

Eric Kern

Interviewed by Jen Brown  
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Corpus Christi, Texas

Transcribed by Alyssa Lucas

**[Jen Brown]:** Let me just push record here. Um, okay. It is March 18, 2022. This is Jen Brown. I am in Corpus Christi, Texas, out on the Island, and I'm with Eric Kern to do an oral history, um, about Baffin Bay. So, to begin, do I have your permission to record?

**[Eric Kern]:** Yes.

**[Brown]:** Okay, thanks. Well, usually with oral histories, we like to start with, um, background and early life. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

**[Kern]:** I grew up in Houston, a little incorporated village actually surrounded by Houston called Hedwig Village. Um, from a very early time, my father was quite—was an oil field chemical salesman, but he entertained his clients in hunting and fishing venues and so from a very early age I was hunting and fishing with him and that was really a big formative part of my early life. Virtually every opportunity we had, every weekend, we were somewhere doing something like that, and so as I've got older, I went to Memorial High School in Houston and met friends that had like interests and so that's how we would spend our free time, fishing, mostly freshwater fishing in the first, uh, kind of years of my life because it was more available around the Houston area than Galveston. I fished Galveston a little bit, but then, later on, found Matagorda and that part of the world, and started really getting into saltwater fishing and was into that by the time I was in college. I went to A&M, the main campus in College Station, and did well. I had a good roommate that taught me how to study. I didn't do really well in high school. I was distracted by other things, but we did well, but he also loved to hunt and fish and so we worked really hard during the weeks, but then on the weekends we were going any spare time we had. He had a hunting camp in George West. I had a hunting camp with my father in Eagle Lake, and so pretty much all the fall semester we spent at one place or the other, and in the spring, we'd fish, but he had a little lake house outside of Colmesneil, Texas, which is up in East Texas, and we'd drive over there and stay and fish and that so. So, it's all, that kind of activity has always been a part of my life.

**[Brown]:** Um-hm.

**[Kern]:** Graduated from A&M, first job was in the oil field. A guy that was running the South Texas territory for what became Baker Oil Treating lived in Kingsville and he thought it would be—I was going to assist him with the South Texas region and so I wound up living in Kingsville and that's where I met Susan, my wife of thirty-nine years. We met at a Tuesday night dance at the KC Hall. She had grown up in the Valley, spending her spare time on South Padre Island, and

she loved to fish so that fit pretty well, and she was working, going to Texas A&I, but she worked for the King Ranch. And through that connection, she had permission to drive across the ranch and fish the shorelines of the Laguna Madre and Baffin Bay, and so that was my first introduction to that part of the world. That was probably 1980, '81, and I just fell in love with it here.

**[Brown]:** Do you remember that first trip?

**[Kern]:** That—

**[Brown]:** —to Baffin—

**[Kern]:** Yes, very clearly. Well, one, I loved to hunt and fish and so to be driving across a 250,000-acre ranch with deer running everywhere and turkey running everywhere and then break out on this beautiful big lagoon with nobody there and to be able to just wade for hours up and down the shorelines catching fish. Yeah, it made—I thought I was in heaven. It was a wonderful, wonderful place and I fell in love with it.

**[Brown]:** Um-hm.

**[Kern]:** But that would have been the very first time. I'll tell you what, not the first time I saw Baffin Bay, but Susan and I's first real date was when the vet and his wife for the ranch, John Toelkes, invited us to go to King's Inn which is a restaurant in Riviera, Riviera Beach, that's still there today, and it sits on the back, very back of Baffin Bay. So, that's probably the first time I ever saw the water there.

**[Brown]:** Um-hm.

**[Kern]:** But there's a pier there, I'm trying to think of the name of the other little town they call it. There was a pier. I think the hurricane may have gotten it, but we would go down, drive down there and go out and drop crab lines off the pier and catch crabs. It was a lot of fun.

**[Brown]:** Um-hm. So, what was the fishing like back then?

**[Kern]:** Well, the fishing was, was wonderful. Um, my knowledge and ability about how and where to fish needed some work. And, uh, but it's because we were just learning. We didn't have a boat, so our access was limited, but as far as the fishing at that time, obviously, were not nearly the number of people on the bay that there are now. I don't ever really recall when we were walking them shorelines, it would be unusual to have a boat come by because you're twenty miles sometimes, you know, south of Corpus Christi, and there were people that fished Baffin. Boats weren't—the technology for boats then wasn't nearly as good. At most, there was a bunch of commercial fishermen. You would see them from time to time. They all had little Vannoy Skiffs, and I think most of them came out of Flour Bluff, um, but they weren't—they were commercial, they were netting, they had trotlines, and the fishing, in my opinion, I

thought it was great, but I think there might have been some other people already at that time that were starting to have concerns over fish populations and the excess of commercial fishing, commercial harvest, particularly redfish, and so as we were learning to fish, I was learning more about the resource, and I had good input from those people as I got involved with GCCA [Gulf Coast Conservation Association] back in the early, early days and so if that answers your question, I thought the fishing was good, but I think the redfishing today is probably better because of the efforts of the GCCA and the rest of the sporting community put into that, not just eliminating commercial fishing and the nets and the trotlines, but changing the attitude of the people on how many fish to keep, changing the attitude of the people on creating the hatcheries to stock the fish and the redfish now. All of that happened, was happening as I was getting more and more involved with the bay—

**[Brown]:** —Um-hm—

**[Kern]:** —and being on the water. Um, and I went back to Houston for a job at a bank, and I guess like '82, '83, maybe '83, and stayed there about a year and a half, still came down here to fish all the time and then as soon as I could, I found a job similar, a similar job with a bank here, and moved back permanently in 1985, and we bought a house over in Flour Bluff on the water and bought a boat and the most fortunate thing that, as far as the bay is concerned, ever happened to me was I moved in next door to a guy named Doug Bird who was, I didn't know it at the time, but he was one of the top two or three best known, well-known fishing guides on the Laguna and in Baffin Bay. He particularly liked to fish Baffin and I learned more in living next door to Doug for eight years. He's fishing every day. I'm fishing every day I can, every day I can get off work and he's a generous, outgoing, really fine fellow. Shame you couldn't interview him for this. He passed away about three, four months ago. They're actually having a service in Baffin Bay for him in June and I'll be there, but we were friends from that point forward, and like I said if you—the amount of knowledge that's back before GPS and back before electronics and learning your way Baffin Bay. The rocks were bigger back then, but the rocks are still there but knowing where the rocks are, and knowing how to stay out of the rocks, but then, on the other hand, the fish like to be around the rocks so knowing where to fish is really kind of a—I owe a ton of that information to him and now that I have that information, I still have his old handwritten map that is a sketch of Baffin Bay, and that he's written in the different places where he liked to fish, and where the rocks were, and it's tremendously accurate. Compare it now to GPS, and I don't know how he compiled all that knowledge, but he did. It's very interesting and living in the Bluff, just about everybody, they're fishing, and we had a great neighborhood and so that was kind of our lifestyle for quite some time. At that time my parents retired, moved from Houston to this house. Well, it's actually the house next door. They rented it. There was only about three houses on this street at the time and they lived here for a year or two and decided that they liked it and wanted to stay and so they built this house. I think they built this house in like '88 or '89. My dad spent his last fishing days here on the bay and became fairly competent. He liked to go with me, but he had his own boat, and he would—I'd see him sometimes, and I was standing on Tide Gauge Bar one morning and I had a big floating cabin that was behind Tide Gauge Bar, and I was down there with some friends real early. I hear this boat coming, coming from way around the corner and just throwing up a big rooster tail behind

