

## perkins-leigh-2014-07-22.mp4

**Leigh Perkins** [00:00:10] Well that's an easy one. I'm. One of the reasons was Herbert Stoddard who happened to be an close friend and associate. Leo Albert. Aldo Leopold. He was brought down from Wisconsin down to Georgia and Florida to study Why wild quail were on decrease he said its because of Fire ecology. Federal government when they came out with smokey the Bear and Florida was burning was part of this Habitat. The more lightning strikes on Florida and. All the other states put together so the natural habitat. It. Was a fire ecology and when they prohibited burning they lost a lot of their wildlife including deer the flora was somewhat fire dependant if you stop burning you lose the pines the hardwoods would grow up . An entirely different environment. so he single handedly took on the Federal Government to again introduce fire in the habitat and that impressed me from the time I was 10 years old I knew him. He was my hero. thats what Really got me into wildlife conservation. My father and mother both hunted and fished my father didn't fish my mother fished and 2 brother and 3 sisters had no interest in fishing and so was her companion and I got to fish in a lot of wonderful places . So that's why I was involved with wildlife conservation.

**Leigh Perkins** [00:02:32] Well. Number one. On my list is Your neighbor PERC: Property Environment Research Center. And their Main interest is Wildlife habitat, both public And private. And one of the big concerns. Is that many states are Pro public and anti Private Wildlife. In other words The public Wildlife belongs to the public and the public should go where ever they damn please. Regardless of private property. To me private property is where the best habitat is, people that own the land. Love the land. Take care of the land. Governments can't our government puts money and effort and wildlife and fisheries. the Limit everything Has a limit. If I allow The public to fish to this spring in one year would be destroyed. It's very good fishing but there is a Limit. and Montana has some private spring creeks but there theres a fee and a limit to the number of people who fish them and that is successful. Well the Bature Conservancy does a great job they incentivize private land owners to give conservation easements on the property so they will be protected. That will be my number two. Fish and Wildlife Foundation. That's Government run that's A Positive too. Matches gifts for. Conservation. Or if somebody will give a conservation easement or sell a conservation easement often its a triple thing Orvis company will match individuals gift and fish and wildlife foundation will match that. That's a positive thing from the federal government. I was on that board for years And Trout Unlimited I put that third.

**Leigh Perkins** [00:05:40] The fact that. They. Actually. Facilitate. Wildlife conservation. Not just preaching. They're. On private as. Well as. Public property incentivize the land owner. Ranchers and farmers. To keep this land from wildlife. Habitat. that will get the job done.

**Leigh Perkins** [00:06:25] First I'd like to compliment Montana. They were the first I believe to realize putting hatchery fish on top of wild fish, you decrease quality of the wild fish I am certain more available to predation. And. almost sure. Montana which was first state to say no more stocking where there are wild trout and that's been effective. My state of Wyoming here took several, more than a decade before they got on the same thing. The Salt river which is a stream that all these spring creeks go into--let me think about it--8 years ago that they stopped stocking and now its a better fishery than it was when they did stock they also limit a lot more now I think its only 3 cutthroat I don't know exactly but its a reduced limit and they have sections that are all catch and release and when I think generally found out that when you're fly fishing only that gets to be a class thing but if you

say catch and release you can fish anyway. But people who are bait fishermen don't want to play catch and release so it gets the job done without having a social stigma to it.

**Leigh Perkins** [00:08:32] It all comes back to. Habitat. As long as there's places for fish there's going to be fishermen and if you improve the habitat there's going to be more fishermen. Competition. There's plenty of competition. And fishing tackle manufacturers. I think it's a healthy business because of competition.

**Leigh Perkins** [00:09:06] I got a long list. Joe Brooks is number one he had a home in Montana you know he'd go to Livingston. Herb Russell. He was a fisheries biologist that taught me about these spring creeks. He brought me down here you see that it is a swamp if we get the cattle off of it and channel it and put ripples and pools it will be a spring creek. This was a swamp. Overgrazed. With virtually no fish in it. Little work made a great spring creek. Rick Ruloff I was watching an interview in Willow Creek he was a marine biologist and fishing guide in Florida Great story about him. I've been fishing with him in Tarpon tournaments and we got in trouble cause we stopped to fish for bonefish that's against the rule you've got to just concentrate. Because there's a lot of money on this and you're gonna let your teammates down he said why don't you forget the tournament and just come down here and fish. During the tournament hours which always ended at 3 we won't fish tarpon we'll fish bonefish. When the tournament's over we got the whole Florida Bay to fish. That made me realize the number of fish and the size of fish is less important than the wildlife experience, so he was a real key for me. Lets see...Paul Stoffard, the local guru of the Salt River taught me an awful lot about how to fish midges streamers. Douglas Reid of Argentina. Jim McLennan of Calgary. I could list another 50 people I think. But most of them the experience. Don't measure your pleasure by the number of fish and size of fish, I'd say that.

