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INTERVIEWER: Marsha Holland
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MH: I appreciate you meeting with me Brad. Today is January 11, 2017, I am Salt Lake City, Utah. If we can start off this interview with a little background information. Please give me your full name, date of birth and where you were born please.

BB: Brad Barber. I was born in Ogden, Utah. Born June 21, 1949. I have lived in Utah all my life.

MH: And a little about the family you were born into please?

BB: I spent my whole life in Utah, went to high school in Clearfield. Born and raised in Syracuse, Utah. Went to Weber State University as an undergraduate. Went to graduate school in Economics at the University of Utah.

MH: So, you are a Ute?

BB: Yes, absolutely.

MH: You ended up in your career path, not directly working or affiliated with the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, but would you tell me how you eventually came into contact with The Monument?

BB: The quick history there, I went to work for the State of Utah in 1980. At the time I was working for the Governor in the State Planning Coordinator's Office, which morphed into the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget. I worked there from 1980 until 2000. Along the way, in the early 80s, we started working on various kinds of public lands issues. In 1989 I became State Planning Coordinator. At the time the State Planning Coordinator's role was to coordinate all the public lands issues for the State of Utah. I worked on all kinds of things; Wilderness, BLM and Forest Service planning issues, etc.

My first real involvement was we were working on our own project for the Escalante area. The Escalante Canyons National Eco-Region it was called, a vision we were putting together for that part of the world. At the time Governor Leavitt was working quite closely with Department of Interior, Secretary Babbitt. We sat down and talked to him about this idea that we had, that would have been approximately in 1994. We had been working on it awhile. Probably a year before the Monument, sometime in 1995 or early '96 we were discussing it with Secretary Babbitt. Then bang, we hear this rumor about Grand Staircase. Of course, the Governor and I

went to the White House the day before the announcement. That was my introduction to The Monument, I was just thrown into it.

We were working closely with Governor Leavitt with all this stuff, then he and I went to the White House to talk about our project because we had heard the rumor. He had talked to the President on the phone. The President invited him to the White House to talk about his ideas. We put our presentation together and we flew off to the White House.

MH: I remember Governor Leavitt told me that you had a presentation all ready, I was surprised.

BB: Yes, we had our own vision. We worked hard to tailor the presentation for the White House and discussing it in a bigger context. The area we had been focusing on was somewhat smaller than the size of the Monument. It was mainly the Escalante Canyons, down to the Lake (Lake Powell) and also the whole drainage of the Escalante River. It did not go quite as far west as the Monument does. It did not take in as much country to the west, but it did take in all the way to the south, to the Lake. The idea there was a little unique in the sense that we were thinking about it in terms of an Eco Region, in terms of not just BLM land, but with the (National) Park land to the south and the Forest Service to the north, and the idea that we needed to not just preserve this area, but think about how it interacts with Forest Service management and Park Service management. It really needs to be managed as an ecosystem. So we had unique thoughts there and some unique ideas, and Secretary Babbitt was very much interested. In our last meeting with Secretary Babbitt, he said, "You know we could do this with a National Monument." But he had been working on the Monument at that moment. We know that for a fact. Later on we learned that, he had been working on the Monument but had been sworn to secrecy and could not tell us about it.

MH: And why did this idea of Eco Region develop, why did your office have a focus on that area, what was going on at that time to lead you to this idea?

BB: We had been working on Wilderness for quite some time, for a decade, and in that part of the world there are a number of Wilderness Study Areas (part of FLPMA enacted in 1976), so that was part of the discussion. When we worked on a Wilderness Bill in 1995, the year before the Monument, it didn't go anywhere. There was a lot of push back from that part of the world, particularly from Garfield County. A lot of it was the thought of, Okay, Wilderness is one thing...but other issues kept coming up in this discussion. Our thought was this is a part of the world where there are a lot of Wilderness Study Areas, a lot of potential Wilderness, but there are all these other issues; grazing, roads, all the stuff. It really needs to be more than a discussion about Wilderness, it needs to be about, How do manage a larger area in a way that makes sense with all these issues? That is what attracted us to this idea. We created a task force and had all the right players, even Louise Liston from Garfield County, was involved. We thought we were on to something. But then once we developed the idea and the first draft of the plan, we presented it at a public meeting in Garfield County and we basically had to escape out the backdoor- 1994-1995. The public did not like this notion very well.

