

AN ASSESSMENT OF OUR SUCCESS AS FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGERS — AND A LOOK AT THE FUTURE

by

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Distinguished fellow panel members, ladies, and gentlemen.

It is a pleasure to come back again to West Virginia, a place I enjoy visiting for a variety of reasons. It's as unlike my part of Maryland or Washington, D.C., as any place can possibly be, and I find myself with my family repeatedly coming to West Virginia to get away from it all.

In fairness to Mr. Cantner and his director, I should point out that they are doing a remarkably fine job here. They have bred a strain of trout which is infinitely more intelligent than the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. I have had miserable success in attempting to catch these creatures in this State, although the effort has been eminently rewarding. I can also say to you that there is no more delightful experience, perhaps, than to encounter an inch and a half of rain in the Dolly Sods when you are camped in the back of your station wagon. There are all kinds of adventures to be found in West Virginia, and I'm always pleased to come back.

I'm compelled to say, in light of the things that have been said earlier this morning, that I, too, have some roots in West Virginia. My progenitors, a great many years ago, came from West Virginia. So you can accept me or reject me summarily as you please, but I do enjoy this State, and I am particularly pleased with the surroundings in which we find ourselves here. It makes me think that perhaps the profession of fish and wildlife management has come up in the world.

Now to address myself to what seems to be, I suspect, a rather ambitious subject for anybody, let alone a recently reconfirmed Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: An assessment of our success as fish and wildlife managers and a look to the future.

This is the kind of all-encompassing subject that any bureaucrat delights in attacking because he can say many things and signify nothing. But I would like to tell you this morning that, in fact, I intend to signify something. I should like to talk a little bit about the past, the recent past, a little bit about now and perhaps a little more about the future. And I should preface my remarks by saying that when I say *we*, I mean all of us collectively, not the editorial *we* that means the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service or his agency, but *we* as fish and wildlife managers.

Have we been successful in the recent past? We've done a number of things, and we have seen a number of things happen which may have been a result of our activities, or perhaps our serendipity, but in any event several things have happened. We have encountered a whole new clientele for fish and wildlife and their habitats. Some of these clientele groups, representatives of the public at large, are folks who sometimes complicate our lives, but they're there nonetheless. They are the people who don't like hunting, the people who don't like the way we manage hunting and fishing, the people who object to the fundamental ideas that have been our philosophies for years and years. These are not the kinds of clients that a group of professionals might seek to serve, but they are clients nonetheless because they are members of the public, and as government employees, whether at the Federal or State level, it is our obligation to at least attend to their interests. A whole new array of these kinds of people has emerged in the last few years, and they have begun to make themselves known in ways that I will discuss in somewhat greater detail in a few moments. And I will make some observations about what I think this means to us.

We will have in the new Congress strong representation for the environment and for fish and wildlife as components of that environment. What might be termed the "Colorado Syndrome" is making itself more and more evident. This is where some of the fundamental issues that determine whether a candidate wins or loses are those that

directly relate to the environment and to fish and wildlife. I believe that the new Congress will show a much stronger inclination toward consideration of environmental values. There are young, thoughtful, aggressive representatives in both the House and the Senate who are concerned about these matters because they reflect a real challenge for the future. We see this growing, and I think it will grow to a greater and greater degree in future sessions of the Congress.

We also now have as tools strong laws supporting the general idea of environment and fish and wildlife, and in many cases we have strong people to enforce these laws. I commend to you the statement made by Attorney General Saxbe not long ago about a subject that normally would be quite remote from the mind of an Attorney General of the United States. He didn't like the idea that there were illegal dredge and fill and other associated works going on in this country, and he indicated that it's his intention to seek out these illegal acts and prosecute those responsible to the fullest extent of the law.

We have strong laws that complicate all our lives; for example, the Endangered Species Act, which clearly reflects the concern of the Congress about all man's fellow creatures, both animal and plant. We also have a strong law in the Marine Mammal Protection Act. These laws indicate strong interest on the part of the general public as to the welfare of man's fellow creatures and their environment.

We have seen a good many issues arising. We all know about the attempt to stop the deer hunt at Great Swamp and two other national wildlife refuges which has now been finally resolved, at least on the issues presented by those who wanted to stop the hunting. We know about endangered species and the kinds of complications they bring to all of us as administrators at the Federal and State level.

We're aware, all of us I think, that a monumental step has been taken and the challenge has been handed to the Congress in terms of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Our last frontier has been alluded to as being divided up among Alaska natives, the State of Alaska and the Federal Government, as well as certain other private and commercial interests. The Secretary of the Interior, in behalf of his own agency and the Department of Agriculture, has presented to the Congress his proposals for the establishment of a series of national wildlife refuges, national forests, wild and scenic rivers, and national parks encompassing more than 80 million acres in Alaska. These proposals will be debated and redebated and debated once again in the Congress for the next five years, during which time the Congress must make its decisions about what will be done with the future of Alaska.

