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EXPERIMENT STATION FILE

THE EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE EXTENSION SERVICE WITHREFERENCE TO WILDLIFE CONSERVATION*Office of Experiment Station
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Answered.....

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Director of Extension Work

Conservation is no new word to those of us who work for the Federal Government. We have a Soil Conservation Service, an agricultural conservation program. We are engaged on water conservation, forest conservation, conservation of human resources, and conservation of wildlife. The Extension Service is coming more and more to the realization that one of our big jobs is that of correlation, the task of bringing together the efforts of many individuals and organizations, both governmental and private, and of focusing these efforts on fundamental local problems. As the cooperative Federal-State agency with trained representatives, the county extension agents, in practically every agricultural county in the United States, we are trying to weave the various programs and plans into a pattern which is closely related to the problems the farmer knows are vital in his neighborhood.

EXTENSION EMPHASIZES LAND-USE PLANS

During the coming year we plan to pursue this course with vigor throughout the United States in the county land-use planning program. Practically every county has set up a land-use planning committee of agricultural leaders who will study the use of the land and the problems arising from such use. Many of these county committees have started making land-use maps of their counties, using all the information available from every source - census data, county records, soil surveys, other technical surveys, personal visits to certain areas in the county, and technical advice from the land-grant college and from Federal research agencies in their territory. Each State has a State land-use planning or policy committee which includes a representative of the Bureau of Biological Survey or the State Conservation Commission, or both.

Some counties have made considerable headway in land-use planning and are making very creditable maps but, more important by far, is the fact that local people are gaining a comprehension of land-use problems. For the first time they are considering the advantages and disadvantages of certain land uses as applied to their own neighborhood - they are considering the use of land from the standpoint of public welfare in their own community. The land-use planning committees are going beyond the

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survey of land uses in the county and at community meetings are discussing the reports and formulating a long-time program of action for the county. They consider what organizations can be utilized in solving their particular problems - what changes should be made in the county to make it a better place in which to live. These long-time county programs strike at the root of their troubles and focus all efforts where they will do most good. They clarify the objectives and correlate the effort expended for community betterment.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ON SUBMARGINAL LAND

We confidently expect that land-use planning will give wildlife conservation an impetus which will accomplish much within the next few years. Reserving certain submarginal land for recreation purposes, for erosion control, for tree planting, or for the formation of ponds for water conservation is a very common land-use recommendation by the local committee. The next step is to use National agricultural programs, modifying them if necessary, to help the local people bring about the use of land they have decided is most desirable. An increased appreciation of the value of the wildlife which can be developed on their own farms and in the county parks, forests, and reserves will be one of the objectives of this effort. I believe that the time has come to cash in on those long years of pioneer work which you and those who have gone before you have done in waking America to the vital need of conserving our natural resources.

FARMER'S STAKE IN NATURAL RESOURCES

Any way you look at it, the farmer has a big stake in the conservation of natural resources. He knows that he lives off the natural resources. The farm spells home to him. The city dweller may live in a dozen places during the course of his career, but the farmer expects ordinarily to stay on the farm - the same farm if possible - because he loves to work in the open, likes to handle animals, and loves the growing things. Is this not likely ground for developing a movement for conservation of all natural resources? Yet in the past the rural people have too often felt that they were brought into the picture only by sufferance and not as a vital cooperating factor. As "Ding" Darling said to the extension agents, in an article published in our extension magazine a few years ago:

"Our laws say that the farmer does not own the game, but nearly every hunter who has gone out looking for a day's shooting has a pretty good understanding of the fact that the farmer controls the game. If the landowner destroys the environment and with it the game, even the most liberal laws will do the hunter little good."

I. T. Bode, whom many of you know, after doing an excellent job of pioneering with extension agents in the field of wildlife conservation, told me that in his opinion a large part of the solution of wildlife conservation problems rested with the private landowners and operators and that, though the importance of private land in wildlife conservation had long been recognized, it needed now to be crystallized in policies and activity.

