

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

ALBERT E. HYDER

It is logical that the annual convention of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners would be an appropriate time to review situations and problems. To an extent, this convention itself serves that function. We present and hear papers, themselves progress reports on the many aspects of fish and wildlife management. We confer and discuss particular situations with our "opposite numbers" in other States. And, this is as it should be.

As President of the Southeastern Association this year, I pondered long about what to say in this message. Should we adopt the "rifle" approach to make a heavy impact upon one major objective? Or, should we utilize the "shotgun" approach to strike several situations simultaneously?

If I have a hope for a single objective, it would be this: to cooperate more closely as a sectional unit in order to achieve mutually beneficial results for the entire region, as well as for the nation as a whole, not only from technical viewpoints of management but from policy making and administrative aspects as well.

If I have hopes for results in the scattergun approach, they lie in more effective "patterns" of tactics which lead to a basic cooperation.

Recent developments appear encouraging. Recognition, in the form of two more birds in the bag, has come to our biologists who labored long in gathering the most comprehensive dove data to be made available to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In a similar manner, recognition came in option of the return of a wood duck to the bag. These direct results of investigations should provide a worthwhile incentive to biologists engaged in projects of the future. They should be incentives for administrators to work more closely with their colleagues in other States on coordinated programs. We most certainly hope, for example, that the new cooperative deer disease study can be as productive.

Discussions in Atlanta indicate we may expect the Soil Bank to produce more results of benefit to wildlife. The U. S. Public Health Service has come to recognize the value of conservation groups in pollution abatement work and a new liaison coordinator has been employed to further this goal. There have been increases in pay scales granted to wildlifera in many southeastern states! We must realize that these developments may be short term and might not affect the total conservation picture for periods of more than a decade or so while we as conservationists must look centuries ahead.

Before we take a look forward I think it absolutely essential that we look backward for a few decades and centuries and try to apply what we have learned in history to the signs of deterioration which we are seeing now in the field of conservation. These signs should awaken us all to real "plans of action" to prevent us from "going down hill." In looking backward we should consider the misuse of the basic natural resources almost to the point of depletion and also see that no nation has ever been any richer than its natural resources.

The resources of water, soil and timber have been most abused but if we dwell upon them and the correct overall use of all three it would be easy to have an abundance of fish and game. The great civilizations of Greece, Babylon, China, Arabia, Mesopotamia, the Mayans, Pimas and Cochise of America, had the same basic thing happen to their civilization which is surely happening to ours now. Our great southwestern desert is being extended by irrigation wells withdrawing twice nature's recharge every year. This is also happening elsewhere. The Sahara Desert in Africa is expanding—in fact I doubt if there is one that is not becoming larger through man's abuses. Believe it or not but most of these deserts have actually been created by man's abuse of the water, soil and timber *and it can happen to us and almost surely will*. It is rather nonsensical to discuss what happens to fish and game with real damage to these resources. It is sensible to ask if we, as administrators, are willing to sit idly by while state and federal programs, of one kind or another, drain the very life blood from our lands and waters and deposit it in some sea, ocean, or gulf.

Looking forward, there are many problems which will require our attention. An expanding population which enjoys more and more leisure time and improved modes of transportation is making increased demands upon outdoor recreational resources. Will competition for land and water become so strong

that recreational facilities suffer? I assure you it will. Or, can the public be made so aware of these values that recreational facilities will become an integral part of planning for farm and other programs, new reservoirs, forestry management areas and super highways? If we are not aware and if we do not act and act quickly, we will be left completely out and, sad to say, there are few signs of the needed action now. What will be the effect of the new highways upon the availability of remote hunting and fishing areas, the "tourist trade" and even law enforcement? Are the accelerated Federal programs to have an effect upon personnel employed by State agencies? These are some of the questions facing us in the immediate future and again may I express the belief that the solutions, in part, rest in cooperative action by the entire region.

In the past several months, it has been my privilege to work more closely than ever before upon basic problems of national significance and those of us in the Southeastern Region appear to be "missing a bet." With your indulgence, I would like to quote a personal experience to illustrate the point.

Earlier this year, the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission was invited to appear before a Congressional subcommittee which was investigating the joint Army-Interior Reservoir Land acquisition land policy. This policy, adopted October 12, 1953, called for outright acquisition of land only to the normal pool level. Flowage easement rights were taken on lands above that point, the Federal agencies in some instances paying up almost to 100 percent of property values without obtaining title thereto. There are many reasons why conservation agencies oppose this policy but foremost is the exclusion of the public and public agencies from reservoirs created with public funds. State agencies wishing to develop waterfowl areas were forced, for example, to purchase the necessary land at values greatly increased due to proximity to the reservoirs.