it and I thought, “Who is this yahoo, golly, going to run right over us,” and it was my father (both laugh). “Thanks, dad,” but at any rate, we spent some fun times here at the end of his life fishing and he liked it here as well.

**[Brown]:** Um-hm.

**[Kern]:** So, stop me if you want me to.

**[Brown]:** Well, can we go back and—

**[Kern]:** —Yeah—

**[Brown]:** —can you tell me more about your—how you got involved with the Gulf Coast Conservation Association and what sort of things you did?

**[Kern]:** Well, okay. There were some guys here in town. I still see some of them around at the Harte Research Institute, Pat Murray. Oh, God dang it, you got me on tape. I’m not going to be able to say his name. Big mustache?

**[Brown]:** David McKee?

**[Kern]:** Yeah. Oh, David McKee too, but—

**[Brown]:** Oh.

**[Kern]:** I knew David, but I’m thinking of, oh, I’ll get it in a second, just part of getting old. Uh, he was at the President’s Ball the other night and we had a nice chat. I hadn’t seen him in a while. He likes to fly fish, Mark Ray. Anyway, I just heard about the organization somehow, and I started to determine and develop an understanding of the problem that was occurring in the bay, and especially the redfish, and we were both concerned citizens headed up by Walter Fondren and in Houston and a bunch of very prominent guys. Walter, an Exxon heir, who really started GCCA, Gulf Coast Conservation Association. Trying to remember how it worked. Did I start in Houston and then moved to here or did I start here and then move to Houston? I think I started volunteering and attending meetings and working on banquets and stuff like that while I was in Houston. I was in Houston from ‘85 to ‘92. No, I was in Corpus from ‘85 to ‘92. So, I’m going to say, I started here with a group of guys, Mark Ray being one of them, several others that I could name, but we had meetings here and we’re head of banquet, head of fundraisers and we’re successful and we were one of the nicer chapters of GCCA. There were always some ill feelings between the Houston chapters who were kind of the old prima donna guys. They were the first guys in and this chapter down here. It had started as a sister organization, a similar organization, and then merged kind of into GCCA, and they call it CCA now. So, when I moved back down here, I was on the state board at that time and I kind of acted as an intermediary between the two groups. That was kind of my stated purpose. I would attend the meetings in Houston and then I would come down here and talk to the people here about what

was going on and it's because I knew these people, and anyway, but that's really the how I got involved with it was recognize the problem, didn't know exactly what to do about it, and then found information on this group in Houston that also recognized the issue and they were more Port O'Connor, guys. It's easier to get to from Houston and I think maybe their netting or their trotline problem there was worse or as least as bad as down here and so that's, that's why I decided to get involved. I just reached out to them and said, "What can I do to help?"

**[Brown]:** And you talked about this a little bit. Can you expand on some of the efforts you did and, like, what the group did as a whole?

**[Kern]:** GCCA, and this was one of the things that people, the rank-and-file members of GCCA had a hard time understanding. It's like a, you know, the story of the March of Dimes. They came together to fight a specific disease and they found a cure for it so then what are they going to do with the organization? The way the organization moved forward was not the way it was while they were trying to find the cure, same thing with GCCA. The problem was very easily identified too much commercial fishing. You can't go catch a bass on a trotline or catch a hundred bass on a trotline and go sell them. They were a game fish. Redfish, saltwater fish really weren't gamefish. The only solution to the problem was legislation and the only way to get legislation passed is deal with politicians and so most of the money the GCCA raised in the early days, almost all of it went to pay lobbyists and activists and political efforts to influence not just the existing legislators but legislators that were going to be elected that would support our position and a lot of the Gulf Coast Conservation Association, they thought the money, the guys from Corpus thought, "Well, the money should be used for other types of projects down here. Where is all the money going? What are we doing?" And so, there was some real conflict there, but it was really these guys who were savvy businessmen, they knew how to get things changed in Austin, and it took money. Like I said, my efforts were on the fundraising side with helping with the banquets. I was co-chair of the banquet here in Corpus Christi one year, and worked on the banquets in Houston every year and there was—and I also tried to convey that message to other people in the organization, that, yes, there are other things that GCCA now CCA can get involved with and they have, but back then the primary objective was to get the legislation in place to conserve the redfish and there was strong opposition to it, the commercial fishing industry down here, and it got physical. I had windows broken out of my cabin and things along those lines that you didn't really want to have a GCCA sticker on your boat down here at first because it was a lot of that kind of bad blood going on.

**[Brown]:** Like what sorts of things were happening besides your windows being broken out?

**[Kern]:** That's, those are just—I don't ever remember having any kind of a physical confrontation with anybody or anything like that. That's just—there was an attitude, you know, the commercial guys, you still see them on the water, you would still see them quite often on the water. There was a lot of illegal fishing going on. The game wardens were busy trying to put a stop to that once the legislation was in place and, you know, they didn't give up easy, but there was, living in the Bluff [Flour Bluff] where most of them lived, you'd feel it. You'd walk in a store, and you could recognize them, and they could recognize you and we had different

opinions on how the resource should be utilized and, in my opinion, we were right, so.

