

Transcription: Grand Canyon Oral History

Interviewee: Pat Grediagin (PG)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Pat recounts 1980s private and trail work river trips in the Grand Canyon, taking a BLM job at Red Rock Canyon, and then starting overseas travel in 1989 with a Nepal trek

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TM: Today is Wednesday, November 25, 2020. This is Part 5 of a Grand Canyon oral history with Pat Grediagin. My name is Tom Martin. Good evening, Pat. How are you today?

PG: I'm fine, thank you.

TM: Great. Pat, may we have your permission to record this oral history over the phone?

PG: Yes, you have my permission.

TM: Thank you. Last time, the end of Part 4, you'd mentioned quite a bit about your experiences at Phantom Ranch. At one point, you got invited on a river trip. Do you remember how that invitation happened?

PG: Yeah, and I can get into that in a minute, but I had forgotten to mention that earlier, I think it was 1982 when I was still working in Canyonlands, I had done a private Grand Canyon winter trip. So I thought maybe I'd start with that being my first time on the river and then when I was working at Grand Canyon would be the next time on the river. Does that sound okay?

TM: Absolutely! Wait a minute, let me make sure I understand this. In 1982, you did a private, also called a do-it-yourself or non-commercial, river trip in the winter in Grand Canyon?

PG: Yeah. Right.

TM: Those were rare. Wow. Do you remember the months?

PG: Well, I think it was... Definitely was in February, and I don't know if it was a little bit of January and February or a little bit of February and then a little March. But I know February was a good chunk of it. And I know that it was cold down there! In part because the shadows of the rim... You don't think about it in the fairer weather season, but when the sun's lower, sometimes it really doesn't come over the rim to hit parts of the river. If you're down there and the weather's cool, and you don't have any direct sun on you, it just is like a little refrigerator box. So we had some cool times but we also had some nicer, warm days when we were in the sun.

TM: Did you just call Grand Canyon and get the permit?

PG: Four of us from the Canyonlands river crew were on the trip. In my memory, it was Glenn Sherrill, one of the river rangers, who got the permit. I don't know how he went about and got it. He might of just picked it up kind of on short notice because it was such an off-season that I don't think there were... It might of been available, but I don't really know how he got it. I just know that he was like, "Hey, got a Grand Canyon permit, wannna go?" And I'm like, "Sure." Tom Cox went, another Canyonlands river ranger; and Ed Forner and I. So, four out of five of the Canyonlands river rangers went on that trip.

PG: I think there might of been some other people, another person or two. I don't really remember that trip. It seems like there was more than four of us. By the way, I do have good notes. As we're doing these interviews, I'm on a year-long road trip away from home and I don't have access to all my notes. But I do have notes at home that have a lot of the details of things I'm telling you about. So, if there was ever a question, I can look things up and be pretty precise with a lot of it.

TM: Fun. Well, we'll hold that thought when you get home.

PG: Yeah, right. So, there was the four of us. Let's see, that was four of us, right? Plus maybe another couple. As I say, I can't remember. And I think it was... It might of even been a little longer than a 21-day trip. It might of been a 23-day trip, or...

TM: Could of been 25 or 30.

PG: Could of been 25; I don't think it was 30. But it was a long trip. We were all... Probably three out of the four us were not working at the time. Two of us were seasonals and one was a permanent but part-time, not working the total year. So I think time wasn't an issue and we just said, okay, let's go.

TM: Wow, great. Did you get a chance to row a boat?

PG: I did not row a boat. Well, yeah, I rowed a boat... No, I was basically a passenger with Ed's boat. I'm sure I rowed a little bit then, but he really did all of the significant rapids. It was his boat that we were in and I was just ballast and the bailer!

TM: I'm just rockin' back on my heels thinking about this. No drysuit, no splash jacket kind of stuff.

PG: We had wetsuits.

TM: Oh, brrr! I just think, you know, wetsuits are meant to be, like, in the water.

PG: Right. But if you're getting splashed and stuff at all, they work reasonably well there, too.

TM: Sounds like it would be freezing. And you have to bail the boat. That means you're standing in cold water. Oh my, this is a hardy crew.

PG: Yeah. I do remember being cold. I do remember that I very seldom bathed. I do remember that I washed my hair about three times out of at least 21 days. Because mostly it was just kind of chilly, and the days were short so there was not a lot of direct sun on us. But I don't want it to be all a black box trip 'cause there was times, in different parts of the Grand Canyon, where you do get a lot of sun in the winter. I don't remember, we probably had some rainstorm or two, but mostly I remember being cold

because of the shadow effects from the cliffs in areas. But then at other times we would have had sun on us and that always would of felt really nice.

