

EFFECTIVE USE OF THE INFORMATION MEDIA

By Wendell Bever
Southeastern Association of Game & Fish Commissioners .
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I am not a specialist in the field of information and education. What I know, believe me, I learned the hard way. If, however, I can help stimulate thought, differences of opinion, or excite your imagination just a little, then we'll both be making some head way.

EFFECTIVE USE OF THE INFORMATION MEDIA

I like to say there is really only two kinds of media - that which utilizes a captive audience and media that must attract an audience through some special means.

For example: A personal appearance before a group involves a captive audience. Although there is more than one channel on a TV station, as there is more than one newspaper, the audience is also captive because TV can handle but one subject at a time. A wildlife magazine sent to a subscriber basically goes to a captive audience—what else can he read in your magazine? Only what you want him to read.

The Daily Newspaper

Let's consider the non-captive media first. Head man in this listing has to be the daily newspaper. You make use of it in many ways, foremost through your weekly news releases. This isn't necessarily the best use. Look at what you are competing against (display of federal, federation, etc. reports). Can you imagine an outdoor editor trying to wade through this stuff. Believe me, he doesn't. I have talked with dozens of outdoor writers and editors and all of them, all, make a strong point that 90 per cent hits the round file. One week's collection can take up an entire file cabinet.

Why do you sweat and groan out a first-class conservation magazine and haphazardly produce a weekly newsletter that could reach far more people.

How to handle a newspaper media? I prefer these steps.

1. Study the circulation and distribution. Select the newspapers with the best state coverage and greatest readership.
2. Meet the managing editor personally and make him your friend.
3. Meet the outdoor editor - if they have one - otherwise the guy most likely to use your material. Cultivate him, take him to lunch, brag on his work, be a "little helper" if necessary, take him fishing or hunting, paint a bright new picture of the out-of-doors and last **MAKE HIM YOUR FRIEND** not a casual acquaintance but an honest to goodness friend.

If you haven't got it made in six months, you should have taken up archeology.

If a large circulation newspaper doesn't have an outdoor editor or outdoor page - promote one. Work on the managing editor.

In Oklahoma, the Tulsa Tribune and the Daily Oklahoman blanket the state - both have full outdoor pages at least twice weekly. Besides furnishing them with weekly newsletters, we provide other services; special articles, pix anything that will build readership and promote the out-of doors. These two newspapers are read by three times as many people as all the weeklies and most other dailies put together. And best of all, these editors love us and we love them.

Back to Your Weekly News Letter

Be sure you provide a service. Keep the material short and well written. Put your meat in the first paragraph - who, when and where - and remember, the last paragraph of a release is the least important, the first to be cut. If you don't know the working rules of a newspaper business, you better learn them.

Make doubly sure that you are working through the right editors or staff writers. Sometimes it pays to direct red-lined releases to more than one staff writer. Look at it this way. Your release arrives in the mail. The gal that routes the stuff recognizes game and fish masthead so on to the sports editor it goes. In this particular release

you had a squib on a pollution problem that killed a mess of fish; you had another squib on public hunting areas in soil bank land and third, you had a paragraph on the introduction of a new game bird.

Considering the fact that the Daily Oklahoma has a petroleum news editor and oil pollution is one of his fortes - *we should have sent him the squib on pollution*. Further, the farm editor is gung ho on soil banks, so perhaps a *release to him on the public hunting areas* would have been in order and, ditto, *the new game bird* to the garden editor. These people are few, but they are special people.

It's a fact of life: wildlife, nowadays, is everybody's business and it crosses all paths. We can no longer deal in dull generalities.

Now Your Magazine (And the Captive Audience)

Most states will admit, if they are honest, their conservation magazine reaches an awfully small percentage of the state's citizens. However, we can assume the magazine does reach a selective group - at least the magazine is not a shotgun approach, it's specific to the individual, so in a way we are hitting the guy that counts.

Most of us will admit the magazine is our prestige publication along with annual reports and special bulletins. It makes us look sharp, we hope. And in this respect everything we do should 'shine' - we are in the public relations business up to our eyeballs.

Twenty years ago, few federal agencies published news letters, magazines, giveaways, etc. Now they are all in the act. Don't for a minute believe the objective is strictly for service or education - PR or image building is paramount. Why do you reckon we get all these speeches given by federal personages. It's ego building, alias image building.

So, in a sense, when we say we are providing information we have to ask. What for? In most game departments the answer would be image (or PR) and service.

Therefore any time you write material, take pictures, put anything out before the public, make sure it's your best foot forward (for image), and make sure it provides a service.

If selling a subscription improves service and image, then sell it, don't give it away. Anything for free is never worth quite so much to an individual as something he pays for.

I am not enough of a pro to tell you how to put a good mag together. Just do this Critique your hindsight. Before you put out a new issue, call a staff meeting and get murderous. Critique your copy with a vengeance.

Miscellaneous Publications

The same rules apply. Admittedly, most leaflets are directed to education benefits but they can also provide a service and improve upon an image. Inexpensive giveaway material can be useful at state fairs, meetings, schools, to youth groups, etc.

TV & Cinema (Another Captive Audience)

In a way we can liken Department produced movies to TV shows almost in the same way we compare an outdoor page on a large newspaper with the Department Conservation magazine.

A good department movie helps promote image. It is educational and it can provide a service. It is also expensive to produce and cost per viewer is high. Quite frequently that same effort put into 30-second time slots for public service time, or on Sunday afternoon 20-minute TV shows, will reach a thousand time more viewers.

You I & E men know what I am talking about. The potential should be obvious considering the success of 5th rate outdoor shows.

A cinematographer is essential if you are to crack to TV market big. You need an extensive film library of material.

