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Transcript of an interview with

Beth Schultz

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INTRODUCTION

At a community meeting In 1975, Beth Schultz became aware of plans to log the karri forests of Western Australia for woodchips for the Japanese market. This was the beginning of the Campaign to Save Native Forests and marked her first involvement as a conservationist and forest activist.

Born in Roma, Queensland in 1936, Beth became head prefect of her New England boarding school which she followed with a degree in Latin and French and a scholarship to study in Paris. It was here that she met her future husband, fellow student, Phill Schultz. After further studies and work in the United States, Beth and Phill, now with two children, moved to Perth where a lecturing position awaited Phill at UWA and their family grew with the birth of another daughter.

Alerted to the significance of WA's old growth native forests and the effect woodchipping would have on them, Beth joined the Campaign to Save Native Forests and the South-West Forests Defence Foundation. Having decided the conservation movement was in need of a lawyer, Beth successfully completed a law degree and was instrumental in establishing the Environmental Defenders Office. She was an active member of the Conservation Council in WA until, she says, she became too radical for the organisation. She has been heavily involved with the Western Australian Forest Alliance, an umbrella organisation for community-based environment groups.

Beth is especially critical of prescribed burning practices in WA and heaps scorn on the government departments, shires and councils involved with the policies. Despite advancing years, Beth shows no sign of slowing down her activities and says it is rage that keeps her lobbying for the protection of forests.

Beth Schultz is the recipient of numerous awards for her dedication to conservation and the environment in WA over many decades. She received the Centenary Medal in 2001, was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2007 and was awarded the 2012 Conservation Council of Western Australia Bessie Rischbieth Conservation Award.

Beth Schultz was interviewed for the State Library of Western Australia in May and June 2023.

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

FILE ONE OF THREE

This is an interview with Dr Beth Schultz AO for the State Library of Western Australia. Probably the best way to describe Beth is as a forest activist. We'll be finding out more of what she's done in a long and busy life. Today is Monday 22 May 2023 and we're meeting at her home in Nedlands. I'm Anne Yardley.

Beth, can we start with learning a bit about your early life, where and when you were born and about your growing up years.

SCHULTZ: I was born in Roma, Queensland, a country town. My father was the town dentist, my mother—she was very good at arithmetic and she worked in the bank but had to give it up when she got married. It was a mixed marriage, my father was Catholic and my mother was C of E, Church of England, which caused all sorts of ructions when they got engaged.

AY: Can I just say, that was genuinely considered a mixed marriage in those days.

SCHULTZ: Yes, oh yes. Well, we had a state school and a convent and we used to throw stones at each other, you know, "State school ring the bell while the convent march to hell". Yes, it was pretty vicious. Dad was in the First World War, he was at Gallipoli, not the invasion but the reinforcements and then he was sent to Palestine. He wasn't sent to the Western Front. If he had been I probably wouldn't be here. But he never talked about it, never ever talked about it. He had a whole pile of little photos, little curled up photos on his dressing table. I don't know what happened to them, they probably got thrown out. Photos he'd taken with a little fold-up Kodak camera, a little collapsible camera that he'd had with him during the war. So I don't know what happened to them.

The stories were that the nuns would come to my mother to try to get her to break off their engagement because they were engaged for two years because they were saving up to get the deposit on the house before they got married. That's the way you did it in those days. And the nuns would try and persuade my mother to break off the engagement and they told her that if they got married, her children would be bastards. The joke which I like to tell is that they were dead right [laughs]. I had an older sister who died of ovarian cancer when she'd just reached 50 and a younger brother who's still alive in very poor health, he lives on a farm and he's as far right-wing as I'm left-wing.

AY: Tell me a little about your upbringing. Religion was obviously something you learnt to deal with, what about politics?

SCHULTZ: With religion, Dad was the one, unusually, who conceded so I was raised C of E.

AY: Politically where would your family have been?

SCHULTZ: Oh, they loved [Sir Arthur] Fadden, the Country Party man, and they loved [Sir Robert] Menzies—'Reds under the bed', they were really, really right-wing.

AY: Roma, for people in WA, is western Queensland.

SCHULTZ: About 400 miles west of Brisbane on the Condamine Highway, in the days when it used to take us two days to get to Brisbane and you'd get bogged in the mud, the black mud.

AY: Where did you go to school?

SCHULTZ: State school, a beautiful big brick building in the days when there was pride in public buildings and they built buildings to last, so from prep babies—for a while I could even remember my teachers—up to grade 5 I was at the state

school. There was an intermediate and high school in another building and that was grade 6 and 7 but then it had 9 and 10 but if you wanted to do your Leaving you had to go somewhere else.

AY: That somewhere else for you was New South Wales, wasn't it? Where did you go to high school?

SCHULTZ: New England Girls' School, Armidale. I went there, well I did the Leaving, they called it the Scholarship, grade 7 in Queensland, everybody did the Scholarship [0:05:00] and I think the majority of kids left school. At age 14, you'd done your Scholarship and you left school. It was a statewide exam and I think I came 10th in the state, I did fairly well in that exam. My parents thought if I went to a cooler climate, I wouldn't mature too young so they sent me to Armidale, that was a cold climate. And it was cold, it used to snow there. Church of England, New England Girls' School. I loved it, the Church of England School.

AY: Was that quite progressive of your parents to assume your daughter was going to stay at school to do her Leaving?

SCHULTZ: Especially Dad, to support me as far as I wanted to go, always. I remember standing outside the local picture theatre and a farmer saying, "Why are you taking your daughter? she'll only get married and have kids." Dad wasn't at all like that. He was basically Irish—Irish Catholic. My older sister, she dropped out, she waited till she was married with a family before she did her university degrees.

AY: You were obviously very academic, you were head girl—prefect.

SCHULTZ: It wasn't so much academic. The school was run by the prefects, not the teachers, so each dormitory had two prefects in charge of the dormitory and they ran the getting up, the dressing, the washing, the bathing, the going to bed. It was run by the prefects and the head prefect organised that. You ran a roster of what all the prefects were doing for, sort of, public duties. So it

was not so much academic, the prefect before me wasn't really academic at all because you could get on and organise things.

AY: So more leadership qualities perhaps?

SCHULTZ: I suppose you'd call it that. I had this philosophy that I'd never ask somebody to do something I wouldn't do myself. If I was expecting them to obey the rules, I had to obey the rules.

AY: What were your interests at school? what did you like best, was it academic work?

SCHULTZ: Yes, I loved Latin and I liked English and French. We had the most fabulous teachers, our English teacher Miss Young, she was Scottish and she was just a brilliant, brilliant teacher. The Latin teacher was a Miss Baird. They would have been World War One spinsters. Nobody talks about the tens of thousands of maiden aunts, all the fiancés, future husbands, got killed in the war. There's a whole generation of maiden aunts and spinsters.

AY: And teaching was an acceptable occupation for women?

SCHULTZ: Yes, it was highly respected. Part of our problem with education is there's no respect for teachers anymore. I don't know how you turn that around.

AY: Did you have a sense of what you'd like to do after school?

SCHULTZ: Yes, I wanted to be a nurse, always wanted to be a nurse. I played with my dolls, all that stuff. But before we did our Leaving, the headmistress, Miss Colebrook, her philosophy was if the school is too big for you to know the name of every student, your school was too big. We had about 320 students and we were all boarders, there were no day girls in those days. It's changed since then, but everyone was a boarder. She took us into her office and said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "A nurse". She basically said, "You've got too many brains for that, you should go to university." Instead of saying go

and be a doctor, she did what most girls did, go to university and do an arts degree. So that's what I did. Went to university and did an arts degree.

AY: You did do well there too didn't you because you got your BA in French, [0:10:00] you did your honours and you got a travelling scholarship, tell me a little about that.

SCHULTZ: The head of the French department, I think his name was Mahoney, he encouraged me to apply for this P&O travelling scholarship. And I got it. It was a first-class single cabin from Brisbane to London and it took six weeks. Six weeks of uninterrupted fun. I didn't want to get off. [laughs]

AY: Before we get on with that story, I should have asked you which university you were at?

SCHULTZ: University of Queensland.

AY: Did you enjoy university life?

SCHULTZ: Yes, yes. I think I was president of the French club. I made some big mistakes. For reasons which I'd rather not go into, I repeated my final year so all my colleagues, school friends who went to university, I was a year behind them. I went back for another year so I was what they called senior prefect for two years, '53, '54. That put me a year behind so it was getting to know a whole batch of new people that basically I didn't know. And I went to women's college until I got into trouble for staying out after, you know—

AY: Curfew I suppose.

SCHULTZ: Yes, curfew hours, which I think was 10 o'clock, and got caught and Miss Piddington, she was a tough old biddy. She fined me but my father supported me, he said, "I won't let you go back." So I went back and boarded with a family out near the university. But I shouldn't have repeated that year because I really wasted my time. The worst thing is, the leader of the class I

dropped back to, I'm just trying to think of her name, the whole class, everyone knew she was the leader and she would have been senior prefect but because I'd been senior prefect once, the headmistress made me senior prefect for the following year. I've got to try to think of her name, she's since died. [Erica Brown] She tried to keep in touch with me, that's another of my failings. Everywhere I've been, made friends, moved on, never keep up the friendships. So around the world, I've left all these people behind and I left her behind too. She even got to the stage of sending me a self-addressed stamped envelope to write back but I never did.

AY: [laughing] There's a bit of a clue there. So you finished your degree, got your honours. Are you any closer to having an idea of what you'd do, in terms of a career?

SCHULTZ: No, I did my arts degree, then probably get married and have kids. I wanted to live 70 miles from anywhere, way, way in the outback and have a dozen kids.

AY: We'll see how that went for you in a minute. But instead you get to the Sorbonne, what are you doing there and what's that experience like?

SCHULTZ: I was very, very lonely but I made some very good friends. The French system in those days, I don't know whether it's the same, they cooperated. They themselves set up these groups to study a text and they'd divide up the text and give each one in the group of 10 or so, a section to study in detail and then you'd share that knowledge with everybody else so they were really, really cooperative. Cooperative to the extent we'd think was cheating. Helping each other to that extent. When I compare that with America, special books were put in reserve and you could only take them out for two hours and you had to have them back for other people to use so what American students would do was pull the relevant pages out of the book. Absolutely, it was competition, competition, competition. Whereas the French, it was cooperation, cooperation, cooperation. Absolutely the opposite, I don't know if it's still the same. America's still competition and cutthroat. [0:15:00]

AY: It's an interesting observation. I believe you met your husband to be in France too.

SCHULTZ: There was a group of Australians there and we very quickly got to know each other and he was born in Hull, he was an evacuee when they shipped out boatloads of kids when they thought England was going to be invaded. So at about the age of six he was shipped to relatives in Sydney, then sort of passed around a bit. Went back after the war and then the whole family migrated. So he was English. Actually we had a mathematician here from Hull and he could still pick Phill's accent. He said, "You're from Hull." Thirty years later after living in Australia for most of his life, he still had a Hull accent. His family couldn't afford to send him to university so he got a scholarship and he did a degree in mining engineering, so he was a gold miner and then he switched to petroleum engineering. The French were very cluey, they were giving scholarships to students to get them used to using French equipment thinking when they went home they'd buy French equipment. So he got a scholarship to study petroleum engineering in Paris and that's where we met.

AY: Was he studying in French?

SCHULTZ: Oh yes, they gave him a crash course in French, yes. I mean he'd studied it at school. For historical reasons, if you studied a foreign language, it was usually French.

AY: Did you marry in France?

SCHULTZ: Well, we basically got engaged by phone over the Atlantic. I couldn't go to America because there was a small quota of Australians to go to America, so he had to fly over to Paris. We got married in Paris at the British embassy, it was too complicated getting married in the French system so we got married and he went back to Penn State where he was doing a master's degree in

petroleum engineering at the Pennsylvania State University and I had to wait for my visa to come through then I flew across to America. That was in 1961.

AY: And you continued to live in America for 10 years?

SCHULTZ: Until 1970.

AY: What was that experience like? You had a couple of children born there as well.

SCHULTZ: Yes, two of them are American citizens, one was born in Seattle, Washington and the second one was born in Missoula, Montana and they had to become naturalised Australians but they had dual citizenship. Because Phill was born in England, they could also get a British passport which is much less useful now since we had stupid, rotten Brexit. My son has travelled with three passports so you have to be careful which one you pulled out. An American passport wasn't always very popular. [laughs]

AY: How did you find living in America?

SCHULTZ: Made some very good friends. We never encountered any crime or any violence, actually it was in the roaring 60s. We both got accepted to go to Berkeley. We were travelling across the country going to California and in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which at that stage was the oil capital of the world, Phill got offered a job with Standard Oil of New Jersey for an amount of money that we couldn't believe and we stayed in Tulsa, Oklahoma for two years and never went to Berkeley. Not a bad decision.

AY: You were happy with that decision.

SCHULTZ: Well it would have been interesting to be at Berkeley in the 60s, wooh. At that stage we decided we wanted to come back to Australia eventually. The best thing we can get from America is an education so we looked around, after staying in Tulsa, Oklahoma for two years; incidentally, it wasn't until the

last 12 months or so that I discovered that Tulsa, Oklahoma had the worst race riot [0:20:00] in America's history. In 1921, on the excuse that an African American boy had assaulted a white girl, they completely demolished a whole town. They bombed it, they shot, they killed, they burnt the whole town down. We lived in Tulsa, Oklahoma for two years, never ever heard of it. It wasn't until just recently that I found out about it: the Tulsa, Oklahoma race riot. The worst race riot in American history, absolutely mind-boggling. They bombed it.

