



Transcript of Video Interview with Will Travis,
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This interview is part of Earth Alert's Heroes of the Coast video archive, featuring interviews with leading California coastal activists, past and present California Coastal Commissioners and Coastal Commission staff. For more information, visit www.earthalert.org.

Janet Bridgers (JB): We're here today with Will Travis. Will, thanks for joining us.

WT: Great to be here.

JB: Will, you are now the former executive director...

WT: Executive director *emeritus*—how's that—of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, BCDC.

JB: To start with, what was the path that lead you to become the Chief Deputy Director of the California Coastal Commission?

WT: It is interesting. It is simply the absolute stunning beauty of San Francisco Bay. I was growing up in Pennsylvania. I always had the sense that there had to be someplace better and I was majoring in architecture. Three friends of mine and I took a trip around the country in a Volkswagen Beetle from architectural monument to architectural monument and we were going from the Hearst Castle to the Frank Lloyd Wright Civic Center in Marin County. And we happened to go through San Francisco, stopped for lunch on the waterfront, and I said, "this is better." And I have had an entire career of jobs that I never applied for and starting at BCDC as their first permanent employee after the agency was made permanent, and going from there to the consulting world. Worked with Stewart Udall, and then to the Coastal Commission and then back to BCDC.

So I've simply been in love with the California coast, and particularly San Francisco Bay.

JB: Wonderful. Well, some people find their calling and you did.

WT: It is indeed a calling, yes.

JB: So what year did you begin working for the Coastal Commission?

WT: The Coastal Commission in 1973, right after the initiative was passed, I was the third or fourth employee that they hired.

JB: So, did you come with Joe Bodovitz?

WT: No. Joe was the executive director of the Bay Commission – BCDC. Mel Lane was the chair of BCDC and they both took those respective positions over to the Coastal Commission. They then agreed that they wouldn't raid BCDC staff. I, at the time, was working for Stuart Udall and consulting, so I was fair game, and the former chief planner of BCDC was the chief

planner in Wisconsin, so he was fair game. So the four of us who had worked together at BCDC ended up at the Coastal Commission, two of us by indirect routes.

JB: And that was right after the start. And did you feel that it went smoothly, the startup?

WT: Well, it went as smoothly as you can in a new agency. I remember one of the first calls we had was from a then-ATT saying they needed a permit to put up some poles for some telephone lines and they needed it right away. Joe Bodovitz said, "well, that's fine, except it would be handled by our Eureka office and we don't have phone service." And we got phone service very quickly.

We did a lot of things where we had a fellow working for us, name of Bob Lagel. And he was the only guy who ever called me Willie. And he said, "Willie, did you ever notice that everything we have to do but can't do, the cost is always an exact multiple of what we get reimbursed to go to Pt. Arena and back." And his point was we would just pay for it and put it on our travel expenses. And I joked that when he retired, CalTrans had been monitoring our travel expenses and they were going to build a freeway to handle all the traffic that was going back and forth.

But we had to put things together on the fly and that was, of course, back in the old days, before you had computers, or word processors. Everything was done on, in Joe's case, it was a standard old Underwood typewriter. But it went as smoothly as I think it could have, doing something that mammoth, undertaking a plan for the entire California coast in such a short period of time. Politically, it was modeled on BCDC, but it turned out quite different from what BCDC was.

BCDC did its own plan and that plan was embodied into law, not because that's what was recommended, but because Joe Bodovitz was a journalist. The chief planner was a journalist. And Mel Lane was a publisher. And they knew how to communicate. And they wrote the plan in such a simple, clear declarative-sentence fashion that high school students and even the California legislature could understand it. So the legislature loved the plan, and they wanted it to be part of law. So they put it in the law. But then they realized they wanted to keep it up to date, and they didn't want BCDC having to come up to the legislature every year to amend the law, so they said, "you can amend your own plan with a two-thirds vote." So BCDC can, in essence, amend the law under which it operates.

