

And then we'll put him beside a mountain camp-fire and dare anyone to deny him his rights to the public estate.

This is our program—a campaign with the camera. There's nothing new or different about what we're doing. But we think there IS something new and different about how we're doing it, our combat teams, our slides series to meet crises in conservation, and our long-range planning in education through the slide series. We're putting great faith in the camera. That's why, when you run across our field-men, you'll find them carrying cameras rather than literature, light-meters instead of display boards.

I hope that in the future we can report to you further upon our progress in a field which, conservation-wise, has been relatively unexplored.

TECHNICAL LAW ENFORCEMENT SESSION

THE SELECTION AND TRAINING OF WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

By W. H. KENNEDY

*Chief, Law Enforcement Section, Tennessee Game and Fish Commission
Nashville, Tennessee*

A matter of vital concern to any agency charged with the responsibility of the protection and preservation of wildlife resources is the selection and training of its law enforcement personnel. The success of any Game and Fish Commission rests upon the shoulders of the Conservation Officers. If a conservation program is to succeed, it must be accepted by the people it serves. To the masses of the people, the Conservation Officer is the Game and Fish Commission. He is the man they look to for answers to a variety of questions. His essence is of service and sacrifice. Almost every Game and Fish Commission in the United States owes its life to its enforcement officers. I submit that is a point beyond disagreement. Therefore, the selection and training of law enforcement personnel is perhaps one of the most important functions of Wildlife Administrators.

All laws, rules, and regulations would be merely surplus terminology on the statute books without officers to see that they are complied with. And, the better the Conservation Officer, the better the Conservation program, for it all touches this man—the officer. His selection must be careful; his training the very best that can be given.

If he could be given the protection of Civil Service, it would be well for political appointments for pure political purposes can have no worthwhile effect on Conservation. While the politicians diddle, daddle and trade, the natural resources of this country suffer, dwindle, and fade.

The only way to avoid this most undesirable situation is to establish a system whereby officers may be selected by competitive examination. Candidates would be required to meet certain minimum qualifications with reference to age, education, weight, and height. The written examination should be designed to test a candidate's sense of reason, aptitude and general knowledge of the job. In addition to the written examination, applicants should be subjected to an oral interview by a board composed of persons unknown to all applicants and who have some knowledge of what will be expected of officers. This interview will help to determine the applicant's ability to evaluate given situations, his ability to exercise common judgment and other qualities, as may be discovered by the posing of questions. These two phases of the examination, written and oral, determine the grade of the applicant. A list of names ranked according to grade should be certified by the examining board to the Game and Fish Commission.

Then, before offering employment (beginning with the highest ranking applicant and working down the list) the applicant should be interviewed by a

Board composed of District Supervisors of the Game and Fish Commission as a double check on his personal appearance and general knowledge. To insure against loafers and persons of undesirable habits, a searching investigation should be made into the applicant's character. This can be done by checking with neighbors, public officials, business men, etc., in his community. After this has been done, the person seeking employment should undergo a rigid physical examination, for the job of Conservation Officer is not easy.

After the applicant has successfully withstood all of these phases as above set out, his training should not be too difficult. It has been said "Experience is the best teacher". *I believe that*, therefore, officers, in my opinion, should be employed on a twelve-month probationary period, working the first four months with an experienced officer and under the closest observance and supervision. This would virtually guarantee that he gets off on the right foot.

His training should include a school held by the Commission during some season when activity is at a minimum. Generally, two weeks are adequate with half the force attending one week each. This affords an excellent opportunity to better acquaint the officers with the broad Conservation Program of the State as well as various projects being carried on presently, and those that are planned for the future, and just why they are, what they are, and what his part may be. I don't know anything as embarrassing as to be asked about a project, and not know.

Some other particular subjects which I think should be taught are: First aid, including treatment of snake bite, gunshot wounds, and other injuries associated with hunting and fishing and live-saving; the operation, care and maintenance of equipment; public speaking, including preparation of news items for local use. The subject of law should be given the most of the time allotted for the school. The officer must be familiar with the Game and Fish laws. He needs also to know the law of arrest, searches and seizures, evidence, courts, and matters of procedure. Most important of all, to be able to determine if an offense has been committed, therefore, he first, must know the law. Each of these subjects should be taught by professional men.

Another important phase of an officer's training, and one which should never come to an end, is the opportunity to attend District Meetings, along with representatives from other branches of the Commission, Biologists and Technicians. In this way, each can be informed about any activities or developments being pursued, and which he may be asked about. Meetings of this nature can do much to eliminate misunderstandings and mistrust, for each will become acquainted with the problems of his fellows and co-workers.

I would here point out that most of the research and development work carried on by the technicians in the several states and which are financed for the most part by funds derived from the Federal Government as a result of the D. J. and P. R. Acts, and which have already been proved to be necessary, would be curtailed, and perhaps abandoned (for the amount of Federal funds received depends in part on the number of licenses sold), if Law Enforcement breaks down. And, what good are laws if they are not enforced?

The Wildlife Law Enforcement Officer is many things—public relations expert, diplomat, fact finder, work horse, salesman, lawyer, criminal investigator, hard-boiled prosecutor and compassionate leader of youth. He is soil for the barren rock. For I say to you, if the seeds of Conservation that we are sowing today germinate, take root and grow, it will be because you selected the best personnel possible and gave them adequate training to become efficient Law Enforcement Officers.

The system of selection and method of training as herein set out is generally followed in Tennessee. I recommend it to you for I believe we have a group of Law Enforcement Officers that would do credit to any Game and Fish Commission.

Thank you!