00:00 Richard Batiuk: Sure. Rich Batiuk. Date of birth was July 25th, 1962, since August of 2018, I'm now retired. Prior to that, I worked for almost 34 years with the United States Environmental Protection Agencies. Chesapeake Bay Program Office, Indianapolis. Actually worked for a state, federal, local business academic partnership for those 34 years, 25 of those years, I was the Associate Director for Science analysis and implementation. Essentially responsible for working with thousands of partners and figuring out common ground for moving forward on Chesapeake Bay restoration, with the focus on water quality and all the associated sources and impacts of water... Of impacts on water quality across the six state watershed.

00:44 Eve Austin: That's it?

00:45 RB: That was it, yeah.

[chuckle]

00:47 EA: How many years did you say you worked?

00:49 RB: Almost 34.

00:50 EA: Wow. Okay, and so you're retired now?

00:52 RB: Retired now, yeah, so since retired, doing all the things I wanted to do but didn't do during my 40 to 60 hour work weeks for so long, but I actually got a unique partnership with one of my long-term colleagues, Holly Greening who retired about four months before I did. She was the executive director for what they called the Tampa Estuary Program. So it was the comparable program focused on cleaning up and restoring Tampa Bay on the Gulf Coast of Florida, and she and I have partnered together, we have a group called CoastWise Partners. We have a very unique business plan and that is, we work for good food. No, seriously that... So we've actually travelled around the country and I've done a little bit around the world. If people pay our travel costs and a little bit of our business costs, our time to them is free.

01:36 EA: Really?

01:36 RB: So we've got work on East Coast with folks up on Long Island Sound up in New Hampshire. Next week we're heading down to North Carolina to work on the Albemarle-Pamlico Sound. In a couple of months, I'm going back to New Zealand to work with those colleagues, and I've got folks in Korea that want me to come over and work with them. So we've been working on all coast lines and actually in the interior, the United States as well as folks around the world, essentially trying to help them from our combined 75 years of experience about what we learned and to do and not to do in Tampa Bay and Chesapeake Bay, but also our experiences with many other, what we call watershed areas or efforts that are focused around large water bodies that involve multiple counties or multiple states or in some cases, multiple countries as well.

02:24 RB: So it's been a lot of fun. A nice transition from 34 years worth of working, now essentially giving of our time and experience and expertise to folks. Work with people from probably about 55 different countries, not myself, but them coming to our office or working with them. And there are certain terms and terminology and approaches that are easy to translate, whether it's into Parsi, into Mandarin or Spanish or whatever the language might be out there. So, some common themes, they all involve humans and trying to have people essentially change the behavior, one way or another. And the underlying sciences in the aquatic system and on large landscapes that flow into 'em. There's a lot of commonalities that you find as you work around the world or even between here in the United States. Different cultures, and different approaches, different governmental systems but there's a common language and that you can find underneath all that as well.

03:22 EA: And you're a scientist, so your expertise begins with the science.

03:27 RB: Yeah, I'm certainly a scientist by training. I got an undergraduate degree in Environmental Science at University of New Hampshire, before they actually had degrees in environmental science, so I combined several of the major sciences together, then I went on to American University in Washington DC and got a masters degree in environmental toxicology. Was interested in the... How chemicals worked their way through the system, human body as well as the ecosystem and they influenced it and did my research on the Chesapeake. And then, brought my family down here and the rest is history. Was able to get an internship and then a lifelong career with EPA, working for a very unique partnership and in applying my science, but my science was only a piece of it.

04:08 RB: I had to be a social scientist. I had to be a... Someone that understood how to work with individuals whether it was farmers or with people on Capital Hill or with a neighborhood association somewhere or with a environmental engineer working for a city to try to upgrade a wastewater treatment plant, to try to work with a whole range of different folks to find common interest and common ground and essentially try to help move them in a particular direction that would benefit them, but also their downstream neighbors and trying to essentially change the perspective around 18 million people by the time I retired, here in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Not that you're gonna get every one of those people, but you've gotta change somewhere along that path of how people are living and what they're doing affects their land, their drinking water, their surroundings as well.

04:57 EA: You're talking about something that I've heard over and over again now with several people who I've interviewed, have talked about the importance of relationships as part of the work of relationship building and collaboration. That's what I hear you saying some of the...

05:13 RB: Absolutely. A big part of my job was a science translator to have folks understand... Not... You didn't wanna sit there and describe the carbon cycle, whatever, you wanted to have people understand what that science was telling and what did that mean to them either in their job or their day-to-day life, etcetera, but also was to understand enough of where people were coming from, the social side of it to then say, "Okay what are their value systems? What are they concerned about and how can I connect up with what they're concerned about locally or whatever area that

they're interested in, whether their farm, their house, their city or their township or a watershed or a particular sector of industrial business sector, etcetera, and how you could make the connection to the job that we as a larger partnership had to carry out as well.

