**Oral History**
**Connie Timmerman**
**Dillingham Alaska,**
**June 20, 2017: 4:00 pm**
**Interviewers:** Anna Lavoie, Jean Lee, and Kim Sparks (PSMFC, NOAA Fisheries AFSC)
**Abstract**:

*Text in brackets [] signifies interviewer/s interpretations, and/or clarification of the narrative of the interviewee.*
*Text in parentheses () represent nonverbal sounds and activity during interview.*

Anna Lavoie: This is Anna Lavoie with Connie Timmerman. We are in Dillingham, Alaska, on June 20th, 2017. So, Connie whenever you're ready if you could talk about your life, your history as a woman from the area as a fisherwoman and your experiences and your role fishing.

Connie Timm.: Okay, I was born here in Dillingham at Kanakanak Hospital, the hospital here was called Kanakanak in 1948. Family of 8 children, mom and dad, six sisters and two brothers. I'm actually third to the youngest. My two brothers are just above me. And we were raised first along the beach down where I set net, but because the beach eroding, our dad moved us on top of the hill here, and lived up there all our lives, born and raised. Dad was a fisherman, Mom was a housewife but in the summer she worked in the cannery as a waitress and that's how we, they got their money to get a grubstake for the winter. The grubstake would come in every spring, there'd be a big steamer ship come in and would bring a grubstake in the winter, for the winter. And under the house we didn't have running water, we didn't have electricity or anything, under the house Dad and them built a cellar down in the ground where we kept our potatoes and onions and stuff that needed to be cool. And kept things that way. Then there's lots of canned stuff, of course, but—

We subsisted, put up fish all summer long. Dad had a dog team. After we got all the fish put up for the family, we didn't can fish in those days, but we smoked them and we salted them. And we didn't freeze them because no freezers those days, but we did that and after that was done then it was time to do the food for the dogs. We had about a ten-dog team in the back of the yard. Dad had a half gallon, 50 gallon oil drum cut in half and he used it as a cook box for the dogs. We had a fire underneath it. So at the end of summer we'd put up like 600 reds, and we'd fillet them out and just dry them, don't do anything, just fillet them out, don't worry about what they look like, didn't even rinse them. We filleted them out, gutted and headed them, and hung them on the dry rack and let them just dry in the air and then when that was done we bundled them with string in about twenty in a bundle. And Dad had a cache out in the woods, he would put them in there for the dogs during the winter. And in his grubstake he ordered cornmeal, and during the winter when he made dog food, cooked for the dogs, he'd make a big cornmeal mush and put the dry fish in there for the dogs and that was what we fed them. Because he used the dogs to go hunting, to go moose hunting during the winter. And there was no roads to Dillingham and he'd take the kids to school before the road came in.

And after that, it was time to berry pick when the fishing was done, cannery was closed, Mom was done, Dad still had his boat out. He'd take the whole family in the boat and we'd go away from here on the river. Sometimes down toward Snake River, which is

downriver and across this way, or up the river up the Nushagak and we'd pick berries, go and gather salmonberries and blackberries and blueberries and put that away for the winter. Mom made all our homemade jam. She was a great cook, she could make anything—a wonderful meal out of the anything. She made all our bread, she made donuts. Thanksgiving time we'd have a meal, she'd make pies with apples that she had cooked and saved some way, I don't remember how. And then she made blueberry pie out of the wild blueberries. It was amazing what she could do.

But then after the electricity came in, I'll never forget we got our first, Dad got a generator and he started it. We were all so excited running around, our first electricity. And it was away from the house. We were in fact, we were still living down the beach, it was pretty cool.

And after that during the winter Dad would go upriver with the dogs and go trapping and get the fur to make extra money to buy the few things we could in town from the stores. We didn't have much, there wasn't many flights in. Flights came in very few.

In fact, we lost a lot of our people because they got sick of course. Those days where not everybody was sick like they are now because we lived off the land, I think it was all pure, we're healthy.

And as I grew up, as I got older, when I was old enough to go on the boat with my dad he commercial fished out here, I went on the boat with him. Before that when the older girls were older, they went on the boat and I was at the age where I had to stay home and babysit the two younger ones while Mom worked and Dad was on the boat. And then later on I went on the boat with him with my brothers, my two brothers. And fished with him up until—I married at real young age. I married at 16 and I went and I commercial fished with my husband for years out here in Nushagak.

