

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

by

Andrew H. Hulsey

I am told that the President is expected to give an address or message at the beginning of these meetings. This becomes both an opportunity and a responsibility.

As the time approaches for the meeting, many subjects or ideas pass through one's mind. In the final hours, I decided to take the "bit in my teeth" and talk a little about the things that have been worrying me the most these past few months.

First, I will have to state that these are my own personal thoughts and do not necessarily represent the philosophy of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners nor my employer, the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission.

WE CAN HAVE OUR CAKE AND EAT IT TOO

In the early days of this organization, we were all lean and hungry. We did, however, have clearly defined goals; for example, reestablish the once plentiful deer herds, restock the turkey, save unique wildlife habitat by purchasing land, build public fishing lakes in areas found to be deficient in fishing opportunity, and learn how to manage our freshwater fishery resources. Everyone worked hard towards accomplishing these goals, and "Lo and Behold!" after some quarter of a century we have had a great measure of success.

Given enough money, our various agencies now have the knowledge and trained manpower to do a good job of managing the renewable resources entrusted to us. Since these resources are renewable, the truth of the statement, "We can have our cake and eat it too", should be self-evident. Our motto should be "SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT"!

However, I have gotten the feeling that we are somewhat floundering and wavering. Is it possible that as we essentially accomplished the original goals we set for ourselves, we have failed to set and clearly define new goals?

Without a goal to work towards we are likely to become inactive and "encyst". I feel that many of us may be transforming into "resting spores".

A friend of mine calls this "the full stomach ethic"! Have we become "fat cats", more interested in holding a job than doing a job?

Along with the problem illustrated above, I have the feeling that, in some way, we have failed to give the strong — and yes STUBBORN — leadership to the environmental movement that rightfully we should.

We should serve as the foundation and source of sane and scientific guidance; yet it appears that we have "tucked our tails between our legs" and slinked off into a corner, giving the "instant ecologists", the preservationists, and anti-hunters and others the leadership role. This can only lead to disaster with fish and wildlife having to accept "shorts"!

DON'T CRY WOLF!

I am worried that there is a tendency to exaggerate the so-called environmental and fish and wildlife losses attributed to each and every proposed development project, no matter where it is located, its size, purpose or extent.

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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