

# White Grass Heritage Project

## “Sharing the Legacy”

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INTERVIEWEE: Pam Holtman

INTERVIEWER: Roger Butterbaugh

LOCATION: White Grass Dude Ranch, Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming

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- B: The date is August 29th, 2006. My name is Roger Butterbaugh. I am the caretaker at the White Grass Dude Ranch and also the coordinator of the White Grass Heritage Project, the latter of which is focused upon collecting relevant information, oral histories, artifacts, historical photos related to the White Grass Ranch which started back in the early 1900s, 1913 to be exact. And also, in addition to collecting information about the Ranch as it operated as a dude ranch, we are also collecting information from 1985 when the Ranch actually ended with the death of Frank Galey and those happenings since that time, from '85 forward, at which point the Ranch, initially, went into disrepair and then has been rehabilitated. And actually, tomorrow, August 30<sup>th</sup> 2016, we will be doing a ribbon cutting to commemorate the rehabilitation of the Ranch here. I'm sitting with Pam Holtman, who was at the time of the early 2000s - 2001 to 2006 - Park Historian here at Grand Teton Park. During the time that Pam was here, she was directly involved in the formulation of what was to become the Western Center for Historic Preservation, which at that time was a part of the Grand Teton Park and the Western Center was given the charge of establishing a training center; but more basic to that, rehabilitating the White Grass Ranch so it could be used as a training center. So, my welcome to you, Pam.

H: Thank you.

B: Pleasure to be with you.

H: You, as well.

B: We've talked many times on the phone [H: Yes.] and it's always been fun to hear you talk about some of those earlier days in the formation of the Western Center and the working up of the creation of the training center. So, I would like to begin with a little bit about your background, in terms of, you've been in the Park system a long time, still are, and would be interested in where you came from and how you actually ended up in the Park system; what your background is.

H: Oh yeah. And if I, may I clarify one thing real quick?

B: Please.

H: That today is August 29<sup>th</sup> 2016.

B: Thank you.

H: Yes, because I'm pretty sure...

B: I did make that mistake.

H: Yeah, I think you said 2006. Which I understand why you did, but it is, 2016.

B: Thank you.

H: Yes.

B: Thank you. Correct me anytime.

H: Yeah, that's the park historian in me coming out. (laughs)

B: Please, please, please.

H: [Time Stamp 3:10] I have a fun background as to how I came to the (National) Park Service. I was working, I actually used to work in the financial world in Denver, Colorado in the late 1990s and I started to take graduate level history classes at the University of Colorado at Denver and history's been a passion of mine since I was a kid and I thought, You know, I don't want to work in the financial world long term, but I would like to see and explore more of what may, maybe I could do with history. So, I took the first ever class offered by professor Tom Noel at University of Colorado at Denver called National Parks History. And I thought, because I've had a passion for national parks since I was a kid; we'd go on vacations and visit the parks, when I was a youth and growing up in the Denver metro area. We'd go to Rocky Mountain National Park often, and I distinctly remember coming to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks when I was a kid with my parents, sister, and my mom's parents, so my grandparents, and we had a great time. And, so I took this class, National Parks History class, and the professor actually had most of the classes taught by the Cultural Resource, the Natural Park Service Cultural Resource folks (staff) out of the Intermountain Regional Office in Lakewood, Colorado. So they'd come and you know, we'd hear from an archaeologist one evening - because this was an evening class - or a historian, or a historic building person, a historical architect, so I learned - Wow, I could actually do something with history with the National Park Service. So I ended up, one of the gentlemen who taught was Greg Kendrick and I just approached him afterwards to see what, you know, what could I do, how could I get on board, volunteer, something, just get my foot in the door. I ended up volunteering briefly for him. And, then he ended up, he knew that up here at Grand Teton National Park - so this is, it must have been 1999 that I took the class. I started working as a volunteer for the Park Service in 2000 and, yeah, I think - I'm trying to remember - I think I got hired on as a student contractor by the National Park Service in Lakewood, Colorado working for Greg Kendrick doing different things. Actually, I worked for multiple people there but - Sayre Hutchison was another one, Pat O'Brien - and doing different things, updating the List of Classified Structures database for Yellowstone. And, then it came to the point where Greg Kendrick, who, you know, being a regional office cultural resource person, historian, historic building guy, he knew that there was a need for someone to do a condition assessment of the White Grass Ranch. And he said, "Well, Pam, do you want to do that? This would be a summer project (summer of 2001). You just go up there, you know, work with the park, find you park housing and, and there you are, you just do the condition assessments and come back down to Denver and keep going to grad school." Well, I came up here summer of 2001. That was - yeah, June of 2001 - to do a condition assessment of White Grass and then I didn't leave [both laugh] until May 2006. And ended up getting on to this park via a student appointment - hiring, you know, appointment - while I continued to go to grad school and work on my masters in history, in public history. And, yeah, I just, I kept working here. Greg Kendrick kind of went on and did other things. He didn't end up continuing to be associated with the park doing cultural resource/historic preservation stuff. And, I was grateful because I was only on two different student appointments and then by 2003, I was hired on permanently. And, there are many people in the Park Service who have to go through seasonal appointment [B: Yeah, Yeah, yeah.] after seasonal appointment. And I didn't.

B: Ah, good for you. Good for you.

H: Yeah, so that's how I got here.

B: So, and you're still working for the park system as....

H: [TS: 7:53] Correct. Yeah, so I am working for what we refer to as the Park Planning and Special Studies Office - in Washington, DC is where it's located, in the main National Park Service building outside of the Main Interior Building. And, so it's a national program. My title is program analyst, but planner is a better, I guess better term as far as what I do. I work out of my home in Fruita, Colorado, so I'm not in an office in Washington, DC, but I have a wonderful boss who lets me telework from home. And it's been, I've been doing that since 2012. Yeah, March of 2012, Yeah, so still enjoying working for the Park Service.

B: I should say you're up here with family at this time as a vacation, but also going to be here tomorrow for the ribbon cutting.

H: That's right. I didn't want to miss it.

