program or the interest keeps growing and growing in four-oared shells and you know, suite-rowing and so on, and with that kind of growth, the annex is going to have to be used more fully as well.

NW: Mmmhmm, yeah, I know it's – I've gone with Sharon Lunz a couple times and it's a bit of

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a jigsaw puzzle to get the boat out that you want. It's a little bit like Pick-Up Sticks.

LT: At the barn?

NW: At the barn. Yeah. And so...

ES: So, it's been a huge success. I mean, frankly, if Larry and I – I don't think I ever envisioned it being this big a part of the community, and as I said earlier, Larry's been a big player in that. I mean, there are programs with the schools, and of course the whole, again, as I said earlier, the community has focused back on the river, which has just been a wonderful thing for all kinds of reasons. And the Rowing Club's been a big part of that, frankly.

LT: You know, Nancy, if I may say, um, this community has such a priceless asset in that river, and it's a shame if people who live here don't experience it, because your sense of what this place is, is so much greater, so different, if you not only go to the mountains, but you also go to the river, and spend time, you know. Um, you know that, and certainly Eliot knows that, but I mean, that's so true, and our purpose has been to try to open that up to people.

NW: Well, you have a lot to feel good about, because now with this David Thompson program and everything, I mean, all those kids get to go in the river that never would have had access to it. Plus, you know, it seems like you met your goal of having the boat club be something affordable that a lot of – that wasn't an exclusive... I mean, there's nothing exclusive-feeling about that barn.

ES: No, right. That's for sure. No. It's a real ghetto. (laughter)

NW: It's not a ghetto! It's cool. It's cool, but it's not...

LT: It's funky.

NW: Yeah, it has that funk about it. It has funk about it. And it has this interesting story. I mean, I think it's really, really cool that, that Jacobsen stored boats in there. Because the guy who built it stored mining equipment in there.

ES: Did he?

NW: Yeah.

ES: Oh geez, see I didn't know that. That's great.

NW: And he was one of these guys that had a finger in a whole lot of different pies. Lindstrom.

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And, um, mining being one of them. So that tradition of keeping boats in that barn is going back a while. So one thing I talked to Jim Blackburn about, since he and Cal, his brother, spent their high school years living in that place, and I asked him about if they went boating or anything, and thinking, because of this nice little cove and everything, and surely they'd be out there playing in the water. And he said they really didn't, because they had access to Tumwater, they had that place their family owned up there, so they'd go boating up there. So they had other interests and pursuits down here. It wasn't the river.

ES: People were scared of the river. I mean, it was cold, it was swift, even with the dams, it was cold and swift. It was an unfriendly river in the sense of human recreational use, you know, so...

NW: So another interesting thing about the barn is the creek that comes out there, which I believe is a meadow creek that flows through our backyard. It comes out of Canyon Number 1, I think.

ES: Oh, does it? It's the same creek?

NW: I think so. I've never really traced it...

LT: I think it is, too.

NW: So I asked an old guy in my neighborhood what that creek was called and he said, "Oh, they called it Canyon Number 1." He didn't have a name for it. Meadow Creek, that's what's on the plats. Anyway, that creek goes down by what's now Hastings and down 9th Street, and I asked Jim about it, and he said it was irrigation overflow then. And then, so, but there wasn't an orchard on the Lindstrom place. On both sides it was orchard, but that particular place that the creek flowed through to get into the river was never really farmed. That's what he told me. And I just thought that was interesting. And he talked about how the bank of the river there – and you guys may have experienced this when you were putting the dock in – was like full of fossils. There was a shelf there that was just full of fossils.

ES: Fossils!

LT: We didn't encounter that. We've done some digging 'cause we've been struggling to keep that trail maintained and we dug a big hole a couple years ago to fortify it. Um. Didn't come across any fossils that I'm aware of.

NW: Might be covered up with sediment or something by now, I don't know.

LT: Yeah, the PUD shoved a lot of dirt around in there.

ES: Yeah, it may be those may have been buried. I wonder, was there a midden there? An Indian midden at all? I don't remember any shells or...

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NW: He didn't talk about that. No, it was more like, it was more like shale, almost.

ES: Yeah, well of course, my memory of the river when we moved here, and you've heard me say this before, was, it was full of junk. I mean, huge pieces of concrete and re-bar, and the old wrecked boats that they used to build the dams, these sort of big, open barges. They were all lying along the river there. And of course the paddle up to the confluence, you can still see there are still some pieces of cement and things like that along the river bank. And you could hardly get to the river. In fact, one of the places you could was that cove, because it was the Lindstrom property, and didn't have all this stuff stored all over – or left, dumped there, frankly. So the river was very, very difficult to access until the park development. You literally had to crawl over pieces of re-bar and concrete –

LT: Yeah, there's still some really heavy duty junk up in that estuary, you know.