And during that time in the winter it was during BIA they were sending us young people, couples and young people that were done with school out to get educated. And they sent me and my husband and my—I had a baby that was six months old—out to LA. Flew into Anchorage, it was in 1964 after the big earthquake in Anchorage. I had never left Dillingham and here I am this little Native girl married with the baby and going and never saw things, never did order food, just was really, I didn't know anything. And we're flown into Anchorage, from Anchorage we went to Seattle and they put is in the hotel for two weeks and then they sent us to LA in a bus. And I'll never forget the first night we got there late and they had brought us to a hotel and I opened the bed—I had my baby and I opened the bed because I wanted her to put her in the bed, and these bugs ran, and I screamed. And I didn't know what they were, I guess they were cockroaches. I had never seen cockroaches. I wouldn't let my baby sleep in that bed. I sat upon a chair all night holding my baby. I didn't even put her on the bed to lay down. So after that, the next day, I barely slept. My husband, he was sent out to Mt. Edgecombe High School so he knew, he slept on the bed, he didn't care. But I wasn't going to. No bugs was going to crawl on my baby. So, they put us in a hotel, then they went and got us an apartment. He went to school out there, he went to school for A&P mechanics.

Then from there when that was done we traveled up the Alcan to Anchorage. By then I had two children, my two oldest. In the spring of April of I forget what year, but we went up the Alcan. Of course, those days it was gravel, it was slippery. I never thought I'd

make the trip (coughs). We had to stop and wait because we couldn't go. It was so—these bugs—so slippery but we finally made it to Anchorage and then he went to work. That's when the oil fields came into Anchorage. He went to work up in the fields and worked up at the fields. And he had trouble with alcohol and drugs and after so many years I left him and came back home with my kids to come home and I came home and I worked at the school district for 28 years.

Well I met my second husband, who I was raised with here, but he went away to school too. And with my first husband I had three girls and then I met John, my late husband that passed away, and I have a boy, John Jr., who's just like his dad. He's a master mechanic, his dad was a master mechanic. He traveled for the school districts all over and worked on their generators and he'd fix four-wheelers and anything. He says if it's broken, if it's fixable, I could fix it. If I can't, it's no good anyway. Get rid of it. So, and I was married to him. He passed away about 15 years ago.

Lived here, I worked at the school 28 years and from there I went to. And John worked. But during the summer we all worked together, we all subsist, we put fish. We have an island up at the lake. We'd put up the fish down here, fill my smokehouse and then we go. He was working in summer and I worked at school so I didn't work and I'd take my three girls and my son and go up to my island at the lake and we'd put up fish and hunt for spruce hen. and do everything up there. Me and my three girls built the cabin. The cabin that the girls would later call their cabin. But my husband would come up from work at 4:30 and drive up and he'd write us a plan on a piece of paper and next day we'd go out there and follow the plan and build the wall and we end up building the whole cabin. But, then up there he'd always take time off.

We did our moose hunting right around the cabin there. We all went out. We all were out on the hunt. Everybody caught them, everybody had a chance to catch their moose. We only caught one for the family because we didn't want to waste. But each of the kids as they got old enough they got to shoot it, but then we all helped skin it out and we all prepared it. We butchered it ourselves and took care of it. And we still do it.

To this day we still, every summer I'm down here doing subsistence now. And soon as we get, I get this done, soon as my smokehouse is completely full, and I need about twenty more kings to do that, then I will on the weekends, I'll work during the week, on the weekends I'll go up to the cabin. My daughter stays, that she still lives with me, she's 22, she's my baby, I adopted her when she was three months old. But she's my smokehouse queen. She won't let nobody, she does the lighting because she's afraid that somebody's going to put treated wood or something on it because it's all, it's all bleached wood as you can see. This is all soaked in water and we—she lights, we light a little fire in the bottom of a 50-gallon drum in there, and then after going good, and there's lot of hot coals, we take this wet, big logs. I get on the bottom, take the wet big ones and we put them on top, and then we put the tin over it, and it causes a smoke, but it's a cold smoke. It's not a hot, so we call it cold smoke. So it takes, it's about two-week process. When it's nice like this, we'll, the flaps pull down on that, we'll leave the flaps open everyday and let the natural breeze dry them out. The kings especially are really fat so we let them drip naturally and then in the evenings after the sun gets down, it gets cool, then we close them so there's not too much heat around and light the fire so they cold smoke again. And a lot of times it'll smoke all night, when she does it.

