DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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REMARKS OF LYNN A. GREENWALT, DIRECTOR, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, AT SIXTH AMERICAN FOREST CONGRESS, OCTOBER 7, 1975, IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

FORESTS AND WILDLIFE--INSEPARABLE NATURAL ASSETS

I am grateful for the opportunity to be here today. It is a high honor and distinct privilege to participate in this landmark conference, which is addressing itself at the highest levels not just to forest management but to wildlife and other related natural resources as well.

John Gottschalk, a former director of the Service, once noted that we biologists like to think that we are really brothers under the skin with foresters. Aldo Leopold, our adopted patron saint, was first of all a forester. Looking back through the roster of other men who have made their mark in wildlife conservation, it is quite evident that foresters and wildlife managers can be interchangeable.

Having thus established a certain ecumenical rapport, let me talk for a few moments about fish and wildlife and their absolute interdependence on forests and other natural resources. I beg your indulgence for flavoring this discussion with some of my own deeply felt personal philosophies.

When the English poet John Donne penned the following words several centuries ago he was not talking about conservation nor the interdependence of natural resources. He did, however, eloquently express the existence of a cosmic oneness which all living things share, and we would do well to keep his thoughts in mind.

In Donne's words: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

Paraphrased into simplicity, we may read into the poet's prose the inescapable fact that all of us in the conservation movement, as in life, are in it together--foresters, biologists, bird watchers, nature lovers, hunters, defenders of animals, and, yes, even that ubiquitous group Dick Pardo, AFA's Programs Director, has referred to as "little old ladies in combat boots." May the Lord bless them! For they have done much good.

From this point I want to move to more specific ramifications of forest-fish and wildlife relationships.

Forest management, whatever its objective--saw log cutting, pulp log harvest, reforestation, fire control--has a potential for profound impact on fish and wildlife habitat and is, therefore, rich in potential for benefit to fish and wildlife. Most forestry programs carried out in the world today are designed to yield a multiplicity of benefits to the landowner. The enlightened foresters now at work in the woods recognize the great opportunity they have to benefit from more than just the accumulation of forest products.

The opportunity to reap more than one benefit from forest management is one that is virtually limitless. It's easy to manage forests--or any land, for that matter--to maximize the output of timber, or grazing, or recreation, or fish and wildlife, or for any other single purpose. It's not so easy to manage lands to provide a mixture, an array, of benefits. Once the manager steps into the arena of multiple benefit production he becomes embroiled in the problem of how much of what should be produced, and to what degree is one benefit to be given up so that another can be gained. This is a difficult problem at best, but particularly when public lands are involved--subject as they are to the often countervailing pressures of the hosts of interests represented by the public at large.

Fortunately for the United States, forestry in this Nation is almost universally based upon the idea that multiple values are to be derived from forest lands, public and private. The Nation is equally fortunate that among these values are fish and wildlife. There is a growing increase in the level of recognition given fish and wildlife and this should be comforting for all of us, because the opportunities for enhancing fish and wildlife on forest lands are great indeed. While this recognition has been late in coming it is increasing at an encouraging pace.

As Forest Service Chief John McGuire said in a recent speech: "Historically, wildlife was one of the last resources in this country to be placed under management. Even after the Nation had begun to manage agricultural crops and trees, we still believed that Mother Nature could take care of the animals. We didn't realize the extent to which man's presence changes both the variety and habitat of wildlife in our forests and rangelands. Even now, we are gaining new knowledge about certain species."

These opportunities can be exploited in a variety of ways, often without significant interference with other forest management objectives. The trick is to determine ahead of time what it is the forest should yield in terms of a variety of benefits and then set out to manage these lands accordingly. This means careful planning, of course, and a recognition that many benefits just don't accrue automatically as a result of doing the usual, traditional kinds of forest management. One must be prepared to work at securing the combination of benefits desired and this means accepting the idea that management modifications are in order.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages approximately 32 million acres of refuge lands. Of this about 5.5 million acres are in timber and brushland on 65 National Wildlife Refuges where such terrain is managed primarily for the benefit of wildlife. While we may be a mini-landlord compared with some Federal agencies, we do harvest timber and in relatively impressive amounts--$820,000 worth in 1974. Our timber management programs, particularly in the southeastern States, are fine examples of how timber can be managed to benefit wildlife. Our operations are studied by foresters from all over the world, and we're proud to put these programs on display.

We in the Fish and Wildlife Service do not say that all timber management should be patterned after ours; we say only that we can show the way to manage timber to benefit wildlife and suggest that when the forest manager wants to do that we have a model that can be helpful to him in gaining that objective. We are especially proud of our timber management programs on the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge in Mississippi and the Piedmont Refuge in Georgia.

