

THE PARTNERSHIPS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

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1987 TRANSACTIONS WESTERN SECTION THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY 23:27-30

The title for this General Session is "Resource Management of Tomorrow: Problems and Solutions." And I am pleased to have this chance to travel with you into tomorrow. But like any time traveler, I am making the trip with some trepidation and the words of Mark Twain in mind. "Never make predictions," he said, "especially about the future."

Crystal ball gazing is a high liability profession unlike any other. After all, we have enough difficulty guessing tomorrow's headlines, much less prescribing the solutions to tomorrow's problems. But conservationists have always been risk takers. And so, together, let's take the unpaved road into tomorrow, but only after taking a short detour into yesterday.

More than half-a-century ago, the conservation movement was created by giants like John Audubon, Gifford Pinchot, Aldo Leopold, and the National Wildlife Federation's own Ding Darling. They were individuals awed by the grandeur of nature. They were enthralled by the sight of wildlife roaming freely in habitat that had been undisturbed for hundreds or thousands of years. And they were deeply saddened by the sight of polluted lakes and streams, eroded farmland, and the precarious existence of their beloved wildlife.

Those early conservationists viewed the wilderness as a tonic, a spring from which individuals could draw strength and inspiration. They, and we, echo Henry David Thoreau's words: "We need to witness our own limits transgressed, and some life pasturing freely where we never wander."

In order to save their vision of America, our conservation forefathers became activists in many ways. They became determined to shake up the status quo. They were ready to fight the power structure in order to end the environmental disregard that threatened to destroy our natural resources.

When we inherited their Earth, we vowed to improve its quality. In many ways, that vow made us activists, too. Certainly, our allegiance to environmental quality has made us healthy skeptics and fierce advocates against unreasonable development.

Over the past 50 years, our skepticism and activism have served conservation well. We have raised our voices against continued decimation of wildlife habitat and natural resources. And we have been rewarded with such important legislation as the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts and a host of others.

We have raised concerns about the effects of toxics in our water, our air and our soils. And although problems

persist, we have gotten legislation moving in the United States Congress and in state legislatures across the country.

In general, we have raised public consciousness about groundwater contamination, acid rain, soil erosion, loss of biological diversity and a score of other issues. With persistence, and sometimes with adversarial tactics, we have changed the face and mindset of America.

And wildlife, in many cases, has been the real victor. Some species have been brought back from the brink of extinction. Fifty years ago, less than 13,000 pronghorns roamed the West. Today, habitat restoration and restocking programs have helped increase the population to more than 750,000.

In the year 1900, encroaching civilization cut the population of white-tailed deer to less than half-a-million. Today, there are about 12 million white-tails roaming the countryside.

Our steadfast loyalty to the conservation credo has resulted in a multitude of environmental issues placed high on the national agenda. Just how high? Consider a recent series of interviews conducted by *The Christian Science Monitor*. The newspaper asked 16 leading thinkers to list the emerging issues in the 21st century. Among scores of items listed, deterioration of the global environment was one of six issues labeled as high leverage topics.

For most of the 16 interviewees, environmental disregard came second only to nuclear holocaust in its potential for destroying humanity and the natural worlds. Historian Barbara Tuchman called "the loss or deterioration of the natural world" the next century's number one problem. That recent interview was not the first indication of the importance of environmental issues.

Lou Harris and his fellow pollsters have confirmed in recent years that our battle cry for conservation has become America's battle cry. In the environmental arena, public opinion has moved in only one direction. The American people each year get tougher and tougher, more adamant and more shocked about the state of environmental cleanup. The numbers in favor of environmental protection are staggering, paralleling nothing less than Americans' belief in free elections, in the right to free speech, and the right to private ownership of property.

We can conclude that, in many ways, our early adversarial tactics have succeeded. The message that environmental disregard will no longer be tolerated has rung loud and clear across the nation. It has even been heard in America's corporate boardrooms, where

business people are more apt than ever to heed the admonition that they must bear the cost of social responsibility or the consequences of evading it.

Our short trip through yesterday's conservation successes should serve as a road map to the future. We have indeed succeeded in many ways by using an adversarial approach. But with success must come change and maturity.

The conservation movement has grown up in 50 years. We have broadened the power structure enough to become part of it and to be heeded by it. We are acknowledged as a powerful and well respected movement.

