Interview with Fran Steinbauer - Reston Land Corporation
28 January 1982

NN: This is Thursday, January 28th, 1982. I'm Nan Netherton and I'm interviewing
Fran Steinbauer, who is president of the Reston Land Corporation. Fran, I'd
like you to give me a little biographical information, where you were born,
your schooling and your first jobs up to the time to the job at Dulles.

FS: I'm pretty much a native, was born in old Sibley Hospital in Washington,
D. C., which no longer exists. And except for during the World War II years
where my family moved around a little bit, I'm a Washington area native,
primarily in Maryland. I lived in Laurel, College Park, Maryland, and then
Laurel, Maryland, most of my teenage years which was spent in Laurel, went
to high school there, and then after a brief interlude after high school I
came back to the area and went to the University of Maryland and have a
Bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Maryland.

NN: What year is that?

FS: That was in 1959. And my first job after the university was with Dulles,
so I've been in this area right here in the Herndon-Reston-Dulles area all
my professional life.

NN: How did you get that job? I've been curious about that.

FS: With Dulles?

NN: Mm-hum.

FS: Well, it's interesting because ... the usual interview routine at the
university campuses. I looked at a lot of different things and the one I
was aimed at primarily -- I guess in retrospect I'm glad I didn't take that
-- was with the Chrysler Corporation in Detroit. I had professionally
during school and prior to it done a lot of automotive work, automotive
body fender work, and they were interviewing and they were interested in
and so forth are . . .

NN: Gap line . . .

FS: Cap line. He's a public relations gap line and he's having fun with something new again. But there's something more behind it. Somehow because Gulf had that dam for so long, he would like to somehow make them have the responsibility to keep it forever and never have RHOA have the responsibility for it. That's my opinion. That has yet to be resolved. Fairfax County has gotten into it some and they're doing their studies. There have been in the last year and a half there have been four -- with this one it'll be four -- independent engineering studies, none of which have showed anything really wrong except this criteria changed. It says should you or should you not now meet that criteria. If you did, you'd have to tear down Lake Anne dam and rebuild the whole thing over again in an altogether different idea, so I can't imagine how they're going to do anything. We are going to transfer the Lake Thoreau and Lake Audobon dam very quickly ourselves to, along with this process and get current with it because we don't believe that there's any reason for the developer to keep the dams. I mean, it's a RHOA amenity, we should do it properly, we should meet all the criteria, collectively agree on what needs to be done, do it and turn it over to the homeowners association because the homeowners association is property used by the people who live along the lake and the ones who are enjoying it and it should be turned over to them more promptly. And it got in trouble because they -- we (I was part of it) -- felt that if we keep it, we always have control over it and that kind of idea, I think, in a way boomeranged.

NN: It can't be strengthened or backfilled or anything like that to keep from tearing it down?

FS: It is not structurally . . . as a matter of fact, all the reports say
structurally it is much more than it ever needed to be or needs to be now, and it's because the road goes over it, it's double wide because the road goes over it. Normally a dam only has to be maybe ten, twelve feet wide at the top and that one's fifty feet wide at the top.

NN: Is the ultimate storm greater than that we experience with Hurricane Agnes?

FS: Agnes was . . .

NN: That was a test.

FS: Agnes was a test and the water only rose about two feet above normal elevation. The top of that dam is twelve, fifteen feet above that, so you can see that we're talking about a probable maximum storm is one that is . . . Noah would have recognized it as what he went through, if you ever got to that. In order to handle that probable maximum storm which is, as I say, beyond anything that we know in the way of a storm, you would really have to not have a road over it and would have to dig out a relief channel that would really take part of the houses around one side of the dam there, the relief channel.

NN: What about VEPCO? Has anything unusual resulted from the burial of utilities and the dealings with VEPCO? Is it something that has any important relevance in that story?

FS: I think that particular note probably has to do with another current subject which is a high voltage transmission line that VEPCO proposed to put through . . . Let me show you on the map and that won't show up on your tape recorder, but I want you to understand it. Lake Anne area and central Reston, here's the Dulles access highway. The old Washington and Old Dominion Railroad line goes through here. VEPCO has its major transmission lines that go along there and you've gone past them. In order to serve north Reston but really in order to serve this part of the developing Loudoun and western Fairfax area, they felt that they needed another substation. You know they had a substation down here that serves . . .