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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

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Communication is a vital part of this complex world in which we live. Even with the vast vocabulary that has evolved throughout recorded history, we still often find difficulty in expressing ourselves. As receivers of information, we struggle to grasp what the other person is trying to say. Also, when we speak to others, we struggle for the right words to use so that we can convey to that person exactly what we mean. The words we use and how we use them are very important to us as we communicate with each other.

We have all experienced a time when we had to search for just the right words to use at just the right time. While using the right words is important to describe something, so is using the appropriate words for the audience being addressed. The papers given at this conference have been great. We are surrounded by people who speak the same language. The words, the terms, the phrases are those familiar to us. If the presenter is offering a new idea or concept, then time is spent explaining the new material so that understanding results. We may not agree with the presenter but we tend to understand what they are saying. If any of you have talked to an elementary class, a high school group, or the local sporting club, you have used different words, terms, and examples in order to facilitate understanding. Jeff Green's paper, "Educating People About Wildlife Damage," was an excellent example of communicating with a special audience. Understanding the

audience, or publics with whom we wish to communicate is vital for success.

Let's take a quick look at our general publics:

1. Professionals in our field: we know the language, the terminology, the meanings of the terms. Other natural resource professionals and administrators also know the language. They may not always agree with us, but communication is not a real problem.
2. Politicians: They may understand the basics, but what the folks back home believe is paramount to them. The voters cast ballots from the local to the national level. The politicians need a program that is effective and that sells to their constituents.
3. Clients: They are the people in need of relief. They may not understand the language but they do understand results.
4. General public: Mostly neutral if they are not riled. They may understand wildlife-people conflicts and may not always agree with the methods used, but generally they are quiet. As was brought out in the opening session, "Wildlife Damage Management and the Public," more and more people are aware of the need to manage, especially that interface between wildlife and people, but the majority want non-lethal methods used and

animal welfare is a priority. Jim Miller and Jeff Green both said in their papers on Tuesday, that 54% of those seeking help do not want the animal harmed.

5. The active anti's—the hard-sell group. They range from the animal rights people to those concerned with animal welfare who believe that pain, or the illusion of pain, must not be inflicted. These are the militants.
6. Students: The future professionals and future voters. An extremely important group, yet a group that is definitely divided into those in colleges and universities who are going into professional wildlife or range management, and those in pre-school through university graduates who love wildlife, but a talk, or TV program, a film, or one or two courses will be all the exposure they may receive other than just viewing and enjoying animals. The latter are to become the general public, the voters who will vote out the leghold trap, vote in the non-hunting legislation, may become anti's, etc. They should understand and be supporters of good management. We hope they remain animal welfare advocates because we all should be concerned.

These publics include a wide variety of people—different strokes for different folks are needed. How can we best communicate what we are and what we do to our various publics? This paper is not an analysis of all the words and terms used in the Animal Damage Control (ADC) specialty. It is merely an attempt to look at those most frequently used and to comment on their possible significance.

ADC has evolved into a rather complex professional specialty with many subtle agendas. Beginning in the late 1800's with

the federal U.S. Department of Agriculture's Branch of Economic Ornithology, it soon expanded to include mammals. In the early 1900's a federal predator control program began. Eventually the word "pests" came into use and may now be one of the most encompassing. Much has been written on this subject. However, it seems that federal legislation is the major factor in the names we use. Beginning with the 1931 Animal Damage Control Act, the stage was set for the use of ADC. Since then up to and including the 1990 draft environmental impact statement, the term ADC has been commonly used. The history of federal wildlife damage control is given in the 1990 draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and is quite thorough.

Since the early 1930's, the broad professional field of wildlife management has developed and matured tremendously. That ADC is a specialty of the wildlife management profession is generally accepted and it is easy to substitute "wildlife" for "animal" and use the term wildlife damage control. This was recommended in 1961 by The Wildlife Society's Committee on Economic Losses Caused by Vertebrates who urged that a Wildlife Damage Control Section be established. A condensation of the committee report was prepared by Walter E. Howard who chaired the group and was published in the Journal of Forestry in January, 1962. They gave 8 reasons for establishing such a section including "overcoming the stigma of ADC research in educational institutions" and to "give prestige to the words control and damage."

