

## **lilly-bud-2016-02-26.mp4**

**Bud Lilly** [00:00:10] Dunbar came to Montana, in his teens and started, he was raised in California. But he started coming to Montana to do trout fishing. And then in 1959, we had a devastating earthquake, along the coast of California, that reached all the way into West Yellowstone. And it just closed everything down, Yellowstone Park. Changed the thermal features, and everything. So there were no people around. But Cal was around, with me. So we went in, and fished Yellowstone Park, in August. And I think we were the only people in there, because everybody had left, because of the earthquake. And that was one of the first real experiences that I had with Cal Dunbar. And that goes back to 1959. Now we're talking about 2016. Cal is still living. He's 91 years old. And we've had enough experiences between that time, that Jim agreed to talk a little more about Cal Dunbar, because he was also a great person with me, in the early days, of trying to do things about the fishing regulations, the catch and release, and maintaining a good, pristine streams and environment. So Cal and I got together on a number of occasions, and there were always historic because we did something wrong. And I had kind of put these stories together, just to identify the kinds of relationships that I had with Cal Dunbar. Cal had a grocery store after he came to Montana, and settled in West Yellowstone, and developed a grocery store, and then he retired. And people said, "What is this part about retirement? You're standing around." And he said, "Well, I'm semi-retired." And so, during that period, Cal and I did a lot of fishing. And had experiences like, I was explaining a while ago, when I'd hook a great big fish, I'd start hollering at Cal. And he said, "Your voice always went up about three octaves." Another great experience we had is, one of my friends in southern Idaho called, and said, "Bud the fishing on the Henry Fork is spectacular." This was in March. So I called Cal.

**James Thull** [00:02:26] What year was this?

**Bud Lilly** [00:02:27] This will go back probably 40 years. 40 years ago. I called Cal I said, "They tell me the fishing is really great, on the Henry's Fork, below the Ashton Dam. I'll meet you in West Yellowstone, we're going to go." So I drove to West Yellowstone, picked up Cal in March, we drove down to Ashton, Idaho, bought our license. But they didn't have any fishing regulations. But we went out to the Ashton Dam. And the snow was about eight feet deep. We saw no signs of any kind. Cal was fast to get his tackle together, so he put it all together. He's down there fishing, and having a wonderful time. Hollering, "Hey Bud, come on down, it's really good!" During that time, the warden has pulled up, and was writinmg me a ticket. Because it was closed to fishing. I said, "Cal, you better come up here. And talk to this man that's got his pencil, writing up a story about me." So Cal come up, and the guy fined both us. So we had to go back to Idaho. And actually meet with a judge, later on, and we went back and this warden was sitting there. And the judge asked him questions of how we had broken the law. And we explained that we didn't have regulations, and the snow had covered up the sign. And the judge says, to the warden, "Isn't that kind of a gray charge, that you have against these two men?" "No", he said, "They should have known the difference." So they fined us, and they put me on a year's suspension, because I was also an outfitter in Idaho, on the Henry's Fork. And they were so delighted to get my name, they put it in the paper in the Idaho Falls Post Register. So everybody'd be sure to know that the warden had arrested Bud Lilly. And his accomplice was Cal Dunbar. And that was another one of our major events.

