

RECORDED INTERVIEW OF TIM STEIDEL

CONDUCTED BY KAREN BREWSTER
(SUSANNAH DOWDS LISTENING)

IN SKAGWAY, ALASKA

OCTOBER 3, 2018

ORAL HISTORY 2017-01-85

KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
TRANSCRIBED BY RUTH SENSENIG

[00:00:00]KAREN BREWSTER: All right. Today is October 3, 2018, and this is Karen Brewster. And I'm here with Tim Steidel in Skagway, Alaska, for the Klondike Gold Rush Historical Park Oral History Project. And we are also accompanied by Susannah Dowds, who's listening in, who's working here as a historian. Uh, so Tim, thank you --

TIM STEIDEL: Absolutely.

KAREN BREWSTER: For making time today. [00:00:27]Um, so just to get us started, can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your background?

TIM STEIDEL: Ok. Well, I'm the chief ranger here at the park. I oversee the public safety program and the backcountry operations for the Chilkoot Trail, and I have law enforcement program, um, trail center operation backcountry permit office, and uh, oversee just the three units of the park, the White Pass, the Chilkoot, and the Historic Skagway unit, so. [00:01:00]I've been at the park since -- arrived in April of 1994, and uh, at the time, I came in as a -- pretty much an entry-level law enforcement ranger. Um, although I was overseeing the backcountry ranger operation at that time, working for the chief ranger. And, uh, I started out in Virginia with the National Park Service, actually in 1987, although I did a stint in Youth Conservation Corps, YCC, in high school with Prince William Forest Park in, I think it was 1980 --

KAREN BREWSTER: With which park?

TIM STEIDEL: Uh, Prince William Forest Park in the National Capital Region.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

TIM STEIDEL: It was in northern Virginia. And, uh, that was in 1985, when I was in high school. [00:01:49]So I went through the Cooperative Education Internship Program with Virginia Tech, and kinda alternated between school and work. Spent one season of that at Assateague Island National Seashore in Maryland, and then just before they were going to hire me permanent at Prince William Forest Park at the end of my program when I graduated college, I had applied for an intake training program, which brought me to Alaska. So I got that and came to Seward, Kenai Fjords National Park, in 1991, in June, and I worked there to finish out my cooperative -- or the intake program. Um, until March-April of '94, when I was able to land the position here in Skagway.

[00:02:38]KAREN BREWSTER: So are you originally from Virginia?

TIM STEIDEL: I am, yes. I was born and raised in Virginia. Yeah, so.

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KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

TIM STEIDEL: So I met my wife when I was at Kenai Fjords National Park, and she was actually working for the Alaska Natural History Association, which is now Alaska Geographic, and um, she had come down at one Christmas to winter care-take at the glacier cabin, down at Exit Glacier there in the park. And um, by the time I came to move to Skagway, I proposed to her, and she came back in October of that year, and we got married. Actually, went back to Seward to get married, but she then moved over to Skagway with me after that.

[00:03:18]KAREN BREWSTER: Great. So what -- can you tell me a little bit about this program that you were talking about and the co-op program and the intake program, what that is?

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. Um, today it's called Pathways. Back at the time when I was in college, it was the Cooperative Education Program, and it's kind of like a student internship where you have an opportunity to do, um, enter into an agreement between the school and the agency, um, the park of, I guess the employee's choice as long as they are able to find a park willing to enter into a relationship like that. And since I had this prior Youth Conservation Corps summer that I worked with the park, there was a chief ranger there who remembered me, and he was predisposed then to kind of put a good word in, and the park had an opening and an opportunity to enter into an agreement like that with Virginia Tech. So, um, it was about six-year, or a six-quarter program, and you alternate part-time, about half-time in school, half-time in work. And then when I graduated from that, as I recall, the intake program, because I was still part of that cooperative ed program, you have different types of hiring authorities that you can be brought into the intake program. And that was the cooperative ed program was one of them, so much like the Pathways, it made me eligible for permanent hire. And then the intake program was able to pick me up. [00:04:42]The intake program is an upward mobility type of training program in the Park Service that's about every three to five years it seems like over the years it would get congressional budget support to have it. And then it would get cut for a few years. So it would run three years. It's been reduced to one or two years now. Um, and you get assigned to a park. In my case, they were trying to create diversity so that people would have different experiences. I came from the DC area, so they wanted to move you to a more rural area. If you were, in some cases, in my class we had people who were at Yellowstone, working seasonally, and they qualified for the program. But they moved them to Washington, DC.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: Worked out a lot better in my situation. Some of those that went to the big cities weren't quite as happy about it.

KAREN BREWSTER: No.

[00:05:31]TIM STEIDEL: The idea is that within your three-year term, at least once, maybe a couple times, you'll move. That year, everybody -- nobody moved until their last year, so it was kinda hard for some people. But I loved it. I loved working at Seward in Kenai Fjords. I loved Alaska.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: Soon as I got off the plane, I just called my mom when I got to Seward and said, I'm not coming home, Mom. I was on a two-year plan, three-year plan, maybe.

KAREN BREWSTER: Uh-huh.

TIM STEIDEL: But -- but yeah, the -- the -- it was -- I spent the whole three years pretty much at Kenai Fjords in Seward. And at the end of the program, they try to get you placed within the region. Ideally, the region's supposed to reserve a spot somewhere. So it turned out Klondike had one.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: And it was real similar to Seward.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: As far as community and coastal park environment.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: And it was a good fit for me. I think everybody was just going to kind of figure it was a two-year stint, see how it went, and I ended up being here the whole time, so yeah.

[00:06:29]KAREN BREWSTER: That's great. Well, so when you were starting out in college, were you planning to go into law enforcement in a park-type setting, or what inspired you to do that?

TIM STEIDEL: Actually -- right. I actually wasn't. I was in -- working -- at college, I was in the School of Forestry, and my background was wildland recreation, so I was interested in the parks, I always was. I actually -- from my earliest memories wanted to be a park ranger. I wasn't sure -- necessarily sure what all that meant between a Forest Service and a ranger, park ranger.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: But as I got closer to college, in high school, I had a really good English teacher, actually had us doing what she called an I-Search project. It was a research project preparing yourself for the college or career of choice that you wanted to go into.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

TIM STEIDEL: Identify schools in your area of study that you're interested in, what the requirements were, high school requirements for classes to be able to be eligible to get in.

KAREN BREWSTER: Cool.

TIM STEIDEL: And what testing requirements. So it really prepared me well, so that when I got to my college and learned about the programs, like the cooperative ed program, there was only a handful of us that really knew what they were about and signed up for 'em. A lot of students, unfortunately, just didn't know about them, and I think they all ended up a little bit behind the curve when it came to landing jobs outside of college, so.

[00:07:45]KAREN BREWSTER: So your college degree is in forestry, wildland recreation?

TIM STEIDEL: Um-hm. Um-hm. Is it. Yeah, I kinda did a, not really a major, but they had specialty areas in the School of Forestry at Virginia Tech, and wildland recreation was my specialty. But I also did the silviculture side for forest timber harvesting operations, so I kind of had both that way. I went an extra year, actually, to get that accomplished. And, um, so then my experience at Prince William Forest Park for all those seasons really -- uh, I was in natural resource management, actually, and, um, I really enjoyed that. Predisposed with my area of study to pursue a career in natural resources, and it wasn't until I got to the intake program that they didn't really have a natural resource specialist position, but, um, they had a generalist ranger, and I actually spent most of my first year at Kenai Fjords in interpretation.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

TIM STEIDEL: And um, it was at the end of that that we had an opportunity. One of the benefits of that program was funded out of the Washington office, so the park didn't have to front all the costs for the training and the development.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, right.

TIM STEIDELL: And you're supposed to spend about half your time in development and training, so I started shifting it toward a more generalist ranger stint, and it's a little easier to go to FLETC in those days and get your law enforcement commission, whether you're

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KAREN BREWSTER: FLETC?

TIM STEIDEL: FLETC's the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

TIM STEIDEL: So whether you were in natural resource management, interpretation, even the superintendent in some parks, um, had their law enforcement commission. And I -- I got it on my, well, would've been my Individual Development Plan in those days, um, and got it approved for funding, and they -- they sent me to FLETC and let me get my law enforcement commission. [00:09:28] And the park at that time didn't have any law enforcement rangers below the chief ranger, so it was good timing to step in and fill a need that was there, and uh, and that just kind of set me up to continue on down the road more, more into law enforcement emergency services, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah.

[00:09:47] KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And so you came here to Klondike park in April of '94, you said?

TIM STEIDEL: Uh, that's right. April of 1994, I arrived in Skagway.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok. And so, you -- what were you doing? You said you were just sort of a general ranger. What's --

TIM STEIDEL: I was a general ranger, um, but I --

KAREN BREWSTER: What does that mean?

TIM STEIDEL: A generalist ranger, um, today it's very different. Back in the day, the 0025 Generalist Ranger really worked in a lot of different areas. Um, you could be hired as a resource person but also still do interpretation. And maybe still do some law enforcement. We weren't really specialists -- specialized in law enforcement in those days. You did have positions that were specialized, but a lot of your generalist rangers had commissions, but they didn't do, you know, more than 50 percent of their job in law enforcement. [00:10:34] In those days we used to, you know, keep our firearms in our locker, and only on rare occasions when something's happening, unfolding, and we'd go to our locker and throw -- throw our gear on and call into service and go. Um, you see less and less of that these days.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: So we've become -- with ranger careers and ranger futures, we became a lot more specialized in law enforcement, and a lot of those generalist positions have -- have really disappeared in the Lower 48 and they're starting to disappear in Alaska. We were kind of the last holdout, stronghold, for generalist kind of rangers. [00:11:09] You'll see the difference between my generation and these new generation rangers coming in, where

I always describe it to people, I was a ranger first and got my law enforcement. Today they're law enforcement first and decide, parks are a neat, nice environment to go work in, so they come out and become rangers.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: It's a -- you know, it's a small difference, but it -- but those who have been around can see the difference in priorities and the nature of the work that the rangers are, kind of, are drawn to.

[00:11:36]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Yeah, and nowadays, there's interpretive specialists.

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: And managers and rangers and it seems very specialized.

TIM STEIDEL: It's true. Yeah, they all have specialized now, and it's professionalized in a lot of ways. But because we haven't, as an agency, in my feeling, expanded, um, in depth and scope to meet the needs of all the park job requirements in all those areas, 'cause we specialize now, we don't have enough resources, money, and support to actually properly staff all of those in specialized functions. And law enforcement here is really struggling with that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, really?

TIM STEIDEL: Because it's just hard to keep up with all the requirements, whether, you know, we're saying we're not generalists anymore, we're specialized, but we're doing aircraft, aviation management and safety, we're doing, um, fee collection, we're still doing structural fire management and wildland fire response. Uh, we're still doing permits management, commercial operations. So all of a sudden now, we're supposed to be specialized in law enforcement, but we still have to make sure all these other things are getting done. So it's been a challenge in Alaska, and I think across all the parks, to be able to still fulfill all those roles, but still work in a specialized or professional world that we're in today, so.

[00:12:54]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, and I would think that each park has different needs, you know. As you say, a park in Washington, DC --

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- or Yosemite versus Skagway, --

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- have different needs, both in terms of law enforcement and all the other positions.

TIM STEIDEL: Absolutely, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And if they're trying to make it generic across the board, --

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: that might be difficult.

TIM STEIDEL: Right. Right. And that's very difficult to do. But the parks are so varied and diverse across the nation. Um, we don't fit a cookie cutter --

KAREN BREWSTER: No.

TIM STEIDEL: -- model for across the agency. But I think we do a pretty good job, as best we can, but it does make for some challenges.

[00:13:32]KAREN BREWSTER: So when you first got here, you know, what kinds of things did you work on?

