

INFORMATION-EDUCATION SESSION

MULTIPLE LAND USE AS IT AFFECTS OUTDOOR RECREATION

By HOWARD R. SCOTT

The South Carolina State Commission of Forestry is fitting the State Forests of South Carolina into the ever expanding concept of multiple use of our timberlands, which includes consideration of wildlife, recreation and other benefits which can be coordinated with timber production.

The four state forests in South Carolina comprise an area of 123,519 acres— or approximately one percent of the forest land area of the state. For this discussion, I will confine my remarks to the two largest state forests. Both of these areas were purchased by the Federal Government in the 1930's and were developed as land utilization projects.

The Manchester and Sand Hills State Forests are in the sandhills region of South Carolina, an irregular narrow strip, 10 to 40 miles wide and 150 miles long, extending across the middle of the state. Following the edge of the piedmont, the sandhills form the upper part of the coastal plain.

Soils and topography vary widely over the area. The soils are mainly sands and coarse sands, with smaller areas of sandy loams. These soils are inherently low in mineral plant nutrients and organic matter. They are strongly acid in reaction. In general, the soils are similar to the deep sands of western Florida, southern Alabama and eastern Texas.

Past land use practices are comparable to those that have taken place on similar areas in other states. After the original timber was cut, cultivation and uncontrolled fire reduced the forest area to scattered longleaf pine with an understory of scrub oak consisting largely of turkey oak.

The rehabilitation of the run-down land areas on the State Forests received a big boost from Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration projects. Buildings, two large group camps, a telephone system, fire lookout towers and a number of lakes, roads and trails were constructed.

In 1939 a Cooperative and License agreement was entered into between the Federal Government and the State of South Carolina which placed the management of these two state forests with the Commission of Forestry. The state received title to the Manchester State Forest area in 1955. Under the original agreement, the 28,830 acres comprising the Manchester State Forest area were to be used as a demonstration conservation area embodying the principles and objectives of planned multiple use. These objectives were to be attained through management practices covering the forestry, wildlife and recreational phases of land use represented by the area.

There are two group camps, one for whites and one for Negroes on the area. Cabins, recreation and dining halls, and kitchen facilities are at both areas. There is also a lake at each camp area that can be used for swimming and fishing. The operation and maintenance of the group camp areas was transferred to the State Park Division of the S. C. State Commission of Forestry in 1947.

In 1943 the S. C. State Commission of Forestry entered into an agreement whereby the Sumter County Board of Commissioners assumed responsibility for the protection and development of the game and fish resources on the Forest. The Commissioners appoint an advisory Game and Fish Committee to cooperate with the State Forester in handling the game and fish resources. The Forest is open to hunting and fishing under a permit system, and organized deer and dove shoots are held.

The Sand Hills State Forest is an area of 92,000 acres in Chesterfield and Darlington Counties under lease from the Federal Government since 1939. This area is also a multiple-use area. The custodial agency of the Federal Government is the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The western half of the area is operated by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife as a wildlife refuge, game management demonstration and research area. The S. C. State Commission of Forestry administers the remainder of the area as a state forest, public shooting ground and research area.

An area around one of the ponds has been developed as a Negro state park. There are two additional ponds that are open for fishing.

To get the state forests back into the production of timber, a tree planting program was begun during the mid-thirties. After most of the old fields were planted to pine, many unsuccessful experiments were conducted to find ways and means to return the scrub oak type area to the production of pine.

The Commission of Forestry was successful with an experiment initiated in 1947 which provided for complete clearing of the scrub oak followed by heavy disking and planting of pine. From this small beginning, the clearing work was increased to 300 acres per year.

The 1960 Legislature provided for a greatly expanded scrub oak clearing program which calls for clearing approximately 5,000 acres per year. We have been fortunate in renting some of this cleared land for the production of water-melons. During the current year, 3,000 acres were rented for this purpose.

As a result of the clearing program, doves have been attracted to these areas in large numbers. Excellent dove shoots have been held annually on Manchester State Forest for the past several years. This is the second year that dove hunting has been permitted on Sand Hills State Forest in cooperation with the S. C. Wildlife Resources Commission and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

We realized that dove hunting on these areas would be temporary and consequently have started a program of reserving permanent wildlife strips about 250 feet in width around cleared and planted areas. Brown top millet is being planted in patches in these strips.

In 1961 the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife prepared a wildlife management plan for Sand Hills State Forest. We are now operating under this plan.