**Leigh Perkins** [00:12:46] Today for all of those above. Unfortunately a lot of them are gone by. I think people will have the attitude that an outdoor experience shouldn't be measured by the length and number of fish. Enjoying the marine biology, the fisheries biology, the birds, enjoying the outdoors. A lot of times you're fishing, the fish are not rising, fish aren't biting, but you can recognize what unique birds or flora there is. Well. I think that.. What I just said. Enjoy the outdoors and that goes with it. Enjoy the experience of being outdoors. Don't get involved with tournaments. Tournaments is strictly the number of fish and the size of the fish and if you are concentrating on that you'll miss your going to miss all the other wonderful things that go on around the outdoors.

**Leigh Perkins** [00:14:12] One of the thrills of fly fishing is the length of anticipation on length of anticipation if you're blind casting or trolling there is no anticipation bang something hits and that's wonderful but if you see a fish rise and you put a fly upstream of it its taking 40 seconds for the fly to get over the fish and thats anticipation for me that's some measure of excitement length of anticipation. So fishing to sighted fish or fishing to rising fish is really what I live for and think more families should be enjoying. Pretty much what I listed above: enjoy the length of anticipation enjoy the outdoors and don't brag about the size and the number of fish you catch.

**Leigh Perkins** [00:15:58] I can think of two off hand. Jimmy Carter our president--I never voted for him. Well he's a fine gentleman and I had an opportunity to fish in Colorado with him. We were both guests of the folks that owned the property And Jimmy and his wife Rosalyn virtually fished hand in hand together. They were inhibited by Secret Service--he was still president at the time and Secret Service were running up and down the stream spooking the fish. I am sure he wished the Secret Service was not there. He was there for

the love the outdoors. He knew birds I respect him for that. We talked about certain birds. He was a true lover of the outdoors and the fishing experience . I did not like him as president but once i got to know him as a person I admired him very much. The other: Dick Cheney, our vice president . He is a Wyoming boy and was--Secret Service called Me up and said Vice President Cheney would like to fish your Spring Creek. and here are the dates, he you would like to do it and we must come and inspect the property and I said that's fine I would love to have Vice President Cheney here, but I have one request. A young man here who was trying out for the Olympics. And he came down with cancer of the bone he is now going around giving lectures to students talking about how lucky he is he only has maybe 6 month to live. He had fished here and had to use a chair and put him on a riffle but he enjoyed it. He was making fly rods to sell to support his family and Orvis provided him with the blanks and he would very much like to present the Vice President with one as a gift they said that will be impossible so I said well then it is impossible for Cheney to come fish here then they called back and decided he could have 5 minutes. Cheney came and of course all kinds of Secret Service running around two of which had on scuba outfits in case the Vice President drowned in a stream be easier to drown in a bathtub than this stream but they are running around with scuba tanks on. And it looked like it might be a thunder storm coming and the guys came to me and said we gotta get the Vice President out of here and I told him we need to get across the river and He says how am I gonna get across the river. He weighed about 300 pounds. And I said I am not going to carry you. And the Vice President came to the house to meet David Green. He spent about--he told the Secret Service guys to stay out of the house. Cheney wanted him to make a rod for the president for bass fishing. and he said I must pay for it and of course he was delighted. When that boy died they knew and the widow was called by both the president and vice president. She needed me. Back then a lady couldn't really go to salmon camps all by herself. So I was her male companion. From the age of about 12 on.

