

Vignettes from the Past: Bill McCambridge

Recollections of Wm. F. McCambridge

The First Forest Entomologist Stationed in Alaska, 1952-1956¹



Assignment - This is Bill McCambridge speaking. It's the 19th of March, 1997. It's about 45 years ago that I went up to Alaska. My tour as the first full-time forest entomologist in Alaska, started in 1952 and ended with my transfer to Ashville, NC in 1956. In the fall of 1952 I went with Bob Furniss² to Juneau, where the Alaska Forest Research Center was to be my headquarters for the next 4 years. We flew around quite a bit of southeast Alaska looking at the black-headed budworm and hemlock sawfly, which was prevalent throughout the whole area. In the fall of 1952, I came back to Ft. Collins and transferred to the Portland office in the winter of 1952-53. In April 1953, I went to Juneau, where Ray Taylor was in charge of the Alaska Forest Research Center, and spent the period from April to about early October out of Juneau trying to determine the extent and severity of the black-headed budworm in southeast Alaska.

My assignment was not only Forest Service land, contained within two national forests, the Tongass in southeast and the Chugach out of Anchorage, but I was also responsible for reconnaissance and evaluation of forest insect problems on Bureau of Land Management lands. So the acreage would have been in the millions. It extended up to the Brooks range and out toward McGrath to the west of Anchorage, and of course all of the Kenai Peninsula, and the forests from Yakutat to Ketchikan.



In addition to the measurement of damage, we were also trying to determine if the budworm could be easily killed, and of course in those days we could use DDT. DDT was extremely effective at low dose rates, probably less than a pound an acre, in killing the black-headed budworm and also the hemlock sawfly, but everyone was concerned that the amount of DDT that would eventually enter freshwater streams and the adjacent saltwater would be a drawback in its use, so that early-on we gave up the idea that budworm control would be in the picture at all.

While the crew was engaged in the measurement of damage, like I said, part of my other duties were to evaluate forest insect problems in the interior. The forests of Alaska are subject to tremendous forest fires every year, and in the surrounding areas of unburned but weakened spruce trees, you get spruce beetles building up, and you get loss that's scattered in small groups. Where the spruce beetle would be attacking white spruce along river bottoms, it becomes somewhat a serious problem, because the white spruce grows to a rather nice size. Unfortunately, the silt from the stream beds that's blown into the air also gets into the bark of the spruce and makes it very, very expensive to saw those trees. The headsaw needs to be resharpened after just a few logs have been passed through because of the silt that's in there dulling the blades.

The other problem that was prevalent in interior Alaska in larch, was the larch beetle, *Dendroctonus simplex*. At McGrath, where they did have quite a bit of mortality to larch, I observed that the beetle hibernated in the bases of the large trees in the wintertime. This was very apparent by late August when the beetles would accumulate there in great numbers, almost, well exactly like the Engelmann spruce beetle here in Colorado. That was an interesting thing, and I don't think that that point has ever been adequately followed up by subsequent forest entomologists. George Downing was the man who replaced me in 1956, and there've been several others since then.

Getting back to Juneau, I was in the field working out of a research lab that they had down at Hollis, it's on Prince Wales Island, which would be west of Ketchikan. That would be Ray Taylor's crew. He had a relatively large group of men working then. The work at the Hollis camp was to measure the impact of logging, mostly soil erosion, over the duration of the regeneration of the forest, and stream bed alterations as a result of the cutting. They were in a place called Maybeso Creek, an area of clear cut that must have been, oh, probably, as big as one of the ski bowls at Vale, which would be almost a section of land, I'm going to guess a clearcut of 500 acres. The study showed the effect of large-scale cutting. The crew did leave a strip near the riverbeds, and it was very interesting to see their measurements of the river changes before the cut and after the cut. The upshot of the whole thing was that large cuts could be tolerated because erosion was minimal. The major areas where you'd get erosion would be in the logging roads themselves, and that had to be carefully addressed. Otherwise, you'd get an awful lot of siltation at the bases.