TM: Sure, sure. Did you guys do some hiking?

PG: Yeah. I remember we went into Deer Creek Falls. We went up the trail and into the narrows there and we actually climbed down in the narrows without ropes. I don't know exactly how we did that but we skinned down some rock I can kind of remember. Yeah, so we were down in there. I don't think we went very far down in there, we just went down and then crawled back out. I know we did that. We went to Thunder River. We went to Nankoweap. So we would have done a lot of the hour or two hour kind of hikes out of the standard hikes. We did those.

TM: Did you see anybody else on the river that you remember?

PG: I don't remember seeing other people. We might of seen someone here or there, but I don't remember either way. Actually, I'm gonna say I think we went down to Pearce Ferry on that trip. So that probably was like a 25-day trip at least to get down there. And at that time... Boy, my memory of that part is kind of dim, but it seems like, gosh, I think we had to row across.

TM: It would of been a lot of rowing on flat water.

PG: Yeah, I better just abandon that whole notion. I think we went down there, but I don't have a good enough memory to say we really did. And I don't know how we would of done... Oh, I think we got picked up by a boat! I think a boat would of come upstream and picked us up at the bottom of the river and taken us back out to the ferry. I think we did do that.

TM: It would of saved you lots of, you know, couple days of rowing. Sure.

PG: Yeah. 'Cause we didn't row across, I'm sure of that. I think we got picked up by a boat.

TM: Okay. Neat. You weren't rowing, but I just wonder whether Ed, or Glenn, or Tom, or anyone else who was rowing, had any thoughts on comparing Grand Canyon to Cataract Canyon?

PG: Boy, I don't know. You know they're kinda different in the sense that Cataract is all compressed into one little section and the Grand Canyon you have rapids and then no rapids, and then rapids, and then no rapids. So the tempo is different. I know that we were all... I think it was everybody's first trip and so we were scouting all the rapids and, you know, intimidated by Horn and Crystal and Lava. I think we probably had some guidebooks that talked a little bit about, well, you wanna run right here, or run left. We would of kind of been using anybody's tips we could of gotten a hold of, plus then just looking at it, going, oh, looks like we need to do that. I don't know that we compared the rapids, one to the other, and I don't remember what our water level was. Mostly I had the sense of a big adventure. It was the Grand Canyon which has got this reputation and we were doing it. And we were all compatible and got along well. It was a big adventure, yeah.

TM: Yeah! Did you stop at Phantom Ranch and walk up and say, "Hi, the Canyonlands crew is here!"

PG: Right! No, I don't think we... I'm sure we stopped at Phantom, but I don't think we announced ourselves as anything like that.

TM: How many boats did you have? Do you remember?

PG: I don't know. We would of had maybe three but, honestly, that would mean we probably had six people, and I can't remember who the other ones would of been besides the four of us. So yeah, that's about all I can tell you about that trip.

TM: '82, in the winter, that's good.

PG: Yeah. And then the next time... I think I did pieces of three river trips when I worked in the Grand Canyon. I'm not sure what the order of them was and I don't even remember much about what I'm going to say is the third one, which is the one I can't remember very well. One of them was this walk down Nankoweap. I was in Grand Canyon from somewhere in '86 to about summer of '88. This was a fall trip, it was a November trail crew trip. Kim Crumbo was...I guess he was the lead guy in the river crew there at the time. He would coordinate with river crew in the Grand Canyon, as well as...not river crew, trail crew...trail crew from other parks that had some river skills. I don't know how they knew each other but he got trail crew guys from outside the park to come in and help with inside-the-park trail crew. Go down and mediate social trailing and try to get the trails along the river corridor under control in terms of all the social trailing that was taking place where trails were going in places where it wasn't a very good idea, to re-route them. He had this crew of guys, as I remember, who were doing trail crew work. He had a volunteer named Ginger Harmon, who I'll mention probably later in another piece of my story, who hiked in. I don't know how they got to know her. She was a bit older than all of us and probably at least 10 to 15 years older than me, probably 15 years older than I was. I think what the Grand Canyon river trips would do, is they'd launch somewhere, people would get off at a certain point, and other people would come in. People would get off at another point, other people would come in. So they circulated people on and off the trip to let non-river crew people get a sense of what the river corridor was like so that they had that background.

TM: Oh, that's a neat idea. So when you hiked in at Nankoweap.