B: Welcome back [H: Yeah, thanks.] to a place you have an intimate involvement, and I started to say, tremendous impact on what, actually, this place has become. So I'm curious, going back to your statement about your first involvement with White Grass, that being a condition assessment, take us through that process because that is really where it began? Or well, maybe [H: Yeah.] half a question before that is: why would anybody want a condition assessment of White Grass in 2001?

H: [TS: 9:31] Yeah, I was trying to remember that this morning. [both laugh] As a matter of fact, I thought, now why were we doing that? It didn't, the, as far as I remember, I, the birth of the idea of turning White Grass Ranch into a Western Center for Historic Preservation did not come in the summer of 2001. I think the idea was there was concern potentially by folks in the region, you know, cultural resource folks in the regional office in Lakewood, Colorado, as well as the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, and potentially locals here in the Jackson Hole area, about the condition of White Grass and concern that, oh, is White Grass going to turn into another Bar BC Dude Ranch, in which, it's just left to go to ruin. So, I think the idea, really, behind having a condition assessment done of these buildings was just to see, well what condition are they really in? Are they as deteriorated as the Bar BC buildings? Or are they in better condition? So, and I wasn't the only one - there were, I believe there were two other students who helped do those - and honestly, once we were done with that project it didn't go anywhere. I think the information was gathered, the idea was noted - okay, this is the

condition of White Grass, we'll let the Superintendent know. And, at that time, trying to think, 2001, I think Jack, I'm trying to remember when Jack Neckels left, I know he had been the Superintendent here briefly when I was just coming on board to this park. And then he left. And I do believe the next Superintendent was Steve Martin.

B: Right.

H: Yeah.

B: Right. I think that was 2003 that he came on board, Steve Martin. And it would have been Neckels that would have preceded him. Cause the other Jack, (Superintendent) Jack Stark was around in '85 when Frank Galey actually died.

H: Yeah. So, yeah, the great meeting that took place, that actually said, Hey, we want to save White Grass Ranch: it wasn't because I did a condition assessment in 2001. It came later. So, I want to say that must have been 2003 that we had that meeting, I believe.

H: Yeah, this was a huge deal. So this was after Steve Martin had come on board as a Superintendent of Grand Teton National Park.

B: [TS 12:11] And I should say - you help me with this - that his coming represented a significant change in the park, in the Grand Teton Park; meaning that superintendents before were not particularly interested in cultural resources and when Steve Martin came on, he brought a fresh approach to all that: am I saying that correctly?

H: Yeah. That is definitely correct. He, and I think that part of it was his wife, Cyd Martin, was a – well, they're retired now- but she was a Park Service employee at that time too. And she was a cultural anthropologist. So she got her PhD, she did her dissertation on the different cultures up in Alaska, if I recall. So, in other words, he is married to a cultural resource specialist. So his awareness of preserving and protecting cultural resources probably was more heightened as a result of having a wife who did that as a living. And so, any way, he came on board.

H: [TS 13:26 ] OK, so let me back this up and say it again, so when Steve Martin came on board to Grand Teton National Park in 2003, yes, it was a change in attitude towards historic buildings. Here's the other fun fact is: myself and another park employee who was a cultural resource person, Christine Landrum who was the Park Curator; there wasn't enough office space for us up here in the park. So, we ended up, the park ended up renting or leasing a space down in town and...

B: In Jackson?

H: In Jackson, that's right. And Cyd Martin shared the space with us, Steve Martins' wife. So Cyd Martin, Christine Landrum and myself shared an office space [B:Umhm.] in Jackson.

B: And what did Christine do for the park?

H: So, she was the Park Curator.

B: Oh, you mentioned that. [H: Yeah.] Thank you. [H: Yeah.] I'm sorry.

H: Yeah, no that's OK. And so, if you can imagine when you are within four walls to the wife of the Superintendent, you have an ear [both laugh] directly to the Superintendent. And let's just say that Christine and I took advantage of that. [Butterbaugh laughs] And we'd say, you know, Cyd we're kind of this and this and anyway, she'd relay it back to Steve Martin in the evenings and she'd come to work the next day and have an answer for us. [B laughs] Which was very helpful. And we got a lot accomplished that way.

B: [TS 14:57] Yeah, wonderful twist of fate.

H: So, it was. Yeah, and I think also because Christine and I were still so new, she and I being similar in age and we basically, actually, went to grad school together at University of Colorado at Denver to similar classes. Both ended up up here at Grand Teton for a little while together. We, they kind of took, Steve and Cyd Martin took us under their wings a little bit because we were newer to the Park Service. And it was nice because Steve Martin was the one who gave me my permanent position, so I'm always grateful for that.

B: Oh, nice, nice.

H: Yeah. And so anyway conversations started happening with Steve. The other nice thing is because of that relationship building that went on with Steve and Cyd, we kind of had an open door to go talk to Steve. Which you know in the Park Service we're very, you know, you've got to through, go through the chain of command. Well, we didn't do that so much. If we had a concern, we could have a meeting with Steve - formally or informally - and kind of say, Here's what's going on and here's what we think we need to do or what have you. So, we started having a lot more conversations. I had already been in the park for 2 years, so I kind of had a sense of what was going on where; not that I was an expert in each location, but I had a good sense of what each historic district or historic building was like to a certain extent.

B: [TS 16:28] You're talking about buildings, districts here in the park.

H: Yes, correct, yeah, within Grand Teton National Park. [B: Yeah.] Which were over 300 buildings that were eligible (for) or listed (on) the National Register of Historic Places. So it's a considerable number of buildings at that time. [B: Yeah.] And we would have conversations about we got to, you know, things could happen differently. Well, Steve Martin's management style was: We're going to do it. You know, [both laugh] I mean there was no let's talk and have 5, 10 meetings about a topic. It's like, we're going to get it together. We're going to talk about it. And so, he was the instigator of a lot of this. It wasn't, I don't want it to sound like I'm the one coming to him saying we need to do this. He was also the one saying, Okay, you're the Park Historian, you're the historic building lady. We, I want you in this meeting. I want to have a conversation about whatever area and let's figure out can we start adaptively using some of these historic buildings. So those conversations were happening early on when he got to the park as a Superintendent. Well, and I don't remember exactly all the details, but there came a point where he knew he wanted to bring the Intermountain Regional Director up here - her name at that time was Karen Wade - to have a conversation about all these different areas in the park. You know, like, What can we do with this? But kind of just to show her, because I don't think the Regional Director - I could be wrong about this - but I don't think the Intermountain Regional Director for the Park Service was invited up to the park often before Steve came on board to look at historic structures. It just, you know, as you said, the two Jacks beforehand, it wasn't their main focus. So, we knew that he wanted to bring Karen up. And I don't exactly remember how Barb Pahl from the National Trust for Historic Preservation got connected to Steve Martin and hopefully the oral history with Barb Pahl will make sure that, how that relationship came into being, is recorded. But, basically, he knew that at this meeting (2003) we were going to do a tour of the different sites, different historic districts or buildings within the park.