The kinds of things we do sometimes startle the tradition-bound forester--not to mention the environmental purist. For example, we show that wildlife often benefit to a remarkable degree from practices that are often thought to be inimical to sound forest management. Among other forest management practices, we sometimes utilize clear-cutting, for example. Not on a grand scale, perhaps, but we have found that opening up the forest can be particularly beneficial to some wildlife species. We often flood our forest lands: those of you who have seen waterfowl in the flooded hardwoods of Arkansas know that mallards and trees make an exciting combination. On the Kenai National Moose Range in Alaska the moose--and other wildlife--have been the beneficiaries of that nightmare of foresters: fire. Fire-induced disclimax vegetation has increased the moose population on that area substantially. Dead snags, often an affront to the sensibilities of the forest manager, are important to eagles, falcons, woodpeckers, and wood ducks, some species of which are threatened or endangered. Wind-downed timber is valuable cover for forest birds and small mammals.

Incidentally, I would be remiss if I did not salute the U.S. Forest Service's splendid cooperation in modifying some of its management plans to help assure the survival of certain endangered species. The Kirtland's warbler in Minnesota, the condor in California, and the eagle nests in Alaska and elsewhere are just a few examples.

I've pointed to these actions only to indicate that sometimes the management of forest lands to benefit wildlife means that the manager must be willing to break with tradition in order to achieve the kinds of benefits he is after. This means the consideration of alternatives--"trade-offs" in the lexicon of the bureaucrat. This is not easy, because when alternatives are available the manager is subject to the pressures of various groups who'd like him to do things their way. The striking of a proper balance in these circumstances is perhaps more of an art than a science, but it is something that more of us must become comfortable with as time goes on.

Suffice to say that the opportunity is there; it remains for all of us who have a responsibility for forest lands to determine where, to what degree, and how those opportunities are to be exploited.

Fish and wildlife--and their habitats--are a valuable commodity. They are valuable economically: one need only to contemplate the millions upon millions of dollars spent on fish and wildlife related activities of all kinds to be convinced that the economics of wildlife is a substantial part of this Nation's economic aggregate. They are

valuable esthetically: imagine what the world would be like without wildlife species with which we are most familiar--ducks and geese, deer, bears, rabbits, butterflies, the whole spectrum of living things that make life interesting and appealing.

Fish and wildlife and the places they live are absolutely essential to man's well-being: whole segments of the world's population live largely on products of the sea; the estuaries of the world--those areas where rivers meet the ocean--are vital to the creatures that live in the sea, since most spend at least a part of their lives in these intertidal nurseries; the estuaries are dependent upon the quality of the water entering them from the rivers and streams and oceans; man has a profound impact on the quality of these waters. Without a properly functioning machine, as represented by the inter-relationships between oceans, the estuaries, the rivers, and the lands that affect the rivers, man and all of his fellow creatures are collectively in jeopardy.

In a very real sense, then, we cannot afford to be without wild creatures and their habitats. It is not unrealistic to say that man's very survival may depend on his ability to maintain an environment that will support his fellow creatures--large and small. Failure to do so could spell the end of more than one species, including that large, warm-blooded, car-driving, energy-consuming omnivore called Homo sapiens.

E. B. White, journalist and famous essayist and humorist for New Yorker magazine, gives us pause for thought with these words: "I am pessimistic about the human race because it is too ingenious for its own good. Our approach to nature is to beat it into submission. We would stand a better chance of survival if we accommodated ourselves to this planet and viewed it appreciatively instead of skeptically and dictatorially."

Nature is important. Fish and wildlife are important. These truths are, I think, widely recognized. What is not so generally understood is what it is that fish and wildlife need in order to survive, especially in today's world, where man can and does have so many major influences.

The critical need of fish and wildlife today, the ingredient that is vital and at the same time more vulnerable than ever before, is habitat--the places wild creatures live. Unless habitat of the proper kind, of a proper quality, and in sufficient quantity is available, fish and wildlife simply cannot survive. As I'm sure you all know, habitat is not just the nearly primitive and often remote forest, or the desert, or the mountain tops with which wildlife are so often associated in the minds of the general public. Habitat includes coastal wetlands, the ocean shelf, the grasslands and potholes, field borders, woodlands, and backyards that offer places for wildlife to live and reproduce. These kinds of habitats are disappearing at an alarming rate. Highways, parking lots, homesites on drained and filled marshes, industrial sites, mines, and urban sprawl are leaving precious little habitat for anything--except man. Eroded fields,

polluted streams, lakes infused with poisonous chemicals or unnatural nutrients contribute only to the decline of wildlife and fish populations.

Clearly, the processes by which habitat is destroyed are accelerating in their effect. The factor common to all of this, of course, is man and his activity. Our desire to improve our collective lifestyle, to secure more of the things we have come to need, to power our society, to achieve the self-elevation and self-discovery all of us cherish, has been achieved at a monumental cost. And a significant part of that cost is in more than dollars. It has been, it is, and probably will be, at a cost borne by fish and wildlife through loss of habitat. And this precious commodity, once gone, is gone forever. It's clear, too, that if we are to achieve these things associated with "progress" (whatever that is) we must continue to impose this burden in some way. Something has to give, simply because we cannot have all of everything.

