DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOF

news release

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EXCERPTS FROM REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STEWART L. UDALL BEFORE THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE FEDERATION, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, APRIL 20, 1968

We Americans want a future with wildlife in it. Not so long ago, it would have been well nigh impossible to imagine an America shorn of its wildlife. But today, laissez-faire exploitation of habitat imperils many species of life on earth, even including the dominant one--Man. Our society is just now learning that wise management of our environment is the key to the continued existence not only of wildlife but of man himself.

The linked dependence of organisms with other organisms into an unbreakable Chain of Life must have brushed the consciousness of even paleolithic man. African Bushmen may not think in terms of the killing of a giraffe as a gap in nature which must be filled by other life. But they take its flesh and use it to create flesh and energy for themselves with it, thus they partially fill the gap in the life system left by the giraffe. Hyenas and other carrion eaters also sustain themselves from the giraffe life that was lost. And butterflies come to sip moisture from the ground where the great animal fell. In such ways, the unity of all life with other life has been experienced directly by our mammalian and human ancestors from millions of years.

This connectedness has been severed, however, for most people in our civilization who have never had direct experience with a natural, functioning organic system. But,second hand information--from speeches to television--has provided even the most sterile urban existence with reminders that a natural

world exists; we still "know it is there." And when yearning overwhelms, most of us can still drive or fly to a sufficiently wild place and interact once more with other organisms by fishing or hunting, or just looking at other species, usually without asking where our food and other resources come from.

What still hasn't come home to most people is that we are living in a time of crisis for our essential habitat as well as for the habitat of other living things. Foul air, polluted streams, "improvement" of seemingly worthless land is causing destruction of life-supporting micro-organisms which are the base of the pyramid of life. These destructive forces are on the increase; human population and technology are on the increase--all come together to threaten not only the quality of our lives, but our total existence.

If we are to reverse this trend in time, then wise management--what we mean by conservation--must replace thoughtless exploitation--and it must start now.

"The California Fish and Wildlife Plan," published in 1966, is a highly valuable study, not only to your State, but to resource planners all over the country. But management needs more than a plan; it must have public support--support which will come only through energetic leadership from people like you --support in building conservation into an integral part of our society. We must move from purpose, to policy, to practices. In this sequence, public approbation is indispensable.

In America every advance we have made toward wiser resource use, or toward ending environment abuse, has come only after a long, hard struggle to resolve conflicting human interests. Too often, when an issue comes up for decision, those who are affected just do not know enough about the issues to care. People

who are not aware of vested interests or the public values at stake, whether long or short range, will not make good decisions--or will let biased sources make the decision. Apathy and confusion stemming from lack of knowledge plague us all in public life. But our conservation decisions can be greatly clarified by the work of well-informed citizen leaders.

I've seen it time and again--the dedicated and informed amateur can sell programs and secure public acceptance when the professional worker cannot. What it all amounts to is that the professionals, the scientists and technicians, the Federal bureaus and State agencies can do only so much. And their effectiveness is often limited by their missions.

But the local citizen--the man who takes the time and the initiative to inform himself and then to speak out--he is the key. This "legitimizer" knows and understands his associates, their likes and their prejudices. He lives and works on the scene. He can communicate, he can make his neighbors understand in local terms what they didn't understand in continental terms. And in the Assembly in Sacramento or on Capitol Hill in Washington, the voice of the well-informed citizen leader is listened to and respected.

Your presence here is evidence of your active participation in wildlife conservation efforts. I can think of no happier blend of appreciation for wildlife values than that held by members of the California Wildlife Federation. Hunters and fishermen join here with other wildlife users--"birders" and those who just like to feel that some where in the trees or behind the desert dune is something that <u>defies servitude</u>. You who enjoy wildlife, for whatever reason, work together in organizations such as this to preserve habitat, perpetuate variety, lead others to a better understanding of wildlife values--and, I hope, of <u>environmental</u> values. A conservation leader must think beyond

his personal emotions, beyond the limited vision of today's full bag and creel. We must be concerned with the "quality of the environment," with good land management as well as wildlife management; with clean water as well as fishing space, with the value of swamps and estuaries over and above their affect on waterfowl.

Through leadership and wise management the leader must learn to cope with unavoidable changes in the environment and seek achievable goals. There is no possible way to return this continent to its pristine state; we have--literally and figuratively--already overgrazed our ranges. Many of our activities which destroy wildlife are essential to man's survival. Agriculture and urbanization combine inevitably to reduce outdoor recreational values.

