

GENERAL SESSION

REMARKS BY GOVERNOR ALBERT BREWER TO THE SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF GAME AND FISH COMMISSIONERS, MOBILE, ALABAMA, MONDAY, OCTOBER, 20, 1969.

It's an honor and pleasure to join you for your 23rd annual conference here in Mobile today—and to have the privilege of extending a personal welcome to each of our out-of-state visitors, as well as Alabamians.

The beautiful and progressive Port City of Mobile is one of our most dynamic areas of modern Alabama—and I know the people here are gracious hosts. I'll tell you like I told the 3,000 members of the National Guard Association we had here last week—have a good time, and spend plenty of money.

I'm especially glad that you're visiting in Alabama during the year of our Sesquicentennial. As we celebrate our 150th anniversary of statehood, we are proud to show the Nation what we've done and what we hope to accomplish in the future. All of you, I am sure, realize that all across this Southland of ours, the mood is one of optimism, enthusiasm, and progress. The Nation is looking to us for leadership in many areas—not the least of which is conservation.

This morning, I want to share with you a few thoughts concerning this important matter of natural resource conservation and my hopes and plans for its future. Each day we are finding ourselves confronted with problems which demand a greater use of our natural resources. As these *demands* increase, our task of finding a compatible relationship with our environment demands more and more of our energies. To the Game and Fish Administrator, this is a tremendous, but not impossible job.

Environment is truly the sum total of the world around us. It includes the water we drink, the air we breathe, the food we eat, the condition of weather, the use of our natural resources and much more.

The deepening concern over our environment comes at a time when there are danger signs in all of these areas. The time is especially ripe for a concerted effort—a realistic look at our environmental problems and a logical plan for dealing with them. It is an absolute necessity in the field of wildlife management that we begin to get ahead of our problems through long range plans, to the extent that we meet and solve our problems before they assume monumental proportions.

I am aware that you are already working with this objective in mind. I know of your efforts to plan for the future and your information exchange programs between states.

I am speaking of your cooperative projects, such as your wildlife disease study at the University of Georgia, the statistical project with the North Carolina State and the fish disease and parasite study with our own Auburn University. These are the type efforts which produce quality workmanship and knowledge, and could not be economically obtained by any one state. I commend you for your efforts and dedication toward securing these important programs for your Association.

We are implementing in Alabama a similar system to consolidate various programs into centralized working units whereby a much higher quality of work and better services can be provided at a reduced cost.

Here in Alabama we have made some excellent progress, especially by having a strong and effective Department of Conservation under the admirable leadership of Joe Graham.

We are making progress in abating water pollution and are endeavoring to accelerate this progress to achieve standards acceptable to all of us who are so vitally concerned about water resources.

Our Game and Fish Division has been given complete freedom to investigate all forms of pollution and to provide public information as a

result of its findings. A measure of the success of this work was realized when it became my pleasure to present Charles Kelley, Chief of our Game and Fish Division, with the Alabama Wildlife Federation Water Conservationist of the Year Award for his untiring efforts to maintain high water quality standards. His efforts received further recognition as he was also the national recipient of this award.

As Governor I highly respect and strongly support the work of our technical people. We gear our programs and monies to the recommendations made after due research and study—not on some political whim.

In our Water Safety and Game and Fish programs there is complete impartiality in law enforcement. The officer in the field is given complete backing of all his supervisors.

Our Water Safety program has made excellent progress since its inception. This has come about by making water safety its *prime objective* and responsibility through an established Water Safety Division—it is not a secondary responsibility.

Through a combination of research, restocking, a strong law enforcement and education program, and most of all, a change in the attitude of people, we have experienced a tremendous increase in our deer and turkey populations and a better than average success in other game species. Our deer population has increased from an estimated 16,500 animals in 1940 to over 300,000 today. Our turkeys have doubled during the 1960's to a population in excess of 200,000 birds.

