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This oral history interview segment, part of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) history, is meant to highlight Partnerships with GSENM; goals, processes, and results. The Escalante River Watershed Partnership (ERWP) is a ten year partner with the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Equipment used: Olympus WS821, Start Stop Transcription Program.

MH: It is January 26th, 2016. We are in Escalante, Utah at the Interagency Offices. I am with Amber Hughes.

Amber, if you would please introduce yourself, your full name, date and place of please.

AH: My name is Amber Lynn Hughes, my birthday is June 24th 1974. I was born in Battle Mountain, Nevada.

MH: At little bit about the family you were born into- where were your folks from and what was their work?

AH: My parents are from Northern Minnesota, 10 minutes to 2 hours south of the Canadian border. My dad got a job with the Bureau of Land Management in Battle Mountain. He may have had some other western positions, either which way, he got a job in Battle Mountain. My parents met in Bemidji, they didn't want to have anything to do with farming so they left and came out west.

MH: So, did you spend your school years in Battle Mountain or like other BLM families, did you move often?

AH: I lived there for the first six months of my life then we moved to Glenwood Springs, Colorado. I think in 1977 he got his position with the Arizona Strip in St. George. That is where I went to school. He was doing rangeland, ecology and botany. When I was younger, I thought it was a pretty lame job. I would go out in the field with him, I was so bored and I thought I would never think about doing this.

MH: Interesting. And segue way into your educational background and how you ended up coming to the BLM.

AH: I was working for one of those "hoods in the woods" programs called the Red Cliff Ascent where troubled teens come and hang out in the desert for a couple of months. We were out hiking around, I think I had had a particular rough days with some of the kids. I was looking around at the plants and I thought I really should go back to school and get my degree in botany

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because plants don't talk back to you. As I was hiking around out there, I was often thinking, "Oh, I bet my dad would know what that plant is, my dad would know what that plant is..." My thought was, "Why don't you just figure out what they are and do it." It was while I was going to school I got a position with Natural Resource Conservation Service. They were doing, or had gotten the contract to do the soil survey out here on Grand Staircase, two years after the designation in 1998. I would take these ortho digital photoquads of the 7 minute maps, the soil scientists would bring in the aerial photos with the soil lines drawn on them and I would transfer them to the ortho-quads, which was eventually published into the soil survey.

MH: Wow- that is detailed work.

AH: It was very boring. It involved doing some soil samples, but primarily drawing lines and looking into a lighted table, so you could see through the digital ortho quads. Time intensive and very detailed oriented. It opened up the door for me to see what Grand Staircase was. I really didn't know it, even though I grew up in St. George, I really didn't know what was beyond Cedar Mountain. I would go up Hwy 89, beyond that I really had no idea.

MH: The provincial nature of young people, stay closer to home. Your comment about learning more about what Grand Staircase was about, through soil inventories and other initial studies- in your mind at that point, what are you seeing?

AH: Looking at all those maps? At the time I had a house mate who would come out to the Escalante Canyons and go to these various places. He would come home and tell me about them and I remember one time he was talking about this Washing Machine place, some people call it the Cosmic Ashtray. I thought that sounds like a cool place, when I found it, came across the map that had that formation on there I thought, "Holy cow!" You can see it from outer space. During the summer breaks the NRCS was nice enough to allow me to take positions with Colorado State University- they had the contract to also come out here and do vegetation surveys. Vegetation was more of my thing, not so much soils, although it is very important component of everything. I was then able to start coming out here and seeing the landscape while doing the surveys with Colorado State University. That was interesting, to see all these places on maps and then come out here, "Oh, I recognize that! Kind of..."

MH: And you got your degree in Biology? Where?