06:02 RB: Looking back on it, certainly I would still go with science route, but I would encourage a lot of folks, myself included, to have more of the social sciences, which for the early parts of my career, were really frowned upon or looked upon, that, "You're not a biologist, you're not a physic... Physicist, you're not a hydrologist. You're... Oh, you're with that softer science." What I found is that, was actually, the most critical parts of my job was being able to understand that side of it and then to bring the science and the policy together, to make that happen as well out there. So folks on a more hardcore science track should have, almost everybody should be required to minor in some kind of the social sciences, if they truly wanna influence what's happening out there.

06:44 EA: Over such a long span of years. I'm sure you have any number of stories and memories of work.

06:51 RB: Oh yeah.

06:51 EA: I wonder if you could talk a bit about anything that stands out, maybe a moment or a challenge or a story that might be interesting for people to hear about.

07:02 RB: So one of the key highlights of my career was working with a tremendous... Literally thousands of different partners, to put together what we call the Chesapeake Bay TMD or the total maximum daily load, or as I coined the phrase, "The Bay pollution diet. In other words, the Chesapeake as a watershed, it encompasses six different states in Washington DC.

07:25 EA: Okay.

07:26 RB: So when water lands on just below Ithaca, New York or out in Jefferson County, West Virginia. Eventually, that rain water works its way somewhere into the Chesapeake Bay. So what a farmer is doing in West Virginia, what a small town is doing with their city streets up in New York itself eventually comes down and influences the Chesapeake. So we had to figure out Mother Nature knows how to sort of correct things, but we in the human race, for the past 300-400 years have been tilling the soil, and changing and knocking down trees.

07:56 RB: So the Chesapeake gets too much nitrogen phosphorus and sediment pollution to bail absorb it, and then be healthy. Sort of like a human being, there's good food and there's too much of poor food that are coming in. So, the bay like humans has a metabolism. And we had to try to figure from a science perspective and then from a policy perspective what's the right amount of nutrients and sediments coming into the Chesapeake that the water would still be clear? It's not gonna have green brown waters out there because of harmful alga blooms and there's enough oxygen for rock fish, oysters, crabs in order to just not only survive, but to flourish and support local economies there.

08:35 RB: So putting that diet together involved convincing a lot of people, not just six states, but a

lot of people that they needed to buy into it, because eventually it had to go down to the farm scale, to the towns, to the villages, to the Walmart parking lots, to people that are planning growth on the eastern shore of Maryland Virginia and Delaware. And part of that work involved a colleague of mine and he and I teamed up essentially for almost a two-year period. We hit the road, we talked to hundreds and hundreds of audiences. We did radio shows, we talked to newspaper editorial boards, we sat down with farmers, with farm bureaus, with home builder associations, with municipal authorities, and we had a lot of periods in which, of two or three month period both years that we went through a series of public meetings and public hearings.

09:23 RB: So one of the most memorable was we're in the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. An area that depends, a lot of its economy depends on agriculture, so there's a lot of beef cow out there, there's some dairy, but there's a tremendous amount of poultry, both chicken and turkey. So we set up a public meeting in a regional high school, so that farmers, so that... And we set up at the end of the day, in the evening, so that people could get off of work, and come and listen to us and not only listen to us but that we could listen to them as well.

09:53 RB: So on our way to that public high school after having sat down with a regional newspaper editorial board, the farm bureau that morning, and then an afternoon radio show, we heard that there was a large crowd there, that state troopers had been asked to come because there were people outside holding signs. I had never gone into a place where my personal safety was in question, so my colleague and I quickly pulled off our suit jackets, undid our ties, rolled up the sleeves, and came into a large auditorium, and it's about 500-600 people in there since it was a regional high school, and you could smell the days labors out there, the smell of manure, the smell of chicken. And some folks might say, "Oh that's bad."

10:36 RB: No, it was production, it was food, it was people doing their hard work but we knew that we had an audience that was not very... Gonna be very friendly. Not only that, but a certain congressman from that particular area who happened to be a Republican, got up to, shall we say, "Welcome his two EPA colleagues and spent 10 minutes essentially getting the crowd riled up and moving them in the wrong direction in terms of all the things that EPA was doing was doing wrong. So, my colleague and I had... Essentially we were slated for two and a half hours, we ended up staying for five hours, but when I stepped up on stage, the first thing I said was good evening, I'm from the federal government. I'm here to help you. And you could have heard a chicken flap in that area.