ES: Yes there is.

LT: And I don't know how you'd ever get that out.

NW: Oh yeah, the confluence, you mean?

LT: Yeah, just down from there.

ES: And of course, the east side of the river, and this is off the subject, but the east side of the river had just hundreds of cars as rip-rap below the banks of the river, just shoved over the bank, and that was really only cleaned up since the Loup Trail was built.

LT: What a change in values. (laughter)

ES: The river was scary, you know, the community had its back to the river. It was....

NW: Yeah, and then Jim that the railroad tracks, too, were another part of the barrier. And...

LT: Yeah, that makes sense.

NW: But by the time you got here in the '90's nobody was really living at the Lindstrom place after Jacobsen and Rich had left?

ES: Actually, when we got here, Rich Congdon still lived there.

NW: Oh, okay.

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ES: In fact, I think he lived there until the city took it over. You remember about that, LT?

LT: I know that that was true, but I don't know what timing.

ES: I don't either. But he – when I was carrying my boat down to the cove, Rich still lived there. It was John Jacobsen's property and Rich, I think, rented from him. But they were very friendly to, you know, we were all sort of rowers, so we, but, I don't remember where the exact property boundary was, but Rich, I remember Rich Congdon living in the house. Just at the very end of his time there.

NW: So do you have any photos of building the dock?

LT: Yeah, I have a scrapbook and photos of the dock that we actually, not of the building of it, but of that dock, and of the area with that dock.

ES: I think I might have some. I think I also have pictures of trying to get it across the river.

NW: Oh, that would be great!

ES: I think, at least I have a very strong image in my head of two or three kayaks around the raft and maybe, may have been a picture someone else took, 'cause I was in one of the kayaks, but I can remember... (laughter)

NW: The entourage!

ES: Yeah, right. A little, sort of, entourage, exactly. I'll look for them. Boy, they're way back in my slide collection.

NW: Oh, okay, so slides. We can scan them. Because that might be nice to have on the listening posts on pictures of the dock.

ES: This was way pre-digital, so it would be a slide.

NW: Okay, all right, yeah. Well, I think that's probably good for, like, the early history, and so I think I'll shut it off unless there's something else that...

LT: I can't --- hmmm. Let's see.

ES: I just, you know, I guess one thing I'd like to say is, you know, I'm not that active in the rowing club anymore, 'cause of, for a lot of reasons. I kind of wish I was, but – Larry gets a lot of credit for just doing wonders in terms of building the club up and making the whole thing much higher profile for the community. And a lot of other people also: Skip Johnson, Bob

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Derry, a whole bunch of folks that have given a lot of time and effort to the whole thing becoming what it is, and it's really a wonderful community asset.

NW: It is, and I'm happy to start learning more about it, you know. And be involved through this listening post project.

LT: Yeah, it, you know, it's one of those things that I just devoted myself to, really, from the beginning til now, and plan to continue doing so as long as I can...can! Because I like it, and I value it so much. Um, I'm trying to think of any other particular tidbits that might be of interest to you.

NW: Well, you might just tell me why it is so important to you. I mean, when you moved here you weren't really into the water; now you're way into the water –

LT: Well, I always loved water, like Eliot. I'd done sailing, not to the extent that he did, and does, but I loved sailing and I loved water, but I hadn't done this kind of thing. And I love human-powered activities, you know, and so it combined two things that I loved, and it just was a natural fit. It just seemed like a wonderful way to spend time and to be out there. It's a nice thing that doesn't hurt your body. I mean you can do it; it's a smooth, non-impactive sort of activity. And I, for better or worse, I've had a tendency to proselytize about things that I personally love to do with other people and form clubs around them. And so the Row and Paddle Club is one of those.

NW: So you started the Unitarian Fellowship, too? You were part of that, too?

LT: Yeah.

NW: I didn't know that. That's interesting.

ES: He's also part of the MVSTA founding.

NW: Oh, okay, I can believe that, since you lived up there in Twisp. Okay, well that's all right. That's good that good things happened!

LT: Oh, that's another story.

ES: It's really good.

NW: So that's a life-long sport, too, I mean – rowing, paddling.

ES: Rowing is a wonderful, full-body work-out. I mean, it's probably second only to cross-country skiing. It uses a whole lot of muscle groups, and it's very aerobic if you're doing it full-

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out, and it's a great form of exercise, as Larry says, it's very low-impact, so you could do it at an advanced age, with luck.

NW: So there's a lot of camaraderie among the people in the boat club, is what I've always seen.

