

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

The Probe: Newsletter of the National Animal
Damage Control Association

Wildlife Damage Management, Internet Center for

September 2005

The Probe, Issue 240 – September/October 2005

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/icwdmprobe>



Part of the [Environmental Sciences Commons](#)

"The Probe, Issue 240 – September/October 2005" (2005). *The Probe: Newsletter of the National Animal Damage Control Association*.
60.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/icwdmprobe/60>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Wildlife Damage Management, Internet Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Probe: Newsletter of the National Animal Damage Control Association by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

The Times, They Are A-Changing: A Rebuttal to Dexter Oliver

Nicole Frey, Treasurer, NADCA

Editor's note: This article was written in response to an article by Dexter K. Oliver entitled, "The Conceptual Feminization of Wildlife in the USA", which appeared in the July/August issue of THE PROBE.

As one of those pesky female professional biologists, I can't help but provide a rebuttal to this article. However, I will avoid addressing some statements that I feel are just plain silly and focus on those that can be rebutted logically. I agree with Oliver that there is an increasing number of women in the natural resources workforce. A quick glance at university statistics around the US will show that this increase is evident not only in the undergraduate attendance, but at the

Master and PhD level as well. For example, the year I obtained my master's degree, 36% of the natural resource graduate students at the university were female, an increase of 8% in 10 years. However, I must contest Oliver on one point: no woman struggles through the rigors of a PhD just because she likes to touch "cute", fuzzy things. To satisfy that urge, she usually buys a dog. Dozens of successful, logical, intelligent women are entering the natural resources workforce annually. Conversely, USFS and BLM demographics project as many as 50% of the current workforce will have retired in the next decade. The gripping result is that "good old boy" clubs are disintegrating nation wide. No doubt, some of the members of these clubs are frustrated with this new development.

Oliver's first contention is that Walt Disney's "utopian idea of the way wildlife should be

seen" created a new view of wildlife. It would be more accurate to say that Disney's portrayal was a reflection of a changing viewpoint, rather than the origin of this viewpoint. Many people regard this as the 'humanistic' view; persons with this view emotionalize many mammals as pets equipped with human emotions. To them, animals should be treated like one would treat a pet dog or cat. There isn't a sexual bias toward those who hold this humanistic view of wildlife (After all, wasn't Walt Disney a man?). Rather, many people with a humanistic view of wildlife live in urban and suburban areas, and enjoy a limited experience with nature. In fact, often the only experience with nature that they have is through their television.

Dozens of successful, logical, intelligent women are entering the natural resources workforce annually. Conversely, USFS and BLM demographics project as many as 50% of the current workforce will have retired in the next decade. The gripping result is that "good old boy" clubs are disintegrating nation wide.

Activists are also commonly people who grew up in urban or suburban settings. However, activists often view animal life as more important than human lives. E.L.F, Earthsave, Greenpeace, the Humane Society, PETA, SHAC, and the Sierra Club are some of the more famous activist groups. Each of these was founded by a man and has a male president. This is definitely not a group of people overwhelmed by a feminine influence.

Granted there are women and men who have humanistic views of animals working in the natural resources field. However, it is not often that people with these views are drawn to work for management agencies such as state divisions of natural resources. Usually, young professionals with these ideals enter into the field as a research technician, where their views are modified as they experience the natural world in its actual

Continued on page 4 col. 1

From the President

Fellow NADCA members,

Another calendar year is winding down, and the first decade in the new century is about half over. As a kid I never understood how time could fly so fast, except during each August when the realization that school was starting just around the corner hit me. Then, time really flew! Ever since then, time has seemingly sped up each year, and these last couple of years have been no different.

I bring up the speed of time for a purpose. It has been 2 years since the last NADCA election. As such, all of the Officer and Director positions are expiring. If you have ever had the desire to help guide this unique organization, or know of someone who might, now is the time to act! Watch for a ballot in the next *PROBE* and please vote.

Art Smith, President, NADCA



The Probe is the newsletter of the National Animal Damage Control Association. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced in any form without written permission of the editor. Copyright ©2004 NADCA.

Editor: Lawrence M. Sullivan,
Extension Wildlife Damage Management
Specialist Emeritus
The University of Arizona
U.S. Mail to:
P.O. Box 163
Arivaca, AZ 85601
sullivan@ag.arizona.edu

Editorial Assistant:
Pamela J. Tinnin
31669 Pine Mtn. Road, Cloverdale, CA 95425
E-mail: pamelatinnin@earthlink.net

Your contributions to *The Probe* are welcome and encouraged. The deadline for submitting materials is the 15th of the month prior to publication. Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of NADCA.