Ray Taylor's permanent crew was Andy Anderson, his assistant, who was a silviculturist, John Sandor, who later became the regional forester up there, a lad by the name of John, I can't think of his last name, although we lived in the same apartment for about a year. He must have impressed me quite a bit. Al Harris was there at the time. Paul Hack and "Cappy" Caparaso were sent up in later years, this would be about 1954. He had a large crew that had a very, very difficult job of surveying the timber types and they spent awful long hours in miserable weather trying to develop a good timber type map for the Tongass National Forest.

There wasn't too much in the way of activity on the Chugach N.F. and some BLM lands and I never got over there to examine any serious problems, although John Schmid (Rocky Mtn. Forest Expt. Sta., Ft. Collins), in later years after I had left, was called up to the Chugach to look at an area of spruce beetles attacking white spruce. The cause of that infestation was the same as we frequently see, just bad practice in establishing a power line through the forest. The common way to do it was, when the ground was frozen, just bulldoze everything to the side, clear the area, and as a result there was a tremendous amount of material in which the spruce beetle could develop, very much like the windfall in Colorado, ca. 1950. It appears that bad forest practices is a common event, regardless of where you go, or the time that you go.

Stories



Left: Forest Service boat "Chugach", Juneau, Alaska. ca 1952-1956. Right: Forest Service boat "M.V. Forester", Alaska. Sept. 1955. During McCambridge's assignment at Juneau, transportation to field sites was beginning to switch from boats such as these to aircraft. McCambridge tells a humorous account of Two-gun Sherrick's first try at the helm of the "Maybeso."

Two-Gun Sherrick - One of the temporaries that I had in 1953, was a fellow by the name of Two-gun Sherrick. His real first name was George, but he preferred to be Twogun and thought at one time of making that his legal name. Anyway, Twogun eventually became a permanent employee of the Alaska Forest Research Center. The

Center had a 40-foot boat called "Maybeso", and it was decided that Andy Anderson could train Twogun to be the skipper of that boat.

That brings us to a portion of this diatribe, if you want to call it, to some of the incidences that happened while I was there. The Maybeso was brought up from Seattle by Andy Anderson, and it was moored, as is common, in a small boat harbor with boats of relatively large size. This would be boats from about 40 feet to some as large as Coast Guard boats. So the Maybeso was (laughter) going to take a little run out to see how Twogun Sherrick could handle this boat. He was moored about 200 feet below a very popular restaurant at the Juneau small boat harbor, and I was there the day he took off at the controls. The first element was to back the boat up. He's on the flying bridge, and (laughter) he's moving this boat out, in reverse, and he knew enough to handle the rudder so that he's making a right turn, but somehow the chain-link connection between the flying bridge to the engine room, locked, and he couldn't stop the boat from reverse. Well, he wasn't (laughter) going that fast anyway (more laughter), he plows right into the piling on this restaurant. Now the whole restaurant is shaking, cups are falling, a big hubbub. Poor Twogun's on the bridge, Andy comes up from the engine room, totally, totally lost control. Well, he finally took over the controls and they were able to get the thing out. But (laughter) that was Twogun's introduction to being captain of Maybeso.

Parties - While we're reminiscing, when I first went up to Alaska in '52, Frank Heintzelman was the regional forester. Frank then soon became the territorial governor of Alaska, and it was his custom to put on a Christmas Party for all of the Forest Service personnel. This would be the regional office and the 4 ranger's offices of the Tongass (Juneau, Ketchikan, St. Petersburg, Sitka). Anyway, he'd had these big Christmas Parties and everybody in the Forest Service was invited. And you walk into the governor's mansion, it was a nice little building up on the hill, nice view, and he had a large entryway and a large table. On that table was an excellent selection of booze and scotch and various other libations, very, very impressive, very good. And, at the end of each evening of the festivities,--he had two nights, two separate nights--it was pitiful to see the condition of the stalwart Forest Service crews walking out of the governor's mansion, staggering I guess is a better way. God, we had some good times up there.