AY: So you lived quite an insular existence there.

SCHULTZ: Oh yes, never heard a word about this. We had a pleasant stay in Oklahoma. I taught at a private school, Anglican, called Holland Hall, an interesting experience because when I finished my arts degree in Queensland I started on an education degree because I didn't know what else to do. Hated it. So I had no training in education but I got this job in this private school teaching Latin and French, which I quite enjoyed.

Then we looked around for a university that would accept us both. Phill had decided to get out of engineering and get into pure maths so we were both accepted at the University of Washington in Seattle. We drove there, actually Mum and Dad came over and we drove from Tulsa all through the Rockies and national parks to Seattle. We'd hardly got there when Kennedy was killed. I remember walking in the university grounds and hearing he'd been shot. The radio, all they played was music, there was no talk, no advertising, just sad music.

AY: What an amazing time to be there. That makes me think of politics again, you had been a Young Country Party member in Queensland, you were a Young Anglican. Your family was right-wing as you've said, but Phill your husband was not. How did he influence this change in you? Or how did this change come about in you from being—

SCHULTZ: I found out about a few things I suppose, got educated. I'm probably left-wing of him now [laughs].

AY: You come back to Australia, by this stage you have two children, what actually brings you back, apart from your desire to come home.

SCHULTZ: We didn't want to live in America. It's got much, much worse since then. It's unbelievable, how these people can be so stupid.

AY: Coming back to you though, why Perth?

SCHULTZ: Phill got a job. He applied to various universities. It was done by letter, I don't even think there was a phone call. And he got a job as a lecturer in mathematics at UWA. I think he applied for various universities, I think he didn't hear back from Queensland, I don't know what happened. I think he might have got offered one in Adelaide but I'm a bit vague about that, but he chose Perth so we came to Perth in 1970.

AY: And obviously you both settled in. Perth is not like Brisbane, it's a different kind of a place for you as well as being different for Phill.

SCHULTZ: But it was Australia. I remember getting into the Qantas plane to come back and it was decorated with Australian flowers and you think, oh, we're home [laughs]. I wish they hadn't sold it, and we all owned Qantas and not that horrible toad of a man.

AY: You're back here, do you start studying about this time?

SCHULTZ: No, that was much later.

AY: So tell me what you were doing when you first came back.

SCHULTZ: Raising kids.

AY: And you were here in this house in Nedlands.

SCHULTZ: We bought this house in 1970. We'd never owned a house, we'd always rented. We didn't have any furniture, we just set up on a salary of one. One person's salary was enough to pay for husband, wife, three kids and pay the mortgage. [0:25:00] I didn't have to work. I'm one of the last generations to raise my own kids, didn't pay somebody to raise them. Now, mum and dad have to go to work to pay the mortgage, or they don't have any kids because they can't afford them.

AY: Was there a moment where you became aware of issues to do with conservation and the environment, or was it gradual?

SCHULTZ: It was woodchipping. There was a mothers' group of wives of academics and we had a playgroup, we met once a week around the houses with our kids and one of the members was Jeanette Conacher who was a geographer, her husband was Arthur Conacher and he was a lecturer in the department of geography at UWA. It would have been early 70s—'73, '74. They said, "There are terrible things coming to Eden in New South Wales called woodchipping and it's going to come to Western Australia."

So in 1975, in the days when they used to put stickers on lampposts, there was advertising about a meeting about woodchipping to be held in The Tree Society premises in South Perth. I had this friend, our kids were both going to the same kindergarten, the Nedlands kindergarten, you know, dinky-di West Australian, Audrey Black. In the early 1900s, apparently the state government had given public servants a block of land to clear the land to grow wheat. So her family at Nungarin, they got a block of land and they were basically self-sufficient. They couldn't grow tea but that's probably the only thing they bought. Mum and dad and five kids, self-sufficient on a farm at Nungarin. Anyway, she'd had an interesting career, she was a triple-certificated nurse, travelled around the world. American doctors don't like Australian nurses because they're too forward; anyway she switched from that and she was a librarian at UWA. We got together and we'd seen this

notice about a meeting about woodchipping so we went together to this. We dressed up as though we were going to a P&C meeting, and we got there and it was young people in sackcloth and ashes, you know, and smoking a joint after the meeting if not during the meeting.

AY: Why did you care about trees at that point, something must have sparked it in you?

SCHULTZ: We'd been down to the forest, we'd seen the karri. To chop these down and grind them down into bite-sized bits to send to Japan to make into paper just didn't make sense. In joining this group, this meeting at South Perth, that turned into the Campaign to Save Native Forests with people I'm still in touch with—Bill Thomas who made a big name as an MLA.

AY: So who were those early players in the campaign to save native forests?

SCHULTZ: There'd been a march—there was a complaint about an American base at Exmouth and they had been on a march to Exmouth and they took up this anti-woodchipping campaign and it had two objectives: save native forests, stop woodshipping and save the Shannon basin. When the Labor Government set up the EPA [Environmental Protection Authority] in Western Australia, one of the first things they did, they set up the Conservation Through Reserves committee. It went around the state and looked at how well our native environment was protected in national parks. They divided the state into 12 systems and system two was the karri forest. They said with the advent of woodchipping, the basin of the Shannon River should be held aside from clear felling for the first 15-year licence period. The woodchipping licence lasted 15 years initially. No clear felling in the Shannon basin for woodchipping for 15 years and then to look at the basin and set apart a large portion of it as an [0:30:00] international-standard national park.

So the Campaign to Save Native Forests and the South-West Forests Defence Foundation, we said, "Make the whole basin a national park now."

That became the objective of the two groups: stop woodchipping and save the Shannon basin.

AY: Why had they put that 15 years on it, did that make sense?

SCHULTZ: I don't know. The *Wood Chipping Industry Agreement Act* was passed by the Court government in 1969. It was amended in 1972 by the Labor government which made it even more favourable to bloody Bunnings and co. Absolutely shocking. When you look back on it—like the deal they did with Alcoa—and we're still stuck with the terrible, terrible deal they made with Alcoa. They're annihilating the northern jarrah forests so some over-wealthy people in America could make even more money. Ohh, decisions made in the past we live with them down generations.

AY: And this is obviously what you were looking at. When you said the Labor government and the Shannon basin, we're talking about the Burke government, are we?

SCHULTZ: No, no this is the 70s and [John] Tonkin. I forget the sequence: [Charles] Court then the series of coalition governments. Even Labor was all supportive of woodchipping. They exaggerated the number of jobs, exaggerated income, when we started we were basically giving marri logs at 80 cents a tonne. We were just giving them the logs.

AY: Looking at the Shannon basin, can you explain why it's important to have something become designated a national park rather than a state forest? What's the difference; if something is designated a state forest, does it protect that forest?

SCHULTZ: It's protected from privatising. It's state-owned but it's managed for state purposes and logged as the state purpose. There's honey production and tourism and recreation. But the primary use is chopping down the trees for logs and you've got contingents of men in the Forests Department, then

CALM, and all these other names, say forests are there to be chopped down. God put trees on Earth for us to chop them down.

AY: So that's what can happen in a state forest, it's actually not protected at all.

SCHULTZ: From alienation. It's still publicly owned, well, I suppose who owns it? The Crown, I don't know who the owner is—the people of Western Australia via their government.

AY: So what were you able to achieve with the Shannon National Park?

SCHULTZ: That's when I became very active in the Labor Party because when Whitlam got chucked out, I joined them and I think I might have given them a $50 donation. At that stage, the state Labor Party had a conservation and environment committee to advise the Labor Party and the government on policy and there was a very, very strong conservation and environment committee with forest activists on it, a whole bunch.

AY: Who were some of the people?

SCHULTZ: Bill Thomas, Neil Bartholomaeus and Angas Hopkins, Angas is now dead, and a whole bunch of other people. They were coming up to the '82 election which they knew Labor was going to win. We had huge debates, the committee said the government should have a policy, if and when elected, they would make the whole Shannon basin a national park. So it was the 1982 state conference where this was debated and all the politicians were against it, they said, "We're going to lose the seat of Warren because all the timber workers won't vote Labor if we won't let them woodchip the Shannon basin." So it went to a vote, in those days, the first was on the voices—yay or nay—[0:35:00] and the next was on the hands and then if 10 members attending put their hands up it went to what they called a card vote. Some of the unions, for some reason, had 30 votes. Now our committee had been madly lobbying the left-wing unions, the Miscellaneous Workers Union and Jim McGinty. It went to the vote and we won. But Brian Burke got several of

us from this conservation and environment committee and he took us into a back room and he said, “Look, take the words out of the policy to make the Shannon a national park. I’ll give you a letter to say we’ll do it, just take the words out of the policy.” That’s when I got his measure. He’d tell the public one thing and he’d do something else behind their backs.

AY: So, what happened?

SCHULTZ: We wouldn’t buy it and the words stayed in the policy. They went to the election with: when we’re elected we’ll make the Shannon a national park. Well, Bunnings and the Forests Department and the government had no intention because the month they were elected, I don’t know, February or March, the month after they were elected this beekeeper, Ken Spurge, he rang me up, he said, “Look they’re putting new logging coupes into the Shannon basin,” and indeed they were. Bunnings and the Forests Department had no thought that they’d be stopped logging the Shannon basin. So there was a big row and Labor went to Ian Temby QC, the Labor lawyer and they got this opinion that said there was a legal working plan for the state forests that ran for 10 years so the working plan was from ’77 to ’87 and that said logging wouldn’t happen in the Shannon, and you can’t make the Shannon a national park because the working plan says it’s going to be logged until 1987. Through a whole variety of lucky happenings, I got to know David Malcolm QC, he was WA’s top barrister and what a mind. A sad loss he got dementia, very, very sad.

Anyway, I was working for Dwyer Durack and off I trotted to David Malcolm and I said, “Could you do us an opinion, can the government make the Shannon basin a national park when the working plan says it’s going to be logged until 1987?” Two weeks later, I’ve got it here, his secretary rings me up and says come and get the opinion and he said, “Government policy overrides the working plan, and the government can make the Shannon a national park.” They couldn’t weasel out of it that way. They looked at the coupes, the cutting areas that they’d started and whether they’d finish or whether they’d leave it. But logging stopped in the Shannon so we saved

most of the Shannon, yes. There's been a bit of logging, the Forests Department said, "Look, let us clear fell; you can make a national park after we've done the clear felling. It needs to be logged, it's been burnt, we should log it and regenerate it." Yeah. But it took them until 1987 or '88 when it was actually gazetted [1988].

AY: We can check on that date. We haven't talked about you for a while, at some point you decide to get a law degree and I have it here that you did that because you thought the environment movement needed a lawyer. Tell me about all of that.

SCHULTZ: Yes, yes. Okay, when academics got study leave, '76 to '77, we went to America for a study leave. Phill was almost in despair because I didn't want to go; he got Arthur Conacher to talk to me to say that I had to go, I really should go as a family to America. Anyway, I was away when they blew up the gantry at Bunbury. And so when I came back in '77 and Arthur and I had started the South-West [Forests] Defence Foundation, our objective was we were going to get them—woodchipping—and then take legal action, get incorporated and we'll take legal action to stop the woodshipping. Well the [0:40:00] coalition government wouldn't let us get incorporated. Under the *Associations Incorporation Act* it was at the discretion of the attorney-general. We didn't fall into the categories that automatically got it. We were at the discretion of the attorney-general and they wouldn't let us incorporate it.

We could take legal action, it was rather futile, but at that stage that's when I thought, the environment movement needs a lawyer. Because a beekeeper came to a Campaign to Save Native Forest meeting and said, "I think woodchipping is illegal, it's against the Constitution." And it was actually a misreading of one section of the Constitution; it was about the conservation of water but they just meant damming it, not conserving it. So I went to the UWA law school and I said, "Who's your constitutional lawyer?" It was Peter Johnson so I went up and told him this and he said, "If you want to take legal action, you can't come to a barrister, you have to go to a solicitor; I suggest

Les Stein, he would be free because he was a law lecturer at UWA or go to Bob French," who was with McDonnell Sutherland, later Robert French, chief justice.

We went to Les Stein who led us a merry dance and that's when I thought well, the environment movement needs a lawyer. With my academic record there was no question, I was just accepted into law school and of course it was free, thank you Mr Whitlam. We got back in '77 so I would have started in '78—'78, '79, '80, '81, I never know which order, BJuris then LLB.

AY: You're thinking long-term here because this takes a few years to become a lawyer.

SCHULTZ: Well that was the problem. You needed more than a new chum that had just done a degree and then getting my articles. The courses, there was nothing on environmental law. The nearest you could get was planning law and mining law, nothing on environmental law.

AY: Because environmental law didn't exist?

SCHULTZ: No! I don't know when it first appeared, no, nothing like environmental law. But it was useful; it was useful for the contacts I made.

AY: Where did you work, where did you do your articles?

