

## gutkoski-joe-2017-03-10done.mp4

[00:00:10] Well, I'm over 90 years old. And so, when I was just a little kid born and raised in northeastern Pennsylvania, my uncle used to build split bamboo fly rods. And of course he gave me one. And.

[00:00:36] He taught me how to fish. And my father taught me how to hunt. So I had two guys that were mentoring me and after a while they, I love stream fishing so much, brook trout. And of course there were browns there, and submarine but mostly browns and native brook. And. Yeah. Pretty soon my uncle and my father evolve into fishing for pan fish. Like wow I mean so far not with boats from shore. All of the pan fish that were in Pennsylvania that were stocked into new reservoirs. And so they would, they would go fishing and they'd let me let me off say at choke Creek, and I would fish trout and stay there by the Brits because they were kind of evening and night fishing so was pretty late at night when they'd come up and pick me up. So that shows you what, how I love to fish trout types. And that's what got me started.

[00:02:25] If you want to catch large Brookies you have to hike up to Mystic Lake and at the head of Convoy.

[00:02:44] No. No that's not it's not Convoy, it would be the head of Bozeman Creek. There there's the old dam there that was breached because it was a danger to Bozeman. And a lot of logging both in this city property and Forest Service. It's very unstable. The land flows. Trees and uh, land flow. And right. Focused on the dam. So pretty much we talked about getting rid of that dam and lowering it to where it was just a pond originally. Back in the early 40s is when it was. Made into a regular reservoir, small reservoir.

[00:04:01] So now it's just a dam. I just referred there's some awful big brook trout in there.

[00:04:07] Nice.

[00:04:13] Oh I thought so. And now of course I haven't. When I ever go back to look up my nephews and nieces and so forth, I go back to my old haunts. In some of those streams and it had horrible brookies. Nice. Just kind of sewage conduits.

[00:04:40] Water. Warm water. Lot of house built all along that reach. There are still some streams that are good, that I fished as a little kid. But I would have I would have to walk miles from my home. It was never a thought of staying out. Because I was ten, eleven, twelve years old. And so I had to learn to love native trout. I just kept that. I didn't come West and I got out of the service in 46. I served on a destroyer in the Pacific during WWII and then I started coming out west for summer. But when I went to Penn State on the G.I. Bill. So that carried me so. I became familiar with Idaho and Montana working summers mostly firefighting and then after graduation I decided to stay stay out there. And I did, I graduated in landscape architecture. And I did some private work at that time. At that time there were no licensing. I ended up after I retired after 33 years in the Foreign Service, I went to private practice once again. And by that time we had licensing in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. So I took the test and got licensed and campaigned in those three states as a sort of a private practitioner. Throughout the whole thing, the Smith River, the forks of the Missouri, all of that meant a lot to me living in Missoula. We moved into Missoula in the late 40s. and then we moved, I was transferred, to Bozeman in '64. My wife and three kids moved to Bozeman so I've been here ever since. But still it's a regional view of work and so forth so I got in a lot of trouble with road builders and loggers in other words foresters

and engineers. And my whole career in the Forest Service as a landscape architect was just one big fight. I ran into some supervisors of me that tried to get rid of me but I was always able to hang on. And so I want to say.

[00:08:41] 33 years in the Forest Service was conflict and no rest. Fighting and conflict within within the agency. Yeah I was always a good soldier and I never squealed outside in the agency. Always kept my battles inside. But some of my battles reach newspaper level, not that I, and after that so some people accuse me of ratting on the agency but I never did. That's why they couldn't fire me. They hit some of my immediate supervisors, had hearings on me. But they could never bring, never bring it, anything. I had too many friends in the Forest Service in higher levels because I worked with the home. Through, through that I retired in 1980. And so a lot of guys pass through into the upper echelons. Landscape Architecture, I was the first landscape architect they hired in region one, Missoula. You can see. The timber guys hate hated that. They didn't want, they were. They were very high in the Forest Service as far as power because they were getting a lot of money. And we, we, I, I'm saying the Forest Service built just one heck of a lot of road because we saw in the Wilderness Bill of 60 for coming. Way back in the 50s, we saw that coming. Timber guys saw that coming. We had accelerated programs for roading and logging because we go to Congress and say the forest is being eaten by bud worms, spruce bud worms which in fact which also fed on doug fir. And so we get a whole bunch of money and we were given a way. Forest Service timber, region one, talking about it. At that time when I was a regional landscape architect we had lands. East. I don't know if I'm pointing right. From the Minnesota grasslands all the way to the Colville forest in northeastern corner of Washington state. That was region one. That was my, there was a time that I probably knew every ranger in that whole, that whole area. There were a lot of them. And we were giving away the timber almost for nothing. Just to get a road built so they wouldn't declare it wilderness. Because I saw a wilderness bill coming out in 64. And a lot of the timber guys were aware of that. We had this accelerated road building program.