Man began to make his choices in this matter some time ago. When non-native man came to North America, he began to intervene in the natural process occurring on the land--and of which the native peoples were a functional part--in ways that were at first subtle but which later grew to far more dramatic and far-reaching dimensions. Early Spanish visitors brought horses to North America--an event which changed a number of things, including the role native man played in the scheme of things. The pony ownership syndrome among certain western Indian tribes is a case in point. Early settlers also left their mark: they settled and cleared the land and began farming. Others moved across the country, living off the land and its wild inhabitants, and were themselves displaced by later arrivals, who cleared, farmed, fished, built towns, and did all the things that man has always done in his own behalf.

These activities were, at least in the beginning, a mixed blessing. Opening the eastern forests increased deer herds and helped other wildlife. The virtual elimination of bison in the West also is a ribbon of a less brilliant hue on man's banner. Whatever the moral or philosophical merits or demerits of man's efforts over the past four centuries, he has moved into and altered fish and wildlife habitat--and continues to do so at a frightening rate and in ways that eclipse his best efforts in the past.

This gloomy recitation sounds like a prediction that things are bad and will not get better. Not so, really. Please remember that man, the thinking, perceptive, rational animal, has done this. It is possible, then, that man can work to overcome and ameliorate his deleterious intervention in the natural processes. In short, things can be changed.

Two things are important to keep in mind. First of all, man, having once intervened in the processes, must continue to be a part of those same processes he has interrupted. It is not possible, now, for him merely to step aside and let nature take its course.

We intervene in the processes which govern living natural resources in many ways, all perhaps under the umbrella of the term

"management." We manage land, water, forests, crops, soil, fish, and wildlife. Management--and hopefully in the most positive sense--must be continued. There is no alternative to this. This is a responsibility we cannot shirk; indeed, it is one to which we must address more of our skills, time, and money. We cannot, if we have one scintilla of recognition of our moral responsibility--let alone our own self-interest--avoid contributing our best intelligence and energies to this effort.

I trust we can all agree that man--and especially we, as managers and stewards of the resources entrusted to us by the public, or our stockholders--must continue to exert influence over the natural processes into which we long ago thrust ourselves. Given that premise, then I think I can be reassuring on the point that man need not stop his world, forswear progress and personal and societal improvement, or sacrifice all he has gained in order to accomplish right and proper things for fish and wildlife.

It is possible to mix technology and wildlife; it is possible to improve our collective and individual lifestyles--worldwide--and still have fish and wildlife and their habitats. Again, I must emphasize that we cannot have all things in unlimited abundance. There must be an acceptance of the idea of the inevitability of "trade-offs"--to use that awful term--to accomplish the things we want and must do. We must accept the fact that some sacrifice in the form of added expense, restriction of use, limitation of opportunity, or freedom of action is necessary in order to have the best of all possible worlds we so fervently seek.

I'm convinced that we can have coal extraction and wildlife in wildlands habitat. I believe we can have Alaska oil and gas, and caribou and bear and waterfowl. I think we can enjoy controlled "progress" without sacrificing fish and wildlife. Let's face it. Fish and wildlife and their habitats depend on us; they are at our mercy. A man pitted against a grizzly bear is likely to mean a period of extreme trauma for the man; a grizzly bear pitted against men and their works is no contest at all.

What is it we must do? There is a lengthy litany of "things to do," like making sure we don't drain and fill wetlands unnecessarily, or that we don't dam and channel, and construct with prodigality. We can assure that the forests contain trees for eagles and bears as well as saw-timber. We can control the kinds and amounts of chemicals and nutrients that flush into the streams and lakes of the country, and we can pay attention to erosion problems, which, unlike those of the "dust bowl" days, tend to be derived from road construction, housing and industrial development. These activities contribute immensely to silting of streams and the clogging of lakes, marshes, and estuaries.

The ameliorative actions I have mentioned are effective, important, and necessary. But they do not really treat any more than the symptom. What we really need, in my view, is the development of a higher level of environmental consciousness, an understanding in each of us of the consequences of our collective actions. Let's call it a need for an environmental ethic. This ethic must be born of an understanding

of what's at stake for all of us, a comprehension of how natural processes work, and how man and his actions are inextricably entwined in the whole. This is not to say that every citizen should become a competent ecologist; this is neither practical nor desirable. I do suggest that as a Nation we must become informed and energetic participants in our environmental affairs, aware, for example, that our decisions could result in the demise of a whole species of animal or plant life somewhere; or, finally, that we do, in fact, owe our children and their children an opportunity to enjoy the bounties of nature we ourselves have too long taken for granted. Like many ideas, this one is easier to talk about than it is to make happen, but I feel convinced that we must create a pervasive and basic environmental conscience that will lead the Nation, and especially stewards of its resources, down the proper paths. This must be the solid underpinning of our endeavors to harmonize man and nature. Otherwise all the lesser things we try to do will be to no avail.

In closing let me quote again from John Donne. Among his many pithy statements is this one: "I observe the physician with the same diligence as he the disease."

Let's hope that the care ministered to the resources entrusted to us as managers results in a long and healthy life for the environment--both for man and other living things of the earth.

If we can do this then perhaps posterity, in scrutinizing the "diligence" of our efforts after our passing, need not indict us for malpractice in the treatment of their heritage.