My own contacts with members of Congress have indicated to me that they have a keen interest in this debate—very little understanding, which is another kind of problem—but a very keen interest in doing the right thing with the last remaining resources on a large scale that the United States, and perhaps the world, has to offer.

Other kinds of issues that have arisen. There's one I hesitate to talk about because I know it stimulates streams of adrenalin in the circulatory systems of my fellow administrators—that's the matter of lead poisoning and should we use steel shot or something else.

Among other emerging issues, perhaps the most significant in its own way is the recent suit against the Secretary attempting to enjoin him from continuing the migratory bird hunting season nationwide this year. The suit was filed in Federal Court in New Jersey on the grounds that the Secretary had failed to file an environmental impact statement when promulgating the regulations governing the hunting season for 1974-75. This action is indicative of concerns that should be important to all of us. First of all it indicates that there are a great many people who are dissatisfied with the idea of hunting. I'm convinced that these folks are utterly misinformed—many of them. They don't comprehend the consequences of their action; they don't fully realize the long-term results of their doing this kind of thing.

Without addressing this point until it's appropriate in my discussion, I will tell you that the United States achieved an agreement with the four plaintiffs to the effect that we would file an environmental impact statement, not on the 1974-75 season, but one

which addresses the general issue of migratory bird hunting. We have started a statement and at present we have about 10 of the best people in the Fish and Wildlife Service working on it. I know they will be turning to the best in the States very shortly for assistance in completing it.

It's important, too, that you know that some of the issues addressed in the complaint against the United States were not limited entirely to the idea of failure to file an impact statement. These were substantive issues that reveal that people who don't agree with us are learning more and more about what they can choose to disagree with. There was a general complaint that we hadn't solved the lead poisoning problem yet; therefore, we should not hunt. There was an allegation that we didn't know enough about the peripheral species—hooded mergansers and some others. And in the absence of good knowledge on which to base regulations, they suggested we not hunt. It was also said that it's too easy for a hunter to confuse a whooping crane with the lesser sandhill crane. In that absence of understanding and skill the hunter might shoot a whooping crane and, therefore, we should not hunt.

There were about a dozen of these kinds of substantive allegations. This was a marked departure from the "don't hunt because it's not good to kill fellow creatures" that was the hue and cry not long ago. People are learning more about what we do and how we do it and are beginning to question it. Perhaps we are successful as managers in that we've sparked that kind of interest in people, but it's a kind of interest with which one has to be very careful. We have to be professional and accurate and convincing in dealing with this whole host of citizens who have suddenly awakened to the idea that fish and wildlife and their environments belong to us all.

Some other things have happened recently that we should not be very proud of. In spite of our best collective efforts, I think we have probably lost another 125 to 150 miles of shoreline in Chesapeake Bay to dredge and fill and bulkhead. It happens every year. We don't do very well in that kind of arena, and we'll have to improve if we intend to live up to our obligations as stewards of the Nation's fish and wildlife resources. We haven't really convinced the arch-preservationists that theirs is not an acceptable alternative, and we haven't really convinced the arch-exploiters that exploitation is not an acceptable alternative.

Meanwhile, we've done a lot of talking to one another. It's always fun to talk to one another. I can be very comfortable with you and you with me and you with your peers wherever they may be, but try talking to the Humane Society or to some group of developers. That's more difficult, yet those are the people that we should be talking to, not to one another. We should be talking to the people whose minds and attitudes should be changed, the people whose misunderstandings can be the downfall of the things about which we are most concerned.

All of us, I think, are facing cutbacks in dollars and people that are always an administrator's headache, the bane of his existence. And that, too, is an area in which we don't do very well, because we don't sell ourselves to the people who control the gates leading to the mint or to the manpower pool, and because we somehow fail to articulate effectively how important the things we do really are. If we're to succeed, we're going to have to convince governors and legislators and financial committees that the payoff in the national interest, in the State interest and in the local interest is really very great in terms of fish and wildlife and their habitats and the well-being of the country. Otherwise, we'll be locked out when they're passing around dollars and people, and none of us can stand that.

Nor have we really convinced our opposite numbers in government, those who are advocates of exploitation, and I shouldn't say this in a pejorative sort of way. There are people who genuinely believe that one of the tenets of progress is to do something with the land or to dam the stream or to take another kind of action that is representative of progress and economic success. We have not convinced these people that there are good ways and poor ways to get the same thing done, and we don't always get into the act at the time when our being on stage is most important. We don't get involved at the right times, at the right places, and with the right people to effect the kinds of changes

that must be made if, again, we are to discharge our responsibility to the resource.

