

Did the Game and Fish Commission accomplish this alone? Has the job been finished? No, a thousand times no; as stated in the beginning, all the conservation agencies and organizations in the state are working together toward one common goal, the conservation of all our natural resources. An example of this, working together, is that every summer camps for hundreds of boys and girls are held with instructors from the various state agencies assisting in the camp and working toward the same objective—the wise and careful use of all our natural resources.

When will the job be finished? Not until time is no more. "People are funny," and a good program of Wildlife Conservation is just like a good church or religious program—you just can't afford to let up. It has been said that to be a strong Christian a person must first be a strong believer in the principles of Christian faith; likewise, for a person to be a strong conservationist he or she must first believe that the *whole* of our natural resources—people, soils, forest, water and wildlife—are of vital importance to every citizen and to every business enterprise in the nation. In other words, "You've got to believe all of what you preach."

A REPORT ON THE YOUTH CONSERVATION EDUCATION SECTION OF FLORIDA'S GAME AND FRESH WATER FISH COMMISSION

By DENVER STE. CLAIRE
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In the following pages an attempt has been made to report succinctly the progress made of various programs created in the Youth Conservation Education Section of the Information and Education Division in Florida.

I have attempted to report the basic facts relating to each program and in no way have I embellished them with fanciful wishes.

I need not delve into the philosophy of conservation in this paper. Being specialists, you are fully aware of this philosophy and the importance of our assignments.

I sincerely hope that perhaps any one of these programs may be the nucleus for many program experiments for our youth. It is only through the combined efforts of all of us everywhere that any kind of success, conservation wise, will be accomplished.

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The Florida Youth Conservation Club League was created in 1952. The league was organized to consolidate the various conservation efforts of the youthful clubs in the state. The league is administered by a board of directors composed of youngsters who are elected annually. The board has the power to create and recommend policies which are reviewed by the executive secretary who acts as a liaison between the board and the Game Commission.

There are twenty-four clubs in the league with an approximate membership of six hundred. These members make up the Youth Conservation Corps. The program was designed to include the youth who is not a member of any other organization. It is a program that takes care of a particular group. Most of these clubs in the past three or four years have been initiated by local citizens in their communities who see the need for this type program.

In April of 1959 the Florida State Adult Advisory Council was established and consists of eleven members. These board members are generally club advisors who have been appointed from various youth conservation clubs located in the geographical areas of Florida. The members are citizens who serve without pay.

The council has a chairman and is empowered to create and develop, and to recommend and establish policies and programs for the Youth Club League and its program.

The council also has the authority to determine ways and means for raising money to sustain the various activities relating to the Youth Camp and program.

It is the plan of this council to create regional chairmen and county chairmen to serve the many needs of the Youth Conservation League, its member clubs, and its many programs.

In 1952 and 1953 the first and second Youth Conservation Camp was held in Auburndale, Florida. The next year, 1954, it was moved to the Ocala National Forest where 57 acres were leased from the United States Forest Service. This past summer, 1959, the eighth annual encampment was celebrated. Approximately 4,000 young people have been in attendance during these annual encampments.

On October 10, 1959, the first meeting was held to discuss the proposed site of a second Florida camp, the South Florida Youth Camp. The site selected is a section of 57,000 acres owned by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. The camp will be financed and constructed by interested sportsmen and others interested in Youth Camp and Conservation education. It is planned that possibly this coming summer, 1960, a pilot run of two or three weeks will initiate this new Youth Conservation Camp.

Dredging of an artificial lake alone will cost approximately \$72,000.00.

This will be a step forward in the ten-year program which includes three camps. The third camp will be located in northwest Florida in the Blackwater Forest area. It is hoped that possibly this camp will be in operation by 1962. Aside from our summer encampments, teacher and lay workshops in conservation are also planned to service the community. The camps will be used also for a training and meeting area.

In 1956 the Florida Society of Junior Conservationists was organized. All young people between the ages of 8-16 are eligible to apply for membership in the society. The society has seven degrees which determine the advancement of a Junior Conservationist in the organization. These degrees are: gopher, opossum, raccoon, alligator, otter, fox and panther. The highest degree is that of the panther. Members of recognized conservation clubs are eligible to work for these degrees during the year. Non-members may work for their degrees during the summer encampment.

