

HOW AND WHY OF TV IN KENTUCKY GAME AND FISH PROGRAM

A program designed to inform or educate the general public about fish and wildlife management is not effective unless it reaches people in all walks of life. Therefore, to reach these people today it is necessary that the old standby—the newspapers—be utilized; that public appearances by personnel of a department be continued; that radio programs be issued; that magazines, pamphlets, booklets, brochures, movies and photographs be utilized. But today a vital factor in such educational or information programs is television. Many fish and wildlife agencies, we are afraid, are overlooking this excellent economical phase of public relations to the detriment of their overall program. Many publicists have not come around to recognizing that there is an effective medium in TV and have, therefore, limped along without it.

But, those agencies which have more or less ignored TV will not long continue to do so, because, willing or not, the general public will demand of TV stations such programs and the stations, even if a department is reluctant to put on such shows, will be forced into such programs by its sportsmen and its viewers. If this program is not furnished by a wildlife agency then it will be commercially presented.

We know of several such programs and they are doing good work for the fish and wildlife agencies, but such commercially backed programs cannot have the impact on the general public as do those that are presented by the station as a public service feature with public relations personnel of a fish and wildlife agency planning, directing and moderating such programs. It is through this type program that an agency can subtly get across to the people its projects, its programs, its hunting and fishing potential with a resultant increase in the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and actually present to the public the basic reasons for the existence of a department or agency.

Furthermore a program by a department is more timely and carries more authenticity than one presented by an "outsider" who, in his efforts to attract listeners features, more than game and fish management, a gimmick or a give-away program which actually distracts from the soundness of the program. Too, an audience will be more interested in a program sponsored by a fish and wildlife agency than those otherwise presented if they are aware that the information is coming from the "horse's mouth."

To illustrate the drawing power of a live TV program let us cite some facts that were gathered for a potential sponsor of "Kentucky Afield," which is presented in a 28½-minute slot, in color each Saturday evening at 7:00 p.m. over WAVE-TV in Louisville. An oil company approached the Department regarding sponsorship of this program a few years ago and the station manager, as strange as it may seem, was rather reluctant to sell it. He liked it as a public service feature of his station. But, he did gather for the Department these facts which were presented to the oil company.

The Saturday afternoon program (it was at that time presented at 2:00 p. m.) had a Neilson rating of 11.6. This meant that 11.6 per cent of all the TV sets in the coverage area was tuned in to Kentucky Afield. Further, it meant that sets in 54,000 homes were receiving the program. For advertising purposes the station claims that there are four viewers to each set, which would indicate that 216,000 persons were viewing this program every Saturday afternoon. A department employee who could attract an audience of about 600 persons would have to lecture 365 nights out of the year to reach as many persons as see this TV program each Saturday.

Furthermore, this lecturer would reach only those persons who were interested in its fish and wildlife agency and those on the border line, those who had not taken time to find out about the work of a fish and wildlife agency, would be missed.

In the audience of Kentucky Afield are not only sportsmen, but women and children and businessmen and others who are not necessarily interested in fish and wildlife management but who are attracted to the

program because of its interest and through this interest they are, in some respects, slanted toward better conservation measures in their state. They are made acquainted with a fish and wildlife agency through this program, without which they would, perhaps, know about this work distantly but would not generate an active interest in its being.

We know, through experience, that listeners to Kentucky Afield become more interested in fish and wildlife management, and quite naturally, fishing and hunting. That is exactly what the Department hopes to obtain—a greater interest in the work that is being done; an insight into the soundness and worth of a Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and a desire of more people to participate in hunting and fishing. Such activity breeds nothing but more strength for a department and any such agency surely needs all the support it can get from all segments of the public.

Specifically we believe that Kentucky Afield reaches persons who would otherwise not know about our fish and wildlife agency.

It creates interest by people who are not participants in this sport.

It strengthens the work of field men in their scientific endeavors in that more people feel they are acquainted with the Department before actually these field men start such a program.

It builds up goodwill from a great segment of the public.

And it reaches more people of divergent activities than any other media thereby spreading the word to a wider group of citizens.

All this it does at very little cost.

It attracts the attention and, perhaps, the admiration of other agencies of state government and is an excellent medium of reaching the governor of the state and his cabinet members.

This latter needs explaining.