AH: It was from S.U.U. [Southern Utah University], I got a BA in Biology with an emphasis in Botany. I worked for Colorado State University, then Northern Arizona University, during the summer months on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon and the Kaibab National Forest, and I was a seasonal with Zion National Park. I know the Colorado Plateau well. After I graduated from college, it was wintertime here. A position opened up in Big Thicket National Preserve in Southeast Texas. A six month seasonal position. I thought I should probably apply for it, I got the position. It was down there that I realized the Colorado Plateau was my home base, the landscape I am most attached to. Being in Texas, they were offering to send me to school for my Master's program, but I really felt like I needed to come back. During that time frame, the first position that I applied for as biological technician in Kanab - I landed the job. I was actually back, working in Zion before I was actually offered the position. I was really excited.

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MH: You eventually began working on Grand Staircase as a botanist. And you also eventually became involved with Russian olive eradication, and the Escalante River Watershed Partnership. That did not happen overnight, how did that happen? As a botanist you are seeing the issue on the landscape, let's talk about that.

AH: I cannot remember the exact moment it all started, somehow I met Bill Wolverton. Bill Wolverton is a core person in this whole project. I was living in Kanab and he asked me if I would come out for a week and look into maybe doing this kind of work on Grand Staircase. I was thinking of the massive amount of distance between Kanab and Escalante Canyon...hmm. I didn't know. He invited me out for one of his weeklong volunteer trips with the Wilderness Volunteers. I went out near the Scorpion Gulch area and was pretty impressed. It was the first time for me to be that deep into the canyon. I came out, still thinking I don't know...this is crazy. He cracked the whip on all these volunteers, worked them very hard. Many of them loved it. I thought, okay, that's great, nice to meet you, went back to Kanab. That happened in 2003.

In 2005 they flew one of the botany positions up here and one in Kanab. I applied for the position in Escalante, landed it, moved up here and that is when Bill Wolverton approached me again saying, "So, what do you think about this?" The logical reason he was trying to engage Grand Staircase's botanist is the watershed sits above Glen Canyon (where he was working) and so there will forever be this connection, a huge seed source from the Escalante that sits above his work.

When I worked in Zion, I worked on a Russian olive and Tamarisk removal project in the Parunaweap (east fork of the Virgin), the Virgin River. It wasn't a brand new idea to me. After seeing the years of work that have been done in those locations, it made sense to do something like that here on the Escalante. There was not much of a weed program. They (the Park Service) have a swat team that would travel around to different parks, that are paid, and they go out and work for a couple of weeks. They did that prior to me coming to Escalante, in the Hurricane Wash area because the Park did identify they wanted Coyote Gulch to be cleaned out.

I was looking at the upper section of the canyon thinking it would sure change things on so many levels, that the majority of those changes would be positive. Somebody in the Washington office [agreed], can't remember who exactly, but I managed to get some funding to hire a four person Student Conservation Association group. I had also organized with the Wilderness Volunteers to do a fall volunteer trip starting here at the mouth of the canyon. The four SCA students came in and I had no idea what I was even getting into... (Laughter) I bought a couple of chain saws knowing nothing about chain saws. I wasn't even trained to use one, when I was in Zion we had to do everything with hand tools. Even sharpening them...those poor kids that came to work for me, I had to call on a lot of my co-workers who knew something about chain saws. We somehow managed through the summer and ended with the Volunteers starting right at the mouth of the canyon. The SCA crew worked in Calf Creek, the first canyon, and it took three or four weeks to clear from Lower Falls to the trailhead. The section above, the upper Calf Creek Falls, I thought, "There is probably nothing up there..." (laughter)

MH: Yes, it is insidious. A couple of things...why is Russian olive such a problem here?

