

An Oral History Interview

with

MARK TRAUTWEIN (part 2)

San Anselmo, California

conducted by
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MT: The Alaska Lands Act was not only the crown jewel in the history of conservation legislation, I know Mo understood that it was also a crown jewel, if not the crown jewel, of his legislative career, and he wanted that bill done. He didn't want to sit around and futz around for endless years, trying to get a few more acres of wilderness, or this or that or the other thing. Mo was a legislator, and the measure of his success was in getting bills passed. It may sound self-evident or obvious, but there are a hell of a lot of people in Congress who don't see themselves as legislators. They see themselves as policy people or politicians or they're just keeping a seat warm, or they're leaders of movements and causes. Mo was not that way, Mo was a legislator. And he understood that bills weren't going to be perfect, and that he wasn't going to get everything he wanted. He had a clear sense, I think, in all of these bills, which he was able to communicate to staff and to others, of what his bottom line was. It was a relatively high bottom line, which was a very important thing to remember with Mo. I mean, he's often thought of as a compromiser and all that kind of stuff, and he was--he was willing to compromise, but he compromised at a very high level, in that he didn't want just any bill passed, he wanted a good bill passed.

JF: Did he ever, in compromising or in doing a bill initially, did he ever ask for more than he really ever anticipated getting, so that there'd be something to give up in a compromise?

MT: Yes. We all understood that was part of the way the game was played. But he played it a little less than others--certainly in my experience with him. And when we talk about the Arizona Wilderness bills, it was a slightly different process. We always would understand that you were building a little fat into a bill. But particularly with the Arizona Wilderness bills and the Alaska Lands Bill it was also the case, I think.

Because of the nature of Mo's political personality, and because of the nature of his credibility, the fact that he had a reputation for fairness and principle, you could take a different approach. You could take the approach that said, "Here, with this proposal, this bill I'm introducing, or whatever, is a--this represents what I think is a fair, balanced place to be." So that rather than, "Here's my wish list bill, now come attack it," it was, "Here's where I think the reasonable, principled balance is." And so that the negotiating then became over whether to tweak it a little up or a little down, but not how to cut the difference between what Mo the conservationist thought, and what whoever--Don Young, or a good part of the rest of the Arizona delegation--thought was a nonconservationist's, let's say, for the sake of argument, kind of position. I think Mo was unique in his ability to pull that kind of thing off. And it flowed directly from his personal and political personality, the respect and credibility he had with his peers as a man of principled but reasonable judgment--a man who believed in things, but also a man that if you could make a good argument to him, that someone's legitimate interests were being unfairly trampled upon by some proposal or other, that he was willing to accommodate it. I think that was really the guts of what made Mo different. And this was a personality that got communicated down through his staff.

And I will say here--this is something that I won't be able to keep repeating over and over again, but I want this to be sort of understood throughout everything when I talk about Mo's legislating--that often when I'm talking about Mo, I'm talking about Stanley Scoville as well. Stanley Scoville was Mo's chief of staff on the committee for his entire tenure as chairman. It's impossible to think of Mo as a legislator without thinking of Stanley Scoville. He was his right-hand man, he communicated so much of Mo to the staff, and in his own way--often imperfect (chuckles)--enforced the kinds of standards that Mo wanted and expected from his staff in terms of how you went about doing the job of legislating for him. And this whole notion of kind of principled reasonableness was one that Mo personally, and then through Stanley, enforced with the entirety of his staff. And once you got it with Mo--and it took me a few years, I think--I was young and full of spit and vinegar and stuff when I came to work for Mo, about saving the world--but once you established with Mo that you got that, and that that's the way you would work, he gave you enormous responsibility and authority and freedom to do his work for him. Once you earned his trust and his confidence that you were going to think like him and approach issues in a Mo-like way....

JF: What was that way?

MT: That's what I'm talking about. It's like that you were going to do the right thing. The goal was to do a good bill. In my case, when I was doing wilderness bills or parks bills, that you were going to do a good park, you were going to do a bill that really did protect wilderness, that really did protect the land and its resources, but was also a fair bill, that didn't just try to pile on acres for the sake of piling on acres, that didn't try to screw people just because they weren't on your side. If ranchers or miners had a problem with either on general policy level, or with some specific area, you were supposed to try--if their problem was legitimate and reasonable, you were supposed to try to solve it. So you had to be willing to listen to people. You had to know your stuff. You had to understand where the other guy was coming from. But at the same time, have that same commitment, that same fire in your belly, for doing something you'd be proud of.