**James Thull** [00:04:21] We got to get a copy of that paper for your archives, Bud!

**Bud Lilly** [00:04:25] I'm sure Cal probably must have that, someplace. I keep in touch with him. He's now living in California. With his son, and his wife. And his wife, Jan. And I talk to them, periodically. But Cal is no longer able to travel, and he's had hard hearing, and a little bit of trouble with his dementia. So we didn't, we agreed, that Cal would do our thing, through me. And I talked to his wife Jan, who's also a graduate of MSU. And a strong supporter of Montana, although she was raised in Utah. And went to school in Utah. But she taught in West Yellowstone. And had a great influence on the people around her, as well as in Montana. So I've treasured the stories that we've had together. And the episodes. I can remember one more story: when my first wife and I, Pat, and Jan and Cal went to Jackson Hole, to a Federation of Fly Fishing meeting. And Jen and Cal sat, sat in the back seat. And I discovered that Jan and Cal always argued about whoever said something. And it was a real exposé, to ride along and listen to Cal and Jan squabble between who said this mountain, and that mountain, and all the recollections. But Cal, in the meantime, after all those years, we established a little fishing club in West Yellowstone. And made some impact on the changes that took place in Yellowstone, including catch and release, in some areas. And setting up stations, regulations, throughout Yellowstone. Which made it a sport fishery, rather than a meat fishery. Yellowstone, at the moment, is trying to go back to the old days, by killing all of what we call, exotic fish, and that's primarily the rainbow and the brown trout. They want to maintain only the old Yellowstone cut, cutthroat. And that is probably not a good idea, anywhere, anymore, to try to go back to those days. Because the environment has changed so much. The water temperatures in Yellowstone have changed. The food has changed, there's diseases in the park. And so there's all kinds of considerations today, that have to be addressed. And it's a matter of passing these things along now, to the younger fishermen. And one of my approaches is, that I've developed a fishing access at Logan, Montana. Between my wife, Esther, and I, and a very great friend, acquired a nice piece of paper, property. Along the Gallatin River in Logan, Montana. And we now have a access that's been cleared of all the buildings bypro, people that was so pro, in favor of the idea, of creating an access. For all people to use, as a river recreation area. It's not just for fishermen, but it's going to be for. River recreation, includes hunters, fishermen, and people floating in a tube, as well as those that enjoy fishing.

**Bud Lilly** [00:07:46] So that's becoming a landmark. And we're using that as an example, of how you can encourage people to begin to recognize the value of these pristine rivers that we enjoy around our part of the world. The bad thing is, that there's a lot of influence that are changing the environment. Like overgrazing, too much siltation from programs, dams, and so on. That have changed conditions so that the early days that I grew up with, in the 1930s, are no longer the same as they are in the 19- rather in the 19. Now we're into 2016. And so we have to have a different approach to these programs. And Cal and I followed the same program, for many, many years. And whenever we could do something that would be positive, to try to protect the environment we did. One of our big programs together, was when the Forest Service started their clear cutting program. We recognized that clear cutting would change the runoff, of the winter snowpack. And the Forest Service wouldn't agree with us. That cutting all the trees, they said they were clearing out, so we didn't have that many fires. However, once you cut it clean, the snow runs off earlier, because of the exposure to the sun, and of course, there's nothing to stop the runoff, and that, again, was changing the environment in the streams, drastically. Today, we're dealing with it, the, all of those changes in the environment, in our rivers, and streams, and lakes. So there is a process going on now, to recreate a lot of the conditions that we felt today, rather than they was 20 years ago, or 40 years ago, or 60 years ago. Or even 80 years ago, when I first started fishing. We have to recognize, that adjustments must be taken, as we go along, to improve the environment of today. And try to protect it for the future. I deal

with a program in Yellowstone, that has helped, over a long period of time, of changing conditions in the park. And I hope that they will recognize what is best for the, the fishing access, and so forth. And the drought in the park. Also, Montana State Fish and Wildlife is beginning to recognize that they have to make some adjustments. They recently created a committee, called the Future Fisheries Committee. And they said, you know, we'd love to have a high school student on that committee. I found one here in Three Forks, Montana. That is very knowledgeable, he's 16 years old, and I got Charlie on the Future Fisheries program, because that's going to be his future. So I keep in touch with that kind of address, to the younger generation. And then also, I deal with the handicapped. With the access we have at Logan. Coming up soon, we're going to have a day of fishing, only for the handicapped. Men wielding- men, women, and children. And I'll have professional people down there, that are capable of teaching these handicapped people how to fish. And passing along this information, not only to those that can do it, agilely, but those that are handicapped. We'll have wheelchair access. We will have doctors there. We will have professional fishing guides. And it's going to be a big day, to encourage everyone that they have an opportunity to fish. So we're naming that area, I hope: P-A-R-R. Public Access River Recreation. Not just fishing. But for river recreation.