SCHULTZ: Sort of all over the place, I remember doing interviews and they'd ask you, "Well, how are you going to manage to do your articles when you've got three kids?" I don't think they're allowed to say that now, are they? I got articled to a barrister which was useful because I got to meet a lot of lawyers. I think his name was Malcolm Lee, he became a Federal Court judge.

AY: How did you find the experience of law? You're saying there was no environmental law at that stage.

SCHULTZ: Then I went to Dwyer Durack and I forget what order it was in. I was doing petty things in the Magistrates Court. My pièce de résistance was, under one Act, I forget which one, if your meter box is tampered with the homeowner is assumed to be guilty of tampering. It's the reverse onus of proof. You have to prove your innocence and especially if you were an electrician. So I was defending electricians who were charged with tampering with their meter box. I got one of them off, I still don't know how I managed it but I was doing these silly sort of, well you know.

AY: Exactly, so are you finding it irrelevant?

SCHULTZ: Absolutely nothing to do with anything I was interested in.

AY: And yet you persevered.

SCHULTZ: Well, the next stage I was with Rob Garton-Smith and Co who had an office in North Perth. This is interesting, Bunnings went there, of all the law firms in town, Bunnings went to this firm to do their contracts for sharefarming for plantations. Rob's wife Jenny said not to touch it with a bargepole because they knew I was there. I would see them coming in and out. And of course I had access to all their files if I wanted to. And Rob and I thought we did make their contracts a bit greener. [0:45:00] I think I was being set up for something really, really serious because people would ring me up and say, "Should I do these contracts?" And as a lawyer with Bunnings as a client, I said, oh, one of the best things in the world. If I was a greenie, I would say don't touch these coots with a bargepole. I think I was being set up, people were ringing me up and wanting me to say, "Don't go near them," and they could go to the professional board and say that I was double-crossing a client.

What happened was, that was the year of the *Four Corners* program 'The Wood and the Trees', and I made the mistake of going on Howard Sattler with Syd Shea from CALM. We'd hardly started when Syd Shea said, "There's a well known conservationist that works for a firm that works for

Bunnings." Right? [sighs] All through the interview, oh Bunnings couldn't pay higher orders or they couldn't afford to pay you. This sort of nonsense. Actually, I think they worked it out how they were going to play with me—cat and mouse. At the end of the interview, I said, "I'm going to have to resign."

I went back to the firm, Rob had been in touch with the ethics committee of the Law Society and the Law Society said between the employee and the client, the firm's loyalty is to the client, not the employee. I had to resign and as of then, I was out the door, 1990 it was.

AY: You could see that coming?

SCHULTZ: No, I couldn't, I couldn't see it. Once it became public on the airwaves, I knew I had to resign, it was over. Thereafter I didn't go back—I didn't enjoy it. I didn't get anywhere near doing environmental law, defending electricians whose meters had been tampered with.

AY: I guess what I'm still asking you is, you put a lot of years and effort into becoming a lawyer and working your way through your articles and working for a law firm looking after electricians and the like. And yet you kept this faith, this commitment somehow. Did you still feel that you were going to be useful, that this law degree was going to be useful in your environmental work?

SCHULTZ: In the sense that I got these opinions and getting legal advice. I mean, David Bellamy threatened to sue me for defamation—oh, that's another story. [laughs]

AY: In other words, you knew lawyers.

SCHULTZ: I knew lawyers. It got me into a circuit where I could approach lawyers and get their help. And they were pretty gentle with me, you know, because I was sort of one of them.

AY: What did you do next?

SCHULTZ: Well, I went to work for the Conservation Council full-time unpaid.

AY: Full-time unpaid, how are you managing to do that?

SCHULTZ My poor husband and poor kids. I'd go down to the forest for a weekend, I'd be away the whole weekend. Weekend after weekend, I'd just go down there and take people around the forest.

AY: What sort of work are you actually doing, apart from, say, those weekends away showing people around. What is the organisation doing?

SCHULTZ: Trying to raise public awareness. We never did stop woodchipping. What we did was keep reducing the area where they could operate, getting more and more into national parks and into various sorts of reserves.

AY: How are you doing this—by lobbying, by activism?

SCHULTZ: Lobbying and public awareness and then the old growth forest campaign all through the 90s leading up and helping get Gallop[1] elected in 2001 with his forest policy. We were just absolutely flat out. There was one rally we got 20,000 people into the streets of Perth.

AY: Which rally was that, can you remember? [0:50:00]

SCHULTZ: I think I was away for that particular one, it was with Patrick Weir. The big step was in 1990 when we formed the WA Forest Alliance. We had a meeting down in Donnelly and the various groups—every town in the South West, well more after WAFA was formed. There were a dozen forest conservation groups like ACF [Australian Conservation Foundation] or

[1] Geoff Gallop was elected premier of Western Australia in 2001 partly on the back of a promise to save old growth forests.

Wilderness Society, Conservation Council that were not specifically forest activists but that was part of their brief, and we formed the WA Forest Alliance as an umbrella group for groups that were active in forest conservation.

That really took off. We brought in people like Rachel Siewert who later became a [Greens] senator. Peter Robertson, he came from the Wilderness Society and we coordinated this group. The amount of interest it raised, it was absolutely phenomenal. We commissioned a public opinion survey by the company that did the work for Richard Court, so they couldn't say we'd got a friendly consultant. They found that the majority of Australians wanted to save old growth forest. So we knew we were on a winner. Then we persuaded the Labor Party that they would save old growth and we helped Gallop get elected.

AY: So you're lobbying government, how receptive are you finding, well, both shades of government I suppose, both the Court government and then the incoming Gallop government?

SCHULTZ: Because I was in Richard Court's electorate, I could go and basically get to see him. He couldn't refuse to see me so I was lobbying him directly.

AY: Was he receptive at all?

SCHULTZ: Well he was better than his dad. When Charlie Court died and everyone was lauding him I thought, yes, thanks, you gave us woodchipping in the karri forest and bauxite mining in the jarrah forest, thank you very much, yeah.

AY: Are you seeing—we're up to 1990 or thereabouts when you formed the WA Forest Alliance—are you seeing much of a change both in the community in terms of environmental awareness and in government?

SCHULTZ: Well, seeing forests as not just logs. There's more to them than chopping them down for a pathetic number of jobs and no income for the state.

AY: But there would still be opposition from the timber workers.

SCHULTZ: Oh yes, a very powerful lobby. Yes, the logging industry, like the pastoral industry, is sort of a sacred cow and the real costs are never quantified. It employs a few people, it brings in a few dollars and we've always done it so we'll always do it. The legacy that it's left us with, our forests are basically trashed.

AY: This is a powerful force, as you've said, if you're going to oppose them you have to become a powerful force as well. So how are you achieving that, in around 1990?

SCHULTZ: We were just getting started. We got legal advice, there was a professional PR person, Guy Grant, he said, "It's the old growth, stupid". And that was save the old growth.

AY: There was the Campaign to Save Native Forests. Did that morph into the WA Forest Alliance, what happened to that organisation?

SCHULTZ: No, it fizzled out in the 80s.

AY: Why would that have been? Was it not serving the purpose?

SCHULTZ: Well the people driving it like Bill Thomas, he went into politics, some of them died, and it just fizzled out.

AY: To what extent would the WA Forest Alliance be the replacement organisation?

SCHULTZ: Well it was much bigger. It was much bigger because it was an [0:55:00] umbrella group for 20 groups. In the 90s every town in the South West had a friends of the forest group and WAFA united them with we'll do this here, we'll do this there and brought them together and coordinated it. It was very

powerful, holding public meetings. Peter Robertson and I got a series of these amazing maps which showed vegetation changes over 10 years and he and I went on a—somebody organised a trip, June Lowe I think, we went to all the towns, Bunbury, Manjimup, Denmark, Albany, Margaret River, big public meetings and showed people these maps which were absolutely shocking.

People didn't realise. Red was the most recent and these red patches showed the vegetation had been annihilated in the past five or 10 years and going back. Everything that had a colour on it, the vegetation had been interfered with. People didn't realise because it's not just the logging but the logging and the burning. And not just departmental burning, CALM as it was, the shires are doing it, local governments are doing it, private landowners are doing it. Those maps were for the 1990s, they should get them done again and show people what's happening down there because when it's visual, it's much more effective than saying 200,000 hectares get burnt every year when you see it in red in front of you.

AY: Who's producing these maps for you?

SCHULTZ: This was funny. CALM had them done and we couldn't get them so we went over and picketed CSIRO and this man called Jeremy Wallace said, "I'll help you." And CSIRO did them for us. We bought them, but yes.

AY: Do you know if they have been updated?

SCHULTZ: They would have, somewhere. Actually I went in to the CSIRO and they said, "All that's in the eastern states now." They've given me a phone number to ring. I'd like to do them, actually my son's into it, he can access the departmental maps for burning so he's got a whole series of maps for burning by the department but not other people's burning. Oh, one of the jobs I want to do.

AY: Alright, that's on your list of things to do. Where's your funding coming from?

SCHULTZ: Well, I was unpaid, so.

AY: But nonetheless, you're holding meetings in different places and—

SCHULTZ: I tell you what, South-West Forests in the mid 1990s, Ian Maley, he started Wilderness Equipment, he's a president of ours, he's been president for the last 30 years, he had a friend that he'd known through his outdoor activism and his company and this friend died and he left South-West Forests Defence Foundation $400,000. Now, $400,000 in the 1990s was a lot, a lot of money. So we financed the old growth forest campaign. That's where it came from.

AY: Politically where are you aligning yourselves or are you not aligning yourselves?

SCHULTZ: Well, Paul Llewellyn, Chrissy Sharp, Giz—especially Giz Watson[2]. Giz is an absolute wonder, she's amazing. She's now secretary of WAFA, among other things. I suppose with the Greens until we had this sort of falling out with Chrissy Sharp.

AY: Now what was that about, why did you fall out with Chrissy Sharp?

SCHULTZ: She thinks that regrowth—forest that's been logged and regrown, it should be thinned. And she's absolutely hellbent on thinning regrowth, obsessively so. Well, it's turned up now with the new management plan. They are planning on doing ecological thinning. They say all the benefits it has and completely ignore why it's counterproductive, why it does more harm than good. As usual with foresters, they just tell you what they [1:00:00] want you to believe and anything else is just brushed aside.

[2] Paul Llewellyn is an environmental planning and management consultant, the Hon. Giz Watson was the MLC for North Metropolitan 1996–2013. Dr Chrissy Sharp was the MLC for the South West Region, 1997–2005.

AY: So the thinning, where is the expert advice coming from?

SCHULTZ: Oh, the foresters get their own advice and they only listen to that. The terrible thing with burning, DBCA [Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions] says we are implementing government policy. Where does the government get their policy? From DBCA. It's incestuous. Now that we've entrenched this burning in the South West, 200,000 hectares a year. For a long time, if it was burnt in a wildfire it didn't count, it didn't count towards the target. They got some very big wildfires; they had to count them because they couldn't reburn the area.

Then there's an even worse thing where 45 percent of the vegetation managed by DBCA has to have a fuel age of less than six years.

AY: What does that mean, fuel age?

SCHULTZ: Burnt.

AY: It needs to be burnt every six years, is that what it means?

SCHULTZ: Six years or less. If you go into their office, I've done this and on the wall is a big map of the area they manage and every bit has the date it was last burnt and once it gets to six years, well they'll burn it. They're still operating on the Forests Department blocks. The Forests Department carved up state forest into blocks which they're locked into. Some of them are very big, you know, six, seven, ten thousand hectares. They operate, they burn the block and the block might have half a dozen different types of ecosystems, from peats to tingle forests, and they burn the whole lot. They fly over in an aircraft and drop incendaries, that's how they light the fires.

AY: These are prescribed and managed burns. Are you saying they are those things but it's still not correct.

SCHULTZ: They just like burning, they like to burn and burn and burn. If it's not burnt it's called dirty bush. They create all these lies that say it needs to happen otherwise we'll lose lives and property. They're scared now not to do it because if something happened, they'd say it was because we didn't burn.

AY: Does the fuel load need to be reduced in forests, in other words—

SCHULTZ: No. No because if you leave it alone, on the ground you've got all these insects, microbes, little animals reducing it. You burn it, they've all gone, you've lost your natural fuel reduction. Now they've done the research. You may be protected from a wildfire for maybe five years, but not always. An area can burn again after two years. So it's not giving you that much protection. For the next 30 years it's growing, growing, growing then it reaches a pinnacle and then it drops back so your long-unburnt forest is far less flammable than the stuff that was burnt 10 years ago. They're burning it at such a rate that they are maximising the fuel load and fuel is native vegetation. It's not pastures, it's not plantation, we don't count them. We just look at native vegetation and we call it fuel even though it's habitat for unknown numbers of invertebrates, reptiles, mammals, birds, the whole—

AY: This is a really big topic and I think it's something we should revisit.

SCHULTZ: It's coming in a petition, the government has been asked to hold an inquiry and we're waiting to hear whether they will and we'll know whether they're genuine by the terms of reference and who they get to do the inquiry because they've had inquiries in the past and they get some pyromaniac from the eastern states to come and do the inquiry and all they say is, more burning, more burning.

AY: And when is this due?

SCHULTZ: Any day now, any day now.