I was the luckiest guy in Washington. I was incredibly privileged, and I never, for a day, forgot it, that here I was, working for Mo Udall, who really, personally believed in caring for the land, and in not reliving the mistakes of western progress and development, in terms of running over everything, and paving over everything, and using up everything before it was all gone; and who believed that was part of the western heritage, and wanted to make a major statement in preserving and conserving that for future generations. And here I was, and that was basically what my job was, was carrying out that agenda for him. And he was chairman of the committee that did this legislation, and he was Mo Udall, who had this utterly unique political capital, personal political capital with which to carry this out.

JF: And he pretty much let you run with something?

MT: It was the most rewarding part of the job, because once you kind of established this relationship with Mo of trust and confidence, he didn't just give you errands to do, he

gave you responsibilities. He gave you the responsibility for doing a lot of the negotiating, and gave you a lot of the authority for making a lot of the decisions. And it not only made working for him rewarding, it was a little scary at times. Sometimes you weren't altogether sure what the right thing to do was. But you could always talk to Mo about that. You could always go to Mo, because he was very, very accessible. I mean, Mo wasn't one of those kind of members where it was hard to get his time. I mean, I could see him five days a week, if I had to. And I could go to him and say, "Mo, you know, I got this problem. I got these people sayin' this, and the other people sayin' that. I just don't know where you're comfortable being with this." And we'd talk about it, and I'd get some sense of it from him. And then I'd go and run with it. It was also an enormous motivator. I mean, this was so much fun! You really felt that you had a share in these accomplishments, that your role was more than ceremonial. (chuckles) And at times it was definitely....

It would have been easy to sort of let that go to your head, and a lot of people do, in that institution. You give people a little bit of power, and they just (phffft!). They become highly unpleasant people, and very difficult to work with. Anytime that happens with me--and I like to think it almost never happened-- there was Mo to sort of take some of the air out of your balloon, and there was Stanley, who'd make sure you didn't let that-- who would bring you down to earth in a hurry. But there wasn't a day that went by that I didn't understand that Mark Trautwein didn't mean a damned thing, that none of this was happening because of Mark Trautwein, that Mark Trautwein only meant anything because he worked for Mo Udall. And that when Mark Trautwein walked into a room, the only reason Mark Trautwein's presence in that room was of any interest to anybody was that I represented Mo Udall. And especially as the years went on, the deeper and deeper I got into my career with Mo, people understood that I could speak for him, and that I had his ear, as well as his confidence.

I don't think that that is necessarily a usual or common thing in the institution--it wasn't when I was there. I loved Mo for that. You didn't get a lot of personal strokes from Mo on a personal level. He wouldn't, you know, put his arm around you and tell you what a great guy you were, or ask how you were doing. I mean, Mo, in the twelve-plus years I worked for Mo, he never once asked me a single question about my personal life. But he respected you and honored you in the way he let you work, and the way he let you represent him, and I felt privileged by that. And it just made you want to work so hard for the guy.

JF: More specifically, on the Arizona Wilderness Act, the 1984, the first Arizona Wilderness Act, I've heard you referred to as the architect of that act. Assuming it was you, as opposed to Mo or someone else, how was it determined, I should ask, what lands to include and which not to? which to set aside, and which not to?

MT: That was the first significant piece of legislation that I ever really did for Mo from start to finish, where Mo brought me in one day and said, "I want to do the Forest Service wilderness for Arizona. Go to work." (chuckles) The kind of thing I went "Oh, my God! It's show time! This is the real deal now, and I've gotta do this!" By now, this was

in 1983, so I'd been working for Mo for about a little less than three years, so I'd kind of done my apprenticeship, sort of, and I'd established this relationship with him, that I was talking about.