PG: I think so, yeah.

TM: When you hiked in, people were hiking out?

PG: Yeah, I don't know if they went out Nankoweap, or if they went out somewhere... I think we ended up at Tanner to work.

TM: Okay, well that would make sense that's easier.

PG: Yeah, I don't remember if they... See, we would of got dropped off or had a vehicle there. So it would of make sense to have people hike out there because then they could of picked up the vehicle that we went out there in. I don't remember the outbound crew. I know we hiked in, it was kinda foggy, and cool. Especially up higher, when we started, it was cool and kinda damp, I remember. I don't remember much about the hike down, other than we hiked down. You said there were some bad places and I don't remember those.

TM: Yeah, that trail has one little section where there's a cliff, you're on the top of the cliff, walking along the trail on a slope that goes right to the cliff and that can be a little unnerving for people.

PG: Yeah, I don't remember. I don't remember being unnerved. I don't remember that spot. I don't remember being unnerved. I typically don't get unnerved easily on trails.

TM: Bingo. Okay. Great.

PG: So I don't know what the situation was.

TM: You would have never noticed it.

PG: Yeah, I don't remember it. I think Ginger hiked down and maybe two or three others, so maybe there was four of us that hiked down there, and we joined the river crew. I think it was for maybe a week? I really don't even know where I got off. I think it might of been Phantom, that they just dropped us off at Phantom and picked up more people there. I think we did work at Nankoweap and I think we did work at Tanner to get rid of social trailing. I remember just being so impressed how they would cut chunks of prickly pear and then dry 'em out a little bit so that they got a little crust on them so they wouldn't rot in the soil. And then, after they had dried for a week or so, it seems like they would plant them in the ground. Now I don't know if they had the chance to let them dry that much or they'd just put them in the ground when we were there. Because I'm not sure they had a follow-up trip right away. But, I thought that was a brilliant way to get rid of some social trails.

TM: So they would take the cactus and cut it up, and plant it in the social trail so that people would stay on a trail and not make four trails.

PG: Right. Right. Yeah, it was to eliminate trails that weren't necessary and just were scarring the landscape and causing erosion. And they would move bushes, or plants and grass, and try and naturalize it a little with whatever they could to discourage traffic. It was good honest work down there, working on social trails. I think it was Nankoweap and Tanner, and then I guess that I probably got off at Phantom after a week on the river, or maybe something like that. So that was one trip. Another trip... Let me think about this. Another trip, I hiked down Havasu to the river. We slept overnight somewhere along the line, I think. I think we camped out. Do you know who JT Reynolds is?

TM: Yes.

PG: He also hiked down. There was maybe four or five of us that hiked down there and JT was one of them. I don't remember who the others were. I had become friends with JT when I went to what they call Ranger Skills in 1984, and that was at the Albright Training Session in the Grand Canyon. I was in Canyonlands and I went there for two or four weeks worth of training and JT was one of the instructors. We just kind of became friends at that point. So I knew JT when we were hiking down. I remember him there and I remember he was very interested in learning how to row. When we got to the river, he rowed a raft and I was somehow in it. I had been a Cataract ranger by that time and had a sense of how you row. He did a fine job, but I remember being his passenger while he rowed. I remember Kim Crumbo telling me to not be shouting suggestions at him, which I wasn't doing, I don't think. I think he just recognized that it's never really more to give people suggestions when they're in the middle of the river unless you want to just go like, "Tend to your oars!" What does that...

TM: Yeah, Look to your oars, Burt!

PG: Look to your oars, Burt! Right, something like that. I do remember being advised to just let him do it, he'll be fine. I'm like, Okay. So he was fine. And I don't know where we came out. Maybe we went to Diamond Creek. I don't know if I would of gone that far with him but maybe, because I don't know where else we would of gotten out at.

TM: Whitmore, I guess you could of gone out that way, or up to Toroweap.

PG: I never went out Whitmore so I think that I must of gone all the way out there with that trip. And there was, I think, a third trip. There was a time where I was asked to go to camp at Havasu for four or five days and just witness what kind of use there was going on there and document it: how many boats came in, how many people came in, what time they came in. I think it was for the River Management Plan that they were looking at updating or something like that.

TM: Yeah, which updated in 1989 so that would make sense.