[00:12:36] Interesting.

[00:12:37] Paid by the timber that was cut. That we gave away for almost nothing.

[00:12:44] That would never stand in today's national forest. The truth people would be knocking on our doors. But we were very powerful then.

[00:13:08] Well I did. And I spent 13 years as a smoke jumper. Some of that was done with, towards the end, with landscape architecture in the summertime. In the winter, going back to the Smoke Jumpers during the fire season. I had them talked into they were going to take me anyhow because I had the high, high blue card, high level firebombs division. Boss. Sector boss. Is pretty high in the experience. So I talked them into letting me stay on as a smoke jumper a while. After the fire season was over, and it starts raining, I go back to landscape architecture and there came a time when my boss in land in the lands division Regional Office and he says Joe, he says, What are you? Are you a landscape architect or are you a smoke jumper? I said I'm a landscape architect, dad. He says Well, you're going to have to cut off fighting fire. So. I was for the time, las the only one for quite some time. When there was a lot of public awakening, what the Forest Service was doing the way of road building, logging and less about the environment. And so they started hiring landscape architects. Pretty soon we had quite a, quite a contingent of landscape architects, so that was good.

[00:15:28] Wonderful. Wonderful.

[00:15:28] One, one thing that is, that I'm working on. This is a eighth legislature.

[00:15:41] In other words the past 16 years we had that same bill. And it's in there cooking now. But what it says there is fisheries biologist of Montana State Fish Wildlife and Parks keeps a list of important fisheries only important fisheries that are de-watered each year, chronically. And there's 4700 people don't know this. Seven hundred and thirty six, I think miles of important fisheries, only important fisheries make, make it on this list that are de-watered each year in the state. Statewide.

[00:16:45] It's interesting. So.

[00:16:49] And that to me is the big impact on trout fishing. Well it's the construction of houses along our streams and rivers. The counties are more interested in people building houses and the money in taxes they get than in keeping a big, big buffer on our streams and rivers and lakes and ponds and as long as it's private they fall down and roll over. And. The governor, who is very good at education and stuff social stuff like that.

[00:18:05] But he has an ambition. He's got four more years now.. When he finishes that, he wants to run for the Montana Supreme Court. And you have to run. Unless somebody drops out and the governor selects somebody. You have to run to get to the Supreme Court.

[00:18:29] That's his objective objective. And he will do nothing against, the, agriculture community either irrigators or stockgrowers. He will do nothing. He is absolutely fearful of them. And that what's makes it very difficult. And the Legislature is all Aggies because they're the ones that have winters, those 90 days off, they can hire somebody to feed cattle. And the predominant people in our legislature are agricultural community. That's why it's so difficult to get this instinct flow bill through.

[00:19:40] And it's also very difficult to find somebody to sponsor it. I used to just go. I didn't even mess with the politicians over here, east of the divide go. I'd go over to Missoula, Hamilton, Great Falls or Kalispell. Go to representatives and senators trying to get sponsorship. It's always turned down in the general House or Senate and tabled or shelved so Montana is still that way.

[00:20:32] Now a lot of fishermen come in here. I see them coming by the hundreds, thousands with fishing cases. They think Montana is still, uh, what's the word.

[00:20:52] Kind of a prime fishing area?

[00:20:54] Yeah. It's got everything that the other states have ruined. But that's not so in Montana. It's a big fight. And you take Francis Trout Unlimited. They do a lot of good work, a lot of good work. But they won't hook onto our bill. Because we've had this in the last eight legislatures. Sixteen years. Because they would rather buy a water right and keep it in the street. But I tell them we don't have you don't have enough money to buy all the water rights that are needed. What we need is something in the law that prevents the irrigators from de-watering important fisheries. But I don't want to say anything against Trout Unlimited because they do good work. But I feel we're not gonna jump ahead unless we put the protection of these important fisheries in the law and share the water with irrigators. They won't share anything. Ag won't share anything.