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- AH: Russian olive was introduced in the country during the Dust Bowl era to help stabilize soil. It works particularly well in the Midwest. It made its way to the Southwest and into many tributaries of many rivers. Basically what it does is channelize the river. Then water cannot come out onto the flood plains like it normally would without those trees there, same with tamarisk. What happens is a wall is built and then it goes down a section, then another hill on either side of the creek forms and so you have these different layers of where water can get to. When you get that first mound on the edges of the river it blocks the water from being able to flow out. That has an effect on the cottonwood trees being able to germinate. The other thing that happens is that the trees are very dense, it is a mid-story tree. Cottonwoods are the tallest trees but not as dense as Russian olive which sit below cottonwood trees and they are very shade tolerate. They can easily come up in the shade of cottonwood trees. Then you have the willows that prefer a little more sunshine. You see them growing in spaces that are not super dense or certain times of the day where they get a lot of sun. The willows are not shade tolerate, so when the Russian olive start coming up it blocks them, out competes them and then you have an overhang over the creek which cools the water, shades the river. They have found on the Escalante, the water is cooler on the main stem that it is in the side canyons which is a problem. When you have some of the tributaries being warmer, then it is not able to support the cold water fishes. The Escalante is supposed to be warmer and support warm water fishes. I am not a fisheries biologist, but these are a few things I understand about it; they out compete native vegetation, they do have berries on them that birds do like but from what I have been told and what I have read it is an inferior food for the wildlife in the area (some will argue with me on that!). Overall, I think a diversity of berries and other food sources is better than having a monoculture of one food source for a variety of reasons.
- MH: So, although it works well in the Midwest, is Russian olive not great in the western application with its particular rivers and tributaries?
- AH: It is very good at stabilizing soil.
- MH: And the Dust Bowl...
- AH: There was a lot of vegetation in the Midwest that was removed for farm lands and with the monoculture of certain crops, you can't maintain soil stability, particularly if you have crops of annual plants. Certain times of the year you don't have those plants in the ground and you get these wind storms coming through, there goes your soil.
- MH: In the west then- these are not the Great Plains, there are more microclimates from varied geography maybe. There was a conversation I heard recently, discussing if the Escalante River was always having big floods, flooding and carrying sediment, creating big flood plains a long time ago. What is its natural history?
- AH: Between 1900 and 1930, when you look at some of those old photos, there is next to no vegetation. There are some legacy cottonwood trees in there that are 200 years old minimum. They have somehow survived through a lot of this. There was crazy flooding happening. John Spence knows the history of that really well, and perhaps can provide better information. There were torrential rainstorms which caused huge flooding to go through, topped off with

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unregulated grazing, it has been said, and thousands of cattle were in the canyon taking out more of that vegetation. There is not much there to slow the water down.

MH: Jane Belnap told me that USGS had good ways to see what happened long ago by looking at soil core samples, the true story of the earth. Yes, there was no regulation, it was tragedy of the commons, so to speak. May I ask you what the condition of the Watershed was when you began to look at the eradication project?

AH: The river or the watershed?

MH: Whatever you relate to most...you relate to plants and what their environment should look like. You mentioned the idea of an impending monoculture on the river.

AH: In the beginning I didn't have as broad of a point of view as I do now, as far as the entire watershed. So, when I first began I was looking primarily at the ribbon of water that runs through from the mouth of the canyon down. I didn't think it was so bad. We are fortunate in this part of Grand Staircase, this part of Utah. There are infestations of weeds going off like wildfire throughout the country. You come to this place, you don't have vast amount of spotted knapweed, Russian knapweed, Hoary cress. A lot of this stuff is right over in the Paria River Watershed. You come over here, we have had little things here and there which we've gone out and treated immediately. I was looking at this place and thinking this is probably a place where you can go in and take out the primary weed which is Russian olive and you will not get an influx of a secondary weed coming in afterwards, or worse weeds. On the Colorado River, they come in and take out those invasive trees and Russian knapweed is there immediately.

MH: Is this knapweed like tumbleweed?

AH: No, no, it is much worse than tumbleweed. It is a strongly rhizomatous plant. When you pick it or dig it, it encourages more growth. It grows right under the soil, the roots can grow down thirty feet. I knew we didn't have that.