TIM STEIDEL: So when I first got here, I was a -- I was the only permanent law enforcement ranger working below the chief ranger, and the superintendent was actually commissioned in those days, too. So both of them, while they were in senior management, they could carry a gun and uh, and back up and respond. Superintendent never did that, but the chief ranger, uh, did on a couple of occasions.

KAREN BREWSTER: Who were they at the time? Was that --

TIM STEIDEL: At that time, Clay Alderson was superintendent, and Bruce Reed was the first chief ranger when I got here for a couple of years, before he -- he moved on. I think he -- I think he retired here. I believe he did, um, and then left. Um, but so I was the only permanent chief ranger -- or law enforcement ranger. Um, I wasn't chief. I was an entry-level ranger at that time. And I had a couple of seasonal law enforcement rangers. At one time, three law enforcement seasonal rangers on the Chilkoot Trail. So we actually commissioned all of our backcountry trail seasonals in those days, which we don't today.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

TIM STEIDEL: Because -- a lot of that's because of that specialization and all the required training and travel and background. All the required elements that go into maintaining a full-time permanent commission has just got really expensive. Took much of the year to get it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: And for seasonals, it just was getting harder and harder to work out. They do still have some in the region, but it's a tough program to manage, and especially in a highly politically volatile community where you want some stability and continuity where the people know and build a trust and relationship with the LE rangers. The seasonals, it just took one coming in and having a contact go bad, and I didn't want to say bad, meaning that they were just doing their job, but the local community doesn't like their job.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: And uh, it would, if they didn't have the years of experience to kinda know when to push things hard and when to soft-pedal things, it could lead to set-back in the community with the park and the community relationship ten years, real fast.
[00:15:36]But, um, I was -- I was more of a field ranger, but I was overseeing the backcountry ranger operation. I supervised the trail rangers. We didn't have the trail center in those days, and -- but I was out in the field a lot more. We actually did the Dyea walking tours in those days. For about four or five years, the rangers did those tours around the Dyea town site. So -- so I was actually out there a couple times a week doing those as well, but --

[00:16:03]KAREN BREWSTER: And then did you hike up and down the trail?

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah, more than I do now. Yeah, I was probably up there four, five times a summer. Not many, but occasionally, I'd actually cover a full shift. Uh, 'cause a ranger would get sick or hurt, and we'd have a vacancy there. But yeah, I was definitely out in the field a lot more then.

[00:16:20]KAREN BREWSTER: And what types of things do you encounter when you're out there in the field?

TIM STEIDEL: Um, mostly --

KAREN BREWSTER: Back then?

TIM STEIDEL: Mostly on the trail, I mean, we had a lot of -- pretty quickly, '94 wasn't too bad, by 1995, we had a lot of bear incidents starting to rise. We had a number of cubs, um, twins, being born in '94, and when we saw that, we had a geologist up here, Greg Streveler from Gustavus came to visit and talked to us. When he heard that we were having several sets of twins being born, he said it's usually indicative of a population explosion and an increase. And sure enough, we did. And we weren't as prepared for it in those days, 'cause we didn't have a lot of bear activity in the park prior to that, and all of a sudden, we had an increase in people hiking the trail, too, and the combination of the bears increasing and the people increasing and not good education. [00:17:11] We didn't have the trail center, so only about half of the hikers were being contacted before they'd get on the trail, didn't have a -- we had kind of an honor system permit system, and um, so we -- we had a lot of people doing crazy things out there, putting peanut butter jars on the picnic table, trying to get pictures of the bears coming up and licking out of the jar. We had reports of people petting the bear for pictures. Um, so pretty soon -- I think the first encounter that really sticks out in my mind was at Canyon City suspension bridge going across to the townsite, and we didn't have any bear poles or bear facilities there at that time, and people would drop their packs to go across onto the spur trail, off to the -- it was kind of a tangent trail to the main trail. And they'd drop their packs so they didn't have to carry them for the extra twenty minutes to go in there and back out, and came back and found that a bear had broken into their pack and got into their canned oysters. And bear and good canned oysters. The bears must've loved 'em because he was a problem the rest of the summer for us.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[00:18:05]TIM STEIDEL: And we really had to learn what it meant to do bear hazing, and we really started beefing up our interpretive information and education program and getting - - trying to get information out ahead of time. But, um, so a lot of -- lot of time spent with bears.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: And people, with education. [00:18:20] But, um, you saw a lot less of a prepared hiker in those days, without the trail center. People were bringing suitcases up the trail, like hard-sided luggage suitcases to go up the trail.

KAREN BREWSTER: Were they trying to recreate the gold rush?

TIM STEIDEL: No, I didn't get that sense. They just really were not prepared, didn't have any idea of what hiking remote Alaska mountains would be like.

KAREN BREWSTER: So --

[00:18:44]TIM STEIDEL: We had a couple -- I'll just tell you this one. We had a -- I had a ranger who worked for me, Nancy Shea, when I first got here. At that time, she was probably in her late 40's, and, uh, she was up at Sheep Camp at Mile -- near Mile 13, and had these two young children, probably around the ages of ten, twelve years old, show up at the porch of the ranger station at the end of the day. Wet, cold, and very hungry. No backpacks. Little daypacks. And they'd been each given a hotdog and their grandfather dropped them off at the trailhead and said, "I'll meet you on the other side at um, Log Cabin," where they would hike through and get picked up, if you were doing the whole trail. Well, he thought it was a day hike, and that's how much preparation they'd done. And they got to thirteen miles at Sheep Camp and Nancy put 'em up for the night, fed

'em, and didn't send them the rest of the way over the trail, and brought 'em back out when she came off the trail to reunite with the grandfather. But that's the level of preparation that's -- people were showing up with on the -- at the trailhead.

[00:19:53]KAREN BREWSTER: So explain what the trail center is. People now need permits, and they didn't need permits back then?

TIM STEIDEL: Well, again, it was a kind of volunteer honorary permit. We wanted 'em to have permits, but we couldn't enforce it 'cause we didn't have any way to meet the hikers. We -- it was about 50/50 whether a Dyea ranger ran into them at the trailhead or whether somebody, a ranger on the trail, even passed them or if they were passing too early or late, they didn't see 'em. So, um, it was about 1996 that we actually had -- Cathy Cook was the Chief of Interpretation here, and she's the one actually who had the vision and came to me and said, "You know, Tim, what you need to do is open up a backcountry station and, um, issue permits and have a desk and have rangers assigned that can meet people and have everybody required to come through for orientation and get a permit." [00:20:50]So we started putting some ideas together, started working with Parks Canada, who's been partners with the international park for years at this point, but -- and on the trail. But, um, it was about the right time 'cause they -- they were wanting to charge a fee. Um, they wanted us to charge a fee at the same time, but we didn't have the right political climate at the time to go into fees, and we didn't have the fee revenue legislation we have now with FLREA, Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, I think. Um, so that -- that's what gave us our instrument a little bit later. But at this time, um, Parks Canada was kind of ready to enter into something like a trail center operation. We were starting to get more and more interest. We actually had the little blue building across the street here, the Itjen House, was our first trail center. That had just opened up. It had been a supervisor's office for the restoration crew that were working on the Pantheon, Moore House projects, Peniel Mission. All of those had recently been restored, and that was the supervisor's office. So that all finished. It opened up. They were deciding whether to put it into the lease program. It was kind of an awkward building, they recognized that. May not have made the most economic sense for somebody to take that for their shop where they want to sell jewelry or produce -- or produce, um, product, and you have these little windows that people can't see through, hardly. It just wasn't the most well-designed. It was somebody's home.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: With a unique personality. It wasn't intended to be a storefront. [00:22:25]So it -- the park decided that, yeah, we have this need. It makes sense. We've got two agencies that can come together, and more economically manage and staff this office and take care of both our needs. So by '97 -- I can't remember for sure if it was '96 or '97 when we first opened it, but I know by '97 we would've had it in operation. And the first year, I don't think -- I know we didn't charge a fee. I'm thinking Parks Canada didn't start charging their fee until '98. That was the big centennial. [00:22:58]But they -- they put two people of theirs in the trail center at that time, and we put one. So we had three, what we now call visitor service assistants, they would've probably just been generalist park rangers in that day, GS-4's, even 3's, maybe, for awhile. And they were in there to give orientations and prepare hikers about what to expect, safety concerns, bear, avalanche safety, um, permit conditions, backcountry policies. It was real important, we had to

emphasize differences between Canada and the US and our different policies. Um, we have dishwasher pits on our side because our ground table's not quite --

KAREN BREWSTER: Groundwater.

TIM STEIDEL: I mean, I'm sorry, we started out trying to do some dishwasher pits. They failed 'cause our groundwater's too high. We actually have -- they have dishwasher pits on their side 'cause they don't have the groundwater issues, but we have a good-flowing river that will wash, you know, as long as -- the gray water away, as long as they strain out their particulates of their food and solids. [00:24:02]But in Canada if they do that, it goes into the lakes and sits there. And it becomes, you know, fungal blooms and things.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: And it becomes a real impact. So we have those kinds of differences. We need to educate the users because you're going to do this on our side, but it's going to be very different when you get to Canadian side.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[00:24:19]TIM STEIDEL: Similarly, subsistence uses were very different. Uh, they have -- even though we're in Alaska where there's a lot of subsistence and regulations and allowances, we're not a subsistence park here at Klondike Gold Rush. So a lot of subsistence uses you can maybe do in Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias and Lake Clark, you can't do them here in Skagway in Klondike Gold Rush. On the Canadian side, however, well, they don't have Alaska subsistence per se, they have similar laws and allowances for their First Nations people.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: So um, but at the same time, they have more restrictions on hunting and fishing for others who aren't First Nations people, whereas we have, because of our agreement with the State of Alaska, since we don't own much of the land on the Chilkoot Trail.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

TIM STEIDEL: The state actually does, and now more private and municipal land in ownership, we actually are required under that agreement to manage the land to allow hunting. And fishing was legal anyhow, but hunting is legal on non-federal lands within the park unit, which is, for Lower 48, that's -- you have them, but it's not all that normal.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: So --

[00:25:30]KAREN BREWSTER: Most national parks, there's no hunting other than subsistence.

TIM STEIDEL: Right. Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: So I didn't realize that here that there was that mix with state and federal.

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: That's complicated.

TIM STEIDEL: All because of that agreement, in order for us to manage land that's not our own, but it's in the park, so yeah. Yeah. And that's -- it gets pretty convoluted. It's only state land within 300 feet of the corridor, the trail. Um, so it's not even all the land that's in the park, that's not ours.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: So it really is kind of a law enforcement nightmare for our new rangers to try to learn all this and figure out. It's really one of the things I emphasize with 'em is, know your feet is, um, where you're standing, 'cause it's very different if you're here versus over here.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: As far as how you can enforce or if you even can enforce the law, so.

