

1Ken Sizemore

INTERVIEW WITH: Ken Sizemore
INTERVIEWER: Marsha Holland
INTERVIEW NUMBER: One
DATE OF INTERVIEW: January 24, 2012
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: St. George, Utah
SUBJECT OF INTERVIEW: GSENM History
TRANSCRIBER: Rosa Lee White
DATE: April 26, 2012

MH: It's January 24, 2012. I'm in St. George, Utah. And I'm with Ken Sizemore today. Thanks, Ken, for meeting with me.

KS: Thank you.

MH: And to start off, if I could get you to introduce yourself and if you wouldn't mind telling me your date of birth, the place where you were born and a little bit about the family you were born into.

KS: Right. Again, I'm Ken Sizemore. I'm currently the executive director of the Five County Association of Governments and served on the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Planning team. I was born on the 22nd of June 1954 in Salt Lake City, Utah to Allen and Myrna Sizemore. I was the second child of five, grew up in the Salt Lake Valley, literally in the downtown area of Salt Lake City, as a small child. My parents rented a home there on what's now 4th North and 5th West. My father was a welder in a fabricating plant. He worked for Eaton Metal Products Company for more than 35 years. My mother was a homemaker for most of my growing up years but later on went on to work in various numbers of places. Again, I'm the second of five siblings and as I recall I'm the only college graduate of those five siblings. So, I came from a very blue collar background. I went to college at Utah State University in Cache Valley and was very lucky to find a position with the Cache County planning department immediately upon my graduation. I had done an internship with the county planning department in my last quarter of school and was given an opportunity to do a summer position with them. And by the time summer ended, they offered me a full time job.

MH: So that's why internships are nice.

KS: That's correct.

MH: And what was your degree in?

KS: My degree was in political science with an emphasis in public administration. I have a certificate in public administration from my undergraduate program. I graduated in 1977 and worked until 1986 at Cache County. In 1986, I was offered a position here in St. George with the Five County Association of Governments, and served as the deputy director, director of community and economic development from 1986 until 2006 when I took over the position of executive director with the Association of Governments.

MH: Yes, and I think that's how we met, when you were involved in the Association of Governments. It was through the volunteer centers.

KS: Right.

MH: I know you have some relationship with Jerry Meredith from the planning phase.. The Monument's designation was in '96. When did Jerry contact you? Did he bring you into the project?

KS: Actually he wasn't.

KS: [laughter] I was one of five people who were asked by the governor to participate on the Monument planning team. Let me give you a little background about how that worked again. As you stated, the Monument was designated in September of 1996. Immediately after the designation then Governor Leavitt initiated extensive negotiations with Secretary Babbitt, the Secretary of the Interior, about how this monument was going to be developed and planned for because it was the first BLM monument designated. There was no track record on how this was going to happen. Secretary Babbitt was very serious about involving the state in the planning for and the development of a management document for the monument. Through those negotiations, Governor Leavitt's state planning coordinator, Brad Barber, was his point man here in Southwestern Utah and came to visit with local officials about what this was going to mean and how the state was going to be involved. On the last day of January 1997, Brad Barber came to my office and sat down with myself and John Williams, who was our executive director at the time and laid out a proposal. He said, "We want Ken to be one of the five people who sit on the monument planning team appointed by Governor Leavitt." That was a big surprise. I can still remember that day very vividly, sitting in our conference room and having Brad come in and lay out this proposal. And it was a big surprise to my boss as well. It meant a big change because they wanted these individuals to be full-time staff people detailed to the monument planning team, which meant I would have to give up three years of involvement with my regular job assignments. It was very fortuitous that John Williams saw the wisdom in making that happen and was agreeable. Of course, it helped that the state was providing some of the financial resources that would be required to pay for our participation on the planning team. So, because the state was willing to do that and we could work out shifting responsibilities at the Association of Governments, we agreed. And again, that was the last day of January of '97. On April 1st 1997, I started that full-time position with the monument planning time.

MH: So a few months later, there's a little transition. You began meeting in Cedar?

