

Along with our new-found authorities goes a lot of responsibility. I think we may be closing our eyes to many of the opportunities these projects may provide for fish and wildlife developments. I wonder, how long before the "environmental backlash"? Is it possible that someday when the wolf is actually in the sheep that we cannot get anyone to help?

DON'T CRY "CALF ROPE"!

Truly, as resource managers, we live in the most glorious period in the history of mankind. I repeat again, we have the knowledge, the opportunity and the means (when properly financed) to scientifically manage our fish and wildlife habitats to produce an optimum sustained yield of the desired product. This is the charge we have been given. Let's don't stand back, but go forward and give leadership during this era of environmental concern.

Thank you very much.

THE PROS AND CONS OF GAME AND FISH AGENCIES RECEIVING GENERAL REVENUE FUNDS

by

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Traditionally most wildlife agencies, including the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, have concerned themselves primarily with hunting and fishing and the interests of the sportsmen. Also, they have operated almost entirely upon fishing and hunting license fees and funds resulting from federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment.

In recent years there properly has been a significant change in such agencies' concern and substantially increased involvement with matters not specifically aimed at hunting and fishing. I believe that there should be an accompanying change in the funding of the wildlife program — specifically that it is no longer proper for the hunter and fisherman to bear the entire cost of managing and protecting the wildlife resource.

To an ever increasing degree wildlife is important to those persons who neither hunt nor fish — those who simply enjoy birds, alligators and other wildlife as well as those who are recipients of the more than \$379,000,000 that is spent annually by hunters and fresh water fishermen in Florida alone in pursuit of their sport. Some specific current activities of the Florida Commission which are and will become more important to nonhunters and fishermen are: protection of nongame wildlife such as song birds and alligators; research on the brown pelican, alligator and other endangered or nongame species; surveillance of and assistance with water pollution problems and dredge and fill operations; inspection of wildlife exhibits; surveillance of fish and wildlife importers; hunter safety education; enforcement of boating safety, littering, and riot control laws; and construction and operation of youth conservation camps.

The Florida Commission concluded that it would be proper for a portion of the cost of Commission operations to be borne by general revenue. This was not an easy decision and I would like to review some of the background and steps that led to the decision, what was done to implement it, and very early conclusions as to the results of its successful implementation.

A recent survey by the Wildlife Management Institute showed that one year's hunting and fishing license revenue fees collected from 55 million hunters and

fishermen account for about 62% of the states' total budget, with general fund appropriation of only 4%. A review of the Florida Commission activities indicate that conservatively 20% of the 1972-73 expenditure — funds for which were derived either directly or indirectly from the hunter and fisherman — were for services of no more value to the hunter and fisherman than to other citizens of the state.

I vividly recall — not too many months ago — a discussion that each of you would recognize. The specific problems vary from state to state — the issue is common to all of us.

WE HAVE TOO MUCH TO DO WITH TOO LITTLE MONEY!

We have previously described some of the activities in which we are engaged that are not solely hunter or fisherman related. As good a summation as I can recall appeared in a REPORT OF THE NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE POLICY. In its opening pages it is emphasized that "TODAY'S GREAT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ARE LITERALLY WITHOUT LIMIT. IN ONE CONTEXT OR ANOTHER WE FIND OURSELVES DEALING WITH ALL LIVING THINGS". IN ESSENCE, LIKE IT OR NOT, THE COURSE IS ALREADY CHARTED, ONLY THE WAY TO GET THERE REMAINS TO BE DECIDED.

The acceptance of the concept of using general revenue funds by the typical game and fish agency that has always been "independently" funded by license fees — is not easy. From my own experience with this mental tug of war I was often reminded of an indecisive child wanting to be a policeman one day, a fireman the next — convinced one moment and unsure an hour later!

One day I was discussing the subject with Brantley Goodson, whose good cracker common sense I respect immensely and who not only runs our law enforcement branch but handles our legislative business and probably more than any one man is responsible for whatever success we have on the "hill". Brantley was arguing that general funds were imperative if we were to keep our heads above water. He contended that the solicitation of general funds was a classic example of "the good, the bad, and the ugly". When I asked for an explanation, he replied, "Our program has to be the 'good' and the 'bad' is also as surely the questionable political overtones of general revenue funds; the 'ugly' must be left for you." This obviously didn't completely answer my question, but we finally defined "ugly" as the only other course — increasing the price of licenses in the face of the fact that the hunter and fisherman is already carrying more than his share of the burden.

Although a final decision was not reached during that particular meeting, we did reach agreement on one thing: "When we decide to go, and whatever method we choose to take, we will go all the way until every avenue is exhausted".

Indecision within the agency itself can be the greatest enemy to a concerted effort for general revenue funds. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages carefully, but once the decision is made, pour all available efforts toward successful completion of the task.

As a starting point we implemented a public awareness campaign revolving around the theme that "wildlife was everybody's business". Funding inadequacies in the conservation field quickly became a popular topic with concerned citizens and they were soon carrying this subject to every conceivable audience. It was apparent from the very beginning that sportsmen's groups were not the only voices bringing the funding dilemma out in the open. Along with the sportsmen's argument that hunting and fishing license revenues were being stretched to the limit by associated conservation issues, a second and often louder crescendo could be heard. These were the voices of bird watchers, hikers,

canoeists, nature photographers and other nonconsumptive users of the wildlife and fish resources. They acknowledged the financial contribution of the hunting and fishing fraternity to the management and protection programs for wildlife resources and were quick to add that, generous as it was, it failed to meet today's management needs. Their point was obviously augmented by the spiraling needs for management and protection programs for wildlife resources that offered little direct benefit to the hunter or fisherman.