**Bud Lilly** [00:11:39] All of these streams belong to all of us. Not just to a few, but to all of us. It's not just for agriculture. It's not just for industry. We're hearing a lot now, about the coal fired- coal fired generators. They use a tremendous amount of water, and they also dump all kinds of carbon into the atmosphere. We're going to have to change our atmosphere, if these things, you're going to have to persevere. It's been my passion, over a long period of time, to be involved. I didn't really find out about these things, that there were organizations, till about 1950. My father was an environmentalist, by incident. We did a lot of things that we thought were good for the environment, just because we liked it. In the 1950s, I found out about clubs that were being created called Trout Unlimited. The Federation of Fly Fishermen. And that gave me an opportunity to get involved with people from all over the United States, and all over the world. In my career, I have probably faced with people from damn near every country, in the country [world], that were trout fishermen. By coming to West Yellowstone, Montana. And I won't try to list either-the countries, or the names. But that's how we spread the word. By exchanging our understanding of environment, with people from other countries. And we're seeing that taking place, but very slowly. There are countries that are still dumping tremendous amounts of carbon into the atmosphere, but there are others that are changing their ways. So hopefully, down the line, we'll be able to preserve what we see now. I'm sitting out here, in Three Forks, Montana, this morning. With a beautiful blue sky like a bird's eye. And the sun is shining. There's no wind. The atmosphere is. (\*Waves\*) The atmosphere is fairly breathable. I have had a long association with the Montana State University, through my friend here, Jim Thull. Jim is doing a marvelous thing, on these oral histories, that he's passing around, and talking to an amazing number of people, that will be telling the story of what I briefly covered here with you in the last few minutes.

**Bud Lilly** [00:14:06] It's important that we have a way of transferring a lot of these thoughts and knowledges, to a great many people. I don't know how many Jim has been interviewing at this point, but we've been talking about a lot of people, around a lot of countryside, that are discussing just what we're talking about, this morning. What can we do, to purify our air. And keep our streams pristine. When I grew up in the 1930s, during the drought years. We thought that low water flows were just acceptable. Now we know about conservation, and by better use of our water, that we don't have to dewater our trout streams, in order to get the most benefit. If we keep water in the streams, then it keep food in the streams. It isn't just because we change the bank up, but we got to have food. The

trout and other species eat, and if you change the water temperature, and change the cover, then you lose the food. It's a very big size that has to be recognized, to be a value. But that there is progress. You know, we've had a lot of effort over a long period of time, on how to solve these problems, but we're still working on it.

**Bud Lilly [00:15:31]** I was not aware of catch and release, until I had this tackle shop, fishing shop, at West Yellowstone, Montana. And started visiting with people from the East Coast. The idea of catch and release, really I think, originally, it was along the East Coast waters, trout waters particularly, before it got to Montana. But I heard all about this catch and release, and it fascinated me, so I pursued it. And found out that you don't have to keep the fish. You can always return them, and that allows them to continue, if you do it properly, it, they continue to be available for other fishermen to catch. There were quotes by a very famous fisherman, Lee Wulff, that said, "A trout is too valuable, to only be caught once." And we've probably used that as an idea. That you can release them, but you must do it properly, you must keep them wet, keep them in the water, so that they don't get too much air exposure. Ten, ten seconds is a major exposure, to a fish out of water. And so, we're promoting that now along with catch and release. And I had a lot of resistance, of people that would come to me. And I had to talk to them through my trout shop, and uh, be very honest with them, they say, "You know, Bud, I hear that you talk about catch and release, just catch them, and thrown them away, by thrownin' them back in the water." I said, "We don't throw them away. We carefully release them, so that they have another day to live. And by that way, we can continue to maintain our streams without a lot of hatchery fish." So I started resisting the hatchery program. And the flow of streams, to keep the water in the streams, so that the fish would have food and spawning habitat. I've dealt with other people that were very instrumental in that kind of a program. That is still very responsible for the early days. It was one of my friends that I kind of grew up with, in Ennis, Montana, by the name of Dick McGuire. Dick was a avid fisherman, and a fishing guide out of Ennis. He recognized that hatchery trout was a menace to the wild populations, because they competed for food, and that meant that the wild fish weren't getting enough to eat, and so they would die out. We also recognized that if the, uh, dams kept the water flows too long, that too, miss- too much water, is too little. That was very bad for the environment. So we worked on flee and stream flows. And getting rid of the hatchery trout, in our wild trout waters. That was a long time ago, that probably goes back to around 1960. And now we're talking 2016. Those same things still apply. So that if you have a wild trout population, in water that's the right temperature, with the right flows, you're going to continue to have some wonderful sport fishing. And that's the way it is, as I see it today. However. There's always been a lot of resistance to these kinds of things, because people didn't understand that they didn't have to eat the fish. Growing up in the early days, that was the only, some of our substinence. Today, we don't have that problem. We don't have to eat the fish. I've told a story about the golfer. If you play golf, you don't have to eat the balls. And the same thing is true with trout. If you want to use them as a sport, you don't have to eat them. So we're promoting sport fishing as a way of life, for everyone to enjoy. Of all ages. Starting at an early age, it exposes people. To their environment, to their surroundings, and what it's all about. So I'm still dealing with it, and that's part of my fun, Jim.