Mo's instruction to me was to go do what I had to do to draft a bill. To do that, I had to understand the areas and the issues. And do to that, I had to just educate myself. So I went back to [Arizona], I spent time in Arizona, I solicited.... I went to all the interest groups in Arizona: the environmental groups, the Arizona Mining Association, the Arizona--it was called the Cattlemen's--Association at the time, to local governments. We sent out letters to all of these people over Mo's signature saying that he intended to do this bill, and soliciting their input, soliciting their ideas. We had the Forest Service study, the so called WARE II Study, Wilderness Area Review and Evaluation Study, in which the Forest Service had designated areas that it thought were suitable for designation as wilderness. And that was sort of the starting point. We got all these proposals in from these organizations, and some of them were quite reluctant to do them--particularly the cattlemen, and to some extent the mining community.

The environmental community was, of course, incredibly eager to do this, and it was quite an extraordinary show. They gathered up a whole crew of volunteers from all over the state and one or more people were assigned to literally adopt--that was the phrase, to adopt--a candidate wilderness area. Every area that the Forest Service had studied had an "adopter" in the environmental community, and their job was to know this area.

JF: Who organized that? Was it the Wilderness Association?

MT: It was a coalition of the Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, and the Audubon Society. You know, at that time, the environmental community in Arizona was really quite small and quite young. When I first came to work for Mo in 1979, you could literally count the number of people willing to self-identify as environmentalists on your fingers. You had to scare them up. It was amazing. But it was growing rapidly. Every one of these wilderness areas got an adopter, and those people went out, they literally hiked up and down in each one of these wilderness areas, and prepared reports with pictures and all kinds of stuff about each and every one of these areas: what was in there, what wasn't in there. In many, many cases, these people knew a lot more about what these areas were actually like, than the Forest Service itself did. They were an extraordinary resource.

And we got voluminous reports and studies from the Arizona Mining Association, eventually. Once you got sort of all this stuff in, you could just kind of lay these things over one another--the recommendations of the environmental community, the Forest Service, the miners, the cattle growers--and kind of put them over each other, and right when you did that, you could immediately see that there were about a third of the areas that everybody agreed ought to be in the system, and another third or so of the areas that everybody agreed ought to be out of the wilderness system, and the argument was over this middle third. And that's basically what my job was, was to try and figure out where

the equities were in that. And in that process, I brought to that my own values, which by then I was confident were Mo's values, which was "when in doubt, it went in." (chuckles) And if you could make a reasonable case that area should be protected, you tried to protect it as best you possibly could. But you had to have solid reasons, there had to be something there worth protecting. I got into conflicts (chuckles) with both the environmental community and the development community on a number of those calls. There were a number of areas that--when the adopters adopted these areas, they got very personal about them, and it became sort of a mark of the value of their work whether their area got in the bill or not. And it was hard sometimes to tell folks, "I just don't agree with you. I just don't think this area should be in."

JF: Did other members of the Arizona delegation to Congress have some say over areas in their particular jurisdictions or districts?

MT: At the time, Jim McNulty represented Southeastern Arizona. As everyone knows, Mo and Jim McNulty are very, very close. Essentially that part of the bill, the areas that were in his district, we deferred really, completely, to Jim and his staff on those areas, including Mt. Graham. The seeds of Mt. Graham were sewn in this bill.

The other members, frankly, no.

JF: Were they involved at all? Did they care to be involved?

MT: (sigh, followed by chuckle) Well, you know, this was part of the interesting process he went through with the Arizona delegation on these bills. None of these members really wanted to see wilderness designated in their districts. These were all conservative Republicans. Left to their own devices, the only wilderness areas they would have ever designated were the ones that everybody agreed on, and the areas were completely easy because there was no controversy about them whatsoever. Mo drove this whole process. Mo made the argument to them, which was a legitimate argument, that it was important to resolve these questions, because all these areas that were in the WARE II Study at the time, even ones that hadn't been recommended as wilderness, were in this limbo-like status, and really couldn't be used. If they weren't going to be designated as wilderness, they couldn't be used for mining or timber harvest or whatever. So they had a reason to want to get a bill done. But their participation was very low--minimal at best--in part because I think a lack of interest, but also because of recognition that Mo was driving this process anyway.

