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Some Conservation Needs in Iowa As Expressed By A National and State-wide Survey

By BRUCE F. STILES

The needs of man are obviously altered by time, place, and environment; and less obviously altered by many other factors. In fact, need cannot exist alone, but by its very nature it must be qualified either expressed or understood. We may say man needs air, water and food. In this statement the modification is understood. It is to sustain life for any protracted period of time with other conditions being normal.

It seems to me that under normal conditions of life and in order to improve our society we must be most concerned with the needs of man that contribute to a full, enjoyable, and useful life. Without modification man's needs are exceedingly great, and since the beginning his needs have continued to increase and as our civilization becomes more and more complex his needs will not only increase, but they will be altered in their relative importance. This has happened to a considerable extent within the last generation, and it is to be regretted that the average person is so slow to comprehend it. As an example, the need for food among our pioneer forefathers was extremely high. To work from dawn until dark to supply this need was accepted as an exemplary practice. To do otherwise or to divert land suitable for crops to any other use was generally condemned. This concept of need has been so deeply engrained in the consciousness of Iowans that a large part of our population still clings to it in thought, if not in practice.

What are our needs now to enjoy a full life in Iowa and what are their relative importance? This I am not qualified to answer, nor will I attempt it. Certainly, to some extent our needs are important or unimportant in the ratio of their abundance or the ease with which they may be attained. Our need for air to sustain life has under normal conditions never changed, but because of the abundance and availability few people have ever rated it high.

Now with crop price supports and the land bank program, perhaps we should change our concept of the importance of using our efforts and our land for the production of food only. Science and technology have so improved our ability and the time required to adequately supply our normal physical needs that they have here in Iowa almost without our being conscious of it slipped into a relatively lower position. The general public, however, does not yet seem to be fully

aware of this in their thinking; although they certainly make use of it in practice.

Now I want to speak of recreation as a need, not so much as a physical need as an emotional, spiritual, or abstract kind of need. We have emotions that we cannot express in thoughts and we have thoughts that we cannot express in words. The word recreation does not completely express my thought. The definition for recreation given in the dictionary may be adequate, but common usage seems to associate it too closely with wasted time and play.

According to a United Press release of February 17, Professor Summer Slichter of Harvard University cautioned against too rapid reduction of the work week. He said, "most men are not prepared to make good use of large and sudden additions to their leisure"; but if leisure were used to increase education he said it "will open up possibilities of great cultural revolution." Then he speaks of man's needs and modifies it as follows: "In order to enjoy the riches of the world's cultures men need primarily two things—education and leisure." While commendable, this seems a bit narrow; for to benefit fully from cultural advantages there must be mental relaxation and moderate bodily exercise. For a better balanced program in the use of leisure time the student should on occasion go fishing and the fisherman should spend a reasonable part of his time in study.

Generally speaking, our basic needs and our desires coincide. That seems to be a part of nature's plan. For many years some of us who work in the field of wildlife conservation have felt that people had a need for greater opportunities in hunting, fishing, and nature study. This, we thought, would be interpreted in their expressed desires in that field.

At a meeting of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners held at Seattle, Washington, in September, 1954, that organization requested the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to have a survey conducted to determine the economic importance of wildlife as well as many other related questions. This survey was conducted by Crossley S-D Surveys, Inc., in New York City, at a cost of \$135,000. States that wanted additional information or refinements on a state level were given the opportunity to extend the survey at a considerable saving at the time their state was covered. We elected to broaden the survey in Iowa and this was completed in September, 1956, at an additional cost of \$17,000.

The survey has furnished the Conservation Commission with some extremely valuable information, not only as to who and how many hunt and fish in Iowa, but as to how much they spent in pursuit of their sport and what their preferences are.

Hunters and fishermen last year spent nearly three billion dollars on their sports, hunted and fished for about five hundred million days, and traveled over ten billion miles to do it. According to the

survey, fishing was 1955's most popular field sport, with about 20,-813,000 persons over twelve years of age going fishing. Fishermen spent \$1,914,292,000 on their sport, for an average of \$91.98 per person. Of the total, \$793,663,000 was spent on equipment and about \$1,047,708,000 was spent on food, lodging, and transportation. About 11,748,000 Americans went hunting in 1955 and the survey indicates a total of \$963,687,000 spent by hunters for an average of \$79.49 per person. About \$124,388,000 was spent on hunting dogs alone.

