

JOINT LAW ENFORCEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION SESSION

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

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The use of short-wave radio communications has almost completely revolutionized enforcement work throughout the United States. The degree of success in which this type of equipment is used is dependent mainly on the efficiency of the equipment and the manner in which it is operated.

Fortunately in our state we were enabled to install our system in 1950. Although the original appropriation did not provide for all of the equipment now in use, it did in a large measure provide for the essential base stations and mobile equipment. Supplemental appropriations and Civil Defense funds have expanded our present network to a very modern and efficient system.

In Arkansas we are ideally situated insofar as the location of the Capital City is concerned. Little Rock is almost in the geographical center of our state. The State Capitol and our new headquarters building both located there make for an ideal arrangement for centralizing our communications and for monitoring the system.

Unfortunately due to differences in terrain and, variations in radio wave propagation, in different parts of the United States and even within an individual state, it is difficult to determine exactly the equipment needed with the slide rule. Also, the variations from day to night and from summer to winter, along with temperature inversions caused by weather changes will affect the range of VHF communications. The time period relative to the eleven year sun spot cycle also determines the distance of skip interference from signals beyond the normal line of sight range.

Much has been said and written about maintenance technicians and radio engineers. After purchasing new equipment, having it installed by the manufacturer, and pressing existing personnel into service as operators, some executives used to consider the maintenance man as a necessary evil. The efficiency of equipment operation is determined by the skill of the technician and the effectiveness of all departments depends upon the accurate and expeditious transmittal of communications to and between all field personnel. An experienced, skilled, and conscientious radio man is indispensable in maintaining this facility to all departments. ,

In our state we have found that in using women as operators that they are well qualified in temperament and ability to better maintain the efficient operation of our network. In addition to the women who handle our system, we are using some of our handicapped Wardens for this important work. One of our operators is a blind Warden who was shot by an outlaw squirrel hunter. Although completely blind, he is the chief operator in one of our stations and is doing one of the fine jobs for our Department.

In our present system we have 194 mobile units, which cover all of our field personnel. We have 26 walkie-talkie units for Wardens, Refuge Keepers, Predatory Animal Trappers, Fisheries Technicians, Federal Aid, Supervisors and Administrative personnel. In addition, we have the two airplanes owned by the Department equipped with radios. In using this radio equipment all of our 13 ground installations, supervisory and administrative personnel have two frequencies for communication purposes.

Probably the best endorsement for use of radio is in the day-to-day or hour-to-hour communications it offers the field personnel. We can remember back in the old days when although we tried to keep in contact, some of our Wardens would go for weeks without seeing his Supervisor, and I suspect that it was very easy for some of our men to get in the habit of thinking that nobody

was too much interested in his activities or his whereabouts, but today every man we have can talk to his Supervisor, to the main office, to his worker in the next county, at any time during the day that it is needed or required. We do require periodic checks throughout each day. This close contact gives the enforcement personnel a tremendous lift in morale.

From the administrative standpoint we can say that the use of radio has greatly increased the efficiency of our field men. Aside from the feeling of belonging to an organization, and a closeness that the radio communication engenders, it offers unlimited opportunity for information necessary to good law enforcement. I don't believe that there is a Game Warden or a game protector or game manager or whatever you wish to call them who has not at some time in his working career come upon a situation in which he needed information, better direction, or guidance, and that's where radio communication is vital and instantaneous.

Our experience has been that before the use of short-wave radio we were continually baffled because of the fact that although we had a comparatively good coverage in men throughout the state, we were unable to keep them properly informed, to get information to them, and to get information back from them fast enough to be effective in enforcement work. I can remember when we formerly would receive a telephone call or a direct report concerning some violation, and then we were at a dead end because the Game Warden was not close to a telephone or any other means of communication. In our state, as in most of yours, if a Game Warden is performing his duties, he is not near to a telephone during the time that he is needed on an emergency report.

We operate our communication system seven days a week. Although we do not operate but nine hours each day, we do increase this operational schedule during our peak hunting periods. There are times when it is necessary to keep stations and units in operation during the entire twenty-four-hour period.

The radio is used in enforcement work to verify information almost constantly. Automobiles that are parked in game areas can be checked immediately to determine the owner of the car. This gives the Warden valuable information when these sportsmen are contacted in the woods. We have a system of checking all of our big game in our state, and the use of radio is essential in making these game checks. We find that the legal hunter is anxious to display his game, where the hunter who might have taken game under illegal procedure or under suspicious circumstances is the man most likely to fail to check his game in the proper manner. By the use of radio and communications with Wardens in other parts of the state, this practice can be greatly curbed.

The use of walkie-talkie equipment has completely rounded out the use of our mobile equipment. This equipment is designed to be used as a pack to be carried by the individual or in boats on our rivers and lakes. This has been especially effective in combating the use of electrical devices for taking fish illegally which has sprung up in the last few years.

We have found, too, that the use of radio equipment has greatly reduced the tendency to violate the game and fish laws. Because we have this equipment, we keep some people from getting into situations which would take place if radio were not being used. Our airplanes have been most effective in curbing game law violations.

Actually, the radio offers our field men a rapid method of making hunting and fishing reports on game conditions which are furnished to the press, television, and radio, and a quick means of sending out emergency regulations and instructions. It has been very effective in handling accidents that occur in the woods. In a number of cases we have been able to assist in saving a hunter's or fisherman's life because we could quickly summon first aid and get medical attention. We also use this equipment getting emergency messages to sportsmen from their families.

