

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AN INDUSTRIAL FORESTER SEES IN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ON INDUSTRIAL LANDS

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I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you as a representative of the Southern Pulpwood Conservation Association. The thoughts I will express to you this morning are my own, but I believe that in large measure they reflect the thinking of the industry which I represent. As you may know, the SPCA is an organization representing pulp and paper companies here in the Southeast having a combined land ownership of approximately 21.8-million acres, almost 18 million of which are open for public hunting and fishing.

These lands are scattered from Maryland to Texas and the size of the individual tracts varies from five acres to many thousands. While most of the land owned by our member mills would be considered remote from the population centers, much of it is not. A portion of these lands is controlled under long-term cutting agreements or leases with the title vested in other parties. The opportunities and problems associated with the recreational use of these lands are just about as varied as the ownership pattern suggests.

In corresponding with your Program Committee concerning my presentation this morning, it was suggested that any problems I presented should be accompanied by solutions. Gentlemen, this is a tall order. In my opinion, the problems associated with the management of hunters and fishermen (not game and fish) on privately owned lands in this country are only beginning to appear. And, the solution of these problems, both the ones with us now and those to come later, will in large measure determine the usefulness and the contribution that the industry I represent and the organizations you represent, will make to our society.

According to Professor C. R. Gregory of the University of Michigan, "By 1984, recreation will be the number one use of all state and federal land, and I suspect that the forest products industries will have to fit their activities to the recreation seekers, not the other way around, as now." If Professor Gregory's prediction is correct, and indeed it may be, we are headed for some very serious problems.

In considering these problems, the first that comes to mind is the ever-increasing cost and risks involved in owning and managing forest land. Industrial forest lands, acquired for the single purpose of producing timber, are now being appraised at values implying other additional uses. The demand for land for recreation purposes is developing to the extent that in some instances the land value cannot be justified on the basis of growing timber alone. Other uses must be considered. The net result has been that the increase in land value has greatly increased the cost of growing timber. In many instances County Tax Boards are classifying land and assessing it on the basis of use, both real and potential, in addition to growing timber. These economic forces are brought into play partly as a result of the greatly increased demand for recreation.

The question arises, why should the industrial forest landowner be expected to bear the ever-increasing cost of owning and managing his land for the benefit of the public user as well as growing timber when the return on his investment is limited to the timber he sells. When forest land could be purchased for \$10.00 per acre, managed for \$1.00 per acre per year, and was taxed at 10¢, the owner could afford to furnish the other services and benefits free to the public. Today, with managed forest land values varying from \$50.00 to \$150.00 per acre, depending upon the stage of development, with management cost in the neighborhood of \$2.00 per acre per year, and in some instances taxes approaching \$1.00 per acre per year, it is doubtful that the industrial forest landowner can continue to give away the recreational value of his lands.

This appears even more positive when we consider the carelessness and utter disregard for private property on the part of some hunters and fishermen. I

could cite many examples of destruction and misuse of equipment, damage to plantations with four-wheel drive vehicles, damage to private roads and obstruction of traffic, and even loss of life as a result of hunters' maliciousness and carelessness. While these instances are minor exceptions, they do occur and the possible damage must be considered as a cost in producing wood. In addition, the cost of possible liability for accidents, in states that have not passed laws protecting the property owner, must be considered. All of these factors contribute to the cost of managing forest land and to the price of growing timber.

Recent surveys indicate that almost 90% of the approximately 60 million acres of industry owned forest land in the United States is open to the public on a free use basis. This is a precedent that has developed over the years, and while this precedent has been developing in industrial forestry, other recreational trends on public as well as private lands have been toward a pay-as-you-go basis. User fees are charged at more and more State and Federal recreational areas, either through the leasing of concessions or by direct payment. In the case of State game management areas, it may be in the form of a special license. Private shooting preserves and released game hunting facilities are becoming very popular, as are commercial boat launching ramps, fishing camps, and commercial fishing ponds.

I think most hunters consider money spent for equipment, clothing, guns, ammunition, dogs and transportation connected with the pursuit of this sport well spent. Fishermen undoubtedly have the same attitude towards boats, motors, fishing tackle and bait. The concerns which provide this equipment and supplies make a profit doing it or they would not continue to make it available.

One answer to the problem of making private lands available to the public for hunting and fishing on a more equitable basis lies in an equitable method of compensating the landowner for the additional risks involved and for the value of service rendered, either directly or through tax concessions.

The Executive Director of the President's Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission recently said: "It seems clear that private lands must play an increasingly important role in the Nation's recreation picture—and if we are to urge this, we must also put forward a plan for fairly compensating the landowner."

In June of this year, at the dedication of America's First Family Forest in Maryland, Edward P. Cliff, new Chief of the U. S. Forest Service, had this to say: "I think that outdoor recreation as another source of farm income will grow increasingly important in the years ahead. Recreation income can be a bonus benefit, because in a properly managed forest it need not interfere with the productive capacity of the woods for timber and other products. This is what we in the Forest Service have come to call multiple use management. We know that it works because we have been practicing it for almost 60 years on the National Forests. The Nation's 4½ million Family Forest owners, most of them farmers, would benefit from this multiple use experience of the Forest Service."