11:17 RB: The next thing I said to this audience was the best available science indicates next to a well-managed piece of farmland, a well-managed piece of forest land, a well-managed piece of farmland is the best thing for Chesapeake Bay, for Muddy Creek, for the South Branch, and the Shenandoah. EPA doesn't want to put you out of business. EPA and your downstream neighbors who depend on clean water, whether for their businesses or for the people that harvest fish like the Waterman and the Potomac and the other, depend on you sending down that, they're as independent as you, we want you to stay in business because if you leave and there's a Walmart there, everybody loses in that particular case.

11:57 RB: So let's have a conversation about what the problems are, how you all can solve them,

and how are we actually crediting the work that you're doing up here in the Shenandoah. And my partner and I Bob, we will stay until everybody has their questions answered, information. So after we're done, we will stay here and take as many questions. And it was the best five hours, probably in my career, both in terms of the level of understanding that they took after we've finished our presentation about how do you put this entire Chesapeake Bay Watershed under a pollution diet and that we're not pointing at all the farmers out there as well, but to have the understanding that every single audience that we stand, we sat up in front, we never gave the same presentation, we tailored it towards their particular issues.

12:44 RB: And you didn't come across as some cold bureaucrat out there. Could we solve everything? Absolutely not, but did we listen to them, and did we modify it afterwards, and did we have them understand what we would do with that information? Absolutely. And now what's happening in the Shenandoah, it's turning around, the waters are getting cleaner. They still have some challenges out there, but they... And a lot of other people are actually seeing the benefits of the work that they've done under this bay pollution diet that the partnership put in place. Now, it's in towards let's say, close to 10 years in place.

13:16 EA: That must be gratifying.

13:18 RB: It certainly is, yeah. There's some challenges out there but I think when I joined with this partnership as an EPA employee, there were 12 million people in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. By the time I retired, we were heading above 18 million people, a 50% increase in human population. Not in my lifetime but within my professional lifetime, within the same six state watershed area. Yes, it's a big area, but that's a huge, huge human footprint to do on that. One should be comfortable that after that career that you just held the line, no, we were actually able to lighten that footprint. Not enough, but certainly enough to start to see hundreds of rivers and streams and the Chesapeake started to work its way back.

13:58 RB: There's certainly challenges out there, absolutely. Mother Nature, climate change, etcetera are heading against you and that pressure, but I think what we've demonstrated that you can change the perspectives on how people live day-to-day, how the decisions they might make, how they work with the different sources out there, whether it's their own backyard, that farmer down the street, that Walmart, and whether you're gonna make a new development of Cedar Acres over here or build it somewhere differently but still allow people to come into the watershed itself.

14:26 EA: Do you remember what year was that meeting that you had?

14:28 RB: It was in 2009. There was a, as I said, a two-year period in which we're leading up to the TMDL itself. So, it was in the latter part, I think towards the winter of 2009. But as I said, we went out once to sort of put a draft out there and then the final version of it, but we had hundreds of those kind of meetings. But really what struck me is the interest of those hardworking folks, men and women, and some of them brought their families 'cause they didn't have somebody out there to do it, to come and sit, to listen, but also to come and express their concerns, their fears, their optimism, their ideas, and then watch that community turn back again and said, "Okay, we know it's our own waters. We're protecting for our next generation." They're very concerned about what their kids and

their grandkids are gonna do. Can they maintain that land? Can they afford to raise a family on prices of milk that are set on world markets? And the same thing with grains and all the regulations that seem to be beating them down and everybody that seems to be pointing a finger at 'em. They've done a tremendous amount of work there as well because they recognize that there is a unique quality to the Shenandoah that brought them there, not only the farm land but just the beautiful mountains on either side, the rivers that go through that, that their local and regional economies depend on a whole bunch of things.

15:42 RB: And they also understood that they were upstream and they were sending something extra downstream to a neighbor whether that's somebody drinking in Washington DC, or somebody catching crabs for a living off of Colonial Beach, Virginia, that if they didn't have good clear water, they didn't have grasses, they didn't have grasses, they didn't have crabs, they didn't have crabs, their family wasn't gonna have that income that particular year. They could see those pieces connected together and I could watch them and then watch sort of afterwards and have gone back to the Shenandoah a number of times and watch the community actually take on its own responsibility, not asking for big brother to come and help them or somebody to force them to do it, but to take on their own initiative and clean up their own act at the same time make their farmers more productive in terms of the crops and the animals that they're producing out there and not impact that, but actually send cleaner water down, downstream.