KS: That's correct. The monument planning team was based in Cedar City for a number of different reasons. The major reason was they had the infrastructure from a facility standpoint to be able to house people and to coordinate the effort. The field office headquarters was in Cedar City, which gave them the opportunity to be close by and arrange for office space to be rented and do all of the logistical things that needed to happen. That's why Cedar City was selected as the local for the planning team.

MH: There were five of you who came from the state?

KS: Correct.

MH: You were one and in what capacity?

KS: My capacity was to be a community planner, to be the socioeconomic point person, arranger, and coordinator and to provide planning consistency analysis, to go out to the counties and understand their planning processes and to integrate county planning processes into the monument planning process.

In March of '97 a press release announced the planning team and the people who would be coming from the state. It included myself, Bob Blackett, a geologist from the state geological survey; Alden Hamblin who was a paleontologist from the state department of natural resources; Kathleen Truman who was a historian/anthropologist and had a lot to do with the oral history idea being passed along through the planning process; Clair Jensen who was a wildlife biologist and worked with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources in Cedar City. So those were... are those five? One, two, two, three, four, five. Yes, that's the five of us.

MH: Yes, so is there a chance I could get a copy of this to add in with your interview?

KS: Sure.

MH: We're trying to also collect some artifacts. Everything's pretty spread out now.

KS: Yes. It is.

MH: Somebody suggested acquiring the pen that Clinton used [laughter].

KS: [laughter]

MH: Let me ask you what your impressions were. Had you been following the designation? Were you aware of it? I know many people were taken by surprise. People in Utah in particular were taken by surprise. I was in San Francisco at the time and I went to a scoping meeting there.

KS: I was there, too.

MH: Oh, were you? And Marietta.

KS: Yes.

MH: That's how I met Marietta. Tell me if you had a connection to the Grand Staircase, if you would. And tell me what your thoughts were when designation occurred.

KS: OK. Again my responsibility at that time with the Association of Governments was community and economic development. I had been working very closely with county officials on economic development strategies across our region. One of the ideas that was being talked about for years before designation of the monument was some kind of a nationally-designated entity out there in Kane and Garfield Counties. It was focused on the canyons of the Escalante. Local officials were dealing with BLM officials and other federal officials about the concept of a national conservation area or some kind of designation in the canyons of the Escalante. Local officials were heavily involved in those deliberations and discussions. Former commissioner in Garfield County, Louise Liston, was leading the charge from the local perspective. There were committees developed to explore what could happen with that concept and a lot of intensive discussion was happening in 1995-'96. I was involved in that process as the regional economic development representative, trying to tie two counties and a number of municipalities into that process and making it a wide-ranging discussion. So I had been very involved with the committee discussions and the canyons of the Escalante concept and proposals for some kind of a museum in Escalante. There were just a lot of discussions going on and deliberations on how we could capitalize on that landscape. Because I was involved in those discussions, we were probably as aware as anyone in Utah about the rumblings of some kind of an announcement as '96 went along. The BLM staff that we were working with at the state and field office level started giving us heads up that there was something brewing at the federal level. There were a number of indicators that something was going to happen but no formal or informal notification

about the designation. So we were taken as much by surprise as everyone else in Southern Utah when the designation announcement happened.

MH: Right. I know that the Grand Staircase entity was unique because it was the first monument assigned to the BLM. But with your experience, was the assignment out of the ordinary? Have you ever had any experience with that sort of a designation or assignment without some sort of community or state involvement?

KS: Well, not personally. Because in my tenure from 1986 on, that hadn't happened, but if you look into history it wasn't the first time and it's not the last time that this has happened to local officials in Southwestern Utah. Their forefathers in the 20th century experienced designations on a regular basis. The designation of Zion, what is now Zion and what is now Bryce and what is Capitol Reef. All of those designations happened in recent enough memory that local officials in 1996 still remembered their fathers and grandfathers talking about those processes. So those designations had happened before and people in Southwestern Utah remembered the angst and the concern and the feeling like they'd been left out of the process a number of times.

A cultural part of existing down here and living in southwestern Utah is having that distrust of the federal government coming in and making these broad designations with little or no input from local officials.