PG: Right. They wanted to get some ideas of what the use was there and whether it was over-crowded, and when people came in. So I was at Havasu for several nights. I don't know how I got there and I don't know how I left there; I just remember being there. Oh, what I remember was there was a flash flood that came down. It must have been the middle of summer, probably July or August. I don't think I setup a tent. I never was big with tents. Anyway, I just, you know, preferred sleeping out. I kind of had this idea that it started raining with a thunderstorm, and I'm looking for a little piece of over-hanging rock so I could scoot under there. I waited it out and Havasu came up and flashed and ran this tomato soup red and then it receded. There was fish that were left in little bits of puddles in places where there normally wouldn't be puddles. It was pretty exciting to me to kind of be there for the whole thing and watch it. And then it just went away. I remember that clearly, but, again, I don't remember how I got there or how I left. At one point I was thinking, well, maybe that was when I hiked down Havasu but I'm pretty sure that I was in the boat with JT. I know JT hiked down, I know I hiked down to Havasu with JT and I'm pretty certain I was in a boat with JT. So that would not mesh with me staying there for four days at that time. But again, I have information on that probably at home that I could clarify.

TM: Yeah, it'd be fun.

PG: So those are the memories I have of the three times I had a chance to go on a river patrol.

TM: You mentioned Ginger, Ginger Harmon. Did you have a story about her?

PG: Well, later, like three years later, when I'm no longer in Grand Canyon, and I'm off and traveling around the world, yes, I do have a story about her. Do you want me to save that for later or...?

TM: Yeah, if it fits later, we'll do that.

PG: It'll fit later, yeah.

TM: And then JT, have any other stories about JT?

PG: Well, he ended up... He went on a private Yampa trip that I had once. I remember inviting JT 'cause he liked river stuff. I remember he was picking up driftwood on the Yampa trip and he was carving

kachina dolls. I said, "You gotta carve one for me 'cause you're on my trip and you're picking up this driftwood for that." He was in my boat, I think. He said, "Oh, yeah, I will," and I never got one.

TM: Oooh!

PG: Yeah. I really liked JT a lot. I don't think I have... He was just a, you know, he was fun to go do stuff with. Well, the river trips is basically what I did with him. When we were at Ranger Skills, I don't know, it was Halloween or something, this would of been 1984 when I was in Canyonlands and on training there, I remember he, I think he would...we'd have dance parties or something like that and he'd come to the dance party. He just was fun. So that's my main memory of JT.

TM: Cool. One of the very few African Americans in the Park Service, certainly in western parks. Were you aware of any other African Americans in any other service units? Were there any people of color in Canyonlands?

PG: No. I never, I don't think, worked with... When I was in Big Bend, later, I think there was a person of color. She might've been more Hispanic, maybe a mix; but, basically, no. I never saw Black people in the Park Service. I know there are a few because I've heard of them or seen reference to them, but it's pretty unusual.

TM: Yeah, real trailblazer. And I don't think his path was easy.

PG: No. I don't really know how his path was, so I can't comment on that other than in general you would guess that it would be problematic, but... The only other trip I'll mention in the Grand Canyon right now, is a trip that I did in 1988. Right after I left the Grand Canyon, I had gotten on a... I think the Grand Canyon at that time was just doing a list, where you'd sign up saying, I wanna do a Grand Canyon trip some time. And the list over the years got quite long, to like it was a five, or a eight, or longer, year waiting list.

TM: Yep, yes THE waiting list.

PG: The waiting list, right. So my name—I don't know when I put in, three/four years before, five years before – but my name came up in 1988 and I got offered a river trip. So I made plans to do it and had invited friends, and then I ended up... At the end of my Grand Canyon... Well, I was working in the Grand Canyon, and I started applying for another job. Again, I wanted to try and get up to that GS-7 level and I had heard that there were some GS-7 levels that the BLM was filling. It was just kind of general ranger stuff, but they were paying a grade higher, basically, than the Park Service was. So I applied for the job. It was in Las Vegas at a place called Red Rock Canyon Recreation Area, I think is the full name, just on the west side of Las Vegas. I ended up getting the job to be a road patrol BLM ranger there. It was kinda like being a park ranger in a park because it was a small area; but I can get into that a little bit more later. When I got there a month before my river trip, I had to ask my boss, or maybe even when he offered me the job, it was like, well, I have this Grand Canyon river trip I've been waiting for four years or whatever the time spell was and my name's up. Can I have three weeks off shortly after I start? He was a good guy, and he said sure. So I was able to get the new job, move to Las Vegas, and then leave shortly thereafter to go do a fall trip. It was probably September or October, started late September or maybe October start, in the Grand Canyon with river friends. I don't think anybody from the Canyonlands crew was on that, but other friends were. And my sister rode in my boat for the whole time. So I took my sister who... My family hadn't done rafting in our youth or during our time as a family

together so this was something that was a pretty...it wasn't her normal, she wasn't a rafter. So going down the Grand Canyon was something different for her and it was really special for both of us to be able to do it together. I rowed a 14-foot non-bailing Miwok.