B: [TS 18:45] That would have been Steve, you, Barb Pahl and Karen Wade?

H: Yeah, so, and one other person, Cyd Martin. So, Steve and Cyd Martin did meetings like this together almost always. Even though she didn't work for the park, she worked for the Intermountain Regional Office. And so, we brought Regional Director, Intermountain Regional Director Karen Wade, Barb Pahl, who was a similar level as a Karen Wade, a regional director type for the National Trust, and then Steve, being very astute, knew we needed to get somebody from the Teton County Historic Preservation Board at that meeting, too. And it was with good reason. And I do not remember the gentleman's name who came with us on that tour; he has since passed. I can visualize him, but I just don't remember his name. Anyway, we had it lined up: where we were going to go, where we were stopping, where we were having lunch, the whole thing was planned out. And of course, White Grass Ranch was on the list because we knew that, here are these buildings that are in, you know, relatively decent condition for the most part and so let's talk about it. Again, I don't know, but I know there had to have been a conversation before we came out here to White Grass Ranch about let's turn this into a historic preservation training center. That idea, I believe but I could be wrong, came from Barb Pahl at

the National Trust. And I would not be surprised if Barb had already had the conversation with a Karen Wade or somebody in the Regional Office with the Park Service. It could have even been Greg Kendrick who I had worked with before being, you know, staying up here at the Tetons, at the park. And so, when we got out here, the conversation started going around - well, why don't we turn this into a western - and it was a different name or we didn't even have a real name for it - but basically; why don't we turn this into a training center for historic log buildings? That we have all sorts of historic log buildings all over the West and we just don't have the people who are skilled, have the skills and the knowledge and training on how to take care of little log buildings. I think we even referred to them as little log buildings, and of course you've got very large log buildings. And so, there it was. We're out here having the idea and Steve Martin, very politically savvy when it comes to anything in the Park Service, it was just very obvious. So, he knew he had to have his Regional Director - his boss - there, to say yes or no. He knew he needed Barb Pahl here because he knew he needed a partner - as in the National Trust for Historic Preservation - to do the project.

B: [TS 21:43] That (Barb Pahl) means fund raising, [H: Yep.] right?

H: That meant we needed an arm to do the fundraising, so that's the National Trust, you know, role. And then, obviously wanting to keep the local historic preservation community involved or just knowing what was going on, so that, hence the gentleman from the Teton County Historic Preservation Board and then, of course, I'm there because I'm the historic building lady. So, I'm the one who drove us around. [both laugh] I'm the one who got us lunch. [more laughing] Must be clear on my role.

B: I'm sure there is a lot more than what you're saying.

H: Well, yeah, [laughter ends] that's all good. So here we are standing out in front of, I want to say we were standing in front of the Main Cabin, talking about "Let's do it" and Karen Wade said "Yeah, I think that's a great idea". Of course, Barb Pahl, I'm sure, lit up with excitement that yes! Because the other thing you have, you put a Steve Martin, who is a "lets do it, I don't take no for an answer, we want to get this done" and you put it with a firecracker like Barb Pahl, who is a "git'er done" lady which is a wonderful thing. You marry the two together with the approval - obviously of the Teton County Historic Preservation Board would be thrilled with the decision - and the blessing of the Regional Director and boom, you've got this amazing project that just took off from there. It wasn't a let's think about it, let's have 5 more meetings as this group of us or involving anybody else. It was "OK, then, we're going."

B: And you were there and you heard all this?

H: Yes, I heard this. Yeah, so, well as a side note, that was one of the best days I ever had in Grand Teton National Park because I thought, Wow, we're going to do something that is going have a



great impact to the buildings because they're not going to fall down; and also, it's going to have a long term impact for historic structures in the West and in this park. It just was, it was really neat.

B: So you could see that vision being pretty dynamic and dramatic at the same time.

H: Yeah, yeah. And that actually, the idea, the more we talked about it, and at this point - once the green flag went up that, yes we're going to do it - we started involving others in the Intermountain Region, who either had partnered with the National Trust or people, you know, people whose job, historic architecture and historic preservation were their jobs. So here's how we proceeded. We knew that Rodd Wheaton, who, this may not have been his exact title, but he was basically like an Assistant Regional Director for Cultural Resources in the Intermountain Regional Office in Lakewood, Colorado. He got on board with the project because Steve asked him to, Steve Martin asked him to come and help. Then, because Barb Pahl at the National Trust had just gone through a partnership project with Bill Thompson at Rocky Mountain National Park, and at that time he was - I don't know what his official title was; he was in the maintenance division, but he was kind of head of the historic preservation program at Rocky Mountain National Park - they had just rehabilitated McGraw Ranch with the help of the National Trust being again, the fund raising arm. And so, it was, well, let's get Bill on board because, he knows historic preservation and he's done work with the, Barb Pahl and the Trust, and so, let's start piecing this together. What do we need to do? Well Barb Pahl, you know, the lady is smart, she knows exactly what we need to do. I'm brand new to the Park Service. I'm like, "you just tell me what to do [B laughs] and I'll do it." I'll ask questions and figure it out because I haven't done any of this before. So, and there's no training when you get to the Park Service, you have on-the-job training. So, I learned a lot at the very beginning of my career with the Park Service. So, we started having conference calls with myself and Bill Thompson, Rodd Wheaton, Barb Pahl, for the most part and, of course, Steve Martin involved when need be. But he's the big idea, he was the big idea guy and he lets the details fall to the, you know, people underneath that are the, you know, worker bees, so to speak. So, Barb Pahl already knew that we needed to get a fundraising, or excuse me, it was a partnership agreement. And there's a Director's Order in the Park Service that tells you, this is how you do it. And, Barb Pahl had just done it with Rocky Mountain National Park. So, she in many ways, she drafted documents, she drafted the partnership agreement. I just reviewed it and corrected the inaccuracies that I knew of. And again, being new enough, I didn't know everything. And, you know, running that then through Rodd Wheaton to look at it, Steve Martin to look at it and I'm not sure who else. We may have had to the Department of Interior Solicitor look at it. I wouldn't be surprised if we did, just because it's a legal agreement.