**[Brown]:** How did the organization evolve after that?

**[Kern]:** You know, I kind of moved away from it when I went back to Houston the second time because my career went in a direction where I was traveling a lot and Susan was traveling a lot and so we were based in Houston, but we really didn't stay in Houston very often. We had no children. We just, she'd be in New York most of the time, most of my stuff was in the southeast and California so we'd meet up somewhere on the weekends and Vegas was always easy. It's easy to get there from anywhere, so, I wasn't as actively involved with the organization during that period of time that it did start to evolve. It changed its name from GCCA to CCA as they opened chapters to other people and other places saw the success that we had with our fishery here and they wanted to—they had different issues like California and Carolinas and Louisiana and Florida, but all they wanted to have the same kind of organizations so it became much more of a national organization and while it still—and the way I see it and what I see is that a lot more of their efforts, they're making a lot more efforts to spend money in ways that benefit the estuary or the environment or the sport and less money in the political realm, but that's just my opinion. There's other people that you could interview that, Mark being one of them, that could give you a lot better input on what changes that evolved with CCA as it moved forward, but it's still very viable. I was in the room when Bill Kinney pitched the idea of a—of the STAR tournament to the old original board, Walter, and all of those guys and it was genius because people, they were paying an entry fee and so they don't—it's not like they're making a contribution to a conservation association and they expect a note that that money is going to fix the broken levy system in the bay that they fish in. It's a contest and, yeah, flies in the face of a no-kill kind of CCA fishing mantra, GCCA fishing mantra because it's—you got to take some fish into the weigh-in and so the idea of the tag fish was a wonderful idea, too, and to Bill's credit, he pulled it off and he sold it to the guys in Houston, and it changed GCCA forever, and that's why it has such a tremendous membership. You enter the tournament, you're already a member, and if you're a member, you start getting all the information from them and the books and the magazines and the newsletters and so you get more aware of the issues and the opportunities to affect change, positive change.

**[Brown]:** Um-hm.

**[Kern]:** But again, I don't want to be a spokesman for CCA or GCCA, I'm just telling you what I did, but there are people out there that I think you could get a whole lot better, big picture knowledge from than me.

**[Brown]:** Okay. Well, let's talk more about Baffin Bay then. Um, what do you think makes Baffin Bay special?

**[Kern]:** Well, the isolation of it, for one thing. Going to let us expand that a bit. It's part of a water system, it's a hypersaline lagoon, um, very little freshwater inflow. There's only one other place I've ever fished in the US that is anything similar. That's the Indian River Lagoon on the

Atlantic Coast of Florida. There in Cape Canaveral and all up back through there, similar, very similar ecosystem. So, it's a unique ecosystem, but there has always been a mystique about Baffin. One, it's difficulty to access. Two, the rocks. Okay? And there was kind of a mystique about the rocks back when not everybody had Garmins. There was a little bit of, you know, you better be careful, knock your lower unit off, there's rocks, the rocks, the rocks and I think a lot of the regular guys kind of promoted that theory trying to keep some of the less (Brown laughs) experienced people out, ou know, "You better not go back in there," and the names of the different places, Cathead and other not appropriate phrases anymore.

**[Brown]:** Will you tell me?

**[Kern]:** Huh?

**[Brown]:** Will you tell me those?

**[Kern]:** Oh, there was—it was called Niggerhead, and it's just a big point in the bay and it had rocks in front of it and on Doug's [Bird] map, I believe, I haven't looked at it in a long, long time, and I believe that's what it's referred to. You don't hear many people call it that anymore.

**[Brown]:** No, I imagine not (Both talking)—

**[Kern]:** —East Kleberg Point, um, is probably a more appropriate word. But no, there was just a mystique about the whole place. It was kind of a cult thing and the fact that—and I don't know if it was because or if it because I still catch bigger trout in Baffin Bay than you catch most places. Whether that has something to do with the deep water and the hypersaline nature of the water, if it has something to do with genetics of the fish that are there, I don't know, but at the end of the day that was where you went to catch a great big trophy trout, you know, a twenty-eight to thirty-inch, over thirty trout would be kind of a mantra for someone. Mike Blackwood was a guy that fished out of Corpus, good friends with some other friends of mine. I'm not close friends with Mike. I recognized his boat. I knew who he was. He had the state record trout and he caught it in Baffin Bay. He wouldn't say where (Brown laughs), but he held that record for a long time. So there was just kind of this mystique about the place, and then being down there, I came across a friend who knew an artist named Herb Booth. This friend worked at the bank with me, and he liked to fish. Herb is very well-known outdoor artist in Rockport, great guy. Herb had some friends that owned this houseboat, and his friends were kind of like commercial fishermen, and they probably had been, if they weren't still. They, they had very little regard. I was down there and with them and they had very little regard for regulations. Um, I had to kind of bite my lip when I'd go down there and fish with them because they didn't mind keeping a few extra big redfish or they'd fillet them while we were down there and not worry about it and, anyway, they had this beautiful houseboat behind Tide Gauge Bar. I think it was built at Williamson Boat Works in Riviera. It was fiberglass and it sat down in the water like a boat, so you walked in, and you walked down the steps. It was forty-two feet long and twenty-some-odd feet wide. Along one back was bunks, there were six bunks, and then it had a nice big living area, a kitchen, and you walked up out of the boat onto the back deck, was

covered, and it had a table where you could sit and eat, and it was beautiful. It was all run on propane and twelve-volt. It had everything but air-conditioning, and it was just so remote and so unique and there weren't a hundred houseboats down there like there are now, and it's hard to get to. You had to run through the Badlands and around through the Badlands and then you had to know where to get behind Tide Gauge Bar or it had a Tide Gauge sitting on it and that was one of the things that you used. I don't know why, how it got there. It's not there anymore, but, anyway, getting behind there and getting to the houseboat and then we were finally there, you tie your boat up to the back and pop the board and it was just like being in another world and there weren't a whole lot of people around. Wake up in the morning and you could just basically hop off the front of the boat, wade across to the Tide Gauge Bar, go across to the other side, and depending on which way the wind was blowing, one way down or the other way down and fish and the fishing was very, very good. It was pretty amazing and Herb decided he wanted to sell his interest in that boat, and I bought it and so then I was partners with these other guys and slowly worked some of my friends in as partners and moved those guys kind of out, and at that point, there was—I wouldn't say bad blood but there was a little bit of that, you know, they're more identified with the old commercial guys than us, but not a whole lot. But they didn't want to hang around with us anymore and so I put together a group of guys that owned it and we owned it together for many, many years and it was wonderful. The problem when I moved back to Houston the second time, it was very difficult to leave Houston on Friday, get all the way down here, unload everything out of your car into the boat, drive the boat an hour and thirty minutes down the King Ranch shoreline. Pretty much Friday afternoon, it's getting dark, and now you've got to go through the Badlands and try to figure out how to get behind Tide Gauge Bar without GPS, and it was a difficult trip. And I, through an associate that—or through a friend that became a member of the No-Mo, I wound up with an interest in a cabin that he had which is right here outside of town. It's about six miles down the way here and so I started hanging out more at the cabin than I did at the No-Mo just because it was so much easier for me to get to and so I still had an interest in the No-Mo, but I wasn't very actively involved in the management and taking care of it, and bottom line, it was probably twenty or thirty years old by this time, and it sat down in the water and that was a positive, but it also got water in it and it had some hull issues, and they were trying to haul it back to Williamson Boat Works to, to get it re-fiberglassed and got into a storm or something and it anyway broke up and sunk. It's out there in the middle of Baffin Bay somewhere.

