

# GENERAL SESSION

COMMENTS BY FLORIDA COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE DOYLE CONNER, SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF GAME AND FISH COMMISSIONER'S CONVENTION, 9 A.M. MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1964—JACK TAR HARRISON HOTEL, CLEARWATER, FLORIDA.

On behalf of the people of Florida, it is my sincere pleasure to welcome you to the Sunshine State.

Our state is well known for its scenic beauty, miles of sun-swept beaches, and superb boating and fishing facilities. I only hope that you can find time from your busy schedule to enjoy some of these outstanding features.

I was personally honored to receive your invitation to attend this convention. It gives me an opportunity to briefly discuss a subject of vital concern to us all—OUTDOOR RECREATION.

Traditionally, the outdoors has been an important segment of American life—first as a wilderness to be conquered, and then as a source of inspiration and recreation.

However, since the end of World War II the natural scene has been consumed at an alarming rate. This year alone, it is estimated that more than a million acres of American landscape will be converted into sites for subdivisions, shopping centers, highways, industrial plants, and the other needs of an increasingly urbanized and industrialized nation.

This has caused hundreds of thousands of families, who are searching for a more liveable environment, to move into the suburban areas.

They want restful and enjoyable surroundings with trees, grass and open space, instead of asphalt and concrete. But too often even these areas are without adequate provisions for outdoor recreation.

In fact, in many suburban areas today usable open space is as rare as in the cities from which many of the suburbanites fled.

As a result, people find themselves traveling farther and farther from home in search of pleasant, uncrowded places to enjoy a walk in the woods, a family picnic, or to go swimming, fishing or boating.

These growing demands on land and water resources are diminishing outdoor recreation opportunities even beyond the suburban areas.

Recreation sites in existing national and state parks and other recreational areas are frequently so overcrowded as to make impossible the enjoyment of the natural values these areas were established to preserve.

And the gap between demand and adequate supply of outdoor recreation resources and facilities will continue to widen over the coming years if effective action is not taken promptly.

It is true that most of our states have some sort of outdoor recreation program, but unfortunately many of these programs are not aimed at providing what most people actually want and need.

Perhaps some of these shortcomings can be better understood if we look at a few of the basic facts of supply and demand.

By the year 2000 our population in the United States will nearly double, and the overall demand for outdoor recreation is expected to triple. Not only will there be more people, but they will have more free time, more money and more mobility.

Already, the increase in demand for outdoor recreation is surging ahead of our population growth. And this is only a foretaste of what is to come.

Next, the kinds of outdoor recreation most people take part in today may not be what they want to do in the future. For instance, more

than 20 percent of those covered by a recent federal survey said that while they do not now go fishing they would like to, or would like to fish more often.

Other outdoor activities for which the survey found large unsatisfied demands include swimming, "going to the beach," camping, horse-back riding and boating.

Here in Florida, where we are developing a huge outdoor recreation program, we are feeling this change in the public attitude.

It is estimated that by 1970 we will have to find several hundred thousand more acres of water habitat for fresh water fishing. In addition, we will have to install approximately 900 more boat access facilities to meet the public needs.

We will also have to place an additional 2,600,000 acres of land under intensive game management, and establish an additional 115,000 acres of nature preserves.

There are, of course, many other acres to be considered. However, the few that I have mentioned will give you some idea of the effect on the state and its agencies such as the Game and Fish Commission.

It is going to require better planning, and bolder and more imaginative efforts on the part of everyone connected with the field of outdoor recreation.

State governments will have to shoulder much of the burden, but they cannot solve the entire problem. Many just do not have that much tax money available.

Therefore, we are going to have to look for suitable resources under private ownership. And what better place is there to look than in the farming areas of our nation.

Farm-based recreation is a new concept in many of our states, but it does have enough advantages to interest the agricultural industry.

First, it can provide extra income for the farmer; second, it can increase the value of the farmers property; third, it helps to remove surplus crops from the market; fourth, it encourages soil and water conservation, and fifth, it tends to halt the flow of farmers to the cities.

Some of the most successful recreational areas now being operated by farmers include golf courses, ponds and lakes for fishing, hunting preserves, and camping and hiking areas. Other opportunities are just around the corner, if the farmer is induced to undertake outdoor recreational projects.

For this reason, I urge your organization and the individual agencies you represent to encourage the participation of farmers in future outdoor recreational programs. It not only benefits the agricultural industry, but the public as well.

Thank you for inviting me here today. I hope you will have a successful and rewarding convention.

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Southeastern Association of Game  
and Fish Commissioners  
October 19, 1964  
Clearwater, Florida

Mr. W. T. McBroom  
Commissioner, Fourth District  
Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission

Mr. McBroom: Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for the opportunity to be on this program. You know, I am in somewhat of a quandry. I have my good friend Doyle Conner here and we saw how amply you folks are going to be welcomed and you get down to me—it leaves me very little to say, so I told my colleagues last night that I was going to make the shortest welcoming speech in history. I'm just going to