Now, if they had tried to do that, I think the legislature would have rejected it out of hand. "We're not going to give a bunch of bureaucrats that kind of authority." But it was one of those wonderful accidents of history. They took that experience to the Coastal Commission, did a whole coastal plan, and I think what had happened is local governments by that time wised up and they went to the legislature and said, "no, no, no, we don't want this plan embodied into law. We want local coastal programs." And so that whole notion was created at the Coastal Commission that doesn't exist at BCDC.

JB: Remarkable, that difference. Has BCDC been as controversial as the Coastal Commission?

WT: It hasn't been, in large part because, as I like to say, the Coastal Zone of California and the Coastal Commission is really a state planning and regulatory agency that just happens to have

jurisdiction along the coast. The Coastal Zone of California is bigger than the state of Rhode Island. BCDC's jurisdiction, on the other hand, is really San Francisco Bay and a hundred feet in from the shoreline and there BCDC's authority is rather limited. It's not general land-use authority. It's just to make sure there's public access and there's enough areas reserved for ports and other things that you could fill the Bay for, but you don't want to.

The Coastal Commission, on the other hand, has vast jurisdiction over a wide variety of areas. So to some degree, it's economic. The Coastal Commission decisions are very controversial because they deal with a lot of expensive real estate and big projects. BCDC's projects and the permits tend to be more ministerial. They're dealing with "is there enough public access." It isn't also that BCDC "saved the bay." It isn't, you look at it and say, "San Francisco Bay is a third smaller than it was at the time of the Gold Rush and it was projected to get another 70 percent smaller and BCDC was created to stop that from happening." Well, it stopped happening, but it isn't because BCDC denied "a bunch of permits. It's because society changed its mind. It just said, "it's just not fashionable. It's impolite to fill the Bay." And if my neighbors can't do it, I won't even propose doing it."

So as someone said, "laws don't change behavior. Laws simply make certain behaviors illegal." But in this case, I think the law and change of law really reflected a new mood as to how the Bay would be treated.

JB: So, in that essence, too, it wasn't other peoples' law. It wasn't that this shift in environmental awareness, and for what I think is remarkable about the bay is that it did happen so early.

WT: Yes, it was.

JB: '61, '62 that Sylvia McLaughlin and her two friends began working on that and there was nothing...well, and also, Bill Kortum began working to reverse that power plant at Bodega Bay about the same time, but it's not...this is quite earlier than most people regard the start of coastal protection. But they both came together.

WT: They did. And yes, BCDC was before Earth Day, before the Clean Water Act, before, obviously, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Clean Air Act. It was really the first expression in an urban area of society's determination to protect something that was precious to them. It's very interesting if you read the early history of BCDC...there's a wonderful production by the Nature Conservancy called "Saving the Bay." And if you read through that, the word "environment" I don't think is ever used. It was not an environmental protection movement. It was an open space protection. It was how we form our civilization and our growth. It's easy to look at BCDC and say it is probably the most effective urban growth boundary administrator in the country, working on a regional level, because the bay used to be treated as ordinary real estate. And it was fill, just the way areas of farmland at the edge of urban areas are now used for development, that's the way the bay was used.

And so they drew the line around this wonderful, not green belt, but blue belt. And that's what it was. And I remember Sylvia McLaughlin taking me aside one day and she said, "Trav, I'm troubled with all this discussion about water quality, and wetlands and all these things. That's not

why we saved the bay.” And I said, “well, Sylvia, why did you save it?” She said, “because we’d never seen anything quite so pretty.” And it’s the greatest value of San Francisco Bay, I believe, is its esthetic value.