**Bud Lilly [00:19:45]** In 1951, I went to West Yellowstone. I was a teacher, in high school. And we had a summer business in West Yellowstone, of washing cars. We put up a very rudimentary car wash, it, In the process, I talked to some others in West Yellowstone and they said, "You're fishing while you're here. You know, there's a guy up the street, that's a teacher in Billings, that has a little fly shop, and he'd like to sell it. Would you like to look at it?" So I went up and looked at it, and, it fascinated me to have a fly shop that I could run in

the summertime, as a teacher. So I asked him how much they wanted, and he said, "Forty five hundred dollars." Well I had two thousand in the bank, that I saved, from coming home from World War Two. My mother gave me \$2500, and I bought it for \$4500. And that, I pursued that, as a tackle shop. In a lot of different ways, that I've described with you earlier, as well as selling a lot of fishing tackle, and a lot of bad information. And I kept it until 1982. And that \$4500 investment, I had probably sold millions of dollars worth of fishing tackle, over that period of time. And a lot of that money was used in all the projects that I've been discussing with you. Because if you're going to save it, we have to contribute. And not that I was a hero, in any way, whatsoever, but I always felt a responsibility of giving back, as well as taking.

**Bud Lilly** [00:21:25] Well, I'm very proud of that Jim.

**James Thull** [00:21:27] As you should be.

**Bud Lilly** [00:21:28] I when I was a senior in high school, in 1942. The Navy was looking for a prospect for the Officers Training Program. And they gave a national test, to high school seniors and college freshmen. And I took the test, just as a lark. One of my student friends said, "You know, Bud, we can take that Navy Test, get of school for two hours." And be damned if I didn't pass it. And so they called me in, and started the process, and I was introduced in a program called the Navy V-12. They sent me to college, I covered the Annapolis curriculum. They sent me to midshipmen school, they sent me to other practices, and then I went aboard ships and started covering the world. And I visited the Atlantic ports, you know, in the early days, with the war still going on in Europe. I took troops to northern Italy. I took troops from northern Italy, to the Pacific. Which is a long time to have 5,000 soldiers onboard. And all those conditions. And then after, I got into the South Pacific. We'd haul troops back and forth, and prisoners and all kinds of experiences. And one of my really interesting ports was in, one of the larger islands of, meeting with the native population that were still carnivorous [cannibalistic], which, we didn't know that. And visiting other, the famous islands that you heard about in those days, primarily by radio, because we still weren't able to really understand what was going on with TV.

**James Thull** [00:23:07] Would have this been, like, New Guinea, or Indonesia, or?

**Bud Lilly** [00:23:10] New Guinea was the, one of the most interesting. I took a group of senators, aboard a little landing craft, and we went to New Guinea, walked around in the forest and saw the devastation. Of equipment that we had left behind, from the battles that, and carried on in New Guinea, with the American troops. I went to Guam, I went to all kinds of different islands. And hauled around a lot of people, including a lot of Japanese prisoners. And the experience is really outstanding because, at, I was commissioned when I was 19 years old, which is pretty young, for a commissioned officer in the Navy. But by the time I left the service, in 1946, June of 1946, I had been third in command. Of a troop ship. The captain was first, the executive officer was second, and I was third.

**James Thull** [00:24:07] And what, How old were you then, Bud?

**Bud Lilly** [00:24:08] 20. If they had been killed it was my responsibility. If I were living, to take over the ship. And through all of my training, I knew how to run that ship. I knew navigation by celestial stars, and so on, the sun, the moon, and I knew a lot about things that were the basics of ship handling. And I, that's been one of the greatest experiences of my life. I came home alive. I was so fortunate, because a lot of my good friends did not.