16:35 EA: It seems like it's a little more of a hostile environment right now to find people who are willing to listen to other's points of view and everything that feels very partisan to me, and so I'm just wondering, 'cause that was 11 years ago, what do you think the challenges would be now for someone doing similar kind of work in 2020 and beyond? What do you think they might be facing and?

17:00 RB: Yeah. So, for my almost 34 years, I saw a tremendous number of changes at the federal level in terms of changes in presidential parties and changes in Congress between Rs and Ds and who is in the minority and the majority. Same thing at the state level and the same thing at the local level. What I was always proud of is that the issue of Chesapeake Bay restoration and clean, essentially the issue of clean water because a lot of folks if you're in Roanoke, Virginia, you may not care about what's happening way down on the bay, but you do have rivers and streams and drinking water that come through and that people always could agree that, nobody disagreed with the need for clean water. The question was who needs to do what, where, out in there? But what I saw is that issue sort of kept above the fray. There were times that certain administrations would take a stance and pull back and push back and whatever, but I haven't seen at the federal scale, I was hired during Ronald Reagan, I went through Bush one, Bush two and Clinton. There were changes back and forth, but those administrations were supportive of a very unique partnership that built a very big tent and had the ability for a tremendous amount of people not only to come to the table but to be actively involved in decision-making together.

18:10 RB: And what this current administration has essentially looked at that and said, "Oh, you don't need it. Let's zero fund it." Okay, that's a challenge. But I think we showed that, in fact, it is working and not only is it working, there was an interesting case where a senator from West Virginia who happens to be a Republican and who happens to not like EPA at all, she teamed up

with a very liberal Democrat in Maryland and the two of them two years ago said not only heck no, we're gonna increase the budget. Why? Because in West Virginia, she recognized that that federal funding was helping her farmers, it was helping her local business folks, it was helping her towns and cities make changes that were good for West Virginia. Yes, they happen to be sending less pollutants down through Maryland and Virginia and down into DC, but she saw that that was resources being used right, and most importantly, that West Virginia had a seat at the table, small West Virginia compared to big Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, and that they were actively involved with their own fate.

19:13 RB: Somebody else wasn't telling them what to do. To me, when I saw that, I said, "Even we can rise about politics when we see that there is an effective organization, in this case a structured partnership where folks come to the table, bring their issues and they work to resolve the issues." Not that this current administration is completely different but there are certainly challenges out there. And I think one of the strengths that we had...

19:34 RB: Within the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership was, you could always fall back on the science. In other words, understanding with... If I've got a cow in upper state, up in New York, there. What influence did that, back into that cow have on that stream, in that river there? Or, if there was a city up the headwaters of the James River, what influence did they have on the James River and how to fit there or what was causing the crabs to crash out there and why was it important to watch the change in tree species as climate changes occurs out there, and what are the implications of that? So that if you built a good solid scientific foundation, and you continue to build on that, and you got agreement from your scientists but also your program and policy makers at each level, at the local level, the state level, the federal level, the regional levels, when times were hard and the politics couldn't get agreement through, you always had a solid foundation. You might slip back, but you're not gonna fall below that.

20:29 RB: And then when there's opportunities to build on it, you continue to build a good scientific understanding and that you're able to then March your program forward. And we've seen that in the Chesapeake as I said earlier, against a 50% human population increase, we actually reduced the footprint out there. That alone is astonishing. Have we gotten there? No. But have we clearly gone beyond what I think the Clean Water Act and other federal laws have enabled most of the rest of the country to do? Absolutely. But in order to achieve our goals, you can't be stymied by that, and I think that's where this effort is, you've got a... Not saying that we need to change laws out there, but you've gotta do things, you've gotta change behavior to a level that wasn't envisioned when they put the Clean Water Act together, or was envisioned even now to implement in what's necessary. I think what we've seen in the Chesapeake is a glimpse of what really is necessary at the very local scale, across an entire quilt-work of different cities and towns and counties and approaches to how we govern what's gonna be necessary to ensure clean water, even against a rising human tide, more intensive agriculture, and more fluctuations in our day-to-day climate that we're seeing out there as well.

21:46 EA: There's still plenty of work to be done.

21:48 RB: Absolutely, yeah. And I think, as you said, that next generation has got some challenges

that I would find difficult to take a look at and at least in the Chesapeake, a lot of the basic understanding of how the system works and how does it respond to different things. I think we got... We've got a lot of understanding of that, doesn't mean that there's not more science needed, absolutely. But I think enough of that basic framework is, we know where we need to focus. The question is, "Can you focus more specifically? Can you get smarter about balancing fisheries or how much a farmer needs to apply on his or her crop land in order to maximize that yield but at the same time reduce how much might be going through groundwater or over that surface water to a local stream and river and more and more emphasis on how do you convince folks to do something different? What are you gonna be asking? What is the certainty, of, "If I put this in place, you'll get this benefit. What is the economic impact of either that action or the job building capacity of taking those actions as well?"