Reports on storms, floods, fires, highway accidents, stolen property, information and assistance to state and local enforcement officials are a part of our regular duties and have become common practice in connection with our work in using radio communications.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service operates one of our Base Stations, the Game Management Agents of the Service use our frequency equipment, the advantages of this exchange is quite obvious. One of our stations operates from a State Police Building and two from State Forestry installations giving fast interchange when needed.

During the past two years the Civil Defense Program has contributed 50% of the cost of all our expanded installations. We have been designated as the Number One network on national emergencies for Civil Defense. Recent Civil Defense tests have proved the efficiency of this system.

I think that every Game Warden will agree that the best settlement on a game violation is a quick settlement. We have found that if we can take a violator into court immediately after he has been apprehended, our chances for conviction and settlement on the case are much better than if we cite this violator into court at some future time. We are surprised at the alibis, excuses, and defenses that are brought up by these violators who were caught red-handed and unquestionably guilty the day before. The use of radio in the presence of the violator is often the means of getting a conviction and quick settlement on the case.

The actual number of convictions increased 17% the first year our radio equipment was installed.

On our network since we have two frequencies, one allocated to station, supervisory, and administrative personnel, we can greatly relieve the traffic on the principal frequency and also use it for investigative and confidential communication.

Before closing this discussion, I would like to point out one or two grave dangers with which we are now faced in radio communications. Drew Pearson in a recent article pointed out the danger of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company entirely taking over the communication system. Unless the conservation agencies and the Game and Fish Commissions immediately get a strong bid before the Federal Communications Commission, we will find ourselves either without a frequency on which to operate or one so jammed with interference as to be almost useless.

There is a constant battle of increasing tempo for the acquisition of more frequency channels by all users of radio communications. All public service agencies, such as Game and Fish, Forestry, Conservation, fire, police, etc., are licensed under Part 10 of the FCC Rules and Regulations governing Public Safety Radio Services. Industrial and commercial interests are exerting tremendous pressure on the FCC in Washington to obtain more and more space in the radio spectrum, if necessary at the expense of bands now used by other services.

It would appear to the speaker that in a given number of usable channels in the spectrum, the government-owned public service systems should receive priority in the issuance of frequencies, and the private interests using radio for commercial profit should be restricted instead of the states and municipalities. It would behoove every Commission to maintain cognizance of this frequency allocation problem and use every ounce of influence with the FCC to protect our rights to our present channels and to obtain more if possible.

The Resolutions Committee of the Forestry-Conservation Communications Association, which is the organization that presently represents Game and Fish Departments, is strongly on record opposing the invasion of commercial companies and utilities on radio communication frequencies and urges our Forestry-Conservation Agencies to retain their state-owned and state-maintained radio systems.

At the International Association Meeting in Augusta, Georgia, last month the Resolutions Committee adopted a resolution setting up a Radio Communications Committee to represent all of the Game Departments in the United States. President Bruce Stiles of that organization has just advised me of my Chairmanship of that Committee.

You will shortly hear from us regarding your views on frequency needs and the trouble you are now having on interference from other states. It might be well to point out that only eight channels in the 46 megacycle band, are

available to all of the forty-eight Game and Fish Commissions in the entire United States. Already most of these states who have inaugurated radio communications are having trouble with interference from other states. There is a need now to ask the Federal Communications Commission to split these frequencies and to assign other frequencies to Game and Fish Commissions.

It is my hope that at this meeting this organization will go strongly on record favoring such a move, and further, that the individual states make it known to the Federal Communications Commission that they desire and demand adequate transmission frequencies at this time, since there is a great likelihood that all channels will be reshuffled and reallocated in the very near future.

There is very little time left for you to act on this most important proposal.

LAW ENFORCEMENT IN RELATION TO OTHER CONSERVATION FUNCTIONS

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Laws as a means of protecting our fish and wildlife resources have long been recognized as conservation measures. In fact, laws regulating certain detrimental hunting and fishing practices pre-date conservation agencies in many states by more than one hundred years.

Georgia, on December 10, 1790, passed a law prohibiting the night hunting of deer with a gun by means of firelight and set the penalty at five pounds and 39 lashes for anyone caught breaking the law. In 1803 a similar law was passed in the Mississippi Territory along with a law which prohibited Sunday hunting.

Following these general laws, a trend to local game and fish laws affecting local areas was apparent for almost a century. In Alabama, which is probably typical of other Southeastern States, a total of 170 laws were passed prior to the establishment of the Department of Game and Fish in 1907. Of these 170 laws—163 applied to only one or two counties. One of the most significant of these was a law which required a non-resident to purchase a ten dollar non-resident license before he could lawfully hunt in Sumter County, Alabama. This law was the forerunner of hunting and fishing licenses within the State. Needless to say, very few fines were assessed for violations of these early laws, but they reveal that laws were believed essential in any conservation program even by our forefathers.

Only in more recent times have such activities as fish and wildlife research, development, management and education been incorporated in the conservation field. We all realize that a successful fish and wildlife program cannot be complete without these activities along with law enforcement, but any way you look at the picture, law enforcement personnel are still the basis of the nation's fish and wildlife conservation program. There may come a day when the law enforcement phase of the program can take a back seat, but that time has not arrived.

Just why is law enforcement essential to our present-day fish and wildlife program? I have often heard this question raised by uninformed sportsmen and, yes, even employees of a Fish and Wildlife Department. To answer this question, let us examine the following facts:

First—Law enforcement is the basis of revenue for a state's fish and wildlife program. We are all aware that the major portion of a department's revenue is derived from the sale of hunting, fishing and trapping licenses, and fines. Monies derived from these sources make the Game and Fish Division of Alabama one of the very few self-supporting agencies of the State. I am sure that this must be true in other Southeastern States as well.