And interestingly, that manifests itself in the way we actually measure what’s important in society, and that’s through economics. If you think about it, the bay as a port, it would work. You could get the ships in and out if the water was crummy. You couldn’t swim in the water, but you could look at it. Its esthetic value is determined by the fact that you pay more for a house if you have a view of the bay than if you don’t. And the interesting thing is it’s measured by the number of bridges you can see. For every bridge you can see, the value of the house goes up about five percent. You pay more for a bay-view room than a non-bay-view room in a hotel. You pay more for a mediocre dinner at a waterfront restaurant than you do for a really good dinner a few blocks from the waterfront. So it does manifest itself in our economic system.

So the bay is really a spectacular esthetic treasure. And we have cleaned it up and we’ve restored it. I like to note that the bay is the most urbanized estuary in the United States of America. It is also home to the largest coastal wetland restoration project outside of the Everglades, so you can have both urbanization and bay restoration—environmental restoration.

I used to say that at BCDC, the most important word in the name of the agency, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission is “and.” We want environmental protection, but not at the cost of regional prosperity. We like economic development, but not at the price of environmental degradation. You’ve got to do both at the same time.

JB: And do you feel that there is any controversy about your mission here in this city, as compared to continual controversy with regard to the Coastal Commission?

WT: Well, the most interesting controversy right now is the fact that, as I said, BCDC was created to keep the bay from getting smaller, from land fill. With sea level rise and climate change, the bay is getting bigger. So you have an agency that was created to do one thing trying to deal with another issue. And we published a series of maps showing what could happen with sea level rise in the future. We thought that was a great community service, so people would understand that we had to think about this and do something about it. Well, we forgot that the messenger is as important as the message and since the messenger was a regulatory agency and everybody knows that in Bureaucracy 101, the first thing they teach you is “You Need to Get More Power,” and then they say, “You Need More Money, Too,” they were convinced that this was a ruse and this was showing where we wanted to expand our authority. So there was a great deal of controversy about that.

JB: When did this happen?

WT: This happened just a year ago. And finally, working with the development community and local governments, by acknowledging not that they were wrong, but we made a mistake and asked them how to fix the mistake that we created, they came up with some language that went into the Bay Plan, that essentially said, “this isn’t changing our jurisdiction.” Of course, we couldn’t change our jurisdiction without changing the law anyway, but we had a statement that

said, “what’s legally true is legally true, and what’s legally impossible is legally impossible” and putting that kind of language into the Bay Plan brought political peace, so ultimately, the environmental community, local governments and the developers all agreed, all supported it and the commission unanimously—18 votes—adopted a Bay Plan amendment about a year ago.

JB: So you do have a working document now for proceeding.

WT: Yes, we do.

JB: Which is amazing, because we were just...we have had conversations with other people who said they didn’t think that elected officials, for example, were in any way beginning to think about sea level rise and the effect on their community, as it were, or whatever their entity is, and the implications, the financial implication, the triage. But you have a working document.

TY: Cut. The recorder is on. I want him to answer that question.

JB: What was my question?

WT: Local elected officials can’t deal with sea level rise.

JB: Right. In the questions we’ve asked so, the people we’ve talked to do not think that local officials are ready for the implications of sea level rise. But you have a plan and so you’re herding the cats here.

WT: Well, one of the great coastal heroes is Leon Panetta. And I remember him saying once that we deal with problems in one of two ways, either out of crisis or through leadership. And sea level rise is one of these issues that I think, for the most part, we’re going to have to have a crisis before we deal with it. There are some local officials who are taking that leadership role on, and it’s very tough for them to do this. Right now, in these economic times, their constituents are interested in three things—jobs, jobs and jobs. And some of them like education, too. So they’re looking at the immediate and they’re looking at sea level rise as one of these issues that, in order to deal with, you’re going to have to make a huge capital investment that won’t pay off until long after they’re out of office to deal with a problem that won’t become real until they are out of office. And it’s very difficult, when they’re looking for short-term political payback. But we do have some elected officials, are looking that pike and they’re seeing what has to happen. But it varies by local municipality and it varies by the individuals who are there.

JB: When you talk, in the plan that you’ve now got on the books, what timeframe are you looking at and what level of sea level rise are you anticipating?