When a new administration takes office the chief executive, without exception, is asked and does participate in a Kentucky Afield program. It's good business for him in that he gets acquainted with the sportsmen and it projects him squarely before them as to his beliefs and proposals in fish and wildlife management.

Cabinet members or designated persons in their departments are invited, from time to time, to participate in the Kentucky Afield program along a subject kindred to fish and wildlife and this brings to those persons an awareness of the importance of the fish and wildlife agency.

We believe that the success of Kentucky Afield, and it has been running continuously for 11 years, is the casualness with which the program is presented; the wide range of subjects discussed; the extensive use of props and animals and fish on this program, all with the underlying theme of fish and wildlife in the background if not projected more bluntly.

The program is produced by the staff of the Division of Public Relations with one man in charge. Field men, biologists, conservation officers, hunters and fishermen all take part in the show from time to time.

The studio producing the tape provides an announcer for introduction and takeoff and then the program is turned over to the Division's moderator. He interviews his subject and assists in do-it-yourself projects that are a feature. The interview is not a sit and talk, question and answer affair. It is conducted amid an appropriate surrounding with props being demonstrated as the questions are asked and answered.

For instance, a jig fishing program is staged. A boat is brought onto the set and a waterline is designed on a scene behind the boat. The subject tells about the art of jig fishing; he rigs his line; baits the hook and tosses out the line. While still explaining the movements of the jig fishermen, he gives a mighty tug and pulls in a five-pound largemouth bass; disgorges the hook and then places the fish on a stringer over the side of the boat. All this while explaining his actions. It is our belief that a question and answer session loses 90 per cent of its effectiveness without props.

A forestry program is planned. Smoky Bear is there to give out his wisdoms after which the program develops with personnel from the Division of Forestry demonstrating fire-fighting equipment; with a film clip of an actual forest fire and with facts on the losses from

forest fires enumerated on a large clip-board with the narrator pointing out these facts with explanations.

These are merely examples of the shows and this main feature takes up about 20 minutes of the 28½-minute time allotment. During the fishing season a roundup of water and fishing conditions, with temperatures, etc., is given. Large maps of the lakes are shown and encased under glass. Pertinent facts are written by grease pencil on this glass and hot spots in the fishing picture are designated. All this while a running account of the overall fishing picture is being given. In hunting season a similar roundup of hunting areas is given.

This part of the program attracts a great following and is anticipated by the audience much as is a weather report by the average listener. This is a new angle of the program. The closeout is preceded by a tip-of-the-week feature in which the conductors of the program gang up in a two-minute bit to explain a feature that would be helpful to the hunter or fisherman.

The studio furnishes a program director who generally goes along with the format that is submitted by the Department.

The working relations with the studio are of the best and that adds a great deal to the success of the program.

The program is taped, usually on Thursday, for playback on Saturday night. In this manner we are able, occasionally, to cut two tapes in one day. Also a spare tape always is held in reserve. This tape is a feature that could be used at about any time of the year.

The Division of Public Relations has purchased a number of video tapes on which Kentucky Afield is recorded. An ideal arrangement would be to cut the Kentucky Afield tape in one studio and then round-robin it to other studios. This plan has been worked on but is still in the working stage. So far we have been unable to work out time arrangements with enough stations to justify this procedure. You see, as long as the tape is used only in the station at which it is cut, there is no charge to the Department. But when the tape is used on another station, the union forces a charge for the cutting of the program. The cost would be about \$150 per tape. If three other stations should use this tape it would be dirt cheap and for one other station, the \$150 is not too high except in the eyes of the financial wizards of the Department.

Presently there is being prepared in Kentucky an educational TV feature that would almost blanket the state. We are working for a spot on this network and believe we'll get it.

That, in general, is an outline of TV in Kentucky's Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. It is, to be sure, in its infancy in this state. We believe that any state that does not avail itself of the opportunity to go TV is missing an important link in its division of public relations.

HOW AND WHY WE PUBLISH A DEPARTMENTAL MAGAZINE

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The central theme of this discussion is "How and Why." The theme is well chosen. In this particular topic, however, with the specific questions "How" and "Why," it might be better to discuss "Why" first and "How" a little later on.

Why, indeed? Our job, as I & E personnel, Public Information Officers, Public Relations Specialists, Conservation-Education Specialists, . . . (you have the job; someone else probably put a name to it) is to create in the minds of the general public an image that reflects good will between people who benefit from natural resource conservation and