**[Brown]:** Huh.

**[Kern]:** But it's gone, and now you'll see a whole lot of these little floaters that are down there and now they're permitted. We didn't have to have a permit. We didn't have to have a number. When they put in the permit process, we were grandfathered into one, so it had a number. A matter of fact, I think Tim, a good friend of mine, still owns the number. He had to pay a fee every year, um, but bottom line it's—those others are, there are a whole bunch of them down there, especially around Twin Palms and at the mouth of Baffin Bay, but I've never seen another one like this. It was really nice and a great place to hang out because it sat down in the water, it was actually even a little cooler in there, and it had burglar bars over the windows, but it had an



escape hatch in the roof in case something caught on fire because there's only one way in and the one way in was right by the kitchen, but it had a toilet and a shower and the toilet, at that point, flushed into the bay, which was bad, um, but it was a pretty neat place to hang out, and I took many, many guests there, and Bill Kinney one of them, and Bruce Arendale, we had a great trip, they were Houston GCCA people, and it was a neat place.

**[Brown]:** Um-hm. What is your most memorable experience about Baffin Bay?

**[Kern]:** Um, funniest story, or it just had a lot to do with where we were, but there was a guy, a friend of mine lived in a condo here in the back of the building. He was a partner of mine down at the house, but he was at this condo and the guy was cleaning fish and he had a whole bunch of big fish and so he started asking this guy questions, "Where did you catch them?" and the guy wasn't very talkative. The guy turned out to be a guy named Louis Pete, who is not with us anymore, but he had a cabin on Twin Palms and was he as an old salt. He knew everything about the bay, and too bad you could interview some of those guys from back then, but there are not many of them left anymore, but Lewis was a character. He was a real character, and Tim was a charmer and he got enough information out of Lewis for me to figure out where he was. He said, "Well, he's on some rocks. He's on the North Shoreline out of Baffin, and it's almost at the Tide Gauge Bar," and how he got that much information out of the guy, I don't know, but that to me, well, that's Cathead Reef, okay. So, the next Saturday, Tim and I are staying at the No-Mo, which was the name of the floater, and those commercial guys that named it the No-Mo because they used to have cabins. They had no more lawnmowers, no more grass, they just had the boat (Brown laughs). They just—no more everything, but we were staying at the No-Mo, and we were on the Cathead Reef as it got light, and we actually went over in the dark and got out of the boats and wade out. Well, back then the reefs were bigger. You'd be wading along in waist-deep water, and you'd bump into, it's about eight inches, a foot below the surface and you could climb up on it and walk across it. It's very difficult because it's rocky and craggily, but you could walk across and get to where on the other side it drops off very quickly into six, eight feet of water, and just stand there on the rocks and throw and literally you'd catch them right under your feet. I mean along the edge of that rock. And I was standing there and I've got a nice string of fish. It's still just getting light, and I'd heard a boat and I wasn't paying attention, but all of a sudden, I realized there's somebody standing right next to me, and I looked at him and he looked at me and he just didn't say anything. I said, I just took a stab, I said, "Are you, Louis Pete?" He looked at me like, "How the hell you know that?" I said, "Well, I just thought maybe. Stand there and fish. They're biting like hell. Let's go." We stood there for an hour, thirty, forty minutes. He kept looking at me trying to think of where did I know this guy? He and I had never met before. Where do I know this guy from? Finally, he said, "You know this is my rock?" I said, "Well, what do you mean?" "I fish on this rock every day." I said, "Well, okay, but I like to fish on it too," and so we would still bump into each other from time to time and it was always amicable, but it was a funny—it was just a whole really funny encounter of a guy who is now, but then was a Baffin Bay legend and he was a nice fellow and as we got to know each other better. And he was down there a whole lot and he told us, "Well, I've got gasoline if you need gasoline and if anything happens," because there weren't as many people down there now as there were then and, anyway, it evolved, but it was one of my most

memorable encounters on the bay (Brown laughs), and I, speaking of that, when they first came out with cellphones, I had an accident down there alone and hurt myself pretty bad and I had a hard time getting back, but I fell and hit my back on those steps where you walk down into the No-Mo. My feet went out from under me, my back hit the bottom step just perfectly square. I thought I was paralyzed for a little while, but I finally got to where I could move around and got out of there, but that scared Susan, so she bought me one of those bag phones. I don't know if you've ever seen them (both talking at once)—

**[Brown]:** —Yeah—

**[Kern]:** —or not. It was huge, and it had a big, huge battery that you carried with you. I saw a lawyer walk through the bank with one and I thought, “What a snob. Who needs one of those things, you know, come on? Who needs a cellphone?” but she wanted me to have one down there so I took it down there and you could only get one operator and she was a lady that worked for an oil company at offshore rig and so if you want to make a call, you first had to raise an operator and then you had to give the operator a number and she'd say, “Well, honey, is this an emergency?” and I said “No, not really. I just need to talk to,” “Well, I'm really not allowed to connect you because we're a private company. I can't. I'm not allowed. My boss—to connect you on personal calls, but if you're ever in trouble and you need help, you just call me, and I'll get you taken care of” (both laugh). Anyway, um, the only other thing that happened with the No-Mo was when Herb Booth, the artist, was along on this one and Craig Cook. We were in there and they had it anchored with an old shrimp boat anchor and a long rope. That's what—so, when the wind would blow, it would swing around one way or the other, but you know how anchors work, if you get the anchor flipped, that anchor could turn loose, could flip over backwards, and then the No-Mo could go sailing off whichever way the wind's blowing, and we were all in there one night and a big norther came through and the boat turned, and it was late at night. I remember they had those propane lanterns and they were swinging because the boats moving and at some point, there was a heck of a storm and at some point, I heard some banging noises, but I didn't know what. I thought maybe the boats that we had strung out behind it were hitting each other so I went out and tried to figure out what was going on, and I couldn't figure out what was going on, but I knew it was getting rougher and rougher and rougher and finally I just went inside and hunkered down and it finally blew itself out, but I got up the next morning and went outside to take a leak and I started looking around. I looked at the shoreline and I didn't recognize the shoreline. Well, where the hell are we? We'd blown all the way across Baffin Bay. We were on the Kennedy Ranch. We left, we'd blown across the Tide Gauge Bar, all away across Baffin Bay and we were on the Kennedy Ranch shoreline, and nobody had a clue, and they didn't, and then the anchor finally took hold and so we were anchored, we were just anchored there. So, we spent the whole day dragging it back across, and then we had a hard time figuring out how to get it back across Tide Gauge Bar because how we got across in the first place, I don't know. There must have been some pretty good waves or something, but we ended up taking it all the way down to the aforementioned point, where there is some deep water you can get around if you know your way, and we got around behind Tide Gauge bar that way and took it back up to where it normally sat, but very shortly after that, we put in a great, big piece of drill pipe and sunk it about fifteen feet into the ground

leaving about fifteen feet sticking up out of the water, built a big metal collar on it, and slipped it over the top, and fastened it to the No-Mo with chains so when the wind would blow, it would just blow around in a circle but never had that problem again.

