



## RECREATION THROUGH WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT: DILEMMA OR CHALLENGE?

Naturally, I am gratified to share in this important and challenging discussion of "Policy Issues in Outdoor Recreation." The growth of official interest in outdoor recreation reflects the increase of public participation in the joys of the out-of-doors. The ascendancy of outdoor recreation has brought with it widespread confusion as to policies and programs; hopefully, a continuation of the recreation-oriented dialogue will help bring us to a point where expedient efforts to cope with a relatively new national problem will give way to rational policies and effective procedures.

Utah State University is to be commended for its recognition of this troublesome area of policy formulation in resource management, and for its initiative and energy in convening this Third National Conference on Outdoor Recreation. All of us, I am sure, appear here in the expectation that what we offer will be synergized by the thoughts of others present and metamorphosed into an up-to-date collection not just of problems, but approaches to their solution.

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Presented by John S. Gottschalk, Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, at the Third National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, Logan, Utah, September 7, 1966.

Those of us who have the responsibility of directing the day-to-day operations of major resource-managing agencies--State or Federal--or for that matter, private, are well aware of the richness and variety of the current population of problems. My personal problem in developing these remarks has been to sort out a fair sample of the multitude of administrative headaches we suffer during the course of a year. I would like to suggest but a few essential dilemmas which I think we must wrestle with, and ultimately resolve, if we are to secure a compatible integration of wildlife management and recreation. That there are many others goes without saying, and the fact that I am not preoccupied with them at the moment, or even continuously, does not mean that many could not be more significant than those I have chosen to discuss today.

We all know, of course, that a dilemma is definable as something we can be on the horns of. Excuse my over-preoccupation with our business when I suggest that we in the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, and wildlife managers generally, are more properly said to be on the antlers when it comes to our attitudes toward outdoor recreation; for we're pierced by the many prongs of a trophy "rack" in seeking to establish clear-cut policies to guide us in our quest for an understanding of our role in the outdoor recreation drama. And forming the base of these impaling antlers is a historic and challenging query:

Are wildlife managers working with a resource for the sake of that resource, leaving decisions as to its use--or nonuse--to others; or do our wildlife management functions presuppose that our resources in a state of nature are being managed for an ultimate end of human pleasure?

There is a basic philosophic split among conservationists on this question, and from this basic dichotomy stem all the prickly prongs of my opening metaphor. For this question has never been quite resolved in the minds of conservationists. I hope it has, in my own process of thinking, in the minds of my Bureau associates, and in the mental processes of my colleagues in 50 states. Importantly, though, it must also be decided in the thoughts and emotions of many million people. But before we can think with any clarity, we must define what we're thinking about.

It seems to me that human use and enjoyment of wildlife--in whatever form--is almost entirely definable as recreation. Is there an eyebrow raised over the hesitation to climb irrevocably on the recreation band wagon? Let me explain.

This product of wildlife management, this recreation, may be a fishing rod on a mountain stream or a cane pole in a farm pond; it may be a gunner swinging on a mourning dove or a photographer shaking with excitement as he focuses on a bear. That use of wildlife may be an annotated checklist of birds; it may be, indeed,

a philosopher on the bluff's rocky face watching the beautiful flight of a vulture and pondering the varied aspects of aesthetics.

There are those nagging qualifiers "almost entirely." I might coarsely lump my reservations into two categories--science and religion, and raise a few more eyebrows. But what I am simply saying is that while the product "recreation" may be the compelling raison d'être for wildlife conservation, it is not the only one. We vitally need to retain a viable, authentic out-of-doors as the locale for that continuing scientific quest man makes in search of an understanding of himself, and of man himself in his environment. We are yet a small millenium away from the canned life of the future, and we have much to learn about nature before we close the doors of our artificial environments and start living on a regimen of ersatz air, beefsteak, and beans. Its utility in science must continue to be a significant product of wildlife management.

And I share the mystical belief of many, that man has many more milleniums to suffer through before he can effectively play at being God Almighty. So, quite simply, I believe that we who dominate the physical world have an obligation not to let our heedlessness, or our ignorance, or our callousness, be the cause of the destruction of the other less aggressive tenants of the Earth. Obviously, this is a personal ethic, one that will get no more dollars for my Bureau's programs, but one which does cut down greatly on my insomnia.

Having said this, I have still aligned myself with those who believe wildlife management should, in the modern cliché, be people-oriented. We do not have refuges, research, control programs, hatcheries, and rationed hunting solely for the sake of fishes or game, but we do have these programs and restrictions in order that people may enjoy the various aspects of recreation associated with wildlife, from park-pigeon pets to rabbit stew.