Anna Lavoie: And so, when you prepared the fish that you caught yesterday, it was yourself and your two daughters? Or—

Connie Timm.: Myself, my two daughters, and my granddaughter, and—three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren were all down here. And we had 44 reds. And because I have enough, what we call eating fish, that's the reds that are in there that are just cut and filleted out with the tail on them and they're hanging with skin side out, and we cut them all the way down so the air gets to them, they dry faster. And so I have those, and I don't want anymore in there, so what we did last night, we just filleted all those out. It's a real easy process, we don't even cut off the head, we don't have to mess with the insides, the guts or anything, we just fillet the back, both top and bottom fillet off. And then we—I have a Seal-a-Meal—and we vacuum seal it and put it away for winter so we can have fresh fish. Then when this is done I'll take it and I'll—the strips—and I'll Seal-a-Meal them, I'll cut them in small pieces. And I do small bags because you take one bag out and if it's just a few people around you don't want it go to waste. So I'll do lots of little bags. And the others, some of the other, the red fish I was talking about, I'll take it out, in fact I'll probably take it out tonight, and they ran out of vacuum seal bags in town. So what I'm going to do is take it out, cut off the tail and put in the box and put in the freezer and freeze it. So when we get vacuum seal bags again in town I'll take it out and I'll vacuum seal and it keeps the fish really fresh and all the oils in it. It'll be frozen, so you know I'll put it right in the freezer to help preserve the oils and stuff in it. And you know, it's nice out so you have these blowflies around and they lay eggs, and—the eggs, they hatch and of course they become maggots, we call them […] in Native, but when you see them the kids always gross out but what I usually do if I start seeing them, I'll take a knife and scoop out the eggs and clean the fish and put them in. But when we're cutting if we find any pieces that the eggs hatched and there's worms, then we'll just cut them off, and we'll put them separate in the bag, and the dogs will eat them. So nothing goes to waste.

When we fillet fish, the backbones we fillet out of the fish, the backbone we willVcut it so air gets into it and hang it and we call it […], just hang-dry, put it in the smokehouse and you cut it up and we just boil it and eat it with rice. And the eggs, we eat the eggs, but when we're done eating the eggs, then the rest we'll take and we'll lay them out and I'll do, I'll prepare them for bait for when we go fishing because everything's so expensive here. A little jar of eggs like this to go fishing is like ten bucks, so I just do—what I use—to make them nice and bright, I'll get cherry Jello or something, put cherry Jello on them and then put rock salt and then keep turning them and sit them out a couple days. And I'll put them in little sandwich bags so when we're going fishing, in the morning we can take a bag out and then we have bait all day to fish. But when we're done there's not much thrown away. We keep everything.

Anna Lavoie: When you used to commercial fish, you said when you first got on your father's boat, how old were you? And what kind of fishing or net was it? Was it driftnet?

Connie Timm.: Yeah. We were, we were on his PG16, that was the name of his boat, and it was, it was a fancy boat in those days. Today, it was nothing. It was small. But yeah, we were on the boat and we fished 50 fathom nets, 150 fathoms, so we'd put out a fathom, and then put another fathom. And they didn't have—the fancy reels and the hydraulics and so all we

had in the back was an old-fashioned roller and while Daddy was working the—the controls up here so we didn't run over the net and stuff us girls had to pull the net over the roller and pick the fish as they came out and put them in a bin, and then we delivered them to a tender. And we'd be out there all summer long with him doing that. That's, you know, that's what they did to make money, to survive for the winter. During the spring he worked in the cannery as a springtime cannery worker helping get the cannery set up. But then he would fish, and all of us, as everybody else got older and moved away and married—the boys were the last ones to fish with him. They stayed with him the longest until we, unfortunately we lost him. He had an accident in the boat harbor and he fell over, hit his head and drowned. And he was, he was real young, it was tragic, but we survived.