MH: Governor Leavitt is from that background, ranching family, property in Wayne County. He had to have an inkling of what the sentiment was in the neighboring county. Were there other things besides the worry that everyone would lose their heritage activity of grazing cattle on public

land? Certainly in the 90s, no rancher was living off that income alone. So, the chances are he knew where the future of ranching on public lands was headed. What were the other issues?

BB: Of course, mining was an issue. At the time there had been focus, and we had done a lot of work on, the Andalex coal mine. In our plan, Andalex coal mine fell outside of that, so in other words that was not going to be prohibited. If this coal mine happens over there, then there is protection over here, we can maybe put all the pieces together to make this work. Part of the idea was there was a core area in the middle which is really Wilderness which needs to be managed as Wilderness. As you get further out closer to town, there is not quite the same level. The level of protection would be a different layer. Ranching would continue, other sorts or things like ATving and recreation, not necessarily mining. Roads would not be prohibited like they would be in Wilderness. The core, the Escalante River, the riparian corridor, was really important. That would drive our focus, on water and the riparian area certainly all the way to the headwaters was part of the thinking. And there would be a better coordination. One of things we discovered, which was not just true in this area, but other parts of the State, when we really were diving into some of these issues in that part of the world, is the Park Service and the Forest Service and the BLM never talked to each other. Yet it is all the same ecosystem, and no coordination among the agencies. I think it is better today. But at that point it was really an issue.

MH: Yes, everyone had their own mission. One of the exciting things as you are talking about this, for me, and is much more of an issue now, are corridors. Wildlife, life corridors, for all the living things to move and survive. Was that being talked about?

BB: Yes, absolutely. Wildlife was. The Department of Natural Resources which includes wildlife was involved in our task force. We had all the players from state and local government. Louise was involved in this as a County Commissioner then when we ran into the problems down there, she was not going to stand up and defend us, lay her body on the line, even though she was involved in this discussion from day one.

MH: Like political suicide?

BB: Yes, there was certainly some danger on her part down there. We were still trying to figure out how to move this idea forward, then here came the Grand Staircase. Then the White House discussion, then the Governor gets the call in the middle of the night. When we were at the White House, Leon Panetta conducted the meeting because the President was supposed to be there but had to leave. We met with Leon Panetta and Katy McGuinty and a number of other people. When we were done, they still would say, "We don't know what you are talking about, this National Monument." They were denying it. They were listening to us and very friendly but not admitting there was any Monument discussion going on. It happened the next day. We were still in Washington. Leon says as we are leaving, "The President would be very interested in your ideas here. So, we can't give him this whole slide show, we are working on summarizing a number of things..." But at 1 am in the morning he gets a call from the President. "Mike, this is Bill, and I am sorry Mike but this is going to happen tomorrow morning." We finish up the memo at the wee hours of the morning and fax it to Air Force One. (laughter) I think it had an impact on a number of things.

MH: In what ways?

BB: In terms of our concept, of our idea of Eco Region, that fell off and became a moot point, but a number of things we felt were important as we realized that this monument was coming down the road. One was a BLM Monument, not Park Service. We did not know what they had in mind, but that is certainly where we were coming from, that it was very critical that hunting continue, that the State be the manager of wildlife in this Monument as they are now. Which is the case. Other more minor issues.

MH: And those demands you can get from the BLM, any other managing agency has a much smaller box to work from.