I am happy to predict that popular support for conservation and environmental protection will grow. Media coverage of environmental issues will become even more intense. But so will the environmental hazards.

We can generally expect continuing decline in habitat quantity and quality. Despite the restoration of some species, declines in the number and abundance of species will continue well beyond the next decade.

As a result, far more species will be eligible for listing as threatened or endangered. And the fate of some endangered species, including the grizzly bear, the Florida panther and the condor, will be determined in the next few years.

Despite these trends, we can expect deeper cuts in federal spending for species restoration and for general environmental programs. In fact, the Reagan Administration has proposed eliminating state grants for endangered species recovery programs.

Reagan's fiscal 1988 budget also proposes cutting \$5 million from development of wildlife habitat management plans. And diverting \$25 million from the Wallop-Breaux Fund, which was created to support state sport fisheries programs. Instead, the money would be put into the Fish and Wildlife Service's operating budget, which is proposed to be cut by \$54 million.

The National Wildlife Federation will fight these budget cuts. But the federal government's decreased role in such endeavors, combined with popular support for environmental programs, will put a much heavier burden on state and local governments.

These broad trends mandate that contemporary conservationists take a different approach than our forefathers took. While there will always be a cadre of kamikaze environmentalists who firebomb into every issue, I believe that neither adversarial tactics nor unlawful actions will spell success in the future. We no longer need to tear down walls. Instead, we need to build bridges.

The road to tomorrow, to the 21st century, will be paved with a variety of environmental partnerships: public-private partnerships, corporate-environmental

partnerships, and maybe some partnerships we haven't yet thought of. But one thing we know for sure. The road to environmental partnerships is already under construction.

Consider, for example, the benefits of corporate-environmental partnerships in the restoration and study of endangered and threatened species. For the past seven years, biologists have been conducting one of the largest behavioral studies ever undertaken on behalf of the endangered San Joaquin kit fox.

Funded by the federal Department of Energy and Chevron Corporation, the project allows scientists to investigate how oil drilling affects the fox's life cycle. The work is taking place in the middle of the bustling Elk Hills Naval Petroleum Reserve, southwest of Bakersfield in California. Without corporate support, the project would never have been possible.

Other examples abound. Boise Cascade has supported the peregrine falcon's return to the wild. For the past six years, the company has allowed the birds to be released on its property. Although Boise Cascade continues to log on its property north of Boise, it does so with the clear understanding that the falcons must be protected.

As another example, Anheuser-Busch is a major contributor to the World Center for Birds of Prey, which opened in 1984. Without such corporate support, this center for peregrine research and propagation would never have opened.

Bald eagles also have benefited from corporate support. The Idaho Power Company began redesigning its power lines in the mid-1970s to prevent eagle electrocution. Chevron has pursued much the same program. And for the past four years, Du Pont has contributed \$50,000 annually to the Fish and Wildlife Service on behalf of bald eagle projects.

Turning to another species, Chevron began work to protect the El Segundo Blue butterfly. Each year, company employees plant buckwheat on land that is part of an oil refinery to ensure the survival of the rare and beautiful Blue.

Long before the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law was enacted, it had become evident that government alone could not protect and improve environmental quality. People must pitch in. For that reason, the National Wildlife Federation last year published "A Management Guide for Landowners," to help individuals understand their role in providing habitat for bald eagles. Much the same concept is evident in our "Backyard Wildlife Habitat" program.

That program teaches homeowners, whether in the city or the suburbs, how to attract wildlife to their own property. Ultimately, the program helps provide cover and food for wildlife while it illustrates to the public that

the future, nurturing his seedlings until they produced fruit. Only then did he move on to accomplish the same miracle elsewhere.

Because he conveyed understanding and concern for people, his style of leadership was lasting. He had a profound impact on people's lives.

Leadership is the most important ingredient for the Resource Management of Tomorrow. A sociologist recently said, "The crucial question confronting us now is not whether we can change the work, but what kind of a

world do we want. For nearly everything even slightly credible is becoming possible, once we decide what and why it should be."

Why we should change the world is easily answered. Because as stewards of the present, we have an obligation to the future. We have an obligation to leave a world improved for our having been here. We hold in our hands and minds the ability to leave a better world. As professionals and as concerned citizens, we must accept that as our challenge for tomorrow.