

Sequoia National Forest, trail-bikers were banned after they started erosion that was ruining hills and the breeding grounds of golden trout . . . With their chubby six wheels churning, ATV's ravaged blueberry crops; chew up stream bottoms and rip the thin top layer of vegetation off swamps.

Drivers also damage themselves . . . There were 84 fatalities among snow-mobilers last year. Forced up steep inclines ATV's buggies and bikes can flip over like a turtle—drivers underneath.

Noise pollution is another problem spawned by these vehicles. They make a racket like a chain-saw and users tend to ride in packs. Snow-mobilers, in fact, have been run down by trains and one bike rider was forced to drive from a 30 ft. trestle, because the bike engine drowned out the sound of approaching locomotives!

It seems better regulations would solve some of the problems!

Meanwhile, I must head for the woods . . . on my son's trusty Yamaha!

KENTUCKY CONSERVATION OFFICERS' QUALIFICATIONS AND EVERYDAY DUTIES

By HUGH CRUMP
Supervisor, Third District

While working at the Third Wildlife District Office at Louisville, Kentucky, a young man by the name of Bill Smith came into the office and inquired about the possibilities of becoming a Conservation Officer.

His first question was, what were the qualifications that he would have to meet in order to be eligible to apply for this position?

I readily replied that he must be between the ages of 23 and 33. His body weight must be in proportion to his height (he must not be excessively over-weight). He must pass a rigid physical examination, take a state merit examination and be placed on a register according to his score. It is from this register that a Conservation Officer is hired whenever there is a vacancy. The top three candidates on the register are contacted and interviewed. The applicant must live in the county in which a vacancy has occurred in order to be eligible. The person should have deep feelings towards preservation of our natural resources; should be of good moral character and accepted by his community. He must be able to supply character witnesses.

Then Mr. Smith inquired about salary and benefits which a Conservation Officer receives.

I remarked that, at the present time, the Kentucky Conservation Officer stands at Grade 11 under the Merit System at a starting salary of \$480.00 per month, and he must fulfill a probationary period of one (1) year before becoming eligible for an increment in that same grade. The top salary in that grade would be \$676.00 per month within an eight-year period. He would be provided an expense account that can run anywhere from \$100 to \$150 a month, depending upon the area that he would be patrolling. This money would be in the form of mileage at eight cents per mile. He must furnish his own vehicle. The Department provides his uniform and equipment that would be required in his territory. We have a state retirement system and are provided with a \$5,000.00 life insurance policy. A Conservation Officer receives 12 vacation days plus 9½ state holidays. He may accumulate sick leave days at one per month.

Bill Smith then proceeded to ask just what his duties would be as a Conservation Officer?

The primary duties are to enforce the game and fish laws of Kentucky. He is the sole protector of fish and wildlife in his county. Even though his primary purpose is enforcing game and fish laws of the Commonwealth, he has other duties pertaining to the various Divisions within

the Department, such as: Conservation-Education, Game Management, Fisheries, Public Relations and Fiscal Control.

In Conservation-Education it would be your responsibility to set up schedules with the 5th and 6th grade students once a month in the schools in your county. After setting your schedule for programs in these schools each month you would be responsible for conducting classes in the preservation and perpetuation of fish and wildlife. However, you will not be expected to exceed over three days a month in conducting classes in your county. Lesson plans and visual aids will be supplied to you through the Division of Conservation-Education. You will probably have to take a day or two in preparation before presenting these classes to your students because you may not be familiar with some of these subjects. The worse thing you could do would be to read from your material.

Mr. Smith interrupted to find out what types of subjects these would be.

In this two-year program he would be teaching amphibians, reptiles, soils, minerals, strip mining and reclamation, water, boating safety, hunter safety, summer camp program and the ecology of game and fish of Kentucky. At the end of the school year you would be responsible for making arrangements for transportation for those students interested in attending one of our summer camps. You would be expected to spend one week at camp with your boys as well as one week with your girls. While at camp you will assist these children at the various field courses offered.

Another important part of the Conservation Officer's work is in regards to the Division of Game. There will be times when the Game Division will ask the Officer for reports pertaining to population of various wildlife species in his area such as: pre-season game surveys, deer mortality and wildlife highway mortality, waterfowl hunter bag checks, taking and holding of wildlife and transporting of wildlife. The Game Division looks solely to the Conservation Officer in handling these reports mentioned above. This enables them to help set the seasons and bag limits on the various species in the Commonwealth.

In the Division of Fisheries you would be expected to make out farm pond applications for stocking purposes and when the fish are delivered see that the lake owner receives these fish. If he is unable to pick them up it would be your responsibility to release them into his pond or lake. When a pond becomes out of balance, a farmer may call upon you to approve a chemical treatment. On other occasions the pond owner may call upon you for weed identification and ask which chemical would be suitable for eradicating that particular problem. At times you would be called upon by the Division of Fisheries to run creel census on the waterways within your county and usually this would run for three or four months. Also, if you have trout streams you would be expected to meet the trout delivery truck and to assist in any way possible. Probably one of the major concerns that you will be involved with in the Division of Fisheries is your careful attention in seeing that the streams in your county are free from pollution. However, in this fast period of modern technology and greater uses of our waterways many of our streams, are faced with pollution problems. It would be your responsibility to determine where the affluent is entering a stream and what adverse effect it will have on aquatic life. Therefore, you would be responsible for taking water samples of the area suspected of pollution as well as the temperature of the water and climatic conditions over a 24-hour period. If dead fish are present, at the time you arrive on the scene, you would also want to take samples and make a count of the number and species of these. You would be expected to make an accurate report to the Division of Fisheries and also supply a list of witnesses in the area as well as pictures, if possible. The reason for gathering these physical evidences is it would assure a greater chance in conviction of those responsible for pollution.