BB: Exactly. And they (locals) are used to working with that agency. The other thing we argued is that the State wanted a big role in planning. The other important issue was State Trust Lands. We felt strongly that they be exchanged out. One of the other things we had been working on was a piece of legislation that passed the Congress in '92-'93 that authorized a land exchange in the National Parks. The issue there was the legislation passed the Congress and authorized the legislation and told Interior to get to work on it, but man, we had been working on it for a couple of years and still were a long ways away. Federal land and State Trust lands. We thought, here is a new Monument, we have been working on this Park Service issue for a while and now we are going to add another big hunk of State land to the mix and we are still not going to get an exchange done, so for God's sake let's do a land exchange. That was an important part of the deal.

When the whole thing happens, then there is contact from Babbitt. Babbitt makes it clear that, "We listened and we are, Mr. Leavitt, we going to involve the State in a meaningful way in a management plan and we are going to do this land exchange." So then shortly thereafter, I was contacted by one of the key people that worked at Interior to start. Governor Leavitt appointed me to a number of important roles. One was to start this discussion about a land exchange. We had agreement with SITLA that I would do that, so then we started, six months later, a really serious discussion of land exchange. The idea was that we not just do the Monument, but we include these Park lands that we had been working on for quite some time, and we do one big exchange. It was the Monument that triggered that emphasis, to finally do this, it was coming from the Secretary. He was saying, "Do this, dammit."

My first time back to Washington, was the first time I met John Leshy. There was a guy named Geoff Webb who worked for Interior and shortly thereafter Molly McUsic. She is a very busy woman, fabulous. Geoff ended up leaving at it was really Molly and I who worked for a long time in finalizing this, and John Hardja. John worked for me. And John Andrews for SITLA was the main guy from SITLA, and Jim Cooper who is no longer there. They were the supporting staff who were doing a lot of the leg work on the ground. It ended up being a negotiated exchange, in other words there were not appraisals done on every acre of land.

MH: Could that happen now?

BB: It is hard to do that these days because there is still...this land exchange ended up being a big deal. It was the largest land exchanges in U.S. history. The largest.

MH: That is pretty impressive.

BB: The downside is that a number of people at the end of the day did not like it, so it is harder to do these days in that fashion, but those people involved think it was a good deal for the State and for the Federal government.

MH: And a good deal for the State because why?

BB: Because we ended up with a bunch of land we could develop. From then until now we have reaped to the tune of 300 million dollars from that land exchange. As SITLA lands. We got a 50 million dollar check as a down payment and the land we acquired through the exchange has been developed- coal mines, oil and gas, real estate development.

MH: So, for real estate development, is the land sold off or does SITLA still receive income flow?

BB: Some of both, sometimes it is sold, sometimes it is leased to a developer and then there is revenue coming in on a regular basis. The details are available, I have got that.

MH: Yes, I would like to include that with this interview. I read recently that most states do not have their school trust lands anymore- and that Utah is doing a fair job of holding onto them and generating income for schools as they were intended.

BB: That is right. Some of the things they do is not always popular, there is some down side. SITLA has done a good job in many many cases. They have done some conservation deals, they can do conservation deals on occasion. Like Castleton Tower, down by Moab, is a good example. That was owned by SITLA and they ended up selling that land at a reasonable price for conservation.

MH: And a big pressure on these lands is resource extraction, and Utah has that kind of resource in its SITLA lands.

BB: New Mexico has it too. New Mexico has done well with its state lands because they happen to have a bunch in the middle of the oil patch. Other states- not the case.

MH: If you don't mind could we talk about the nuts and bolts, you find out the Monument is designated, Governor Leavitt charges you with overseeing this, what were some of the challenges?