LT: Yeah, it's a good group. We've had very little conflict, almost none, and, you know, there's some discussion about what our goals ought to be and that sort of thing and now the group has evolved to other levels and continues to do so and that's good and that's bad, you know, I mean, you always have nostalgia for the simpler times, but it's serving a much broader number of people in the community and introducing them to the river and that's what it's about, so that's good.

NW: Yeah. Good. So, of this early history, I guess this is a question for both of you, in the maybe wrapping up a little bit, but: is there one thing about that early history that you feel particularly proud about as providing this foundation for everything going forward?

LT: Well, I think Eliot and I both feel proud about the fact that we collaborated and made it happen. And I feel proud about doing the formal organization and then carrying it on.

ES: Nancy, I think I'm proud of being a small part of helping the community turn back to the river and realize the value of the river. And, as you know, the Rowing Club was a significant aspect of that, but also the Loup Trail, they're involved in that. And I would just echo what Larry said, when you're on the river, it gives you an incredibly different view of this area and community. It is a remarkably peaceful experience for a lot of the year. Maybe not with the jet-skis in the summer, but, you know, for so much of the year it can be really sort of almost a transcendent experience, particularly at twilight and dawn and stuff. It's a magic experience to be out there. And there's more wildlife than you realize, but I'm just proud of the part I played in trying to help the community become more conscious of the river and value it more and take better care of it.

LT: Nancy, it's big. The river is big, and you go out there and you may not see anyone else. It's amazing what a solo or individual experience you can still have out there most times of the day. There are times when it gets busy in the summer and it's not that way at all, but even then, early in the mornings, it's that way. So, it's there to be enjoyed.

ES: It's almost there's a sense of a quasi-wilderness, in places. You get there in the sloughs around the confluence and stuff and you're there with the herons and the ducks and the eagles and the beavers and the -- all the other parts of the natural world, and it's really magic.

LT: Yeah. And when the deer are moving across the Wenatchee, I mean you can go -- I've had the experience of going up the Wenatchee and having to be careful that you don't run into deer

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that are wading across the Wenatchee as you're going. It's pretty – pretty remarkable.

NW: That's cool. It's a cool image.

ES: It is.

NW: Yeah. It is everything you say, I mean it is a place where you see people out there – it's probably one of you guys – in a shell, and I mean they're just like a little speck. They're just a little speck, and they're just slicing through, slicing through, yeah.

ES: The other fun thing that people sometimes do in certain river conditions, you can actually play salmon and row or paddle up the Wenatchee River at certain river levels of the Columbia and balanced between the Wenatchee and the Columbia you can get past that first riffle which is at the first bend above the railroad bridge and then you can actually paddle upriver for another mile or so, quite far up, but by playing the eddies and the shore eddies and so on you can actually get quite far up, almost to, well maybe not to Sleep Hollow Bridge, not that far, but you can get quite a way up the river.

LT: Yeah. If you can get past that – you call it the first riffle. It can be a real daunting rapid, just up above the Pipeline Bridge.

ES: Yeah, Pipeline.

NW: So how do guys share all this information in the boat club about paddling, good paddling routes and tips like that? Is it just sort of informally as you're taking boats in and out of the barn?

LT: Yeah. There's no... Well, we've got a website now. And there's a blog on it, and I've been doing some writing, little articles right there, actually, about rowing things, but it's – mostly it's just word of mouth. People talking to one another. And we have coaches. There are people designated to help others who are new to the club, or new to an activity, get to be safe and comfortable with it.

NW: That's great!

LT: So, we do that all the time.

NW: Is that new? Is that kind of a new thing?

LT: No, no. That's been there for a long time.

ES: And you have races.

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LT: Well, I mean, not formal. We have a few organized activities that one of my favorites is what we call the Guano Rocks Regatta up at Lincoln Rocks, which is about a 6-7 mile thing that goes up and around these rocks that we've labeled the Guano Rocks and back down, round trip. And that's fun.

NW: Is that Memorial Weekend or around in there?

LT: It's about mid-September.

NW: Oh, okay. All right. Well, that coaching thing is neat. And then, of course, the safety issues, I mean that's part of what we think we can do at the listening posts, is provide little updates. People can check the water right before they get in the water. And that'd be really useful.

LT: Check the water before they get in.

NW: I mean, check the reports. It could be a recorded message about the safety conditions that people could check through the listening posts on their phone.

LT: Where would that information come from?

NW: You.

LT: Oh!

NW: It's another part of your job description!

ES: So we're not sure of the accuracy.

LT: Yeah, yeah right.

LT: Well, it's all right. It's cool.

(laughter)

NW: Okay, well, thank you guys.

LT: Sure, thank you.

ES: It was fun.

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