Since the Conservation Officer is the only representative for the Department in his county, it is quite important that the officer sees that the general public as well as the news media receive all the information that they possibly can in regards to the fish and game laws and special regulations pertaining to fish and wildlife. Many times he will be asked to present special programs to sportsmen's clubs, civic clubs, church groups, etc., in regards to the operation of the Fish and Wildlife Resources and what services are offered to the local populous by our Department. Through keeping the general public in his area informed, this will enable the people to have a better understanding of what he and the Fish and Wildlife Department are trying to do thus enabling better cooperation from the general public.

In regards to the Division of Fiscal Control it is the responsibility of the Conservation Officer to make sure that the county clerk has a sufficient supply of the various types of licenses and tags to be on hand and available to the general public. At times, the officer may be asked to assist in the auditing of the license sales in his county and return said receipts to the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

Now that we have covered some of the duties that the Conservation Officer is expected to carry out for the various divisions, let's return to the Division of Law Enforcement and go into a little more detail of your duties as a Conservation Officer. Depending on the types of wildlife that are available in your county, as well as waterways, this will bear greatly in the manner in which you would conduct your method of patrol and surveillance. If for instance, you have deer within your county this would be one of the top priorities that would come under consideration. Therefore, you would be on the lookout at all times for spot-lighting and poaching of deer from these areas. Normally, your poaching would occur during cooler periods of the year. During your daily routine patrol you would also want to be on the alert for pre-season hunting which never seems to end in the Commonwealth. Since there are over 15,000 miles of running streams and a total of 40,395 square miles in Kentucky no doubt you have some of these streams flowing through your area. You would want to be on the alert at all times for illegal netting and seining operations which normally occur in your larger waterways.

During the spring of the year we have a gigging and snagging season which requires a great deal of night patrolling. This is when you should divide your time in order to keep up to date with daily routine as well as be able to continue patrolling in the late hours for illegal gigging of game fish. Also, this may occur during the frog season which takes place after the close of your gigging season for rough fish. In Kentucky, during the spring rains, we often have some flooded bottom lands which contain large numbers of fish. You would want to watch these areas very carefully to see that they are removing the rough fish in a legal manner and not taking game fish with illegal devices.

At all times, a Conservation Officer must be courteous and willing to assist the sportsmen whenever possible. As the saying goes—good manners go a long way—being the only representative of the Department in your county, the methods you use in approaching a person in the field and the way you conduct yourself before him in checking his license and game bag reflects not only on you, but also on the Department. (Not only does this stand true in the field, but anywhere throughout your career).

Mr. Smith asked if there were very many Conservation Officers and what hours is he expected to work?

I told him that, at the present time, we have 121 Conservation Officers that serve 120 counties in Kentucky. The Conservation Officer is expected to work six days a week with his day-off normally during the week. He is on a 24-hour call at all times due to the fact that we have only one officer to a county at the present time.

Mr. Smith inquired into the jurisdiction that the Conservation Officer has in Kentucky.

Although the Conservation Officer is assigned to a particular county or area his authority is not limited by county lines. The jurisdiction or authority of the Conservation Officer is subject to two limitations:

(A) Under Kentucky statutory authority the Conservation Officer is restricted to the enforcement of laws and regulations pertaining to the protection of wildlife and the hunting and fishing regulations established by the Commissioner and Commission pursuant to Chapter 150 of the Kentucky Revised Statutes.

(B) The authority exercised by the Conservation Officer must be within the territorial limits of the Commonwealth. However, a Conservation Officer may submit application for a federal commission as a United States Deputy Game Warden and only then may he leave the state pertaining to the Migratory Game Bird Treaty Act and laws pertaining to the Lacy Act or Black Bass Act.

At the present time there are 100 officers in the Commonwealth of Kentucky who hold a United States Deputy Game Warden's Commission.

Mr. Smith asked if Kentucky had had an increase in fish and game violations over the years?

Yes, I replied. In the last ten years we have had a tremendous increase in fish and game violations. In 1960, we had 3,233 arrests in comparison to 7,274 arrests in 1970. We were successful in convicting 5,349 cases in 1970. Of these, 201 were pending and 1,260 cases were juveniles. Personal contacts made in the field were 338,032 licenses checked. This made the state average of arrests per officer 60. Licenses checked per officer were 2,794. State average of convictions per officer was 75.61. Every 100 licenses checked averaged 2.15 arrests. This is an alarming increase in game and fish violations. However, it doesn't end there. All enforcement agencies are faced with a greater increase in crime.

Mr. Smith wanted to know what some of the most common types of violations were.

Fishing and/or hunting without a license is by far the greatest violation we have with Hunting Out of Season coming in third.

At this time Mr. Smith informed me that through our conservation he would like to apply for the position of Conservation Officer.

I told him that I would like for him to give this some special thought, due to the fact, that it takes a great deal of sincerity and strong desire to be a good Conservation Officer. It takes a special breed of person to be able to put forth the hours and devotion that is demanded of him to be a good officer. There will be times that he will have to make his own decisions and have the initiative to carry these out. On many occasions the officer is by himself, and therefore, he must be able to provide excellent judgment in handling the various problems that he will be confronted with in carrying out his everyday duties.

THE WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER AND HUNTER SAFETY TRAINING

By CHARLES V. GARNER

Hunter safety training has come a long way since 1949. That is when it began after a group of New York State Legislators concerned over the large number of accidents involving young hunters, enacted a law requiring potential hunters under sixteen who had not hunted the previous year to successfully complete a course in safe gun handling before they could purchase a hunting license.

There was one big hitch. No such hunter safety training course existed anywhere.