So I went through this process, and it actually was easier than I thought it was going to be when I first started it, because, like I say, when I got all this--and I had boxes and boxes full of these things--they just sort of consumed my office--of this information from interest groups and stuff--it became pretty clear. And I drafted up a bill for Mo. It was not a wish list bill. And I discussed this with Mo, and it was quite clear that this was going to be a bill that we introduced that this is where Mo thought the reasonable balance lay. Because like I said before, I didn't want to just sort of get out a bill that everyone felt

like they could start nibbling away at and attacking and all that kind of stuff. Mo was going to use his credibility to get this bill through.

And this actually brings me to maybe my favorite Mo story of all time. It was one of the most extraordinary moments that I ever had with Mo, and one that taught me many, many lessons. I had drafted the bill, I had sent it over to him with a long, long memo explaining this, that, and the other thing, and going into great detail about this bill. This was, I think.... For some reason I'm thinking this was like February of 1984. Mo called me over to his office and he said, "Read your memo. Everything looks great. I like this bill, let's get ready to go." I said, "Great!" He said, "Okay, the first thing we've gotta do is call Barry." I said, "Goldwater?! What do you want to call Barry Goldwater for?!" "I want him to introduce this, the companion bill, in the Senate." I thought (muttering), "Barry Goldwater isn't gonna introduce this bill in the Senate. Everybody knows Barry Goldwater is a right-wing, conservative senator, and friend of the mining industry and the ranchers and all that kind of stuff!" I kind of rolled my eyes and I thought, "Ol', Mo, he's kind of a little soft in the head here, if he thinks he's going to get this. But then again, who am I?" So I thought, "Okay, we'll humor the guy on this." So Mo literally picks up the phone at that moment and calls Barry Goldwater and says, "Barry, I'd like to come over and talk to you about something." Barry said, "Sure, come on over," which was extraordinary in itself. The act of Mo walking across the Capitol to go over to the Senate to the Russell Office Building to see Barry Goldwater was a significant thing in and of itself. It showed respect and some deference. So I went with Mo, we traipsed across the Capitol grounds, [me] running to keep up with Mo's giant strides. Of course I'm the dutiful staff person. I'm just a living, breathing stereotype of the congressional staff person. I'm carrying two armloads full of expanding files, crammed with documents and information about all these wilderness areas, ready to answer any question that might come up in this important discussion that was about to take place between these two great men.

So we get over to Goldwater's office and we're ushered in, there's lots of "hey, how are ya'?" and all that kind of stuff. But there was a vote on the Senate floor, so Goldwater says, "Well, Mo, come on, walk with me." So we start walking, and I'll never forget this. Here the three of us are walking down the marble hallways of the Russell Building: Mo Udall, Barry Goldwater, and me. Now, these are two of the giants of my generation, and I'm sitting there going, "What am I doing here?! Little ol' me with these two great men." It was one of those moments where you sort of stand outside of your life and your world and you go, "This is unbelievable that I'm even here." Anyway, so they're walking along and they're not talking about the Wilderness Bill at all. They're talking about some B-29 that had crashed on Mount Baldy when they were kids and how they used to climb up there and play in this old crashed B-29. And they're talking about their families, which of course, these are two of the oldest families in Arizona, they go back to the settlement days of Arizona that their families had known each other. And they're comparing notes on cousins and uncles and whoever. By now we've gotten onto the Senate subway, we're tooling along, going over to the Senate, and now they're talking about their health, and at one point (chuckles) they were comparing medications, and there was some medication that they were both taking, and they were sitting facing each

other on the Senate subway, and Goldwater leaned over and he was laughing, he slapped Mo on his knee, and he said, "Yeah, Mo, I've taken that one too! That's great for your sex life, isn't it?!" And Mo went, "Yeah! it's great!" And the whole time I'm going, "What are these guys talking about?! Mo is blowing it! We are supposed to be talking about this Wilderness Bill, and we're running out of time."

We get literally to the doors of the Senate. Goldwater's standing there, holding the door open to the Senate floor, and he said, "So, Mo, what brought you over here?" And Mo says, "Well, Barry, you know, we've got this wilderness issue in Arizona, and I think it's really important to everybody that we just get this thing resolved, because it's not doing anybody any good while this is still up in the air. I've drafted up a bill here with my staff guy here, and I think it's a pretty reasonable bill, and I'd be honored if you'd introduce it in the Senate." And Goldwater said, "Sure, Mo, no problem. You just tell me when, and I'll drop it in." Mo said, "Thanks, Barry, you're great!" and away he walked. I couldn't believe it! By the time I got back to my office, Twinkle Thompson, who was Senator Goldwater's extremely able and extremely wonderful staff person--my counterpart on lands issues and stuff--had called me three or four times to say, "What the hell happened?!" because she was totally flabbergasted by this.