**Leigh Perkins** [00:22:02] I would say ask Kathy at the Museum of American Fly Fishing she would be best to answer that we have found that most fishermen are more interested in the how, where and with what to fish then they are the history. But for research. I think it's very important. And the work you're doing will be very similar to what the Museum of American Fly Fishing is doing. They could probably give you a better answer than I can on that

**Leigh Perkins** [00:22:44] Yeah that was in Minnesota and angling in Minnesota pretty much means Walleye and Pike in spring and summer. And spear fishing for Northern Pike over the ice in the winter, neither of which I do anymore This was before television and so northern Minnesota, in the mining country, there wasn't much to entertain you other than the one out on the lake and digging a hole in the ice and spearing Northern pike. This is something. I don't think I'll ever do it again but it was thing to do back then It was a great experience. And learned how to get along with people. My Final job there was a pit foreman. I made some mistakes. I have a great lesson from a guy. He was the head day foreman. and the day foreman pretty much sets the program Was open pit mining where your going to take the ore what grade your going to have to have and I would switch between night and afternoon 3-11 and 11-7 . One time we were having trouble getting the number of truckloads. So I waited to the last minute drove the truck drivers up in the pick up and went a little too fast jostle them around. I could tell I was in trouble. So the day foreman took me aside and said, you know, you made a big mistake. You've got to be more considerate of the people that are on the shift. I'm going to sort it out this time, but fom then on you're going to have to realize you've got to be concerned for those people you're working with. Probably the best lesson I ever had. I Certainly did not learn that at Williams College but I sure learned it in the mines. I learned a lot in the mines.

**Leigh Perkins** [00:25:31] Permit. For me the most difficult challenging fish and its almost always one that you see it sighted fish big cyclical black fins coming up in shallow water sometimes you can see them 100 yards away fish to catch, and then approaching them. The most difficult fish to catch is the permit and I would look forward to catching them again.

**Leigh Perkins** [00:25:43] I suppose I caught a 30 pound salmon but I suppose the brown trout I caught on Granite Creek gere. Annie was with me. Great drake spinner fall it was about eight o'clock in the evening and I could tell it was a big fish, and I was right and I was able to catch him and land him, he was on for roughly 25 minutes in a heavily weeded place. I was awfully lucky to do that. One of my most fun fish catches.

**Leigh Perkins** [00:27:26] I got a lot of dog stories. [laughs] Dagmar was a little black english setter that I got In Dagmar, Montana. That was interesting. Yeah. How I got her. We got invited to a friend of mine to fish in Dagmar, Montana thats the very northeast corner, about 10 miles from North Dakota and about 15 miles from Saskatchewan. And it was a big wheat ranch. We were running sharptails and huns but I think it was before the Pheasant season and our host had a setter. We all have dogs and knew our host didn't do any hunting. All ranchers and farmers do is work, they have no time to go hunting. He wanted us to hunt his dogs. And we said, well, maybe. We didn't really want to hunt his dog because his dog had never hunted. And finally we were a little embarrassed--we were his guests and he wanted us to hunt his dogs so ok we'll hunt your dog And that dog was so much better between us we had 4 dogs than any of our dogs and we thought our dogs were pretty good and usually people are very partial to their own dogs and when you meet somebody else's and there a lot better--well, that's quite a statement. And so we said if you ever have pups out of that dog I'd sure love to buy one. The dog had been given to him by a bird hunter from Wisconsin and that hunter came back and found out what a good dog he had given him. So we took it back and bred it to another setter and I got Dagmar from it. She was a little black setter, mostly black, unusual for a setter, and she just turned out to be my world my best setter. Her pup Lee is here now and shes almost as good maybe as good but the real story about Dagmar our labrador was sick or crippled or something she could'nt go we didn't have a dog for duck hunting. As far as I know Dagmar had never gone swimming she never met a duck. So we took her out with us one morning. the opening of the duck season here in Wyoming and we were in cattails pretty good chance if you shot a duck it would land in the cattails not the water she was (unintelligible) that sort of hunting is for black dogs not for me and we head out Annie was with me the first duck we shot I didn't even know where she was she was hiding in the cattails she swimsout goes to a decoy she went to about 3 decoys she gets the duck brings it back puts it in the blind and goes and sits down she got 5 more ducks that day. From nothing she was a perfect duck dog. So thats my favorite dog story

**Leigh Perkins** [00:31:17] I think the fact that there are better fishing opportunities available than ten years ago, four years ago. Eighty years ago--I can't go beyond that I'm only 86. More opportunity today for quality fishing experiences. And I think there'll be more and more to look forward to for the future fly fisherman.