

PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS OF SOUTHEASTERN WETLAND AND WATER USE STUDIES

By H. E. WALLACE, *Chairman*

Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission

*Committee on Water Use, Southern Section, Wildlife Society**

During the past year the members of your Water Use Committee have exchanged correspondence on several occasions regarding the direction of the program with the view in mind of presenting those accomplishments which have taken place since the present committee was formed. You will recall that at the Mobile meeting two years ago a report was submitted which pointed out the futility of trying to perform an efficient and progressive study of water use needs with a committee which annually changes its membership. As a result of that report, your Wildlife Society decided to appoint a semi-permanent committee or at least one which would serve for more than one year. The present committee has subsequently served for two years and a review of past committee reports will indicate the subjects which were considered worthy of study and pointed out ways of attacking or solving these problems. One of the recommendations for improving our approach was that a permanent Water Use Committee comprised of one member from each state be established under the auspices of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners. That official group accepted this recommendation and for the past two years this committee has been in operation. The functions of the Association's Water Use Committee and the Society's Water Use Committee are described in last year's report. Thus it would appear that we have the water use study program well recognized and adequately operated. However, for purposes of self-analysis let's review the events of the past year.

You will recall that last year at Louisville our report pointed out opportunities for fish and wildlife enhancement through wetland and water use studies. In that report we emphasized the need for study by each state of its civil works program as being executed by the Corps of Engineers. We were convinced that a careful scrutiny of the various water development projects being carried out in each state was imperative if our wetlands were to be maintained in a useable form for fish and wildlife. We were further convinced that such scrutiny would expose the alarming situation and result in the establishment of water development project study programs. We are happy to report that several of the states have now become more interested in this subject and have instituted specific programs of their own to provide for this type of study. Tennessee is a good example. Less than six months ago the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission set up a West Tennessee Stream Basin and Watershed Board to survey the game and fish resources of the rivers, streams and watersheds of the Mississippi River tributaries in the western portion of the state and to establish proper coordination with other agencies involved in the construction programs proposed by the Corps of Engineers. We do not feel that Tennessee will regret this step. In fact we are confident that their results will be a pleasant surprise and will result in an expanded program.

Bear in mind that only one percent of the annual budgets for the twelve southeastern states was spent last year on the investigation of water resource development projects so that any new program such as the one recently established in Tennessee is a major step in the right direction. We optimistically believe that the results obtained by these new state programs will be so evident as to culminate in their universal establishment throughout the southeastern region. We certainly hope so and it would be interesting to again analyze water resource study program expenditures several years hence.

Another item which was discussed last year concerned the opportunities which existed under the amended Public Law 566 concerning small watersheds. We pointed out at that time how fish and wildlife planning in these projects previously had been incidental and that there had been no federal cost sharing

* Other members: Harold E. Alexander, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Roy Wood, United States Study Commission.

arrangement for the development of such values. Under the amendment, however, federal cost sharing was provided with the result that impoundments could be enlarged or developed for waterfowl habitat or otherwise improved for fish and wildlife purposes. We are again happy to report that our southeastern states seem to be now taking advantage of this opportunity to an ever-increasing degree. Roy Wood, a member of this committee, offered to delve into this particular program since the Fish and Wildlife Service is directly involved and to present to you the work that has taken place during the past year. As most of you already know, Roy recently was employed by the United States Study Commission to work on certain watershed areas in Georgia and the adjacent states. However, we were fortunate in that Don Pfitzer, a member of Roy's staff who was directly responsible for supervision of this particular program, volunteered to assume this task and his report is appended as a supplement. Needless to say, Mr. Pfitzer's efforts are appreciated and, needless to say, his analysis is gratifying. It points out specific examples of how states have utilized this program to good advantage for fish and wildlife purposes. It is sincerely hoped that the information provided by Mr. Pfitzer will stimulate the states to even greater participation in this program.

Last year Harold Alexander, a member of this committee, prepared a supplemental committee report on "Water Projects in Arkansas in Relation to Wildlife and Recreation." This year Harold has taken upon himself to prepare a special report on stream preservation. This latest report is based on results of a questionnaire sent to the various states of the region. First, we would like to thank those who cooperated in this endeavor and, secondly, we wish to thank Harold for his interest, time and effort. We trust that the facts ascertained by Harold will be given due consideration by those states having stream preservation problems.

