USDA Forest Service Proposed Oral History Project

ATTN: Steven Dunsky, USDA Forest Service Video Producer

Historical Context: In July 2005 Region Five of the USDA Forest Service and the University of California Berkeley’s Regional Oral History Office (ROHO) completed a collaborative oral history project designed to bring “voices” to the social history of forestry in the region. The subsequent book, Lure of the Forest: Oral Histories from the National Forests in California, utilized over fifty life interviews conducted by Service retirees. From the start, the powerful collective memory of the retirees became apparent. Participants and practitioners, utilizing these memories, quickly identified numerous themes capable of supporting historical context for future Forest Service practices and policies. As interviewers and staff honed their oral history skills, with university input, it became apparent that the project had just scratched the surface of information available. More importantly, the team identified over one hundred additional interviewees capable of supplying valuable information on a series of possible “problematic” themes that could be used for future interviews. This discovery, all so common after a first phase of an oral history project, of new themes and needed interviews provides a perfect opportunity for a continuation of the project and the creation of a second volume. The second volume will be based on a yet-to-be selected theme with subsections devoted to historicizing the points of tension or crisis for the Service and a backward look at current policies and procedures pertaining to the selected issue. In this spirit ROHO proposes the below-continued collaboration with the Region Five Forest Service and the Pacific Southwest Research Station.

ROHO Partnership Proposal: Victor W. Geraci PhD and the UC Berkeley Regional Oral History Office (ROHO) will provide oral history consultation, and will take the lead in the editing and draft assembling of a second volume of oral histories conducted with USDA Forestry Region Five and the Pacific Southwest Research Station. ROHO will also assist in the collection and archiving of the actual oral interviews. The project would include the following outcomes from ROHO:

1. Reading of all interviews provided by the project with suggestions for further interviews, types of questions asked, themes for further interviews, and ROHO consultations for technical and content advice.
2. Up to ten one-hour re-interviews with committee selected interviewees.

3. Geraci will review, select, and edit interviews for use in the book. The proposed book will be approximately 300 pages and include an introductory chapter to build a historical context based on the themes selected by the retiree committees. Based on the selected themes, subsequent chapters will have a short introduction followed by portions of the oral interviews that will comprise the bulk of the book. The book will also include appropriate photographs, index, and bibliography.

4. During the 2005-2006 academic year, Geraci will offer a course on Region Five Forestry in which students will visit actual sites, study the nations and region’s forestry history, and complete further oral interviews.

5. Assist in the archiving of all interviews (recordings and transcripts) and inclusion of web links featuring the project and selected individual interviews.

**Time Frame:** The proposed project will be completed in three billable phases and include the described deliverables.

- **Phase # 1: September 2005 through September 2006… Payable October 2005**
  - ROHO Specialist Victor W. Geraci, PhD will participate in meetings with Forest Service project coordinators to review and plan content themes.
  - ROHO Specialist Victor W. Geraci, PhD will participate in meetings with the Retiree Oral History committee and serve as a consultant.
  - ROHO will provide training workshops for interviewers.
  - Specialist Victor W. Geraci, will read interviews completed and begin the initial edit cuts for volume 2.
  - Selected interview sections will then be edited and prepared for use by Specialist Victor W. Geraci, PhD and ROHO staff.
  - During the 2005-2006 academic year Specialist Victor W. Geraci will offer a course based on the projects themes. Enrolled students will study Forest Service History in general and read the *Lure of the Forest* as an introduction to Region Five Forestry History. Students will also visit National Forest sites, study the nation’s and region’s forestry history, and complete (design question guides, execute interviews and transcribe) oral interviews with the mentorship of retired Region Five Foresters.
  - Cost for Phase I: $25,000 (Based on 25 percent FTE for Specialist Victor W. Geraci and cost for ROHO production support.)

- **Phase # 2: October 2006 through November 2007… Payable November of 2007.**
  - ROHO Specialist Victor W. Geraci will meet with the Retiree Oral History committee as a consultant.
  - ROHO Specialist Victor W. Geraci will continue reading interviews for initial edit cuts for volume two.
  - ROHO Specialist Victor W. Geraci and ROHO staff will edit and prepare edit cuts for use in the book.
  - ROHO Specialist Victor W. Geraci will begin drafting introductory and concluding chapters, a selective bibliography, and begin selection of photos for use in the book.
• Work with Forest Service-selected printer to finalize production schedule. Scheduled production of the book will be targeted for Fall 2007.
• Assist in the archiving of all interviews (recordings and transcripts) and inclusion of web links featuring the project and selected individual interviews.
• Geraci will be available for completing interviews or re-interviews with selected participants.
• Cost for Phase II: $25,000 (Based on 25 percent FTE for Specialist Victor W. Geraci and cost for ROHO production support.)

  • Meet with Retiree Oral History committee as a consultant.
  • Finalize reading of interviews for inclusion for second volume.
  • Selected interviews will then be edited and prepared for use in the book.
  • Complete a final publishable draft including an introduction, concluding chapters, bibliography, selected photographs for use in the book.
  • Provide initial editing of the manuscript draft.
  • Work with Forest Service-selected printer to finalize production. Scheduled production of the book will be targeted for July 2008.
  • Assist in the archiving of all interviews (recordings and transcripts) and inclusion of web links featuring the project and selected individual interviews.
  • Cost for Phase III: $25,000 (Based on 25 percent FTE for Specialist Victor W. Geraci and cost for ROHO production support.)