22:50 RB: And how do you get down to even a more local scale within a city like Baltimore, or Richmond. And how do you work at that micro-scale to then understand the challenges that they're facing? But then to build it into day-to-day living and day-to-day decision-making.

23:06 EA: Yeah, what do you think... How do you do, how do you get down to that little micro-scale, say in Baltimore?

23:13 RB: Yeah, that's a good question. I think what we're seeing is our science is starting to get to that scale. In other words, understanding if I'm in a city structure, it's not the same thing from neighborhood to neighborhood, in terms of, for example, how much pervious or impervious surface is out there, or what the opportunity is for urban farming for example? What are the opportunities for getting local employment as people try to build more green space or more... The community to be able withhold that rainstorm. I've watched communities like Lancaster Pennsylvania, Lancaster County. Huge amounts of agriculture, a lot of plain stack community. So that they have religious beliefs and that makes it not more difficult to reach to, but you have to work with them differently. But then in there, they've got a beautiful historic city, that's been economically challenged and they have a system, what is, they call it combined sewer overflow. In other words, when it rains, part of that rain water goes into their sewage system and they get overflows of that, so raw sewage comes out into their systems.

24:17 EA: Baltimore has that also.

24:18 RB: Yeah, Baltimore as well. So a lot of the big historic cities. So, one could try to dig up that whole system and mess up a whole bunch of roads and try to split those. They actually have turned more towards building essentially, building a bigger sponge underneath Lancaster, as they re-develop blocks, as they re-develop streets, as they work in particular neighborhoods. A great example is, when they re-do a recreational area and they have a basketball court or something like that, when they pull it out, they actually build underneath the capacity to drain that basketball court, much quickly, quickly after a rainstorm, so that the kids get to playing from their neighborhood, more immediately. There's not a puddle of water sitting there for a couple of days, but underneath that, that has retained a lot of that storm water, that are gone into a drain, that might have gone in with local raw sewage into a local stream.

25:09 RB: And now, what have they done? They have improved the quality of life for that neighborhood. They've built infrastructure that can will start to withstand more intensive rainfall out there and they've collected important resource down below that, that slowly but surely seeps in there and eventually becomes drinking water that comes back from their system and at the same time, they've restructured their neighborhood, so that that place that used to be an intersection that wasn't good, now has a micro-grow in it, that has a little bit extra property there and little, lo and behold, that thing that looks like an ice plant to next to 'em is actually a bio-filtration system.

25:43 RB: And they actually put in an extra bike lane and they protect the pedestrians along the way. So that you combine sort of your traffic engineering to your neighborhood and the social and business aspects of it along with an environmental solution that's cheaper and actually, in the end, helps the whole system out there. That kind of example, we had to figure out how to multiply literally hundreds, if not millions of times, across every time we dig a shovel into there or we think about an urban planting or as we're re-looking at a neighborhood with all the aspects, social, crime, education but also the environmental and then the whole infrastructure. The street itself, and the underlying pipes, but also that rain water that's gonna come in more intense... Events that are gonna flood out systems and are gonna cause damage and perhaps even impact human lives. That's a heck of a challenge, but that's really the next big step that in the Chesapeake region, in that same thing, not just in city streets but in urban rural areas where you've got farm lands and others, how do you help them maintain what you need to... In a way of life, and maintaining their family farm and hand it down to that next generation.

26:51 EA: So you really need 'em thinking... You really need them, leadership and vision 'cause what you just described, it sounds so logical, but it takes so much coordination and collaboration, you need revision.

27:04 RB: You need vision, you need people that as you say, that articulate, that can translate not just in terms of words, but translate vision into something. You're up against a series of things. One is, that's how my granddaddy farmed my piece of land. Why should I be different? So how do you help that farmer or that farm community adopt and some of 'em are early adopters and some are, they're still saying, "Hey, it's not my problem or I can't afford to do that. I can't afford another piece of equipment. I gotta get rid of this manure and I know it's frozen ground out there, but I can't afford to put one of those storage systems up there to do it. How do I make something like that happen?" That had, being a challenge or if you're in an inner city, you got a lot of other issues to be worried about than some environmental issue. But when that rain storm comes, if you're down in Norfolk, Virginia, 45, 50, 60 days out of the year, you're seeing a king tide without any rain, and you got two feet of water in front, you can't get your kids to school from a national defence, there's an issue down there with a lot of the naval bases and stuff, and then people's property are being impacted. You're actually, it's starting to look like New Orleans, you're having... People are actually raising up their houses, if they wanna maintain their neighborhoods by two or three feet. So it's not coming, it's there. And that challenge is being coming, people are seeing that more mediate.