MH: I know from interviewing long-time ranchers, since after the Taylor Grazing Act, still feeling this ownership and that deep connection to the land that really seems to come out in the personal histories of people in Southern Utah. Sometimes that connection is hard for many people outside of Utah to really understand. They've been ranching, grazing that land forever. and not so much see it as scenic landscapes as much as a way to make a living, although that has changed too.

KS: Yes. It has.

MH: Well, that's a really interesting perspective, a planners perspective. I really appreciate that. For some people it's more emotional. One question, did you have a personal tie to the land? Were you familiar with the Grand Staircase region?

KS: Very familiar with Grand Staircase landscape because of my work. I don't have a personal connection in terms of family who may have lived or grazed cattle or worked out on the landscape. No, I come from Northern Utah with my family background. I was the first of my family to come to Southern Utah to work professionally and live here so I don't have the family connections but I certainly have the professional connections.

MH: Did you spend time there? Had you toured the area?

KS: Certainly. I can very vividly recall my first trip over the Hogsback into Boulder which happened for a night meeting, for a planning commission meeting, I believe it was. I'd never been on that road before and drove it in the dark. I had no idea what I had just traversed. And then going back the next morning, it was astounding to me, you know as most people [would think on] their first experience on the Hogsback. It was just astounding to think about this landscape in front of me and to see the canyons of the Escalante out there. It was a very emotional, visceral response to the landscape. So my responsibility as a planner and an economic development professional was to work very closely with these small communities. I worked with Escalante and helped them develop their first zoning ordinance way back in the '80's and had a very vivid experience there. I know that these ranchers did it intentionally. They came into a planning commissioner hearing to

deliberate the first zoning ordinance in Escalante and they came packing heat. They had six guns, chaps, spurs. They came jangling into the meeting fully armed just to intimidate me. Who was this guy coming in from St. George tellin' us that we need zoning in Escalante? It was a very [laughter] exciting experience.

MH: Wow, real Wild West.

KS: Right.

MH: Interesting because you were asked by somebody to come over?

KS: Yes. The city council asked us to come and make that happen and so we were technical advisers to help them go through the process of making sure they had a plan that enabled the ordinances and that the ordinances reflected the plan. It was an opportunity to get a very close working relationship with individuals in each of these small towns. So, I have connections with all of the small towns across the landscape that's now Grand Staircase. And before I came to work at Five County, our agency was heavily involved in the Alton coal and the Kaiparowits coal deliberations from the sixties and seventies and did a lot of the socioeconomic analysis about what the impacts would be of developing the new town at the Kaiparowits sight and slurring coal from Alton to St. George to the proposed power plant here. We had a history of working with these small towns and helping them develop the tools they needed to accommodate the growth that they were expecting from all of this proposed natural resource development. We had those professional ties across the landscape. I visited and worked in literally every community out there, Big Water, Kanab, Church Wells, Glendale, Long Valley, all of the communities. I've been a participant in the planning processes at the local level and got to know the people very, very well.

MH: Yes. Which really makes you so valuable in the planning group. One of the reasons you came into the small towns to help them plan was in anticipation of resource development?

KS: For some it was. Again, both the Kaiparowits and the Alton projects had wound down dramatically by the time I came on board in 1986 so I didn't participate directly in those processes, but we set the stage then for providing that technical assistance to the communities and had the opportunity to be out there. I was coming in on the tail end of the Alton coal process when the Secretary withdrew a lot of that coal resource. I believe it was the early 80's when that happened. And I was particularly involved with a proposed action from EPA to create integral vistas, a proposal that stated that if you could stand on a national park unit and look out over the landscape, you could not put an activity out in that vista that would mar its scenic value. We worked very hard with our local communities to refute that kind of a proposal. And it didn't happen. It never came to be. One of my major functions over 26 years in this agency has been to work with local communities and counties in sometimes reacting to, but hopefully proactively responding to, federal government land management initiatives.