In May, 1957, the Florida Scouting for Conservation Program was made public. The Scouting for Conservation Program, at the time of its inception had only one other state program like it. The other state using the program was Oklahoma. Scouting for Conservation is a program created by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission for the use of the Boy Scouts of America represented by the nine councils in the state of Florida. It reemphasizes conservation concepts. There are three degrees in this program: Ranger, Chief Ranger, and Florida Wildlife Conservationist. Certain specified merit badges must be completed for each award or degree. In addition to these merit badges there are fourteen conservation projects for them to select from and complete.

These projects must be certified by both the scoutmaster and a representative from the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission.

Each award earns a certificate of achievement. A cloth designed insignia with the rank, Ranger, Chief Ranger, or Florida Conservationist will be presented to the Boy Scout attaining these awards.

The final degree or award, Florida Wildlife Conservationist, will be presented by the governor of Florida at the State capitol. The scoutmaster of his troop as well as his parents are transported to Tallahassee for the event. He will also be presented a pin by the governor which has been especially designed and will be worn on civilian clothes.

In June, 1957, the First Camp Wildlife for Girl Scouts was established at the Youth Conservation Camp. There are five councils of the Girl Scouts of America located in the central region of Florida who use the camp. This was an experimental camp and was so successful in its first year, they have completed their third annual Wildlife encampment this past summer, 1959.

During Camp Wildlife for these Girl Scouts, many of our biologists and technicians and other experts have talked and demonstrated many of the subjects which are related to conservation. Some of the specialists are qualified to pass on merit badges. Camp Wildlife will again operate, and celebrate its fourth encampment, next year, 1960.

The spring of this year, 1959, after many months of negotiating and conferences, a 4-H program was approved by the Department of Agriculture Extension Service and representatives of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. The program consists of three levels or degrees through which the 4-H student can prepare himself in the subjects of soil, water, forestry and wildlife. These degrees are namely: primary level (county), advanced level, and state level. A special primary certificate will be presented to the student who does outstanding work on a county level. Recommendation for this special award will be the responsibility of the county agent.

After some three years of conferences, panels, workshops, and speaking efforts the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs sent a small contingent to the Youth Conservation Camp. In July, 1959, a group of boy Junior Gardeners arrived at camp. So likewise did a group of girls arrive in June for a one- and two-week stay.

They called their summer experience "Junior Nature Camp."

The program was a tremendous success and plans are now being prepared for a hundred boys and a hundred girls to be sent to the summer encampment for 1960. The nature program was very well received, and has caused consideration of a conservation program for Junior Garden Club members.

Another highly successful experimental program conducted this year, 1959, was the cooperation plan of the Florida's Society for Crippled Children. Eight handicapped children (all boys) were sent to the two-week session at the Florida Youth Conservation camp. The severity of the cases ranged from wheel chairs to crutches. A therapist and an aide-counselor supplemented our staff. The youngsters were so elated at having a chance to be accepted as regular fellows that all want to return.

Plans for 1960 may possibly include a special one-week session for these exceptional children.

Continuing Conservation programs for 1960 include:

- Woodmen of the World (conference stage)
- Future Farmers of America (near completion)
- Camp Fire Girls (contact stage)
- Future Foresters of Florida (correspondence stage)
- Junior Garden Clubs (conference stage)

A REVIEW OF VIRGINIA'S CONSERVATION WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS AND WILDLIFE ESSAY CONTEST

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Virginia's school teachers now have the opportunity to learn about natural resources, thanks to the conservation workshops held each summer.

Sponsored by the Virginia Resource-Use Education Council, an organization of conservation education leaders representing all the state and federal resource agencies, and several colleges, these three-week sessions are held at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Virginia State College and the College of William and Mary. The Virginia game commission is proud to be affiliated with the Council and has generously donated staff time and services. The Commission was instrumental in organizing the Council in 1952 and a member of its staff was the Council's first chairman.