And my mom was really, she was really a rock, she kept the family going. Every Saturday we'd have wash day for all of us eight kids, and there's times when we used the rubboard to wash clothes, you know we didn't have anything. But she was always right amongst us, she did everything right with us and she showed us how. I'll never forget for the longest time when we lived up the hill where my brother, my son now stays and my sister lives up there too. We did all the fish for Mom at her place and I got to the point—my older sister—one of my older sisters built the smokehouse, did her own. And another sister of mine got married and moved out to Illinois but then I decided, I told Mom, I said, Mom, John's building me a smokehouse, I'm going to do my own fish next summer. She says, You sure you can? I said, I can, I watched you. She says, OK. So, she was so funny. She'd come down, What you doing? Oh, I just came to see how you're doing. She'd come and look at my fish and not say anything, she'd just check on my and after summer when it was—they were done—I was ready putting them away she came down, she started laughing. I said, What? She said, You did a darn good job, I'm proud of you (laughing). But, uh, yeah, she was a great teacher.

She didn't—she didn't criticize, she showed you how and she didn't care if people got dirty. We had the maqii, steam bath, we called it maqii when we didn't have running water and we'd light the steam, but even nowadays, even my toddlers, my granddaughters, my grandsons and great-grandchildren they come down. You're too busy to worry about whether the kids are going to get dirty or not. I just tell their mom and dads, You know what, you're going to […] don't want them to get dirty then you need to stay home because I'm not going to have kids crying and fighting because they want to come up to the table and you guys are trying to chase them away to keep them clean. I said, Skin don't leak, they could be washed. And that's what my mom used to say. Dirt don't hurt. So, we're pretty casual how we do what we do with the kids. And that's how they learn. They get their hands dirty. They get right into it. And they make mistakes. But we tell them, you just keep on, you're going to get better. And they do good. My um, Earlene's daughter, Chloe, she's twenty years old, she's a little pro. She uses the traditional uluaq (womens knife), which I don't--I used to use a long time ago, but my wrists got bum--and it really wears on me, so she uses it. She has her own uluaq (women's knife) and she fillets out those fish just like a pro. She'll be right next to me, so she does really good. Then my Ray Ray—she's a fixer. She's a mechanic right now. She's a mechanic. She works at a mechanic shop. But she fixes equipment, she gets everything ready, she goes and does all the hard work better than any man that could be around. So

we have a good crew, everybody pitches in. And, you know, they get tired, they start squabbling, but that's life. We just do it.

(long pause)

Anna Lavoie: So, how old were you when you first started fishing?

Connie Timm: Fourteen.

Anna Lavoie: Fourteen?

Connie Timm: I think fourteen. Yeah, it had to have been fourteen because I got married at sixteen, and I fished maybe even younger—because I fished for Dad two, three years. Me and my brother Leroy. My brother Leroy is a year and four days older than me. It's funny, we have—I'm Aleut, part Aleut and part Yup'ik. But on Dad's side, we know he's from the Aleutians so he's Aleut, and we don't—we're not sure what his other—what else he is because we don't—he was an orphan he was raised as an orphan here. But my mom, her mom was, uh, Yup'ik. She was a full-blood Eskimo, and her dad was from Scandinavian country somewhere. We don't know where. So, my brother Leroy, he's really—he looks like a Norwegian. He's really tall, he has blond hair. I have two sisters, two sisters and one brother with red hair. And then a sister with black hair, and then brown hair. So, we're Dillingham special. We come in all colors, I guess (laughing). (laughter)

Anna Lavoie: There were a couple things and in a bit, when you feel like it, if you could talk about your experiences with, like, climate change or environmental change. But before that, you're the second person I've heard talk about grubstake, and we're not from here, and I think I have an idea of what that means but—