[00:22:45] Your library collection on salmonids is priceless. It's so valuable for research. It, there's a heck of a reservoir there. If we could get our fisheries biologist to take, and some of them I'm sure have taken advantage of your collection. But just, but to really, instead of running around putting out bad spots you know. They had no time. And, if they, especially those teachers employed by the Montana State Fish Wildlife and Parks and Montana U.S. Forest Service If if they could avail themselves of this library, my goodness. I remember when I first went into the regional office in the fifties. We had one fisheries, no, we had one wildlife, Fish and Wildlife biologist in the regional office and that was it. We had no more. To me that was criminal, that all we thought about was fighting fire and cutting logs and building roads. I thought that was terrible. I had a hell of a time when I came to the Gallatin here I had, I had, w I came here I had the whole east side, Gallatin, Custer and so forth.

[00:25:01] There was no wildlife biologist, much less a fisheries biologist. Landscape architecture, is, we had to fight for every inch of power. So I start in grazing, our grazing man had charge of wildlife. Now he was educated in cattle grazing. But here in the forest or in Gallatin for Custer forest he had cattle grazing, he had fish, and he had wildlife. And he was educated educated as a range man in cattle.

[00:25:54] All right. So you know I just badgered the hell out of him and the first person we got here was a hydrologist and we got him on board and he had a master's degree.

[00:26:21] The next the next one, with all my pushing and shoving, we got a wildlife biologist. He immediately ran into problems. With our timber man. And it wasn't. He wasn't hardly here a year when he was handed a directive reassignment, a directed assignment over to the Custer. Leaf and out of this wildlife fisheries, Grizzly bears, elk. He was headed directed reassignment or if he didn't take it he was gone. So. I fought for him and had some hearings. That's doing it to him because I was the one with my influence got him in here but finally he, he took the transfer. Next time think I ran into a few years later he was, he was chief of wildlife up in Anchorage.

[00:27:57] Oh wow.

[00:27:59] He survived.

[00:28:01] Well good for him. Excellent.

[00:28:04] I was sent up there on an assignment and there he was.

[00:28:11] That's great.

[00:28:12] But. The Forest Service was a tough nut to crack. They're getting a little better. I hope.

[00:28:32] Well as far as access and species, course, the species we always had rainbow here. Yeah at least before I arrived. And browns. And there was a lot of stocking of Eastern brook trout streams especially up in the, up in the wilderness way back in the, we used to pack in milk, those giant milk cans full of brook trout and dump them wherever, you know. With no, no word with Fish and Wildlife and Parks and what they thought. It was our, you know. And I doubt if that would ever happen again. Fish Wildlife and Parks would be right on our ass. But but I see the rivers becoming more eutrophic with the amount of sewage dumped in, even the Smith. The Smith, we we did as best we could to acquire.

Lands on this national forest lands private into national forest on the Smith. Yes we could. But those lots on private land on the Smith are so valuable for developing houses, you know. We've had some donations of people that owned land on the Smith and saw what was coming and they donated it to the Forest Service. Forest Service wouldn't ever allow houses on it. Especially [00:30:27]space but here we have. [3.0s] I started to float in the Smith in the early 60s. And.

[00:30:40] There's a big difference. You see houses all alone, beyond the private lands. There's not much, it's, it's all rock sloping in, into that great river. And the sewage doesn't have much treatment. Comes out of toilets or sewage systems and there's not much treatment there. It's the rock flows. I'm noticing that all over, even on the Gallatin Forest. Not, not the forest. But there's private land on the Gallatin and it's getting developing. You know where their sewage is. I mean there are houses that are within a hundred feet or less of the river. And That sewage is going right in. That's the fault of the counties. These county commissioners, most of them are aggy, they liked it. They get taxes. The economy get builder, builder builds it, and so forth. I've gone into public meetings, demanded public hearings on houses on the Gallatin River. Right there by Shed's Bridge is the last one in Helena. Tussle with that. He had one house there and he wanted to build another one. It is in deep danger of being you know how the Gallatin River is, it's encountering a heck of a bedbug. It shifts. It's a braided stream. The first thing is it starts chewing up the land underneath these houses. So this guy brings in a lot of concrete and he's got a lot of money. Going to make sure that labor doesn't wash his house. It's like, like, the guy that owns the Chevy, what's his name. Billion, JC Billion.