[00:26:09]KAREN BREWSTER: So once you got the trail center set up, how did you start educating the public? I mean, now everybody knows you gotta get a permit, and --

TIM STEIDEL: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: But they didn't back then.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah, it actually worked out pretty well because we found that most people wanted to come in and get good information. It was a bit of a learning period for a year or two there where we, you know, definitely had some people we missed that got on the trail that hadn't gotten their permits, and we still occasionally have that happen. But it went really pretty well. [00:26:38]We realized when we parked with -- joined up with Parks Canada, that we wanted to streamline the process so that for the user, they weren't duplicating everything. We don't want you to have to go through an orientation with the US and then get an orientation with Parks Canada, go through and get their permit and then come and get -- Canada permit. Pay a US fee, and then pay a Canadian fee. I mean, we wanted to not cause that kind of grief for the hikers, so -- so we really joint -- came up with a joint permit process, one orientation program, and the fee is all included together, collected initially by Parks Canada and then they remit back to us at the end of the year, couple times during the year, our portion of it, so. For the user, it's really pretty much a one-stop kind of operation.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:27:23]TIM STEIDEL: But um, but it -- it doesn't come without its management challenges to make all that happen with the currency exchanges and things like that. But it went pretty well, considering that you're working with an international entity, having some of their employees living in the US for part of the year, and exchanging funds across the border. We -- we -- when we approached Washington, basically the word is, if you can come up with something that's working for you, don't involve us because it'll -- we'll probably shut it down, so. Um, we have a letter of concurrence. We can't call it an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) or an agreement because that would become an international treaty, which we're not allowed to enter into. So um, we have this kind of formal, informal letter of concurrence that each agency agrees to. This is what we're going to provide. This is our expectation. And we provide -- provided the building over there, one employee working in the trail center, um, pretty much utilities included. And Parks Canada provided a 1-800 reservation line and somebody in Whitehorse to work that, two employees in the trail center, and the CAMIS -- which is a big one, the CAMIS reservation system, which is their Canadian -- it started out as a hotel reservation system, and they tried to make it -- adapt it to backcountry camp setting, which was a little weird. CAMIS has not always been a real user-friendly system that way, but it worked, and each year, we keep getting it to work better as we work with the software programmers to --

[00:28:53]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I know Parks Canada has a whole reservation system for campgrounds.

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cause I've used it for their eastern parks.

TIM STEIDEL: Ok. Real similar to the ones we have in our national fee program.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah, and um, I don't know how much pressure they get to go to that. I know we get pressure sometimes to think about it for our side of the operation, but because it's all managed and self-contained by Parks Canada, and then we just get checks from them.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: There's no pressure to us to say you have to do it. Um, but I wouldn't be surprised if someday Parks Canada follows similar suit and makes some good on their national program, but.

[00:29:28]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it's interesting, I didn't realize that so much was done with Parks Canada.

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: You know, I think of, oh, you come hike the trail, you get to Skagway, and you go through the US Park Service.

TIM STEIDEL: Um-hm. Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: And I didn't realize they had such a role in it. I mean, I knew they managed part of the trail, but.

TIM STEIDEL: Right. Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: I figured the whole permitting -- 'cause don't most hikers start on the Skagway/Dyea end?

TIM STEIDEL: They do. They do. Yeah, it's just -- and part of why that evolved that way is because they were ready to charge a fee, and we weren't. So they had the motivation to get that reservation system, make sure it worked for the money side of things, and then, finally, oh it was a year -- quite a few years later, when -- when FLREA was passed. I can't exactly remember the year that was. It was probably somewhere early 2000, 2004, somewhere in that time frame, uh, we finally decided to look at what areas can we meet the conditions of the law. And they were -- they were motivating us to try to find ways to charge fees, but the Chilkoot Trail was one of those and the Dyea campground.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: Um, for falling under the enhanced -- new enhanced recreation fee criteria. And, um, and then at that point, CAMIS and the Parks Canada system was well established, and we just had to do some modifications to it to work our part into it.

[00:30:48]KAREN BREWSTER: So through this whole setting up this permit system, do you limit how many hikers can go on the trail per day?

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah, that's the beauty again of our partnership with Parks Canada. The bottleneck happens at the Chilkoot Pass, and Happy Camp is our smallest campground in Canada, just on the other side of the pass there, several miles. Um, we -- we could -- we've always had higher capacity at Sheep Camp, even though it wasn't always the best campground design there. We've gone through a few of them over the years, and avalanches and floods and everything else to get us to where we are today with our campground. Um, but we could always accommodate somewhere around eighty campers, if we needed to, whereas Happy Camp was always -- fifty was a pretty big max for them, and they even had to do some improvements to get to that. [00:31:34]So -- so we kind of

had, um, Tom, and there was a Parks Canada employee who'd come back from college, and limits of acceptable change and use capacities was his field of study. And he identified -- did some science research and identified fifty as the maximum capacity for hikers coming over the top of the pass and being able to be supported at both Happy Camp and Deep Lake, the next two campgrounds along the trail, so that became our limit. And it worked for us, too, 'cause that way we didn't have to worry about exceeding our capacities at all.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:32:10]TIM STEIDEL: But we weren't going to send a hundred people over the pass just because we can accommodate 'em and then, you know, create a problem for Parks Canada, so. So in the program there was a map, and you could actually have red flags pop up when you got to your limit at each campground on both sides of the trail. And it helped us to be able to have those established, to really manage use across the trail.

[00:32:33]Also over the years, we observed -- because in those years for a while we had trains that ran every day, and it was pretty good, but there were some years when the trains got down to just a few days a week, and you would see these huge spikes of when hikers, of course, would um, associate their hike and their days on the trail with when they were going to end up at Bennett, with the train. And we would get eighty people at Sheep Camp a night, which now is too many. Um, but back then, it was way too many, but they could all fit into this giant circle. Because the design of the time back in that period was to go out and just clear all the trees out of this area the size of a soccer field, and everybody just set up their tents wherever. It wasn't a real positive experience when we got into 18 -- uh, 1998 and would've been much like the gold rush when there were just way too many people, all crammed into little places there on the trail. Um, but --

[00:33:29]KAREN BREWSTER: So why did they create set campgrounds? I mean, most, you know, trails, you just go off the trail, set your tent up wherever.

TIM STEIDEL: Sure. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So when did that get set up that way and why?

TIM STEIDEL: Well, you'll notice that the campgrounds are aligned with actual town sites from the gold rush, so they're already pre-developed areas, and they were developed there for a reason. It was the only flat, really good developable places to establish a camp.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: In 1898, they were towns. Today they're our campgrounds, and still the same holds true. [00:34:01]Plus everything else was their transportation corridor with all kinds of resources and cultural resources. So the campgrounds themselves have a lot of resources in them, but the whole valley is just filled with cultural resources. So we don't want to develop those areas over those resources that we've decided as a park, especially from that point early on that the -- all the cultural artifacts and remnants would remain in situ on the trail and allowed to kind of naturally, slowly degrade. Um, and -- but we're not to create management activities that just wipe them out, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[00:34:36]TIM STEIDEL: So even in the campgrounds, we go out with archeologists, and we do compliance to make sure that when we identify a place for new campsites, that we're not going to be irreversibly damaging some resources in that area. But um -- but yeah, they -- they kept the campgrounds in the established, developed town sites on the trail,

and they decided it's a lot better for the resource, both natural, really, and cultural, to sacrifice a area for developed camp facilities, as opposed to have people constantly going out into different areas, kind of like a wilderness setting where, you know, you're in a small, narrow valley, so everyone's gonna go off into the same general areas as opposed to wilderness where you disburse your use so that it never really becomes a big impact. You can't do that in this valley, so you just sacrifice the camp areas, um, and do that as minimally intrusive as you can, and then hold 'em there in a well-developed fashion for years, so.

[00:35:30]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Ok. And then, um, as you progressed in your job, through the 90's, you moved up into this chief ranger position in 2006?

TIM STEIDEL: I did. I'm one of those rare beasts that outlasted everybody, I guess, and managed to promote up in the same park. Hasn't happened very often. People have to move. Generally, in the Park Service, you move around a lot because if you want to promote, you've gotta move. But it just -- the timing always worked out, and I've been here a long time. And I didn't have a -- I wasn't one who was motivated to promote all along. I enjoyed the field and enjoyed my job. And wasn't really driven, but everybody, I think, gets to that point where, you know, it's time, and the right time opened up, and there was a reorganization of the park during one of those years where we went through what they called the core, um, budget reduction process. [00:36:27]It was one of those that was probably more of a threat of what was gonna happen than what actually happened, but we had to go through the process, and they actually did enact some strategies to try to reduce the base operating budgets of the park to prepare. And part of that was at the time, the chief ranger, um, well, because of some medical issues, was going to have to get out of law enforcement, and there was an opening in chief of admin, and he had a few years left until he was kind of at his retirement date anyhow, so he transitioned over into the chief of admin position and left a vacancy and asked me if I wanted to step up into the chief ranger role. So at that point, I was finally ready to do that, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: And who was that?

TIM STEIDEL: Um, Reed McCluskey.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. [00:37:15]And uh, so that was about 2008 when I stepped into chief ranger, so about eight years. Ten years, now. So, yeah, it's gone fast.

[00:37:26]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. So how do your duties differ now that you're chief ranger?

TIM STEIDEL: Um, much more administrative, not out on the trail so much as I used to be. Um, not as fun, but rewarding in other ways. Yeah, it -- I've told folks recently, I think the highlight of my career has been able to help other employees get the developmental experiences and opportunities they need to further their careers and to hopefully move on into their dream positions. [00:37:56]And I feel like we've been pretty successful for a lot of our rangers at doing that here, and um, where they may not get a lot of hardcore law enforcement kind of work, um, they get a lot of opportunity that has made them good rangers, I think, for management and -- and being able to see the big picture, and being able to work as a team in a lot of different areas.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: That generalist thing that has disappeared, I still think there's a lot of value in it and merit that makes you good in management, whether it's superintendent or in higher level, uh, management positions throughout the agency. So um, I think it's been a good park that way, developmental for people. [00:38:36] So you know, a lot of my job is supervision. I spend a lot of my -- the supervision doesn't get the credit for how much time, if you really want to do it and put the time into it, it takes. Every little bit of counseling, time of discussion about people's development and opportunities and, you know -- So much of my time is just sitting down one-on-one and talking with the rangers about different contacts I've made out here in town. And it could've gone this way, but I decided to take it this way, and I think this is why it was better to go this approach. Yeah, the book says you could do it this way, but I've learned with some hard knocks that if you take a little bit of a lighter community policing kind of approach, you can get a lot more compliance with a lot less grief. [00:39:20] And those little nuggets I like to share with my employees, and just spending time passing those things on. Um, you know, there's always the disciplinarian side of things that you have to deal with, too, and those take a lot of time. Um, and they're a big drain on the program and morale and everything, so. So that's definitely something that doesn't get credit for when we look at our job descriptions and what we do, of how much time is involved in that. [00:39:48] But no, that's been one of the biggest challenges for me here, especially in the last few years. When A123 came out, that's a new Park Service audit program that every discipline, I think, just about, is touched by it. Rangers are hit hard, and admin's getting hit harder. Maintenance is getting hit hard with it. And it's, uh, I used to sit around with Reed McCluskey and talk a little bit about regulations and laws versus policy, and how everybody likes to throw out, "Well, this is required by law." Well, most of the time, what they're really looking at, it's required by either a policy or maybe a safety regulation. And they're not necessarily wrong, but you'd have the discussion about, you know, we're -- we're two rangers, and we're supposed to somehow make sure that every OSHA vio -- you know, safety requirement is taken care of, and every aspect of the park and facilities here. And, like, if you were to actually do that, you know, you'd be so overwhelmed. Well, when A123 came out, they expected us to do that. The problem is, they didn't ramp up numbers of people or money or resources to make that happen. So you still have a full plate that you've been working on, and now you've got this monstrous program like structural fire, which is incredibly important at a little park like this.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: With all these buildings close together made of wood. Um, it's really important, but we -- it's not like we didn't do anything with structural fire, but you kind of prioritize so what you see and deal with and the time that you have to make it work.

[00:41:10] Well, when structural fire A123 came out, they had to send me these long checklists of pages of things that have to be done, and it became the priority. Um, and some good things happen. I mean, it's -- I don't want to say it was awful. We're paying much more attention to our fire safety than we ever used to. We never have had a big fire in the park either way.

KAREN BREWSTER: Thank goodness.