Connie Timm.: Well, like we said, the only time anything came in in the days when we were small was a big steamer ship, during the summer it would park at Kanakanak Beach and the guys would go out. But, I remember we used to get barrels like this, those old wooden barrels with […] on them, with butter and salt. Saltwater, so it was salted butter. And we'd get all—Mom—we'd get like a thousand pounds of flour because Mom baked and everything. We'd get all the sugar, all the essentials we need. Course it was a lot of canned stuff, like canned vegetables. We weren't farmers, we didn't farm at all. You know, we didn't even have a garden because we didn't know how to do it. But um, all the canned peas, canned corn, cream-style corn, then Spam and corned beef, corned beef hash, all the canned stuff. And in those days the grubstake would be about three thousand dollars. And those days, which now would be a heck of a lot more, because we had to get that for the whole winter. What's funny about it—because Dad would always order two cases of apples and two cases of oranges and we were all of course, us kids—fresh fruit, it was heaven. We would eat fresh fruit, fresh apples and oranges, then have to wait a whole year practically until we get them again. So it was a big treat to get them in. But Mom made, Mom made all the jellies out of wild berries. We didn't have pectin, and I don't use pectin to this day. She picks the berries just before they're ripe and they have their own natural pectin and so you don't need the commercial. And so she made all those. (long pause) But that was a grubstake.

Anna Lavoie: So it was the supplies or provisions you would get to make it through the winter.

Connie Timm.: Yeah, it was mostly all staples. Like we'd get the oatmeal and—cereal wasn't a big thing, you didn't have them those days—we'd get the oatmeal and the cornmeal. Cornmeal we'd use for the dogs to make the dogfood during the winter, but they also made a mush. Then the rice and potatoes (cough). They got so the potatoes we could get them to last pretty long down the cellar that they put in the floor before they got bad. So, we ate good. We were never wanting. So, wintertime Dad would get ptarmigan of course. Summertime he'd go get geese and ducks and we'd have those. We essentially lived off the land the whole time. Very healthy.

Anna Lavoie: Well actually, I had a different question too. Before Jean helped you yesterday on the beach. If we hadn't come, you would have picked the fish yourself, right?

Connie Timm.: Oh yeah.

Anna Lavoie: So how many—if you had to pull your net alone, how many fish have you picked before—?

Connie Timm.: Lots. More than I could remember. My late husband, like I said he traveled, he was a mechanic and he was gone for weeks at a time, especially in the summer because he had to upgrade all the generators and stuff in the villages. So I had to go put out the net myself with my kids to help. We'd pull it out, pull it, pick it. We'd get some—in the net, when the kings are running, I've gotten as much as like 60 kings, and that's lots. And that's lots of hard work. Course I was a lot younger in those days. These days I could barely lift a king, they're huge. But uh, yeah, we did it—I did it all myself with my kids. And of course I had three girls so they did it all with me.

Something happened and broke, we did it. One time my toilet wasn't flushing and—I thought maybe one of the younger kids came and put something in it, and of course he was traveling. So I got my girls and we figured out, we took it apart. And we found a mayonnaise cap that one of the kids had put in it and it was just big enough so when you flushed it, it came up and sometimes it worked and other times it came down and wouldn't flush. So I pulled it out and needed a ring to put in the bottom, so we had to run to town, get a ring and we put it back and fixed it. My husband came home and said, Wow, what happened to the toilet? I said, I fixed it. And he laughed. And then when we first moved down here we didn't have a road. We had to walk from up on the hill from the road down and of course we burned oil, so the only way to get oil down here is 50-gallon drums. And of course with him traveling, me and my girls we take the pickup, go up, get the oil, 50-gallon drum, roll it off the truck and roll it through the woods, all the way down here, pump it in. The only thing I didn't know how to do after he changed the furnace is the new furnace had to be bled and I didn't know how to do it, and it seems like every time he left we ran out of oil. He left, something happened. We ran out of oil one time and he wasn't there. And he came home when I was cranky and I told him, You know what, John Timmerman? When you start that furnace, I'm going to be there watching you because I'm going to learn how. And just think buddy, pretty soon I'm not going to need you. I could do everything. And I was busy—I got busy cooking and he never said a word to me. And he's in there doing it so I go in, I walk away from the stove. I go in to watch him and he's sitting there with the, uh, big blanket on top of his head with a flashlight. And I said, What are you doing? He said, You're never going to learn how

because you're going to need me forever (laughter). I had a laugh, but I learned how. But he was just that kind of person (laughter).