Even in the upper section where every summer when the irrigation company starts to take water out of the river, not much or any water is flowing between town and Death Hollow. In that section, there was actually very little Russian olive but a lot of, a fair amount of, native vegetation in there. When you got down to the springs of Death Hollow it was just mayhem. So thick in there, I was concerned we would not get vegetation to come back in there. I had seed collectors go in and collect seeds, upstream and within the project area. We collected and pulled cuttings of willows, sent them off to a grower. In that section to deal with the woody debris, we measured out these sections one hundred meters, flagged off. We had the crews go in and treat every other one hundred meters, hoping that a flash flood would come through and take some of the debris away. Then you go back to the other sections the next year. It took us a couple of years to get through this section. We went in during the following fall to do some replanting and came back to thick native vegetation, it had come back on its own. We were shocked. The more we started to pay attention to it, as we were moving further downstream, (the crews start in September and by the time they would leave in late October) the first part of their work project area already had native plants growing back.

MH: That is fantastic.

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AH: It is really kind of unheard of. With other projects that are similar to this, they don't have that kind of success. Ecologically speaking they have stepped over that threshold and to get that restoration pre-invaded situation back, really is difficult if not impossible.

MH: Why? Is it climate, soils, water, the perfect combination?

AH: That, but in many places they just don't have those native resources there, they are gone.

MH: Gone.

AH: Other projects like Seeds of Success, who are going in and collecting seeds, particularly here on the Colorado Plateau, for restoration projects whether it is uplands or riparian. They still are (were, still are?) bringing in cultivated native seeds from the Pacific Northwest. They need to be from this area, genetically native to this area. They have been cultivated in Idaho, Washington, Oregon, where even in their high deserts, they still get more rain than we do on the Colorado Plateau. There is a program to increase seeds specific to the Colorado Plateau (Colorado Plateau Native Plant Development Program). We are hoping that restoration success rates will increase. It has already been shown that you have better success with the local genetic native seeds.

MH: In the big picture on the Colorado Plateau, how do you see Escalante River, its relationship; its continuity and success, in relation to the entire system?

AH: It is an equal player to all other watersheds that contribute to the Colorado Plateau. With our partnership there are four other partnerships that have been developed all within the same time frame. The Gila, in AZ, the Dolores, in Colorado, San Juan which runs in four BLM districts, part in Colorado and part in Utah, and the Verde in AZ.

MH: Would you say now that is becoming more productive in its natural state? Or too soon to tell? What do you think the focus is with these big river projects?

AH: I think the focus is to get them to be healthy functioning riparian ecosystems. Beyond that, the BLM would also like to see functioning healthy uplands, the uplands effect riparian systems. Everything drains down to the riparian systems. I think it is ultimately the goal, the national strategy. The big vision is to have healthy landscapes.

MH: Then your main work objects during this time for the BLM and the Escalante River Watershed Partnership? When did that begin for you?

AH: Technically 2006 and still on-going. I have never been willing to walk away from it. Still in the year I was gone my contributions at the time were looking at potential grant opportunities, providing information to put into grants.

My primary work objective was the Escalante River Project, I also worked with seasonals from the Seeds of Success (SOS). That project I have been working on since 2002, which started with the Kew Botanical Gardens in London, Chicago Botanic Gardens a collaboration where they would collect seeds from ten percent of the world's plant populations. They SOS gave themselves a deadline and met that goal early on. This is when we had very specific seeds or plants that we wanted us to collect from. We'd go out and collect, send them to Bend, then they

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would go to Kew Botanic Gardens for long term storage. Some would go to other seed storage places like in Fort Collins for genetic work.