TIM STEIDEL: But we're putting all the time into it, and energy. [00:41:35]But it means I'm not out there in the park seeing things. I'm not -- small violations may just go unresponded to, like we were talking earlier, altogether. [00:41:44]Um, when you get a big case, you suddenly have to have a talk with the management team. All right, this is going to take almost every bit of my time and my ranger's time to deal with this. Do you want me to drop these other collateral duties, you know? I mean, the fee plan that we're supposed to have done and signed in three weeks? I'm probably not going to get to it. You know, we've got a structural fire inspection coming up, you know. [00:42:05]Um, fortunately this is a small park with a really good teamwork, and maintenance has been a huge support to us to do that. But -- but nonetheless, everybody's strapped, and we've got so much work going on that, um, those collateral duties that are supposed to be less than 20 percent of your time because of A123 now with these long checklists are becoming 40 to 50 percent of your time. And when you have five or six of these, it doesn't take a mathematician to figure out that that's a little bit more than 100 percent. You know, so something's not gonna work here.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[00:42:34]TIM STEIDEL: So those are the kind of things that are, um, in the new age and era of accountability, have for small parks, has made it really difficult 'cause the same one or two people get stuck with everything.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[00:42:48]TIM STEIDEL: And you got those with aviation safety, structural fire, wildland fire in the last year and a half has come up and done the same thing. Um, commercial opera -- I mean all of them are starting to get hit with these. I just had my law enforcement audit. And it's a good audit, and we -- we fared pretty well in the green, but, you know, there's a whole 'nother checklist like that of a lot of things that need to be dealt with here that, um, we just haven't been able to get to.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: Obviously, medical. Search and rescue. I mean, they're all getting the same things, and it's like, I've been swamped. How am I going to do more?

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: I mean, no one else can step up and do it, so.

[00:43:24]KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Well, that's what I was wondering is sort of it's the nature of working for the federal government.

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: And how you manage all that?

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. Well, I often comment, you know, like the OSHA regs, you know, those were written at a time when you had big industry, in the '70's, but you had, you know, all kinds of people working in safety arenas, and -- and it was a big industry, with big money and there was lots of big positions. They probably didn't want to have to staff them all, but the regulations required someone to be able to do all that work. It didn't transfer over to the government very well because we weren't built like that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: You know, everyone thinks of big government, we're -- we're -- we're not built that way. Unless we're willing to sacrifice entire programs in order to put positions in all

these requirements for safety to make sure they're done, you know, which what superintendent wants to do that, you know?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[00:44:10]TIM STEIDEL: Um, it's really -- it's really hard, so -- and it's just complicated now because we've moved into a realm where just in the last few years, I personally see -- view it this way, and I haven't heard the agency step up a whole lot, but we're in a little bit of a crisis when it comes to law enforcement rangers. Uh, I have always struggled to get LE rangers here to Skagway, just because we are not a high-call volume park, and when you come out of FLETC and you have your new commission and, uh, ready to go out and do the job, you want to make your first case, and going to a small park's not gonna help you do that necessarily in your first year or two years, maybe. [00:44:49]Um, so that's a challenge. Even though it's beautiful. I mean, I fell in love with it, and a lot of people do when they come here, but getting 'em here and figuring that out sometimes is a little difficult. [00:45:00]And we're going through a phase now with so many people have retired that it's such a young workforce, that they -- it's part of the program's management strategy, but because they're so young, they haven't had their fill of the busy parks yet so they're not quite ready to say, all right, I'm ready to go to a smaller park now that I've done all that. So we're in a lag, and we don't -- the recruitment's kind of difficult right now. I'm kind of seeing in this generation, there's not a big desire for law -- to do law enforcement. There's a little bit of a, maybe an edge against law enforcement in this young generation's perspective, so it's getting to be pretty bad. [00:45:38]Um, I've struggled to get people here. I've had to find all these unique hiring authorities to bring in good people, and I've done it for about four years. I look to -- as my, all my twenty-five years of being here, I had four years with law enforcement that I had good solid, steady, stable staff with three rangers, even four rangers for a while. And most of those, I had to hire somehow other than the mainstream hiring authority. Federal Careers Intern Program, I'd never used it before. I used it to get Derek Thompson here. He was a great ranger, had him for five years. After I hired him, they -- OPM said we can't use that anymore. [00:46:18]Um, I hired Liz Blakeley off a SCEP program, but it was the student hired just before SCEP, and after I hired her, they changed it to the SCEP that it is, which is still good program, but it's just very different. So it was harder to be able to -- like, she was one of my trail rangers, not commissioned for a year, wanted to go into law enforcement, and I was able to pick her up. But once SCEP come in that way, it's just a differen -- the competitiveness, the way it's all managed, it's just different. So you can't like target a trail ranger and say, I want to get you into my law enforcement program.

KAREN BREWSTER: So what's SCEP?

TIM STEIDEL: That's the -- the Student Career Employment Program, I think, is what it's called, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: The student hire. Much like what I went through in college, so. [00:46:57]Um, so every time I do something, they take it away from me. The sad thing is, from my perspective, it's successful. But so right now, it's really hard, um, and you know, case in point, we've been trying to get a chief ranger here as a detail.

KAREN BREWSTER: 'Cause you're gonna retire.

TIM STEIDEL: Just a detail. 'Cause I retire in a week here. A little over.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

TIM STEIDEL: And um, twice we've announced it for several weeks, nation-wide, and not one expressed interest of somebody to come on detail, all expenses paid, to come up here for a few months. We're having to wait for my PD to be reclassified, like most of 'em are right now, and that takes some time. So they can't announce my position --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

TIM STEIDEL: -- long term until that's been reclassified, so that could be another three to six months away.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: So it's just really hard. [00:47:45]As I've been hiring just seasonal rangers and looking for some law enforcement rangers for vacancies over the last several years, I talk to the big parks, and while they may still have thirty rangers, they -- they're down half. So they usually have sixty.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: So even though they have a lot of rangers, um, for their program they're used to running, they're really pressed and strapped, too. And when you have that many, anyone who's applying for their first job looks at, ooh, Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, the big mother parks.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: We all kind of ogled over those when we were young. And that's where they go, and it's kind of hard to pull 'em away to come up to, where's Skagway?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: Southeast Alaska, what does that mean?

[00:48:27]KAREN BREWSTER: You were talking about how you share with your employees some of your little nuggets and your experiences.

TIM STEIDEL: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: Can you share any of those?

TIM STEIDEL: Um. Do I want to share some of those?

KAREN BREWSTER: Things that --

TIM STEIDEL: Without incriminating local people?

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, you can do it without names.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Things that have happened that you, yeah, that you -- lessons learned and how you've handled things.

TIM STEIDEL: Right. Right. Well, I say there's probably been quite a few of those over the years. I um, you know, we have a lot of locals that are connected in small town with family members, and often times, family members'll end up out in the park, and whether it's riding an ATV off a trail where they shouldn't be, or crossing through a salmon spawning stream at a time of year they shouldn't be, you have to make contacts with these people. [00:49:16]And a lot of rangers, especially right now, they're -- they're taught, you know, kinda, this is the response. You write 'em a ticket. Or if it's severe enough, you go ahead and arrest 'em. Or you cuff 'em and frisk 'em for weapons or what have you. And that's, you know, and it's not wrong. A lot of parks, that's kind of where they've gotten to be, where if you don't do that, everybody's going to run right over you

and damage the resource or steal and consume the resource to a point that it's no longer repairable. [00:49:43]And, um, but, you know, we're just -- in Alaska, we're just a -- it's a different cultural experience up here. It's a different level of political scrutiny, and, um, and just community. And that's what we want to try to get across to the rangers is, you know, a lot of parks, you have -- the community's outside the park and the people come to you to visit. Well, here the park and the community are so intertwined that it's not -- you can't really separate as that you're coming to visit us. I mean, we recognize that we are your backyard, and in some cases, literally, we used to once be your backyard.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: You know, so um, and we -- and we are a community. [00:50:27]And we recognize that the people for the most part aren't going out to intentionally damage the resource. Once in a while. But for the most part, that's not what's going on. They really just need to learn and know and understand. And understand there's a consequence and what that is. [00:50:44]And I've always, whether it was in EMS or SAR, my effort here has been prevention. We want to try to prevent problems, as we just don't have the staff and the resources to respond extensively.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: Or on a regular basis. So same for law enforcement. We just don't have the response capability to deal with a lot of crime or big issues. And some of that's how we're built as a proprietary jurisdiction park. We don't have the primary jurisdiction for law enforcement in -- in the area. So um, I'm trying more and more, and unfortunately our training environment nationally is less and less, community policing-oriented.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: And it's more preparing people for the hard stuff that you're seeing out there.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: That's very real, and it happens every day. Every day I get another email about one or two officers that's been killed on the job. Every day.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Wow.

TIM STEIDEL: And where and how. And that's -- you know, it adds up pretty quick.

[00:51:39]And so they have to be ready to do that kind of work. And you don't want to have them come here and you -- you cause them, because of your training or your teaching and coaching and counseling, to lose their officer safety skills.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: 'Cause that's the worst thing that can happen. [00:51:55]But at the same time, you try to teach 'em that it's not so black and white, that they're -- they have to use their heads. They have to think beyond just following the guide book of, do it this way every time in every situation. And think through the big picture. What is the goal of the park's management team with this particular issue?

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: Um, if it's collecting wildflowers, picking the iris out in Dyea, you know. Um, you know, which is a beautiful, magnificent resource in a park that's kinda rare.

KAREN BREWSTER: But you're not supposed to do that?

TIM STEIDEL: It's illegal to pick the flowers off there. Um, but what is the team's attitude about it? Has the park team identified that as a hey, we are the, kind of, premier -- this actually used to be better years ago than it is now. It got too many trees there. But are we

the premier site that's preserved for iris growing and viewing? And we -- we want to make sure people aren't out there picking it, then that's something you should be putting your time on, talk to people and make sure they're not doing it. If we need to write citations, write citations. [00:52:58]I don't -- I don't discourage them from writing citations if they're deserved, and they need to be in order to accomplish our goals. But we try to enforce the least amount of um, enforcement. To gain compliance, it's just like use of force, right?

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: You only use the amount of force necessary to gain compliance. You don't want to exceed that. Well, the same principles can be held true to writing tickets and arresting people, you know. You know, if you can gain compliance by a warning, why do you need to arrest them?

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: Let's just warn them, you know. [00:53:30]And that's the mentality we try to instill in 'em because a lot of places when they go through their field training, there's no mercy.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: And it's just like, we're arresting everybody, or we're citing everybody. And the family is there at the picnic table with their kids trying to instill this good Park Service experience. The kids are picking up pine cones and putting them on the table, and the rangers will come over and give them a \$150 fine because they're not supposed to disturb the resource. You know, I mean. You know, that's -- that's actual counsel, what I've heard from rangers coming back from training.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

TIM STEIDEL: What they're told and coached to do.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: And they get marked down if they do that. So I don't want that here.

[00:54:02]We're not going to be a very happy park if the environ -- if the community -- 'cause I've seen it up and down in this community with the relations, and they will turn against us, and they'll make it very difficult for whatever superintendent and management team here is trying to do anything that we want to do.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[00:54:16]TIM STEIDEL: So trying to instill into them that mentality of, we're a community. We're all here living together. We want to live in harmony. We want to protect the resource, but can we teach them and train them in a way that they'll comply and respond without having to totally ruin their day and their experience and their relationship with us down the road.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[00:54:38]TIM STEIDEL: So I don't know if I've given you a specific incident per se, but probably the biggest incidents we've seen over the years are ATV's off trail, and a lot of those are kids, and they're trying to get our goats. Not as much anymore. I mean, in the early days, they would do that. [00:54:52]Um, we've had a few of them like running their trucks in donuts around the Moore House lawn, only 'cause they were mad about us putting a building in front of their view of the eagles. Um, and that one, we took to court, and it was a good case. [00:55:06]But, um, dogs off leash, lots of people want to run their

dogs off leash. We realize it's been a problem. It's been getting better. And it's been getting better because we've -- instead of just citing everybody and arresting everybody, we've started an education campaign, and we do start putting a little bit more strict rules out there. No zero, um, um -- Oh, what is it? No leash, zero --

KAREN BREWSTER: Tolerance.