TM: Oh, wow. What fun!

PG: Yeah, it was fun. We had a great trip. I'm still friends with a couple of the people that were on that trip.

TM: Who's that?

PG: Well, my friends Patty and Lee Gelatt, who I still boat with. Lee had been a BLM river ranger in Desolation Canyon and was hanging around Moab in the early 80s. Patty had been working for Fish and Wildlife Service doing endangered fish surveys along the Colorado River. I had met them in Canyonlands when I was there and felt... It was so common for young people in their 20s, who were seasonal here, seasonal there, to just go off and do trips together or get together and... So there was this pool of ready playmates, basically, to go do fun stuff with. So they were on the trip. And my friend Marilyn. I think she was on that trip. I'm trying to remember, yeah, I think she was on that trip. Bill Persons, who later worked for Larry Stevens, I think, doing fish stuff in the Grand Canyon. He must of been up in Canyonlands a little bit, because he somehow got into the mix and was on that trip. Bill Noonan was Fish and Wildlife Service off doing endangered fish species really out of Gypsum Canyon mostly at the bottom of Cataract. He went on the trip. And another fellow named Ron Ryle was on the trip. I don't remember how he fit into the picture. He, I think, was a friend of somebody's. He wasn't a personal friend of mine at that time. He took his dad on the trip, and I don't remember his dad's name. I think that was the group, yeah, I think that was the group. We probably had four boats and I think that was it. There was somebody else, maybe someone else who hiked out...

TM: Four heavy boats.

PG: Yeeeaah.

TM: For three weeks – a 14-footer. You know, even if the other three were 18.

PG: Right, I know, I know. And I had a little, dinky cooler. I don't know how I managed it but we did it. Yeah, so I did that trip in 1988. It was a great trip. And then I didn't do any more Grand Canyon trips for quite a while, until after I retired. So we can leave that for later.

TM: Yeah, yeah. Do you remember one or two highlights from that 1988 trip?

PG: Well, you always remember the flips. Patty and Lee flipped in Hermit, but it was not a, you know, they just turned it right back over. I remember that Lee had some little speakers or something and he was playing reggae music when we were rigging and de-rigging. We sort of made the pun with reggae and rigging and it would be the "de-reggae" music or the "de-rigging" music, and the rigging or the reggae music. So every time we were rigging and de-rigging the boats, we put on the reggae music. And what else? Don't remember any other particulars. It just, again, was fine weather. There might of been rain in there somewhere. I just love fall trips 'cause they're usually so pleasant. Oh yeah, I remember that my skin got so dry in that water. It just dried out and I ran out of some kind of hand lotion, so I

started putting Crisco oil on my legs because they were just so itchy-flaky. I can remember getting in to the kitchen oil and putting it on my legs because they were dry.

TM: You must of had quite the sun tan.

PG: I had a great tan, yeah, and now I'm paying for it.

TM: Oh dear, aren't we all, yeah.

PG: Yeah, right. I really don't remember much else in particular there. If I go through and read my notes, I'd go, oh yeah, we did this or we did that. We did the standard hikes and just had a good time.

TM: Nice. Did you stop at Phantom, and walk up there and say, hey, I've got a job now with the BLM!

PG: Yeah, that's something that I forgot about! When I worked at Phantom, the way we got our food down there, by the way, was everytime before I hiked down to Phantom, I would take a grocery bag, a paper bag of groceries, to the Mule Barn, the Park Service Mule Barn. The packer would go down once a week and would haul down whoever's stuff was in the Mule Barn to haul down to Phantom or Indian Gardens. So my food would get hauled down to Phantom by the packer and I could send stuff out with the packer. If I took a boombox down there or something, I could take it down with the packer, or the packer'd take it down and I could send it out later if I wanted it on top. But it was limited service so you had to get your timing down right. I sent down a whole bunch of beer! I had the packer haul the beer down and I stashed it in the closet of the Phantom Ranger Station, and then we went and picked it up so we didn't have to carry all the beer from the top. That was how we managed with smaller boats, we just picked up some supplies at Phantom.

TM: What a great idea!

PG: I probably sent some dried food, you know, some canned food or something like that as well. So we re-supplied at Phantom. I forgot about that. Yep.