Now this conflict of the purpose of wildlife is within the minds of conservationists, not between groups but inside the individual's id. Given the decision that wildlife is largely definable as a recreation resource--and I think we have that decision--what are our management dilemmas? Let me explore these not as a Federal employee but as an unofficial spokesman for all professional wildlife managers, less self-annointed than committee-appointed.

First, and important to our dilemmas, is the problem of balancing off different types of recreational use that can be made of wildlife. Judging by the efforts of organized groups or at least judging their public statements, both hunters and non-gunners are trying to be patient and understanding; the fanatic fringes are at least not further fraying our fabric of agreement. But there is a built-in conflict between those who hunt and those who don't... only the tolerance of men of good will has kept tempers from getting worse.

There are a dozen examples of this conflict--and of insulting epithets for each group--that all of you know. But State and Federal administrators in the wildlife field must always live with this basic problem as they establish seasons or prohibitions on virtually any species of game or as they seek to manage game populations against a habitat requirement or emotional bids.

This pair of matched prongs of our antler-metaphor is pretty well known. But there's another dilemma that's more subtle and perhaps more insoluble: the public ownership of game versus the private ownership of habitat. As you're mostly aware, the vague legalities and argued traditions of the United States add up generally to a conclusion that all fish, fur and fowl, all creatures that are wild, "belong" to all the people--if ownership terms may be permitted. Wildlife may not be "possessed" by individuals except as permitted by the "people," typified in a State for what we call loosely nonmigratory species.

But this same wildlife lives, wholly or in part, on land where the claim of private, exclusive ownership is even more clearly recognized in legal and social thinking than the State's claim to fish and game. In attempting here to speak for all who are charged with wildlife management, I think most administrators--State and Federal--will agree with me that conservation agencies cannot resolve this. For while the Federal and State departments can own enough land to assure preservation of most species, all of them

together can never control enough space to satisfy our present hunting public, much less an expanded number of gunners in our growing populations.

Thus, we must depend upon "private" acres, the farmlands and timberlands owned by individuals, to give us both areas of production of wildlife and places in which to pursue it, whether that pursuit is with shotgun, camera, or checklist, or with a less purposeful (but equally valid) desire to see something free and unchecked.

Just how we shall achieve a coordination between the landholder and the gunholder is a Gordian knot that no Alexander of the wild has yet severed. And the problem is further horned by the simple thesis that he who controls the habitat controls that which depends upon the habitat--which is to say that the use to which a landowner puts his acres will determine what wildlife, if any, can live upon it.

Wildlife managers in States and in the Federal government are trying to get themselves off these prongs. There are programs that offer assistance to farmers, remembering that the tiller who plants bicolor lespedeza rather than corn will have trouble paying his taxes and interest. There are other campaigns to establish varied types of aid, from cooperative agreements with organized groups to the furnishing of signs for private land.

Possibly the program that bids fair to be most successful is the charging of fees by landowners for hunting and fishing. But

this apparently simple bit of economics has its own thorny prongs. If the State "owns" the wildlife, can an individual commercialize upon it? Or phrased more intimately: since every "you" can claim some title to the game and has, presumably, a hunting license to prove it, should that "you" have to pay further funds outside the legal process in order to possess what he has apparently paid for earlier?

A possible way out of this antlered thicket is even more subtle, but remember we are dealing here with emotion, legalities and human desires. Wildlife managers may get off these horns by recognizing that the landowner in this program is not charging for hunting and fishing so much as he is leveling a fee for trespass-- or, to use a gentler phrase, an access fee.

This charge can be made by the farmer handling the trespasser-- whether quail hunter, pond fisherman, camper or hiker--on an individual basis as an "entry fee, ... so much for a deer stand or bank site--for a day's use of an intangible resource." But often this requires too much organization and time for too little cash; a farmer is more likely to lease his acres to a group, letting a single transaction replace several individual contacts. The problem here is obvious; our traditional "one-gallused" sportsman is ruled out.

Of course, the mythical man in overalls may be far more apparent than real in any case, but he is part of our ethos, a factor to reckon with.

There are other spurs in this dilemma, too. A good many farmers just aren't interested; they are geared to tractors, plows and mass production of grains rather than recreation. Posting a NO TRESPASS sign is easier than planning an access program, while offering the spiritual solace of being sole master of the manor.

Further, a good many State wildlife agencies and a horde of hunters feel that trespass charges are a violation of our "free hunting" tradition, that it reduces the untrammelled spirit of pioneering--reduces the quality of hunting and fishing, as it were. This emotional response is understandable, but under the stress of human impact and the inexorable march of time it is losing its validity.