TIM STEIDEL: Tolerance policies for no leash on dogs, and things like that, so. [00:55:33]And we get out there, and we inform people. We don't cite 'em the first time. We say hey, politely tell 'em, look, you know, this is what happens when dogs are off leash. They've been known to chase wildlife. Even in some encounters, dogs have brought bears back, and the bears have attacked owners. I mean, these are -- these are all things, you know, porcupines are abundant in the area.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: We've had many dogs get porcupine quills in their mouth. So you know, you try to just educate 'em and share these experiences. And most people, you know, whether they like it or not, they will usually start to comply.

[00:56:00]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and as you said, there have been ups and downs with this community --

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- and their response to the Park Service.

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: And as the rangers, enforcement, you're sort of out there.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: The first face.

TIM STEIDEL: We're usually the first, yeah. The -- the catalyst for the relations.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: It is true. [00:56:18]And that's why I say, it's so important 'cause you can -- you can make ten years of building relations in the community and have a new ranger go out there, and just with the wrong approach for that individual and the situation, set -- set back everything that you've done in the matter of an instant.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: You know, so. It's -- it is hard. Um, and it's a lot to ask of rangers who are just learning. And we're becoming a bit of a developmental park for young, new rangers getting skills and training. And it's a little bit of an unfair situation for 'em.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: But uh, but the community's also changing and getting better, too. Um, we -- [00:56:55]when I got here, we had -- I didn't realize right away. It took a while to figure it out, but just how much the community -- and not all, it's just the small majority.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: Um, how much they had an antagonistic relationship with the Park Service. And -- and you kind of start off already behind the curve --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: -- trying to build relationships in that situation. Took a lot of years. [00:57:19]I was lucky because pretty quick I got into the DARE program, and I started teaching drug abuse resistance education to the kids, fifth and sixth graders, fourth and fifth, sixth

graders in the school. And, um, did that for ten years and actually moved into the junior high.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: Never quite got to high school. But we did other things, like carnivals for Yuletide and all. So the more we did community-related type of activities, got to know the kids. Those kids now, I'm hiring some of them.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: To work on the Chilkoot Trail now. It's awesome. [00:57:44]And, um, and that's the kind of thing, even the parents that maybe didn't used to like us a whole lot, sees what we're doing for their kids and all of a sudden now it's like, "Oh, maybe -- maybe it's good they've been here and done those things over the years now."

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: "And look how they're helping." So -- so that kind of thing just speaks volumes. But uh, but you gotta be consistent with it and stay at it. And it's -- it takes more than looking at this as a stepping stone in my career. I'm going to work here two years and make some cases and move on --

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: -- to the next park. And that's -- that's the kind of thing when communities get a rub against the Park Service for "I can't trust them. You're just here to make a case for yourself. You don't care about us." And, you know, that -- that's when it's hard, when there's no relationship between the community and the park.

[00:58:30]KAREN BREWSTER: Hm. Um, do you have a particular case that you worked on that you remember, or you -- ?

TIM STEIDEL: (chuckle)

KAREN BREWSTER: The most memorable for you?

TIM STEIDEL: Um, it's been a few. Actually, the interesting thing is, in twenty-five years, I've only had a handful, small handful, of cases that went to court here.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: Actually, I had more in two years I was in Seward than when I was here. Those were mostly poaching cases. One vandalism case. But um, you know, a couple -- it's funny. I mean, they're small things, but a couple of 'em that I wrote were dogs off leash, and these were because the dogs ended up thirteen miles up the trail at Sheep Camp.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

TIM STEIDEL: And it got to the point where I finally had to realize that the owner was really trying hard, but he had a dog that was on a chain that was about, you know, this big around, an inch in diameter, and he would break the chain and get loose when he was at - - the owner was at work during the day. You know, and then he would latch onto hikers and end up at Sheep Camp. And one time both dogs ended up there, and they were fighting, and it was dangerous to even be around them. [00:59:29]But, um, those were my first -- well, weren't my first. My first one was an individual in town here who rode through the salmon slough. And it wasn't just they drove through the slough 'cause everybody drove through the slough in those days. We didn't have the gate there or anything. It wasn't developed. But he did it at a time when there was a bunch of cars parked, so he couldn't get through the slough, and there was an interpreter starting to lead a tour, and there was all these kids, and kids in the water, and he kind of looked at the

interpreter and grinned at her and drove through the wild iris and around the trees and around the slough, almost hit the kids. And then took off in a real spiteful way. And the police chief just happened to be there when that happened so. So we had all these witnesses, a statement, and it's like, well, you know, you asked for this one, so. That was a -- that was a citation we wrote that stuck, um, but it was a particularly interesting landmark case because this individual was known as being the most biggest, meanest, disgruntled individual in town, and it kind of made a statement early on for the others in town. [01:00:32]I was new here. That was my first year here. I had actually helped him get his truck out of the snow once, but that good deed didn't -- wasn't appreciated. But, uh, we made a statement to say, we're not fooling around, and we're not going to be pushed around. And, um, he actually wouldn't come back in the park for years after that. He kind of gave certain gestures to me for a while, um, but, uh, you know, because we did -- we had a real problem early on with, um, lack of understanding where the park was out there. And I could understand that because there was no fencing. There were no signs. There wasn't really much of anything out there 'cause they were kind of hands off, waiting for the archeology to be done before they designed and developed anything.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[01:01:13]TIM STEIDEL: But it was really hard. It was really hard for the staff to know where - - when we did those walking tours, everybody -- the big joke was, nobody did the same tour twice 'cause you didn't know where you were. Um, but we, um, you know it was hard for the visitors. And so they didn't -- it wasn't always that they didn't want to comply, or they were being spiteful. Sometimes they just didn't really know where they were allowed to take their ATV or not.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[01:01:34]TIM STEIDEL: And so it became -- I began to define my program by making sure we had the proper amount of presence and the proper amount of education with signage and contact and -- and information, but then also facility design. So that became kind of the hallmark of my program was trying to get a balance between enforcement, between education, and designing facilities so that people knew what was expected and could comply, or it deterred those who would put a little effort into violation. [01:02:08]But if you designed it well and did it right, they weren't gonna put that much effort into it. So um, I think we had a lot of success with turning that around and, uh, and then making a couple of cases like that one, um, really made a statement. [01:02:22]We've had, um, we had some other cases. We did have a weapons violation case out in the north end of Dyea in the park. And that was one where the rangers heard gunshots. It was people that were drinking and shooting, but they were doing it in a way that was across the river, which we do have raft tours on the river, and then also right -- you could see the Chilkoot Trail where people go, you know, sixty yards away, seventy yards away, there. Um, and guided tour -- that first couple miles of trail, we get several hundred people a day hiking that with guided tours and all. These people didn't know anything about that, they were just shooting. And, of course, when the ranger came out there, they heard him or saw him coming, and the guy that had the guns had gone and hidden them and buried them in the ground. And he was a felon, it turned out, wasn't supposed to be in possession of the guns, you know, so. Um, they ended up getting cited that night. The next day we went out and found the guns, and, um, it was a case that really didn't go as far as we wanted it to

go because we didn't have support locally here, um, to take some of the cases. [01:03:25]Some of -- while the nexus for our involvement was the Chilkoot Trail threat, where they were standing was actually not on federal land, so we didn't have local support to take that case further. So the case didn't go anywhere, but it really brought up a lot on the issue in the community, and we had both sides, like, "Hey, I don't want to be out there with my kids recreating and have people shooting where they're not supposed to be, and putting us at risk." And then others wanting to have gun rights everywhere, wherever they're at, you know. So it was really kind of an interesting -- but that's typical of so much of the incidents. It just takes one. Any -- I mean, I can't hardly think of any contact that was so little that it didn't raise an issue in the community, you know. Like asking someone to move their car 'cause they're on the plants and not in the parking space.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: You know, it gets talked about in the coffee shop for the next day, you know?

[01:04:12]KAREN BREWSTER: It's life in a small town.

TIM STEIDEL: It is, it is. It is. But um, I often say it, though, because some of the cases that go before Congress have been little contacts like that.

SUSANNAH DOWDS: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: In the park's in Alaska. You know, some of the biggest ones we're dealing with are the -- the rangers that just want to do a life jacket inspection on a boat, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: And the guy ended up saying, you can't do this. You can't be here. You don't have authority and threatening to ram them, and then they pulled guns on him, and then he went to shore, and then they tased him.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. That's the Sturgeon case?

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah, exactly. Right, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Went to the Supreme Court, yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: So you just don't know in Alaska what -- what little contact is going to end up being before Congress. [01:04:49]I was working a detail down at Glacier Bay National Park to help with the tanner crab patrol. And I was only out one or two days before I got the flu and couldn't work the rest of the patrol.

SUSANNAH DOWDS: Oh, no.

TIM STEIDEL: But, you know, we thought it was a pretty nice contact. We -- we probably boarded twelve or thirteen boats and were letting 'em know the new legislation, that these wilderness waters are now going to be banned next year to crabbing. So we're not here to enforce it this year, we're just passing this out, let you know. But now that you know, we need you to move out of the waters. And while we were there, one individual didn't have their commercial fishing license who was required to, so we wrote a ticket for that.

[01:05:26]Well, um, I thought it all went pretty well that day, but next thing you know, we're being taken -- it's up before Congress, and the Secretary of Interior's being asked to investigate why the rangers were, uh -- and Murkowski's -- Senator Murkowski, not Lisa, but her father.

KAREN BREWSTER: Frank.

SUSANNAH DOWDS: Oh.

TIM STEIDEL: At the time, in his words, "the gun-toting pirates of Glacier Bay were there drawing guns and boarding the boats of fishermen." Which we never drew our guns that day. You know, and he -- and I didn't even know he'd done the investigation. It was already done by the time I heard about all this. And he's like, "You know, everything I'm hearing from the president of the fisherman's association out of Ketchikan and everybody representing us, they were courteous and professional. It's just that the owners and the operators didn't like the message, you know." So that's how quickly things get so distorted and blown out of proportion.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[01:06:16]TIM STEIDEL: Anyhow, it's -- it's -- it's interesting. It's made my career interesting. But it's caused me to be thoughtful in my tactics and approach out there, and I try to pass that on before it becomes major issues for the park.

[01:06:32]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, not everybody in law enforcement and rangers take that approach.

TIM STEIDEL: Right. Right. It's easier not to. It really is. It's -- it's hard to do that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: I feel it's the right thing to do, but it's hard. It's much easier to arrest somebody because that's black and white.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: I know the policy for that. I know how to do it. I have the tools. I -- we're set up. Although I will tell you, arresting somebody in Skagway is not easy. We've got to get 'em to Juneau, and there's one or two of us, and, yeah, it's not easy. We don't do many arrests.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: I've done one here, really, and it was when we were assisting the police outside of the park.

SUSANNAH DOWDS: Oh.

TIM STEIDEL: For some operations years ago, but, um, we have policies and procedures set up if we have to, but we really try not to. It's gotta be pretty serious if we're going to.

[01:07:19]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and as you say, there's a difference between doing the job you're doing and living here.

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: Versus coming in as a seasonal and you don't have to live with the people you're arresting.

TIM STEIDEL: Right. It's hard when you go to the gym to work out, and everybody you work out with, you've put in jail or something.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. Yeah. For sure.

KAREN BREWSTER: I mean, that's the village public safety officer program around Alaska deals with that, yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: Um-hm. Um-hm. Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: And um, so it sounds like you've figured out a way to have a balance?

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah, I won't say it's perfect, but we try, you know. It's just about being empathetic with people, understanding the situation, and recognizing them as community. If you treat 'em like community and not just like one-time visitors who will never be

back, which the big parks can often do. They look at these people as like, well, you've done the wrong thing when you came to the park today. I don't care if you come back or not, here. You know, um, and uh, there's a different perspective on how you treat people and just go into these contacts, so, yeah.

