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RUDOLPH DIEFFENBACH, FWS VETERAN, RETIRES

Rudolph Dieffenbach, co-ordinator of River Basin Studies for the Fish and Wildlife Services, will retire on December 20 after a long and notable Federal career of 44 years and eight months, Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman announced today.

For the past 27 years Mr. Dieffenbach has been an official of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the former Bureau of Biological Survey, one of its predecessor agencies.

At a convocation held in the Department of the Interior Auditorium on December 16, Mr. Dieffenbach was presented with the Department's Distinguished Service Award, signed by Secretary Chapman.

"The career of Rudolph Dieffenbach has been one of outstanding accomplishments in the field of land acquisition for the establishment of a system of national wildlife refuges and as an administrator and planner of the Service's river basin conservation programs," declared Secretary Chapman.

Mr. Dieffenbach began his Federal employment in 1908 when he was appointed as a junior forester with the United States Forest Service and detailed to the western United States to work on land classification and forest boundary surveys. In 1912 a promotion brought him into the Washington office and from that time until 1924 his work, for the most part, dealt with land surveys, appraisals, and acquisitions under the Weeks law. In October 1924 he transferred to the Treasury Department for a year as a forest valuation engineer, studying forest resources for income tax purposes.

Because of his training and recognized experience in handling land acquisition matters, he was selected by the former Bureau of Biological Survey in 1925 to organize a program, headquartered at Winona, Minn., for acquisition of the land required for the newly authorized Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge, extending along both sides of the Mississippi River for a distance of approximately 300 miles from Rock Island, Ill., to Wabasha, Minn.

In 1929, after the enactment by Congress of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act which authorized the purchase of land to establish a nationwide system of migratory waterfowl refuges, Mr. Dieffenbach's abilities as an expert in land acquisition were again recognized by a promotion to the Washington office to take charge of the new Branch of Lands. In this position, in which he remained until 1947, he became responsible for organizing and directing the appraisal and acquisition of lands for the 272 national wildlife refuges which the Service administers today. Mr. Dieffenbach is credited with pushing this work with great energy and his efforts were constantly directed toward acquiring lands at the lowest possible cost to the

Federal Government. As an added responsibility, he was appointed in 1930 as secretary of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission and served in that capacity until 1947.

In 1945, when it became evident that advance planning and co-ordination were a necessary part of the job of conserving and protecting fish and wildlife resources within the river basins of the United States in connection with flood control, hydroelectric and irrigation projects proposed by the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, a new organizational unit, the Office of River Basin Studies, was established in the Fish and Wildlife Service. Mr. Dieffenbach was selected to head this unit, and at the same time to continue as Chief of the Division of Lands. In this dual capacity, Mr. Dieffenbach did such a remarkable job of organizing and planning that he was given a superior accomplishment award in 1946. By 1947 the nature and scope of river basin projects had become so extensive that Mr. Dieffenbach was assigned to devote his full time to this program.

During his career Mr. Dieffenbach served on many committees and represented the Service's Director at numerous meetings and conventions. His latest representation was as a delegate to the convention of the International Union for the Protection of Nature, held at Caracas, Venezuela, in September 1952. At this meeting he presented a paper on the effects of dams on fish and wildlife resources in the United States.

Rudolph Dieffenbach was born in Westminster, Md., on December 25, 1884. In 1905 he was graduated from the Baltimore, Md., City College, and in 1908 he received the degree of B. S. in Forestry from Biltmore, N. C., Forest School. He is a member of the Wildlife Society, Society of American Foresters, and the Masonic Order. He authored several manuals on the survey and appraisal of lands.

Mr. and Mrs. Dieffenbach live at 7901 Kentbury Drive, Bethesda, Maryland.

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