

PUBLIC ROLE IN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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California is a big state, one of the biggest in the nation, and it has a lot of people, in fact more people than any of the other 49 states. This means that we are going to have problems when we get into the business of managing and developing our resources. And to do our job properly, we need all the help and support we can get.

In this area of help, some time ago I was of the opinion that we might be able to get some ideas from the State of New York. I thought of New York because until recently, it was the most populous state in the nation. Also, New York has some 200 years more experience as a state than California has. To my surprise, I learned that we've passed New York in more than just population, and the fact is that we can give New York cards and spades when it comes to resource development. I don't say this because I want to knock New York or detract one whit from the fine job they are doing in resource management. I say it to emphasize the fact that California is leading the way in the field of resource management and development.

Let's look at the two states for a moment.

New York has a population of 18,336,000 people; California has 19,535,000. New York has 1,500,000 licensed hunters and fishermen; California has nearly 3,000,000.

New York has 32,000,000 acres of real estate; California has 100,000,000 acres.

^{1/} Presented by Kirk West.

New York has about 20,000,000 acres of private land suitable for outdoor recreation; California has 50,000,000 acres.

New York has 500 privately owned shooting preserves; California has 1,000 waterfowl hunting clubs, 185 pheasant clubs, several upland game hunting clubs, and many deer hunting clubs. We don't have an exact count on deer clubs, but it is a substantial number because there are 105 in Mendocino County alone.

At the present time, the New York Conservation Department is conducting a program to obtain public hunting and fishing on private lands. This is done by having landowners sign an agreement to permit hunters and fishermen to enter their lands. So far, almost a quarter of a million acres has been opened to hunting and fishing.

California conducted a similar program back in the 1940's and the results were highly revealing. The California program involved pheasants, and this was a very suitable choice because most of the good pheasant areas are located on private lands. The problem was to get the private landowner's permission to allow hunters on his land.

This was done by the Department of Fish and Game getting landowners to sign an agreement to allow pheasant hunters on their land. The department in return posted and managed the land, issued permits, and patrolled. And because more hunters were expected than the natural pheasant population could satisfy, the department also planted birds on these areas. This program hit a peak in 1954 when 22 areas with an acreage of 226,986 acres of land joined the program. In that season, 92,237 hunting days were spent on pheasant co-op areas and 34,480 birds were taken. The department planted 31,949 birds. Here is where the interesting part comes in. After 1954, the state program began to go downhill. Not because it was a failure, but because it was so successful. What happened was that when landowners were asked to join the co-op program again, they refused to sign up their acreage. They wanted to run the hunting themselves, plant birds, and charge a fee to hunters. As a result, with more and more landowners running their own programs and obtaining their own birds, the department had no place to put them so it had to go out of the pheasant raising business. And the privately owned pheasant hunting clubs were so successful that by 1967, there were only four areas left in the state program.

From this experience in the 1940's and 1950's we have learned that the State's efforts in many situations are best spent encouraging private landowners to provide and manage public recreation. I believe this is a legitimate role of government, at least under the present administration in California. One of the problems is that many landowners don't know how to go about setting up recreation programs and this has given birth to a new

breed of men, the wildlife consultant, and his role in public recreation will continue to grow in importance.

Of course, the primary role of government in the resources field is management. This is what public conservation agencies were created to do. And in this role of resource manager, we must insure the perpetuation of our renewable resources and seek the full utilization of our nonrenewable resources. We also must take into consideration the good of the resource as well as regulate the utilization of resources by people. At times this may mean the protection of endangered species of fish and wildlife, or the protection of places of natural and unique grandeur and beauty, such as the redwoods.

A most important function of government in its role of resource manager is coordination. The management of resources on land that is not owned or controlled by government necessarily requires coordination among resource users. We must take care that one use of a resource does not impair or injure other resources or other users.

Another area where government plays a prominent part in resource management is the providing of recreation on public lands. After all, the people do own this land, so why shouldn't they be able to use it? And due to increasing public demand, government is more and more getting into the recreation business on public lands and waters. To cite a few examples, we have our marvelous state park system, a fish planting program that sees from 50 to 60 million fish planted in California waters every year, exotic game bird introductions in game deficient areas, recreational facilities at state water projects, and projects to provide access to public lands and waters. The provision of recreational facilities on public land and access to public lands and waters will proceed as rapidly as our financial resources permit.

Still another area where government has a legitimate role is in the prevention and control of land, air, and water pollution. Here again, government can proceed only as fast as its financial resources permit. The bald truth is that society must be willing to pay the price if we are going to clean up this pollution mess. So government's role here is one of research, to learn the price of not cleaning up pollution, and education, to teach the public that pollution control is vital to the continued well-being of mankind.

Government has been getting into a relatively new field in the last two decades; that field is the ocean. We have always had some management responsibilities for ocean resources, but with interest developing by leaps and bounds in the utilization of these resources, government's role of manager and coordinator will become more vital. First, we must learn what we have in the way of ocean resources, then we must find ways to utilize them

for the benefit of society.

One last subject I would like to cover briefly is the subject of wilderness. Justice William O. Douglas of the United States Supreme Court has given one definition of wilderness in his book, "The Wilderness Bill of Rights". Here's how it goes:

"Wilderness is a roadless area where only a trail marks the passage through a forest or over a range. Wilderness is prairie and foothills untouched by plows or pesticides. Wilderness is the rolling tundra of Alaska and the seashore not marred by man-made passages nor invaded by structures or other marks of civilization. Wilderness is the unpolluted river and lake and the unbroken bowl. Wilderness is the vista which faced those who first topped the Appalachia going West. It is nature's labyrinth of downed logs, primeval stands, meadows and swamps, whose creation preceded man. Wilderness is the earth before any of its wilderness has been reduced or subtracted."

I have always been a strong advocate of retaining some of our prime wilderness areas in their natural state. I feel it is vital that we preserve the integrity of the full length of the historic John Muir Trail. For this reason I feel it would be a great mistake to allow the Minarets Road to be completed because it would bisect the Muir Trail and seriously downgrade the whole High Sierra wilderness. I feel it is also essential that we give immediate attention to the U. S. Forest Service proposal to create a Golden Trout Wilderness Area in the Southern High Sierra. In both of these issues, we need your active support.

I believe we must do all in our power to preserve some part of our wilderness heritage for posterity, for it may well be vital to man's survival. Let it not be said of this generation that it saw the last wilderness in America.