WILDLIFE SPECIALISTS APPOINTED

With these things in mind, a beginning has been made in the appointment of wildlife extension specialists in Texas, in Iowa, and in Michigan. In other States, extension soil conservationists, foresters, entomologists, and other extension specialists who are qualified for the job are making a substantial contribution.

Take Texas for example. The first definite step was taken in 1935 with the setting up of the Texas Wildlife Research Service at the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College. In this the college cooperated with the American Wildlife Institute, the United States Bureau of Biological Survey, and the Texas Game, Fish, and Oyster Commission. The next year, an extension game specialist was appointed, a former county extension agent, E. R. Callendar, who had proved his ability in this field. The same year the college also added courses in wild-game management. By 1937 extension game-management demonstrations had been set up in 54 counties distributed over the State. The cooperative demonstration areas ranged in size from 500 acres to 500,000 acres, managed by 110 community associations and 4 county associations composed of three or more community associations. Each cooperating farmer signed an agreement joining with his neighbors in protecting, conserving, and increasing the desirable wildlife on the lands entered in the demonstration, and agreeing to mark the area with uniform markers. The 4,400 landowners enrolled have supplied plenty of food, cover, and protection for game birds, especially quail, though fish and other forms of wildlife are included. Mr. Callendar says of his work:

"We try to weave game management into the whole fabric of our program. It is another spoke in the wheel of a well-rounded land-use program that seems to fit."

FARMER-SPORTSMAN CLUBS

Another place where wildlife conservation work clicks is in Iroquois County, Ill., where the sportsmen and the farmers have organized cooperative clubs with more than 700 members, approximately 35 percent farmers and 65 percent business and professional men. These clubs are bringing closer relationship between the two groups, giving business men a better understanding of problems facing the farmers, affording wholesome

recreation for both, assisting in the control of rodents and such farm pests as foxes and crows, and last but not least, affording an additional source of income for the farmer through the sale of furs.

Cole County, Mo., might be cited as another example of this sort. County Agent R. W. Kallenbach has been spending considerable time cooperating with the Central Missouri Wildlife Conservation League, the State Conservation Commission, and committees of local farmers. After a community meeting at which the problem of wildlife conservation was discussed, the farmers agreed to establish a wildlife reservation for quail in their neighborhood, and the 4-H Clubs of the county readily agreed to feed them during the winter. Last winter they carried 135 coveys of quail through the winter.

The Brook County, W. Va., Wildlife League has been very helpful to farmers in a general campaign against stray dogs which were killing the sheep and wild animals. Farmers in that county established a game preserve of about 2,800 acres, which has been successful in restocking of rabbits, squirrels, and quail.

Although some progress has been made along the lines of cooperation between sportsmen and farmers, the real spearhead of our attack on problems of conservation of natural resources has been with rural young people in 4-H Clubs. More than one million boys and girls are enrolled in 4-H Clubs and a large number of them include conservation as one phase of their club work. For example, their tree-planting activities have reached considerable proportions. A couple of years ago, Tuscarawas County, Ohio, reported that every club in the county had planted more than a thousand trees, and all the clubs together in the 15 years they had been planting trees had set out 300,000 in the county. These figures could be duplicated in New York, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and other States.

TRAINED 4-H LEADERS NEEDED

The limiting factor with 4-H Clubs is the scarcity of qualified leaders. Mr. Bode, after studying the field, felt the need of some plan for systematic training of local leaders. He said that in practically every State he visited he found local men and women intensely interested in wildlife conservation, but generally they felt more or less helpless because they knew so little about the subject.

When leaders such as Miss Nuterich, a school teacher who leads the Southwest Birds Nature Club in Middlesex County, Conn., can be found, conservation of the feathered songsters naturally follows. This club held weekly meetings to study birds and made a large chart recording the first time and place birds were seen and the person reporting the event. On their frequent field trips they saw and identified over 50 different birds. They prepared an instructive exhibit for the county 4-H fair,

winning first place there and also at their State 4-H exhibit. Each member kept a scrapbook on birds. How can more such leaders be found and trained?