TM: Very clever, very nice. Okay, then, thinking about moving forward, but kinda looking over our shoulders as we do. 1988, you wanted more, a little more kinda law enforcement exposure... Or no, the GS-7 – you wanted the pay raise!

PG: Right, I wanted a pay raise. I think my first job might of been GS-3, I think. And then I'd been a -4 for a very short time. And then I was a -5 for forever, like most of 10 years so I thought, you know, I wanna be a -7. I wanna be making some more money somewhere along the line here. So, BLM, they just paid their rangers more. They were getting their ranger program going and they paid... What was a GS-5 in the Park Service was a GS-7 in the BLM. Basically they were tempting National Park rangers to come over and work for them because they were trying to get their staffing ranger numbers up. Basically they were stealing from the Park Service, which was fine, they were paying more. I know several people that decided they'd go to work for BLM and I decided I would as well. So I applied for that job, which was on the outskirts of Las Vegas. I got the job. I ended up moving there in, like, July. It was hot. Maybe it was August. I remember it being kind of...after a bit, enjoying it in this sense: it was such a change of pace from spending most of my time at Phantom. It was like night and day, from being very remote at the bottom of the Grand Canyon to being in Las Vegas open 24 hours a day. It didn't matter when I got off

shift, I could go get groceries. I didn't have to drive for two hours to go get groceries. Well, I guess I could get groceries on the South Rim, too, but...

TM: Yeah, but to take in a movie, or go to a hardware store, or simply clothes shopping, it's a couple hour drive to Flagstaff.

PG: Right, so I kind of was enjoying all of the things I could do so easily and so readily while I was in Las Vegas when I first got there. I had a new job. It was a road patrol in this area that was a day use area, Red Rock Canyon. I had co-workers that I enjoyed working with. I rented a room in a house that a BLM guy, who was their wild horse and burro program manager, I think, out of this office. There was kind of a main BLM office in Las Vegas that had a lot of different functions, or had people doing different types of jobs, all gathered there. That was where our headquarters was. The ultimate supervision came out of there. I had heard that he was looking for roommates. He had a three-bedroom ranch house. He had a woman that he rented one of his rooms to so I asked him if he would rent a room to me 'cause I didn't wanna spend all my... I could of rented an apartment, I guess, but I just was always into saving money, and thought I didn't know anybody in Las Vegas, this is a good way to get to know some people. So I rented a room with him and lived in that household the entire time that I was there which was really only about, mmm, 20 months, maybe. I was there less than two years, something between a year and a half and two years.

TM: How did that job work? Who ran your dispatch, did BLM run that?

PG: Boy, I don't think BLM would of run it. I think we used Las Vegas services for that because it wouldn't of been worth BLM's time to set up a whole dispatch office. I don't really remember. I know that we did call Metro, I think that's what Las Vegas police were called. We called them for backup if we needed something.

TM: I was gonna say – who backed you up?

PG: Yeah, it was the Las Vegas Police Department.

TM: And Red Rock Canyon, is that that – it's a gorgeous area of climbers, it's a big climbing place?

PG: Yes, right, another big climbing place like Joshua Tree was a big climbing place. Red Rock is...

TM: Is it a state park now?

PG: There is a state park that's kind of embedded in Red Rock, on the south end of it, Spring Mountain State Park - yeah, there's a state park there. But there is a part that BLM totally manages as a day use area with some canyons you can go walking up. Not great distances, you don't do great backpacking trips there, but day hiking and rock climbing. Just a natural area on the edge of Las Vegas where people could get out of the city and go have a picnic. It was that kind of area.

TM: I'd think it would be pretty busy, just because of the huge population center of Vegas with tourists coming and going all the time.

PG: Right. It was busy. I don't remember if we had traffic jams kinda busy. I'm pretty certain it was just day use and we closed the gates every night so it kind of limited all the overtime. You know, trouble