[00:33:17] OK.

[00:33:20] He owned a lot on the East Gallatin. And he built that house right over the East Gallatin, where he could come out on the porch and practically spit in the East Gallatin. So the revolution started to chew leaves on the end of that arc. Start chewing away. So I caught him with a dozer in the river and concrete. That stream planning group called Confluence, call themselves Confluence, fisheries, supposed to be fisheries bio. There they are. Make sure JC's house doesn't fall into the East Gallatin. So I made so much noise about it, the local soil and water conservation district, which is made of five people, most Aggies, because it takes a lot of time for environmentalist to, well first he has to be elected on the soil and water conservation district. And then he spends quite a bit of time. It's basically a volunteer thing you might get paid a little travel time or something. So the environment has a hell of a time staying on these key county and city committees like the soil and water conservation. So we hauled JCB and he's really an ego maniac.

[00:35:38] Says sure, go ahead, fine me. I'll pay. And I tell them, I told the committee, I says, he's got it all wrong. It's not the money that we want from him. We want him to quit destroying our East Gallatin River. He completely lost it. Cussed us out and left. With his parting words, yes, fine me, I'll pay it. That's the kind of mentality we have on wealthy people that come in here. They've got wealth and they've got power. They're the ones that are impacting our rivers and streams as I see it.

[00:36:48] Of course you know we're in the middle of great supposedly blue ribbon streams but still in West Gallatin River, below Gallatin Gateway village gets de-watered each year so you know. I directed to upstream sources of these rivers and streams and lakes and ponds so because once you de-water a river it takes years for the biotic as you know. Abiotic insects to come back to where trout can make a living in that stream or they'll come down and you get nowhere. After it's de-watered in the fall and winter,

especially the winter, when they come down anyway. But they won't stay because it's not much for them to eat. It takes eight years to establish that biotic community that a trout eats.

[00:38:18] Right. I just think a real straight scoop. If you encounter a fly fisherman out on that river or stream, if he's willing to you can buddy up with him if he's, that's probably the best advice.

[00:38:42] Find a mentor?

[00:38:49] Yeah.

[00:38:49] Well I used to read Keith McCafferty when he was field editor for Field and Stream magazine. Don't tell him I said this.

[00:39:04] You know. He might see it so I can't guarantee that.

[00:39:08] He has gone to fishing because after all he's got to make a living for his family. That's what's selling these days. He's a superb outdoor fisherman author.

[00:39:26] Great wonderful.

[00:39:33] Yes I think that I think it has to come from the bass fisherman. That's what hooks you in for a lifetime of supporting these environmental catastrophes and injuries and outlandish things that we do for money in Montana. It's very simple. I I really take comfort in people moving in here from out of state looking for a refuge and security and the very thing that you and I are talking about. But a lot of those people they feel that Montana is the epitome of conservation and environmentalism and we're not. The mining industry is kind of on the downgrade now, but when I first moved into Montana in the late 40s the Anaconda Copper Mining Company was still going. And that's where the power, they owned all the newspapers except for the Great Falls Tribune. They never owned that.

[00:41:36] Bozeman, Missoula, Butte, Hamilton, Billings, they owned those newspapers. Now they're of course Anaconda Company went bankrupt, left Montana with a big, big load of expense cleaning up after their hundred years.

[00:42:08] Well the state got right. When they first started focusing back in the 50s. Montana State Department of Fish and Wildlife and they didn't have parks then.

[00:42:26] And there were some pioneers that really worked hard for fish and wildlife. And it was the place to go when you couldn't go to the Forest Service because they were unmanageable from an environmental standpoint. So all it was was Fish, Wildlife and Parks. We'd go to them. But soon, when we rewrote the constitution back in 73, the director of fish wildlife and parks was, was hired, selected by the five person Fish Wildlife and Parks Commission. That was in the Constitution, that was in the law. So here we come 73 with a lot of environmental people participating in rewriting our constitution. I told them, I says, leave the director alone leave him to be selected. But now, the new constitution, the governor appoints. Strictly politics and the governor is a politician of course. He's worrying about staying in power.

