

WILDLIFE BENEFITS FROM RESOURCE PLANNING - THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAM

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Abstract: Land use and resource planning, because of mounting socio-economic pressure, will become increasingly important to wildlife administrators. The Land and Water Conservation Fund Program opens to wildlife agencies a unique opportunity to share in coordinating the direction of land and water use planning. When viewed in combination with existing statutory authority for total state planning and considering the mandatory requirements for coordination of water and other plans with a state recreation plan, the program provides an exciting, readily available means of building wildlife views and values into a statewide development program.

We live in a competitive world. No one knows this better than the periodically frustrated wildlife biologist who has, after pointing out his best arguments, often had to sit helplessly on the sidelines and watch thousands of acres of prime habitat chewed up by new housing or freeway construction. At other and more frequent times he has wistfully watched streams become rank as a result of organic and industrial pollution. He has watched the march of "No Trespassing" signs across the private and sometimes the publicly owned range and farmlands. He has witnessed and possibly, at times, been the "whipping boy" in feuds between the urban sportsmen and the rural landowners. Examples are many but the results are largely the same, progress continues, and generally to the detriment of the wildlife resource.

In time to come, more people will require that more land be devoted to living and working space. More leisure and more money to spend on leisure activities, together with technological advances in transportation and the other mechanical sciences, exert pressures for high-speed highways, second home developments, new parks and the whole gamut of other effects precipitated by the operation of these factors.

The trend is clear and I doubt that it will be diverted. But, considering the character of the happenings which formulate the trend, I believe that there is room, on a point by point basis, for guidance to ameliorate the overall deleterious effects to the wildlife resource base. I refer of course to the involvement of wildlifers in broad-base resource planning.

There is not one of us in this room who, viewing the trend, can seriously doubt the wisdom of resource planning. The question, in terms of the statewide picture, is how to get a foot in the door.

Many of you may recall a brief article in the December issue of The Wildlife Society News, under the heading "Planning Problems". The article, after detailing the deficiency of planners nationwide, quoted C.H.D. Clarke, Chief of Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Branch, who, in addressing the East African Wildlife Land Use Symposium in Nairobi, last July, said, "You may, as we do, have to force your way into the room where land is planned, in order to get consideration for wildlife, but it is better to do so than to risk having your grandchildren say you should have done so."

What Dr. Clarke said is, I have no doubt, true too often, especially as regards those areas which lay in the path of urban sprawl. However, with the current status of statutory authority there is good prospect for wildlifers to play a key role in planning the use of the peripheral lands and those situated further from the urban core. There is even the growing probability of consultation with regard to the close-in areas, depending upon the scope of responsibility and the amount of manpower and effort that any given wildlife agency wishes to devote to the management of the so-called "nongame" species.

Most states currently have enabling legislation which authorizes a given agency of state government to prepare long-range plans for the physical growth and development of the state. Most of these enabling acts have been updated in recent years but the original authorities date back, in many instances, to the 1930's. Recent federal programs including those oriented toward highways, water and outdoor recreation have provided a catalytic effect in many states to give real meaning to planning. While sweeping material benefits are slow to come there have already been many forward strides as a result of these programs. Where wildlife interests have become involved at the outset, the habitat and hence the resource has benefited. This is not to say necessarily that we have been successful in deterring projects which may have adverse effects on wildlife. And I hasten to add that such would probably not be desirable in any event. But we have, I believe, been successful in a number of instances in proposing alternatives which have been accepted.

It seems to me that the wildlife manager and administrator has a clear cut mandate to devote a substantial portion of his time, effort or workforce to the proposition of planning. And by this I mean inhouse, organizational and species or area management planning as well as over-all planning.

In terms of overall planning and subsequent actions to implement the plan on a statewide basis, I would like to suggest that a key program for your concern and personnel input is the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program. Here, more or less under one cover, is a tool which provides entry into the rooms where not only land, but water is planned.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Program was envisioned and is being implemented as a stimulus and support program for the entire field of outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing.

In its simplest terms, the program offers financial and technical assistance for the planning, acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Financial assistance from the Fund for acquisition and development projects can be made available only if and when the state has prepared and submitted for approval by the Secretary of the Interior a broad based, comprehensive, statewide plan which considers all facets of outdoor recreation including programs at city, county, state and federal levels as well as those programs being carried out by the private sector.