It behooves the committee at this time to mention the large number of programs which are concerned with water resources as certainly game and fish agencies are not the only ones concerned with the subject. At the same time we would like to emphasize the need for liaison with these other programs and the associated agencies. In particular, we would like to see game and fish representatives from the states of this region in attendance at these various meetings not only to indicate our interest but to inject our thoughts into their plans. One such meeting is the Southeastern Water Resources Conference which is attended by a variety of interested agencies. Included among these are the various state water resources departments, the state and federal public health services, the Corps of Engineers, the U. S. Soil Conservation Service, the U. S. Geological Survey and the Tennessee Valley Authority. Usually conspicuous by their absence, however, are representatives from game and fish agencies. Last April, for example, this particular conference was held in Nashville and the two-day session was devoted entirely to the recreational uses of water with reference to the fish and wildlife aspects and with the part that pollution contributes in the field of water resources. Yet only three state game and fish commissions, Florida, Mississippi and Tennessee, were represented at this meeting. It is difficult to conceive how our interest is to be properly represented if we continue to avoid participation in such discussions.

Another good example of our attendance delinquency is the National Watershed Conference which is held annually. Out of the several hundred persons in attendance at this national meeting only a handful of game and fish representatives are to be found present yet the meeting is sponsored by the International Association of Game, Fish, and Conservation Commissioners, the National Wildlife Federation, the Sport Fishing Institute, the Wildlife Management Institute, and our own Wildlife Society (and others). It would appear timely for the various game and fish departments to realize the need for representation at such allied meetings and rather than send large delegations to such family gatherings as the North American Wildlife Conference where everyone is already interested in wildlife, to review the various meetings on the calendar wherein wildlife is involved (even though not as a primary category) and to send representatives to those meetings.

In conclusion it appears that we are headed in the right direction though at times it seems painfully slow. And in summary we would like to recommend that

(1) continued effort be made to initiate new state programs to study and evaluate water development projects and to utilize the opportunities now existing under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act,

(2) continued effort be made to take advantage of the opportunities now existing under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, as amended, and

(3) adequate representation be had at the various water resource meetings in order to indicate our interest, assume our responsibility, and inject our thoughts into such appropriate and allied programs.

FISH AND WILDLIFE AND THE SMALL WATERSHED PROGRAM*

The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (Public Law 566, as amended), which is administered by the Soil Conservation Service, was passed in 1954 and is now popularly known as the small watershed program.

The attached table, "Status of P. L. 566 Watershed Applications as of October 1, 1959 in 12 Southeastern States and U. S. Totals," shows the magnitude of this relatively young program. The popularity of the program is amply demonstrated by the fact that 1,204 applications, totalling 86,454,800 acres, have been received in Washington by the Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, and 209 projects, comprising 12,412,500 acres of land and water, are already authorized for operation. Of the authorized projects, 77 are in the 12 Southeastern States and comprise a total of 3,765,400 acres of land. The 521 floodwater-retarding structures, which will impound 12,847 acres of water, and the 1,157.4 miles of channel improvement, which have been or will be installed in these watersheds, demonstrate the importance of the program to fish and wildlife resources.

The enactment of two recent amendments to Public Law 566 is of significance to fish and wildlife interests. In 1956, the Act was amended by Public Law 1018. The provisions of this amendment of interest have permitted the inclusion in watershed projects of nonagricultural water-management measures, including fish and wildlife development. It did not, however, provide Federal financial assistance for such measures. In 1958 it was further amended by Public Law 85-865. This amendment authorizes Federal technical and financial assistance for the installation of measures for fish and wildlife developments when such measures are an undertaking for the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water, and are a part of a watershed project developed under authority of Public Law 566, as amended.

Eligible measures for fish and wildlife development are:

1. *Storage capacity in reservoirs for fish and wildlife development.* This capacity may be in addition to capacity provided for other purposes such as floodwater retardation, irrigation storage, or municipal water supply. A reservoir may be constructed solely for fish and wildlife development, however, if it is an integral part of a watershed project developed for multiple purposes. The fish and wildlife storage capacity in any reservoir may be for the purpose of enhancing the fish and wildlife resources in the reservoir or for releasing water to maintain stable flow and suitable temperature conditions downstream that are conducive to fish and wildlife development.
2. *Modification of reservoir structures for fish and wildlife development.* Features for fish and wildlife development may be incorporated in structures to be constructed as a part of a project or may be provided for as

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