[01:08:19]KAREN BREWSTER: So I wanted to ask a little bit about search and rescue.

TIM STEIDEL: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: Is that something that you and the ranger team work with?

TIM STEIDEL: Yes. Yeah. Yeah, we do. We try to train and be prepared. We don't, again, have a lot of calls for search and rescue. Most of our calls are really medevacs, helicopter medevac maybe, but we don't have to do a lot of searches because we have a pretty narrow valley with steep walls and a trail. And development and staff all along the way. It still happens, but usually not more than ten or twelve hours at a time.

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I guess then it's rescue?

[01:08:48]TIM STEIDEL: So it's kind of more -- more rescue, more EMS response kind of work. We pretty much know where the patient is, it's just getting to them and getting them out. But occasionally we have had -- we have had a three-day rescue, or search and rescue one time, where we didn't know where the hikers were, but um -- But we average about, these days, not many. One to three. We used to average three to five helicopter evacuations off the trail each year on our side. Now the Canadians have more, and sometimes they do ok. It's rough, and they strain themselves, and work hard to get over the top, and then they're in Canada and they get hurt.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. Oh, ok.

SUSANNAH DOWDS: Oh.

TIM STEIDEL: Or they get sick. Or whatever. So they have more than we do. But, we -- I always joke, we send 'em over. We get 'em -- just get 'em to the Canadian side. It's not really like that. [01:09:34]But, uh, um, yeah, you see a lot of your more minor injuries, but they can't go on. Muscle, bone, and joint type of injuries. Um, we will get some illnesses. If it looks like it's passing quickly and the next day they can re-assess and get moving, that's -- that's great. Sometimes we try to do that. Or if it's just a, yeah, minor sprain, let's see how you feel in the morning, kinda keep them over 'cause we don't want to fly people off unnecessarily. But that is the evacuation choice, method of choice, is helicopter, 'cause we've done one litter-carry from Seven-Mile on the trail, and it took all night long that night, and it was hard, and it's -- the trail's not main -- it's a good-maintained trail, but not for litters with twelve people trying to carry a litter off the trail.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, man.

TIM STEIDEL: So we don't want to do that very often. So our recommendation is flying. It just puts everybody at less risk that way. It's a high-risk operation, but it's less risk in reality than trying to do a Chilkoot litter-carry off, other than the first two miles of the trail.

[01:10:31]And, um, we do get -- we've had a stroke up there. We've had cardiac -- amazingly, we've not had a heart attack.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, I was going to ask you.

TIM STEIDEL: But we have had a situation where a guy was on a pacemaker, internal pacemaker plant that stopped working.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

SUSANNAH DOWDS: Oh.

TIM STEIDEL: But it wasn't really a heart attack, but it was enough that they wanted to get him off the trail, and we took -- that was the one that was all night long.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

TIM STEIDEL: We had to get him off, but, um -- but, uh, we've had some falls. We get a lot of early season with the snow and ice conditions.

SUSANNAH DOWDS: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: And especially when it's melting out with boulders down below.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: And we've had people unfortunately in worst-case scenarios, you get sliding on the ice and snow, can't self-arrest and they end up hitting the rocks at high speed, you know. Had some pretty -- pretty good head injuries and broken ribs and serious injuries with those. But not too often. Um, but mostly it's -- it's more minor muscle, bone, and joint type stuff.

[01:11:21]KAREN BREWSTER: But in the early days when you first started --

TIM STEIDEL: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- when it was less controlled up there --

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- was there more evacuation or injuries?

TIM STEIDEL: There were because, again, especially when we didn't have the trail center, there was a lot less -- one of the key jobs that's really hard for the trail center staff, um, that I don't think people appreciate from other programs when they know that they're just in there answering questions and issuing permits and collecting fees, is they're expected to be able to size up --

(Radio noises in the back)

TIM STEIDEL: Sorry. They're expected to be able to size up the hiker when they come in, just from a few minutes of --

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

SUSANNAH DOWDS: Oh, right.

TIM STEIDEL: -- observing them, talking to them, seeing their gear. And say, "Is this an experienced person or not? How much do I need to change to how I cater my message to them based on novice, -- "

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: -- Mount McKinley climber, um, somewhere in between. And it's a hard thing to do, but they get good at it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: And they've gotten really good at it. And I think -- you know, I contribute [attribute] several things, that, their ability to assess the hiker and give them the right message for preparing, the trail crew, right now, this last crew under Eric's supervision when he was out there leading the crew for the last eight or nine years now, has gotten the trail tread and maintenance up to such a standard now that any time there's an accident, the first thing they look at is, is there something that is mechanical in the trail that could have -- if we do it differently, we could have prevented this?

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: And they actually try to fix it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

TIM STEIDEL: So -- so that's awesome. [01:12:48]And then, the ranger -- we've had good rangers up on the trail who are also assessing and sizing up people and trying to prepare 'em so their next day up over the pass is going to be successful. And all of that has reduced, I really believe, our, um, our rate of incidents of injuries up there. Um, but uh, I guess that was what you were asking?

[01:13:12]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, yeah, that back in the '90's when you first started --

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- when there was less control --

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- over who was going out there, --

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- maybe there were more accidents?

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah, it seems like there were. And um, I mean, there's always still a potential for something happening, but yeah, definitely, they just were less prepared, and it seemed to happen more. And we've had a ranger that was out there at that time that spent three days with 'em at the summit, at the pass there, um, fell and broke a knee on the steps of the building.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

TIM STEIDEL: Actually, going to get water. And didn't even have a pack on. And couldn't get to him because of the weather. White-out for three days. We were about ready to figure out how to gear up to get people in there to manually get him out, and we actually got a window where the helicopter was able to sneak in and get him. But, yeah, she was up there with the ranger for three days, and um, that's -- [01:14:01]that's another challenge, you know, is the weather conditions up there, it's so different. People come in here and they'll see a day like this, and they think --

KAREN BREWSTER: A beautiful, sunny day.

TIM STEIDEL: -- it's beautiful. What do I need to take rain gear with me for? You know, and you get up there, and it's a blizzard suddenly.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: And it's totally not prepared for the conditions. Because it's very different. It's not very high, but a few thousand feet makes a difference in this country, so.

[01:14:20]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, I was gonna ask about weather affecting getting in there to, um, evacuate people.

TIM STEIDEL: Right. Right. One of the worst ones we had was a film crew from Quebec who was up at Sheep Camp. And they'd been on the trail a few weeks, and, you know, they're trying to recreate the hiker or stamper experience.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: So they're in period clothing, and they're trying to -- it's a little bit of one of these reality competition kind of shows, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: And they're trying to recreate the experience with limited food, old gear, and they're -- while they're out there, they talk to some of the guys bringing groups over and learn about edible plants and foods that are out there, the berries and stuff. So one of the guys in particular started getting to be a little confident that he could identify food that was good to eat and not when he was out there, so he sees this one plant that's called the

false hellebore, and it's a beautiful little bulb plant with kinda lily-looking leaves, something you'd see in your garden growing. And he was like, "Well, this must be edible, just look at it. It's like something in your garden." And he took the bulb of the plant, and there's five of them on the team, and he ended up consuming just the tip of his finger size of -- little finger of bulb, and the others took about the same, but they put it in their mouth and it burnt right away, so they spit it out. Well, he swallowed his, and he got deathly ill. Um, Parks Canada -- we actually had, it was our -- on Wednesdays our rangers swap, so both of them were away from Sheep Camp.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

TIM STEIDEL: On their way in or out, and the Parks Canada patrol person was coming down to orient with the US side and just happened to be there and was waiting for the Sheep Camp ranger, and was in looking at some of the brochures and saw the false hellebore. So when he came across this crew that this one guy's now just constantly vomiting and, uh, and um, yeah, just really, really sick, um, he asked if they'd anything by chance that they'd eaten, and they said, I don't know and described the plant. And he recognized it from off the brochure, so they called down and said, this is what's going on. False hellebore, it turns out, is the most deadly poisonous plant in the Northwest that you could possibly consume. So -- and it -- it can kill you. [01:16:29]And um, we -- it was marginal weather. We were able to just get in and get him with assistance with the EMT from town, and by the time we got back to the ambulance, the crew working on him thought he was not going to make it. Fortunately, they got him to the clinic and got him up to Whitehorse, the hospital, in a couple hours. And he did. In fact, three days later, he was well enough to go back out and join the crew again. I don't think he ate any more plants that he didn't recognize, but uh, but that's -- you know, that's another example of, it can get very serious out there fast, and if the weather's not cooperating -- I don't know if he would've made it if we couldn't have got the helicopter to him. Uh, it was touch and go. Any worse, I don't think the pilot wouldn't have been comfortable getting in there, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: So, very fortunate situation.

[01:17:16]KAREN BREWSTER: And is it Park Service helicopters? You have your own or you contract out?

TIM STEIDEL: We contract with TEMSCO.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. They've got the helicopters on scene here. We could bring in a helicopter from Denali. It would take a bit longer, and they're not always available, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: But um, but that's probably the only agency helicopter we would try to work with, so yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: Coast Guard, in theory, but they're not always as easy to get as the paper makes it sound in your policy.

[01:17:43]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, and then I was thinking, you have a clinic here, but if it's some severe --

TIM STEIDEL: Right.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- incident, you have to get 'em to Juneau or Whitehorse.

TIM STEIDEL: Right. And we do have the Guardian Life Flights.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

TIM STEIDEL: And Air Northwest, which are great actual, true air medevacs. And TEMSCO's -- work's medevacs for us, but they're not a true air medevac.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: And that's great, 'cause we'll come and transfer to them to get to Juneau in that situation, and they've got a full paramedic staff on board.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: And lots of good facilities. But, um, yeah, they wouldn't be able to get their helicopter to Sheep Camp. It's just too big, so.

[01:18:15]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, well and -- but there may be times when you can get them from the trail to town?

TIM STEIDEL: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: But then you can't get them to Juneau?

TIM STEIDEL: Right. Right. Yeah. And then you hope the highway's open. To go to --

KAREN BREWSTER: To go to Whitehorse.

TIM STEIDEL: Whitehorse, yeah. Yeah. [01:18:30]And it's -- over the years, it's worked pretty well with the international relations for emergencies like that. There's always talk about whether it can continue, but it seems to have -- continues. So, yeah. We're pretty fortunate here in Skagway that we have the highway and the boat system and air.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: Airport with the plane opportunity, so hopefully one of those three, and given your season, is going to be open, but we have had short stints where all three are shut down.

KAREN BREWSTER: Wow.

TIM STEIDEL: In the winter, usually.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well then, hopefully you have fewer people being injured out on the trail?

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah, we don't get a lot of use. [01:19:05]And that's another thing that's changed. When I was first here, it wasn't uncommon to have one or two, usually German, um, solo hikers.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh.

TIM STEIDEL: Or two or three hikers, maybe, going over in January or December. And not advised, but, you know, we don't close the trail in the winter. We do discourage its use, but a lot of them were successful, though. A lot would turn around. And, uh, we don't see that anymore, which is good because it's brutal conditions out there.

[01:19:33]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, and is the trail even marked that they can see it through the snow?

TIM STEIDEL: Not -- not -- not with what we usually do. If you really know it, but it looks -- even I've had rangers go up there in the winter, and it -- they kinda get disoriented.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: And, uh, it -- it gets dangerous 'cause the whiteout is so white that you sometimes come up on thirty-, forty-, fifty-foot bluffs, and you don't even know you're at the edge of it, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: And it just all looks like you could just continue on. That's how you get hurt, turn an ankle, break an ankle, and you die in the minus-forty conditions out there --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: 'Cause you can't move. So it's probably just as well we don't have a lot of winter activity.

[01:20:12]KAREN BREWSTER: Um, you talked about, sort of, promotion within the park, but I know that in, like, the mid -- late-'90's, early-2000's, this park kinda went through some reorganization and a lot of people leaving. Do you remember that period?