Another big party we had was when I was to leave, as were both of the other fellows, John Sandor and Bob, who were being transferred also. We had 104 people in our apartment. We had a two-bedroom apartment in the Mendenhall Apartments, lovely view of the channel. Anyway, we had gone out to the Mendenhall glacier and we'd picked out a piece of ice that had no air in it. The white color in ice comes from air. And this one had somehow had the air squeezed out, we took a large-size wash basin, and we filled it with that ice. We had almost half the amount of ice we brought down six days later in the apartment, still there after 105 people had had enough for libations. It was a very interesting thing that. I don't know what the temperature of that ice would have been, but I suspect it must have been a little bit below 32. It was a lovely thing to see.

In that regard, Dave Wagstaff and I, one day went out to the LeConte glacier, which is, oh, east southeast of Petersburg. It's a very, very active glacier, spits out glacial ice all the time, calving all the time. It's a great rookery for seals, both hair seals and fur seals. It was quite a thing to be sitting on the bank and watch, oh maybe 50 yards away an iceberg perhaps as big as a large apartment house quietly going sailing by softly, at about, oh I'd say, 2-3 miles an hour, as the tide was going out, and in the course of watching icebergs go by, one came by that actually looked black. When there's no air in the ice, it sort of takes on the color of the water. The water in southeast Alaska was never blue, it was always black or very, very dark in color. And, when those icebergs freeze and you get a chance to walk near one, on the ice, if you get two planes that are parallel, you can see a distance of about 30-40 feet through this ice. Very interesting phenomenon.

Bear Scares - One of the interesting aspects of the work up in Alaska, I worked alone almost always, except on the occasions when I'd be working with crew down in Juneau. But I worked alone everywhere. On the mainland, and on three of the islands, the Baranof, Chichagof and Admiralty, we were required to carry a gun. So, one of my first purchases was to buy two 300 magnum Remingtons for use when we were out. Which brings up a couple of interesting stories.



Frank Hutchison and I had to go to a bay north of Juneau to examine dying of spruce, actually it turned out to be water impoundment that was causing the death. Anyway, on the way back, walking in the muskeg was really tiring us out, so we sat down by the trail and took our knapsacks off and were resting. I got up and put on my knapsack and reached down to pick up my gun, and not 20 feet away a beautiful grizzly bear, silvertip (the reason they're called silvertips is the tips of their hairs are silver, and it's a beautiful animal). About 20 feet away coming down the trail, this silvertip jumps over a log and, my eyeballs must have been as big as saucers, I pulled back the bolt on the Remington, and that damn bolt came out in my hand. Well, the noise of the bolt coming out (bears don't have the best of eyesight) scared the grizzly bear, and he jumped off to the side. He wasn't 10 feet away from both of us, Hutch was still on the ground trying to get his gun raised. It was a sorry affair.

Anyway, another experience I had was at Yakutat. The forest at Yakutat was being logged and the logs put on barges and taken to Seward for initial manufacture. Frank Heintzleman had adopted a policy that logs could not be taken to Japan or elsewhere

without having some primary manufacture. At Yakutat, a lot of the area was being logged, mostly large Sitka spruce, some of them six feet in diameter. It appeared to me to be one of the original forests because the layer of duff on the ground was only about two inches thick, and then it was glacial outwash. But anyway, the area was being logged, and I was up there trying to determine if the spruce beetle was going to be any kind of a problem, once again working alone. Well, I came to a little ravine, and in all my years of working in the forest I have never walked backwards in the woods. But I started down this little wash I suppose it is, and I ran into an awful clump of what's called Devil's Club. It has a big leaf like, oh, somewhat like a huge grape, rhubarb maybe, and the stems are all spiny, and miserable things. Anyway, I decided not to get into this Devil's club, and I hadn't come down the ravine too far, so I started to walk backwards, and I looked to my left, and I saw a small bear coming up the hill. Well, any time you see a small bear, any kind of a small bear, you should be wary. Shortly behind the small bear, was a huge brown bear with a hump on its back, and it was a brown bear, a grizzly. As soon as that female bear saw me, she came right at me, charged. My problem right away, and I'd given this some thought, when could you find a tree small enough to climb. I took off running. I didn't have my gun with me then. I had a single-bitted ax. Anyway, I took off running and finally found a small spruce tree about, oh, I went back later on to measure it, it was about 15 inches in diameter at the base. How I shinnied up that thing I'll never know. Anyway, I'm way up, probably about 20 feet in the air, and that female bear came right at that tree and was slamming it with her claws. Most of you know that grizzlies can't sheath their claws so they can't climb trees, but anyway that bear was at the bottom of the tree, groaning and moaning and slapping at the tree, and finally the small one took off, and so the mother bear took off, and at that point then I realized that I had to come down, but I didn't know where the bear was, so I had to get back to the logging camp. It was then that I really was scared. I did not know where the bear was. I knew the bear still had the cub. My plan to get back to the logging camp was to get down to the bay and walk along the water, and if the bear came out, to run out into the water and try to get underwater. Well, the temperature of the water--Malaspina Glacier is right across there--the temperature of the water was probably in the 40's. I probably wouldn't have lasted very long. Anyway the bear never did come back. One of the logger's hobby was photography, and he was taking pictures for Wild Kingdom or something like that, it was a series on wildlife, and he was very interested, so he got his camera and we went back to see if we could find the bear. We never did, but he subsequently got some very good pictures, not too far away from the area where they were logging.