In Maryland, game wardens attend 4-H Club meetings, interesting the youngsters in game management, and giving advice about feeding stations and feed patches maintained by hundreds of club boys and girls in the State.

Boys and girls in Massachusetts carry on what they call their 4-F work, meaning Furs, Fins, Feathers, and Forests.

Minnesota has long been a leader in the 4-H conservation work. The extension forester reports more than 35,000 farm boys and girls have made contributions to restoration and protection of forests, game, fish, and useful birds in both water and land projects. He asserts, with perhaps pardonable pride, that the contribution of these youngsters has more than doubled the efforts of wildlife organizations in the State during the past 10 years. In Minnesota, 1,300 clubs maintain conservation libraries consisting of State and Federal bulletins, pamphlets, circulars, and books identifying birds, trees, flowers, and animals.

RAISING QUAIL IS POPULAR

Raising quail in cooperation with State game or conservation commissions has proved a fascinating activity to older club boys in many States. In the State of Washington, club members returned 3,178 mature birds to the State game department for which they were paid \$2,789.32, but they also reported a little sadly that sportsmen will get 537 birds free because they escaped from the members' rearing pens.

In Missouri the boys chosen to raise quails were selected by their county agent for their proved ability in this field. Each boy had to show that the farm offered enough cover to protect and support a covey of quail. Each boy chosen was supplied with an incubator, a brooder, and a quantity of quail food. The 10 boys who carried on the experiment raised 298 chicks from 449 eggs, releasing 214 mature birds in the neighborhood. The parents, the neighbors, and friends are said to have taken a great interest in these activities.

These are examples of our work in 4-H Club wildlife conservation taken at random to give you an idea of the type of educational work we are doing. Similar examples could be found in many counties in any State. Mr. Horn and Mr. McCulloch of the National Cartridge Co. have been very helpful in the assistance and encouragement they have given 4-H Club workers in the wildlife conservation field.

CONSERVATION CAMPS TRAIN RURAL YOUTH

I do not want to leave the subject without mentioning the State Conservation Camps held during the summer in practically every State for the last few years for 4-H Club members doing work in conservation. They have filled a real need in educating our county agents and in training leaders among older club members. Just to show you how these camps work, I am going to read you a letter written by one of our county agents in Florida to our magazine, The Extension Service Review,

"Florida's first 4-H Club wildlife camp was held during the summer of 1937 at Camp McQuarrie, permanent 4-H Camp site in the Ocala National Forest. One entire week was devoted to the study of wildlife and its propagation and conservation, by 80 boys and county agents.

"In this State, with a game and fresh-water fish commission having numerous wardens in the counties devoting their entire time to the conservation of wildlife and doing a very fine job, I could not see wherein the Extension Service could be of much help in getting over the idea of wildlife conservation. I was wrong in that I was presuming that the educational work back of the movement for wildlife conservation was being carried forward by the game commission when, as a matter of fact, it is primarily a law-enforcement body. There is a large field for educational work by other agencies. It is here that the extension workers can come into the picture, doing much constructive work."

In this short account of the place that wildlife conservation is taking in extension education, I have tried to show you the importance of this activity in the land-use planning program which we are emphasising this year. At the same time I have tried to give you a picture, necessarily incomplete, of some of the activities which we are stressing, and which we are bringing particularly to the attention of local planning committees in order that they may see the importance of such work in relation to their local situations and be able to use the results already obtained as a nucleus for further work and recommendations in this field of wildlife conservation.

DISTRIBUTION; A copy of this circular has been sent to each extension director, extension editor, and to each agricultural-college library and experiment-station library.

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The Educational Work of the Extension Service
With Reference to Wildlife Conservation

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