Henry J. Vaux, Dean of the University of California Forestry School, says: "Free Forest Recreation is obsolete—a reasonable system of charge on the forest recreationist, reflecting in some degree the real value of the land for such use will help."

Marion Clawson of Resources for the Future put it this way: "Another way to ease the pressure for more recreation facilities is to make more use of private lands—but there are limits to such expansion; only a relatively few landowners can afford such a sense of 'noblesse oblige'."

Why should the hunter and fishermen be expected to pay for the privilege of using forest industry lands when there are now in excess of 60 million acres available for free use, as well as millions of acres of state and federal land? The answer to this is that the privilege is not free; either the forest industries, individuals, or the taxpayers are paying the bill. Again referring to Mr. Marion Clawson, Director of Resources for the Future, he anticipates a need by the year 2000 for a forest land acquisition program involving lands similar to most of our industrial forest land, that will cost 10 to 35 billion dollars. This would

be for acquisition only; development and management costs would be in addition. This cannot be considered FREE RECREATION. It will be extremely costly for the taxpayers of this country.

It is obvious that privately owned timber lands are destined to play a more important role in providing hunting and fishing areas for our citizens. In so doing, the landowner should, in some way, be compensated for the service rendered. It seems to me that if the need is to be met, the production and harvesting of game is going to have to be considered in somewhat the same manner as other crops. It has a value and it should be harvested and enjoyed.

A second problem facing the forest landowning industry is in deciding how much of a role should they be expected to play in providing the necessary areas for public hunting and fishing. Obviously in counties where industry ownership is large, a large part of this burden should be borne by industry. Industry should make provisions for hunting by local people on a nominal basis. With each individual company the solution will be different. In general, however, I think it can be said that the more intensively the land is managed for timber production, the less willing the owner is going to be to allow completely unrestricted use, and vice versa.

There are two thoughts that come to mind when I consider the role industry should play in providing free recreational usage of its lands:

1. Recreation as an industry is approximately twice as large as the forest industry, and I suspect that the money spent on hunting and fishing during any one year would at least equal the value of wood products removed from industrial lands.
2. In the Southeast, forest industry lands amount to only 11% of the total commercial forest lands, and 4% to 6% of all farm and forest lands. Should forest industry lands be expected to provide more than a small percent of the area needed by hunters and other recreationists?

In a recent publication of the "Progressive Farmer" the editor, under the caption "Farmers Hunt Hunters", pointed to leasing the farm for hunting as a new source of revenue to which the progressive farmer should be looking. In my opinion, the farm and the farm fish pond have a great deal to offer in the way of providing hunting and fishing for more people.

My County Agricultural Agent friends in Georgia, however, tell me that more and more farms are being posted and closed to hunters, because of the risks involved. This, of course, shifts more and more of the burden of providing suitable areas on industrial lands. In my opinion, industrial forest landowners should be expected to accept this burden only if an improvement is made in the attitude of hunters and fishermen toward their responsibility.

A quotation from the recently released report of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission is as follows: "The most important single force in outdoor recreation is private endeavor—individual initiative, voluntary groups of many kinds, and commercial enterprises." The Commission also makes the following recommendations:

1. "That government agencies should stimulate diversified commercial recreation investments on private lands and waters."
It is suggested that a system of guaranteed loans might be worked out whereby public agencies could encourage private banking institutions to support commercial development. The Commission recognizes the problems of high personal liability insurance, high taxes, government licenses, etc., and recommends that the states take the lead in abating these problems and providing protection for landowners who permit the public to use their lands.
2. "That government agencies should promote greater public use of private lands."

Suggested here are public leasing arrangements, tax concessions and easements. The importance of securing perpetual rights and benefits is emphasized.

Timber easements such as in Vermont, with the private owner keeping only the timber rights; cooperative arrangements with landowners; and further development of farm ponds for fishing are suggested.

The so-called FAIR Program in Louisiana, which is an agreement between Olin Mathieson and the Wildlife Federation, is an example of the type of agreement which will probably gain wider acceptance with commercial forest landowners in the South. It is my understanding that this is a special use easement—in this case hunting and game management—with the owners' retaining title to the land and continuing to make all of the forest management decisions.

A third problem that must be dealt with has to do with impressing hunters and fishermen with the fact that hunting and fishing privileges are not free. A more responsible attitude on the part of the participant is a must if unrestricted use of industrial and private lands is to be enjoyed. To illustrate this point, I would like to relate a story told by a friend of mine in Middle Georgia about his fellow townsmen. Mr. Wilson has a very attractive private pond, but it affords no better fishing than most. Because it is somewhat restricted, every one in town thinks it is the best fishing place in Middle Georgia. Even though the pond is posted, a lot of people still come to Mr. Wilson for permission to fish. In a not too friendly tone, he usually says "go ahead". The visitor will walk down to the pond and in a few minutes he will come back to the house and ask, "Mr. Wilson, is it all right if I use one of your boats?" Next he will ask if he can use one of the cane fishing poles which hang on the side of the boathouse, and does Mr. Wilson happen to have any crickets for bait. The next question, and the one that really causes my friend to lose his temper, is, "Mr. Wilson, where is the best place to fish?" The reply usually is, "In the pond—I don't know of any being caught on the hill recently."