B: Legal document?

H: Yeah. Legal agreement between the Federal Government and, I think National Trust is a non-profit organization.

B: [TS 27:09] It's a non-profit now, it was once a part of the government, I think.

H: OK. That's right. That's right. Yeah. So, that, that was one of the first things we had to get in place. And that came along quickly, as I recall because of Barb Pahl's involvement at Rocky Mountain National Park. The fun thing is, we ended up making this a big to-do. So I want to say it was 2004. The National Trust had their annual national conference in Denver, Colorado. So that meant, I want to say his name was (Richard) Dick Moe, who used to be the head of the National Trust, he was going to be in town for their national conference. And, I do believe, because Barb Pahl had a connection with somebody at the Department of the Interior, her name was Kit - I don't remember her last name but it's in the park files, I do remember that because I wrote it down - and I don't know if Kit or Barb or how this worked out, but at that time Gale Norton was the Secretary of the Interior. And so it was arranged that during this National Trust conference Mr. Moe, in case I have his first name wrong, and Gale Norton, the Secretary would come together and sign this partnership agreement. And we ended up doing it at Red Rocks Amphitheater outside of Denver, which is normally a venue for, you know, big bands to come play. [B: Sure.] U2 has played at Red Rocks, right? But instead on the big concrete stage there's Mr. Moe and Gale Norton signing this partnership agreement on a table with a tablecloth. I mean, [both laugh] there wasn't, there wasn't a lot of pomp and circumstance about it. But there was some, something else going on that was part of that National Trust conference. So there was several people, not just me and the couple other people in the stands to watch this agreement, but they, part of the conference, were to go to Red Rocks and watch the signing of this agreement.

B: Yeah.

H: Anyway, I'm pretty sure, because it was warmer weather, so I'm pretty sure it had to (have) been like summer or spring of 2004. And then that allowed the National Trust to start doing all the fundraising for us. And the agreement was, and of course there's a copy of it in the park archives, they would fund raise, I think we had to say that it was less than a million dollars but it was, you know, nine hundred thousand blah-blah-blah.

B: Nine hundred and seventy thousand, I think, was the final figure.

H: OK. Thank you. And there was a reason why it wasn't a million, because the verbal conversations had always been a million, but there was probably a legal something - something that we had to knock it down below a million. So anyway, they signed the agreement and then Barb Pahl went gangbusters [laughs] and got the money over, you know, several years. But she did a phenomenal job raising the money.

B: And it should be said, just as a sidelight to that, one of the constituencies she went after was former dudes and wranglers here at White Grass.

H: Yes.

B: And that group was very vocal challenging the park about letting White Grass deteriorate.

H: Yeah.

B: [TS 30:32] And so they were, historically, putting pressure on the park to do something with White Grass. And so when it came time, they actually ponied up to the table and started writing checks, in addition to other [H: Yes.] contributors that Barb Pahl contacted. But they were a very active group in this process.

H: Yeah, we are grateful.

B: And several of them will be here for the ribbon cutting tomorrow.

H: Which is excellent. Yeah.

B: Yeah, sure, sure. Well, we do have the picture - you sent it to us actually - of the Red Rock Ceremony (outside Denver, CO).

H: Oh yes.

B: And so, that will be archived in all the other materials for the park and also the "Heritage Project" too. So it's off and running.

H: Yes.

B: Off and running.

H: Yeah. It was amazing because it's [laughs] one idea. There's a lot of paperwork that is associated with one idea. So we knew that we had to do an environmental assessment document. We needed to do a planning and compliance document to determine exactly what did we want to do out here; how could these buildings be reused and what's both the environmental impact, what are the, what are the impacts to the cultural resources. So again, being the historic building lady, I was on the planning team with many other people in the park because you have to take into consideration all the resources that could be impacted by doing a

major rehabilitation project out here. So Suzy Schulman was the Park Planner at the time; she was the lead on the planning, our lead for the planning process. And then, there were other disciplines involved from the Resource Management division, Interpretation, I would assume that we had, you know, at points somebody who's a Law Enforcement Ranger, the Fire Management folks....

B: Natural Resources.

H: Yeah, obviously Natural Resources, they were a big part of this. But we needed to not only do this environmental assessment, which I think it was, it just ended up being called the White Grass Ranch or Dude Ranch Environmental Assessment. I could be wrong on that, but again, it's in the Park Archives.

B: Yeah, there's a Cultural Resource Report.

H: Yeah. So part of that report or how we got...

B: Landscape (Cultural Landscape Report).

H: Yeah. Or how we got to that was, well, we need to have a conversation about how are we going to rehabilitate these buildings. So we need to come up with ideas; how are we going to use the Main Cabin and the Hammond Cabin, and all these other little cabins, the bathhouse? So we hired, in other words, we— Grand Teton National Park – contracted with A&E Architects up in Missoula, Montana. And I am going to make an assumption that Rodd Wheaton, because he'd been involved from the get-go here, he knew of this firm up in Missoula, Montana, because we needed somebody who could do architectural drawings. Because we needed to show, well first, the people who are working on the environmental assessment, here's what we want to do. We needed to tell the public, here's what we want to do and even, in my mind a little more importantly, we needed to tell the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, here's what we want to do to these buildings, because we needed to do our Section 106 compliance for the project, or for this whole thing. And we need, we decided we were going to do our Section 106 compliance at the same time we were doing our NEPA, our National Environmental Policy Act compliance, which was the environmental assessment. So, we had Jim McDonald from A&E Architects help us come up with the drawings for each of the buildings. We had, you know, we had meetings about how could we use these spaces. So Rodd would be a part of that, or Bill Thompson because he had just gone through it at McGraw Ranch. And, I mean, we went back and forth about how are we going to do this. And the cool thing is today, I'm sure there's been some deviation, but not much. This is how we envisioned this back in 2003, 2004, and here it is 2016.