Anna Lavoie: That's funny.

Connie Timm.: But we—yeah—we didn't—we couldn't be, uh, girly. We had to get out there and work. We'd shovel our own road. Once we got the road in we'd have to shovel a path up there. I'd drive the four-wheel drive truck. We were self-sufficient. I could do—I used to tell him anything you can do, I can do better. Teach me. Watch me. I'll learn. And then driving the skiffs, he was always driving the skiffs up the lake. But he was gone. I got tired of waiting for him. He was late coming in, and I just took the skiff because I watched him. If there was, uh, water in the gas, he'd drain the filters. So one day, I'm going up there and I took my dog and my son was a baby, jumped on the skiff and went up the island. Left and told the girls, the girls were home, told them, When John gets off work. Tell him, You guys got the truck, pick him up, tell him I went the island with son. I'm done sitting down here waiting for him. And we had a cabin cruiser that was in the lawn down here, and we were, uh, repainting it. He was repainting it and doing work on it. And there was masking tape all over it because we were painting. And I brought my son up there and we were fishing, bottom fishing on the Oluwak, we went up to the cabin and we had just one little room cabin, went up there and we're sitting there and pretty soon I hear a boat. I said, Son, listen, I think that's a cabin cruiser. Round the corner comes my husband. He comes to shore and he says, You guys OK? I said, We're OK. And the son started telling him, Boy, we went fishing and Dad I caught lot of fish and I used your hooks and those white people down there, they didn't know how so I let them borrow your hooks but I got them back, Dad. He was so proud. And John came up to me, he said, What do you think you're doing? You're going to kill my son. I said, I told you I was leaving. I left the girls let you know. I'm fine. And so, after that it was OK, I could take the skiff anytime I wanted and so, yeah, we just do what you need to do.

When the fishing slowed down here when I was younger we'd go across, my younger sister and I and my, um, niece, we'd put the net in my skiff and go launch up the Wood River and go across the bay and set the net out, just three women. And we'd go there and get our fish. And one time it was the first time we're going out, we had Tony's boat, we put it in the water and it wouldn't start and we had to make the tide because the tide goes out you can't go anywhere, anyway. We thought we had to go back and Rose said, I'm going to go get the trailer—my sister—I said, Go ahead, I'm going to work on the skiff. I said, I asked Tony, Anybody drain these filters or—check the gas for water? No. So I took it all apart and drained everything. And my sister just rolled up with the trailer behind, pull it out. I said, OK Tony, turn the key, try starting it. She started right up. Those kids said, What happened, what'd you guys do? I said, I fixed it, I drained it. She's all, You know how, I said, I watched Tom, I could do it.

It's like when he got sick, they sent him into Anchorage and they wanted me to keep him there and I told them no. It's not going to—I'm not leaving him there. You need dialysis. I said, I'm not dumb, teach me. I stayed in Anchorage three months and they taught me. I came home with a computer in my house. They told me he had one year to live. He lived six years with us. I had him six years longer. We'd carry him. By the time he passed away he had no legs, he was legally blind. We'd carry him into the jet boat and bring him up to the cabin and he'd go fishing with us. We'd let him out, we have a little boat, little skiff

with a little motor on. And my Ray Ray, my youngest one was about five years old. And he wanted to go out on it. And I told my son, Go ahead, put your dad in and let him go. He needs to go—They'd come with me till Ray Ray and Ray said, Nope, Apa—she called him Apa—you always get cranky. I'm not going with you, you growl if I talk too much. He's, No baby, I won't. She said, You could be a grumpy old man and so we let him go and I told his son, and I told him, You stay in front of the cabin because he was legally blind. As long as we can see you're fine we can go out and get you guys. They had lifejackets on. We hear them talking and visiting and pretty soon I hear this little voice, Take me to shore. I heard you get grumpy in there with our baby's telling her grandpa she had to go to shore. No no honey, I'm not grouchy. Now we still have that boat and we call it the Grumpy Old Man boat. And it's still at the cabin. It's funny, you can hear the kids, Come on, let's go riding the Grumpy Old Man boat. And it's just a real old skiff with a little—I think it's a three horse on it. You start it and just toodle around. But there's a way, we find it, we do it. We're all in this together. We work hand in hand.