Hollis Camp - Getting back to the Hollis Camp where the research was done, the crew was building a small soils lab, a little building probably about 15 feet x 20 feet, and Ray Taylor told me to go and shingle the roof. So I went with Dave Wagstaff to shingle the roof. Now this building was about, oh, the top was probably 18 feet high, and it was on a little bit of a hill, so on the uphill side it wasn't too far off the ground. We had never shingled a roof, but we understood that you shingle from the bottom up. So we started on the lower layer of shingles, and soon we had to get up on the roof. Well, the roof was pretty steep, so, picture this, we put two ropes on the low side of the cabin, threw the ropes over the top, and tied ourselves to the other end of the ropes as we continued to

shingle on up the roof. In addition to that, we had placed a ladder from the ground up to the edge of the roof, and a second ladder, we tied (chuckle) a couple of short boards at 90 degree angle from the top of the ladder, and we draped it over the peak of the roof, not attached to anything else except just by gravity holding on. OK. So we're shingling and finally we run out of shingles, and I said to Dave, "Dave, how about going down and bring up some bundles of shingles?" So Dave untied himself from this rope, continued to walk down the ladder, and reached a point where he walked beyond where the ladder was resting on the edge of the roof. Well, the ladder swung up in a big arc, and Dave fell off, landed on a stump, and bounced into a deep layer of sphagnum moss. He wasn't exactly wounded too badly, so he started to get up. As he was getting up, the ladder, which had been swinging in a big arc, finally came down and ricocheted off the stump that Dave had just hit, and hit Dave on the head as he was getting up and knocked him down again. He was in a pitiful shape. I had to write an accident report concerning that event, and whilst most of us thought it was funny, Ray Taylor was incensed that we were so loose with safety.

In that respect, a couple of weeks later, Ray Taylor's coming down to the Hollis Camp to examine the crew and the work that's going on down there. He had flown down to Ketchikan and been picked up by the Forest Service boat. Anyway, Ray's on the stern of the boat, and he gets to our wanigan. That's a house that's built on some logs, and they were quite comfortable, we had no complaints. Anyway, Ray's boat gets to the edge of the wanigan boat, and Ray steps--we have a little platform in the back of the wanigan boat--stepped out to get on the wanigan boat. When he did that, the boat coming in a little bit too fast, had to be reversed quickly. Well, in reversing the blade, the skipper, Andy Anderson, caused some waves to push the boat away from the wanigan. There was a pike pole, resting horizontally on some supports along the side of the wanigan. Ray, with one foot on the wanigan boat and one foot on the boat as it was spreading itself away, reached up and grabs the pike pole. The pike pole is not attached to anything. It came off the stand, and Ray fell between the wanigan house boat and the other boat, a very dangerous situation because there soon was enough ocean surf to force the boat back in. Anyway, the crew pulled Ray back into the boat. Ray was a marvelous man and had a great sense of humor, but he looked dyspeptic all the time. Anyway, they dragged Ray out of the water and he lines the crew up, tells the crew to get into line, and he gave them a lecture. In later years when he lived down at Pebble Beach, and I used to go and visit him and talked about that scene. He could laugh then, but it was no laughing at the time. So we got a big letter from the regional office about safety. But that's the way things went.