Now, what about the future? I suppose that it is axiomatic that anybody who lives on the lower Potomac where the atmosphere is charged with various kinds of things—not all of which emerge from the water—might feel compelled to come along and tell you what is going to happen in the future. And I warn you that I am 100 percent accurate 14½ percent of the time, so you should take my comments in that context.

I think I can speak to you about some things that we, collectively, must look toward and attempt to do if we are to discharge our responsibilities as stewards of the Nation's fish and wildlife and habitat resources. The future, beginning right now, is going to test our ability to be advocates of the resource, advocates of those parts of this sphere that we inhabit that don't always have advocates—the critters, the places they live, and the things they need in order to survive. Somebody needs to be an advocate of the resource. Everything we do ought to be measured against a yardstick of what does this really do for the resource for which we have a responsibility? A good sales pitch—one you have heard me talk about before is simply this: that which affects the resource sooner or later affects us. We are warm-blooded mammals, primates, and we are subject to the same kinds of pressures and stresses that our fellow creatures endure. Perhaps we are a little more tolerant, a little more adaptable, but sooner or later, if we don't take adequate steps at the right time, we will pay the price. The things that we do and that we advocate ought to be in the best interest of the resource and its environment. By so doing we are acting in our own self-interest, and I don't mean as administrators of fish and wildlife programs, but as human beings occupying a limited and fragile environment.

How are we going to be tested as advocates? In a whole host of ways, and you don't have to be omniscient to foresee these things; for example, the energy crisis, resource exploitation, and the fact that a serious problem is confronting this country and much of the rest of the world regarding sources of energy. We may literally be witnessing the eclipse of the petroleum era, especially in the western world, and this means a scurry to find some other kind of energy source. Obviously, it could happen that the exploitation to the fullest of the energy resources of this land could be done at the expense of those things for which we must be advocates. And it could conceivably be done in the total absence of any contribution, in a technical way, from those of us who are best equipped to make that kind of contribution. On the other hand, if we do our jobs properly, I think we can, almost literally, have our cake and eat it too.

A similar situation could occur because of another problem—the world food crisis. It has been suggested in a simplistic sort of way that the United States ought to grow more food, more fiber, and more forage to help feed the rest of the world. We all know it's not that simple. But because of the general feeling about what the United States ought to do, there is going to be added pressure, for example, to use hard pesticides, to exploit lands which have heretofore been sacrosanct. Wetlands are going to be under greater pressure than ever before. Estuaries and all the lands that might, in somebody's scheme of things, be used for an alternative purpose are going to be under pressure as they never have been before in order to help achieve an economic turn-around.

We'll find a growing, but not, in my judgment, overwhelming pressure to do away with management—the kind of pressure that says “nature does extremely well in the absent of man so let's absent man from the management scene.” We all know that's folly and foolishness, but unless we're very careful in explaining what the real world is like, this kind of advocacy from the misinformed and the uninformed will increase.

We're also going to have to look at a new way of doing business, and to many of us this may be the most appalling prospect of all. I turn once again to the New Jersey suit against the Secretary. That was not a reflection alone of folks who don't like hunting, but a reflection of a way of doing business that is going to be new and challenging and traumatic to all of us, and that also can be one of the best things that ever happened to us. No longer can we say: “fish and wildlife management is a highly technical business that you wouldn't understand any more than you understand the Doppler effect; therefore, go away and let us do it and it will all come out right.” Those days are gone forever, and I think the public deserves the alternative, the right to know what its

government is doing in its behalf and how the government goes about its business and what's at stake and how people can express their own views in these things.

The suit in New Jersey against migratory bird hunting was, in part, a complaint because the folks thought that they could not express their opinions to the Secretary and his delegated representative—me—in such a way that we could and would acknowledge and accommodate the fears that they had expressed. And so they turned to the recourse that is available to every citizen and has been for 200 years, the court. The trick was that they had a very good way to get at us, and I don't want to leave you with the impression that I don't like the National Environmental Policy Act, because I do. It makes us do business well. Quite frankly, we had not filed an Environmental Impact Statement, and that was easy for them to demonstrate and they almost got an injunction on that basis.

Among the many things that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does in behalf of fish and wildlife is the business of setting migratory bird regulations. We do it in a studied and precise sort of way, although I am sure there are many State directors who sometimes wonder whether the outcome does reflect a studied and precise input—well, that's a different story. In any event, our processes are very similar to those employed and indeed required by the National Environmental Policy Act. As a result, we were able to demonstrate to the court that we had come pretty close to doing the NEPA thing on this occasion—close, but not close enough. We must do it in a formal way before the next hunting season.