28:19 RB: So the question is, how do you build it into what we already do day-to-day, the decision making, the planning we do at all levels, how do you make that so integral to that? But at the same time, have folks that you're gonna need to change whether it's what you pay taxes-wise, or how

other... You expect others to do things or even how I as a homeowner, or a renter or a land owner, what do I need to do differently to protect my area, but also somebody downstream that might be impacted by what I do? Could be a neighbor, or could be somebody 50 miles downstream that is being impacted by some of that choice is, that I make to build a home here or even put fertilizer in my backyard.

29:00 EA: For younger people, either in college or young professionals, kind of facing all the challenges we've just been talking about, I'm curious, when you were that age, and you decided to get into this world. Well, I'd like to know why, what got you here and then what can you imagine might interest, people to not be overwhelmed by all these challenges right now, how do we get younger people now to kind of feel the fire that you did, when you were young and how did you get into this?

29:31 RB: Yeah, what burned in my belly was a couple of things. One is, I think I was still in high school, but I read Silent Spring, by Rachel Carson and that struck a chord in me, and that's sort of where it hit me going on down the toxicology root to understand chemical contaminates and how they work through these environments eventually, impact... And in this case-wide-spread out there. So that was one of the books that really influenced how I looked at things. The other one was actually James Micheners', "Chesapeake." in terms of such a unique ecosystem, but also what I saw in the Chesapeake was hundreds of years of culture and social change and influences that self and then how that ecosystem also influenced culture, and whether it was a by-boat up in Baltimore or folks bringing certain watermelons up into Richmond and using that as a waterway but also the amount of crop land and how things were working in that particular area.

30:26 RB: And the last one was, "Beautiful Swimmers" by William Warner, that also looked at that, but it started to get at the history of crabbing and the influence and these very independent gentlemen and women out there that worked the water, they called Waterman and that were making their lives off of that and then I also looking a lot of National Geographic and saw these pictures of the Chesapeake in the '60s and they started to talk about its decline. So, at an early age, my sisters thought I was crazy that I wanted to be Jack Huston, in the shallow waters, working in the Chesapeake Bay and following up on Rachel Carson and trying to figure out what happened. So when... By the time I was hitting in high school, and due the direction I wanted to go in, my sisters were still trying to figure out, "Do I wanna be a nurse or do I wanna be an artist." But I was fortunate in that regard and was able to then carry out my career going to graduate school and then get an internship and work it in there as well. And it was a phenomenal career to have that influence.

31:22 RB: So if I was young again and coming out and being challenged with what it is, I'd actually say I'm jealous of them. In other words, they get to come out to this brave new world with challenges that certainly were bigger than what I faced but also with information and knowledge that I never had access to, until well into my career. Whether you take advantage of the internet or the ability to instantaneously communicate with thousands or millions of people or to reach around the world and collaborate with colleagues of different religions, social aspects, much less countries in perspectives. They've broken down barriers that are in our case, were either concrete or physical, that you couldn't talk to countries or we didn't have the ability to travel as much of that or just the

information flow as well.

32:09 RB: My advice to them is, keep an open mind with your career. Get as much experience hands-on, do internships, unpaid and paid. But it's okay to work a little bit for the unpaid, as long as you have a mother or father or family that will be willing to help you out there, but get that early feel for what your passion is, 'cause if you're doing a job and if you're doing it right, you may spend not just 40 but in my case, 50-60 hours a week.

32:24 RB: You'll have responsibilities for people and they're gonna understand whether you're not passionate or not. If you're not coming into that office, excited about things or willing to share, a vision with something and being able to get out there, people, I think, if they're unhappy in their jobs, life is too darn short 'cause it's an important, it's not the only thing, but it's an important piece to get in there. But also get an education, not only in schools and in classrooms in graduate school, but also continue your education out there and really focusing as we talked earlier, not just about your particular niche out there but widen it out to the Social Sciences. And that's a whole realm as well. That's not just a multi... One dimension, because all of us are gonna need it, even if you're a poli sci major, somebody that's interested in anthropology, applied anthropology, etcetera, all of us need to understand that, if you wanna have your science used, you wanna influence science, you wanna influence policy, you wanna help people make different decisions, all those aspects.