WT: Well, this is the difficult thing with sea level rise. I say “no matter which projection you use, I can guarantee you one thing. It will be wrong. It will be higher or lower.” We don’t know exactly. But we were looking out basically 50 and 100 years. And if you look at the projections of sea level rise, they stay pretty tight for the next 50 years. They’re somewhere in the order of 14 inches to 19 inches. Then after that, they go way up. It could be as much as 55 inches.

In planning, typically, we look out 20 years. It's hard to think about what our economy will be, what the issues we'll be facing 20 years from now. Now we're asking people to think out 50 years and 100 years. And the best we can do now is think about 50 years, think in our planning for sea level rise in that order of 16 inches or so, and how do we plan for it, and then how do we incorporate adaptability into our plan, so however high the water gets in the next half century, we can adjust. We've left enough space for a levee, the foot of a levee, to be widened. We've left space for the water to go inland and upland so that the wetlands can migrate. We've taken all that into account.

But even at that, you have to remember that after 100 years, it's not like the water levels will stop. They'll keep going up and up and up and up. So we're into a situation...I'd suggested that instead of planning cities along the coast, we should be planning long-term campgrounds. It's something we can either take down, move, allow to flood, or wear out, but it's not a wise idea to build a gothic cathedral on the shorelines right now.

JB: Well, I'm really glad to hear you have that idea and that you characterized it as such, because my parents lived near Pensacola, not too long ago, and after watching what the hurricanes do down there, I have suggested they should make the entire Gulf Coast a campground. Then those folks can go to Minnesota in the summer and come back to the coast in the winter.

WT: Oh, the nice thing is they won't have to go so far. They only have to go to Georgia.

JB: Well, we're being lighthearted about it, but how many times are they going to rebuild the coast, the Gulf Coast. Here it's happening again. And it gets a big play, but this is just another effect of climate change and global warming that is still disputed by so many people in Congress. What is your take on what's going on in Congress with regard to sea level rise?

WT: Well, I think the United States is probably the last place in the world where climate change is still a political issue. Most of the rest of the world is settled. The science is settled. They're beginning to take steps to deal with it. But we're finding a very difficult time doing it. Florida, in particular...if you think about Florida, it's largely a flat state. They have a massive system of canals to drain Lake Okeechobee into the Everglades, but with sea level rise and increased storms, the water isn't draining anymore. So now they're using huge pumps to pump it out to sea. They can't build levees because they have an underlying geologic structure, which is limestone. And they have two industries, really. They have tourism, most of which is along the coast, except for those in Orlando, and real estate, which is in a bad way right now. So politically, the state can't get its arms around the fact that it should be telling people, "all those great places you're going, because you love and they're on the beach, well, we're going to start closing them inland where there isn't anything."

I think it's important to recognize the reality of...as we look far into the future, that there are some things we can continue to enjoy. We can continue to enjoy the California coast for the way it is now, recognizing it's going to be different in the future. We can continue to enjoy San Francisco Bay. It'll be different in the future. So we shouldn't pull up and abandon the campground tomorrow. We should enjoy the campground and our camping experience right now.

JB: Do you have children?

WT: I do.

JB: What do they say? What do they think about all of this? Are they happy, mad, puzzled?

WT: Well, I have a daughter who's about to be 21. So she's wise beyond anything I can imagine, but she's glad that Dad's taken care of this far.

JB: Very good. So is she oriented toward coastal work?

WT: No, I don't think so.

JB: We've been having a lot of discussions about...Prop. 20 represented, of course, a real high-water mark in terms of public participation.

WT: As it were.

JB: Yes, and now, 40 years later, many of the coastal heroes involved at that time are passing away and we need a new generation of people to carry the torch. So from your perspective, a) does BCDC have a lot of public participation; b) how do you encourage it, how does that extrapolate toward the coast as a whole.