B: Amazing.

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- H: [TS 34:57] We knew the caretaker was going to be in the Hammond Cabin where we're sitting right now. We knew that the kitchen and meeting space/dining space/training space would be up in the Main Cabin. And, it's amazing to see what went, what had been on paper....
- B: Come to be.
- H: Here it is. (B laughs) So we, we also asked A&E Architects to complete a Cultural Landscape Report for us so that we would know not only what, we already knew the buildings were significant because they'd been on the National Register for, you know, a long time – whatever year that was – but we needed, they didn't take into consideration the historic landscape features. So we needed to get documentation about what here, on the ground, was significant, in addition to the buildings so that we knew: Okay, can we put in a pathway here? Can we not? Do we need to take out vegetation that wasn't here during the historic period of the Ranch? Or do we need to add it back in? What do we want to do? So those conversations were had at the same time we were talking about the buildings. And then the cultural landscape report is what guided us as far as what did we need to preserve or what not, when it came to landscape features.
- B: Do you recall the exact date of the period of significance for the Ranch?
- H: Oh..
- B: That you're removing things.
- H: No.
- B: Basically that's a concept where you pick a date and you try to make decisions...
- H: Yeah.
- B: In history . . . make decisions today for things that were a part of the history for the Ranch.
- H: Yeah, correct.
- B: For example, there was a porch on the Main Cabin that has gone away [H: Yeah.] because it was put on after the period of significance. And so, my question is: Do you recall – we can

look it up – but there's [H: Yeah.] actually been some confusion as to what that period of significance was.

H: Oh, so you're saying...Okay, well, the good news is, it's in the, on the National Register of Historic Places nomination, because that's one of the blanks you have to fill in. [B: Okay.] So I don't, sadly I don't remember what we said. It would also say it in the Cultural Landscape Report. (The Cultural Landscape Report indicates that prior to 1970 was designated the period of significance.) And so, yeah, I know there were some things that were added to buildings later when Frank Galey's second wife was out here (after 1970).

B: Right. Correct.

H: Like the sliding glass door on the Main Cabin.

B: Yeah, exactly.

H: And you just could look at the building and know, well that wasn't, you know, in the real high days of the dude ranch; that wasn't there. I mean high days in the sense that, before the seventies and eighties and whatnot, so.

B: As a clarification, that porch was taken away, the sliding glass doors were taken away and the logs were put back to what the original building was.

H: Yeah, so we, yeah, I'm sorry I don't remember the dates. But it, we, I mean we used the documents, the National Register nomination, as well as this Cultural Landscape Report to help us guide decisions on what to do. Yeah.

B: And it should be noted that part of the Cultural Landscape Report that A&E Architecture firm did, and of some note to them, they have a long history of working with historic structures in the park, and did some work in Yellowstone over the years and other places, too. [H: Yes.] So they didn't come into it fresh by any means, in terms [H: Yeah.] of the work here.

B: But part of that report was also the result of numerous conversations with former White Grassers.

H: I would assume, yes. I, that's...past memory.

B: Because those quotes and that material is in the Cultural Landscape Report.

B: Yeah. So, but you were not a part of those interviews?

H: No. And I do remember, that Cultural Landscape Report may not have been 100 percent complete when I left in 2006.

B: [TS39:08] Well, as you recall, were people in the park, meaning employees and different divisions in the park, were they generally supportive of repopulating, if you will, the White Grass Ranch area? Because it had laid dormant and nature had basically had its run from '85 up to 2003, 2004. Was there widespread acceptance and agreement within the park to embark on this project at White Grass?

H: No. [laughs] That's a simple answer.

B: Please clarify.

H: No. There's no doubt about it, the natural resource folks were definitely against it. There was the perception that if you rehabilitate White Grass Ranch, put people back out here, then the elk are going to go away, the antelope are going to go away, it's going to have a major negative impact on the wildlife and therefore, we shouldn't be putting people back out there. That, obviously, has not come to pass. I think if, [laugh] Roger has lived out here for how many years now?

B: Six years.

H: Yep.

B: Six summers.

H: Yep,

B: And there are plenty of elk around, I can attest to that.

H: Yeah. So, I mean, I appreciate them, they're doing their jobs, the wildlife biologists they were doing their jobs. But it didn't, I mean, where was the data to back up (what they said would

happen)? And plus, if you talk to the dudes, if you would talk to anybody who worked at White Grass Ranch or came out as a dude or dudette, stayed here during the summers, they had wildlife all over.

B: True.

H: And so the idea is, there were probably more people out here when it was an active dude ranch than how many people would ever be out here at the ranch at one time. And that's why in the environmental assessment we said "X" number of people - whatever it was, 15/16 people - could be here [B: Stay.] at one time, could stay [B: Stay.] overnight. Yes, yes. So it's not like a day event that was limited to 15 or 16; but people physically sleeping here, it would be 15 to 16 people. And, so in other words, there'd be so few people here compared to what it was like when it was an active dude ranch. And...

B: And the concept was, the ranch would operate basically late spring, summer, maybe early fall and then be shut down for winter.