comes out at night a lot so that was greatly reduced 'cause we would close the gates. I remember we would drive through and we'd do a sweep and get the cars out and shut things down. Trying to think of how to give you any details on that job. I had a patrol rig. I don't remember too much trouble. We had a little bit of... Did we have climbing training? I can't remember if we even had climbing training there. I think they had climbers out of Las Vegas that would come and do search and rescue stuff, I think. I don't have very good memories of what I did there in particular other than driving around talking to people. I can't even remember what minor crimes I might of written a citation for. But, it was nothing... I don't remember anything big happening there. Again, if I looked through notes, it might jog my memory. I don't have too much to tell you about that job other than after a while the allure of 24-hours availability of anything I wanted anywhere in Las Vegas, that started dimming and I started realizing or feeling that I would like to go back and work in a park again because... There was not a community in the BLM staff. In Canyonlands there had been a wonderful group of people that I would spend time with: go on river trips, private trips, with and then go on hiking in days off with. There was a lot of camaraderie amongst seasonals in Canyonlands. In the Grand Canyon, I made friends with some people. Went off on a ski trip with Barb and Dave Sharrow, and...oh, I forgot her name right now, but Jane Hendrick and some other people, Martha Hahn was on that trip. There were people that I did stuff with even in Grand Canyon, although I had less chance because I was down in the bottom of the canyon so much to get to know so many people. In BLM in Las Vegas, everybody went to their home at night and there really wasn't much...I didn't really come up with too many pals there. The people that I lived with, that I shared the house with, were fine people but they weren't the people that I would seek out to go do stuff with. They just, you know, had other interests. The guy that owned the house was into horses and I wasn't really a horse person. And the young woman, I can't even remember what she might have been interested in. I think she kinda stuck around the house a lot. So after a while I thought, okay, I wanna go back to working in a park somewhere.

Well, what I decided to do, instead of looking for another job then... I had thought for a while that I wanted to do more extensive overseas travel. When I decided that I was gonna move out of Las Vegas, I thought, well, this might be a great time to take a break. So what I ended up doing was quitting because I felt that I could always go back when I got done with this travel that I wanted to do and get another job with the Park Service by just applying. I thought I had enough years in service and experience, that somebody somewhere along the line would hire me back in. So I quit the BLM in the fall of 1989. Maybe I wasn't even there a year and a half but, well anyway, I'd have to do math on that. I quit the fall of '89 and this is where the Ginger Harmon part comes in. I decided I was gonna travel overseas for a year and I came up with my own itinerary. I was doing a solo trip. I said I want to go to Australia and New Zealand, kinda going where the weather was nice; Africa, then Europe, and spread that out over a year. Then I told friends, I'm gonna be here and here and here and here, do you want to join me? Some people did join me on the trip during that. Actually it was ten months that I was overseas. But, Ginger Harmon had... She, by the way, was, I think, one of the founders of Great Old Broads and she was connected with Sierra Club. She had been doing some hikes and treks in Nepal, like numerous of them, I don't know how many. I think she had some money somehow from somewhere and she had sponsored some construction of schools, or supporting schools, or wells, one of the two. I can't even remember now if it was wells or schools or what. She would go back every now and then and do a trek in Nepal and kind of check on whatever the project she was funding was. She had made friends with these trail crew guys that had gone on that river trip that I was on and was putting together, hey, who wants to go trek in Nepal? One of the guys, named Ed Rossetti, I think he was out of Glacier trail crew.

TM: Yeah, that's right.

PG: Do you know the name?

TM: I want you to tell me everything you remember about Eddie.

PG: All I know is he was on that trail crew river trip and that's where I first met him. Maybe Ginger might've known him from before somewhere. He went on this Nepal trip with Ginger that I ended going on. And there was two people from, maybe two people or four, from Canada. I don't know where she got to know them from. You know Ken Kehoe, another trail crew guy? He worked Forest Service mostly. I think he was on that. I can't remember if he was on that November Grand trip or not. Those two guys were on the trip. Some people from Canada were on the trip. Ginger was the one that had a contact in Nepal that was gonna put this trip together. It was a month trekking in Nepal. So I had put my own little trip together that I wanted to do, in my head, that started in New Zealand and Australia. I kinda went around the world in that direction with what I wanted to do on my trip. Then I heard about Ginger's trip and I realized that I could front-load my own travels with her trip for a month. So I timed my exit from Las Vegas and BLM so that I could start with her trip and then continue on with my own travel plans. I guess I could probably get in to that next time.

TM: Yeah, that sounds good. Where are we at? What time are we? We've been doing this about 50 minutes, okay.

PG: I can go into it now if you feel like you want to continue.

TM: Yeah. No, this'd be good. Yeah, I'm up for it. I'm like, all right, Eddie Rossetti ended up meeting a woman named Michelle Madland, and Michelle was a bear ranger at Glacier and she taught violin and she was from Los Alamos and they ended up getting married. Eddie then went back to school, left the Service, and got a physical therapy degree.

PG: Oh, my God, he comes back in a whole other realm, huh?

TM: Yeah. And they have kids. Just a great, great couple. Just brilliant, brilliant people doing great things with their kids. Yeah.