To digress a moment, I believe that at least in rapidly growing states, the growth of consumptive users of wildlife is rapidly approaching a saturation point. The expected peak in numbers of hunters and fishermen may be realized sooner than most of us think, due to increased population pressures, environmental problems and widespread habitat destruction. On the other hand, the number of non-consumptive users of our natural resources is expanding at an exaggerated speed. These concerned conservationists want positive reactions from the agencies vested with the responsibility of safeguarding our wildlife heritage; and, if convinced of an agency's true concern with general environmental or nongame species problems, will wholeheartedly fight side by side for equitable funding.

Once public interest was stimulated, the next step was to document the situation for legislative review. This report was detailed and specific as to men, money and time devoted to the various activities not directly hunter and fishermen oriented. It included, most importantly, an open admission that current financial structures permit little more than a cursory expenditure on these programs. Once the seed was planted, then the day to day drudge of following the package through the legislative committee process began. Those of you that have been involved in any similar attempt will know what I mean by constantly "walking the halls". Those that haven't, have an education, and sometimes a rude awakening coming. Every proposal must be justified and then re-justified and someone must be available to provide what we finally dubbed as "instant solutions". The Legislature was interested in facts and documentation and left little room for emotions or gut-feelings. Members of the Legislature were, in the beginning, cautiously receptive and it took considerable background preparation to convince them that we had devised a workable plan, were sincere in our efforts to carry it out, and were in fact departing from our traditional "independent funding" posture.

We were fortunate that public interest was high and interest groups were as avid as we in bringing this problem before the Legislature. In the final analysis, our efforts were rewarded. We obtained nearly three million dollars of general revenue funds for the continuation and expansion of programs that did not directly benefit the sportsmen. It would be naive not to temper this initial success with the realization that with any general revenue money comes the possibility of increased political pressures. To this date, this fear has simply failed to materialize. Pressures for hiring, firing or promoting personnel have not increased appreciably and, if the first few months can be used as a barometer, they are not expected to. I suppose it's like trying to shoot the rapids in a small boat. With careful planning, some make it and without planning, others find themselves on a collision course with the rocks. We have attempted a new twist — we bought a rubber raft and hope that the obstacles that we do hit will merely bounce us around awhile and not sink the whole boat.

In conclusion, I would offer a summary statement and recommendation. Our responsibilities are increasing so fast that some type of additional funding source is imperative. Whether it is general revenue funds or an alternate resource, the basic problem remains the same — we have a responsibility to properly and effectively manage and protect the wildlife and fish resources of this nation. Sportsmen can no longer shoulder such a financial burden and other sources of funds are desperately needed. Let us not obscure our objective with ap-

prehension founded or unfounded, and, in so doing abrogate our responsibilities.

If state game and fish commissions are to survive and continue to function as first rank state conservation agencies, then we must accept change. We must revise our attitudes, mold our philosophies and, in some instances, compromise our convictions, lest we reverse our role as the leading conservation agency in the environmental field and begin a plummet that not even adequate finances can cushion. The hours of discussions are coming to a close and only minutes are allowed for decisions.

GAME COMMISSION'S STAFF, A COMMISSIONER'S VIEW

by

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An assessment of the activities and opportunities of professional persons in any field is a very difficult matter indeed, whether or not one is a member of that profession. It is entirely too easy to make broad statements that suffer from the over simplicity or mindless sensationalism that appear to characterize contemporary American evaluations of fields of endeavor such as medicine, law and automobile engineering to name a few. It can be said, however, that if one establishes a definition of professionalism as the degree to which a given individual in his vocation offers himself for exploitation by society, those individuals who work in the wildlife resource area compare rather well to those persons in the larger and better known professions. There are three main problems which I fear will trouble the fish and game staff member for at least the foreseeable future. The first is that he offers his services in a buyers' market controlled by government agencies at various levels where his opportunities for advancement either by extraordinary accomplishments or by changes in geographic position tend to be quite limited. Secondly, despite the educational programs offered by our state commissions and other organizations, the public still does not have a very clear understanding of the special expertise possessed by our commission staff members whatever their field of work. Thirdly, in the last twenty years, America has undergone a rapid change from an industrial society to a post-industrial, consumption oriented socioeconomic system in which our staff members will be looked upon as technicians whose job is to produce ever more recreation rather than intelligent and considered protection, management and development of our wildlife resources. They will be placed in the position of being asked to produce an ever increasing yield from a fixed or declining resource base, and will in turn be asking society to do what it has always been loathe to do: show more discipline both in reducing what it takes from the resource and in protecting it by such measures as comprehensive land and water use planning. These three factors may tend to place a game commission staff member in a less advantageous position with respect to his effectiveness and independence in the community at large, and his ability to command a salary commensurate with his experience, educational attainments and economic importance. In considering these stresses to the social, economic and professional status of wildlife professionals, it is my opinion that the greatest gains for our staff member can be made through strengthening our departments as a whole, elevating their status in the eyes of the public as independent, vigorous, responsive, and responsible agencies.