**[Brown]:** Yeah.

**[Kern]:** But that was an interesting evening.

**[Brown]:** So, Mike Wetz said I should ask you about the stick.

**[Kern]:** It's not actually in Baffin, and he may have a misunderstanding of that.

**[Brown]:** Okay.

**[Kern]:** Um, it's in the Laguna. It was an old trotline stake, and I got into a habit of wading this one particular shoreline, and then out from the shoreline, is where I fished yesterday actually, and there was an old sunken houseboat about halfway across Yarborough [ed. clarification: meant Nighthawk not Yarborough], which is a bay off of the Laguna. I would tie up to that stick and wade to the houseboat, and it just got to be my deal. Well, everybody said, "Well, you're a one-trick pony," and I said, "Yeah, I'm a one-trick pony, but it's a good trick. Look in the ice chest," and we did. I consistently for years caught a whole lot of fish right there and the joke got to being that that's my stick. Where are you going? I'm going to my stick. And just like Lewis Pete said, "This is my rock," that's my stick, and so as a joke, I carved my initials into it (Brown laughs) I said, "You don't believe me, go look. It's got my initials in it," and I can show it to you if you hold on just a second.

**[Brown]:** Okay (laughs).

**[Kern]:** Four or five years ago somebody hit it in a boat. I went out there and was broken it off at the bottom. I couldn't ever figure out why this one stick stayed out there, it was made out of cedar and this was the only one left in all of Yarborough, there's not another one, this was all that was there. So, when it was broken off, I (audio stops).

**[Brown]:** Okay, go ahead, sorry.

**[Kern]:** Back?

**[Brown]:** Yeah.

**[Kern]:** Okay, so I tied onto it with a rope, and tried to pull it out. I couldn't get it to come loose. I couldn't figure out what the deal was, and I finally got in the water, and I reached down to the base of it trying to figure out, and it's wired, and I dig a little further and it had been set in concrete and wired, and someone had put this post. It must have been the base point for some long-ass trotline or something, but that post was not going anywhere. How it broke, and if it

broke above the concrete, but the wire underneath the water was still wrapped around it. So, to bring a piece of it home, I cut it off like this and that's it and if you look real close you can see my initials in it right there. You kind of have to look at it. E and there's the K. But—

**[Brown]:** —So—

**[Kern]:** —that's the stick.

**[Brown]:** How long did you fish there?

**[Kern]:** Starting in the eighties, late eighties through I still fish there, have it on GPS, I fished there yesterday (both laugh). The stick went away, I guess, six, seven years ago now.

**[Brown]:** Okay. Well—

**[Kern]:** —Yeah—

**[Brown]:** —now no one can find your spot, right (both laugh)?

**[Kern]:** A lot of people know the spot, unfortunately, but—

**[Brown]:** —okay—

**[Kern]:** —most of my friends had been there multiple times.

**[Brown]:** Uh-hm. Well—

**[Kern]:** But most of them have their own boats so I sometimes run up on people that are already there.

**[Brown]:** Yeah. Can you tell me more about the changes you've noticed to Baffin Bay over time?

**[Kern]:** Well, we mentioned, we touched on the worms, and the information you sent me after that conversation was really nice, I enjoyed that. I'd always wondered, uh, if someone was doing some more work on that and I had actually brought that up with Mike [Wetz] when we had lunch the other day, so you beat him to the punch though. That's pretty neat, pretty interesting stuff, but the rocks are different. They're not as prominent as they were and your little survey mentions that or your little synopsis of the work that they're doing mentions that the rocks are not as prominent as they were twenty, thirty years ago. Uh, they're easier for people to find and so people have more access to that and there are more knowledgeable people that fish the rocks too. Your paper mentions that maybe the boat damage was a causative factor of the diminishing reefs, and maybe it is, I don't think people hit them near as much as they probably used to, but there's a lot more people so, but that's one thing. The

primary thing is the vegetation, the change in the seagrass, the abundance of the seagrass and the types of the seagrass and I'm not knowledgeable in the different species of grass and that's Mike's world, um, and a lot of his grad students' world, but bottom line, the grass is different. The wavy long grass, you stand on Tide Gauge Bar and there's a wave would come in. Tide Gauge Bar is on the windy side, on a southeast wind, but the bar was covered with this grass and when the waves would come in, it would just be like wheat, like have you seen wind blowing through a wheat field? That's what it looked like. The grass, it turned brown and then green and brown and then green which is beautiful. The water was, even on the southeast, on the northwest side of the bay with a southeast wind blowing all day long, the water on the Tide Gauge Bar was gin clear, and the grass kept it that way. You could wade out. King Ranch Shoreline was the same way. King Ranch shoreline was still a little bit that way if you get right up to it, but it was a lot—the clear water went a lot further out and the grass was a lot deeper, but there was a lot more grass, and it was not the mossy kind of grass that we see a lot laking in Nighthawk Bay. Nighthawk Bay is full of this moss that's, I don't think, it's this beneficial of grass. That's just an opinion. It's not pretty. That's not an opinion, but the change in the vegetation and another thing, I was just taking a survey that I didn't solicit, I don't know how I get this stuff, but it was about mangroves in the bay and along the edges of the bay. We've got the freeze last year, the real bad freeze that we had, knocked the heck out of them, but the survey that I was taking is obviously people that are of the opinion that this mangrove is taking over the marshes and it's going to be an ongoing issue. They see it as an issue, I guess. I like the mangroves and I was planting them actually along the front of my cabin because the front of my cabin made a little island that I'm on. It's not a real island, it's a spoil island and it's eroding. Ultimately, it will, and I won't live to see it, but someday it will be gone because, you know, the spoils that they pile up on the edge of the Intracoastal [Waterway], unless they go dredge the Intracoastal again and redo it, that island as it stands will eventually wear away and my house will go with it, but bottom line, Baffin, as you're seeing the mangroves come in down there too, and so I think that's a change. The, you know, the most obvious change is the increase in the number of people and the amount of use and amount of utilization and the change in utilization from primarily commercial, back in the day even with crabs, you know, you don't see crab traps down there much anymore, used to be crab traps all the time. You see the drum trotlines, some out, and there's still a drum—commercial drum fishery down there, but it's not nearly as prevalent as it was, but a whole lot more recreational fishing going on. I went down on a Thursday and about this time last year, and I know a couple of the guides had been fishing Tide Gauge. Tide Gauge is probably, if I had to guess, two, three miles long, maybe even longer, and it's relatively easy to get to, to find. There are not a lot of rocks around it. There are rocks around one end of it, and rocks around the other end of it, but the whole stretch of the Tide Gauge Bar is rock free. It very deeply drops off, very deeply into Baffin, and the reefs shallow up behind, and so it's easy for people to fish, but, anyway, I came around the corner at Twin Palms and down the King Ranch Shoreline and was going to jump behind Tide Gauge Bar, but there's a guy sitting right in the middle of the cut where you're supposed to go through and as I saw so, "Well, I'll just go on down in front of the bar and find a place I can go in and get out and walk." There wasn't any spots. It was lined up people on a Thursday. I found out later that there was a tournament going on. It was going out of Bluff's Landing and a lot of the guides that fished down there, the guides go out of Bluff's Landing so that people that watch them, but I couldn't