More Bears - I had been sent over to Admiralty Island, which has since been declared a national bear refuge, the whole island. It's a very pretty island, it's fairly good sized, and it has some nice lakes, very good fishing, and of course there are platforms here and there for bear watching. But when I was up there, there was none of that. Anyway, I was sent over to look at an infestation once again in Sitka spruce, and I was sent to an old Forest Service cabin that people could use for overnight stays, you had to register in Juneau, and a plane flew me in, and I was to stay as I recall overnight, and the plane was supposed to come back and pick me up the next day. I spent the first day looking at

some of the infestation, and it wasn't a very active thing. It didn't look too bad. Some of Sitka spruce damage was worrisome, but I didn't think the thing was going anywhere, and it turned out it didn't. But anyway, on the second day I was walking up, a sort of a trail from a dock. There's not a soul, probably not a soul on the whole island. I'm walking up this trail and I see a bear paw print and the water is just beginning to seep into that print. I have a size 8-1/2 shoe, and I had boots on, and I stood in that print with both feet, and no part of my shoes touched the outside area of that print. That impressed me that there was a big bear there, and there are some big brown bears on Admiralty Island. Well, I had my gun then, so I had lost an awful lot of interest in the job at that point as I was thrashing around in the woods, but with the gun I figured, well if the thing got close enough I'd be able to knock it down, and as it turned out then, I spent the rest of the day looking at the infestation. And then, toward afternoon, I went down to the dock where the plane was going to pick me up. It was kind of a nice afternoon, the sun was out for a change, and I put the gun behind me on, oh, sort of like a little bench, and I was leaning against one of the pilings that held up the dock. Well, I guess I'd placed the gun wrong. Anyway, I'm thinking about this bear, and, in the meantime the gun that had been placed a little bit wrong started to slide, and it made a sound like "rrrump", and I'm thinking about the bear. There's such a thing as levitation. I was sort of supine, sitting there, and without any visible effort I raised up from the ground and turned around in the air and grabbed for the gun. Naturally I missed everything. There was no bear there, fortunately, but God did that scare me.

In these wild meanderings about the bear, if I'd had to do it over again, and I would recommend this to people that are up there alone a lot in the woods, I would have carried a sawed-off shotgun. Vern Joya, who was the ranger at Sitka, his boat captain, and his assistant district ranger, were on a trail on Chichagof Island (Sitka's on Baranof Island and Chichagof Island is just north of it; Admiralty is to the east, and they have big bears on all of them). They were on a trail looking over a future logging site, and they came across a cub and a full-grown male and full-grown female. They were equipped at the time with two 30.06's and a shotgun. The female bear started to attack them. By the time the whole fracas was over, the female bear took five shots of the 30.06 and one shot of the shotgun before it went down. They had one shell left in the shotgun, but instead of the male attacking, it smelled the blood from the female and took off with the cub. That was a close call, and those guys were still shaky a year after when I saw them.



Flying - Talking about being shaky, I used to smoke a pipe. When cigarettes got to 50 cents a pack, I said that's too much and I started to smoke a pipe. So I was smoking a pipe, and all of the work we did in the air was in a little Cessna or a Piper, two-person or a four-person plane, depending. Anyway, one day I had the pipe in my mouth, and aerial mapping. I'm sure I wasn't smoking the pipe in the plane. Anyway, we were going up a draw on Prince of Wales Island, and we got to the end of the valley and I was concerned pretty much with the mapping of the black-headed budworm outbreak, as I looked up, by God we were at the end of the valley, and the pilot made a turn, and there were trees, a treetop between me and the outer end of the wing. Well, I bit the pipe stem so hard it fell off. (chuckle) Another time we were returning over the Taku glacier. Taku glacier's very close to the Alaska border there, between Alaska and Canada. Anyway, we're coming to a wall, a large vertical wall of rock. I'd flown quite a bit in the Navy and knew that when the throttle is at full power, and the altimeter is going down, that we're in a sort of a serious situation. Well, I suppose I was nervous, but the pilot didn't seem to be. He must have assumed that as the wind came over that barrier it would produce an upwind, which seemed impossible to me. Anyway, it turned out that just before he (chuckle)--once again I had a pipe in my mouth--just before he got to this