PG: Yeah. Is he in the Grand Canyon?

TM: No.

PG: How do you know him?

TM: We met him because my wife and I know Michelle, the bear ranger. We did a Grand Canyon river trip with her, and that's how we met her.

PG: Okay. It's just such a web when you start talking to people about...

TM: Circles and roundabouts, it's like, wait a minute, how did we do that? So you started in Nepal, then. You left Vegas and flew to Nepal?

PG: Yeah. I think I had three or four weeks of parking all my belongings somewhere and kinda getting ready and then, basically, yeah, I flew to Nepal and joined the rest of the people in Katmandu. The trip

was kind of on the cheaper side than normal because she didn't go through a middle person. She knew people in Nepal who could organize the trip and get the guides and get the Sherpas, and all that kind of stuff. That also was appealing to me, you know, as basically a good deal for a... I think we were on the trail for 28 days. So we met there and did a trip that was around, I think, Monaslu. Does that sound familiar? The mountain range, I think, is Monaslu. It's the mountain range just to the east of the Annapurna Circuit, I think. We basically went up into the Himalayas and then a little bit toward the west, on the back side, and came back out and down the Annapurna Circuit. So that was our route. We had people who were kind of the guides and coordinated things, and then there were Sherpas who carried our stuff and the tents and all that stuff. All we had to do was carry our daypacks. And we did the hike for 28 days. I ended up sharing a tent with a woman named Wendy. Boy, I can't remember her last name right now. She ended up working at the botanical garden. She was a botanist, she works at the botanical gardens in Phoenix. When we left, we were in the lowlands and the banana belt. You slowly gained elevation and by the time you're up in elevation, you're more into something that feels like it could be a Tibetan type culture. We were in that for quite a while, and then as we dropped back down into the lower lands, there were lots of kids that would like to come up and say, "We want candy." They'd always be sniffing and, you know, kind of have snotty noses. I can just remember, like on day 24, or something, when we're dropping back down into that zone where there were more people and it was warmer climates and these kids start coming up to us with the sniffy noses, Wendy said, "Ah, so great to be back in sniff-ilization!" I just thought that was a very clever little pun.

TM: Indeed. She must've been in seventh heaven, going through that biological range of vegetation.

PG: I was, I was. Yeah, just the whole... I really enjoyed the upland country. I've never been much of a jungle person, I like more arid landscapes. As we got higher, it got drier, it was more arid and then you had this Tibetan culture. It wasn't very densely populated, but there was always little villages, and stupas, and different prayer flags, and stuff. I quite enjoyed it. One of those small-world stories is: as we came out, and I can't remember the name of the town that we ended up in, and then from there we had to get a bus back to Kathmandu, so we're in some kinda remote town, but I think it did service the Annapurna Circuit. Is it Annapurna, or...? I think that's right.

TM: K2, Everest -- I mean there's a bunch of stuff up there.

PG: Yeah, I think it was Annapurna Circuit that's real common down there. I think this town serviced them, but we're getting on this local bus to go back to Kathmandu, and there's Westerners standing in line to get on this bus. I get this tap on my shoulder and it was this river runner I knew from Canyonlands named Gino. I think his last name was Boyle. I said, "Gino! What're you doing here?" I don't what he was doing exactly, except he said, "Well, wait 'til you see who's with me!" I turned and Sheri Griffith was there. Sheri Griffith, at the time, was operating Sheri Griffith River Expeditions in Canyonlands. She had dated my boss in Canyonlands, Jim Braggs, but now was dating Gino. I think they were just on a trip, as far as I know. But anyway, it was weird to run into somebody from Moab in Nepal on a ride on the bus. So Sheri and I rode the bus back together, or sat on the seats together, as we rode back to Kathmandu. Chatted the whole way and caught up on what they were doing there, what I was doing there, and who was doing what in Moab, and all that kinda stuff. So that takes us back to Kathmandu. You want me to keep going or should I...

TM: Let's see. We could stop here at Kathmandu.

PG: Okay.

TM: So this is Kathmandu and this is 1989, the fall/winter of?

PG: Yes, right. I think the trip was most of November in Nepal, so the end of November/early December was when we had finished the trip up.

TM: All right, so we know kinda where to pick the thread up.

PG: Right.

TM: Great, cool. All right. Well with that, this will conclude Part 5 oral history interview with Pat Grediagin. Today is Wednesday, it's November 25th, 2020. My name is Tom Martin. Pat, thank you so very much.

PG: You're very welcome, my pleasure.