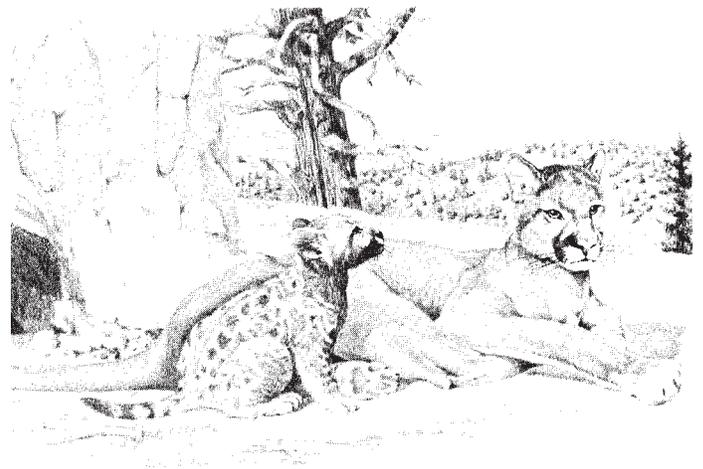
CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

December 11-14, 2005 - 66th Annual Mid-West Fish and Wildlife Conference, Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI. Visit the conference website under "What you need to know" at <http://www.midwestfishandwildlife.com>

The 9th Annual National Wild Turkey Symposium will be held in conjunction with this event.

March 6-9, 2006 - 22nd Vertebrate Pest Conference. Berkeley Marina DoubleTree Hotel, Berkeley, CA.

<http://www.vpconference.org> or contact Terry Salmon, UC Coop. Extension, San Diego Co., email: tpsalmon@ucdavis.edu; (858) 694-2864.



THE PROBE Archives

Thanks to Robert Timm, Superintendent & Extension Wildlife Specialist, UC Hopland Research & Extension Center, all the missing issues of *THE PROBE* have been secured and the archive collection is complete. This collection of all the issues of *THE PROBE* are archived at the Berryman Institute for Wildlife Damage Management in Logan, Utah. Eventually, these hard copies will be scanned into electronic format and be available on the NADCA website, <http://nadca.unl.edu>.

Call for Nominations

The 2-year, term of office for all the current NADCA officers and directors expires December 1, 2005 and an election must now be called. NADCA president, Art Smith, is asking for nominations to fill these positions. If willing to serve, NADCA members are encouraged to nominate themselves. Nominations for yourself or other candidates should be e-mailed to Art.Smith@state.sd.us, or snail-mailed to:

Art Smith
Department of Game & Fish
523 E. Capitol
Pierre, SD 57501

Nominations are due to Art Smith by November 30, 2005.

The positions for which nominations are sought and the current holders of these positions are:

President

Art Smith, Wildlife Damage Management Program Administrator, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Pierre, SD

Vice President - West

Scott Hygnstrom, Extension Specialist, Wildlife Damage Management, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE

Vice President - East

James Parkhurst, Associate Professor, Wildlife Science and Extension Wildlife Specialist, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA

Secretary

Larry Sullivan, Extension Specialist Emeritus, Wildlife Damage Management, The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

Treasurer

Nicki Frey, Associate Extension Wildlife Specialist, Utah State University, Logan, UT

DIRECTORS

Western Region (AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA)

Eric Covington, Wildlife Biologist, USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services, San Luis, CA

Southwestern Region (AZ, CO, NM, UT)

Dave Bergman, State Director Arizona, USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services, Phoenix, AZ

Northern Rockies Region (ID, MT, WY)

Olin Albertson, Owner/Operator, Wildlife Solutions, Vanderhoff, BC, Canada

Southern Region (AR, LA, OK, TX)

Kevin Grant, Assistant State Director Oklahoma, USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services, Oklahoma City, OK

Northern Plains Region (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)

Chad Richardson, Wildlife Biologist, USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services, Fort Riley, KS

Great Lakes Region (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI)

Mike Dwyer, President, Critter Control Inc., Traverse City, MI

Northeastern Region (CT, PA, RI, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, VT)

Lynn Braband, Extension Associate, New York State IPM Program, Cornell University, Geneva, NY

Central-Eastern Region (DC, DE, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV)

Open

Southeastern Region (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, TN)

Todd Sullivan, Wildlife Biologist, Moody Air Force Base, Athens, GA



22nd VPC

The 22nd Vertebrate Pest Conference will be held March 6 thru 9, 2006 at Berkeley Marina Doubletree Hotel, Berkeley, California, USA; sponsored by The Vertebrate Pest Council. Please check the website <http://www.vpconference.org> for preliminary program. Call for Posters, hotel, and registration information.

The Times They Are A-Changing

setting. If the actual natural world and its management are distasteful to them, they do not pursue this profession further. In this way, a technician position is a great opportunity for young professionals to gain experience; they have no regulatory power, they are not making management decisions, they are only gaining experience in management. There is no harm in people voicing their (what we would consider naïve) opinion as they gain experience and learn the realities of ecology and natural resource management.

Next, Oliver discusses how the “women’s rights movement” combined with Walt Disney “brought something new and debilitating to the dignity, austerity, and reality of wildlife management (page 4, column 2).” What an amazingly bold statement. I would really like to see some concrete examples of how women, with the help of a ‘Disney view of wildlife’, have brought about this havoc by using the word “cute”.