I spent much of my early years here at the agency dealing with wilderness, BLM wilderness, and the whole wilderness evaluation process. We have filing cabinets full of information gathered about the qualities of the landscape that would either qualify or not qualify the landscape for wilderness designation. So, between wilderness and resource development and community planning in terms of locating sewer lagoons or water tanks or infrastructure on federal lands to support the communities, I've worked very intensively with all of those small towns.

MH: Right. It sounds like. I remember Jerry Meredith talking about the wilderness inventory. He described it as kind of a nightmare.

KS: It was. Yes, and so I was on the front lines of making all of those things happen. We've had, historically, a very small staff. Even today, our planning staff is less than five. Back then it was two. So, you know, it was hard work keeping up with all of the initiatives that were coming out from the multitude of federal land agencies. It's not just BLM in Southwestern Utah. We deal with the National Park Service. We deal with the U.S. Forest Service and the BLM as well as State Trust Lands Administration and other entities. Keeping up with landscape level activities happening is an intensive endeavor.

MH: You have a lot of experience in it [laughter]. During your assignment, you were planning on being there the full three years? Until the plan was completed and signed off.

KS: That's correct.

MH: So let's talk about the first year, what were some of your main objectives that first year?

KS: The first few months was spent getting to know each other and establishing a vision for what our charge was, learning each other's responsibilities and how we fit into the team process, and going out into the public to start the scoping process required in BLM planning processes. It was learning what our sideboards were, determining who had what specific responsibilities, laying out a plan for how we were going to accomplish them and going out into the public and starting to elicit scoping comments. That was the first few months.

My particular responsibilities were very well laid out. I received, I have it right here in my hand, a role and function statement. Every one of the team members got one of these. I knew that I had to represent the team in everything that I said and did. It was a very different stance than I had to take then rather than being an economic development professional hired by the local governments. I was now representing a BLM planning team. It was a very different stance that I had to take; that we had to communicate and coordinate, that we had to complete every assignment we were given in the time frames we were given.

I had very specific duties to gather and maintain economic development data relative to the plan. I also had to develop the charts and graphs and figures. One of my major charges was to coordinate the development of an economic and socioeconomic analysis. We knew that I couldn't do that individually as one person on the planning team. That was just beyond the capacity of one individual to accomplish. We determined that the best source of socioeconomic analysis and expertise was the Governor's office who hires economists to do that kind of research. We entered into a contract with the governor's office of planning and budget to prepare the larger-scale intensive economic analysis for the monument landscape. It was my charge to make sure that we had a contract that met all of the federal requirements and that we had a scope of work that reflected what the planning team needed to see and what the draft environmental impact statement required and what the Washington office was expecting. A lot of my time and involvement was making sure that we had that contract in place with a scope of work and watching the scope of work happen and collecting the information and digesting it into a format that the document could reflect.

MH: So, the economic development, is it a forecast based on a budget that you're given then?

KS: No, the draft environmental impact statement contains a socioeconomic appendix. The final doesn't have this chapter. But there's an economic conditions appendix that was developed based on the contract with the Governor's office. They called it the Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument Socioeconomic Analysis.

MH: So would this describe what we're dealing with here in terms of the communities, an economic inventory of the outlying communities?

KS: Right. Just like you would inventory what biological resources there are. Rocks or plants. This is the economic inventory.

MH: And what were some of the salient points that came from that?

KS: Well, as I look back on it now in 2012 and see what we were projecting in 1997, I think that we over-projected population growth and over-projected visitation on the monument substantially. But that it set the stage, this is the effort that ended up...

[knock at door]

KS: Can we stop for a minute?

MH: Yes. You were talking about a couple things you think were maybe over-forecasted, perhaps, population growth and visitation. This is really great perspective. When these guys were making their forecast it's really based on nothing that's ever done before. So it's more like on national park basis or... Wouldn't you say that was probably true?

KS: Right. It is.