When I sat in my high school graduating class, two of my friends, sitting next to me, would be dead in a year.

**James Thull** [00:24:48] In the war?

**Bud Lilly** [00:24:49] In the war. 1943. And they, one of them joined the Air Force, he was a Tail Gunner in a B-17, and they got him, within a year, over Italy. Another one was a Marine, that was in one of the landings, and they got him on one of the islands. And those things leave a big impression, even on a man now, and by 20 years old I thought I was very mature, in my experiences, and I think it did make a big impression. I was fortunate to be through a war that was devastating. It was terrible. And I'm not proud of that, but I am proud that I was able to stand up and do something for my country.

**James Thull** [00:25:29] Were there times where you feared for your life?

**Bud Lilly** [00:25:35] I had some times. One of the times was not in a battle zone. I was in battle zone, on occasions. We were always in a battle zone, when we were in the ocean, because there was a lot of floating mines, that we had to be very careful. And we didn't have a good way of detecting. And that was a battle, Jim. But also, I spent three days in a typhoon. On this ship that had no stabilizers. So we would roll from one side to the other. And the bow would drop from one, top of one wave to the bottom, 50 feet.

**James Thull** [00:26:05] Good, God.

**Bud Lilly** [00:26:06] And the fron, when that dropped, it left a big impression on a 20 year old kid. We survived that typhoon, because our captain, was an Annapolis graduate, also. And had been recalled, I think he was a man at that time, in his 60s. And he knew how to run that ship, to keep us from broaching, and going under. If we'd ever approach one of those big waves, I wouldn't be talking to Jim, this morning.

**James Thull** [00:26:32] What was your captain's name?

**Bud Lilly** [00:26:33] I'll have to come up with it, Jim, the ship's name was the USS Blatchford.

**James Thull** [00:26:40] And what kind of ship was it, a Troop Carrier?

**Bud Lilly** [00:26:42] It was a Troop Carrier. And we had about 3,500 to 4,000 troops. We had 300 sailors in the crew, and 50 officers.

**James Thull** [00:26:51] Now, I know you said you hauled Japanese prisoners, too. Was that hauling them back to the state? Where do you haul them to?

**Bud Lilly** [00:26:57] No. What we did is, we would go around to those various islands, where they had Japanese in camps, you know, prison camps? We'd pick them up, bring them on board, and take them to Japan.

**James Thull** [00:27:09] Oh, OK.

**Bud Lilly** [00:27:10] So I landed in Japan on several different occasions, and it was always very interesting. Because we were still in uniform, and then we would go ashore, in Japan. And this was after the war was over. And we'd be walking around in our full

uniform, and the Japanese gave us fullest respect. We went to a dance, one night, in Tokyo, at the Imperial Hotel, and danced with the Japanese girls, in our navy uniforms, and had a wonderful time. So the Japanese were very quick to accept the conditions. It was devastating to them, and their pride. And they did have to give up, you know the bomb, I think, that we dropped in August. I think it was on the ninth, the first one.

**James Thull** [00:28:00] Ninth and 11th I think.

**Bud Lilly** [00:28:02] And that killed about a half a million Japanese. 250,000 on each drop. But it also saved the lives, we figured if we invaded Japan which I was involved with, it would've cost us about a million of our American lives, because the Japanese were ready and determined to fight to the last. Till they were all dead. So the bomb was a necessary thing, it was a tough decision. We had never heard of an atomic bomb. I was, in the ward room, on the sixth of August, or the 9th, whatever the date was it, Jim reminded me, having lunch. And came over the little radio, that we just dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki, or Hiroshima, in Japan. They dropped two of 'em, and that that pulls out World War II, for the Japanese. We'd already finished the war in Europe, after the big battle, called the the Battle of the Bulge. Under some wonderful generals, and some people that I had so much respect for. We hauled those people to the South Pacific, and they all fought all over again. So they fought, really, two different wars.