We of the Commission of Forestry recognize that on these state forests we are dealing with soils of limited fertility. We realize that the condition of the soil and its plant cover determines what any area will yield. Although this idea has been repeated to a point of monotony in recent years it is not yet widely appreciated. A fertile soil will not guarantee heavy game populations, but large game concentrations seldom develop on poor land.

The importance of research was recognized when the responsibility for management of the state forest areas was assumed by the Commission of Forestry. Due to the lack of funds, however, only a limited amount of research could be undertaken.

Much of the early work should be called administrative studies rather than research. However, these administrative studies have produced good results. This is particularly true in the work with scrub oak lands which was initiated by the Commission of Forestry in 1947.

Cooperative research with the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station was first begun in 1948. Research studies on an expanded scale were started in 1953 as the result of a formal memorandum of understanding. The Commission of Forestry also has a number of cooperative experiments with Clemson University and is cooperating in a small way with the Soil Conservation Service on a dove study.

The state forests have served as areas for demonstrating a number of forest practices. With an intensified multiple-use program of management, their value as demonstration areas will increase.

For some years an annual personnel training meeting for Commission foresters has been held on the state forests. The theme of the 1962 meeting was Wildlife and Woodland Management. All Commission foresters attended this meeting. Information and instruction was given by the South Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Clemson University, and the U. S. Forest Service.

When the operation of the state forest areas was taken over by the S. C. State Commission of Forestry, the job at hand was largely one of rehabilitation. The completion of this job of rehabilitation is in sight in three or four years if the present expanded program is carried out.

Expanding into a more meaningful multiple-use program calls for a never ending job of overhauling the thinking of those concerned with developing and carrying out a program of this kind.

It is realized that there will be differences of opinion as to the intensity with which the several uses in a multiple-use program should be carried out. There will be differences of opinion as to how each use will fit into the overall picture. Some of these differences can be more easily resolved than others. These differences of opinion, or perhaps disputes, in some cases should be regarded as "growing pains" in the evolution of a logical land management policy for these areas. As Howard Miller, formerly of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and now with the U. S. Forest Service, has said: "In the final analysis, coordination between timber and wildlife—indeed between all forest resources—will be no better or no worse than the thinking and the attitudes of the men who prepare and execute the silvicultural prescriptions."

The key to any multiple-use program is coordination. This is true whether the job is one within a single organization or whether it involves cooperation with other agencies.

We know that adjustments will have to be made. People tend to react differently when confronted with a new problem or situation. At one extreme we have those individuals who build a wall that cannot be broken down. Others accept blindly.

We will need help from biologists and wildlife management specialists to guide us in developing the wildlife facet of a multiple-use program for these lands. We expect to call on our State Wildlife Resources Commission for a large part of this help. We hope to coordinate timber production, wildlife management and other multiple use concepts. Coordination is the hinge on which this multiple-use gate will open.

MULTIPLE USE ON THE NATIONAL FORESTS

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The fact that all National Forest resources are normally available for use is sometimes disturbing to those whose interest in these Federal lands is primarily the recreational opportunities they afford. Usually this is because they are led to believe that non-recreation uses are a hazard to recreational values. On the other hand, those whose principal interest lies with other National Forest uses sometimes become concerned over the "threat" they see in the accelerating use of the National Forests for recreation. These fears are usually groundless. They arise from not understanding—or misunderstanding—the basic precepts guiding the administration of the National Forests; from unfamiliarity with the way in which the various National Forest uses are coordinated.

Many will agree that one has only to consider the resources used and the many users involved; and then contemplate the future increases in both uses and users that are virtually certain, in order to have a fairly clear picture of the complexity of National Forest administration. Unfortunately, there are also many who do not appreciate the complexities involved.

At first glance a Forest Ranger responsible for a 100,000-acre Ranger District doesn't seem to have an overly complicated job of resource use coordination. But if that Ranger District includes the headwaters of a major river feeding a reservoir that supplies water to a specialty paper mill, and also attracts 50,000 or so fishermen, water skiers and speed boat enthusiasts annually, the task of the coordination of uses begins to look somewhat complicated. And if that watershed is also the range of uncounted numbers of wild hogs, and a deer herd that attracts 1,500 hunters every fall, more of the complexities of the job become uncomfortably apparent. Add a traditionally high forest fire hazard, a Boy Scout summer camp, a couple of sawmills depending upon the District for their logs, a dozen overused camp and picnic sites, a designated Scenic Area, 25 summer homes and a couple of commercial resorts under special-use permits, a winter sports area in a zone of uncertain snowfall, a marginal coal mine, 6,000 acres of interior private land and rumors of uranium,