wall, somehow, I'm still watching the rpms, he stopped going down, and I guess he was high enough he gave it a little pull, not enough to stall it by any means, and over the top he went. Well, there goes another pipe. That one I bit in half, and I said, well I've got to quit (chuckle), it's too hard on the teeth. But a lot of our air flights were, for the most part, very very safe. The planes were in good shape. Because of the bad weather that we would usually get in August and September, we would map on clear days, and you'd get a spell of maybe four clear days in a row, and when that would happen, we'd fly 10 hours a day. And I would map almost the whole Tongass in that four day period. It was tough on both the pilot and me, but that's the way it went in those days.

Douglas Ski Bowl - I thought that the social life there in Juneau was very interesting. There were a whole bunch of professional people, both men and women, and we had a good time together up there. A whole bunch of us were installing an outhouse in a ski area over on Douglas Island. I was working with a girl who since has become a lawyer, a very nice soul, and our job was to nail in all of the parts that had been made below and put on a snow cat and all of us would ride on the snow cat. In this outhouse we were trying to determine how high to put in the seat. The seat had been cut and a frame had been, oh, tacked in by another crew the week before. So we were trying to determine the height, so I volunteered to put the seat across what I thought were secure boards, and at a certain height, and I said I'll sit down and see if it feels about right. Lo and behold the supports for the seat were only tacked in anyway. The whole thing gave way. There I am (laughter), hung up in the damn seat of this toilet, in the pit that had been dug. I would have been trapped, but (laughter) she had to pull me out of this damn hole. Pitiful situation, but that's the way it went. That was a swell place at Douglas Ski Bowl to ski. Since then they've developed a nice area a little bit north of there, and I've never been on it, but it was a marvelous place and some of the best powder skiing you could imagine. One day we were skiing in approximately four feet of light powder, powder that was so light that you sank, and the only thing you saw of the skiers coming down was the shoulders and the head. I'll tell you it was hard to breathe in those conditions, but was it grand, and we frequently got, oh, a foot of light, I mean Champagne powder. You could do anything in it. And there was this lovely bowl; it was a beautiful place to ski. A small version of Schweitzer Basin north of Coeur d'Alene.

Fun at the Red Dog - Almost every Friday night, maybe Friday or Saturday night, the Forest Service bunch would get down in Red Dog Saloon. It was a saloon down in a, some might think an undesirable part of town, as I later found out, but anyway, the Red Dog Saloon was a swell place to go. In the back room they had a ragtime piano player by the name of Bob Darts, and he was a corker. So they had a couple of big round tables and we Forest Service guys would sit there and some of the girls, schoolteachers and the nurses and the professional people that we knew would come in, and we'd be dancing. One night in particular one of the guys, while dancing with a girl, got near a table, and somebody spilled a glass of beer down his shoe. Well (laughter), there on the dance floor he takes off his shoe, takes off his sock, and threw the sock up against the wall and it stuck there. I mean, it was a class act all the way, but the piano playing was great, and we had a lot of fun in that place.

Concluding Thoughts - One interesting facet about living, sometimes in isolated conditions, when we would be out at the Hollis Camp on Prince Wales Island, we would sometimes be there for three weeks, and there'd be just maybe three of us. It became apparent that we all felt our health was very good in the third week of being out at that camp, and without one exception when we would come to town, usually Ketchikan, in a couple of days later we'd all have colds. It was interesting to us that we thought we were building up an immunity in such a short period of time, and how short a period of time it took us to become infected with diseases that were in the general population. It was an interesting aspect.