[00:44:29] Sure the government appointment the five person commission. But. Still that removes the selection of the director a couple of clicks away from politics.

[00:44:55] A good friend of mine was sat, sat on the writing of the new constitution, 1973. Good friend of mine. She had ambitions of being the governor, first woman governor.

[00:45:22] I said let's leave it a little like it was where the five commissioners appointed the director. She says Oh no, Joe, I want to appoint as many people as I can. Because I am an environmentalist and I'll appoint. But she never made governor and we could test her idea out. And it may change itself. That's just an indication of how politics in Montana can subvert the land and the water.

[00:46:16] We got them right at this, at this point. But.

[00:46:21] Some wealthy people still got them in the court and it's still in the hands of the judges.

[00:46:31] It's certainly something that anglers have to be aware of and constantly be supporting, right? Would you agree with that?

[00:46:40] Right. The, take for instance Judge Tom Olsen who recently died. He was, he was, in around 1990 he was one of the judges on the 18th District Court. And I knew him to be a fly fisherman. So. One day I was looking at the Gallatin River and above the interstate bridge, the ditch company, trying to remember the name of the ditch company had a dozer in the river. It was dragging those six foot long concrete parking barriers you know, that they use on parking here. He already use this blade to break up all of the gravel. He was taking 100 percent of the Gallatin River there just above Interstate bridge on the west side of the river. That's where their intake was. And so I knew Tom Olsen was a fly fisherman. So Montana River Action, you know, our organization sued the Baker, it's coming, the Baker ditch company who had that ditch and who had the dozer in the river. And had all of the gravel bricked up and was reinforcing it with concrete barriers like this. And so we took him to court. And we won. I knew we'd win because Tom Olson was there. He recently died. I told that story after his funeral. You know you want people to come into his life, so I told that story. They took it to the Supreme Court and we lost. And the law, right now it's you can dry up a stream, an important blue-ribbon stream like that, important fishery if nobody down below is calling for water. If another irrigator with, I hate this word, right. Water right. They don't have a right to that water. They have a certificate. From the state to use so much water for so much time, and that's all they have. They don't have ownership. And so, to finish that story. They took it to the Supreme Court and we lost and that's the law today. You can dry up an important fishery if there's nobody, no irrigator, calling for water down below. That's the law today.

[00:50:20] That's awful.

[00:50:20] This bill will change that. And irrigators, they have no desire to share anything.

[00:50:42] Well the Montana River Action, it's focused on rivers and streams, flowing water and dams and ponds and wetlands and we've gone to court at the drop of a hat to stop some things through the years. The irrigators can still drain a river completely according to that Supreme Court decision. Still it's still a law.

[00:51:33] Well I think we have to keep focusing on access to our rivers because a fisherman floating down a river is the best observer of what's going on, to watch how that river is being treated. And not only fishermen but researchers and river hikers and so forth.

You can, uh, up to the mean, the law says up to the mean high water line. That's very discernable on a stream or river. You know where the high water line is. You can walk underneath that high water line during the lower water [00:52:23]more to come. [0.4s] And you can float that stream if it is floatable in that that's in the law too. Where, as far as access, Montana as a state has focused on that very well. And I think our stream access laws bear us out. Because when I go back to Pennsylvania and I see a freshwater stream like the Lehigh River, you can't even get to it to fish because of the private land. Pennsylvania has done a good job. Right from way back in the 30s, 20s even of acquiring land but it costs a lot of money and there's a lot of wealthy people own that land and they want a lot of money for it. So it's real sad. Hopefully Montana isn't heading that way. But there's a lot of people buying land in Montana for speculative purposes. Because agriculture let's face it, and Montana is cold and arid. And you can't grow lettuce and carrots very well. That's that's why we, uh. One thing, on a different note, I wanted to leave you this.

[00:54:26] Oh great. Thank you.

[00:54:28] This is the Gallatin range wilderness that I'm active on getting. The last pages.

[00:54:39]Of. The. Hearings. Get. Shorter and shorter.