TIM STEIDEL: Um, I remember the period. I'm trying to think of, uh, how when a lot of people left. It seems like we had people trickle out, you know, a few, couple here, couple there, maybe. When a lot of people left was about 2012 or something around there, I think, just before -- it was just before Mike Tranel came in here as superintendent. Um, we had lots -- there was one year where we had, like, twelve for the first time. 'Cause we normally keep a lot of retention here for a long time. All of a sudden, we had about twelve positions that were some high-level chiefs, program leads, I/T person. I mean, everybody left at once. And we had a lot of us still sticking around, so we didn't feel like a complete loss of continuity, but it's just -- it was a major turnover for the first time that I'd experienced at this park.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: And all of a sudden, it's like wow, this is -- this is very different, just a lot of new faces coming in in the key positions.

[01:21:24]KAREN BREWSTER: Do you know why that all happened at once?

TIM STEIDEL: It wasn't -- it wasn't like a morale thing. I think everybody always thought this was a good park to work at, for the most part, and enjoyed their experience. I think it was just that timing. It was just -- it -- probably the first big push agency-wide with retirees going out, it seemed like, in a while.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: There was a wave or two of 'em that went out, and a lot of people's just dream opportunities, or maybe it was just out of convenience. There's a job opening, and I've kind of thought about going to this location and all and just a lot of people took it. It just seemed to be the right time. [01:21:56]I will say that what has driven a lot of our people out of here has been the cost of living and housing here. It's really hard for, um, even mid-level management to -- supervisors, to be able to afford to have a house here in town.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm.

TIM STEIDEL: It's getting hard for, um, upper management.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: I'm glad I bought when I did, back in 1999, I bought my house.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: 'Cause after that, everything just "phluck" (sound effect) sky-rocketed. And that's hard.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: It's hard to see good people come in. It's hard to recruit 'em, and then you get 'em here, and they're great, and they want to stay, and you know that they can't afford to live here and leave. I've seen that happen too many times, and that's really tough.

[01:22:32]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, I know that this time period I'm talking about that the regional office sent in a crisis management team.

TIM STEIDEL: Crisis management? I think it was -- wasn't it like a MAP --

KAREN BREWSTER: Maybe it was the budget thing?

TIM STEIDEL: Not the MAP. What was it, it was the um, oh, superintendent. What do they call it when they bring a team in to review the park because the superintendent's changed over?

KAREN BREWSTER: An audit? No, I don't know.

TIM STEIDEL: Maybe it was a MAPS team. MAP team. But, um, anyhow, I think I know when you're talking about, and they were doing a review of the management team and talking to the employees and chiefs when they had some turnover, about maybe what was not done so well, what needed to be done differently, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah, 'cause I think the superintendent, chief of admin, and chief of maintenance all left.

TIM STEIDEL: Hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: At the same time.

TIM STEIDEL: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: And --

TIM STEIDEL: That was, you say that was 2000?

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't know. It was somewhere in the late '90's, early 2000's, I don't know exactly.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: So trying to figure out what -- what --

[01:23:31]TIM STEIDEL: 'Cause we had one come in when, like, when Reed McCluskey left, and was that when chief of resources left, too, and the superintendent? All three of them? Yeah. I can't really remember. It doesn't -- I don't remember it as being so much of a crisis. I do remember there's a couple of times where the management team didn't get along real well, and when, ah, couple of key positions left there, maybe the superintendent probably was the biggest one. That a team, I think they were called a MAP team, came in and talked to everybody to see, you know, what's your idea of the problems and what -- what are your thoughts on how we can do things differently going forward and so forth. So. I can't remember exactly which year that was. It seems like that was more recent to me.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

TIM STEIDEL: Like around 2010. But um --

[01:24:20]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, do you remember what the problems were and how they got fixed?

TIM STEIDEL: Well, a lot of it was personality problems. We had a couple of management team members that um, did not -- just, you know, personality conflicts. They did not get along well. They didn't um, view things the same way at all. Different personalities. I, you know, and then all of us at that time got caught up in it in one way or another. There was one personality in particular that was really difficult to work with, and um, you know, you're trying to move forward, and it felt like a lot of power -- power struggles was stopping the group from coming to common goals and making progress. So that was probably really the crux of it. [01:25:03]Um, we've -- we've always had some

differences of opinions on how the park should progress, on whether we should keep building bigger or maintain what we have well and not expand. That's been my theory is, we're taking on too many buildings, too many things, and trying to do too much. It's like, let's do what we have well and preserve it long-term and sustain it and not thin ourselves out so much that we can't get any of the work done and jeopardize some things that are falling apart because we can't get to it. Not everybody's agreed with me, felt that way, so we've had some disagreements there. [01:25:36]But, yeah, I don't know that I've seen this as a crisis. We had a chief of admin that was a problem for a couple of years and was moved on. And, uh, we had, you know, chief of resources that was just difficult to work with. And -- and some people thought Reed was difficult to work with. I worked with him the longest, probably, and I kind of understood him, and a lot of things we saw eye to eye on. But there's other ways, like I could see where people had some troubles working with him. But I don't know that I'd call that was a park-wide crisis, that's just --

KAREN BREWSTER: Well, that's Karl's words.

TIM STEIDEL: Oh, ok. Ok. Well, Karl was under one of those problems for a while, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. [01:26:19]Well, I think it was just that there was a big shakeup here at some point.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: That -- and sort of just wondering how, you know, that affects day-to-day operations and the rest of the staff when all that kind of drama's going on?

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. There was some of that. I mean certainly, you'd hear from the staff, you know, one thing they didn't like about working here was having to see the management team set an example of fighting and bickering or yelling at each other. It didn't happen all the time, but it would happen on occasion. And then when it happened in front of the ranks, then it -- you know, that was a morale-killer, and it didn't look good. And uh, they took that with 'em, and some of them may not have come back because of it, even.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: But um, but yeah. No, there -- there was some of that.

[01:26:58]KAREN BREWSTER: But you stuck with it?

TIM STEIDEL: Oh, yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And why?

TIM STEIDEL: Why? I'm just stubborn that way. No, I did. I mean, like I say, I've -- I've -- I've out lived a lot -- I've out-stayed a lot of 'em. Um, but I've been through a lot. When you work in emergency service and law enforcement, drama doesn't really mean a whole lot to you 'cause you've kind of already been there and above it, usually.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: And it's just like, it's not necessary. Why are you even acting this way? [01:27:24]So I don't know. It didn't affect me that mu -- Obviously I didn't like it, obviously I got frustrated, 'cause it's like, there's things we could be moving forward, and it's taking way too long or not happening at all because, you know, people can't come to agreement and just compromise and let's get something done. [01:27:40]So it's frustrating, you know, for sure, but I've also lived thirty-one years with the government now, so you have to be patient to last that long in the bureaucratic process. [01:27:54]But um, I've always loved this community, and I've loved Skagway, and even though the

people are sometimes interesting and they battle and all that goes with that in small-town politics, I -- I really enjoy the community here and small-town life. I come from DC area.
KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: You know, thirty miles south of DC, so I'm not sure I would've said that, yeah, I want to go live in a small park the rest of my career, but I've come to like it and love it. [01:28:20]And I tour enough around the big parks that I found that I like the small parks better. Just because you can get your hands involved in so many different things. It's not monotony. You don't get so specialized that you do the same thing over and over and over again.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: Which, for better or worse, um, I -- I've just come to like the park here and the community. And, yeah, you get -- you get -- you've had -- by and large, we've had a really good staff here over the years, and I think that's outweighed the few bad apples or the difficult personalities that we've had to deal with. And um, it never got so overburdening that way that we couldn't still get important work done.

[01:28:57]KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm. Well, and as you said that, a lot of times for promotion, you have to move on to another park.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: And you chose not to do that.

TIM STEIDEL: I have. I never got bored. I always had new challenges and um, it seems like there's never the same problem twice until lately. [01:29:16]And the problems -- this is a big problem for me these last couple years is I've been here long enough to kind of know what the priorities of my program should be, and I can't put the -- invest the time into those priorities because I've got somebody else from outside telling me, these are your priorities. And I know that's government, you'll always have it, but it's just such a smothering rate that it's -- it's just gotten to be too much.

KAREN BREWSTER: So it's this current administration?

TIM STEIDEL: I don't think it's even the current administration. It's been happening for two or three administrations now. It's just the nature of the way the government's going. Whether you could say it's because of security, um, whatever, accountability? Um, ultimately, somebody somewhere wants their job to be easier, to be -- know the accountability of what you're doing all the time, and are you doing it right. (To someone trying to come into the office) Not now, Steve, unless it's an emergency. Um, and uh --

KAREN BREWSTER: We're almost done.

[01:30:14]TIM STEIDEL: Um, so -- so it just feels like all of the government workers out there are gonna work harder, uh, unreasonably so, to make sure that we have an easy way of being account -- holding everybody accountable --

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: For everything that you're doing and we know that you're doing it right. Um, that's what's gotten to be so hard. [01:30:34]And I could understand it if there's, like, rampant corruption all through the agency, and I just don't see that. There's cases, you know. I mean, the most -- worst ones are the military, usually. Um, but, you know, there's always going to be cases, but it's that same old strategy of punish everybody because a few people here screwed up, you know.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: And we're going to make sure that we capture the person who screwed up, and everybody else, too.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[01:30:59]TIM STEIDEL: So it's just -- it's just the process. You know, it's smothering -- being smothered by process. That's become the priority over everything else, and it's just -- I don't feel that's right. But it's made it hard to really do the job I feel like we're supposed to be out there doing, so --

[01:31:15]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. Well, I heard a criticism from somebody in the community about the Park Service, and I don't know if it applies now or if it was back when they first came.

TIM STEIDEL: Um-hm.

KAREN BREWSTER: But, you know, the rangers walking down the street in the Historic District with guns on their sides.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. Funny how they do that.

KAREN BREWSTER: And so, you do do that?

TIM STEIDEL: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. We're law enforcement officers. You can't really do your job if you're not prepared when something happens, so.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: It's very different. When I got here, I was told, don't wear your gun on the job in town. When you go to Dyea, maybe.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: But um, but yeah, don't -- don't wear it out in the community. And eventually, we, you know, had a couple rangers killed elsewhere, and the park's policy started saying, you know, no, you're gonna have rifles. You're gonna have patrol cars and all that.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: You're gonna have vests. You're gonna go out, and we're asking you to have to respond, you know, we want to give you the PP to do your job.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: And we're going to train you and do it right. [01:32:11]So the community didn't necessarily catch on at the same rate that the -- we rangers had to step up with policy, but um -- You know, yeah, I'm sure you will still hear that from time to time, but, yeah, we're law enforcement, federal law enforcement rangers. They're -- you know, they -- a lot of people still don't want to even recognize that you have police powers, but we do.

[01:32:32]KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. I'm sure if you were a shop owner, you know, during the summer season, and you've got lots of tourists, and then there's a ranger with a gun, it probably has a different look.

TIM STEIDEL: It can, depending on your background and perspective. A lot of people coming off the ships, they want to know law enforcement's around. Everything I've studied in security and tourism is, you know, they don't want to come into a town where they think they're going to become a victim of a terrorist attack because the town's not ready to deal with protecting it.

KAREN BREWSTER: Hm. Interesting.

[01:33:01]TIM STEIDEL: And um, so they're actually finding, you know, don't -- don't send an army out into the street, more than the number of visitors that are there, but, you know, make a presence to let 'em know that it's a secure town and that someone's there to step up and help if things go bad. So. Um, you still have mixed opinions out there, but, no, we're not -- like I said, I'm not in the business of making my rangers less safe. Um, or the public. But just being smart about how they approach people. You know, just because you wear a gun doesn't mean you have to go out and act like Robocop.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

[01:33:36]TIM STEIDEL: You have to be cognizant of it, but, yeah. And that's -- that's where the challenge comes in is you've got, sometimes if you don't hire the right ranger, they come in and they -- I had a ranger one time where after the Fourth of July parade, you know, it was kinda late in the day, and he's walking down Broadway. It looks like an old west town where he's just kinda, I own this town, you know, and it's like, what are you doing?