WT: Well, BCDC was created by Save the Bay, the "Save the Bay" movement, and it's still a very vibrant and active organization, not too much active in BCDC, because we had a well-oiled machine. They were confident that we would be making good decisions, so they didn't monitor us as closely as they had to. But we're also seeing a group of young people come out of the colleges and universities. I had the pleasure at BCDC...the bulk of our staff were women and just bright as all get out, and my job was to kind of clear the brush in front of them and stay out of their hair. So there are a lot of young people that have now found jobs in government, in NGOs, in other places, rather than being unemployed activists, they are employed professionals. So I think we have every reason to be confident that as we're moving forward, just because there aren't people hammering on the door, it doesn't mean we're not doing a good job.

JB: And what is the size of the staff of BCDC?

WT: Oh, it's small. It's 45.

JB: And this is now about? [referring to the Coastal Commission.]

WT: I don't know.

JB: I think it's somewhat over 100.

WT: Somewhat over 100.

JB: Were you here when Deukmejian axed the...

WT: I was here and it was one of the most terrible moments of my life, because I had to give the pink slips to people I knew and loved. I don't think the Coastal Commission has ever recovered from that, in part, because of the dedication of the staff. They had enough people, maybe, to do the things that they had to do, and all of a sudden, they had a lot fewer, but they continued, and they continued to try to do everything they had to do back then, plus more. And at some point, you just have to say, "we can't do everything." And it's been very tough on them.

At BCDC, on the other hand, we were fortunate to be able to get extra resources and extra support from the state, so we always had the luxury of doing things extraordinarily well. I used to joke with Peter Douglas that...I said, "Peter, the Coastal Commission is the Wal-Mart of the coast, and BCDC is like a little fashion boutique. You can get anything you want at the Coastal Commission, but you can only get really high quality stuff at BCDC." We had a lot of fun joking with each other.

JB: I like that. So...my thought was, back to Deukmejian and axing the budget.

(rephrasing on the director's advice) JB: So when that budget cut came courtesy of Governor Deukmejian, were you one of the people who went?

WT: I left shortly thereafter. Michael Fischer and I left about the same time.

JB: And so that was when Peter Douglas was already here and he became the new executive director.

WT: That's correct. I was the assistant executive director. Peter was the deputy director and Michael was the executive director.

JB: So then you went back to BCDC then?

WT: I did. I went back as deputy director.

JB: Okay, and then later, you became executive director.

WT: Yes.

JB: And when was that?

WT: In 1995. Governor Wilson proposed to eliminate BCDC and meld it with the Coastal Commission. So I think nobody wanted the job, so I took it. And I always like to point out that I became executive director on May 17, 1995, and Governor Wilson dropped his proposal to eliminate BCDC the next day. The two events were totally unrelated, the timing purely coincidental, but I always like to point it out.

JB: So here we are in the post-Douglas era at the Coastal Commission and there a lot of comparisons...I mean you can make an analogy between Apple losing Steve Jobs and the Coastal Commission losing Peter Douglas. He had a huge role and ...Does the Coastal Commission, can it carry out its mission without him?

WT: Oh, I think it can. While Peter had an enormous influence, particularly on the ethos, the philosophy, the law is still there. The professional staff is still here. You get some dedicated commissioners coming in. And I think it can be rebuilt, or perhaps built again. I have every reason to believe that the California coast will continue to be protected.

JB: But there are threats. For example, we see the legislature again debating whether to weaken the CEQA, the California Environmental Quality Act, what everybody refers to as CEQA. And this time, it's not the Republicans, it's the Democrats who have majorities in the legislature and are discussing this. There could be a ripple effect if CEQA were weakened, that that could weaken the Coastal Act, because there are CEQA-equivalents that are called for in terms of research on projects.

WT: I think it's a mistake to over-characterize it as weakening CEQA. I've seen the other side of that. One of the things we're trying to do to address climate change in California is, of course, reduce driving. That's our largest source of green house gases. And we want to do that by having more compact, mixed use around transit. Well, CEQA gives everybody who lives near one of those compact, mixed use developments the chance to challenge it.