AY: Any day now. Alright, I think we might leave it there for today, thank you Beth. [1:04:41]

END OF FILE ONE

FILE TWO OF THREE

This is a second interview with Dr Beth Schultz AO and it's for the State Library. Today is Tuesday 6 June 2023 and we're once again meeting at her home in Nedlands, in the middle of a thunderstorm. I'm Anne Yardley.

Beth, last time, we were talking about prescribed burns, which I know is a difficult subject to discuss but we need to. I'm still trying to understand more about the topic. Is it that you believe the burns are too much, too often or they should not happen at all?

SCHULTZ: There should be some burning. We forget that our biota evolved for millions of years with natural fire. That's what it's used to. But natural fire was only started by lightning, that's the only source of ignition, because we didn't have any volcanoes, as they did in the eastern states. We forget, we think about 60,000 years since Aboriginal people came here and they used burning for their purposes. I call it traditional burning, some of their burning is cultural but most of it is very result oriented, to clear a pathway, to clear a campsite, to make certain species grow because they knew what needed what sort of burning, when and how much and how often. They had 60,000 years to find all this out and they've practised it very scientifically.

I call it traditional burning rather than cultural burning, some of their cultural burning was for ceremonies but not all of it, most was what I call traditional, for practical purposes. And they burned with bare feet [laughs], we forget that. And the biota evolved with natural fire, which was lightning and it had several million years to adapt to that. We really don't know much about it and we don't know much about Aboriginal burning either because most of them have been removed from their habitat and to my mind, you can't know about burning orally. You have to do it. And they have been stopped from burning for the most part since the mid-1800s. There was a regulation passed where they were subject to, I don't know, 70 lashes if they lit a fire. So they have been disconnected from the practical use of burning. Some of them have maintained it but some of them seem to have adopted a European attitude to fire. So one has to be careful, if an Aboriginal person speaks about fire, have

they maintained connection with country and do they actually know what is traditional burning and not sort of contaminated with European ideas of burning? And I think that happens a lot and it's a very touchy subject.

Burning now, well what does the bush need? Every bit of bush needs a different sort of burn, no two burns would be the same. But the objective now is burning to protect life, human life, and property and biodiversity is down the track. The EPA did a report, I forget what year, about 2004 and they said, in conducting burns the first priority should be biodiversity, protecting biodiversity. Nobody took any notice of that and in planning burns, protection of biodiversity should be the first priority then fitting in with that you protect life, which is human life and property.

Research shows it is within about 500 metres of the place or things you want to protect. That's where you control the fuel, there are various ways of controlling it but the preferred way, the most fun way is to burn it. And you end up with more fuel after the burn than before. It's interesting fuel is native vegetation. It's not plantations, it's not crops—which are very flammable—it's native vegetation. [05:00] When they talk about the fuel load, they're talking about how much flammable native vegetation there is there. And of course under certain circumstances, all native vegetation is flammable.

AY: What are the alternatives? Are there alternatives?

SCHULTZ: What Kingsley Dixon[3] calls 'at-source suppression'. Jump on it when it starts and put it out before it becomes a wildfire. We now have the means of detection with satellites and drones, we can detect fires as soon as they start and put them out immediately. So immediate detection and at source suppression. That should be trialled, the problem is, the burn industry likes burning, they make income out of it and it is entrenched.

[3] Professor Kingsley Dixon was the foundation director of science at Kings Park and the Botanic Garden where he worked for 32 years. He is professor in the School of Molecular and Life Sciences at Curtin University.

AY: How are they making income out of it, the burning?

SCHULTZ: All the people who are paid to do it. The prescribed burning budget is in the tens of millions, tens of millions. If you look at all the agencies, there are a dozen government agencies that have some relationship with prescribed burning. Most of it is input on planning but the ones that are actually doing it, DFES [Department of Fire and Emergency Services], DBCA and local government. And local government under the *Bush Fires Act* has to power to make landowners burn.

I've just been in touch with Giles Hardy, Section 33 of the *Bush Fires Act*, they can send you a letter to tell you to burn and if you don't do it, they'll come and do it and send you the bill. And that happens. I've got a message, talking to Professor Giles Hardy, he had a property in the Shire of Armadale and the ranger came around and said, "Right, you must burn," and he had to burn, whether it would make the place safer, what impact it would have on the wildlife on his property and the smoke from the burn affecting people's health. None of that was taken into account. The ranger came—it hadn't been burnt in some years—"Burn." And he had to. That's what happens. The amount of burning going on is not just DBCA, the main culprit, also DFES also local government and landowners so we've got the whole state set on fire.

AY: I asked you about alternatives to prescribed burns. You mentioned Kingsley Dixon's, that's talking about a naturally occurring bushfire though isn't it, to identify it and put it out quickly?

SCHULTZ: Oh no, lightning strike. And arson. Most fires are started by people. Arson is the biggest cause and a lot of them are school boys lighting up the local bush. So arson, lightning, escapes, but by far the most number of ignitions are human caused. People don't realise and blame lightning but it's not, it's people starting fires.

AY: Do you think his idea is an alternative though?

SCHULTZ: Within this 500 metres of the places you want to protect, you can do it by planting non-flammable vegetation or thinning, pruning it, that sort of thing, and as a last resort burn because if you burn what grows back is more than what you took away so that has to be taken into account. It's sort of sacrificing the area. And also stop building unsuitable places, building in the wrong places. And there's all too much of that.

AY: Are you saying that population growth—

SCHULTZ: Absolutely, developers do it, they buy a farm in the middle of the forest, carve it up into five-acre lots and flog it off as country lifestyle. These people expect the forest around them to be burnt to protect them. The other problem [10:00] is that if all this burning is being done to meet the targets, they think they don't have to do anything, we're safe so we don't have to do anything, they have gutters full of leaves and they've got a totally inappropriate dwelling. So we've got ourselves in a real mess.

AY: How do you factor climate change into it? If you're saying, and I'm not sure that you are, that the bush will look after itself, but surely things have changed with climate change?

SCHULTZ: Well, we've probably been through—in the last five million years we've probably been through this before [laughs]. We think we've been there. There's one paper that says that with climate change, we should be burning less and not more and giving arguments for that because it takes things longer to recover. Instead of taking six years to recover from a fire, it might take 10 years so if we're burning every six years, it will never recover. I'll dig that paper out, there's one where it says with climate change we should be burning less and not more.

AY: So what should be done to safely to manage the forest, or do you believe it really manages itself?

SCHULTZ: We've made such a mess of it with logging. The forest that was here when we arrived, big trees—not all big trees. People think it was just big trees, there was a range of sizes, there were big trees then the recruitment coming up, which is what we're eliminating now. And then no understorey so there was virtually nothing to burn because the big trees surpressed the understorey. They know there was a big fire in the 1700s, they can tell by the scars on the trees, so with Aboriginal burning or not, there were wildfires that were fierce enough to mark the bark of ancient karri trees, that did happen. Then there wouldn't be another fire for 100 years so the forest had time to recover.

They've locked themselves into a very short rotation on the basis of pseudoscience. This is where it might get a bit tricky, there's a man called David Ward[4] and he found that if you scraped the outside off the misnamed 'grass trees', the balga, there are dark rings around the trunk. And he says, we know the growth rate of the balga, we've worked that out, so you can tell if these rings are made by fire, so by judging the distance between them you can judge how often the fires occurred. And he said that this meant the Noongars burnt the forest every four years. CALM of course loves that and they trotted him around the country with his balga and he showed people how the rings on balga and the distance apart shows the Noongars burnt the forest every four years. And they still stay that. It was on the DBCA website, the CALM website for years. It's probably still there and they probably still trot that out. So we're not burning enough, we should be burning every four years.

AY: Are they acknowledging Indigenous fire practices? Not what's been happening today because as I understand it, the idea is to leave a mosaic of unburnt areas. It's totally different.

[4] David Ward is a retired senior research scientist at CALM. His balga paper is available at https://library.dbca.wa.gov.au/static/FullTextFiles/LS0064.pdf

SCHULTZ: Well, if you think how many hectares of jarrah forests—four million hectares of jarrah forest and they'd be burning a quarter of it every year. I mean, absolute utter nonsense. Some scientists, they look at the fire history by believing the balga nonsense and they did a fire history using satellite images and they found the history of fire from satellite images showed that 'believing the balga' fire history gave false positives and false negatives and it should not be used for fire management. That piece of research from some real scientists gets ignored.

You don't build silly buildings in silly places and expect the bush to pay the [15:00] price. You stop calling it fuel; it's native vegetation and habitat. We're burning habitat of all sorts of things. The thing about this burning, not only do you get this massive growth of fire weeds whether they're native or introduced, in the litter on the forest floor you've got the natural decomposers—microbes and invertebrates and all sorts of things. I've discussed about slime mould, it's in there too reducing the fuel load. You've eliminated your natural fuel and how long, they've got no idea, how long it will take to come back? Probably a lot longer than the time before the next fire. So they'll never come back. The native animals that eat it—wyolies and quendas and potteroos and echnidas that reduce the fuel load by about half—they've all gone. Wyolies were here like rabbits, pre-rabbit population there were wyolies, almost all gone and on the brink of extinction. So we've taken out the natural fuel reducers and they're not coming back. We're replacing natural habitat reduction by burning and it's counterproductive.

The other aspect starting to get a mention is the effect of smoke from prescribed burns. They know that smoke from prescibed burns kills people. If we're burning to protect life and property, we're using a method that kills people. And it's not just what gets over Perth, it's the whole South West for days and weeks on end, subjecting people to this prescribed burn smoke.

AY: And this has been an issue in southeast Queensland, in Brisbane, in the last week or so, there has been a lot of smoke problems in Brisbane.

SCHULTZ: People with lung problems, send them to their doctors, send them to the hospital. There is one doctor who lives in the hills, he's an asthmatic and he's said it nearly kills him. What he did, he's written to tourist bureaus around the world saying, don't come to Western Australia because the bush is all burnt black and there's so much smoke you'll all get sick. That's one way of tackling the problem. I think we maybe should use it a bit more often, even for eastern states people: don't come to Western Australia because the bush is burnt black and the smoke'll make you very sick.

AY: Over the years, you have acquired some land, had a share in land, I'd like to know a little about this and how you manage that land. You had some land first of all I think near Nornalup.

SCHULTZ: Pemberton.

AY: What was the reason behind that and how did you manage that land?

SCHULTZ: Just left it. We had to put in firebreaks and that's another one of my hobby horses. They're not firebreaks at all, they're access tracks but we can talk about that later. We bought this—I think it was in 1979—with two friends, Naomi Segal and Arthur Weston, we had half each, it was a farm outside Pemberton. It had some bush on it, part of it had been cleared and farmed and part of it had some nice karri forest. It had national park near it and state forest, karri forest in it. So we used to go down there and camp. They had to sell their share when their mortgage rate went up to 16 percent, people forget about that, in the 80s. Their half share has moved around a bit and just last year we sold our share. We were down to a third share and we sold our third to Andy Russell who'd owned another third for a long time. We were just sort of sitting on it. I suppose we'd have got a lot more for it when we sold it than when we bought it. But it wasn't bought for that purpose, it was bought to save the bush on it.

We got out of that one and in about '83 we bought a quarter of—[20:00] I don't know whether it was a group settlement block but it was released as a

farm, 150 acres, just on the edge of Nornalup. If you go along Riverside Drive, the first farm block at the end of Riverside Drive is our property and it's in the Shire of Denmark, Hay Location 601, 150 acres and it was sold as a farm but they never got round to clearing it. Bunnings took out the best karri in the 60s and Robin Adair bought it in the 70s and he bought it with others and they were going to go and do into a sustainable lifestyle thing down there. One of their number, I forget her name, her father was an economics professor at Murdoch.

We bought her share in '83 or '84 so we owned a quarter of this uncleared, it had never been cleared, just logged when they took out the best karri so the karris have got a hollow butt and a dry side. There are some really big karri trees there and it's also got red tingle and yellow tingle and also some jarrah banksia woodland, unfortunately full of dieback. It goes down to the Frankland River and between us and the river there's a strip of what is a road reserve which will never be made and then a strip of national park. The road reserve is meant to go into a national park but between it being a road reserve and national park it has to go through a stage of being unallocated Crown land and there is a concern that the Noongars might claim it. It's sitting as road reserve, so we've got our block, a strip of road reserve that'll never get built and then the strip of national park so basically we can go down to the Frankland River, a steep hill.

We think it hasn't been burnt since the 1937 fire. There was a huge wildfire that started somewhere near Manjimup and swept right down to the coast in 1937 and we think it may not have been burnt since then. There was another big burn in the 50s, but we don't know whether—the records in those days are not very good so we don't know whether it was burned more recently. Although Arthur Weston, who was a botanist, said we should chop down a karri hazel tree and count the rings in it, but we've never done that.

In the 80s we got a letter from the Denmark shire saying, "Divide your property into four and burn down one quarter each year." The bushfire people came out to see us and we walked around the place and they said

they'd never seen red tingle that age with no sign of burning, no fire scars on their trunks at all. In the end we gave them all a bottle of beer and they said, "Right, do your firebreaks and we'll leave you alone." So they left us alone.

Robin, who owns three quarters, he's had to do a bit of burning round his place. What he does is, he waits for a nice wet day so there's a lot of smoke and they can see that there's been a fire so they don't look too closely. It's one of the rare places that hasn't been burnt for a very long time. My son wanted to build a place on it, I think he's changed his mind. You don't build houses in the karri forest, it's not a good idea.