H: Correct. Yeah, yeah, we never intended this to be a year-round operation. No, I mean, winters, there's just no way. And if you're trying to run a historic preservation training center - a lot of that is hands-on work - well, you're not going to be doing that in the wintertime out here. And that's another side of the story; is when we were having the conversations about rehabilitating the buildings here, we knew we needed a shop. That you weren't going to turn the Main Cabin, or Hammond Cabin, or the Bathhouse into a shop. It just wasn't a good use of that space, or appropriate, because we wanted to keep these in residential use. So, and this is one of those timing things, you know, it all just came together beautifully. This is when the Rockefellers were transitioning the JY Ranch to the Park Service. So the agreement had been signed in, I think it was, 2001 with Laurance Rockefeller - and Jack Neckels was the Superintendent at the time - that said, OK in "X" number of years - I forget how many - the Park Service is going to get JY Ranch. But, you know, the agreement was the Rockefellers are going to do all these things to JY Ranch including removing all the buildings and rehabbing the grounds and doing whatnot and putting in trails and anyway, that's a whole JY Ranch story, which is a great story.

B: Yes, yes.

H: Somehow, I don't remember exactly how, but the Rockefellers had constructed a very large log shop which, where they kept vehicles for stored, excuse me, vehicles and other things. You know, it was their maintenance shop for JY Ranch.

B: Interesting.



H: Somehow - and this is under Steve Martin's reign here at the park, - there was a conversation about we could use that shop. And I don't know the full story behind it, but nonetheless, it was like, Okay, we'll take that large shop and we're going to put it in Moose, at park headquarters and we could use that for the shop for the Western Center for Historic Preservation (who had responsibilities to rehabilitate White Grass and run the historical preservation training center). So that's just how we got that.

B: Yeah. Yeah.

H: And that's basically the year-round headquarters and shop for the training center.

B: Right. That was a two-story log structure reinforced with steel to support it all. It came down to Moose in 103 big pieces and reassembled in Moose.

H: Yep.

B: And the project manager who made that, oversaw it, was Al Williams, who then became in years to come, the project manager putting together the rehabilitation here at White Grass.

H: Yeah.

B: He goes back a ways on that. It was a very large building, big enough to put, probably, 20 cars in.

H: Yeah, it's huge.

B: It is a very large building. [H: Yeah.] It has served the Western Center very well.

H: Yeah. And I don't mean to leave Al out in this whole thing. He wasn't a part of the, you know, paperwork part of it. He wasn't writing sections of the environmental assessment or whatever. But he definitely, Al Williams, has been a part of the conversations about how do... how could we reuse these buildings.

B: Yes, yes.

H: He's helped for a long, long time.

- B: Yeah, he had documented in an oral history his involvement. We call him the man who was saving historic buildings before historic buildings, [H laughs] saving historic buildings was cool.
- H: Yeah, there you go. That sounds, that sounds about right. He used to help me all the time with other buildings.
- B: Yes. And he will be retiring this year, [H: Yes.] in October 2014 and will be greatly missed.
- H: [TS 45:09] That's the truth, yes.
- B: Was there clear vision as to what the Western Center for Historic Preservation (based at park headquarters) was going to be? Or was it, We don't know, but we'll develop it as we get it started?
- H: That's a great question. I'm going to back up and say just one other thing about... not only were there people inside the park who were opposed to rehab that is rehabbing the historic ... all these historic buildings. But there were people in town who were vehemently against it. We even had article in the local Jackson Hole paper where people were coming out against rehabilitating White Grass Ranch. So I think the complaint was – because Steve Martin not only was paying attention to this place, he was looking at other historic districts within the park like the McCollister Ranch, yeah, I just lost the name...
- B: The Lucas-Fabian homestead?
- H: Oh, Lucas-Fabian. Yeah, thank you. Lucas-Fabian, to potentially reuse those buildings for... McCollister would have been residential use, Lucas-Fabian would have been Artist-In-Residence program. Anyway, we were accused, the park was accused of doing piecemeal planning for historic buildings. Now that's why you have today, but I think it was released in 2015, a historic structures management plan that the park created and put out for public review. That was a result, that environmental assessment is a direct result of the Steve Martin days...
- B: Most interesting.
- H: When we were saying, We're going to do a little here, do a little there, and they said, No, you need to look holistically at all your historic buildings and come up with a plan and do an environmental assessment, tell us what you want to do.

B: Umhm.

H: So, anyway, a side note on that. But nonetheless, the people in the park, they said their words about it and helped contribute information in sections of the environmental assessment. We had the folks in the town who didn't like what we were doing; they were given the opportunity to write their letters of complaint during the public review period of the environmental assessment. It didn't stop us. Obviously, it didn't stop us. So...

B: Right. Were those formalities? Or, I mean, had the decision really been made before all those side steps? In other words, that's a poor choice of terms, but was the environmental studies given due consideration? And then, who made the decision to proceed with White Grass rehabilitation?

H: Yeah, that's a good point. So when you do an environmental assessment, you've got to do your due diligence to say here are the potential impacts to natural resources, cultural resources, the visitors, the - you know - fill in the blank.

B: And you think that was a serious ...

H: Oh yeah, there was absolutely for White Grass because you're following a National Environmental Policy Act...

B: Protocols?

H: Protocol and then the, you know, the handbook that goes with it. And that's more government speak than we need to get into. But no doubt, we did our due diligence to follow that process of completing our environmental and cultural resource compliance. And then, what happens when you finish an environmental... or how you finish an environmental assessment is, you make a determination; Okay, here's our preferred alternative - which was what we ended up going with and you see today - and it's the Intermountain Regional Director who signs off on a "Finding of no Significant Impact". When that is signed, I think on the environmental assessment you may have to wait 30 days or maybe you don't have to wait at all, and then you can proceed. You can actually start implementing the actions within the environmental assessment. So as soon as the document (FONSI) is signed, in a sense, the green light is on and you can go, whether people support it or not, inside the park or outside of the park.

B: [TS 49:21] So then, does the Superintendent let's say, of Grand Teton, make a recommendation to the regional director? And was the regional director who signed off on the project at White

Grass, Karen Wade, who was a part of that original decision meeting with Steve Martin and yourself and Barb Pahl? Who signed off?

H: So, in the environmental assessment you have a preferred alternative, which is basically letting the public know this is the one we are going to choose, most likely. You can choose something else. And so you're letting them know this is what we are going to do. So the decision is basically already been made and we're just making it public, this is what we want to do. So as soon as you're done with the public comment period and you have addressed any substantive comments - like if you forgot to address something about natural resources let's say, in the document - we'd have to write in the "Finding of No Significant Impact" document, we'd have to write...reply to that substantive comment. But if it's a comment that just says, "I think your idea is great" or "I really don't like your idea", that...