The survey indicated that Iowa is included in a seven-state area containing the greatest percentage of fishermen per capita and ranking second in the percentage of hunters. Of all persons twelve years of age or over in the Midwest, 26% of them are fishermen and 17% hunters. Iowa is part of a Midwestern Area unsurpassed nationally for its total percentage of hunters and fishermen. In 1955 over a half million Iowa citizens hunted and fished, and spent over \$42,-400,000 in pursuit of fish and game. They spent over 16 million man days in the outdoors. Five hundred twenty-five thousand Iowans went fishing and 359,000 Iowans went hunting in 1955. The survey indicated that 48.9% of all of the households in Iowa contained at least one hunter or fisherman, and that 92.8% of their hunting and fishing was done in Iowa with only 7.2% done outside of the state. The average Iowa fisherman spent that year \$54.28 in pursuit of his sport and the average Iowa hunter spent \$38.74.

The survey also indicated that the favorite game species was the Ringneck Pheasant, with Cottontail Rabbits ranking second, followed by Squirrels and Waterfowl. The favorite fish was the panfish group, which included Yellow Perch, Yellow and Silver Bass, Bluegills, Crappies and Bullheads. The Catfish, thought by many to be the most popular game fish in Iowa, was, according to the survey, tied for second place with the predator group; that is, the Pike, Bass, etc.

Included in the survey were questions about Iowa's state parks, and about 81% of the heads of households contacted favored expansion and improvement of our park system. Of these, 51% felt that such projects should be financed out of the general fund, 34% favored a small admission fee, and 11% advocated an annual use stamp.

The Crossley officials commented that rigid statistical controls and methods were used and great care was taken to prevent bias or error, or to keep it at a minimum. The officials added that the survey material was subject to a possible 5% sampling error in numbers of hunters and fishermen, man days spent in hunting and fishing and money expended. The need for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation to some extent has been demonstrated in this survey by the expressed wish of the people.

In 1946 there were approximately 10,000,000 hunting licenses sold in the United States. In 1956 there were 15,000,000. This 50% increase in ten years brought a new army of hunters on to a constantly diminishing acreage of suitable habitat. A similar increase in the sale of fishing licenses was experienced. Part of this increase in license sales is the result of an expanding human population. Population experts tell us that we are to have a population of over two hundred million people by 1975. This means even greater pressure on less acreage. Along with this increase in human population we have a shorter work week and a greater pay scale, providing more time and money for hunting and fishing. Further, we have had an increase in the percentage of individuals in the retirement age with time to spend in pursuit of hunting and fishing opportunities.

Last year there were more than fifty million visits to our National Parks and Forests and there were more than one hundred eighty-three million visits to the State Parks of the United States. The twenty-five million licensed hunters and fishermen in our country today does not include the millions more of our youngsters for whom a license is not required. In all phases of outdoor activities the trend is rising toward greater participation. Our state and nation is confronted with an increasing demand for outdoor recreational activity at an ever accelerated pace. We are happy to see this increase in activities, but this brings us to the problem at hand.

The space and resources upon which outdoor recreation depends are diminishing. The growth of our cities, highways and industry have taken their separate tolls. More intensive utilization of all other products and resources of our lands and waters has made its force felt also. Of course we do not recommend that such elements of progress be retarded, however we do suggest that the solution to the problem of greater outdoor recreational needs and diminishing resources requires that we plan wisely to obtain the fullest utilization of our resources for the future, and our survey has shown that in the geographical area including Iowa the problem is most acute. Implicit in any program to more adequately supply the needs for outdoor recreation is the fact that all segments of our state have a big stake in the future of outdoor Iowa recreation.

We need to expand and increase our research programs, and we need more college-trained young men in every phase of conservation work.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

DES MOINES, IOWA