AY: So how do you use that land? Do you go camping for example?

SCHULTZ: The people we bought it from wanted to do the sustainable living thing so they built a house with everything recycled—a shack, a real shack, galvanized iron, recycled windows, recycled floor boards. The galvanized iron on the roof, they turned it over so the holes are on the top of the ridge instead of the bottom and put a dob of something over all the holes so it didn't leak.

So there was a one-room shack on it. They intended to build a bit more and they cleared a bit for a garden, they cleared a bit where they were going to have pasture for goats. So they did a little bit of clearing then Penny sold it to us and we used to go down there and stay in the shack. There were no toilet facilities. Oh, that's the other thing, sometime in the 80s, the Denmark shire hired a plane or helicopter [25:00] or something and went round spying on all these dwelllings and we got a letter saying, this shack was in breach of every building regulation that had ever been written so you have to do this, this and this.

And I wrote back to them and said, "Look, we only go down for a week at a time a couple of times a year. We're not going to upgrade it, it's not worth it and if you try to enforce it and try and make us pull the house down," I said, "we'll still shit in the bush. [laughs] We'll still go down and stay in a tent." So

they left us alone. And then my son and his partner arrived from Victoria about five years ago, went and stayed down there and started tarting it up. So it's sort of a tarted up shack with an unbelievable amount of junk around it—lots of solar panels, recycled watering system and stuff. Now they live in a house in Walpole so the tarted up shack just sits there. I don't know what'll happen to it.

AY: Does it have a toilet now?

SCHULTZ: Yes, a composting toilet, that's used for their veggie garden [laughs]. It's a job removing this great big can. Yes, so they have a composting toilet and the shower recess is on the front porch. So that was the second one. The third one was—in 1985 I was a judge's associate to Justice Clark in the District Court and he used to like looking at the Public Trustee's, they used to put up things for sale on a window in the Hay Street Mall, we'd been to lunch somewhere and we were walking back. On this sign, the Public Trustee's sign, there was a sign for the sale of a property down Black Point Road, which I knew. I thought to myself, either that's clapped-out farmland or it's bush.

I think it was Australia Day, it would have been 1985 or '86, I went down there with Peter Ewing in his car, he worked for Sarich, and Max Churchward, we went down there and had a look and we said, "We've got to have it." We just went in Peter's work car so we had to walk in and he had about 20 kilograms of camera and water because he didn't know if there was any water there. So we walked in and we saw this place. There had been a fire in '83, so it'd not long been burnt and poor old Max went in shorts and the prickly moses [wattle], the dead prickly moses, was prickles, prickles, prickles and Max was just wearing shorts, I don't know how he survived. But we had a look at the place and we decided we really must have it. It was an intestate estate, it had been granted to someone called Cleve Thomas in the mid-30s for 10 shilllings an acre. Elders tried to auction it and it didn't get one bid, it's 800 acres. It was a mile and a half or two miles of coastal frontage so we got our own private beach. They put it on the market for $180,000.

AY: Where is this?

SCHULTZ: It's halfway between Walpole and Augusta. It's the first private property bordering D'Entrecasteaux National Park west of Black Point which is a lovely rock formation. It's a great surfing beach and everything. So we offered them $100,000 and that was a bit rude, we eventually got it for $150,000. We had 15 shares at $10,000 each, we found enough people to fork out $10,000. We intended to set up an incorporated association so the association would own the place then you could change shares but all else happened before we got round to incorporating. We've got at least 12 names on the title and that's going to multiply because Max and Barbara Churchward, they had four shares, they've both died and they've passed it to their three kids and partners so the number of names on the title is going to keep on growing.

So we bought it in mid-1986 and we used to go down there a lot, a couple of times a year because [30:00] you could walk to the beach, we've got our own private beach and the bush and camping there. When we bought it, there was a cattleman's hut on it because Cleve Thomas was a dairy farmer at Balingup and he used to take his cattle there over summer and let them loose on the place. There were fences but when we got there, there hadn't been cattle for I don't know how long and the fences were all broken down. So it had never been cleared and they'd built themselves this cattleman's hut of galvanized iron, jarrah and asbestos. They had a rainwater tank off the roof and they had a generator so there was electric lighting. But we didn't want the generator so they removed that, I think they reduced the sale price by $50 or something for removing the generator.

My older daughter Rosalie never liked the place, she thought it was spooky and rat-filled and she didn't like it at all. I forget what year it was, but a marri branch fell on the hut and squashed it flat. What we did, everyone over 60 buried the asbestos [laughs]. We got the galvanized iron off the roof and put it on the slope of a sand dune beside the camp so we still collect water in the

tank, so we've got a good water supply. We have permanent water, there's a stream running onto the beach so if you walk down to the beach which is about one and a half kilometres from the camping area to the beach, there's always running water there but we've got the rain water tank which fills up. We went down there once and the tank was empty and we think somebody was using it to irrigate their marijuana plot, because we went down there and found evidence of piles of manure and stuff they had stacked up.

Now they couldn't get away with it because drones would find it but we went down there, Max and Phill and I. We went on top of this sand dune and there was this crop of marijuana, oh, shoulder high marijuana with a fence around it and all mulched. There was no way of getting there by—you couldn't get a car there, you couldn't get a bike there. They must have walked miles to get in there and tend this crop of marijuana. We did a very silly thing, we pulled it up and pulled down—they had a fence round it—what we should have done is just taken the crop and got rid of it because they might have taken revenge by setting fire to the place. What we did was pulled up the crop, dug a hole and buried it. And when we told some of our colleagues, they said, "You what?" [laughs] We buried a crop of marijuana. We call the place Wonil, which is peppermint in Noongar. Where the camp is are these massive, massive marri trees, huge marri trees. So there's marri and then there's jarrah, a jarrah-marri forest. There's some yate and there's some bullich but most of it is coastal heath and peppermint. It used to be peppermint woodland but the big peppermint trees have been killed by fire so now we've got these peppermint thickets because when the peppermints are killed they coppice from the root and instead of having one trunk you have six or eight or 10 so it's turned into impenetrable thickets.

We had a botanist look at the place and he said, "You keep fire out for 30 years." Well, see we bought it in '86, CALM burnt us out in '94, CALM and and an arsonist, the whole place was burnt out in '94. And then CALM burnt us out in a prescribed burn in 2011. So we've never got to the 30 years, I'll never see the 30 years. And there was a partially burnt, it would have been five years ago, some arsonists lit up in the national park on our eastern

boundary and about a third of the place got burnt then. But we're trying to keep fire out and get to the 30 years without fire. Instead of these impenetrable thickets of peppermint [35:00] coppice you'll have a peppermint woodland but I don't think we ever will, you know. One year when CALM burnt a third of the place, an arsonist burnt out the other two-thirds. Somebody lit a fire off our northwest boundary on a hot windy day knowing that the wind would burn the place out. That was a deliberate burning.

AY: So if it's not CALM, it's arsonists. Hearing you talk about that, it's no wonder you've had such a love of the forests and your involvement with the Forest Alliance. Can we talk about, your involvement with the WA Forest Alliance. You're a committee member?

SCHULTZ: Because I don't do Facebook and I don't do social media, I'm only very remotely associated with WAFA now. I was there when it was founded. We had a meeting of forest groups, Donnelly River, in August 1990. We'd tried once before but it hadn't worked out. There was a group called SWAN—South-West Activists Network—sort of preceded WAFA. I was there for the Conservation Council, and Rachel Siewert, she was the coordinator of the Cons [Conservation] Council then. The groups like Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest, that's Jim and Mary Frith. There are a lot of forest-oriented groups, the Wilderness Society, Cons Council and South-West [Forests] Defence Foundation which I founded with Arthur Conacher in '75 so we decided to form this umbrella group. The members are groups, not individuals. You're welcome to support and come along, but the members of WAFA were groups.

It was in the early '90s, we teamed up with David McKenzie from the Wilderness Society, I was Cons Council and Peter Robertson was WAFA. We found enough money to pay Peter as a coordinator, this was after South-West Forests got all that money, but we had this sort of triumvirate, this group of three, and we coordinated and organised the activities and the campaigns asking groups what to do. A group would be doing something and they'd call in the help of WAFA and the other groups. So it was a well-

coordinated and well-organised campaign. We produced our own broadsheet and submissions, lobbying politicians and public meetings.

One thing we did was—CALM had got these maps showing disturbance of bushland, big photos from satellite images, showing disturbance of the bushland. There were 12 of these sheets covering the whole of the forest region. I remember Peter went out and picketed CSIRO because that's where they'd come from and they said, "Oh these were for CALM." But this bloke at CSIRO who was very helpful, Jeremy Wallace, he helped us to get our own set. So Peter and I did a tour of the South West towns organised by June Lowe who worked for the Environmental Defenders Office and the Greens, she's married to Giz Watson. So Peter and I did this tour with these maps, right through the towns of the South West and people were absolutely stunned because anything with a colour on had been disturbed in the last 10 years and bright red meant it had been very recently disturbed. And the amount of disturbing from logging and burning and not just CALM, not just the department, mining and private landowners, it was just shocking to see this disturbance. We should do it again because people don't realise how much we're [40:00] interfering with the native vegetation, just trashing it.

And then WAFA worked up to the 2001 election and somewhere along the line, we got the help of Guy Grant who was a professional consultant. He said, "Your motto slogan is, 'It's the old growth, stupid'," so we fought a campaign on saving the old growth forest. We did a public opinion survey with the company that Richard Court used. When you've explained what old growth was, the majority of people wanted it saved. So we worked on that campaign. It was a tremendous campaign, very successful. One of the people who came in was Patrick Weir and his wife, Maggie Bourke, they formed their own old growth group and they organised a public meeting, it would have been about '96 and they got 20,000 people into the streets of Perth. Lobbying the Labor Party, getting it to have a policy of protecting old growth forests, then you've got Liberals for Forests.

AY: Have you found over the years that your job has got easier in terms of public awareness, that the public is much more onside?

SCHULTZ: Not with burning. We're still up against a powerful, well financed and very vocal logging lobby up to their old tricks. I mean, Geoff Gallop was elected with a policy of protecting old growth forests so what the loggers did was change the definition of old growth. So they kept on logging for another 20 years.

AY: What do you make of WAFA's scorecard I suppose, lobbying to have an end to native forest logging which is going to take place next year?

SCHULTZ: But it's not, it's not.

AY: Ah, so what are you saying then?

SCHULTZ: They cover up with this little trick and they call it ecological thinning. They talk about this overstocked regrowth karri and jarrah forest but then when you look, they just slip in, well we might do a little bit outside the regrowth. And one of the reasons they give for doing it is that it looks better, visual amenity, thinned forest looks better. So they anticipate thinning 8,000 hectares a year which is more than is being logged on average under the current Forest Management Plan, that's 6,500 hectares a year so they would actually be active in more forests in the next 10 years than they have been in the last 10 years. They're pulling the wool over the government's eyes. The government says, "End native forest logging," and the department says, "Yes, but we'll do ecological thinning for the health of the forest."

AY: I looked at WAFA's website and they seem to be pretty happy with this—

SCHULTZ: They're wrong, they're just plain wrong. I have this big difference with them. Karri self-thins and they know that. You look at the Boranup Forest, beautiful forest, it's so beautiful when they give a picture of karri forests they give that even though the Conservations Through Reserves committee say it doesn't

have the sombre magnificence of uncut forest. That's the forest they portray as karri forest. It's self-grown, self-thinned regrowth. So they don't need to—people who've done this management plan, their jobs depend on logging forests. So they're going to log forests and they'll find excuses to do it. They have not done the research. Research on thinning has looked at getting better saw logs quicker. And of course it doesn't work because it spreads dieback in jarrah forests and they know that. So that's not too good for the health of the forest. It compacts the soil [45:00] and that's not good for the health of the forest and it can take up to 50 years to recover from the impacts of compaction. Karri forest self-thins but you got all the stumps and what you get is Armillaria.

So they tell you about the benefits for which they have no research and they completely ignore the dis-benefits. The people who have done this plan, their job depends on logging the forests. So they're going to log the forest.

AY: There are a lot of jobs and a lot of money involved with—

SCHULTZ: Well not that many jobs. The department doesn't have that many jobs, you know, their jobs depend on logging the forests.

AY: But the local communities, if you count all of that, there are a lot of jobs.

SCHULTZ: There used to be a lot of jobs. Now it's done by machine, not AI, it's just plain old machines. They don't have a faller and somebody hauling the logs, a man and a machine chops the log down and carts it to where it has to go. Well, if you're going to log, go and log plantations. Actually that happened. There was research done in the Kingston Forest, we heard that when the tree faller realised that when he chopped down a tree, the possums in the tree got killed, he left the native forest and went to work in plantations. I don't know whether it's true.

AY: It's a good story though. Can you tell me about the Environmental Defenders Office, which you were involved with. This is a legal service?

SCHULTZ: Yes.

AY: How did you become involved and what did you do?

SCHULTZ: Well they had them in other states and the law is supposed to, if it's enforced, supposed to underpin everything. Land management in all its forms is underpinned by law and we could see the department and the loggers were breaking the law. They had rules and regulations that they completely ignored. People need legal advice. Private land owners quite often can't afford it, groups can't afford it so I'd done this law degree and I knew a few lawyers, especially Michael Barker who became a judge.