B: That doesn't go anywhere.

H: No, no. Because you're not voting, as we like to say. You don't get to vote yes or no on a project. We want to hear your "You forgot this" and "you need to address this" kind of a comment.

B: We, the park?

H: We, the park, exactly. We...the park didn't...I don't recall us having anything significant that we had to address. We did what we had to do and that was in the "Finding of no Significant Impact". Karen Wade may have retired at that point and Mike Snyder may have been the Regional Director at that point, I'd have to look. So, she may not have seen it down to that final signature before she retired.

B: So I'm going to take you back, it's still a point of confusion for me... so you get Fire and you get Natural Resources and Cultural Resources all putting into this melting pot of information about a decision to be made.

H: Yeah.

B: And then, is it the Park Superintendent who says, well, I hear you Natural Resources, but we're going to go ahead and I'm recommending to the Regional Director that we're going to do that.

H: Yeah. They...you know, any discipline within a park, it's their job, if they're the subject matter expert, is to give the Superintendent information at any time - whether it be in an environmental assessment process or not - give the information to that person to help the Superintendent make

a decision. And the Superintendent, it ultimately is on their shoulders, [B: Yeah.] whatever decision is made.

B: But he's, if you will, the Decider...

H: He is definitely the Decider.

B: Before it goes...before it goes to the Region.

H: Yep, you got it, yep, yep, yeah...so...

B: [TS 52:30] So, it moves forward, documents are created, Western Center gets started and you were going, you were allowed to start in terms of... so the Western Center ...

H: Oh yeah...it was created...

B: (Simultaneously) was created.

H: And we know exactly what we were doing. Yes, Okay...so that's a great story in itself, because I don't know how many folks know this. It was...when we started the project it had a different name and it was like the Western Center for Preservation Training or something – it wasn't the Historic Preservation Training Center (correct name Western Center for Historic Preservation), Okay - but we knew from the beginning we wanted this to be a training center. So we were perceiving this as going to be a training center. Well, it...you know, and Steve Martin is having conversations and I know at this point - so this had to have been between 2003 and 2006, before I left in June (May) of 2006 - Steve Martin is having conversations with Mike Snyder, who at that point is the Intermountain Regional Director, about this is a training center... training center...blah-blah-blah. Well, I distinctly remember - this was another one of those milestone moments in this project - being in Steve Martin's office there at Moose, in the Superintendent's office and having a conference call with Mike Snyder, the Regional Director, in which he told us: "It cannot be a training center." The Learning & Development Program of the National Park Service is saying, No, you haven't come to us and said we would, you know, we want to create a training center out here at Grand Teton National Park. Well that.... again, I'm new. I don't even know that there's basically a Learning & Development Program - and it may have been called Learning & something else at that point - but nonetheless, it's, you know, it's the training arm of the National Park Service that already ran four...yeah, four training centers.

B: Right.

- H: So, I just sat there thinking, Are you kidding me? That was like the, you know, from the high of having the meeting here, that we were going to do it, to being in that office saying, no, we're not going to be a training center. And I'm thinking, What are we doing then? We've already, you know, we're in the process of getting the environmental assessment done or close - maybe it was done at that point – and now we can't...what, what are we going to do? I mean, that whole point is we need to train people. Well, that's when the name changed. And that's why it's “Western Center for Historic Preservation.”
- B: As opposed to “Training Center”?
- H: There's no “Training Center” in the name.
- B: That was the compromise.
- H: That was the compromise. We changed the name, even though we knew the whole entire time we were still going to train.
- B: Did that mean then, that the Western Center, by its new name, was not affiliated with this training & planting...planning part of the National Park System, i.e., the national group?
- H: Correct...and that was fine. That's how, at that point, Okay, it's just going to be this entity within Grand Teton National Park, even though the idea was we'd start on the buildings in Grand Teton, work your way out to other parks in the western part of the United States and then go broader and farther out in the country to other park units. So, that's...yeah, how it ended up.
- B: Wow.
- H: Yeah. But I can tell you, I was super disappointed that day. I thought, What? We have to do it! And it worked out. It just is a matter of semantics; changing words and not talking about it a certain way. Steve Martin wasn't going to give up on the idea.
- B: From what you said earlier, he knew how to work the system.
- H: [TS: 56:51] Exactly. So he did. Yeah, so in a nutshell, to answer your question about “Did we have a vision?” We had a vision. We knew what we wanted to do. And I would say, and Al would probably - Al Williams - would back it up better than me; I do believe the original intent,

that was to move forward, regardless of what it was called. We knew we were still going to train people and work on historic buildings and that's what happened. We never went down a totally different path as a result of that conversation.

B: Well, of course the Western Center...White Grass as a training center was designed to teach traditional log skills for architecture in the West. Were any of these other four centers teaching how to care for this type of architecture?

H: No.

B: So, Western Center really had a niche that was very different from anywhere else in the Park System.

H: Yes. And part of that national training arm, one of those four training centers, was the Historic Preservation Training Center, based in Frederick, Maryland.

B: Right, right.

H: And so, it's in Frederick, Maryland. They were very skilled at dealing with the architecture more in the East. Not to say there aren't logs in the East - we know that there are log buildings in the East - but they weren't the log buildings of the West. It's just a different kind of chinking and notching and whatnot. So, they...I would...I'm sure there are people at that Historic Preservation Training Center in Frederick, Maryland who had some skills on how to deal with logs, but it wasn't their focus. They can do masonry, I mean, they can do all sorts of amazing things. And they've even done work here in this park - I hired them to come and do work in this park - so I fully support their operation. But we needed a training center that really focused on that Western log architecture. So we knew this entity was needed out West.

B: And that proved to be correct as classes have been taught for three years here at White Grass in historic preservation. And to your account earlier, yes, the reputation of this place is spreading quickly and we frequently have people on the other side of the Mississippi coming out here to take classes at White Grass who are National Park people.

H: Yes, that's great.

B: So, it is really becoming more and more of a national entity, or seen as a national entity for the Park System.