This was such an extraordinary thing. I don't think, particularly today in eras of term limits and (sigh) a lot of ideologues running around Congress now, the trust and the confidence that these two men had in one another, which had been built up over lifetimes of working together, even though Mo Udall was the great liberal and Barry Goldwater was Mr. Conservative, they shared so much in common, and they had so much trust and confidence in one another, that they knew [that one] would not embarrass the other, and that the other man's word was his bond, was an extraordinary lesson to me.

That bill that got introduced by the two of them that I drafted in Mo's name, under Mo's sort of broad, general tutelage, essentially passed unchanged. There were a couple of small changes made in the bill, but they were [changes] that we had planned. They were a couple of areas that I put in the bill with the intention that Senator Goldwater could drop them out so that he could say, "I didn't just pass Mo Udall's bill."

JF: I noticed in Roderick Nash's book, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, he mentioned that the Arizona Wilderness Bill opened several million acres around the Grand Canyon to uranium mining, and sort of mentioned that as a legacy of compromise. Was that one of the things you were just speaking of?

MT: No. Actually, the areas that ended up getting dropped out were really areas with little resource value either way. I think there were really only two areas: one a very small one of less than 10,000 acres, and the other, a fairly large one of maybe (sigh) I can't remember how many acres it was, but it was one of the larger areas, but it was also an area where there was really little interest from the mining point of view or any other point of view, really. My recollection would be that the areas around the Grand Canyon--and there really weren't that many, because this was a Forest Service bill, and so this is

the Kaibab National Forest, which is around Grand Canyon, and there were some areas.... Those were pretty non-controversial.

There was another title to this bill, and this is maybe what he [Nash] is referring to, which was the so-called Aravaipa Strip title, which did deal with BLM [Bureau of Land Management] lands. And the [Aravaipa] Strip is that area between the North Rim of the Grand Canyon and the Utah border. Those areas had been subject to, really, a private negotiation between the environmental groups and the miners and the ranchers, that had gone on without any involvement whatsoever from any member's office, or really any government agency. It was this little sort of side, private thing, and they had reached this consensus agreement kind of thing. And it was supported by the environmentalists, it was supported by the miners and the ranchers. And it was in Bob Stump's district, and they basically handed this thing to Bob Stump and he introduced it as a separate bill. It got included in Mo's Forest Service Bill, and the inclusion of that bill in there was actually quite controversial. Bob Stump hated having it in the bill, because it meant that, in order to get this "no winners, no losers" Aravaipa Strip Bill, he had to be supportive of the larger Forest Service Bill, which he was opposed to. And Mo was regularly bashed by the press for doing this, but it was really a no-brainer. I mean, it was obvious that this had to be done.

Now, that agreement between the environmental community and the ranch community did open up a lot of lands on the strip. I'm not sure, but they did become available for exploration and development of various kinds, and some of those lands may well have ended up subject to some mining operations.

JF: (aside about tape) Let me ask you, during 1984 when you worked on this bill, how was Mo's health? He had already been diagnosed with Parkinson's, I believe officially diagnosed in 1979. How was his health in 1984 during work on this bill?

MT: From purely a Parkinson's point of view, I think the effect of Parkinsonism on this point was very minimal. You know, some of the shakes and some things of that nature, but really very, very minimal. His general health, of course, was never good. (chuckles) This is something that a lot of people didn't appreciate, is that Mo always had a terrible back, he had all kinds of bad back problems. He had this incidence of falling off the ladder at his home, I think shortly after the presidential campaign.

JF: It was 1976, I think.

MT: Yes, he broke both of his arms. Mo was always in pain, was always in some kind of physical pain, and you could see it in the way he moved. He never talked about it, and he never complained about it, and he was an incredible patient, but he was always in some kind of pain. But in terms of the Parkinsonism, it was not a factor.

JF: Not a factor at that point. (aside about tape)