In 1962, the California Association of Vertebrate Pest Control was formed which was the first professional scientific society in the field. Also that year, the first Vertebrate Pest Control Conference convened in California (now called the Vertebrate Pest Conference). Pests do not always inflict

damage. They may just be a nuisance, another word to consider especially when damage is not involved.

In 1979, professionals formed the National Animal Damage Control Association. According to their brochure, a major concern is image and understanding with the public. In 1981, the University of Idaho sponsored a "Symposium on Wildlife-Livestock Relationships" which was a different terminology and coyote control was a significant part. In 1983, the 1st Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference was convened. In looking at the literature, it is readily apparent that many combinations of words have been used, and are being used today to describe ADC activities. Those words most frequently used appear to be damage, control, and pest with management being a newcomer to replace control.

While this is the 10th Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop, the first session theme was "Wildlife Damage Management and the Public." The topics covered in that session covered most of the concerns and challenges we have with the various publics I mentioned above and I won't repeat them. However, if there is something important about the words we use to describe this specialty, then I feel the matter of control vs. management deserves some attention. The term Wildlife Damage Management appears to be somewhat less threatening than Wildlife Damage Control.

In 1976, Howard discussed this subject in his paper, "A Philosophy of Vertebrate Pest Control" given at the Vertebrate Pest Conference in California in 1976. He said generally that in a control operation the benefits accrue to others than the individuals or species being controlled, whereas wildlife management favors the well being of the population of the species being managed. These definitions fit well into the Purpose

and Need Statement in the Summary of the 1990 draft EIS. "Wildlife damage control is practiced as a field of specialization within the wildlife management profession. As a wildlife damage management program, ADC incorporates the concepts and practices of modern wildlife management, and provides leadership in the science and practice of wildlife damage control." It appears that both words, "control" and "management" have a place, a role, in the practice of this specialty. Where and when the terms are used must be acknowledged and used properly.

The current trend appears to be Wildlife Damage Management. At this conference that term appears in 8 titles as opposed to only 3 ADC. The terms used within the papers varied widely. We can handle the variety but will our influence with our publics really be effective unless we develop some consistency?

Some other words to consider are damage, pest and nuisance. Not all wildlife creating problems cause damage. Many are just pests or nuisances. Some thought should be given to the negative implication of damage. Perhaps nuisance management would be better than damage management. The word damage tends to incriminate wildlife while pests or nuisances may be tolerable.

Enough about the words that are currently used in the ADC specialty. How do they impact our various publics? As we heard in the opening morning papers a great concern is with the general public and the anti's. There is also a concern about our image with students and the lack of well-trained new professionals interested in ADC. I don't believe it's just the name ADC that keeps students out of the field. Each year the number of young people interested in trapping appears to dwindle. Also, the

public distaste for the leghold traps continues to grow, diminishing the image of the trapper. Also, I believe that in most current wildlife curricula, by the time a student completes their all-university studies and the courses basic to wildlife management, they have a full 4-year program. There exist many more popular competing areas of academic interests for today's undergraduates. ADC appears to be becoming a specialty to be honed at the M.S. and Ph.D. level. The new Utah State program in ADC described in an earlier paper is very much needed and will be followed with interest.

The following guidelines for name selection were obtained from the Colorado State University Marketing Department:

1. The name should be descriptive of the benefits.
2. It should be easy to remember.
3. It should fit the company or program image.

Above all, in marketing, emphasize the positives, not the negatives.

Some other general guidelines:

1. Keep it simple
2. Easy to pronounce
3. No double meaning
4. Distinctive as possible
5. Shorter the better

In an analysis of the current terminology, the above should be useful. Do words such as "damage," "control," "pests," and "nuisance," emphasize the positive aspects of the specialty? They do fit the program image, but they don't really emphasize the positive aspects. It appears that using management for control may not be the proper use of the words but may convey a better image to our publics. Also, using nuisance for damage would be more descriptive of the entire specialty and may project a better image. Wildlife nuisance management may warrant some thought.

The 1990 draft EIS on ADC lists several potential mitigation measures. One of those proposed was, "APHIS should consider changing the name of the ADC program to be more consistent with the program's wildlife management objectives." Clearly a concern exists for the ADC image.

Public involvement is now in vogue in all government agencies. When and if name changes are being considered, our publics must be involved—all of them. ADC is a vital part of our society. It exists only to serve people. Therefore it is up to the profession to develop acceptable methods and terminology so that effective communication and management can exist.