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## WHERE ARE WE GOING WITH WETLANDS AND ESTUARIES?

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Before we know where we are going we must see where we have been. So let's look a few minutes at the road behind us. It is necessary to look just 20 years back, when administration and law enforcement were the primary activities of most of the State Game and Fish Departments. Technical people were absent, or few in numbers. Budgets generally were on a shoestring basis. Wildlife and fishery habitat was more plentiful, and as is typical with our American way of life, the public attitude was casual.

Today things are different. The resources we manage are under pressure of the tremendous competitive demands for water and land use to serve an expanding economy and population. Following our American way of doing things, it will be left up to the public to decide whether the resources can survive.

To date the results from the public's interest look encouraging. In the past few years, we have witnessed an impressive amount of conservation legislation that has been adopted by the Federal and State Governments.

The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 is one of these accomplishments. Perhaps the greatest impact of this act in this region has been the increased activity in our estuarine and offshore fisheries by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. In conjunction with most of our estuarine areas are the increasingly important coastal wetlands and marshes. Seventy-two percent of the over nine million coastal fish and saline wetland acres in the United States are located along our southeastern shores. Therefore, the future management and use of this nationally significant commercial and sport fisheries and wildlife area poses a complex problem.

We may be sure that the developers have or will have well-documented surveys of the areas in which they are interested. In June, 1958, for instance, at the annual meeting of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, one of the speakers pointed out that “hundreds of thousands of acres of reclaimable submerged lands border the United States coastline from New Jersey to Texas” and also reclaimable swamplands in other areas, including fully 159,000 acres of tidal flats and shallows in San Francisco Bay, *now under study!*

In the past, the South Atlantic and Gulf coastal areas have by interstate compacts made headway on multiple State commercial fisheries problems.

The recent establishment of an Estuarine Committee in the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission will no doubt prove to be a forward step in fish and wildlife conservation in the Southeast. With only one exception, the committee is composed of a fisheries and wildlife technician from each State, along with representation from both Federal Bureaus. Maintaining an appropriated share of both fishery and wildlife resources in our estuarine and coastal marsh areas in advance of competitive public use presents a real challenge to this committee and the Marine Fisheries Commission, as well as all conservationists.

Another Federal act to meet a land-use problem was the amendment to the Duck Stamp Act, approved by the President on August 1, 1958. As most of you know, this provides that all Duck Stamp receipts, after the payment of printing and issuing expenses, be used for acquisition of wetlands and other

wildlife areas. In addition it provides that under certain conditions up to 40% of a Federal refuge may be opened to public hunting.

In a short span of years, the need for hunting and fishing areas in the Southeast has required the acquisition and development of public use areas. Co-ordinated State and Federal efforts, strategic purchases, and public support will be the key to the future of this management effort.

The third, but by no means the least important of the Federal legislation that I want to mention is the new Coordination Act passed by the 85th Congress. Fred Seaton, Secretary of the Interior, has called this the most important conservation legislation in a quarter of a century, ranking in importance with the establishment of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife.

The new act proclaims the place of fish and wildlife conservation in the water resource program of the Federal Government, and conservation is now, by law, on an equal plane with flood control and navigation in the Government's vast water resources program. The act provides authority to render assistance in the protection and development of fish and wildlife habitat in Federal water projects. It sets up a procedure for acquisition of land for fish and wildlife purposes. But let's not kid ourselves, the new Coordination Act is not a dreamboat, nor does it cure all fish and wildlife ills. It merely makes the provision for remedial action.

In the past to a large degree the inland water development projects have been on basin-wide or river drainage system levels, and for the most part the major studies have been made by our Branch of River Basins and your State Game and Fish Departments. We are, however, now faced with a problem which I feel is deserving of your attention.

Small watershed development projects, initiated by local sponsors and administered under the Soil Conservation Service, are rapidly increasing in numbers throughout this region. However, the net results of these projects in conversion of habitat, without the inclusion of fish and wildlife features, must be reviewed with apprehension. While Federal investigation of these projects is authorized under the Coordination Act, because of their number and the localized nature of their effects they will undoubtedly require increased attention by the States.