As we approach the problem of controlling our environment and making life more pleasant for our civilization, we must begin first with a strong conviction that our natural resources and our natural beauty are worth conserving.

What have we gained if we attract business and industry to our state, provide more jobs for our citizens, and improve our way of life, if we at the same time, neglect what nature has given us.

What have we gained if we provide a quality education for our children, yet destroy the opportunity for a small boy to roam the woodlands and enjoy the great out-of-doors with a cane pole or his first gun in hand.

We are in danger of letting progress and technological change disrupt our lives rather than improve them unless we learn to deal effectively with our environmental problems.

However, by taking an over-all and comprehensive look at our problems, we will find solutions that will do not only for the present, but for the distant future as well. I am firmly convinced we can have all of the good things of life for our people—modern industry with clean air and high quality water—excellent transportation systems, and at the same time, good hunting and fishing—clean, modern urban areas, and still maintain a rich abundance of natural beauty and outdoor recreational facilities.

I am aware of that small handful of people in this nation who say America can't have the best of both worlds. There are, on the one hand, those few who would bring the wheels of modern progress to a complete halt in the name of conservation. And at the same time, there are those few who are so obsessed with progress that they have no regard for conservation.

But in reality, we recognize that neither of these extremes is the answer.

We can't stop progress nor can we diminish the increasing needs of our people for the things nature provides. Neither, on the other hand, can we afford to neglect nature. For if we do, the very nature we are abusing will cease to support our survival.

I can think of no finer service you can perform than to show our fellow Americans how to make both natural resource conservation and the technology of change work hand in hand. I am confident of our

future in conservation and in realizing our hopes and dreams in this field. Because as I look about me and see so many concerned and interested people in such dedicated groups as yours—I realize that we will never be allowed to forget our obligations to God and nature. I salute your progress of the past—and wish for you—continued success in the future.

THE STREAM DISTURBANCE PROBLEM AND OUR FISHERY RESOURCES—ITS SCOPE AND A METHOD OF EVALUATION AND RESPONSE

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Abstract

Examples of stream disturbance problems are cited. Soil Conservation Service Public Law 566, Army Corps of Engineers Section 208, and highway construction projects cause most stream damage. Significant stream fishery losses are also attributable to agricultural activities, railroad construction, urban and industrial development, and even to private self-interest groups and individuals.

A detailed one-county West Virginia survey was made of fishery damages resulting from Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service C-8 bank stabilization cost-sharing practices that occurred during one year. Nineteen separate projects on three quality streams altered more than 22,400 feet of stream. Replacement cost of lost fishery habitat on an acre for acre basis amounted to \$81,600. Annual fish population losses of \$3,517 plus expected losses from downstream sedimentation of \$1,679, and annual man-day angling losses valued at \$1,522 were determined. Sadly enough, only three of these projects were considered successful in accomplishing the private landowner's intended purpose.

An Inter-Agency Stream Disturbance Symposium, sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, was called to bring together involved agencies to expose and discuss this serious problem. A task force was subsequently appointed to propose solutions and procedures. A much better inter-agency understanding and relationship now exists, which has already resulted in many benefits.

The need for additional administrative and legislative action is apparent, in order to bring the problem under control.

THE STREAM DISTURBANCE PROBLEM AND OUR FISHERY RESOURCES—ITS SCOPE AND A METHOD OF EVALUATION AND RESPONSE

In many sections of the country the stream disturbance problem now ranks as the number one threat to our fishery resources. Increasing "channelization" and "dredging" projects, largely under federal sponsorship, have elevated this problem from one of local concern to a national resource calamity and confrontation.

Public awareness of the stream disturbance problem is only beginning, although professional conservationists have been aware of its effects for many years. The general public, however, has no idea of its extent. For example, pollution-caused fish kills occurred in 26 stream miles in West Virginia during 1967. Our citizens howled loud and long and urged new legislation and control. In the same year 4.2 miles of high quality streams were destroyed in one county, as a result of just one channeling program,