Putting the shows in the can may help extend coverage to other channels. In South Dakota, Titus canned segments of the show and used them in similar outdoor shows on different TV stations where viewer overlap did not occur. Keyes of Oklahoma made arrangements for shows to be duplicated on different channels that belonged to the same outfit.

Titus used the water safety and gun safety, 'Safety Sam' TV clips, in Oklahoma and South Dakota, to good advantage. These film clips should be sent out each year. Since they are seasonal, all too frequently they are filed in the film bank over-winter and no one can find them the following spring.

TV filler material has a useful life of about a year. You are competing for time and since TV people get a little tired of seeing the same old material, they are happy to glom on to new stuff. Today TV exceeds the newspapers as the primary news source. Does your relationship with TV and the newspapers reflect this fact?

Here, again, work closely with the news commentators and encourage the 'sport news' to use fishing and hunting material. Believe me, this is one area where TV hasn't caught up with the newspapers.

A few channels in the country are presently acquiring sporting goods sponsors for straight outdoor recreation newscasts.

Remember the established media already has the readers and the viewers. The more you work through them the greater your audience.

Radio

My experience with radio rates a big fat zero. I can quote some facts and figures from the textbooks, but I am sure that's not what you came for.

The most commonplace request we get from radio stations are:

1. Ideas and materials for radio editorials, and
2. Short filler material

The latter is in short supply. They can use short 15 to 60-second recordings of outdoor facts, outdoor recreation activities, etc. You are better off to collect material that fits any time of the year. Be sure it's not seasonal.

Other Angles

There are other types of media we rarely use to our advantage. For example: If you have occasion to reach the landowner with a message on land management for wildlife, try some new outlets. Post bulletins and leaflets at farm elevators, with county extension agents, county courthouse bulletin boards, fairs, ASC and SCS offices. Try the Cattlemen's magazine and other local farm and livestock journals. Try weekly or monthly columns to these publications - better yet - try editorial styled columns. This will give you a lot more leeway to blow off steam and really tell the truth about a problem. Give the publisher and out and he'll use most anything.

And, Speaking of Editorials

Here's an example of a column we started in Oklahoma about a year ago. It is sent to all state newspapers and the masthead is used by about 75 papers. Additional use is made under other captions and staff writers in perhaps another 50 newspapers.

This takes advantage of a *known* name, a gimmick (Bever Tales), and a first person style hopefully designed to be on the homespun side.

Personalized columns don't take long to gain a following. And the greater the following, the greater the dependence of the managing editor upon the column to meet reader demand. The greater the dependence, the greater your influence with the paper. It all adds up.

Billboards are not in mode right now but the fact remains they advertise and they sell. For three years, Oklahoma has used billboards to promote hunting and fishing.

We were the first state to combine lake fishing reports and conditions on the teletype weather wire. The rumor is, weather wire would like to ease us out but the subscribers swing a mean club. Since the weather wire is daily it means the latest hot stuff on when, and where. Example: Doves come and go in Oklahoma fast and the hot dove areas are spotty. What's good today may be lousy tomorrow. The weather wire tips off the sportsmen in a hurry.

In addition, the weather wire affords the Department with an emergency outlet, i.e., when fire danger is high, hunter reports can go out daily:

One Last Comment

You people in I & E are at long last beginning to suspect your nearest counterpart in industry is the advertising agency. In Oklahoma, we are beginning to use ad

agencies - gratis - for advice on such things as timing on controversial questions, selling an unpopular game management issue, billboard advertising, acceptable sponsors for TV shows, etc.

There's a gold mine of information in ad agencies - if we can tap it.

GAME MANAGEMENT SESSION

A STUDY OF NESTING TURKEYS IN SOUTHERN FLORIDA¹

By Lovett E. Williams, Jr., David H. Austin, Neal F. Eichholz,
Tommie E. Peoples, and Robert W. Phillips,
Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Wildlife Research Projects,
Gainesville, Florida.

ABSTRACT

Thirty-five turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) hens were instrumented with miniature animal tracking transmitters on a study area in March 1968. Twenty nests were found by directional radio location fixes and one nest was found incidentally. Average clutch size was 9.6 eggs per nest in fourteen nests which were observed after incubation began. Eight nests produced 70 poults from 76 eggs. The other nests failed to hatch because of predation or abandonment due to human disturbance associated with the study. Two incomplete nests contained four and six eggs when they were abandoned, one due to human disturbance, the other because of predation. Predators destroyed four nests before the eggs could be counted. The hens showed a strong preference for nesting in a zone along the edge of the low oak scrub plant association. All except three of the 21 nests were concealed beneath saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*). Three late nests were in short herbaceous cover of cypress woods--all three were destroyed by predators. Nests were clustered within the preferred nesting cover type. Most of the nests would have hatched in May. Some of the hens were trapped and moved to the study area from distances greater than six miles but none attempted to return to the capture site. None of the hens was known to conceal her eggs with leaf debris when leaving the nest. Hens frequently flew to and from the nests. They were observed away from the nests at all hours of the day. One apparently roosted once away from the nest but returned the next day to resume incubation behavior and hatch the clutch a few days later. One poult hatched in an abandoned nest three days after the hen had left. Most of the nesting hens were captured with alpha-chloralose on bait. There was no evidence that the drug interfered with hatchability. Other observations are presented including notes on behavior, nest descriptions, and some movement data.

INTRODUCTION

Because of the difficulty of finding nests, very few nesting studies of the wild turkey have been done. Those that have been published were based on nests which were found accidentally in many different environmental situations. The new radio-telemetry tracking techniques promise to provide a more useful type of data than could be obtained before.

The radio-tracking field techniques are so new that very little information has yet been published which would be especially helpful on studies of the wild turkey. Consequently, there is probably a great deal of duplicated work on techniques and procedures. The purpose of this preliminary report is to describe our equipment,

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