In a recent issue of the "Journal of Forestry", Lawrence S. Rockefeller, Chairman of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, in discussing the responsibility of the recreationist, stated: "There has been widespread and often unauthorized public use of private lands wherever possible for hiking, picnicking, camping, hunting and fishing. We have taken this use for granted—and here may be the heart of the problem, for we no longer can."

The last problem I will discuss is an old one and has been thrown at you many times. It has to do with the lack of knowledge and research needed in the field of demand and opportunities for hunting, fishing and recreation. Just where does hunting and fishing, as applied to industrial forest lands, fit into the total recreation picture? I am not thinking of basic biological research as related to fish and wildlife management, but research dealing with demands for hunting and fishing opportunities, as well as trends. Which types of hunting and in what localities are we likely to have the greatest demand? Is golf, boating, and other water sports taking the pressure off of areas for hunting and fishing? Are areas for upland game bird hunting becoming more in demand than woodlands for deer and turkey hunting? Do people prefer to pay more and have released game hunting, or take their chances with natural game populations? Are more people now willing to join together in clubs and lease areas for their exclusive use than in the past, or do most hunters still prefer to go it alone? What is the normal reaction of the local population when large areas are converted to game management areas for controlled hunting, and people from far away places and big cities begin to converge on their traditional hunting grounds?

What is the value to a hunter of a successful day in the field? This can be measured for the man who is able to afford a day at a commercial shooting preserve. It can also be calculated for the man of means who is able to provide for himself a hunting estate or an exclusive lease complete with kennels, stables, etc. For the man who is a member of a hunting club that leases privately owned property, it can also be calculated. But what about the youngster who had rather be in the woods than at the pool hall or hanging around the corner drugstore? What about granddad who lives off his Social Security income? The most enjoyable days of his latter years are spent sitting on his stool at a deer stand listening to the dogs run. What is it worth to a father to be with his son when he shoots his first deer or drops his first duck into the water with a big splash? What are these experiences worth? They are worth something. Admittedly, they are intangible values, but in a sense they have a very real

worth. It is in assessing these values and in determining how the cost shall be met that the real problem lies.

The President's Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission has made a great step towards the solution of many of these problems. It is the recommendation of this Commission that the states should play the pivotal role in making hunting and fishing opportunities available, and that individual initiative and private enterprise should play an important role.

Throughout this presentation I have used the term recreation interchangeably with hunting and fishing. Because of the interacting nature of the problems and opportunities associated with hunters and fishermen and the other recreationists, it has been difficult to disassociate the two. Industrial forest owners are concerned with the problems of the other recreationists as well. You, who are here today, are concerned with the problems of the hunter and the fisherman. Industrial forest owners are asking, "What agency should we look to for guidance in solving the problems associated with the other recreationists?"

Our forests represent an extremely versatile resource. They mean many things to many people. And they provide many products and services. Today we find increased emphasis being placed on recreational facilities for the general public and it is natural that our industrial forests will be called upon to provide their proportionate share of these.

At the present time, I do not think the problems which I have discussed are as acute in the Southeastern states as they are in other sections of our country. This only means that we must have intelligent planning today on the part of industry land ownerships to meet situations which will in all probability confront us tomorrow.

Change is the essence of Nature. It arrives with a sudden shock or treads gently as at the turning of the Seasons.

It is the nature of man to recognize the effects of change but slowly, and always the unprepared suffer the inescapable consequences of change not recognized in time.

A sound multiple use program on industry's lands, as well as on most private and government owned lands, may in time become an economic and political necessity, rather than a choice.

It is important that all of us involved understand and appreciate what a sound multiple use approach means. And we should recognize the fact that as we seek the answers to the many problems involved, a great deal of cooperation will be needed, calling for mutual agreements on programs, policies and techniques. The concept of full and complete ownership and control of private property must be maintained.

Industry has assumed many social and civic responsibilities during recent years. It has supported those programs in the public interest instituted by Game & Fish Commissions and other State and Federal agencies.

In evaluating the degree of cooperation you have received, I think you should take into consideration the fact that one program, while it might be acceptable to one company, might not be acceptable to another company, for good and valid reasons.

Let me assure you that we, collectively and as individuals, appreciate the contributions you are making to the conservation of wildlife, and to provide the thrills and pleasures of hunting and fishing to a greater number of people. Certainly our goals are not too far apart. It is the desire and intention of the industry I represent to maintain a game population consistent with good forest management, and to have our wildlife harvested regularly by responsible sportsmen, and in accordance with the rules and regulations of your respective commissions.