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah. That doesn't help with community relations.

TIM STEIDEL: No, no, no, no. But that's kind of a rare thing. [01:34:04]But, yeah, you know, there's going to be those comments, and I find that those comments is they just don't really understand the world outside that they live in. And, you know, we are kind of a little protected here. It's kind of nice. You know, I'll go to Haines, and I'll go to places and, you know, they can't leave their door unlocked 'cause someone will come in and take their food, or steal stuff from the facility, and they have serious problems down there all the time. And, you know, we have our issues here, especially with domestic, but uh, um, we're a pretty safe town. I mean, we've got an international border just up the road.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: You gotta get out by plane or boat, um, you don't get very far. And people, at the end of the season when they're tempted to steal money 'cause it's their last chance and they got their last paycheck for the winter, and they steal from their business owner, um, usually they get as far as Haines, maybe Juneau, and the troopers meet 'em or the police meet 'em, and that's about as far as they get. So anyone who actually thinks through their action doesn't really try to break the law here too much in a significant way in Skagway, so we're pretty -- pretty fortunate that way.

[01:35:08]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, it says, it sounds like you've enjoyed your career here.

TIM STEIDEL: It's -- it's -- it's been a great career. I don't have any regrets. I've -- I feel like I've received this career calling at a very young age and pursued it. The doors opened all the way through for me.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: Anything I really wanted to do. And it's -- it's gotten me to what I ever wanted to achieve. I think when I -- I think when I was here as a GS-9 park ranger, I was like, well, now what? I've achieved my career goal. [01:35:38]But um, it's been really good. And the last two years have been hard. But I don't regret it, and the timing's just right for me to move on right now.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: From a number of -- of arenas, but um, yeah.

[01:35:52]KAREN BREWSTER: So would you say the most challenging has been these last few years with --

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: -- this policy?

TIM STEIDEL: Um, last two years because of the situation with trying to run a law enforcement program and the whole recruitment challenges, but then the A123 compliance requirements, and just the scope and workload that has come with that without additional support or flexibility to recognize that our short-handed situation here in the ranger ranks. [01:36:20]But um, yeah. I mean, I won't just pin it all on that. Some of it is leadership directive. Um, we have different leadership styles, and some want to see lots of things accomplished, um, that aren't necessarily core to our day-to-day base operations. And whenever you have that, the day-to-day core operations suffer. And it's not that I love doing all the core stuff that's required with the safety inspections and so forth, but you can't do those and bend over backwards to make sure all these highly politically viewed projects and accomplishments are getting completed at the same time. And that's where I think for about six years we were out of balance there with what we could reasonably expect to do and what we were being expected to do, park-wide, with just big projects.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

[01:37:20]TIM STEIDEL: Centennial, um, in 2016, gave us a lot of money, and I've learned a long time ago that money is not necessarily your best friend. You need enough, but when they throw a bunch of money at you, there's going to be a bunch of work coming at you. And when the money comes in in the last two months of your period to spend it, and you have to somehow get the work done, that doesn't work very well.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: And everybody's stressed and starts threatening people's safety and well-being. They're out there doing things in a hurry, and not able to -- they start to lose situational awareness, and you start to risk, you know, getting people injured. And just all of it. It just all compiles, and it becomes not a well-managed program. [01:38:00]And I felt like for a couple of years, with all the money, all the projects, all the push, push, push, get it all done, on top of what I was already struggling with, it -- that was just too much and insurmountable for me. I mean, we survived it, but it -- it's not without cost.

[01:38:15]KAREN BREWSTER: But it does sound like, who was superintendent makes a difference.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

KAREN BREWSTER: It's their leadership and decision-making that affects everybody else.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. It's their responsibility to be tuned in enough with the well-being of their staff and what's going on to say, ok. We are at our limit. Let's step back and let's accomplish these three priorities and not just like, well, I expect to see what your breaking point is. We're going to get as much done as we can until I really feel like you're about to snap. [01:38:45]And that's one thing if you're in a military strategy situation where it's fighting for your life. It's another thing when we're trying to sustain a program. Yeah, so.

[01:38:57]KAREN BREWSTER: Well, I really appreciate you taking so much time today, especially in your last week.

TIM STEIDEL: Well, thank you.

KAREN BREWSTER: I don't know if there's anything else that you had in mind that you wanted to talk about when we set this up?

TIM STEIDEL: I think we covered a fair amount. I'm sure there's a lot more that I haven't touched on in twenty-five years, but um, no, I think -- I think you were able to draw quite a bit of my experience here out today.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

TIM STEIDEL: And I appreciate the opportunity.

KAREN BREWSTER: All right.

[01:39:24]TIM STEIDEL: It really has been a wonderful place to work and wonderful people to work with. That's what I'm going to miss the most, are the wonderful people here. We really are. The one thing I've watched here over the years, and I just see it time and time again, is new people come in from other parks, and they're just like, this is such a wonderful place. And uh, when you've worked here as long as I have, you kind of lose sight a little bit of what's going on at some other parks there, the problems and the challenges they're having. And whatever we've talked about here pales in comparison to some of the other issues out there in a lot of parks, so we really are blessed with the people that we've had here to work with. And we got a lot done because of it and teamwork and um, we've come a long way in the community with our relationships.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

[01:40:07]TIM STEIDEL: And all the superintendents in the recent years have been a big part of mending the relationship in the community. They've all been public outreach, working together, compromising where you can, holding firm where you need to for resource protection, and um, and they've been fair. And I think that's helped a lot.

[01:40:31]KAREN BREWSTER: So some of the earlier superintendents were not so conscious of that?

TIM STEIDEL: Eh, it's just -- it's hard. I don't want to pin it all on 'em 'cause I was sometimes in the same boat with 'em. It's just hard when people have a chip on their shoulder toward the federal government.

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: And that overrides everything else, so no matter what you do, you're always going to be um, the antagonist and the problem. [01:40:51]But, you know, Clay Alderson, an early superintendent, they loved him when he came here. He was here to come in and build the golf courses and the tennis courts and put in the swimming pool, and then all of a sudden a few years went by, and they're like, you didn't do all those things. And it was like, that's not really what national parks are about. So I don't know what happened when you read the administrative history, you know, you get an idea that well, some things were said, some of it may've had some truth. Some of it's probably just distorted in the community's eyes of what they wanted to hear and didn't hear.

[01:41:16]And um, but anyhow, whatever happened, the expectations of the community in a lot of cases didn't add up to what the park actually brought in here. Yeah, it built up these beautiful buildings and brought in some economy and some business people, but, you know, it kind of ruined their backyard.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: You know, they can't just go hunt and run their ATV's everywhere like they used to. [01:41:35]So, and then there were some other matters that, personal matters between um, you know, the railroad, which was the big powerhouse in town, and the park, which was a new power coming in, and the tourism in general. That's this whole

new powerhouse coming in, and all the top people became kind of adversaries, so. [01:41:53]So Clay, you know, quickly was caught up into something he probably couldn't control very well, and he and the White Pass president -- I know when I got here for the last two or three years before the um, Marvin Taylor, before he passed on.

KAREN BREWSTER: He was still president when you got here?

TIM STEIDEL: He was president when I got here. His son later would step up into the position. [01:42:19]But uh, but he and -- he and Clay were very staunch advocate -- or adversaries for those last couple of years. And there was a whole thing with the oil spill into the park and the Forest Service area from the railroad, and some park people, and Clay included, were involved in investigating and seizing evidence from that and getting with EPA and FBI and other agencies, so that became a really nasty case that some people went to jail over with White Pass. Other people lost their jobs. And everybody got pulled into court to testify. [01:42:54]So even though the Park Service wasn't the primary investigating or prosecuting agency in that, just the fact that we were involved and supported environmental protection and all that, um, that was really the biggest wedge, I think, that was driven between the community.

[01:43:10]KAREN BREWSTER: So what was that oil spill? What happened?

TIM STEIDEL: I think it was a pipe -- it wasn't really a spill that happened. It was a pipeline break and a spill, and maybe some -- at the same time it seemed like there was some illegal burning or unpermitted burning up on the tracks. And what happened is the FBI came to investigate, and some individuals lied. They were trying to cover it up.

[01:43:30]KAREN BREWSTER: So it was a -- a line that was through White Pass's -- White Pass owned the lines?

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. White Pass owned the right of way and had the line, and the fuel that was coming down. I don't remember if it was specifically for railroad operations or was actually for the community, but it was just one of their lines they kept and maintained. [01:43:50]But the big problem was that they cleaned it up or tried to clean it up, cover it up, and then they lied and tried to cover it up further, and some people got in trouble for that. And the whole agency, when you get prosecuted as a corporation like that, the whole corporation becomes a felon. So it had long-lasting implications for them --

KAREN BREWSTER: Yeah.

TIM STEIDEL: -- probably to this day. But um, but anyhow, yeah. That -- there's a lot -- it's a big employer in town, White Pass.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right. Right.

TIM STEIDEL: For many, many -- a hundred years, more . Um, so, that was hard to overcome. It's taken twenty years for new faces to come in, old faces to go, and um, some memories to be lost to heal over some of that, so. [01:44:31]Yeah, it's been a lot to overcome in the community here. So, you know. Yeah, so Clay was, you know, as is typical, praised early on and kinda pushed out in the -- by the end. And everyone that came in after that was kinda gauged a step higher, just because it wasn't Clay.

KAREN BREWSTER: Right.

TIM STEIDEL: But, you know, they had to prove themselves, and some did better than others.

[01:44:54]KAREN BREWSTER: Now was Bruce Noble before Clay?

TIM STEIDEL: No. No.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, he was after?

TIM STEIDEL: Um, yeah. He's probably two, three superintendents after Clay.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh. Who was before Clay? Who did Clay replace?

TIM STEIDEL: Oh, I never saw -- knew him. I do remember when I got here -- I'd recognize the name. Was it Jarvis?

KAREN BREWSTER: Or Sims? Jarvis?

TIM STEIDEL: Ok, Sims might've been the first one.

KAREN BREWSTER: Oh, ok.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah, I think Sims was the first one. I feel like there was a Jarvis that came right after him, but anyhow.

KAREN BREWSTER: I can't remember.

TIM STEIDEL: I didn't know them.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. But they were liked. I mean, I think they were.

[01:45:24]KAREN BREWSTER: So when you started, Clay was the superintendent?

TIM STEIDEL: Yes.

KAREN BREWSTER: Ok.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah. Jay Cable had been chief ranger before Bruce Reed.

KAREN BREWSTER: Um-hm.

TIM STEIDEL: It was kinda hard when we had a Bruce Reed followed by a Reed McCluskey.

KAREN BREWSTER: But, I know who -- Jay's name.

TIM STEIDEL: Yeah, Jay Cable. He was the regional safety officer for a lot of years.

[01:45:40]And yeah, 'cause he -- he -- it was kind of funny because he'd tell the tales that he'd get up and he'd try to be at a public meeting and talk, and he remembered one instance where they threw tomatoes at him, you know, so. So that was his experience.

[01:45:54]His challenge was he had to come in, and he was the first chief ranger, I think, with the -- to really enforce the regulations of the park, and everybody was used to all this freedom out there. So he had a tough time. But he had a -- you know, he had a good personality. He had a big family, and he was integrated into the community quite well, but it was still hard for him, I think. But yeah, so. Anyhow, um, but no, I, again, appreciate the opportunity, and, you know, I know we have a lot of good up-and-comers working here. I look forward to what they're going to do with the park and steward it behind me. So.

KAREN BREWSTER: All right. Well, thanks a lot.