**Bud Lilly** [00:29:16] When we arrived in Japan, my first port of call was the port called Nagasaki. And they had dropped the, I think the Nagasaki was the second bomb, Hiroshima, I think, was the first bomb. So they said, "Would you guys like to see the devastation that was dropped on the bomb here in Nagasaki?" So they took a load of us sailors in, to look at the bomb site. And everything was just leveled. And they told us the results of that terrible thing. And then I was also on shore patrol in Nagasaki, so I got to see the city itself. And while we were walking around, we saw this little house, that looked kind of interesting. So we went in, and started knocking on doors. And there was a little voice, this was on Sunday. He said, "No no nothing on Sunday. Come back tomorrow. No pompom today." So, we were able to meet the natives in Nagasaki. Then on a later occasion, I also visited the Hiroma site. And also, when we were in Tokyo, they generously gave us a tour of some of the Imperial Federal Offices in Tokyo. So I had a real exposure to the Japanese. And then after I got started in the fishing business, in West Yellowstone, many, many years later, a number of fishermen came to me from Japan. And they had heard about the fishing in Yellowstone. And we got acquainted, and eventually they had tackle shops in Tokyo. Some of the sporting magazines would write about Bud Lilly in West Yellowstone, Montana. The Japanese experience's fishing in Yellowstone, and other places in Montana. So that's a, I always talked about the fly fishing, being a universal language. We could talk to Japanese, or German, or French, or Swiss. Or I guided people from the [unintelligible]. And it was always the same discussion about, what kind of fish, what kind of flies, what kind of decent conditions. It was a wonderful way to spread your culture.

**Bud Lilly** [00:31:34] Well I do, because when I grew up here, in Three Forks, in the 1930s and early '40s. My family has a little hotel that I'm sitting in today, and they were, the Japanese-Americans were coming into Three Forks, and working on the railroad. And they stayed in my mother's little hotel, and I got acquainted with them, through the hotel, and then when I was in high school, I went to high school and played a team, in Three Forks, that had a number of Japanese-Americans, that went on to join the famous Japanese-American battalion called 442. 18,000 of those Japanese were sent to the norm, the big Battle of the Bulge in Germ, in Europe. And part of them were on the ship that I took over

there, and dropped them off. Also, part of these Japanese-Americans in Three Forks, I had played basketball and football with, and had the greatest respect for them. So after the war, and after many, many years, it occurred to me that the Japanese-American has not had the right recognition that they should have had, they've had some, but, during that period, there was 18,000 in this special battalion, 442. They were the most wounded, and the most decorated battalion, in World War II. So, in the process, on my mother's property here in Three Forks, we had a little space on a lot behind us. So we erected a memorial to the Japanese-Americans. With a lot of help from a lot of wonderful other contributors. We have a wonderful monument for the Japanese-Americans. We have a flagpole, that's 60 feet in the air, with the old flag that flies 24 hours a day, to recognize our love for this country, and the respect we had for the Japanese-Americans.

**Bud Lilly** [00:33:28] Only thing else I should add, is that I've contaminated a lot of my family members with this matter of fly fishing. My first family of three, I had two boys and daughter, all became professional fly fisherman. One of 'em became a lawyer, he was diverted. The other one became a CPA, and my older son was a MBA. And they all followed this fishing thing, and then, when my first wife passed away, in a few years, I met another wonderful person that had two children. At that point I was 60 years old, and my second wife, Esther, had a little boy, Chris. Who at that time, I think was about a year old. And Alisa, who was maybe three. And I married Esther, and I have older kids said, "Dad, that's had a lot of family when you're 60 years old." But I raised those kids, and they are also avid fly fishers. And they have been a, a part of the ambassadorial from the Bud Lilly family, of passing on these ideas that I've talked to Jim, about fishing. They're avid fly fishermen, they're avid about the environment. One of my little grandchildren, with Esther's kids, at the age of 7, you know what he said, "You know, I'm afraid they're hurting our earth." He recognized, at the age of seven, that we had to protect our environment.

**James Thull** [00:34:53] That's really impressive, Bud. Excellent. Well thanks again, for taking the time to chat with me today. And we appreciate all your efforts, and all your efforts, you've been such a great friend to MSU and the library over there, and we're just pleased to sit down and chat with you, a little bit more, today. So thank you for your time, Bud.

**Bud Lilly** [00:35:12] The only other one that I've influenced about fly fishing, is Jim.

**James Thull** [00:35:18] Yeah. You've certainly done that. I always. I always like to brag that Bud Lilly is one of the people that taught me how to cast so...

**Bud Lilly** [00:35:26] So you do it wrong.

**James Thull** [00:35:28] I-(Chuckles)