

# INFORMATION AND EDUCATION SESSIONS

## PROGRAMS ENCOURAGING CITIZEN REPORT OF VANDALISM AND GAME LAW VIOLATIONS

by

WM. H. NESBITT

Hunting and Conservation Division  
NRA, 1600 Rhode Island Avenue, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20036

KEITH R. THOMPSON

Hunting and Conservation Division  
NRA, 1600 Rhode Island Ave., N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20036

### ABSTRACT

A program (Help Our Wildlife), encouraging citizens to report vandalism and game law violations was adopted by 15 states when introduced by the National Rifle Association in late 1974. An early 1975 survey showed six other states had a similar program in operation or under development.

### INTRODUCTION

Game law violations and acts of vandalism have long darkened the public image of sportsmen. Although such occurrences are relatively insignificant in terms of the total activity, they often receive extensive press coverage and tend to give the non-participating public a blighted view of the sports of hunting, fishing, and other outdoor pursuits. Further, unrelated incidents are often attributed to sportsmen simply because it is the proper season. Vandalism near a trout stream in spring will often be ascribed to "fishermen" for lack of positive identification of the culprit. Brush fires and littering during the fall months are usually blamed on "hunters" simply because it is the hunting season. Since all sportsmen are branded by the activities of these few, it is up to sportsmen to police their own ranks so that such occurrences are reduced to the lowest possible level. Not only must the individual be a good citizen when out-of-doors, he must also be willing to point out those individuals who do not behave according to law and sportsmanship, in order to protect and enhance the image of the sport.

### REVIEW OF PROGRAMS

An informal survey by the National Rifle Association (NRA) in 1973 indicated that several states had programs in operation to encourage citizen report of game law violations and vandalism. A significant number of other states expressed a desire for programs of this type. This led directly to development of the NRA Help Our Wildlife (HOW) Program and its introduction to the states in the fall of 1974.

The basic unit of the HOW Program is the Cooperative Violation Report Card (Fig. 1). It is designed to be modified by participating states with addresses and phone numbers of local law enforcement offices and personnel. Examples of such modification are shown in Fig. 2.

The artwork necessary for reproduction of the card was sent free-of-charge to all 50 states in September 1974. This followed a public announcement of the program in the NRA magazine, *The American Rifleman*, of July 1974, and the distribution of one million HOW cards to NRA members via the September, 1974, issue.

A postal survey of state acceptance of HOW was conducted in February 1975. Results for the 15 states adopting the program are presented in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, some 405,000 HOW cards were initially printed by the participating states with 178,500 (44.2%) being distributed by February 1975, the survey date. The majority of cooperating agencies indicated there were good public relations benefits from the program, although some felt that it was too early to evaluate such benefits.


Some state modifications of the card are notable. Idaho printed 14 versions of the basic card, with each version listing addresses and phone numbers for one of its 14 enforcement districts. Several states listed addresses of their regional offices on one card. Vermont reproduced the card as the back cover of the 1974-1975 Digest of Fish & Game Laws and Regulations, given to each license purchaser.

I agree to appear in court and testify against the above game law violator.

**NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION**  
1600 Rhode Island Avenue, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20036

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel. No. \_\_\_\_\_



- 
- 1. NAME
  - 2. SEX
  - 3. RACE
  - 4. AGE
  - 5. HEIGHT
  - 6. WEIGHT
  - 7. HAIR
  - BEARD
  - 8. EYES
  - 9. COMPLEXION
  - 10. PHYSICAL MARKS, SCARS, GLASSES, ETC.
  - 11. PECULIARITIES
  - A. HABITS
  - 12. CLOTHING
  - A. HAT OR CAP
  - B. SHIRT & TIE
  - C. JACKET OR COAT
  - D. DRESS TROUSERS
  - E. SHOES
  - F. JEWELRY
  - (1) RINGS
  - (2) WATCH

**STANDARD DESCRIPTION OF A PERSON**

**NRA**

**Cooperative Violation Report Card**

Violation \_\_\_\_\_  
Auto: License # \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_  
Color \_\_\_\_\_

Violator:  
Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Ht. \_\_\_\_\_  
Wt. \_\_\_\_\_ Hair \_\_\_\_\_ Eyes \_\_\_\_\_  
Identifying Marks or Features \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Details of violation:

- a. Illegal animal taken \_\_\_\_\_
- b. How taken \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Disposition of carcass \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Vandalism \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Offense against person \_\_\_\_\_

Help Our Wildlife (HOW) Program created by The National Rifle Association, Washington, D.C. 20036 over →

Figure 1. Basic format of the NRA Help Our Wildlife (HOW) Cooperative Violation Report Card, as furnished to the states in September 1974.

Table 1. Distribution of NRA Help Our Wildlife (HOW) Cards by cooperating states, February 1976.\*

<i>State</i>	<i>Number of Cards Printed</i>	<i>Number Distributed</i>	<i>P. R. Benefits</i>
Alabama	2,000	1,000	yes
Arizona	5,000	3,000	yes
Arkansas	1,000	200	TSTE
Connecticut	2,500	2,500	no
Delaware	5,000	1,000	yes
Georgia	2,000	1,800	
Idaho	30,000	10,000	yes
Kansas	10,000		yes
Maine	1,500	1,000	some
Minnesota	5,000		TSTE
Oregon	40,000	20,000	very much
Utah	5,000	3,000	
Vermont	250,000	125,000	TSTE
West Virginia	6,000		
Wyoming	40,000	10,000	yes
<b>Totals</b>	<b>405,000</b>	<b>178,500</b>	

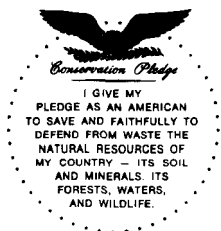
\* Survey date approximately 6 months after distribution of artwork for card to all 50 states. Some replies to survey indicated that artwork had not reached appropriate state division; this may have affected card acceptance by that state. TSTE Too Soon To Evaluate.