So if you've got an old gas station in the corner, and somebody wants to take it and put up a four- or five-story mixed use development with retail on the ground floor, and some affordable units for seniors above, you will have the neighbors saying, "well, I'm worried about shadows, I'm worried about traffic." Maybe it's in a low-lying area. "I'm worried about sea level rise." And CEQA allows any one of those people to file a challenge, simply because of the inadequacy of the environmental document, or the fact that there isn't an EIR.

The cost of that, the delay of that can be a tipping point. And that development never get built. So I think there's some opportunity to recognize that CEQA, when it was enacted, was to provide information to make thoughtful decisions. It wasn't a regulatory document in itself. And we have had a whole body of regulations—Coastal Commission regulations, BCDC, a whole variety of others that now deal with those subsets, and that we don't perhaps need that same level of protection in CEQA, so that every neighbor in essence, has a veto authority over every project. So I think if we look at the change of society and the change of laws, what's happened over time, I think we can have reason to be confident that this isn't a ripple effect that's going through and we're going to have to worry about. We always have to be diligent, of course, but that there can be some thoughtful changes involved.

JB: Okay, and back to the young people that you've said you've seen taking great educations, great training in agencies, for example, BCDC, but you still need a grassroots level of support for agencies, especially the Coastal Commission, since it has the bigger jurisdiction. How do you see young people becoming involved in advocacy? Is that something you think about? Am I asking the wrong person?

WT: Well, I think it's true that every regulatory agency has a tendency to be captured by the entities that it regulates. And that, to some degree, is the blessing we had at BCDC is because it's both a conservation and a development commission. So you had two entities, two activist groups. And we had the Bay Planning Coalition and Save the Bay, and then other environmental groups, that are engaged, but there are others on the regulated community side. I don't know who's not a member of the regulated community. I think we all are. So it's always a balance there.

But again, I see young people...maybe they don't have the luxury that we had. They have to get out. They have to find a job. They're busy dealing with a whole complexity of things, and I think this is something we have kind of lost faith in government. We create these agencies to do their jobs and they should do their jobs. And we shouldn't have to watch them too closely. I'm not sure we need that grassroots. If the agency is well-funded, well-managed and well-run, it can do its jobs without having people hammering at the door.

JB: But then if you get commissioners who are...oh, they've got great looking resumes, but then you watch them and start approving all these projects and so you know it's going back to the appointing authority and they're not getting enough pressure on them to appoint, for example, a wildlife biologist instead of a...

WT: Well, let me talk about that. I said that I introduced myself as saying "and" is the most important word in the agency. And I did that a symposium and Peter was there. Peter Douglas says he's "the executive director of the Coastal Commission and there's no 'and' in our name." I think if you look at the success of the Coastal Commission, and Peter has articulated this so many times, so beautifully, it's the things that didn't happen. It's the wetlands that weren't filled, it's the oil that wasn't spilled, it's the development that wasn't built. The Coastal Commission measures its success in denials. And, at BCDC, we measure our success in approvals, because we want to see things approved, because it is through those approvals that we get the benefits in terms of public access and wetland restoration.

So BCDC has not denied a permit in this century. The last denial was in 1995. It's because we don't view applicants as the enemy. We view them as unwitting partners. They come in and say, "here's my project." I pick up the Bay Plan and say, "here are the rules. Let's see where they match." And where they don't match, we work with the developer to get the project refined so that it can be approved. We then take it through the commission and they approve it. So we didn't look for ways to deny permits.

I think maybe what is needed along the coast is a recognition that there are parts of the coast that are already developed. And those areas you treat the way we treat the shoreline of San Francisco Bay. And then there are parts of the coast that aren't developed, and they should be forever protected. And I think perhaps applying the same standards to the two different areas has caused some of the controversy you talk about.