BB: One of the important things that I had to do, it had to be done on the QT because of the pressures from so many sources, so many directions. You are talking about a lot of money and a lot of land. We really had to do in basically behind closed doors until we got to a point where it obviously had to become public and discussed in the public. It did not always go well. We had some meetings on it in a number of places, including Garfield County. The way it was done, it took a while and it was not until 1998 it all came together. There was a fair amount of work involved with this much land, to make sure we had a deal that both sides could agree too. We had to do a lot of analysis on both sides, back and forth, back and forth, until we finally have a deal. We discussed that deal with a number of key players and then Secretary Babbitt and the Governor come together and signed an agreement in May 1998. And then it has to be ratified by the Congress, then it becomes a public discussion. But what is amazing about this deal is that they sign the agreement, all the public discussion that goes on, it is introduced in Congress by

Jim Hansen, that bill passes the Congress and is signed into law by October of 1998. Between May and October all of that was done. When you talk to people about that, people involved in the Congress, it does not happen anymore.

MH: Even for then it is quite impressive.

BB: It was. And then SITLA had of course been doing their homework. So between October, the time the bill is signed into law and January when all the title work is done, all the titles are transferred and it is done by January of 1999. It is done. Amazing. A lot of hard work by a lot of people.

MH: And is this your full time job, your main focus?

BB: We are also working on the management plan too. The Monument consumed, of course I had a lot of other responsibilities, but the Monument consumed a huge amount of my time between the land exchange and management plan. For three years it pretty well consumed my life. The other promise that Babbitt made was the State would get to pick members of the planning team, not just people on the sidelines watching, but people who are full time BLM employees working on the Plan, that were appointed by Mike Leavitt. Of course, it was my job to find those people, get the right people, get the agreements in place, then they all move over and work on the management plan for three years.

MH: You say full time BLM employees, always a quandary for me, it seems like the BLM in each state is really more of a state agency rather than a federal agency. Maybe too political?

BB: Well, different people might argue differently about that. It operates more like a state agency than any other federal agency, but clearly they not working for the State of Utah, clearly with a federal mandate and a federal boss. They listen to the State only on occasion.

MH: Speaking with Bill Lamb, I believe the State BLM director at the time and he said he had no idea, clueless about the designation.

BB: Yes, he was the director then, and he was clueless about the Monument. That was one of the first things I did that morning the Monument was announced, I was on the phone with Bill Lamb and the Park Service and everybody in Utah. All the land managers said, "I know nothing about this." We later find out the whole story. They were working on it in D.C. They had a team of people working on it, and we knew who a number of those team members were, and they were working on it in secret. It was a politically driven monument.

MH: There are some rumors that the Utah delegation had some inkling weeks before that this was going to happen. Did that ever come out?

BB: The Utah delegation knew when everyone else did. What they did, however, was they got some people to come to a committee meeting, a couple of days before the announcement... I think we knew about it on a Wednesday from a *Washington Post* story that broke. When the Governor called the White House, the President said he can meet on Monday. It was Tuesday when it was announced, I think I have all that straight. On Thursday the Senate pulled some BLM people into a committee meeting. There was some discussion with the Senate on Thursday, we did not get to the White House until Monday. So, that is the difference, a couple of days. They don't learn a whole lot more than we did.

What is interesting is John Leshy, I have a great deal of respect for him, was at a conference at the University of Utah, at the Stegner Center, a year later to talk about the whole thing and everything about the Monument. John was there talking about it and said, "We want to make it clear there was consultation about this Monument before it happened." Then it was my turn to talk and I said, "John, I love you but there was no consultation." (Because I was in the White House and they denied it. You call that consultation?)

Okay, at this point, the Governor had taken an interesting attitude relative to where we are today, mind you. The Governor said, "We are going to make this Monument the best we can make it." And he did. He was committed to that. When I made that clear at this presentation, "We are trying our best, but still, John, there was no consultation. That is simply not correct." Unless you call that meeting at the Senate, where these people were called in to testify, who said nothing- that was not consultation either. There was no give and take about what was going to happen, it happened. It is very different about Bears Ears, there had been a whole lot of dialogue going for years. Even with that, the Governor (Herbert) has a very different take on it today than Mike Leavitt did. I am sure that Mike Leavitt is not going to get up today and talk about that.

MH: Yes, the political climate and their positions in Utah have changed dramatically since Governor Leavitt was here, and he served in two Bush Cabinet positions!