(long pause)

Anna Lavoie: Well, do you, do you have anything you'd like to share about how you have experienced or perceived environmental change or climate change?

Connie Timm.: Well, it's way—you should have saw us a long time ago when we were growing up, the road that you would drive to town with, we'd drive—when the road came in we drove the bus. The road drifts around here would be higher than the bus. It's like riding in this tunnel with walls on the side, there was that much snow. And um, for years there would be snow on top of the—it'd cover the windows in my cabin. You don't see that anymore. We haven't had—last winter we finally—my son is funny. My son bought a brand new Sno Go three years ago and uh, this year he finally got to drive it because we had no snow. We had enough where we could take it out this year.

Anna Lavoie: Wow.

Connie Timm.: Yeah and you don't get as much fish as we used to. And uh, before we used to, we had smelts when we were growing up, we'd go down there and call them […], it's a dip net. And they're little tiny fish, I don't know what the white people call them, we call them smelts, they're about this big. But we'd […] them out and take them and Mom would fry them. And they're just eating potato chips, they are just yummy. But nowadays you can't hardly get them. Wintertime sometimes you get them through the ice, and lots of things. The, you know, the winters are getting way, way shorter. And it's just, I always say […]—climate change has caught up to us because you see more and more different every year and we hardly see the snow. We never have the winters—I don't think we've had a snow day in the school district—for a couple years, maybe three years. But when I worked at the school 28 years, there'd be, like, three days in a row we couldn't go to school because of blizzards. Blizzards so bad that the whole town would shut down. So we don't see near as much snow at all. And it affects our berries because the snow puts water in the ground and berries were really scarce when there's no snow. And of course our lakes system, I own a—under the land claims settlement act under 14C I got a, uh, one-acre island after I proved I camped on it. And um, it's one acre but I always tell everybody because the water's so low and we don't have so much snow coming off the

mountains, I could sell real estate because my island's getting really big, because the water's so low up that way.

Anna Lavoie: Wow. So the island is growing pretty much.

Connie Timm.: Yeah, yeah it is. Because there were times before when we had lots of snow that our cabin would get uh, it would fill with water. Very, very few times you see that now. In fact the lake is really low now again.

And the moose are harder to find. I really think, you know, our moose hunting in the fall. I don't know whether the climate change is making them rut later, but it used to be before we'd go out in the, you know—the bulls would be following the cows and we'd be able to get them. Now the bulls aren't moving, at least not up there, because we're hunting every year faithfully. They're not moving until after the season closes. My son didn't get a moose up there in the fall for the last three or four years. We waited, we finally—the winter we have a hunt in the winter at the end of December, or the month of December, we've gotten our moose in December for the last three years because, yeah, they're just—they're not moving. It's like they're rutting later. Of course, I don't know, I'm not a scientist. But we used to be able—all the kids, you know, they caught their moose, we'd just go around the bend from our island to a slough and get a moose and quarter it up and bring it to the island. But it's really a process. My son goes up there. If I get off work I'll go up there and we'll stay up there like two weeks and camp and he'll go camp in the sloughs and hike and everything. Long time ago we didn't have to do that, it was there, there was plenty.

And bears, more bears. I think that—I don't know whether, what it is, but they didn't bother us before. It seems like they, they're coming closer and closer because, you know, they don't the uh, as much food as they had. And of course our, you know, fishing, they live on fish. And they're real, they're real bothersome especially when you live off the land, you're trying to protect what you put up for the winter. Yeah, it's here. I'm sure it's here. It's, you know, look at the weather now. It's beautiful, but we would—there'd been times we were like 50, 60 below wind chill and cold. But it was good, we—you know, we didn't have—even my kids growing up they didn't have snow machines or anything. They went out and played. We saved uh—boxes we got from the store and they went sliding with them. We didn't plastic sleds or anything.