H: Yeah, and I actually have, this is a very interesting connection. So, in my current job working for the national Park Planning Office, I have the privilege of reviewing every single Foundation Document that every park unit is to have by the end of this calendar year, 2016. So part of.. I won't go into all of the details, but my point of telling you this is, there's a section in the Foundation Document where parks can talk about opportunities. And I have seen in more than one Foundation Document, where they've said they want to work with the Western Center for Historic Preservation to help the park with their historic buildings.

B: How exciting.

H: Yeah, it is. So, it is, yeah I mean, that as far as the word getting out that this place exists and what this place is about and why...its purpose. It's definitely getting out to different national park units, which is awesome. That was the intent.

B: Yeah very good. So, what's it like for you to see this happening, which you started ten years ago, ten, thirteen years ago.. You have a significant part in all this, so I was just so interested in what this was like for you as a career experience; because you said the day the decision was made down here in front of the Main Cabin that that was one of the highlights of your career.

H: Yeah, it was. You, obviously, listeners can't see, but I have a big smile on my face. It's just amazing to walk up the road and look at these buildings and see that they haven't deteriorated even more so than when I first saw them in 2001. It just is awesome. I think what strikes me the most about it is you can come together with many different minds who all contribute their knowledge, skills, and abilities to a project and put a vision together; and it can be not just Park Service people, it's others, you know, we're not living and working in a bubble, the Park Service.

B: Right, exactly, exactly.

H: We need people outside like the Jim McDonalds and the Barb Pahls; all those great, wonderful people who've helped us. That we can come together, put a vision together, get the money to do it, get the volunteers and not just the people power; that's what impresses me the most because there is no doubt there - like where you and I are sitting right now and looking out, that wall was falling down. [both laugh] And that was a functional standing wall, level wall. But the people who, everybody who's contributed to this, that's what I am amazed at. That it is so awesome to see not only paid employees of the Park Service or the National Trust – because I know they've been out here – but the old White Grass dudes and dudettes who've come to help. That all the volunteers, whether they be private citizens or I'm sure there's the other Federal government people, I know there's so many people who've come together to work on thirteen log buildings.



B: Exactly.

H: [TS: 1:03:02] And now, it's a functioning place that can reach farther. And so that's the part that completely, completely amazes me; that we did it, it worked.

B: Yeah, it did work.

H: It did work. [B laughs] Yeah and it's just awesome. And then to have an amazing caretaker like you (the caretaker & interviewer, Roger Butterbaugh), who you know your heart is in this, that's huge. Because if you don't have a caretaker who's willing to put in the time and the energy like you to preserve the history, which is awesome, but also to care for the buildings, then what are we doing? [laughs]

B: Right, right, yeah.

H: You know, it just is so good. So I gave you huge credit, Roger for all your effort and I thank you. It's pretty awesome.

B: Thank you.

H: Can I say one other thing? Just a side note: the only other bummer part though, for me, and this is totally selfish on my part, is there was something about walking up here before these buildings were rehabbed and it was very quiet. It was like the place to come and escape and be with neat historic buildings even though they weren't in good condition. But you could just sit here and imagine what it was like and have the peace and quiet...it just...that part is awesome. But, you know what, you can go someplace else in the park and get that.

B: Right.

H: I'm more thrilled that this place has been rehabilitated than to say it needs to stay as a ruin so I could come out here and sit on the steps. [both laugh] I can go to Lucas-Fabian, I can go to Bar BC, I can go other places and enjoy.

B: I fully accept what you're saying, but I'd also encourage you to come back about 8:30 at night.

H: I believe that. That's a good point, I'm only out here during the day.

B: Because I think many of the people who actually stay here, for a workshop let's say, pick up on the quietness. And we purposefully put, if you will...for lack of a better term, meditative benches out beyond the sagebrush so you can go out and be by yourself and get away from the noise. This place, historically, becomes very quiet in the evenings.

H: That's awesome.

B: As a side light, we did an oral history workshop, teaching people how to do oral histories, here earlier this summer. And we used White Grass as the case study. So the students were asked to learn as much as they could about White Grass in its days as a dude ranch. And we asked them...we put forth, "Why would people come back year after year?" And one of the students wrote in her journal at the end, "They kept saying, Why would people come here for a week and stay for a decade?" [H laughs] They kept asking us, asking us, asking us that. And she said – and then on the last day we were here, third day of the class, we actually interviewed former dudes and wranglers of the ranch era – and so her last statement in her journal was: "So they asked me this question, Why did they come? I'm here three days, going home tomorrow and I can't explain it, but I understand it."

H: That's awesome. Exactly.

B: It's been a labor of love for many people, including yourself.

H: Amen. That's the truth.

B: Are there other things you want to add before we close?

H: No, well, the only other thing I think I would add is, I am grateful I had the opportunity to work on this project. Being newer to the Park Service, I learned so much as a result of working on this, that it's helped me throughout my whole 15-year career. So I'm very grateful. And just to have the awesome experience of working with people like Al Williams and Barb Pahl, and so many people here in the park; Suzy Schulman - I learned so much about planning, park planning and here I work for the national Planning Office now - you know; Rodd Wheaton, who taught me about a lot about historical architects - architecture is what I'm trying to say - here and other parts in the park; Steve Martin, who taught me about here's how you get it done [both laugh] in the Park Service, which is great; and I know I'm leaving other people out. But it's just...It's amazing to think how neat the Park Service is, and we are able to do amazing projects like this for the good of, well, for the good of the mission of the Park Service.

B: Sure, sure, yes.

H: We are to preserve and protect natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment of the public and the future generations. So guess what, we are doing it here!

B: [laughing] Good example isn't it?

H: Yeah, yeah it is and Happy Birthday to the Park Service.

B: At the same time.

H: That's right, in 2016. Yeah.

B: Well, thank you for your contributions to this effort.

H: Oh, thank you.

B: And the testament to your work. And enjoy the ribbon-cutting tomorrow as the fruits of some of your labors. And thank you for working for the Park Service.

H: Yeah, I'm grateful, very grateful. Thank you Roger, it's been a pleasure.

B: Pleasure talking with you.