One initiative that came out of this analysis was the development of visitor centers in various communities surrounding the landscape came from this analysis so it was kind of two-fold. This purpose was to do this inventory and to have the numbers just like we needed numbers on plants or rocks or water or anything else. We needed the numbers. So that was the major function of this analysis is to give us the numbers. The secondary result was to give us some idea of the cultural feel for what would happen out on that landscape. That got beyond just my function of providing socioeconomic information. One of the other charges I was given from the get-go was to help manage what was called a community and economic development strategy team. You may remember those meetings back during that process. We had a group of community leaders meeting on a very regular basis trying to help the monument planning team incorporate community and economic development visions and issues and concerns into the plan, and to make sure that the local officials felt like they were involved and participating in the process. Now, looking back on it, I don't know that we met that objective because there's still so much animosity even today about the process and the plan itself. One of my biggest challenges is having credibility after having participated as a member of that team and being part of the BLM team that did this to us [laughter].

MH: Right. Yes, there were... more than one person, in fact, they were working for the BLM at the time in Escalante and Kanab. Then they're working for the Grand Staircase. Those that moved there to work the Grand Staircase said those employees really took the brunt, because they were in the community. But, it's a job and jobs are scarce.

KS: Right. So my first few months were spent getting that stage built, getting that base built, going into the contract to get the socioeconomic information in place and then doing the analysis of the

information and incorporating it into the draft plan. The second major function I had after that process was going out into the communities and doing the scoping meetings and gathering information. I had a major function in that process because I knew the communities. I was the point person to go out and make the arrangements for the meetings, schedule a time, schedule a place, make sure there were chairs and all of the stuff we needed.

MH: Law enforcement [laughter]?

KS: [laughter] Having a working relationship in all those communities, it was relatively simple for me to do. They knew who I was and I knew the buildings and I knew the people who scheduled them. So I made all of those arrangements for many of those meetings. There were a substantial number of meetings. Literally every town around the monument and then Salt Lake, Vegas, San Francisco, Washington D.C. Just being a participant in that process and going out and gathering the comments and participating in the scoping process that FLPMA requires.

MH: Yes. And how long was that process?

KS: My memory's not quite as good on how long that took but I believe it was probably a five to seven, nine month process. Somewhere in that neighborhood.

MH: Then you have to analyze all the response.

KS: Yes, that was the last stage. The first stage was setting the stage, doing the socioeconomic contract. Second stage was going out and gathering all those comments. The next stage was developing the document, developing the draft plan. A major part of that process was analyzing all of those comments. BLM has learned a lot from how the Grand Staircase accomplished that. We got thousands and thousands and thousands of comments back both written and verbal and trying to incorporate those into a system that allowed us to identify like comments and group them into issues and analyze what they said and respond to them was a big function that they asked me to help participate in. Just trying to devise a system that makes that work. Nowadays that's evolved into consulting firms that do that for a living. They built their systems on what we devised with Grand Staircase. That was the last part of my function there as a team member; watching that and trying to make sense of that huge response from the public and incorporating it into the document.

MH: Right. And what would you say were some of your major challenges doing that work?

KS: My first major challenge was trying to retain the credibility that I'd built over a decade with local officials and now wearing a BLM hat, and being part of the BLM team and making sure that I still had that credibility was a major challenge. In some aspects, I'm still trying to overcome that, even today.

MH: Yes, I was going to ask you the outcome of that.

KS: Well, it was very interesting. The local officials who were on the committee to determine who would replace John Williams as executive director here were very concerned about it. When I made the cut and was asked to come and interview, I didn't just take John's place. I had to apply and be part of a large group of employees and others who applied to become executive director. That's another very vivid memory of sitting here in this conference room in this building and having local officials look me in the eye and say "can we trust you after having gone over to the BLM side and worked with them for three years?".