The important thing is that these people, whatever their motivations, or their misadventures, or their misalliances in terms of philosophy and understanding, have chosen to insist that the Federal Government do its business in an open, candid, above-board sort of way. It's the only way for the Federal Government, or any kind of government, particularly one exercising regulatory authority, to do business. From now on, I guarantee that we're going to find ourselves, again collectively, doing business in a fishbowl that is highly polished and cleaned and is a transmitter of light with lucid clarity. People are going to be looking in at us doing our thing. No longer can we say, "you wouldn't understand and so we'll do it our own way."

But this is to our advantage. It gives us a chance to explain what things are really like and what the issues are and what the consequences are likely to be. When we do explain, I think we'll find that the folks who misunderstand and who, therefore, disagree with us are very likely to discover that we've known all along; that rational management and wise decisions made by professionals unafraid to be looked at by anybody are perhaps the wisest decisions in the long run. So I would look at this as an opportunity to explain to all of our fellow citizens, not just each other, what it's really like, and what it really takes to preserve the deer, and turkeys and armadillos and pupfish, and all the things that people enjoy, and indeed must have if we are to have a rich and varied lifestyle, which is a legacy we'd like to hand down to our children. This is an opportunity we should welcome. Some of us will be able to adapt readily to the idea of being watched continually; others will find it more difficult. I suggest to you that if you are apprehensive about being looked at by your neighbor and fellow citizen, you should attend some kind of attitude-adjustment hour, because that's the way it's going to be.

More important, and I am privileged to be given a forum in which to say this, we must emphasize that it's we who will do this business; not me, not the Fish and Wildlife Service, not the State of West Virginia or Texas but all of us collectively, as stewards of the Nation's fish and wildlife resources.

The resources look to us. They don't have any other champions, and it doesn't matter whether their champion is a Federal employee or a State employee, just so there is somebody to advocate the well-being and the future of these living, renewable, natural resources of the Nation.

We're going to have to discharge our responsibilities in the best way we can while recognizing that many times we're not going to be in absolute harmony. The kinds of things I must decide as a Federal representative may sometimes be reprehensible to the

Dan Cantners and others around the country, and the kinds of things that they must do may sometimes puzzle me and my people. If we stop and measure it all against the idea that whatever we are trying to do is in the best interest of the resource, together we will overcome our differences. We must recognize and accommodate each other's problems. We'll have to realize that we won't always agree, and that we will agree to disagree on many occasions, but whatever we do we must do collectively on behalf of the fish and wildlife of this country.

I was privileged last evening to be at supper with several young men on Dan Cantner's staff. They had no idea—and I didn't tell them—who I was, and they talked freely. I was impressed by the professionalism of these men and their ready acceptance that the world is changing. Their discussion around the table was about things that affected us all when we were young men coming up in this profession: how much money they made, what kind of per diem they were going to get, the complications of the Administrative Section. But fundamentally, they talked about fish and wildlife and the environment, the things that are their bag, disregarding all the other trouble that is engendered in this happy, sometimes confusing, sometimes frustrating business.

The key to future successes for all of us are these kinds of people, the many committed men and women in the field of fish and wildlife management. There are times when we who are administrators take these people for granted, we who sit in corner offices and watch the world go by on a narrow front. But we should never forget what it's like to be in the field. I was forcefully reminded of that less than two months ago when three young, eager, and aggressive Fish and Wildlife Service employees, accompanied by a skilled pilot lost their lives in the conduct of fish and wildlife management in Alaska. They went out to do a thing that is unimportant to a great many people—to inventory sea birds—and none of them returned. They did a thing that all of us have done at one time or another. They laid their lives on the line without perhaps really realizing that they were doing so. They were simply doing a job, flying over the open ocean in a small airplane in behalf of something about which they felt very strongly. They were committed.

As an administrator who feels a rapport with his employees, because I was one of those kinds of people a long time ago, I was not only sorrowed by the loss of these professionals, but I was buoyed up by knowing that there are people who are so committed that they will lay their lives on the line, as your employees do every day.

These are the key to the future—our dedicated people, who are ready to accept the idea that we must be committed collectively to the stewardship and perpetuation of fish and wildlife values throughout the United States. I think we can bring it off. I know that whenever I come into the midst of people like you and surroundings like this, I always go away saying that we're going to make it. I'm confident that in the long-term future we will have championed our responsibilities adequately.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you. It is a pleasure to be at the Southeastern. I have enjoyed my morning immeasurably, and I intend to spend as many more hours with you as I possibly can. Thank you for your patience and for giving me a chance to tell you about the things I see ahead for all of us. Thank you once again.

GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

by

*Honorable Arch A. Moore, Jr.
Governor of West Virginia*

President Cantner, Director Latimer, Mrs. Cone, Dr. Mathews, Director Greenwalt, Honored Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen—

It is a distinct pleasure, as Governor of West Virginia, to personally welcome you to our magnificent Mountain State.

It is a great honor and privilege for West Virginia to host this 28th Annual Convention of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners. I do hope your stay with us will be memorable and pleasant.