What we must seek today is a balance of man and the rest of nature. We cannot serve either without regard for the other. Wise management can salvage recreational potential from drastically altered natural enviroments. An example is the loss of native gamebird habitat to farming while other species are increased. When native species can no longer maintain themselves in numbers sufficient to provide good hunting there is logic in considering the introduction of a foreign bird whose native habitat resembles the altered one here at home.

You are familiar with the chukar which wildlife officials successfully introduced into an untenanted niche, here and elsewhere in the West. Now hunters bag over a million of these sporty birds every year. (And casual birdwatchers with out-of-date field guides get upset trying to find a species that isn't listed in their book.)

Right now through cooperative efforts between the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and the California Department of Fish and Game, six new exotic species are being tested here. Spanish and French red-legged partridges are species which have reproduced in California since their release in 1965. Interior's Dr. Gardiner Bump and his assistants have also provided your State propagation unit with seed stocks of Afghan white-winged pheasants and two varieties of crested tinamous. None of these have proved detrimental to crops and they may provide good sport in areas where game bird hunting had disappeared.

But such programs must be managed with extreme care. Unplanned or hit-and-miss introductions are dangerous. Introductions are attempted only after a detailed appraisal of game-deficient habitats. After analyzing these, biologists are assigned to study game species occupying similar habitat and climatic niches in foreign countries. From dozens considered, one or two species may then be selected on the basis of their habits, reproductive capacity, resistance to predation and disease, relationship to agriculture, ability to stand hunting pressure, and the possibility of competition with native game. Trial introductions of these species, utilizing wild-trapped individuals carefully quarantined before shipment, are then carried out.

This is but one example of how to use resources for the greatest benefit of all. There are always objections to every innovation. Purists may want native wildlife or nothing, but good leadership can ease the resistance to good and reasonable plans. Relatively small efforts to serve a relatively small segment of the population are also relatively easy to "sell."

The big job is selling overall resource planning. Such planning is so big and complex that no one person can know the full scope of it. But some generalizations are certainly true, and can serve as guidelines. The by-products of the population explosion and gross consumption--waste, ash, and contaminants--now total 4 to 5 pounds per person, per day, together with airborne and water-borne waste. Airborne wastes pollute our cities and water-borne wastes pollute the soil. Even climates may be changing as a result of increased dustiness in the air. Dust reflects the sun rays and lowers the surface temperature of the earth.

Much of this destructive pollution can be averted, but with increasing difficulty as times goes on. The use of pesticides is a case in point. Pesticides have been a great boon to 20th Century civilization. They have enabled health officials virtually to wipe out malaria, yellow fever, and sleeping sickness. They have increased cotton production where once the bollweevil held sway. They enable the housewife to buy wormless apples and sweet corn. They help rid our homes of flies, bedbugs, ants, and cockroaches.

But pesticides also present a great hazard. There are literally thousands of examples of wildlife losses caused by the improper use of pesticides--and keep in mind that what kills smaller, less flexible organisms can have detrimental effects on human health as well. Conservation leaders must know the pros and cons of pesticide use as well as its short range benefits; they must rally public support to emphasize the proper use of chemical poisons.

Organizations such as yours can have enormous power in shaping public sentiment--which is the essential ingredient for conservation progress.

A large element of responsibility goes withthis power. And remember this much more--communication starts with listening, but as population pressures add new complexities to our wildlife problems, listening alone will not be enough. Detailed, intensive study of the issues will be a growing requisite to your exercise of power and leadership.

Your community needs your voice, for the road ahead is long, wearysome, and filled with road blocks. I have said, in our current Interior Yearbook, that among the endangered species we are trying to save, one of the most endangered is Man--not because of his rarity, but because he is so numerous, so profligate, so dedicated to fouling his own nest.

You know that we cannot lead ourselves to a fuller and richer life while destroying the natural values that surround us. But have you told others that by protecting our total environment we could very well be saving our own hides? We are fellow-travelers on the same planet that can support just so much life and no more. Your support, your dedication, your leadership are vital to the wise management of our environment.

So, I urge you, prove, when you go home, the quality of your leadership by communicating with your fellow citizens. Educate, persuade, cajole. Enlist the community and win it to the cause of sound environmental conservation. It is possibly the most important cause of our age. For as President Johnson has said: ". . . once the battle is lost, once our natural splendor is destroyed, it can never be recaptured. And once man can no longer walk with beauty, or wonder at nature, his spirit will wither and his sustenance be wasted."

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