- MH: Yes, even though it was a governor appointment.
- KS: Right, yes. So I had to overcome that but obviously they felt comfortable that they could and they did entrust me with being the executive director for the most part I think I have an excellent rapport and working relationship with the officials.
- MH: Right, I can't imagine anything else though.
- KS: That was a very challenging time to overcome that distrust and concern.
- MH: Yes, because you're still here in this community. You were one of the few that came from this community and returned to this community... and that's scary. That is your career.
- KS: The other major challenge we had, and I don't know how much others have talked about this, but the five who were the state-appointed planning team members had to develop a caucus. We would go into either Kate Cannon or Jerry Meredith and say wait a minute, this thing is getting way off base in terms of what we built as a vision early in the process. The frustration both for Jerry and Kate and others here in Utah was that Washington would change direction and policy. It happened all through that three-year process. We'd be going one direction and felt we had a vision and a strategy and a direction to head and Washington would change it 80 or 70 or 90 or sometimes 180 degrees.
- MH: Do you know why?
- KS: Because there was a group of midlevel BLM staffers in the Washington office who were charged from the Secretary to watch this planning process and oversee it and to reflect what would be coming down from the federal level. And there are two major areas that demonstrate what finally came out in the final plan. Number one is the amount of primitive area designated in the final plan was much larger than what the planning team had envisioned during our working process. The second was access and roads. We had a very different process for going out to the counties and establishing what are known as Title V authorizations along the roads. Jerry had a very different vision for how that would happen than what came out at the final product and both of those were the result of Washington D.C. Staff saying you will not do that. You will do this [laughter].
- MH: Right. Yes, Jerry said it was tough.
- KS: It was.
- MH: He felt that was his whole job was defending the group and their decisions.
- KS: Right, yes. And so a couple of times in that three year process, the caucus of state team members went into the managers offices and said "we'll just walk out". We'll tell Governor Leavitt, we're done. This isn't working the way it was supposed to. But it never happened. They were able to mitigate some of our major concerns.
- But certainly what came out in the final document and resulted in a lot of that distrust I had to deal with was the fact that we were driving down the road in one direction and were told to change course dramatically, sometimes at the end of the process.
- MH: Yes, frustrating because you know how much time you spent at the table, all the conversations and the give and take. It's all about compromising. So a couple challenges you mentioned and then what do you think were your major successes or results during, you know, your tenure?

KS: I can point out three. The first one is the monument advisory committee which has had fits and starts since the designation of the monument, but the fact that there still is a monument advisory committee and that the current management are trying their hardest to incorporate that committee in to their decision making processes. I don't think there would be a monument advisory committee without our involvement as state people on the planning team. It was state planning team members that made sure that that the concept survived through the planning process. It was incorporated into the document and the commitments that the Secretary made to the state that there would be a monument advisory committee. It's somewhat disappointing to see how the committee's been incorporated into decision making and most recently having almost a four year period of time without a committee.

MH: That's correct.

KS: You know, it hasn't worked as smoothly or effectively as we had hoped but there is still a committee and I think that that's an excellent outcome that I had a part in making sure happened. The second one is cooperating agencies. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act already talks about cooperating agencies. I brought up cooperating agencies to the monument manager and assistant manager and was somewhat rebuffed, "Oh, cooperating agencies. That's only other federal agencies. We just cooperate with other federal agencies. We don't cooperate with local agencies." I said, "No, that's not what it says." I think if you go back to the BLM planning processes and track them back you will see that that was 1997 when BLM started seeing' that light. And now, in 2012, it's a common practice across the nation that BLM engages local governments as cooperators, formally preparing an agreement and identifying that these counties are going to be cooperating agencies.

MH: It just makes sense.

KS: It just had to... you really had to change the way that planners and BLM went about their processes. So that was the second one. And the final one I would say is that I became known on the planning team as having a mantra: "planning is a process, not a product." Many of the BLM team members had been in processes before in their careers where their focus was creating a document. That's what they were focused on, getting the document in the format that the federal guidelines required and meeting all of the check boxes; that they had analyzed all of these things. The final product was the document. I was reminding them on a consistent basis that, wait a minute, this planning is more than just getting a document out on the shelf. It's building these relationships with the communities and building trust and making sure that there's a process that goes beyond when the Secretary signs the document. Incorporating a management philosophy that still respects local communities. I still have planning team members, both BLM and state talk about, "Yeah, Ken, that's right. Planning's a process, not a product."

MH: Yes, and if you don't have the process in place it will just flop.

KS: Right.

MH: I like the mantra.