BB: It has. I have a great picture at home of everybody involved was in that picture. And a work paper I will give you and all the public stuff in the archives I did all of that. A fair amount of work and a good thing to do so Leavitt is credited for all that work we did in the public lands arena, and it is documented.

MH: With all of Utah's public lands and the idea it hinders Utah economically from being what it can be, was that also the feeling then and now it is more exacerbated?

BB: There are a lot of parts to that. The feeling then was very much the same then as it is now. There was a lot of controversy and opposition. I remember when Governor Leavitt took the position he did on the Monument, we worked on the land exchange, all that stuff, there were a lot of people who did not like that. We were down at SUU at the Rural Summit and there were a bunch of cowboys out back with big signs saying, "Babbitt-Leavitt, the unholy alliance". So, not that popular, Leavitt trying to work it in a collaborative fashion with Secretary Babbitt. And the Clinton administration was not popular in all circles.

When the Monument thing was done we thought let's move forward- there was a bunch more to be done. We worked on another Wilderness Bill and another land exchange and another monument discussion, but a different process. He was challenged in the Republican Convention and was forced into a primary. That was part of the reason because he was viewed by many to have gone too far in terms of working in a collaborative fashion. But it is exactly what we should be doing. Now we have moved so far away from that- that working in a collaborative fashion with the feds is suicide. It is not a healthy environment today.

Now there is an effort that many want to transfer the public lands to the State. Really, really bad idea because then they start being sold and developed everywhere, in places where they

should not be developed because the Utah State legislature then becomes really the manager of the public lands. That is not a good thing for our public lands.

MH: The Utah legislature is in control. Despite their stance I think there is a good national movement to protect public lands- there are 30 and 40 year old Utah residents here who enjoy and count on Utah public lands. I wonder how it will expand.

BB: In my mind the State should not own and manage these lands, the feds should own and manage them, but they should do that in a collaborative fashion. There should be collaboration between the States and the Feds. There should be involvement. I think Montana and Colorado you will find a good effort to work together on public lands. Certainly in Wyoming it is not the case, not in Idaho, they are much more like Utah in the sense there is a lot more fighting than there is collaboration.

MH: As far as successes and results, what would they be for you?

BB: The actual exchange and I also think the Management Plan ended up being a good plan. Again, at the end of the day, I think there was more negotiating and collaborating between Babbitt and Leavitt to get the final plan done. I think it was a very good plan, and I am very proud of that plan.

MH: Many people I have interviewed from that Management Plan team have stated it was the most rewarding time/project they have had in their careers. County, State, Federal agencies representatives, working in a collaborative effort, really hard work, but worth it.

BB: The other big thing we were involved in was the Science Center. That was something else that sort of originated with the State, science conducted on the Monument, and the development of the Science Center Facility in Escalante.

MH: And now we are talking about a third generation on the Monument. Any last thoughts?

BB: I think about all the things relative to the Grand Staircase, there are a lot of important lessons that can be applied to the new Monument. Obviously there needs to be a land exchange and everybody needs to get together and figure out how to do that. We need to work together on a management plan, there needs to be collaboration on a management plan. A lot of the issues of the opponents of the Monument that they are afraid of can be dealt with in a good management plan. Let's all figure out how to collaborate and get a good management plan done. If it is just lawsuits and trying to undo the Monument that will go nowhere.

MH: Yes, I was so flummoxed when I first moved to Garfield County and then over time witnessed three lawsuits involving the Monument- I always wondered how little Garfield County could afford that – and I discovered it is the State, Utah taxpayers that pay for those failed lawsuits.

BB: We can waste a lot of money on lawsuits, but not Mike Leavitt's way of doing it. I am a big fan of his, although we did not agree on everything. I did not come from the same political persuasion that he comes from, I am not a lifelong Republican, but I loved working with him, admire and respect him. He was a true statesman and a leader and we need that in this State more than ever.

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MH: Great final words. I appreciate your time. Thank you.

End of Interview. Time 0:55:50