33:30 RB: I think people, all of us could use more and better training on how to interact, how to communicate, how to understand. I spent a lot of time stepping out of my shoes, sneakers, boots, whatever I had on and stepping into somebody else's and drawing the best I could to look through their perspective and said, "How do they view that world? How would they view what I'm saying? How would they view what we're trying to make the change there and how are they gonna handle that and how are they gonna react and how do you not try into force them to do it, but find some common ground, something you could agree to. It's amazing when you talk to people, how much common ground you can find, whether it's personal, professional or otherwise and that you've got somewhere that you can connect on, you may not like 'em, but you can find some common ground on which to try to build on there as well. There're perspectives out there, you're not gonna change, that's your partner, your family, your friends, you're always gonna see that. But I think looking for that common ground and then building upon it and then making the next connection, you can be successful in doing so.

34:29 EA: I love the image. I'm thinking about you when you described, when you saw this crowd and off came the ties. So, just seeing this is an...

[overlapping conversation]

34:39 RB: Yeah, you're not gonna ever... They're gonna still look at you as a federal person but they're gonna listen very carefully to your words.

34:46 EA: Yeah.

34:46 RB: They're gonna listen to how you said things? They're gonna listen to how well you listen

to them and responded to 'em. Were you genuine or were you just mumbling some stuff out there? Hence the reason for as much as you could roll the sleeves up to you, you at least, you show that, but I didn't go out there with jeans and some splattered manure on there, I didn't wanna falsify who I was.

35:06 EA: Right.

35:06 RB: But I also let 'em know too that my mother grew up in a farm. And farms were in our family for about 200-300 years in Virginia. So I understood and one of the reasons I got into what I wanna do is, I wanted to keep them in business 'cause I saw how she, during the depression, they were able to feed their family from that and then how they worked on it. Unfortunately, my grandfather had four daughters that had no desire to farm, so we lost the family farm but so I understood what happened. But in my other side, my dad was the first generation, my grandparents escaped from Ukraine. So my family, there's a different pieces in there, but I understood what they were trying to do and the passion that they felt, had no desire to put 'em out of business, in fact, the better their business was, the better the environment was.

35:51 RB: And that they could understand that the science didn't demonize them, but it also held him up to then say, "Hey." Or, if you're doing the right thing, I'll go focus on somebody else, but let's not point fingers. Let's figure out how to help everyone to make this work. And there, it's a challenge, that you can't create a miracle, but you can... What you try to say is, you can... That others were understood the plight they were in and if they took their piece, others around there can do it, and all of a sudden, that one plus one equals three or four verses two, that multiplier effect can really be effective in making it happen. But they've gotta... Folks are gonna see through you whether, again, whether it's a local politicians, somebody up on Capital Hill, a farmer on the Eastern Shore, a waste water engineer in West Virginia, they're gonna see whether you're truthful or not and if they... You can hold to their word and you can come back and help 'em. And then that quid pro quo working together, you create networks.

36:45 RB: I think that's the other thing for younger folks to do is, build your networks up, maintain 'em, do extra things for other colleagues, help them out in their career, because you're gonna eventually, you're gonna be in a position where you're gonna need to help them out. But knowing in that, just in your immediate circle, spread that network-wide, share networks among people and then seek out others that have been in the field for a while and say, "Hey, can you mentor me, can you help me out there?" There are a lot of folks like myself that have been in there, that were also in the position they're in, we reached out to people and they helped us break through that glass ceiling or open that door that we might not have otherwise or create an opportunity for funding or for a job, or just for an experience out there as well.

37:26 RB: I've got a network of 3000 or 4000 that I still have kept after I retired. So, not that I could talk to those people, but I know that I've got a connection of out there. And if they remember, "Oh, who is that again?" But you can... You can build up to that level of connections to people. And if they remember you, then, you can go back and forth and things happen. I still have people that are reaching out to me that I worked with 10 years ago, and said, "Can I do that?" I said, "Absolutely!" And then I reach out to the same thing and they say, "Oh, we'll give you hand." So, certainly it's a

profession network, but it also, the blooms beyond that as well.

38:00 EA: Is there, before we finish up, is there anything that you didn't get to talk about that I didn't ask you about, any last thing that you'd like to add?

38:09 RB: Yeah, I would say, yeah, yeah, I've been very fortunate for one of the things that I did. This is my personal way of "How do I look at it?" So, for about 32-33 years, I said, "Am I willing and excited about getting up?" In my case, I get up early ing the morning, so I get up around 05:00. I used to go swimming in a local pool before I went to work, so I did my laps, got in the office around 07:00. Ate my breakfast at the table up there, I got in there, in my case, before my staff did, and I was willing to put in 11-12 hours and then do that over again, do it over again, and be excited about that next day. I said "If there ever was a time were more than two days in a row, I wasn't excited about doing it, then I need to look for another job." And it really wasn't until my last year, that it started to grind down on me and I knew that it was time to sort of... Time to do something different.