We decided to form an Environmental Defenders Office in Perth. I've got a history of it somewhere, it's sort of gone out of my mind a bit. We started the EDO—

AY: Was this a volunteer kind of, pro bono work for lawyers?

SCHULTZ: No, they had paid staff. Labor governments used to give them a healthy grant. The Libs cut it down, or cut it out and it was based on donations.

AY: So the idea was that individual people could come to this office?

SCHULTZ: Yes, as long as their cause was not commercial, it's environmental, they can give advice or take legal action. South-West Forests was set up with the idea of taking legal action and our first action was before the EDO, I think it was 1980, '81 and our lawyer was Bob French, later Supreme Court justice Robert French. We did another action if '92, there was one just before they came in, our action ended up in the High Court because Michael Bennett, he was the EDO lawyer and he was there with us so I guess they helped us when we did the High Court action which of course we lost.

AY: And what was that about, why did you lose?

SCHULTZ: The judges didn't understand. We'd got injunctions to stop logging [50:00] and, I'm just forgetting what—we've had various legal actions. One we took in about '93 because in '92 CALM was working up to a new management plan. They go for 10 years and there was one that started in '88. It was meant to go through to '97 but halfway through they decided they wanted to change it. So '92 they were working up to this change one which was due to start in '93. They were producing a publication, a technical report with various chapters and one chapter was on the impact of climate change on the forests, that was to be chapter two. Chapter three was to be the impact of logging and burning and forest management on the karri forest. Well, what was to be chapter two by John Blythe and Angas Hopkins and a third CALM scientist, the prognosis for the forest was so bad that that report was totally suppressed. It never saw the light of day. Somebody kindly sent me a draft, so I have a draft. But chapter two was completely removed from this publication and chapter three becomes chapter two.

So chapter three, impact of logging, somebody gave me the pre-publication version and it's got three handwritten in and I've got this pre-publication and then I've got what was actually published. And if you compare the pre-publication and the published, every criticism of logging burning is either taken out or toned down. It was very ferociously censored. I could compare the two things. So we took this court action saying that CALM had basically deceived the public, in its public consultation. We lost, ah.

AY: What was the basis you lost on?

SCHULTZ: I forget, I forget. Barry Carbon [former EPA chair] he did an affidavit for us, John Bailey [professor of environmental science] did an affidavit for us supporting what we did. I forget why we lost. You go up against government and government agencies, judges are pretty conservative, so we lost that one.

AY: There's so much to talk about. I do want to talk about the Conservation Council but I think we might leave that for next time.

SCHULTZ: Hmm, and WAFA. WAFA was absolutely fabulous during the 80s. Peter Robertson was the coordinator and he was absolutely brilliant. Then he stayed on a little while and then we couldn't pay him anymore and he went off to Darwin. Jess Beckerling became the coordinator. She's had a long history of activism and being the younger generation, she's into the direct action blockading. She's another who's done an absolutely fabulous job, brilliant at it, her presentation and negotiating skills. I was on the committee for a while but I'm basically out of it now. I just do my own thing for South-West Forests.

AY: Do you think that WAFA is in good hands though?

SCHULTZ: Oh yes, Cons Council is the one that's in a mess.

AY: Alright, till next time, thank you Beth. [54:11]

END OF FILE TWO

FILE THREE OF THREE

This is another interview with Dr Beth Schultz AO for the State Library and today is Tuesday 13 June 2023 and we're again at her home in Nedlands. I'm Anne Yardley. I'd like to talk about the Conservation Council but before we do that, last time I was talking about firebreaks and you said well, they're not really firebreaks, they're—

SCHULTZ: Access tracks.

AY: So what is the difference and why does it matter?

SCHULTZ: Well, they don't really break anything. They've decided arbitrarily that they should be three metres wide; they put them on both sides of the fence so you've got a cleared strip six metres wide covering both sides of the fence. It gets invaded with flammable weeds, it's far more flammable than the things they scraped off; erosion; it's an access track for predators; it's an access track for illegal entry by people on quad bikes and these things they run around on; and it doesn't stop anything. So they really are access tracks. Shires enforce them, make people put them in and yet they're doing all this damage—erosion, weed invasion, predator entry. It's just not thought through. I've never seen any research done on them. I did enquire once at the Cooperative Research Centre, has anyone ever done any research on firebreaks. I don't think I ever got an answer. That's what they really are, they're access tracks to get firefighting equipment in.

AY: Is there not an argument that that is a suitable purpose?

SCHULTZ: Well, you don't need it on both sides of a fence. And where they are put, they might be put in different places and why are they necessarily three metres wide. How did they decide on three metres? Is that so two vehicles pass? And is that really necessary to clear three metres so you can have two vehicles? The whole thing needs research.

AY: Yes, is it just about vehicle movement or is it also about fire not being able to jump the canopy?

SCHULTZ: It doesn't stop anything. You imagine a three metre-wide firebreak in the karri forest, or the jarrah forest, or the wandoo forest or in coastal heath. The embers can blow kilometres so what difference is three metres going to make. It's again misleading naming of something. We're doing it all the time, we shouldn't call them firebreaks, call them access tracks which is what they really are and design them and use them for that purpose. Don't put them on both sides of a fence.

AY: Could they be managed to keep out invasive weeds and the like?

SCHULTZ: I don't see how. Remove the native vegetation which is less flammable than the weeds that invade them. So there's a constant annual job removing flammable weeds. The whole thing is so ill thought-through. Somebody decided somewhere that, oh well, we'll call them firebreaks. We'll scrape these tracks, you know, hundreds and thousands, millions of kilometres of firebreaks causing erosion and the other damage they cause. I've never seen any research on them, so there we go.

AY: Do you think there is an alternative, or just not needed at all?

SCHULTZ: Design them for access to where you want to take your firefighting equipment and design with that in mind rather than both sides of a fence.

AY: Let's turn to the Conservation Council. Tell me a little bit about that. I paused at the beginning thinking am I going to say Conservation Council or Commission, they sound like similar organisations but they're different, so tell me what the Conservation Council is.

SCHULTZ: It's a non-government voluntary organisation that was started in about 1967, it goes back a long, long way. It has been very active with really good people, one in particular who comes to mind is a man called Graeme Rundle

and for some reason he got under the notice of [0:05:00] political parties because Labor and Liberal, they both appointed him, he was on the Pastoral Lands Board, he was on the dieback committee, he was on the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority. He kept getting government appointments. Actually he was an employee of Main Roads and they were very lenient, I mean, he used all their equipment for his photocopying and whatever he did in time out.

He formed an organisation with his partner Penny Hussey, who was an amazing environmentalist, teacher then worked for CALM. They formed the Western Australian National Parks and Reserves Association, WANPARA, to look after national parks in the ecology and conservation movement. It's another one of these groups that is now defunct. But he used to write a constant stream of letters to ministers and politicians but he used the name of the president of the association who probably couldn't string a letter together so all these letters went out in the name of Walter Jones but actually it was Graeme writing all these letters and doing all the lobbying. He had so much knowledge. He'd started in the 60s, he tried to have some sort of sorghum farm in the northwest. Way back when there was some project to develop some agricultural venture in cahoots with the English, I think, and it flopped. He became an activist. As he said, as a kid he used to set fire to the bush round his house [laughs]. He went back a long way and very sadly died of a melanoma that he didn't look after, he died way before he should have, a terrific loss.

But he and I were on the committee of the Conservation Council. I worked full-time for the Conservation Council from 1990 from when I had to resign as a lawyer.

AY: And I think you said you did that unpaid initially?

SCHULTZ: Oh I was never paid, never paid.

AY: So what year did you start being a non-paid worker?

SCHULTZ: Well, 1990. The Cons Council started in the 1960s. It was a well-established organisation and very active. The committee was made up of people active in a particular area so if you wanted to push your area, like waterbirds which was Joan Payne, or wetlands was Phil Jenning. You got elected to the committee and you pushed your cause through, you became Cons Council spokesperson on that issue. So I became the spokesperson on forests and fire.

AY: How did all that come about, how did you discover the Conservation Council and get elected?

SCHULTZ: The members are groups so our group, South-West Forests, as soon as it was formed we joined it. There's strength in numbers and support and advice so South-West Forests was a member as was Campaign to Save Native Forests. We got incorporated in the 80s but I forget when we joined Cons Council, but very early on. You attended as a delegate of your group and then you nominated for a position on the committee of half a dozen or so—president, secretary, treasurer, then half a dozen committee members. I forget when I got onto the committee and then I was the president for three years. I was a bit too radical for Sue Graham-Taylor and Phil Jennings who were the sort of conservative members of the council so I didn't get a second term. Oh, and Harry Cohen was another, he was on there, I think he was representing Sustainable Population Australia or as it was, Australians for an Ecologically Sustainable Population which changed its name to Sustainable Population Australia, SPA, which is what they are now. [0:10:00] Yes, the three years I was president, vice president and then on the committee.

AY: You can't quite recall what years they were?

SCHULTZ: After 1990. I was president probably about '93 to '96 thereabouts and then I stayed on, I was still on the committee and then Chris Tallentire, we called the head paid staff the coordinator. First of all Rachel Siewart, she was our coordinator. She went off to Greens politics and the one who replaced her,

Chris Tallentire, he went on to Labor politics in 2008. So we had to appoint a new coordinator and there were four people on the selection panel, there was Sue Graham-Taylor and David Harries, who was an academic, he was then president and David Wake who in the 1980s was Cons Council's first junior environmentalist, an award we created, and I. So there were four of us.

David Wake and I wanted Charles Roche. Sue Graham-Taylor and David Harries wanted Piers Verstegen who'd been an advisor to the Labor environment minister. Anyway, because Sue and David Harries were more senior in the hierarchy than David Wake and I, we conceded so they appointed Piers Verstegen. There's a complete turnaround. He was no longer a coordinator, he became a director and he corporatised Cons Council. He was probably appointed in 2009 and because I was the forests and fires spokesperson for Cons Council, when Piers said he was going to go and meet the minister, I said, "Can I come too?" And he said, "Yes, sure." Then I discovered he went off to see the minister and didn't even tell me.

AY: Was this deliberate, do you think?

SCHULTZ: Oh yes, absolutely, absolutely. He didn't want anybody who knew anything more than he did on any subject and he became a spokesperson on everything. He was Cons Council and he was spokesperson on everything. And he was no longer a coordinator, he became the director. So the 2011 election, they did a sort of branch stacking deal. They brought in people who'd never been to a Cons Council meeting in their lives and they got rid of Graeme Rundle and me, we were kicked off the committee.

AY: On what basis?

SCHULTZ: Oh they didn't want us, they didn't like us. Piers has stated he didn't like us, and David, they didn't like us. There was a blow-up, it would have been the 2010 AGM which we held out at Murdoch and there was a row about a letter being written to Main Roads. They were doing the Forrest Highway, and Cons Council was apparently seeking a grant from Main Roads to appoint

somebody to look at their environmental behaviour and there was a question about whether the letter had been written, whether it had been read, sent and Paddy Weaver was there as SPA delegate, she put up a motion that Cons Council should never seek or receive any payment from Main Roads because of a conflict of interest. And there was a big row over whether the letter had been written or sent. I'd seen it so I knew it existed.

There was a row with David Harries, the president, and Piers Verstegen who was the director, about it and they became very angry with Graeme Rundle and me for embarrassing them in front of this AGM. That would have been one of the reasons but Piers Verstegen wanted to be spokesperson on everything and the new executive—they put people on the committee who'd never been to a Cons Council meeting in their lives so they wanted a lawyer and a PR person and this and that and something else. They didn't want activists, which the committee had always been before, came on board to push the interests of your particular organisation. Didn't want that anymore, they wanted a sort of [0:15:00] corporatised executive. The Cons Council is now in such a mess, they're trying to retrieve it, Piers has gone and they're trying to resuscitate Cons Council but the feeling about it is that it's lost its way. So yeah, I gave up when they kicked me off in 2011, I gave up on it.

AY: A couple of things there then: funding, you talked about funding about Main Roads, what's the funding for Cons Council, where does it come from?

SCHULTZ: It used to get a grant from the federal government and the state government, donations and fundraising. It used to organise conferences on energy, on feral animals, on sustainability. It's done nothing of those sorts of things. We had appointed someone to do an enquiry into people's attitudes to national parks and we published a list of all the conservation groups and their contacts. All sorts of things. I think it's tried to take legal action over fracking, it might have been, but it's just lost its way. As far as I can see, it's a nothing. The active group in WA is the Urban Bushland Council. Yes, it's very, very active. It has great speakers, it has 30, 50 people at meetings.

AY: Where did the activists go then, who were in Cons Council?

SCHULTZ: Well the forest activists have gone to the WA Forest Alliance, it's an umbrella group whose members are all groups. Urban Bushland Council, it's got about 80 members, 80 groups working to save their bit of bush. They mightn't be incorporated, they might just be friends of their local bit of bush. It has excellent speakers, regular meetings, it's doing great work.

AY: Cons Council, what sort of relationship does it have with government? Or maybe that's changed over the years?

SCHULTZ: Well, Piers was very influential at working with government, he was credited with being one of the 100 most influential in this state for a while, so obviously ministers were listening to him, but I don't know.