Table 2. Comparison of state programs utilizing a concept similar to NRA Help Our Wildlife (HOW) as of February 1975.

<i>State</i>	<i>Program Title</i>	<i>Violation Report Card</i>	<i>Description</i>
FL		yes	A program promoting hunter-land-owner cooperation is now under development.
MD	Cooperative Game Law Violation Incident Report Program	yes	Report format is similar to that of HOW card.
MS	Report the Violator	no	A poster program encouraging sportsmen to report violators to the local conservation officer.
NV	Sportsmen Monitor	yes	Volunteers are certified after a 45-minute visual presentation explains accurate reporting wildlife violations, legal do's, don'ts, and constraints.
NC		no	An untitled program of stimulation of public reporting of violations.
WA	Civilian Wildlife Patrol	yes	Program formed in cooperation with Washington state Big Game Council. Volunteers are certificated after basic training in legal do's, don'ts, and constraints.

AGENCY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION  
**VERMONT FISH & GAME DEPARTMENT**  
 MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05602

Printed in U.S.A.



**Cooperative Violation Report Card**

Violation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Auto License # \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_  
 Color \_\_\_\_\_

Violator:  
 Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Ht. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wt. \_\_\_\_\_ Hair \_\_\_\_\_ Eyes \_\_\_\_\_  
 Identifying Marks or Features \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_  
 Details of violation:  
 a. illegal animal taken \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. How taken \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Disposition of carcass \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Vandalism \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. Offense against person \_\_\_\_\_

Use the above to give information to your warden  
 SEE REVERSE SIDE

Code No. 258974



**VERMONT**



'74 -'75  
 EDITION

**DIGEST of  
 FISH & GAME LAWS  
 AND REGULATIONS**

This booklet contains information in condensed form which will be most helpful to the average sportsman. It is not the complete text of Fish & Game laws and regulations. See page ii.

**LAWS AND REGULATIONS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BY THE FISH & GAME BOARD OR THE VERMONT LEGISLATURE.**

**STANDARD DESCRIPTION OF A PERSON**

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. NAME             | 11. PECULIARITIES |
| 2. SEX              | A. HABITS         |
| 3. RACE             | 12. CLOTHING      |
| 4. AGE              | A. HAT            |
| 5. HEIGHT           | OR                |
| 6. WEIGHT           | CAP               |
| 7. HAIR             | B. SHIRT &        |
| BEARD               | TIE               |
| 8. EYES             | C. JACKET         |
| 9. COMPLEXION       | OR                |
| 10. PHYSICAL MARKS, | COAT              |
| SCARS,              | D. DRESS          |
| GLASSES,            | TROUSERS          |
| ETC.                | E. SHOES          |
|                     | F. JEWELRY        |
|                     | (1) RINGS         |
|                     | (2) WATCH         |

JOSEPH C. GREENLEY, Director  
**IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**  
 600 S. Walnut St. Phone 384-3700  
 P.O. Box 25 Boise, Idaho 83707

I agree to appear in court and testify regarding this matter.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

I do not wish to testify.

**TWIN FALLS DISTRICT**

Bill Gorgen, Dist. Mgr., Phone 734-5693  
 1764 Glendale, Twin Falls ID 83301  
**CONSERVATION OFFICERS**  
 Norm Jackansen Phone 324-5047  
 827 Teton, Jerome ID 83338  
 Dan Poppleton Phone 436-4094  
 P.O. Box 164, Rupert ID 83350  
 Bud Stackler Phone 678-2750  
 Rte. 3, Box 371, Burley ID 83318  
 Delon Teeter Phone 543-6553  
 Rte. 4, Buhl ID 83316

Figure 2. Examples of state modification of the basic format of the NRA Help Our Wildlife (HOW) Cooperative Violation Report Card.

The only major modification of the card format suggested by a participating state was the inclusion of the date and time of violation on the card. This has been done and revised artwork is now available to participants.

Of those states not initially adopting the HOW Program, six reported having their own program of a similar nature either underway or in development and six indicated they are considering HOW for future adoption, pointing up the need existing for such a program. Two states reported the artwork for the card had not reached the correct division, and three states failed to reply to two letters regarding the survey.

Table 2 compares some aspects of six state programs with concepts similar to HOW. In the case of Florida, the program may adopt the HOW card as its report form. The value of a citizen report form is reflected by its inclusion in four of the six programs.

The programs of Table 2 vary noticeably in depth and preparation of the individual. The North Carolina and Mississippi programs appeal to the public to report violations. The Maryland program offers a report format much like HOW, and is geared toward landowner use. The Nevada and Washington programs offer comprehensive training and certification of volunteers, but do not confer the legal powers to make arrests. The apparent aim of these last two programs is to make keen observers of the volunteers, resulting in information that will stand up in court.

Both HOW and the state-developed programs have a discernable common goal of involving the citizen by encouraging him to report vandalism and game law violations. The need for such programs of citizen involvement is shown by a high initial adoption rate for the HOW Program of 36.6% (15 of 41 states that did not have a similar program and who did reply to the survey).

#### SUMMARY

The initial acceptance of the NRA HOW Program by 15 states and the development of six other state programs of similar concept reflects a growing need for citizen participation and aid in outdoor law enforcement. Although the thrust of these programs is toward citizen reportage of vandalism and violations of law, they are also an educational device for reinforcing the positive attitudes of obeying the legal restrictions as an individual and exercising the right of every U. S. citizen to report law violations.