We have a project going on with Indian Rice grass. In light of increasing the native seed production for restoration work on the Colorado Plateau, Troy Woods (USGS) who was doing some genetic work to see what the differences were between the different seed populations that we were collecting compared to other places on the Colorado Plateau. It grows in Washington and Oregon and most high desert areas, it's a cool season grass, one that is good for all kinds of animals including livestock along with a few other ones. When we were getting the seed from the Pacific Northwest we were not getting great success rates from those seeds on our restoration projects on the Colorado Plateau or GSENM. Once the Seeds of Success met that ideal early goal, they asked, now what do we do? A few people on the Colorado Plateau said, we have this big gap we need filled. We have a big issue. That is where things in this part of the United States, where the Seeds of Success Program has gone to and the Native Plant Development Program formed. The seeds are not leaving the United States anymore for storage at Kew Botanic Gardens, but are going to Pullman, Washington, Fort Collins, Bend. We are trying to get more folks to grow the seeds out so we can actually start producing seeds.

Commented [HAL1]: I think what I was trying to say here was. Our restoration needs here in the western U.S. were not being met. The SOS program combined its efforts with the Colorado Plateau Native Plant Program. This is a program that is increasing seed production for restoration needs on the CP.

MH: So, the idea is to work on the Escalante River Drainage, collect seeds, and...

AH: We also have three listed plant species, threatened and endangered plant species, on the Monument. The Ute Ladies' Tresses in Deer Creek, an orchid. We have five orchids that grow on the monument by the way.

MH: I did not know that.

AH: Who would have known, out here and in the desert. We also have the Kodachrome Bladderpod. Which grows on a Paria member soil formation south of Kodachrome State Park. We also have Jones Cycladenia that grows out in the Circle Cliffs. When I first started working here, I was working with two other botanists. I was asked by one of them to help with the monitoring or the Ute Ladies' Tresses. The Ute Ladies' Tresses population was easy to get to and monitor, so is the Kodachrome Bladderpod. From what I could tell, the Ute Ladies' Tresses was the only one at that time being monitored. There was another seasonal working with me, we monitored the Ute Ladies Tresses and I also helped her with the monitoring of Welsch's Milkweed out in the Coral Pink Sand Dunes. Once I got my position up here in Escalante, I knew I wanted to branch out and see what was going on with the Cycladenia, and what was going on with the Kodachrome Bladderpod. Both of those species I am working with the Fish and Wildlife Service and their recovery plans.

MH: What's going on with them?

AH: The Ute Ladies' Tresses, they continue to find more populations of them, is a riparian species. There are population from Nebraska to Nevada. They are starting to think they are not as rare or threatened as they first thought. Ultimately, the goal is to get all these populations within a certain numbers so they can delist them.

MH: That would be an exciting time, wouldn't it?

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AH: I think that anytime a plant can come off the list, where there are more than these little tiny numbers of plants, that is a success.

MH: Do you think some of these species became limited, endangered or disappeared because of grazing? Once the Monument was designated then more riparian was protected and grazing limited or halted all together. Did that help from what you have seen?

AH: With the Ute Ladies' Tresses the timing of grazing has an effect on it. If you graze during the summer season when it is growing it will have an effect on the orchid. If you graze it in the winter time, like they do in Deer Creek, it looks like a bomb has been dropped in there in the winter time because of the cows. The Ute Ladies' Tresses are shade intolerant and can't compete with other plants growing up and taller in those riparian zones. What you will find is the numbers of orchids decrease when that riparian plants increases. When you bring in the cows they mow the plants down and then come July, August, September, October, they actually do very well. When they fenced off the campground at Deer Creek, there are some populations on the other side of the creek where the vegetation has become so thick they can't be seen now, I can't find them.

MH: Then they can come back, aren't they a bulb?

AH: Yes.

MH: I think I would fall over if I ever saw an orchid out on the Monument.

AH: Right, they are tiny and inconspicuous. Not those things you see in the grocery store. The *gigantius* one that grows along the rivers that are greenish color, still inconspicuous.

MH: In all, do you think your work objective to mitigate Russian olive could help the endangered in some way?