I would not predict that "fee access" for wildlife recreation will "solve our problems," but I do believe that it may create a new form in which we can better live with our situation. Adequate compensation to the landowner may result in development of better habitat for birds and mammals alike when there is a cash return for such work, even though remuneration also brings the need to deal with people seeking fresh air and sunlight.

Another pair of points on which we're impaled is the stress between what we might call "mass demand" and "quality experience." The professional wildlifer is faced with the demand that he provide an outdoor experience for "everyone"--though it doesn't appear that

"everyone" really wants it--while he is inexorably confronted with requests for the balm of loneliness. A hunter wants to be the only gun upon the hill, or at least for his party to be the sole group in the area. A fisherman likes to be alone on the stream with sky and wind and bluff; the birdviewer wants to be beyond the sound of traffic; a trail rider resents a Honda.

But there are masses on the trout streams, casting shoulder to shoulder; the game farms are filled, and people stand in line for blinds at public waterfowl hunting areas.

An answer, of course, is that people seeking the lonely solace of silence must go further from the cities, perhaps across a continent. It is costly in cash, time, and trouble but there are still many open spaces--and percentagewise fewer people seeking to be alone in wildlife recreation. But this still doesn't prevent a portion of a populace from seeking--even expecting--to find the quality experience amid the mass demand.

And we wildlife managers can do a better job of improving our quality in the midst of quantity! Let me confess that many of us aren't truly recognizing that social forms and contacts have changed. We haven't applied our minds and our imaginations to our possibilities.

There is only one other major brace of horns that I would like to review in this discussion. These counter-thrusting spikes are matched under the title of earmarked financing, and if I am to be spokesman for the wildlife interests, it must be said here that this

does not appear to be a problem peculiar to the Federal administration. Most, if not all, fish and game agencies are suffering the same attrition.

When wildlife conservationists were trying to devise Federal aid programs for fish and game--the Dingell-Johnson and Pittman-Robertson bills--earmarked financing was rated as poor fiscal management. But a dozen years later, earmarked financing has become good fiscal policy in debating and operating the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. "Good" and "bad" are loose terms--but we know "set-aside" funds bring difficulties.

For those who pay the special fees inevitably get "cheated" to some extent as the financers of a program; these payers are the major beneficiaries but others get a lesser ride for free, and I think this is particularly true of conservation programs supported by earmarked funds. Let's face the fact that hunters and fishermen pay most or all costs of many conservation projects from which swimmers, boaters, picnickers, campers, and birdwatchers benefit greatly.

Frequently, in State and Federal operations, stable, dependable and inadequate revenues come to agencies that are being saddled with new burdens and added jobs--but without further money. Now, stability is an admirable virtue; one hesitates to sacrifice it in searching for adequacy, so additional sums are sought by a bit further milking of the present cow: raising permit fees or adding

special stamps. But this tends to discourage long-range planning, while providing for still more "free rides"--it means programs are dictated by fund availability rather than human needs, and that new demands frequently are met only by skimping on the basic program of wildlife management.

I suggested that earmarked financing is sometimes a rut, a furrow we're having trouble getting out of in order to meet all the demands of wildlife recreation. But we dare not abandon it; it is stable. So probably the answer is to get supplemental funds from general appropriations for the entire public good. The Accelerated Public Works Program is an example; these funds primed both State and Federal work in the development of wildlife recreation opportunities.

Right here, let me hark back to an earlier thought, that there are various classes of user groups who are enjoying the recreational output from wildlife management. Yet, because of our one-sided financing approach, most wildlife programs ignore or at most merely tolerate those who are not required to buy a hunting or fishing license. As I have said many times before, we are grossly delinquent in planning for and accommodating this "non-consumptive-user" group. Were we to make them welcome in our wildlife management programs despite their current non-support, we would be inviting tremendous financial and moral backing for wildlife conservation programs.

Most of our other problems in providing popular enjoyment of wildlife are not truly dilemmas--they are, properly, challenges. What is the human carrying capacity of a given area? How much and what sort of human use may be permitted on the areas we now call "refuges" or wildlife sanctuaries without destroying the basic purpose for which these areas were established? (This is not solely a challenge to the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife; State fish and game agencies face it also.) What additional wildlife-and-people roles can be played on publicly owned lands, whether managed by the Forest Service, the Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, my outfit, the military, or the various States?

These questions are not dilemmas, I repeat. They are solvable subjects for research, and for firm determination within flexible guidelines. They will require that hardest of all human endeavors: thought. But we aren't hung up on antlers here.

So let us now carry on that thought process to its next stage, so far as my formal presentation is concerned. And remember, in the time for questions, that old Mittel Europa proverb: "He who hath a query may seem a fool for five minutes; he who hath no questions will remain a fool for life."