believe how many people were down there. I used to—it was unusual in the early days of owning the No-Mo to have a boat come by while we were wading, and I told the story about dad driving by. The only reason he was in there was because I told him how to get in there, but the utilization of the bay has evolved a ton. It's different. It's and there's still—it's still, especially talking with people like, you know, we have guides that come up here from Galveston every year to fish here because the Galveston fishing has gotten to be so difficult. Um, I fished with a guide a couple weeks ago, that's what he's doing here, and I knew him from a long time ago. And so I think our fishing's still pretty good probably compared to what other people experience in different places of the bay. Um, and the little window that I had into Baffin, maybe I just learned more, how to catch redfish, but I certainly catch a lot more redfish now than I did in the early days. In the early days most of what we caught were trout, but again you fish in different ways to catch redfish, but, for example, the stick, when I first started fishing there it was almost trout, it was mostly trout and then gradually the redfish had become dispersed amongst the trout and you'd catch trout one cast and a redfish the next cast and so that's changed a little bit, and I think that's in part due to some of the efforts that GGCA and CCA made and the hard work that was put in back then and the hatchery and maybe some of it's due to environmental factors. I don't know, but I don't know anybody that knew what the bay was like before the commercial fishing was going on to the extent it was when the GGCA finally had had enough, um, so maybe they'd say, "Yeah, there used to be a lot more redfish, and then there weren't and now there are again," but I don't know. I couldn't prove that, but I know day in, day out, present year excluded because that was a pretty significant fish kill, we had last year and so the fishing this year and through especially from Baffin Bay this way. From Baffin Bay to the mouth of Corpus Christi Bay. Last year was awful and I pretty much totally blame that on the freeze. I didn't—I quit going to the stick because I was still going down to Baffin because I could catch fish in Baffin and I couldn't catch fish up here so, but over time those things that I pointed out are the things that stick out to me the most, but it's changed and it's still a wonderful, beautiful place, but you could say that about—you could say change over that thirty or forty years period of time, that's universal. I mean look at Houston where I was growing up in Houston and Houston now and Corpus Christi when I first started living here in Corpus Christi now and the south side wasn't here. You turn on Ennis Joslin and go all the way to the Ocean Drive and the only you passed was the ballpark and now look at it. So, Baffin is not immune to the change that we've seen everywhere as populations increased and different industries have moved into the area. Baffin's probably a little sheltered from that.

**[Brown]:** When we had talked previous—

**[Kern]:** —than most places. Go ahead.

**[Brown]:** Sorry. When we talked previously in the week you had mentioned another freeze—

**[Kern]:** —Oh—

**[Brown]:** —back in the eighties, and can you talk about that and—

**[Kern]:** Well, now, that was a changing point too in the bay, when you asked about the change. That freeze, it was in the late eighties. There were several, but there was one, in particular, that was really, really bad and it was like, I don't remember the year exactly, I think '89, but it just devastated the fish and the turtles, and it was prolonged, and very, very bad, and it happened when the tide happened to be very, very low. You know, Baffin doesn't really experience the tidal change, but the water comes in and goes out depending on the moon and wind over a long period of time, and the freeze happened, there was a whole lot of grass that was up and out of the water, the Tide Gauge Bar was almost out, and bottom line, it killed the grass, and so that kind of got things—and killed all the fish, and so that puts a whole lot of nutrient in the water. And so, I'll never forget, Chas Mella and I were going down to the No-Mo and we got probably ten or fifteen miles down the King Ranch shoreline. We passed Bird Island on our left, King Ranch on our right and we never ran down the Intracoastal. We ran down the shoreline and all of a sudden, we come across a line and the water turns yellow, orange. They call it brown tide, but it looked almost orange to me. We stopped, and I said, we're in two boats and he came up beside me and I said, "Well, look at this. I don't know how to fish in orange water" and he said, "I don't know what it is," but we went down onto Baffin, and it was all the way. It was, and within a few months or a few weeks, it was all the way up here to Corpus, and it was a little bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy because it shaded out what grass was left that hadn't froze, so it dies, so it rots, and so there's more nutrients in the water and so the brown tide perpetuated itself and it perpetuated itself for several years. I'd given up for the first year or two after that freeze, I didn't catch a fish. Susan and I had what was a sail line and they were legal. They still are. You see people using them on the causeway, but we would sail line it off Tide Gauge Bar back into the back and, you know, catch fish and for the whole summer after that freeze, we'd go down to the No-Mo and we'd put that line out and I never caught a fish on it and I can say that about last year in the stick, at the stick. I waded the stick four, five times at this time of the year which is the best time of the year to be over there and caught maybe two or three fish after that freeze so this—but that for the freeze in the nineties is the big one was the whole bay system. This last freeze for some reason seemed to be more intense right here like I said from the mouth of Baffin to Corpus Christi Bay. Why that seemed to be, the people in Corpus Christi Bay are catching fish, the people in Baffin Bay are catching fish, the people down on South Padre are catching fish so go figure, but that brown tide, you had to fish, well, you had to fish with bait which I don't like to do just because you have to mess with it and keep it alive and haul it around and it's just a lot easier not to mess with it, but that was really the M.O. and I kind of thought that that's the way it's going to be forever. It's not going to change. Subsequently, I got some friends whose dad and granddad fished Galveston Bay back in the twenties and thirties and forties, all the way till recently, the Anderson Way on Galveston Island is named after his great grandfather, and they talk about Galveston Bay going through that kind of a transition due to pesticide runoff and other things from the refineries and everything that surround that bay. They said it used to be pristine like Baffin was before the freeze and like the Laguna was before the freeze, and still is to some degree and Baffin still is to some degree. Galveston doesn't have any of that kind of grass anymore. They have marsh and a pretty healthy marsh, but they don't have the kind of bottom grass that we've got. Uh, so the water, the bay finally started to clear up in some areas, and the tide that they didn't have as much food left for it. We didn't, fortunately, didn't have additional freezes that perpetuated it. I was