JB: So do you see that that would be...because we have also asked a number of people whether they thought it would be possible to amend the Coastal Act significantly, or pass another initiative. And the answer has been no. So how would these...and I can see the wisdom in what

you're suggesting because, well, let's just say Redondo Beach, Manhattan Beach. Well, the beach is important, but that is not a wildlife habitat. Hey, Ballona Wetlands in West L.A. That is not wildlife habitat. It's too much traffic, but there are other places that are and should be protected because they are habitat. They're rare. They're wild.

WT: If I had the answer for that, I'd probably run for elected office. I don't have the answer for that and I think it is important, as we look at the California coast, it's important to remember that it spans a distance, from Oregon to Mexico, if you take that same distance to the East Coast, it goes from Boston to Savannah, Georgia. You've got 12 or 13 different states, recognizing different political, economic, social, cultural uses and differences there and they approach it differently. I've often questioned whether it was wise to get rid of the regional Coastal Commissions. If you look at BCDC, it's a regional agency. It centers on San Francisco Bay. It's the icon for the Bay Area. It's how we identify ourselves. "I'm from the Bay Area."

The problem we had with the regional commissions is we could never figure out where to draw the line between the regions. Remember, San Francisco was in one region, and San Mateo was in another region. And that didn't make any sense. So trying to find those regions, so that you have clear identification, was very very hard to do. How we approach this in the future, I don't know the answer to that. But there are, and I think recognizing that California coastline is an awfully long place and having, simply for consistency sake, the same rules that apply to the redwood forest in Del Norte County also applying to palm trees in San Diego County might not make much sense.

JB: Very, very good answer there, because... And we've had, over the years, with this program, many discussions... there were many benefits of the regional commissions, and for activists, one of the big ones was you didn't have to Eureka if you're in San Diego to discuss a San Diego issue. It was kinder to activists of the travel, just the travel expense and difficult. And you could organize a bigger crowd, too, instead of... you might be able to get 50 people to a meeting instead of one person.

WT: Well, I mentioned that Governor Pete Wilson proposed to get rid of BCDC and merge it with the Coastal Commission. And local governments in the Bay Area didn't like that, because they serve on BCDC. The environmentalists didn't like it. But who really killed it was the developers. Because they realized if they merged, they'd have to... now where they go to a commission hearing in San Francisco or Oakland, they might have to go to San Diego. So they didn't like the idea. So I think you raise a very very good point there, that having your own region, regional identity, your activist group that is focused on what you're seeing and dealing and living with everyday, than to get people in Ventura excited about something that's happening up on the Lost Coast.

JB: Well, I think we're just about out of time here. Is there anything that you would like to impart before we finish talking today.

WT: No, it's just that it's been a wonderful journey and a great honor to be associated with the Coastal Commission and BCDC and it's just been a heck of a lot of fun, too.

JB: Tell us a great story here before you leave. What was a fun moment in...

WT: I can't because...

JB: You can't, so we'll cut that one out because that wasn't fair to pop something like that on you, but we've had a lot of fun hearing stories from a lot of people.

WT: I think that Joe Bodovitz who was the first executive director of both BCDC and the Coastal Commission and I've joked "made the mistake of hiring me twice," is also my mentor and he and I go to lunch quite often and having somebody like that that when I can't figure out what to do, I can call him and say, "what did you have in mind here?" It's like trying to interpret the Constitution and you'd be able to call Thomas Jefferson and say "what did you mean by this, Tom?" But Joe always used to say, "you have to understand there is no government in the Bay Area. There's only repertory theatre."

And there is a great "repertory theatre" along the coast and different people playing different roles at different times, but that group, that community, that "us," it's just been such a privilege to be part of that and know all these wonderful people.

JB: And you're one of them.

WT: Thank you.

JB: Thank you for joining us today, Will.

WT: Okay. Thank you.

JB: And viewers, thank you for joining us today

[end of interview]