Two of the people that I worked under that I didn't mention, one was Art Greely who was the regional forester after Frank Heintzleman. Art Greely was a people person, a very very fine man. He had been stationed in Portland in a forest survey position and then was appointed regional forester of Alaska. He was a very nice man to work with, and the whole Forest Service composition, with just very very few exceptions, were very much like a family up in Alaska. Juneau was absolutely isolated except by air or by ship, and so you got along with the people, and it was a very nice experience working with Ray Taylor who was a nice man with a good crew. We had a lot of fun, we had a lot of laughs, and the people all worked very very hard under, generally speaking, miserable conditions in the field. Before I took up with the pipe I was smoking cigarettes. You'd be out there in your rain hat and your rain jacket and rain pants and it'd be raining like mad, and you'd light up a cigarette underneath your hat, first having dumped the water out of it, light up a cigarette, hold it in your left hand with your clipboard while you were taking notes, and by the time you got through writing a few notes, the water would have gone down the sleeve of your rain jacket. So each time you'd light a cigarette you got, if you were lucky, two puffs in the rain, you'd lower your left arm and the cigarette would go out as water collected in your sleeve came rushing down your arm.

The other man that I worked with was Bob Robinson. He was the chief forester for the BLM in Alaska, and he was, once again, a people person, a very very likable man. He finally married, settled down in Sequim, WA, rain shadow of the mountains there, actually not a bad place to live. Bob was just a marvelous man. He was very practical, he recognized the difficulty of trying to manage, or let's say more adequately, just to preserve the resources that were up there, the area was so vast and the crews were so limited, and it was so difficult to get to some of it. His job was fire suppression mostly, although he did supply me with all of the airplanes that I needed to fly around the timbered part of Alaska, the interior. But he was very very realistic in his approach to exactly what could be done and actually what should be done. He wasn't romanticizing any of the situations. He recognized that the natural resources, the timber resources of the interior are limited in their size, are extremely hard to get to unless you'd be logging in the winter, and all you had was cover vegetation.

One of the difficulties, talking about vegetation, in the interior of Alaska it was so hot, I was at Ft Yukon, which is north of Arctic Circle, looking at, once again, some spruce beetles and flying out of there up to the Brooks range, mapping some spruce beetle

infestation, and it was so hot that you were suffering of thirst all the time. I remember we had some butter and we scratched down through some sphagnum moss, I'd say probably a foot, and we reached the first layer of permafrost. We put the butter and milk down there, covered up with the sphagnum moss, and it stayed nice and cool all the days we were there. This was in the summertime and it never got below 98 degrees at Ft Yukon. Needless to say that prior to the midsummer the mosquitoes were bad, and they had an insect called white socks (Simuliidae), which had a piercing and biting mouth part, and it would take a little chunk out of you. At McGrath, I remember walking, oh I had some insect repellent on me, it wasn't very good, but we walked a distance of about a hundred feet from a little road, and the white socks and mosquitoes were so bad that we were desperate to get back into the car and get away. Our arms, any parts of us that were exposed, were all spotted with little drops of blood where these white socks had bit us. It was a pitiful situation.

Well Malcolm, that about sums it up. I think I've covered some of the things that you wanted. It's a kind of a rambling type thing. I have a few more slides to send you of some of the personnel, and I'll be doing that. Use any or all of this part. If you do transcribe this tape, I would like to have the tape back to send it to my nephew who's always been asking me to recount some of the stories of when I worked up in Alaska. So I'll be seeing you Mal, and I hope you can use this material.

Color Slides provided by W. F. McCambridge:

Slide 1. W.F. McCambridge (L) and Frank Hutchinson at Herber R., Alaska, July 1953. "Ran into a silvertip grizzly on this trip."

Slide 2. "Old sourdough" W. F. McCambridge beside survey float plane, Wrangell, Alaska. 1954.

Slide 3. Forest Service boat "Chugach", Juneau, Alaska. ca 1952-1956.

Slide 4. Forest Service boat "M.V. Forester", Alaska. Sept. 1955.

Slide 5. Self portrait: W.F. McCambridge, Alaska Forest Research Center, Juneau. Dec. 1955.

Footnotes:

¹ *This oral history account was solicited by Malcolm M. Furniss, Co-Ch. Western Forest Insect Work Conference. Five color slides accompanied it (captions appended) and were returned.*

² *At the time, Robert L. Furniss was in charge of the Portland Forest Insect Laboratory, Division of Forest Insect Investigations, Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine. He had, at the request of the Alaska Region, Forest Service, examined insect outbreaks on the Tongass and Chugach N.F. in 1946, 1948, 1950 (diaries and photos in possession of M. M. Furniss).*