terrified after this last freeze that we were going to see that. I hadn't seen it, knock on wood. Um, I think we're out of the danger zone now, but it was a changer, and the bay, it took the bay a long time to get back to the point that it is now, that where we have clear water in the flats and behind Tide Gauge Bar and we had green water in the deeper water where the bay for a couple three years there, it was just, everything was brown. Yeah, and it's well documented too. I've talked to other people at Harte and Dr. Wetz's office, people that I talked with. They can tell you the exact years and which one I'm talking about and so forth and so on, but that's—I'd never seen anything like it before and neither had Chas, and Chas had grown up on the bay, and he's ten years my elder, so he's a guy you could talk with, too, if you'd like. But it changed everything and it's still not back the way it was. The things you're asking are different, they're different because I, in my opinion, of that event and then subsequently additional usage and additional demands on the resources that we have today that we didn't have back then, but that, that was like somebody flipped a switch.

**[Brown]:** Hm. Can you tell me more about the different tackle you've used over the years and what's changed and what's stayed the same?

**[Kern]:** Oh, um, technology on open faced reels is, you know, back in the early days we had a masters that didn't have magnets and they had little cloth weights that were inside the gears, and they weren't really good in saltwater. They weren't made for saltwater. They're difficult to cast. You didn't have carbon fiber rods yet, fiberglass and they're not as reactive. It's not—you can't feel as good with the fiberglass as you can with the carbon. The new reels have magnetic anti-backlash technology and very easily adjustable and so the tackle, that kind of tackle was improved a lot. So, there are other types of tackle, you know, actually some of the lures, the old lures are plug and shorty or fifty-one M, two Mirrolure, those lures have been around forever and they're just as good now as before Corkys came out and all the rage there for a while, started in Galveston, the guy was making them in his garage supposedly and it's a soft shallow running bait that big trout seem to like and they're part of the mystique in Baffin was to fish with Corkys. Maybe the guy was here, I can't remember if I was here or in Galveston, but his name was Brown I think, but you couldn't get them, so everybody wanted them. I've got a whole box full of them (Brown laughs), but don't use them as much as I used to, but those kind of changes come and go but, you know, as far as fishing the bay is concerned which I still do some at like especially this time of the year, that's exactly the same tackle we used thirty, forty years ago. In fact, terminal tackle that we used thirty, forty years ago.

**[Brown]:** When did you get into fly fishing?

**[Kern]:** Well, I grew up spending my time in Colorado in the summers and my aunt and uncle loved to drive up in the mountains and fish the little streams and they fly fished and so that's where I started fly fishing, but that kind of fishing is totally different than saltwater. The waters moving so you don't have to try to move the lure. The water moves the lure for you so as far as stripping the line or sight casting a fish or any of that, and all the saltwater stuff I had no idea. Um, I don't remember. Oh, I do remember. A friend of mine, Chris Hayes, had several offices in Florida and he lived in Miami, and he knew I liked to fish, and he asked, "Do you ever fly fish?"



and I said, “No, not in saltwater. I fished a lot in streams and lakes in Colorado.” He said, “Well, why don’t you come go with me? I’m going to go fly fish with a guy named Joe Rodriguez tomorrow and we’re going to fly fish for tarpon and come along.” And I did, and we went off in the oceanside down there. I fished Florida a whole lot now, I didn’t use to, but Joe was kind of a well-known guy and he’s kind of a, he’s not my favorite person, he’s a little bit gruff, but he was poling and Chris, you could see his tarpon coming at us and he’s yelling at Chris and Chris is throwing and Chris gets one in front of him and sure enough it eats it, hits it, and jumps about ten feet in the air and just goes berserk and I thought, “God, I want to do that. That looks like fun,” and then he got it all the way to the boat and so I get on him about it, oh, we fished together all the time and I said, “You know, you owe me a whole lot of money. You cost me a ton of money learning how to do that and then all the different places to go to do it” and the other thing I added to that was, “You owe me a great debt of gratitude and you created a tremendous amount of frustration for me because the only thing more difficult than learning how to competently fly fish in saltwater for tarpon is teaching your wife how to fly fish for tarpon,” (both laugh) but she got very good at it, and we traveled all over the Caribbean and Central America and Mexico and lots of different places. I caught bonefish in Hawai’i on a fly rod, and so we traveled a lot, our travel destinations almost always had something to do with fly fishing.

**[Brown]:** Um-hm.

**[Kern]:** But it’s Chris’s fault (Brown laughs).

**[Brown]:** Okay.

**[Kern]:** That’s how I got into it.

**[Brown]:** Nice.

**[Kern]:** and its—I had no—the background I had in Colorado was actually a detriment to the, just, the way you cast, the way you shoot line, the way you move the bait, it’s all different and the habits that you can develop with that light rod and a steam are bad habits in saltwater. The—

**[Brown]:** —the strike—

**[Kern]:** Yes. The old trout strike and my guide in Islamorada, who’s one of my favorite people in the world, started fishing with him when he was just, probably in his early twenties and now he’s in his late thirties and got a wonderful family and married an artist that we knew before they got married, and they have a beautiful family. They’re one of the nicest people in the whole world you’ll ever meet and “Eric, you trout struck him again, stop it, you’re killing me” (Brown laughs). Well, because he worked hard to get that boat in the position in where you could shoot at that fish and he’d, unlike Rodriguez, he doesn’t have a bad word in him, but it frustrates him as much as it frustrates me, but it’s a habit, especially made worse because I fish

with conventional tackle here for a while, and so here you get a little spinning rod or casting rod you can set the hook. You do that with, you're not going to, especially on tarpon, because unlike a redfish that eats a fly and then crushes it with its big crushers he's got in the back of his mouth. Tarpon doesn't have any of that. He's just a big, open hole, and it's hard, it's bony, and if he opens that mouth again, when he feels you lift that line then the fly just going to come out. You don't even feel it. You see him eat it (makes gulping noise), but when you touch him with that line before the hooks in him, that mouth comes open again, and out comes the fly so don't trout strike or brown trout strike (both laugh).

**[Brown]:** Right. Okay, so going back to Baffin Bay, I just have a couple more questions. Um, what does Baffin Bay mean to you?