AH: I think with the Ute Lady Trusses, yes. I did some informal consultation when it came time to do some work in Deer Creek. We decided to do work after October 1st. We were seeing small trees popping up. I knew as they got bigger not only would the Ute Lady Trusses continue to disappear under its shadow, other species as well. We worked with Fish and Wildlife to come up with a plan of how we were going to do that, specifically in the Escalante River Watershed Project, that is the only species, plant-wise, that we have to be concerned about. The *Cycladenia* grows out in the Circle Cliffs on super steep soils. Very hard to get to. [With] Those plants, it has been interesting. They have taken me to some very cool places, rough places in the Monument, sometimes scary.

MH: Major challenges for you working on this project, besides chain saw use and locating cliff dwelling plants?

AH: Other people who don't like my projects. (laughter)

MH: What's the main objection?

AH: The UDWR has augmented the turkey population. That was the first thing that was presented to me. "What about the turkey population?" It is said it (the turkey) is native although people have brought more and more in. They (the turkeys) rely heavily on those Russian olive trees.

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MH: I think I started to ask that question earlier, with Russian olive being around for eighty years, do you begin to have new species come in this ecosystem with new birds, new fish, animals?

AH: New stuff? Generally you see the same species year in and year out. Increasing numbers or decreasing numbers.

MH: The turkey populations. So the herds were augmented by people for ...

AH: Hunting. For some folks, one of the things in all of this, turkeys eat the Russian olive seeds. But what did they eat prior to the introduction of Russian olive seeds? It was a number of plants such as gamble oak acorns and bullberries and they eat a lot of insects. That was another interesting thing, in some of the articles, papers I have read, where they have done insect surveys, they have found that the diversity and numbers of insects decrease in monocultures of Russian olive versus in a native forest. There was that.

There were also some and still are some folks opposing... with the Partnership came more funding, which meant we were bringing in "these conservation corps kids". The majority of them come from other parts of the country. Some of them are black, some of them Asian. They are different from the residents.

MH: A different problem of a monoculture of sorts. I guess that is what you are saying then is the local population was uncomfortable with the influx of these different groups of young people? Prejudice and intolerance?

AH: Yes. I have seen a lot of that.

MH: That is not great to hear, honestly.

AH: It kind of is really. I had a City Councilman call me, 10pm one night, and was very upset. [Some in the group] they were taking their shirts off at Nemo's and playing guitars. "This is not the image we want to portray to people traveling through here." That has been a bit disconcerting. Even a couple of my co-workers really hate seeing some of those folks come to town and be on premises (Interagency office). Kris and I have had to take great measure to ensure that only certain members of the crews, the crew leaders are allowed here and there to avoid confrontation. Some folks who were initially on board with it, after seeing where things were going, they have put up as many road blocks as they possibly can now.

MH: Any other challenges you want to discuss?

AH: That's about it, we worked through the NEPA process, and we have got that covered, paperwork-wise we are good. Financially, the Walton Family Foundation has given verbal financial commitment until 2018.

MH: Excellent.

AH: They kind of had us on the edge, waffling. They are the biggest funder of our partnership and of these other partnerships on the Colorado Basin.

MH: It would be a bit tragic to stop...

AH: Yes, to pull the plug when you only have nineteen river miles out of ninety.

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MH: There is a constant revisiting of areas?

AH: Yes, retreatments, we do have to go back and do retreatments.

MH: And the other partners, who are they?

AH: Grand Staircase, Glen Canyon, the USFS, The Nature Conservancy, The Tamarisk Coalition, Grand Staircase Escalante Partners, about 30 signed partners and 15 unsigned but involved. The Partnership was formed as an idea at a bio blitz at one of the private inholdings in Deer Creek, they thought wouldn't it be great to have a partnership, then I got a phone call. There are thirty signing signatory partners and a few who partake in the Partnership but have not signed the MOU due to various things, not their place.

MH: A great partnership, there is a lot of area, a lot people, and private land impacted by a healthy environment, right?