I appeared before the Committee to present a lengthy statement. Due to the limited representation of wildlife organizations, however, permission was obtained from the sub-committee chairman to secure additional written statements on the problem. Through the International Association of Game and Fish Commissioners and this organization, I asked all States to transmit statements. While 16 complied, *none were from the Southeast*. This is only one of the many instances which can be cited. Can we then claim to be cooperating and working on basic regional or national problems?

To conclude the story, this particular situation seems favorable. The subcommittee and its parent committee has recommended the joint policy be revoked. Further, the committee recommends (quote): "In planning reservoir land acquisition, the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation should seek to make fully available the maximum conservational and recreational values inherent in their reservoir projects . . ."

It seems to me that we are not making full use of our potential coordinated influence on national matters, especially with respect to Congress and Federal legislation, as well as with internal legislation in every State. Due to seniority and other factors, southerners hold a high number of influential positions on key committees in Congress yet they are rarely contacted on conservation matters of a regional or national scope except to get an extra bird in the bag or some other short-range matter. They could be of valuable aid in many other fields such as soil conservation and the Soil Bank, forestry, interstate pollution and wetland development work. Federal agencies are as far apart as Sputnik and the North Star. As an example, some agencies are trying to buy and preserve waterfowl land while others are subsidizing drainage of them. I think we must be condemned for not working on the real issues in the making which will affect the country for centuries.

To jump to another situation, I feel we should devote more attention to a particular field of conservation—conservation of human life. While we may not be as directly concerned with "human management" as "wildlife management," we do have a great interest in water safety and hunting safety. Additional legislation is being considered on both Federal and State levels, and conservation agencies may be charged with the administration thereof, but educational work will continue to be important. Those of us in Tennessee hope States in the Southeast can join in on an expanded educational program of safety, particularly water safety. The terrific boom in water-borne sports is

reflected in large numbers of drownings which, at the present time, far outnumber gunning accidents.

In Tennessee, we now are producing our second water safety film for both TV and group use. Our officers make weekly checks with County Coroners and report drownings, which are carried regularly in "Box Score" press releases. We have distributed many radio tapes, presented demonstrations and made talks on the subject.

The Water Safety Congress, which originated in the Southeast, performs a valuable liaison function and participation by other States is invited and urged. The next national convention of the Congress, by the way, will be held at Mobile in May and many States should consider sending representatives.

Like the growth of a child, progress is difficult to note in day-by-day activities. A glance back at the comparatively short existence of the Southeastern Association, however, will reveal many accomplishments. We certainly wish and hope that everyone present at this convention will learn facts of value and return to their respective tasks and projects with dedicated resolve.

I would also like for each of you to go back home with a quote from one of Edmond Burke's speeches as a guide line for everything we do in the field of natural resource conservation. That quote is as follows:

"An unwritten compact between the dead, the living, and the unborn requires that we leave the unborn something more than debts and depleted natural resources."

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

THE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

By ROSS LEFFLER

Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior

What I have to say today will not take all of the time you have so generously allotted me. I am being brief not because I feel the subject lacks significance to merit a long speech, but in the hope brevity will give my remarks greatest possible emphasis.

My subject is most important because of the difficult problem which lies ahead of us. Our heritage of abundant wildlife and public recreation dependent upon it is in a critical situation. I do not need to stress this point to you. There is an awareness in this audience—as well as among people generally—of the mounting threats to fish and wildlife values. By the hand of man, moved by the force of an American population growth at a pace which startles us, living space for wildlife is being transformed—many times unnecessarily—into sites for housing and industries and sometimes into areas for sewage, waste or trash disposal. We also have lands taken out of wildlife use for transportation, power, clothing and food. We have conflicts for water supplies and water uses which are growing more and more complex.

Don't get the impression I have the philosophy of a Canute commanding that there be no progress. That we must have if America is to maintain its position, but it should be achieved without loss of fish and wildlife values. Nor should you try to find in my remarks the slightest desire to perpetuate the arguments which have long split many of the governmental agencies involved in resource management. In my opinion, all that has been accomplished by this senseless feuding has been the retarding of progress. In words so widely used over the years by foes of bigotry: "There are many roads up the mountain, but only one moon shines on the top." Similarly, there are many ways to carry on good conservation practices, but only one goal: To preserve for those who come after us the opportunity to enjoy the rich heritage of natural resources which have made possible our way of life.

You will note that I am not saying good soil and water conservation are enough to insure fish and wildlife conservation, or that you can have the latter without the former. Neither am I using the shopworn expression that con-