**[Kern]:** Um, jeez, it's full of so many wonderful memories. It's a very special place. I mean to have some place that you love. Um, I feel comfortable when I'm there and it's just, there's too many memories to ever comprehend. It's just, we spent so much time there. Susan and I grew together there, and it's just been a very, very special part of my life. It's unique as we discussed, and I don't mind sharing it with a whole lot of people. I liked it better when we didn't have to fight so many, but it's a very special, unique place and it has been a big part of my life and, you know, everybody's got something that they feel really good about or some place that they feel at home, and on the water down there, on the water here, and I consider the whole Laguna, not just Baffin, but Baffin in particular. We were young and enthusiastic, and it was just a wonderful place to be.

**[Brown]:** Um-hm. What do you think success looks like in terms of kind of current efforts to restore and conserve Baffin Bay?

**[Kern]:** Okay, that's a good question. There's what I would love it to be and what I think it probably has the potential to be. You know, will it never be the same as it was when it was—and again, and I don't totally blame this on human intervention. Human intervention is—the problems and changes with the bay, I'm going to digress a little, I'll come back to your point. There's some of them that we can control and do things about and there's some that you can't. I don't think it's feasible to say what you're going to limit the number of people to go on to Baffin Bay. No, you can't do that. It's a resource. Our population is growing. You're going to have to limit population control in the United States. No, you can't do that. A certain number of people are going to find it and appreciate its attributes and they're going to take advantage of it and that's just the way it is. There's nothing you can do about it. There are more people, there's more fishing in Baffin Bay. So, what we need to focus on is the things that we can make a difference, the human-introduced issues that are detrimental to the bay's health. The human introduced issues are pesticides, are sewage, are degradation by commercial fishermen that are putting things in the water and trash, monofilament, overfishing. Okay, we can control that, but that always will just be controlled. Okay, if the limit's one and there's ten fishermen and then they each catch one, that's ten. If the limits one and there's a hundred fishermen, they catch a hundred. So unless you make it a total catch-and-release facility, which I don't think is ever going to happen, there's going to be a balance. Is the fish population ever going to be the way it

was when—and again there was probably parts of the fish population that weren't nearly as robust then as they are now and the redfish fishery with the assistance it's received, I think is probably as good or better. Are there as many big trout as there were back in the day when trout really weren't focused on much by the commercial guys? Um, no. Is there something you could do to make more of them? Well, you can help. You can put in limits, and you can have slots and say, okay, you can only catch one fish over a certain size every day or every week or every year, have a tag for it, I don't know, but what would success be? Limiting the totally controllable factors almost completely and those are pesticides and sewage and trash and any others that I'm not thinking of right now and then monitoring and trying to have as beneficial an effect as possible on those issues are not totally going to go away (phone rings). I don't think it's ever going to be, you know, I'm never going to be standing on Tide Gauge Bar for four hours on a Saturday morning and not have anybody come by.

**[Brown]:** Um-hm.

**[Kern]:** And that's not going to happen. It'd be nice.

**[Brown]:** Do you need to get that?

**[Kern]:** No.

**[Brown]:** Okay.

**[Kern]:** Answering machine. I'm surprised the yard guys—what day, today's Friday?

**[Brown]:** Yeah.

**[Kern]:** I realized that they usually come about this time of the day, and I was about to say they're going to be out there with weed blowers and you're going to have a hard time, but fortunately that hasn't happened.

**[Brown]:** Yeah, luckily. Well, how do you think we can get younger generations to be stewards of Baffin Bay?

**[Kern]:** Introduce them to it. Introduce it to them in the same that I was, and my father did for me. Um, I've also heard talk, been talking to Dr. Wetz about having a facility on Baffin where grade school-aged kids that are in high school could—junior high, high school-aged kids could come and experience the bay and, you know, maybe do a little fishing and do a little sample taking and just be on the bay and see what kind of an interesting and neat place it is. I was talking to a guy about taking he and his twelve-year-old son fishing and he said, "Well, he's got a real short attention span. You're going to have a hard time." I said, "No, there's so much going on out there. There's someone to point it out to him. Someone to say, hey, look at what happening here, look at what's going on with this, you know, what kind of birds are those." All those different things that my dad did for me, but if people do that to kids that they have

access to. I don't have kids. I've done it with a hundred [ed. clarification: Kern meant "a whole lot"] of younger ones, my friends' kids, I live vicariously through them, um, but just give them that kind of an understanding of what it is and just teach them about it. I had a great role model in that regard, my aunt in Colorado. To go in the mountains, up the mountains and out the stream with her was not just a drive in the four-wheeler and get out and throw casts. She was looking at all the flowers and all the little things that grow in the stream and the different kinds of trees and the different kinds of birds and the geologic formations and the things like that and in Baffin, you can show, look at these rocks, that's really made by a worm, and all that stuff many kids would find very, very interesting and it's just exposure to it so anything you could do to increase exposure to young people and give them an appreciation of what they're seeing, not just look at that, but look, this is what this is. This is what's happening here. That bird eats this bird or eagles steal fish from the ospreys. Eagles supposed to be the big predator bird, but he's really more of a thief (Brown laughs), the osprey's a predator and so than learning those kinds of things in those kinds of things is, I think, to many kids would be very interesting, but maybe there's some that aren't cut out for that, but most of them I've been around have an appreciation of it.

**[Brown]:** Um-hm. Well, those are the only kind of questions I had. Is there anything else you want to talk about?

**[Kern]:** I've talked more, (laughs) you're good. You get people talking. I guess that's what you do, but I've enjoyed it. Looking back over it, I'd be thrilled to see what kind of an end work product you want to develop or how that would be, how would that be used to maybe interest others in the wellbeing of the bay. We were talking with Mike about, you know, how to get corporate sponsors and things like that and there are people and there are groups and companies that have a vested interest in both young people and older people developing a more caring and focused stake in having the bay be healthy and the companies will benefit if the bay is in better health and their customers will benefit and the customers' kids will benefit and so how do you promote all of that? How do you create that interest and that's the thing he's—my wife Susan was really into the sea turtle thing and just spent tons of time with Dr. Shaver and her group out there, rescuing turtles, turning loose turtles, and during the freeze, I was out for five days in a row picking up turtles, cold as heck, but not that I didn't want to do it, but Susan was maniacal about it. She just loved that, and she has fundraising issues, and I say, "Well, you've got the best product in the world. Everybody thinks those turtles are the cutest thing in the whole world, and how can we help the turtles and Baffin Bay don't quite have a turtle?" It's more, it's subtle. It's more subtle so how can you create value for people that will benefit the bay? I'm not totally sure, but hopefully, we can make some progress in that regard.

**[Brown]:** Um-hm. Well, if that's it, I'll turn off the recorder.

**[Kern]:** Okay.

**[Brown]:** Okay, thank you (both talking at once)—

**[Kern]:** —Thank you—

**[Brown]:** very much.

[end of recording]