AH: Speaking of another hurdle, private land owners have been. Sue Fearon has started working with Grand Staircase Partners. She is Kris's counterpart working with private land holders. [The opposition is]Because of what this partnership brings to town, these are different people with some other deep inbred things like, "this is just another way the government is trying to get onto my lands". There have been some hurdles with folks and others of them I have been absolutely surprised when they came up to me in the beginning and said, "I will not participate in your project! I will not be doing any Russian olive removal." A little while later, I drive past their land and say, "Hey, wait a minute!" All the Russian olive is gone. Others are waiting to see about others' experiences with removal will be like.

AH: I do want to kind of clarify, this is not an eradication project, it is a control project. I do not feel we will ever be able to eradicate the Russian olives because of birds. They carry the seed everywhere.

MH: Where's the ornithologist!

AH: There will always be that private land owner come hell or high water, "I will not have my trees cut down." And there are those trees that you don't get to, a weird tree growing in the rocks 300 feet up.

MH: They are not that inviting a tree, sort of rip you up, super prickly.

AH: If you are on the Escalante River you have to be sure you stay right in the middle.

MH: Nineteen miles left, what is that looking like?

AH: There is a section downstream from the Highway 12 bridge, there is that private land which most of that, if not all of that, has been cleared. It is clear all the way down to just past Phipps Wash. From there to Boulder Creek, the confluence, it is super thick, the thickest part of the entire river. It's kind of a scary section, but we will work through it. There still is a mile or two from inside Glen Canyon up to the boundary line. That whole section from Phipps Wash to Glen Canyon boundary line is what is left. Treading into new territory now.

MH: Success or results during your tenure, what would you like to say?

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AH: Last fall we did close the gap from town, mouth of the canyon, to the bridge. Fifteen years' worth of work. And a lot of learning, and where we learned the most. We will find out more. Getting that made me super excited. The Partnership was recognized by the Secretary of Interior, Ken Salazar.

MH: Congratulations! Excellent.

AH: It was huge for me, I think someone recommended the Partnership to be recognized. First it was a Park Service type of project, then it was expanded to include all DOI agencies. We, along with other partnerships across the United States got to meet with Ken Salazar. He asked us all a number of questions. He invited us into his office, we could step out and look at the monument. I think he was hoping that somehow he could dredge up money from Congress to send out to continue to support us. Either which way, to have the Secretary talk to you, he made a point of talking to all of us, asking us questions about our projects. Exciting.

MH: Any last thoughts on the Partnership, future goals, challenges?

AH: Well, from 2006 we thought, "Well, we will get done when we get done." One year I only had money to hire one person, she did retreatment. I like that this partnership was able to form, so we could figure out, based on past years' experiences, how much can we actually treat in one year with a certain amount of people, with a certain amount of money. It is nice to have that in writing now, we feel confident now to say, "Come the end of 2018, we will that lower section cleared of the big trees." It will totally switch over to retreatment phase. Then we won't have all the crazies coming to town, we will just have the a few crazies.

MH: Are they really all that crazy, or hard working kids? They have been trained and oriented.

AH: I think a lot of them are hardworking kids, maybe some are lazy, but they all come with tattoos, piercings. Some are sweet country folks from Kentucky, and some from downtown LA who have never seen stars in their life. Never been camping. It is a really cool opportunity the Partnership provides.

MH: That opportunity and experience could mean survival of our most basic needs; air, and water. The things we learn from these projects could save places for the next generation, we don't know.

AH: Or give influence on other projects. To go along with that we have had a couple of old timers from town come to our meetings, which is always a bit fretful for us, "What are we going to get?" We have had some good positive interactions with some folks, men who remembered when they brought these trees to town and planted them and say that was the worst thing that has ever happened.

MH: I would love to talk to those ranchers...

AH: One of them is the man who owns the Padre Hotel, approachable guy.

MH: Last question, your current assignment please?

AH: I am the NEPA coordinator, as a detail. Helping with various things like the Grazing EIS, a little bit. The campground upgrades, Deer Creek, soon Calf Creek. SRP, which kicks out a lots of DNAs.

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MH: Good. Thank you. I appreciate your hard work. Thank you for your time Amber.