38:55 RB: So for about 32 years, there were times that got me down but I'm an extrovert, so I've absorbed my energy from others out there. But I kept that in there because I didn't wanna find myself in a rut. I didn't wanna be that I couldn't come everyday and learn something new. That I couldn't come in that day and actually move the needle one way or another. That I couldn't come in that day and say, "I know what... This is not all BS, but there's important stuff in here, there's stuff I need to do." So I worked for a federal government agency. I had a large staff, I had budget to take care of, but I had a heck of a lot of partners that I had to work with as well.

39:17 RB: So, I was continuously prioritizing what I needed to do and a clear vision of what I needed to... What I could do as an individual, what I could do as a leader of a teams of folks and what I could do is, as a, essentially a facilitator for a larger partnership. So if you go in with a clear sense of what your mission is, whether you're part of a partnership, an organization, a business whatever that... What is it that you can buy in to and what is you, as an individual, what could you change in influence around you? And you continue to come back to that, refine it as you go through, you'll have a very successful and a very happy experience with your career. 'Cause I can look back, there's a couple things I regret, but I can honestly say I'd go back and do it... The whole thing over again. I'd be a lot smarter and I'd do things a little bit differently, but I would step back in my old shoes and plow on from there as well.

40:19 EA: And you'd have the Internet.

40:20 RB: Yes, exactly.

[laughter]

40:23 RB: Yeah. During that time, that technologies on all sides changed tremendously and that certainly positions folks, well, there's a plus and a minus to it. It allows people to communicate much better, but it also, in my particular case, the amount of communication and the amount of transfer information was so much, that you get overwhelmed by it.

40:42 EA: That's true.

40:43 RB: And you get trapped by that particular piece. Back when I started, it was using fax machines and mailing a heck of a lot of stuff to people because as you said, we didn't have the internet, we didn't have the ability. They were just starting some of the ones in late '80s and '90s to actually transfer files and stuff like that. So there was a slowness to that. But telephone... We used a telephone a lot more, which I still do. I think people forget how to communicate to the fellow persons and a lot of cases, I'll reach to the phone. Well, my electronic contacts have home phone numbers, they've cell phone. So there were times that, "Hey, I wanna reach you by phone, because I'd much rather talk to you." And a lot of folks said, "I'll email you." And I said, "Yeah, you're okay but I might likely to reach out to you, 'cause I don't wanna lose that human touch in that connection in there. And it could be somebody that I don't with enough, but it's... I think nowadays you only see that person maybe is a little circle in their little photo in there and all you do it is electronically. So you haven't connected to 'em.

41:38 RB: And I think if you lose, not that you're gonna sit there and know their family and your kids and whatever, but a lot of cases, you actually, you build up that relationship and that helps you in your profession and it also helps you understand where that person's coming from. And the challenges that they're facing. So don't lose that inter-personal connections in there. It could be colleagues around the world as well. So take opportunities to travel, to go to conferences, to keep that connection in there because those... That network, you will rely on, particularly if you wanna change perspectives and you wanna change behavior, which a lot of the jobs in the environment field, that's gonna be what, it's gonna be needed more and more and more. Even scientists have gotta, to work to be sure that their science is relevant, that it's changing human behavior and what's out there. So they need to have those skills, they can't hide in the field, they can't hide in the lab anymore. Not if they're gonna get funded.

42:26 EA: Thank you so much.

42:28 RB: Oh, you're welcome.

42:29 EA: And thank you for all the work that you've done over the years and continue to do just for good food.

42:35 RB: Yeah, that's fun, actually now, it's great food, because as people are essentially hiring this, which they... You hire somebody that... We had one group up in Narragansett Bay that they said they were interested in bringing Holly and myself on, but before we talked about what they want us to do, and they actually, they flew us up to Providence to spend a couple of days with 'em. They had already laid out the restaurants they were gonna take us to. So I knew that we had not only gotten to our motto or a business plan of working for good food, we're now working for great food. They had raised the bar, they understood that, with good sea-food and an iced micro-brew or glass of wine for Holly, we were in good shape there. So, that's when we knew we made the break through out there that folks understood that they truly need to feed us well and then we'll work even harder for 'em. But yeah, that's been a pleasure sharing those experiences with others.

43:24 EA: Right. I am gonna sign us off. So again, this is Eve Austin and it's January 9th 2020. I've been talking to Richard Batiuk, in this Town Creek, foundation, overall history interview.