AY: Is that a role of the council, to lobby government on behalf of the organisation it represents?

SCHULTZ: Yes, that's what it stands for but now they don't take the local person who knows most about it, Piers goes along, the fount of all knowledge.

AY: What was happening during the years you were active, some of the challenges, some of the achievements?

SCHULTZ: Well we were very active in the WA Forests Alliance because it was an umbrella group. Actually [laughs], there was a question that WAFA couldn't become a member of Cons Council because an umbrella group joining another umbrella group got a bit complicated. A lot of the members of WAFA were individually members of Cons Council so Sue and Phil Jennings decided that WAFA couldn't join Cons Council. I was Cons Council's rep on WAFA so there was that connection. Through the 90s, especially the second half of the 90s, there was there was this triumvirate, there was Peter Robertson who was the Wilderness Society, no he was WAFA itself because he was the paid coordinator of WAFA. David McKenzie was the Wilderness

Society, I was Cons Council and Peter Robertson, we had the three of us and we used to coordinate and meet and plan the activities, linking the groups together—you do this, you do that—and waged enormously successful campaigns through the second half of the 90s. We had our formation meeting in August of 1990 at Donnelly River and we formed WAFA. And it just grew and grew until it was the most successful organisation, the most successful campaigns and that was where our PR advisor, Guy Grant, said, "It's the old growth, stupid". [0:20:00] So we fought to save the old growth except the department did the double-cross on us and changed the definition so they could keep on logging for another 20 years. And now they're doing the same thing again. The government says stop logging and these people say well, we'll do ecological thinning which means they're going to keep on logging for another 10 years. They are so devious.

AY: Tell me about some of the other challenges or campaigns you were mounting during that time?

SCHULTZ: Well, working to get more national parks, particularly—Graeme Rundle was working on the northwest because he was more familiar with that and because he was on the National Parks and Native Conservation Authority, he said he'd visited every national park and nature reserve in the state. So he got around. And he was on the Pastoral Lands Board. But, working for more national parks, stopping clearing, getting Fitzgerald added to it and not being released for agriculture—the addition to the Fitzgerald National Park. Trying to get some constraints on mining activity, I can't remember marine activity but there must have been because we were into everything. It was a busy time; forests and fire and forests through the 80s trying to save the old growth and then the next move to save what's left of it. We have except it gets subverted by the department whose jobs depend on logging and burning.

AY: You said you were too radical in the end for the Cons Council, why?

SCHULTZ: Yes, [laughs] I suppose I didn't mince my words. It was not only Cons Council, but owning these bush blocks in the South West we came into personal contact with CALM. I remember getting a friendly lawyer sending a letter to CALM, they were going to do a prescribed burn near our place down at Nornalup, getting her to write a letter saying if your fire enters our property, we'll sue the pants off you.

AY: Did that work?

SCHULTZ: Well, they didn't burn us out. They did burn, but they didn't burn us. And then there was the 1994 fire which was CALM's fault. There was a fire started at Black Point and they thought they'd put it out so they went home and it took off and burnt our place out, the eastern part of our place and an arsonist burnt out the other two thirds. Rick Sneeuwjagt who was one of their head fire lighters, waged a horrible media campaign saying it was all my fault because we didn't do prescribed burning [laughs]. The media was absolutely horrible, all the country newspapers.

AY: To you personally?

SCHULTZ: Oh yes, absolutely personally, oh yes, it was all my fault. On their maps about this fire they had 'Schultz' written as the name of the block. I mean, my share, I owned about one-fifteenth of it, they forget about all the other owners. They actually wrote on the map 'Schultz' across the property.

AY: What was the attitude of the other owners, were they supportive?

SCHULTZ: Oh yes, all like-minded people. When the fire got into the place, I was the one they rang at seven o'clock in the morning to ask for permission. Well, they didn't have to ask permission, under the law they'd got every right to go in without asking anybody but they wanted to give me a stir and rang me up in the morning to say, "Can we go and do your place down there because there's a fire coming from Black Point?" Yes, it was horrible.

AY: What was your response?

SCHULTZ: Well, what do you do? They did enormous damage, their firefighting was just over the top. They scraped this huge bare place through the middle of the block and then an arsonist lit up [0:25:00] and burnt out the other two-thirds so the whole place was burnt. That was ’94. Same thing happened in 2011, they lit a prescribed burn up near Nannup, it was meant to burn to Milyeannup. It was meant to burn six and a half thousand hectares, it got away and burnt another 50,000 hectares. It never got a mention because it was exactly the same time as the Margaret River escape, the prescribed burn that got away and nearly burnt out Margaret River so the fire that burnt 50,000 hectares of bush including our place from boundary to boundary never got a mention. After that, I’ve just been looking at it, they’ve changed the CALM Act so now CALM can’t be sued for doing you any damage.

AY: Why?

SCHULTZ: They are protected. Anything done, following any of their plans or policies or guidelines, done in goodwill, they’re protected. You’d have to prove that it wasn’t done in good will. There was another case about 2004 or thereabouts, wine growers sued CALM for a prescribed burn that caused them $620,000 worth of damage to their crops. And they lost. So they took it on appeal to the the Appeals Court, there were three judges and two judges who didn’t know their arse from their elbow, they dismissed the appeal but the third judge, who was a farm lad, he knew what was going on. He set out all the reasons why prescribed burning is a bloody bad idea and why it's so popular because the media prints all this stuff about how good it is and how great it is and how much we need it and they get away with it. So he would have allowed the appeal. The other two dismissed the appeal. After that they tightened it up so if CALM burns you out, you’ll have a tough time getting any compensation. It’s just shocking. They amended the CALM Act in about 2015, ’16. I’ve just been looking it up.

AY: Can you think of any other challenges during your time?

SCHULTZ: [sigh] Well I was in Richard Court's electorate so I could pretty much go off and get a one-to-one with him. We got on quite well. They did make some moves because we got the Regional Forest Agreement in 1999, that was hilarious because we had this wonderful woman called Donna Selby, she was from the South Coast Environment Group, SCEG, and she was just amazing. When Cheryl Edwardes was saying, I don't know whether it was the millionth or the five hundred thousandth, person to walk across the Tree Top Walk, Donna jumped on and seized the limelight. And then when they launched the RFA—it was John Howard, it wouldn't have been Zoom, but whatever, and the minister were announcing the Regional Forest Agreement 1999, she jumped on the stage and grabbed the microphone. And then she got sued for something and got off. She was prosecuted three or four times and every time she got off. She was called Teflon Donna, I don't know where she is now, but she was one of the amazing people who emerged in this campaign and did amazing things.

AY: What was the result of that campaign?

SCHULTZ: Well, the worst parts of the Regional Forest Agreement were avoided, even the coalition government were aware that things were changing but then we were working up to the 2001 election to get Gallop elected, taking him down into the Walpole Wilderness Area and Judy Edwards, who was the shadow minister for environment and then became environment minister. I think the best environment minister we've ever had with a policy of protecting old growth forests. We did get a lot more old growth forest. We didn't get all that we should have. And of course logging continued, the hideous mess they make down there. But it's gradually winding down—there's nothing left to chop [laughs], yes. [0:30:00]

AY: You mentioned the fact that you live in, well, it was then, the Court electorate, you stood as a candidate for the ALP, was that like tilting at windmills?

SCHULTZ: Oh they need a name, even in blue ribbon Liberal seats, they want someone for the upper house. This was for the Senate because it was a federal election.

AY: Which federal election was this?

SCHULTZ: Eighty-four.

AY: So you were the endorsed Labor candidate for Curtin.

SCHULTZ: And now we've got a teal [independent].

AY: What was that experience like? How did you find campaiging?

SCHULTZ: I really didn't do anything. They weren't going to put any money into it; I didn't know how to do it. I think I had some leaflets made but Hawke came over and muggins me, I thought he would want to meet the candidates. No way. He was hobnobbing, they were setting up the Curtin Foundation and they wanted all these crook businessmen, most of them had been in jail, or should have been in jail. There's that famous photo—I found it again the other day—on the front of *The West Australian*, Hawke and Burke, sitting in front of all these businessmen that they were pressing to donate to the Curtin Foundation to fund the Labor Party. Hawke had no interest in the candidates whatsoever, all he wanted to do is hobnob with these businessmen and suck some money out of them.

AY: So are you saying being the Labor candidate for Curtin, you didn't get a great deal of support from the party?

SCHULTZ: Oh, they didn't—all they wanted was a name, all they wanted was a name.

AY: I believe you're not a member of the Labor Party anymore. Why not?

SCHULTZ: No, no. The best part of it was leading up to the ’82 state conference and the ’83 election getting Burke elected although everybody knew he was going to get elected. At that stage Labor had a Conservation and Environment Policy Committee. It was to advise the party on conservation and environment. All these people from the Campaign to Save Native Forests, particularly, they were very Labor oriented. We got onto that committee to get Labor to have a good policy. Part of the policy was to make the Shannon River basin a national park. So the motto of the Campaign to Save Native Forest and the South-West Forests was, stop woodchipping and save the Shannon basin. So we had our bumper stickers. Well there was no way we were going to stop woodchipping. It stopped when the Japanese wouldn’t take the chips anymore. That’s what stopped it.

But save the Shannon basin, the EPA when it was first formed in the 70s, about ’72, about the first thing it did was set up the Conservation Through Reserves Committee—CTRC—and this committee of notable people went round the state and looked at what was in the reserves system and what should go into the reserves system. It divided the state into 12 what they called systems and the karri forest was system two. And in system two they said that the Shannon River basin should be exempt from woodchipping for the first 15-year licence period, no logging in the Shannon, and after that a significant portion of it, not the whole lot, but a significant portion of it, should be made a world class national park.

We then adopted that and said not just a significant part, but the whole lot because it flowed into Broke Inlet and most of it was unlogged. The loggers and their mates in the Forests Department said, “We’ll clear fell then you can have a national park.” The same with this ecological thinning, they want to thin the forest before it goes into a national park, then they’ll stop.

AY: Can we talk about 2001 and the Regional Forest Agreement and—

SCHULTZ: Well, the Regional Forest Agreement was 1999, 2001 was the election of Gallop with the protecting our old growth forest campaign and the Monday

after [0:35:00]—he would have been elected on the Saturday and on the Monday, full page ad in *The West Australian* from the Australian Conservation Foundation saying, “Look what we’ve done for you! Join the ACF.” We were absolutely furious. They hadn’t done a thing for the campaign and here they were claiming credit for it and saying join the ACF, instead of saying join WAFA or help one of the WAFA groups. I wrote an absolutely stinging letter, I forget what the name of the—he was known Australia-wide—ACF sort of faded a bit, I couldn’t tell you who was the president of the ACF anymore but everyone in Australia knew at that time. We were absolutely furious that they would behave like this.

ACF has had a bad history in Western Australia. I remember it would have been in the 80s when Mary Frith and I tried to call meetings with the ACF but we couldn’t get anybody to come and then they had Alan and Susan Tingay who did these paintings [indicating paintings on her wall], they were with the Campaign to Save Native Forests and they both got themselves onto the committee of the ACF and then the next thing, they’re given a grant to do a survey on birds. So it was a bit dubious that the two of them were on the ACF committee and here they were getting a grant from the ACF to do a study of West Australian birds. So it did look a bit dodgy.

AY: Generally speaking what’s the relationship between the ACF and the groups you’ve been involved with?

SCHULTZ: They were nominally part of WAFA for a while but I don’t think we’ve heard from them in years.

AY: They have a very visible presence, haven’t they?

SCHULTZ: In the eastern states but over here they’re not. It used to be Cons Council for forests since the mid 1980s and now it’s WAFA then there’s this new group that’s started down in Denmark, FaBWA—Fire and Biodiversity group, they’re doing an enormous amount on fire, prescribed burning. They’ve got

the support of highly respected scientists like Steve Hopper and Joanna Young and Kingsley Dixon.

AY: When you look back at all the work you've done over the years, in forest activism, what are you most proud of, would you say?

SCHULTZ: Shannon Basin.

AY: Achievements, things that have been successful that you are proud of.

SCHULTZ: Well, buying these bush blocks, should have bought more. [laughs]

AY: You've saved this forest?

SCHULTZ: Yes, yes, we hope in perpetuity. I've got three pretty green and active kids, they started a lot sooner than I did because I was in my 40s before I started in on all this.

AY: We haven't talked much about your children, you have three, tell me a little about them and their growing up years because you were obviously very busy.

SCHULTZ: I was never home. When I think of it now, I just walked out and go away weekend after weekend after weekend. I just wasn't here. Then doing a law degree full time, phew, either that or I got bowel cancer. [laughs] That knocked me rotten for a while, yes.

AY: It would do, absolutely. So when did your children come along?

SCHULTZ: The first two we had in the States. Jonathan was born in Seattle at the university hospital. In those days, we were tied down, you were tied down with greasy leather straps, you couldn't even wipe the sweat off your forehead, the American system was—and the husband; go home we'll call you when it's all over. Really, really bad. So that was Jonathan in '67, next

one was Rosalie who was born in Missoula, Montana. Having seen what American hospitals did to you, I was going to have it in the bath but at the last minute [0:40:00]—oh, and the other thing, you got shaved, you got the Brazilian so they could tinker around with whatever they wanted to do to you. So I left it to the last minute so they didn't have time to do anything to me. [laughs] That was Rosalie. They were American citizens and they had to become naturalised Australians but because Phill was born in England, they were entitled to a British passport, which was great before Brexit because the British passport gave them access to Europe. Jonathan had three passports, don't know whether he still has. And then Madelaine was born here at King Edward.