You know, today there's too much TV, too much of square little boxes, they sit there all day, and it's not good, it's not healthy. They need to be outside. In fact, kids come down to visit. One time I was there doing dishes and I looked out my daughter and her daughter drove up, I thought, Oh good they're visiting. And I'm doing dishes at the counter and I'm looking out and they're still there and their heads down. And they're on their phones texting and stuff. And finally I went out the door, I said, Hey. She rolled down the window and said, Hi Mom. I said, You know what, why don't you just close the window and go back home. I said, You guys aren't visiting, you're just playing those little boxes. No we're coming in. I said, Then leave them in the car. Don't come in my house—and they don't talk anymore. They just sit there. I had two grandkids at the table—want to come visit Grandma. And I'm talking and they're not, you know, they're answering me but they're not saying anything and I look around, they're across from the table and they both got those little square boxes. I said, What are you guys doing? We're talking. I said,

How? They said, We're texting. I said, That's crazy, you don't even—no conversation, just sit around with these little boxes right across the table from each other. I said, No, that's not good.

My girls when they grew up, they would learn how to run the Sno Go but they didn't take the Sno go until they learned to troubleshoot it, check the gas and the spark plugs, because their dad, John, used to always say, You're ten miles away from home and we didn't have fancy phones where you could call anytime. You need to know how to do stuff, how to fix stuff. And he made sure they all learned how, all my girls. Like I said my youngest daughter is a mechanic, but us women we could do anything. It's a tough life, but you could do it if you set mind to it. And I truly believe that. It's there, we're capable just as much as our men are. And it's a good uh, it's a good companionship, that way I think it's healthier. You work together, you know. One person isn't just doing something. Everybody is pitching in, and that's what makes everything go around. You're healthy, you're working together as a family and that's why I think it's so important what I'm doing in teaching my kids and doing subsistence and stuff as a family. Except sometimes I get the feeling that I need to let go. My kids can't do anything without me and I'm getting old. But it's good. Like today's my daughter's birthday. They all come down. My youngest daughter, she'll do the barbecuing and everybody's bringing something, then later down we'll go down and put the net out because it's blowing and I might get kings tonight. And so—busy busy busy. Never a dull moment.

(long pause)

Anna Lavoie: Well, you're welcome to talk about anything else you feel like talking about.

Connie Timm.: I'm good now. I'm getting dry mouth (laughter).

Anna Lavoie: (laughs) We need to give you water. We usually have water.

Connie Timm.: I'm good, unless you want to ask me anything else, if I can answer it I'll answer it. You're the one, you're the inquisitive one. If I know, I'll tell you. If I don't, I'll tell you.

Anna Lavoie: Well, simply, how long have you had the cabin up at the lake?

Connie Timm.: We started, my late husband, we started camping on there. My late husband—we started you had to be camping before 1972 land claims. And he actually brought me up there in '69. And we started camping up there.

Anna Lavoie: OK.

Connie Timm.: Yeah. And it's quite a process. You had to a lot of paperwork and keep on them. But they—once it goes through, I got the deed and it's mine.

(laughter: Maggie, Connie's dog joining the interview causes laughter)

Anna Lavoie: She wants to be on video…

Kim Sparks: She really wants to be over here.

Jean Lee: She's cute.

Connie Timm.: She's my bear dog.

Kim Sparks: She’s a lover.

Connie Timm.: She’s my bear dog. It’s really funny how she slimmed down this summer because during the winter she’s try to run after me up the road and she’d have to rest she’s so overweight. But now she could chase my car and everything and its good. She’s a good dog. They’re part of my family. We've had lots of animals and most of them die of old age. I don't—put mine on chain. In fact with us down there, the kids had to walk up to the road to catch the bus (laughter because of Maggie). They had to walk up the road to catch the bus, and the dogs would follow them up, especially in the summer because—the bears. And I get a call from the dogcatcher, saying, You need to put your dogs on a leash and keep them home or we're going to fine you, city ordinance. I said, that's fine. I said, I want you down here 7:30 in the morning to walk my kids up the road and then when the bus gets here at 3:30 you better be there to walk them home. Because there's bears on my road, you want them on a leash, come on and do it. Earn your money. He'd leave us alone after that. Because they did—I swear they know when the bus is going to come.

C’mon Maggie, sit down. Down, down!

(more laughter and distraction goes on because of Maggie)