

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This change of office by virtue of our President assuming other duties has been rather unexpected. I am sure that all the Directors of the Southeastern Association join with me in expressing our regret that this change becomes necessary. I know that we shall miss the leadership that Mr. Durand could have exercised during his term of office. I shall do my best to carry on as a substitute.

We can also obtain solace from the fact that Forrest's services and counsel are not lost to us in his new position. It is encouraging and gratifying to know that the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation is staffing its offices with qualified individuals from the ranks of state administrators well versed in our particular field of Outdoor Recreation. So, we all look forward to continuing cooperation and service between our respective states and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation office in Atlanta.

With these brief remarks over with, I assure you it is a very privileged honor to welcome all of you to the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners. It is especially significant to me personally, because it was in this hotel in September of 1931 that I became actively interested in the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners and the American Fisheries Society. The proceedings of those meetings 32 years ago and the gracious hospitality of Arkansas are still fresh in my memory.

We want to especially thank the program committee, Nelson Cox and his staff for the arrangements, and all the committees and individuals taking part in our meeting. I want also to remind you that Nelson Cox is now serving as President of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners. We all appreciate the workload that Nelson is carrying and assure him of our every assistance.

Without burdening you with details, I believe it important to review some of the measures affecting fish and game programs that have been initiated during the past year. These items are not mentioned in order of their importance.

Of special interest to us in the Southeast is the inclusion of a \$200,000 item in the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife budget for expanded research in the wildlife disease program through a cooperative agreement with the School of Veterinary Medicine at Athens, Georgia. This project will enable the school to enter into the realm of basic research in wildlife disease and will be in addition to our present program which is providing information vital to game management programs in the Southeast. The steering committee will report on progress of this cooperative undertaking later.

Likewise, the Southeastern Cooperative Fish and Game Statistics Project with the North Carolina State College is continually providing more and more assistance to the states in statistical methods.

Your association is also exploring the possibility of entering into a fish disease research program with an appropriate school in the Southeast. The committee will report later on progress of this undertaking.

Since our last annual meeting, we have all participated in the Accelerated Public Works Program made available to us through the Federal Aid branch of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. Believe me, I shall not attempt to report on that subject. Suffice it to say that most of our member states have cooperated in this program to very good advantage in spite of the confusion it has generated. We appreciate the patience and indulgence of Dr. Watson and his staff in aiding and guiding us through this dilemma.

Not since the days of Theodore Roosevelt has a president taken such an active role in the conservation of natural resources as presently witnessed by the current administration. I would call specific attention to the travel and activity of our Chief Executive for the cause of conservation, and say that attention at this high level is somewhat like a

shot in the arm to the old-timers who have struggled for years for recognition of natural resource conservation.

There has been a virtual explosion in national interest in outdoor recreation. Federal agencies are at last aware of the broad public demand for official recognition of recreation as an essential component of our national welfare. This interest is reflected in many policy directives from the White House and Cabinet members to state and local governing boards. It takes the imagination and initiative of fish and game administrators to keep up with the complexity of Federal and State programs which offer assistance in some form to our wildlife problems. We must rely heavily on the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to keep us advised of the various tools and aids available to us. If you have not received the brochures on this subject from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, by all means obtain a copy.

The recent policy directive by the Bureau of Public Roads opens a new area of possibilities to us. This, in my opinion, is to many states a breakthrough in game and fish conservation progress.

All of you are aware of these matters and we need not dwell on the details of implementation since each state has conditions and capabilities unique unto itself which must be adapted to the program involved.

There is one area of concern which has been expressed by many fish and game administrators in connection with this outdoor recreation explosion. There is concern that in the Accelerated Recreation Programs, fish and game may, in many instances, be subordinated or lost in the scramble among other outdoor recreation interests. We do not share this concern. We like to think of fish and game as still the motivating influence which lures people into the out-of-doors. Certainly, it has been the fishermen and the hunters who, by purchase of licenses, have financed agencies throughout the country that have fought for clean waters and green forests for the last century. Had it not been for these people and their agencies, I shudder to think of how much real outdoor recreation would be available to save today.

Over the past years there have been changes in the concept of conservation. There is every indication that other changes are in the immediate future. As administrators and workers in the field of wildlife conservation, we have adjusted to these changes. Just as the concept of the old-time game warden has changed, so has the other branches and divisions of the conservation agencies. A wildlife biologist can no longer be concerned only with the health and happiness of a whitetail deer, but by necessity must be qualified in water and land management, public relations and all phases of natural resource conservation. I and E divisions can no longer be content with informing hunters and fishermen about current laws and prime hunting locations. With a multi-use outdoor recreation program, the I and E divisions must be concerned with the other users of the forest, fields, and waters. We are now in the multiple use era of outdoor recreation. We must join hands with those other interests to insure orderly and coordinated development of recreational programs consistent with people's natural desires and needs in all phases of resource conservation.

We, in the field of natural resource conservation, have the personnel and facilities to stay on top of the planning of which course outdoor recreation shall pursue. There will be conflicts of interest, competition for use of areas and facilities. Most of us are veterans at holding our own when the chips are down. Fish and game people are also experienced in resolving conflicts of interest that may provoke argument. We must assume an attitude of tolerance, understanding and sympathy toward the total outdoor recreation picture to the end that all Americans can choose the type of recreation they prefer and that such opportunities are made available to them.

Perhaps the one concept that I might leave you with is this. In the overall recreation future, let us insure and insist that fishing and hunting does not evolve into a commercial commodity to be bartered and sold, but remain as intended, a natural experience full of romance and adventure as we now know it.