In addition, through wording inserted in subsequently enacted legislation, coordination with the state recreation plan is required when a state avails itself of assistance provided by the Water Resources Planning Act of 1965 and the Historic Sites Preservation Act signed into law in 1966. Also, wording in the state plan is of major importance with regard to whether or not a federal water project undertaken by the Corps of Engineers or the Bureau of Reclamation will provide recreation and fish and wildlife benefits under terms of the Federal Water Project Recreation Act.

Conversely, the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 requires that water development and land conservation projects to be undertaken within any metropolitan area must be submitted for review to an areawide agency which is designated to perform metropolitan or regional planning for the area.

Because of these factors, the statewide outdoor recreation plans which have been submitted by the fifty states, four territories and the District of Columbia, will, as they are further developed and refined, come closer to meeting the concept of coordinated planning than those prepared for any other program of which I am aware.

Of at least equal importance insofar as you are concerned is the fact that the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program is, to most intents, a state administered program. Aside from technical assistance rendered on a by-request basis, planning has been recognized entirely as a state responsibility. Planning requirements laid down by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, acting for the Secretary, must, however, be met. Subsequent application for financial Grants-in Aid to specific acquisition and development projects is also largely a state responsibility, with the Bureau exercising only the broadest guidance on administrative policy matters and necessary project documentation. Basic regulations in this phase of the program deal with the state proposal of projects to meet needs and deficiencies cited in the state plan and which are in accord with the required action program contained in the plan.

Further, in reference to the coordinated planning approach I referred to a moment ago, this is the only planning program, insofar as I know, which requires that the plan submitted for approval be certified to the Secretary as the "Official" state plan by the Governor or his specifically designated representative.

In essence then, what I am saying, in refutation of Dr. Clarke's comment in Nairobi, is that you as wildlife managers and administrators are just as welcome in that room where land is being planned as you may wish to be.

To illustrate in another way the importance of this program to you let me cite, finally, the impact of the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant function for acquisition and development in regard to hunting and fishing benefits.

A survey of all projects submitted and acted on by the Bureau as of mid-December indicates that a total of 542 of the more than 2,000 projects undertaken or planned by the states provide significant benefits for hunters and fishermen. These projects include game access roads, big game range rehabilitation, development of waterfowl areas, acquisition of fishing access, and development of fish hatching and rearing facilities. They have also included development of fishing lakes, overnight campgrounds, boat ramps and associated parking and other day-use areas.

These 542 projects have, or will receive, fund assistance in the amount of \$61,855,000 by the time they reach a point of completion. It is of interest also that the dollar amount allocated to these projects is equal to 35 percent of all monies so far obligated from the Fund to approved projects.

By citing these figures I don't mean to imply that all of the projects mentioned were, or are intended exclusively for hunting and fishing

purposes. The facts are that in many cases these purposes may be considered secondary to other, more general, recreation use. However, in each project enumerated hunter and fisherman benefits are of major significance.

On this basis and as a means of comparing this Section with the nation, California and Nevada together have fifteen approved projects which we regard as providing significant benefits to hunters and fishermen. These projects carry a total Fund obligation of \$2,378,296 or approximately 15 percent of the monies so far obligated in the two states. Again I should hasten to add that these figures are not all inclusive in terms of enumerating developments which might be used by hunters and fishermen. They do not include developments which might be used by sportsmen enroute to a target destination of developments which may contain marginal or secondary benefits for the hunting and fishing public.

I should also make it clear that, in citing these figures, I am referring to direct benefits to hunters and fishermen and, thus, to the management of wildlife species. My premise in this regard is based on the assumption that hunting and fishing are a direct and logical extension of the management process. That harvest of the standing crop is the ultimate tool of management. No attempt has been made to total the indirect benefits which might accrue to management as a result of providing recreation areas which have the effect of relieving overcrowding and possible competition with hunting and fishing pursuits.

In this regard, I should also make it clear that, as a matter of policy, the Bureau encourages projects which will serve broad rather than specific segments of the public. Similarly, we encourage projects for active rather than passive participation.

I hope that my remarks here today have helped to shed a little more light on the potential benefits to be derived through the function of planning, and especially through wildlife agency participation and support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program. I wish also to thank you, on behalf of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, for this opportunity to participate in your program.