I want to mention briefly two other public laws enacted in the 85th Congress, these because of their indication of a trend in the recognition of fish and wildlife. They are Public Laws 850 and 843, which set up River Study Commissions to develop a multiple water use approach on river systems in Georgia, Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, and in Texas. In both instances, fish and wildlife are listed as a project purpose.

In addition to Federal legislation, there is one type of State legislation that has and will continue to play a big role for fish and wildlife. Water regulation laws are rapidly moving from West to East, and without provision for proper consideration of fish and wildlife in every act passed we may see their needs taken over by other water demands. In most States, however, there are indications that the public wants the consideration of these resources.

In summary, it appears that we are presently in an unprecedented era of fish and wildlife conservation in the Southeast. Most States have firm biological, educational and law enforcement programs. Our task ahead will be increasingly a more difficult job of keeping the resource requirements abreast of the rapid conversions of land and water use. Therefore, intensive work with estuarine areas, wetland problems, and fitting of the resource into water development projects will pay rich dividends.

The number and magnitude of man-made changes in the estuaries, sloughs, marshes, lagoons, and swamps that fringe most of our South Atlantic and Gulf Coasts have been increasing steadily to meet the needs of our growing population and industry. These areas provide an essential and unique habitat for important game, sport fish, commercial fish and shellfish resources. They provide forage and cover for wild furbearers. They comprise the nursery ground for many kinds of fish and shellfish; they are the spawning grounds for some, the feeding grounds for others. Commercial or sport fish, such as menhaden, shad, striped bass, croakers, weakfish, and tarpon are reared there during their early stages. Shrimp, oysters and clams, which support important fisheries,

spend at least part of their lives in this inshore environment. The continued existence of these game, fish and shellfish resources depend on it.

Many of the estuarine changes have been relatively small dredging and filling operations. Considered one by one they are minor, but combined they are affecting in some degree a very large part of our coastal waters. These minor and major projects have been authorized because they would not interfere with navigation, but little thought has been given to their effects on our natural resources.

In the maritime States you are familiar with the history of coastal agriculture attempting to compete with inland production; the concentrated dispersion of water from lakes and rivers into the estuaries; the drainage of prime fish and game habitats; the undetermined effects upon productivity of our coastal areas along the intracoastal waterway; or the invasion of salt water into once productive marshes and into ground water supplies.

I think we will all agree there are dangers ahead in the estuarine development. I believe you will also agree upon one premise, that considerably more biological information about estuaries and the things which live in them must be accumulated if intelligent solution to the problem is achieved.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT SESSION**

### **THE SELECTION AND TRAINING OF ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL IN FLORIDA**

By DAVID SWINDELL

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This paper is not being presented with the thought that we in Florida have discovered a new method of personnel selection, since I am sure that many states today are using a similar approach to the problem. The records of the three years during which time our program has been in operation reflect the success of the system and give many sidelights into our experiences however, and it is with this thought in mind that this presentation is made.

As an insight into the background of the program, mention should be made of the history of the Merit System adopted by the Commission. The Merit System was originally adopted in the closing days of an outgoing governor's administration but was suspended shortly thereafter as "unsuitable" by the Commissioners of the new administration. The same system was reinstated by these commissioners at the end of their tenure, however. When our present commissioners were appointed, a departure was made from the past pattern and the plan was endorsed. Through all these adoptions and suspensions the plan itself has remained essentially the same. It is doubtful that the Merit Plan will be subject to such an "on again, off again" treatment in the future, since public opinion in the state seems strongly behind the protection of capable public workers.

In 1955 the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission put into operation a method for the selection of new employees in accordance with the procedures established by a Commission designed and promulgated Merit System. This method, while geared primarily to the selection of enforcement personnel, has also been used to fill those vacancies in the game and fish management divisions which do not require specialized training or experience.

Prior to the adoption of the present method, vacancies in the above categories were filled by the department heads or intermediate supervisors by selections from a usually small group of applicants from the locality where the vacancy occurred. Oftentimes this resulted in relatively poor groups from which to choose and political sponsorship was the rule. Minimum education and maximum age were sometimes disregarded in order to fill a vacancy quickly. The new employee almost always was allowed to remain in his home community