AY: Was that a very different experience?

SCHULTZ: Oh yes, a very different experience. I managed to find a woman obstetrician, there weren't too many of them around then. That was alright. In our family, all five of us have PhDs and only two of us have used them—my husband and the older daughter. She's a medical doctor but she's a doctor doctor, she's got a PhD as well as being a doctor, and so many degrees, she just keeps on getting degrees and won't tell you what they are. The latest one she's doing at Flinders, and she's done this thesis on the Aboriginal encounters with the coronial system and how badly it treats them. Our system puts all weight on written evidence and none on oral, even though written evidence could be as corrupt as it comes, but not on oral evidence so they're disadvantaged. Most of them live a long way away from where the coronial inquests are held so they have trouble with transport and staying. They're severely disadvantaged by the coronial system even though they're tied up with it all too much. Anyway, she works for an Aboriginal corporation in Alice Springs, married to a doctor, no kids, so she has time to do all this. She gives away so much money that the ATO checks her every year. In fact, one year they found a donation she hadn't claimed for. [laughs] As a doctor in a remote place she gets paid an enormous amount of money and of course she's a strict vegetarian, buys her clothes at op shops, no make up,

no alcohol, no cigarettes, no gambling. What do you spend your money on? I think they paid cash for their house.

AY: You said that you were a bit of an absent mother, I think, is how you described it, but it sounds to me as though you've had a big influence on them.

SCHULTZ: Oh, they're as green as they come. The younger daughter, she had a very interesting career, she did her Leaving or whatever you call it, in three years instead of four and she got a Rotary scholarship to study for a year overseas so she went to Argentina for a year. By the sound of it, she gave the Argentinian girls their sex education and she came home with an Argentinian boyfriend, Gabriel, he turned up at the door one day. Then she got a scholarship to ANU and did science/law, then she got a scholarship to Berkeley and did her PhD in chemistry at Berkeley, then she got the Humboldt [Research] Fellowship and went to Germany. I don't know where she met her now German husband but she married a German bloke and they're now living in Germany. She can't get a job in anything to do with her PhD or her academic career in chemistry. She's working for a company that does house heating, they do it centrally and they pipe hot water to houses and apartments, so that's what she's doing. [laughs] They've got two kids, a son whose now 16 and a daughter who'd be 14. I don't know them at all, they've always lived in Brisbane, in Melbourne and Germany.

AY: And your son, where is he?

SCHULTZ: Ah, he got a scholarship to ANU and did his honours degree in science then he went travelling. Actually he was in China the day Tiananmen Square happened and he'd just got on a train to go to Russia. He just got out in time and of course he didn't tell us, we were absolutely panicking [0:45:00] because we knew he was there when he happened. But he contacted us when he got to Moscow or somewhere but he worked in Europe for many years, working for an IT company and he came back overland from Belgium to Australia in the days when you could go through Iraq and Iran and

Pakistan. It would have been in the 80s before all the horrible troubles there. Then he did a BA at UWA in history. He did an oral history of the forest movement down in Denmark. Then he went to Melbourne uni and got a PhD in politics. He did his PhD on Australia's relationship with the Pacific Islands which is a good choice because he went and stayed in all of the Pacific islands. Somewhere along the line he has a partner, she'd done a BA in philosophy at UWA and then she became a nurse. Last December they finally got married with a two-year-old son in hand. So when his son is 20, he'll be 70. [laughs]

AY: Let's go back to you, you're not short of achievements. In 2001 you got the Centenary Medal for service to the preservation of the natural environment; an Order of Australia in 2007 for similar reasons, a Conservation Award from the Conservation Council, you did get recognised.

SCHULTZ: Yes, I also got a Greening Australia award, it was quite funny because Bob Pearce was the minister and he really didn't like giving it to me because he was sort of on the other side, the Labor minister for environment.

AY: And you've been inducted into the WA Womens' Hall of Fame as well. So, what do you make of these awards, do they matter to you?

SCHULTZ: I can see other people who are equally deserving. It's so random, somebody takes the trouble to nominate you. I don't know who it was.

AY: This is for your Order of Australia.

SCHULTZ: Yes, and for the others too, someone has to nominate you and support it. I've a life membership of the UBC even though I'm not a member, I'm a supporter and have always been a supporter. In fact I was going to give them a donation in my will and I thought, oh well, I won't wait until I'm dead, I'll give it to them now. [laughs] They got $25,000 out of the blue, they were quite happy.

AY: I bet they were. Sorry, who is this?

SCHULTZ: Urban Bushland Council.

AY: You're now a member?

SCHULTZ: I'm a supporter, you can't be a member because it's only groups that are members, I'm a supporter.

AY: What are you doing now? You're not the kind of person to stop doing things.

SCHULTZ: We've got a new Forest Management Plan coming up. I must say, it's the fifth one I've had to deal with and it's the worst ever. It's a sales pitch for logging and burning. That's what it is. It's got all these pretty pictures but no draft Forest Management Plan has ever had pretty pictures. This has got pretty pictures all over it, they're selling you something. They're selling you logging and burning, ecological thinning and more burning. It's absolutely disgraceful. I have an appointment with the EPA—it's the final, the last ditch. They put out a draft—shocking. And they took on board some of the complaints. They had a map of isohyets which was 40 years out of date.

AY: A map of where?

SCHULTZ: A line linking the places with the same rainfall, which is called an isohyet and they had a 1400mm isohyet on the map. There hasn't been 1400mm of rain in the South West since the 1990s. They had this hideously out of date map, they've put a new one in, it's not much better, they've only got it going till 2010. Why haven't they got one going up to 2023, BOM [the Bureau of Meteorology] surely has that or could do it for them. No, because the prognosis is so bad they don't want you to know the truth of the matter.

So I've got a meeting with the EPA. [0:50:00] Instead of having a public environmental review, a full consultation, you go by invitation only and I've

got 45 minutes with them. So I'm trying to work out what to say to them in 45 minutes. There's that and then there's the fire thing.

AY: Fire thing?

SCHULTZ: Carole Peters had a huge conference in Margaret River two years ago, then another one, when was it—this year, it was this year, Fire & Air [Forum]. The other one was Fire & Biodiversity [Forum], Margaret River, very well attended. But you're just preaching to the converted. You have all these great speakers along, they speak to each other. People who are interested and supporters are going along and the people who are doing the damage don't go along or they don't listen. I've made a list of all the organisations in Western Australia that have some connection with prescribed burning and there are at least 10 of them. Some I'd never heard of. There's a group called Strike Force Vulcan that's trying to do something about arson. But the main culprits are DBCA—[Department of] Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Fire and Emergency Services and the shire councils. They actually do burning and there's no independent assessment of what they do.

The Conservation and Parks Commission by law is required to assess the implementatioon of management plans. The last time it assessed a burn I think was 2006, it assessed seven burns and it was absolutely scathing. They'd burnt no planned burn areas, the records in the South West didn't correspond with the records in Perth, absolutely scathing. They've never done another one since. DBCA does its burning and does its own assessments so it ticks off on anything. When things go wrong, too bad, stiff cheddar. A prescribed burn escapes, burns 50,000 hectares of bush as it did in the Walpole wilderness section, another 10,000 hectares of Walpole wilderness, too bad. Now you can't sue them because they've changed the Act.

Working on burning with Felicity Bradshaw, when I was with Cons Council, it would have been 2004, we did this leaflet they were going to put out. Something happened and we never put it out. I had 50 printed and threw

them away, so there never has been a leaflet about prescribed burning that you'd put in every shack on the Bibbulmun Track, that you'd hand out at every environment meeting you'd go to. It's never been done so I've drafted another one, I want to get that done with approval from various people. And then, there's still Forest and Fire and now we've got this farm we've bought in the Shire of Westonia where we hope it rains enough so they're ready to start seeding. That'll be exciting.

AY: We haven't talked about that, so tell me why did you buy there in Westonia, and why a farm.

SCHULTZ: Yes, a farm, well we've been playing around with this for years so it was sort of known that Phill and I were willing to help financially with buying something that would be revegetated. There's a consultant zoologist, I think he's a zoologist, Jeff Turpin. He found this farm and he had two other consultants Sam and Andy, they're consultants, they work for mining companies doing that sort of that. They found the farm and said, "Would you contribute?" It was something over $300,000 so Peter Ewing and his wife Marion, they contributed, we always get Rosalie to contribute so you fork out $50,000 and you buy a farm.

They found this farm which is very interesting. It's 666 hectares, one third was cleared for crops, one third they'd messed around with [0:55:00] but there were malleefowl nesting in it, active malleefowl nests and one third was a breakaway. We now know there is a rare and endangered acacia there. And it's on the western boundary of Chiddarcooping Nature Reserve; it should never have been released. It's so important that DBCA wanted to buy it but they only wanted to buy the bushy bits, they didn't want to buy the cleared paddock and the farm wouldn't separate. So we bought the whole lot and the idea is to put the bush back. There's a farmhouse that kind people have fixed up, we've now got running water and electric light, solar panels, that's good. We've teamed up witih a mob called Carbon Positive Australia, which sells carbon credits, we hope to ethical companies, and using that

money they revegetate the bush to get the credits. We've got to promise to keep it there for 100 years. That's fine by us.

They had an Aboriginal corporation from Northam collecting the seed bags and bags of seed from the bush and now it's all ploughed, there was a dam in the middle of the cleared paddock, we've had that filled in. It's been ploughed and ready to go so when the rains come, they're going to start seeding. They've had the tree seedlings—they're going to have to be planted. For some reason, I don't think they're calling on us to help but anyway, we hope to get the cleared paddock planted this winter, this rain season. That's exciting.

AY: It is very exciting. In terms of planting, how do you make the decision on what to plant where. Are you getting expert advice on that?

SCHULTZ: Oh, the people doing this are consultant botanists. They had to have a survey done to see if we were interfering with any rare and endangered species, which apparently we're not. They've collected from the surrounding bush. They know. They know what's to be planted. The other thing is, we found this amazing geological formation just by accident. Nobody told us it was there because the old bloke we bought it from, his health was bad and we really didn't get to meet him. One of our number, Peter and Marion, found this amazing geological formation, it's called mogote m-o-g-o-t-e, nobody's ever heard of. We call it our mini Bungle Bungle. They're about knee high, these rounded things. It's an amazing formation, all these regular things with no vegetation just these geological things. We found a scientific paper written by two geologists in Adelaide in the 80s and they've got photos of these things in our area, but not ours and ours are much better than theirs. We've tried to contact them but I think they must have died or retired because we never got a response. We should try again.

We've got this amazing geological formation and we've also got rocky outcrops, we've had Steve Hopper down there and he's found these Aboriginal traces that we didn't know, but he's found them. You know, the

traps they put up to catch reptiles and a place where they were making their axes. There's a strip of this rock through the middle of the granite and you could see where they've been working at it and taking bits out and where they've tried to make their axes. It's an interesting place. Steve was very keen to see it because he loves his geology, granite outcrops and he's been down to have a look and he'll be down again.

AY: That is very exciting. I was about to ask you what's in store for you but you have plenty of things in store for you.

SCHULTZ: Yes, plenty of them and grandkids. Joschka—he had his wisdom teeth out yesterday, aged 16. They're a long way away but we've got the little fellow, two and a half, down in Walpole. He's quite fun when we see him.

AY: When you look at how the community responds to the environment, to forests, have we got better over the years [1:00:00] that you've been an activist, have you noticed there is a greater awareness.

SCHULTZ: Oh yes, you remember John Beard? He called us eco-nuts. He was dreadful, he was rude. I went on a walk with him and he was so rude. Harry Butler wasn't too good either. No, he was very rude about us too, holding up progress and this sort of stuff. I don't think we have that sort of vilification. The old growth forest campaign brought out enormous numbers of people who never in their lives had thought about the environment. People are doing things like opinion surveys up and down their own street, lots of initiatives going on I'd never heard of before. We're just sort of complacent. We're not willing to make the sacrifice that people need to make. We still want to drink coffee, we want our coffee beans to come from wherever. We want plenty of fresh water even though we're polluting the water left right and centre with plastic—got a drawer full of Glad Wrap, you know, we don't want to give up these things. And I don't think we will. It'll catch up with us and come crashing down on us.

You look back at things people were saying in the 80s, they knew about it. Graeme Pearman, from the CSIRO, that got jumped on from a great height for daring to tell the government they were doing the wrong things.

AY: So in some ways we haven't learnt. I wanted to ask you what keeps you going, but it's clear what keeps you going because you get fired up by these issues.

SCHULTZ: Well it's rage. I've long said that, it's not love of forests, it's rage. I think it's my Irish ancestry.

AY: Maybe that's what it is. [laughs]

SCHULTZ: If the Irish can keep a grudge going for 400 years, I can keep it going for 40. [laughs]

AY: Well, good luck, thank you for your time. It's been fabulous meeting you.

SCHULTZ: It's been nice meeting you. [1:02:26]

END OF FILE THREE

END OF INTERVIEW