KS: So I count those as my three major successes.

MH: Did you stay, you stayed for the whole three years?

KS: It was April '97 to July of '99. So it wasn't quite three years but more than two.

- MH: And how did you feel when you left? Did you feel like it was pretty solid, everyone knew the process and were on solid ground, heading in the right direction?
- KS: Yes, I thought we were headed in the right direction. And we had some formal celebrations about what we had accomplished and got nothing but positive feedback from the Washington staff as well as State staff about what we had contributed to the process. One of the things that we've seen is that no other BLM designated monument incorporated state planning team members into their processes. And it was not just cultural. Organizationally that was a problem and some governors in others states weren't as excited or as engaged as Governor Leavitt was to push that at the Secretary level. And it's also true that the budgets that were provided to the monument in those early planning days were significant. There was a lot of money invested into that planning process that other subsequent monuments didn't get. The amount of money they had to do planning processes was much less than the Grand Staircase.
- MH: Right. And continues to be. BLM is always underfunded. And it's sort of a generational change and attitude change and mindset change. It takes time. And for the BLM, I think they've had a lot of really major changes.
- KS: They have.
- MH: In a short amount of time.
- KS: And you can see it. In the time I've worked here in Southwestern Utah... another vivid memory that's not monument related, was walking into the St. George field office of BLM in 1986 to talk to the field office manager about resource management planning here in the St. George area and almost literally being tossed aside. That individual was very condescending and said, "I don't have to listen to what the locals say. I have a federal mandate and I'm gonna accomplish that federal mandate. County commissioners are just like any other of the public that wants to comment to me. I take their message, and give it the same weight as any other person who writes me a letter." You know, that was the attitude in 1986 from local BLM staffs. It's changed so dramatically now where you've got local field office managers and their staffs who get out and know the community much better. They participate in processes to get to know commissioners and mayors and planning staff and know what's going on in the processes and they've hired people now who are their planners, who have a background that's broader than just natural resources, and they've come up from a social science perspective instead of a physical science perspective which makes a big difference.
- MH: Yes, well it does help balance what you're doing.
- KS: The planners who are working here in our field offices now have a much different view of the world than the planners of yore. So it has made a major difference.
- MH: And I see also on the monument because as I've interviewed a lot of old, long time residents there some of them have taken the monument in stride at this point; they can still graze and there's still firewood and they can still access most places. minor changes. But there's just some people always can't stand whatever the federal government does. Period. Now I see another generation of young men and women who are becoming better educated and they're getting jobs. It's good employment compared to being in tourism, a career job, working for the BLM/Grand Staircase or National Park. If that's what you have in your backyard, there's nothing wrong with moving along that road.

KS: Even some of our most outspoken local officials, when you look at their families, they have children who are working for federal agencies.

MH: Or grandchildren.

KS: Or grandchildren, yes.

KS: Nothing stays the same. Change is a constant.

MH: It is. One reason why I really treasure my current job is because I can help people realize how important their cultural heritage is and that it can be preserved. I haven't met Kathleen, but hope to... the cultural heritage is really key and a really important part of preserve.

KS: And that is Kathleen Truman's forte and you do need to have a conversation with her definitely. It would be very fascinating to hear her take.

MH: Yes. Well, I appreciate your time and we got you out of here just in the nick of time, it sounds like you have a back log in there. Do you have any last comments?

KS: As I've stated, I think that change is a constant and that we need to be able to accommodate and deal with change. It's something we don't like as human beings. It's uncomfortable to have to deal with change but I think that we're much better suited in 2012 to deal with potential surprises on public lands than we were in 1996. And it won't surprise me if in the next few months, in this election year, that we're going to see some more surprises about public lands in Utah. Maybe not in southwestern Utah but who knows. I think that the agencies have a culture now that's much more accommodating to incorporating local governments as cooperating agencies and listening to their concerns and bringing them to the table and making the planning process more robust and inclusive than it has been in the past.

MH: Well, thank you. Thank you so much for your perspective and comments. I really appreciate it.

KS: It's my pleasure.

End of Interview. Time: 00:59:05