Here are some examples of women that did great things to bolster ecology and natural resource management since the time of the “women’s rights” movement. During this time Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring*, which erupted in a new consciousness about how our scientific progress can negatively alter our environment. It promoted consciousness about ecology and ecosystem effects. Terry Tempest Williams wrote of land stewardship while protesting natural resource destruction, especially when it comprised human health. Celia Hunter helped create the Alaska Conservation Society and was appointed to the Federal-State Land-Use Planning Commission in 1970. Her actions and decisions halted the use of atomic bombs to create a port in Cape Thompson, along the Alaskan coast. I mention these three women because they are in the Ecology Hall of Fame. There are countless other women out there who have contributed greatly to natural resource management, even before the 1960’s gave women “newfound freedom in the workplace (page 5, column 1).”

Next, Oliver states “tinkering with wildlife is now a mainstay with them” (‘them’ referring to women who use the word ‘cute’; page 5 column 1). I deliberated whether or not to respond to this statement. So, I’ll make it brief. People have been tinkering with wildlife for thousands of years. Whether it was good or bad for wildlife management is only a matter of perspective. Centuries before women entered

the workforce, people tinkered with animal populations to make more food and they tinkered with animal populations to make fewer predators and pests. And while the people thought that they were managing populations in a beneficial way, they actually made many mistakes along the way (over-harvesting, over-protection, general messing with the ecosystem). This is why there are over 140 known extinct mammal species alone and hundreds more on the endangered species list. Furthermore, both male and female biologists ignore “rules and regulations concerning handling threatened and endangered species”, not just women who have compassion for an owl nestling that has fallen on the ground. This is a valid problem, but one that is genderless in its source. So, why is having compassion for a living creature such a bad thing? Compassion for life tempers our actions, allowing us to pause and consider the ramifications of our management decisions. Those 140 extinct mammal species could have used a little human compassion in their management.

The last point that I will address is the idea of women “flocking” to the natural resource professions due to their newfound freedom and ability to get a college degree (page 5, column 1). Allow me to make 2 points here. First, women represented 46% of the total work force (all employment) in America (www.dol.gov/wb/stats/main.htm) in 2004, and only 1% of these women work in the natural resources fields; the national average shows 1.5% of the American workforce with natural resource professions. Women made up 6% of my undergraduate graduating class. Of these, only half continue to work in the natural resource profession. This hardly constitutes a flock; it is a small exploratory group at best. Second, most of the increase of women in this profession occurred in the last 15 years. I’m fairly sure the women’s liberation movement was over by then. Growing up in the ’80s and ’90s, my tendency toward the natural resources profession was not a reaction to any realization of “newfound freedom”. I grew up with the knowledge that I could be whoever I wanted to be.

I think Oliver’s real contention is what he perceives is the ease of getting a degree and a job in one of the natural resource professions. However, with a bachelor’s degree in the natural resources field, neither gender is considered an expert. With a bachelor’s degree, one can expect to get a GS-5 level position at best, which will provide this person with a technician level position where he/she can work in the field, gain experience, and slowly acquire the label of a “special-

The editor of *THE PROBE* thanks contributors to this issue: Nicole Frey, Roger A Woodruff, and Pamela J. Tinnin.

Continued on page 5, col. 1

The Times They Are A-Changing

ist” as he/she climbs the professional ladder. Oliver makes a suggestion that Equal Opportunity Employment may be giving women a hand-up in our natural resource professions. On the contrary, obtaining a field-technician position is actually rather difficult for women. First, employers are reluctant to hire women to work in remote areas alone. Second, many women are naturally smaller than men and unable to do the heavy labor that some field technician jobs require. These are logical concerns, and ones that most women will reluctantly agree with, yet they create a limit to the types of entry-level field jobs those women entering the profession are actually suitable for. However, the hardest challenge for women is that they have to fight through this stereotype that Oliver has presented to us – that all women are “bunny-huggers” (my word, not his). As Oliver suggests on Page 5, column 2, if women want to be taken seriously, they often have to continuously prove themselves until they create a reputation of not being an activist or too soft. Until this stereotype desists, employers will hesitate when hiring women onto a research project for fear of her emotional bias. Yet, the women that are successful in the natural resources profession got there due to persistence, determination, intelligence, and talent (much like any man), not because they proved they could kill a wolf or trap a beaver.

I am not going to refute or apologize for the soft or “yin” characteristics that are part of a woman’s nature. It is a woman’s soft side, or nurturing instinct, that makes her adept at working with the public and finding compromises among arguing parties. It is her nurturing instinct that drives her to seek a balanced ecosystem that allows for the best situation for the most species. Chinese practitioners consider the “yin” that Oliver references as the “calm, nourishing” side of harmony. This doesn’t sound that bad to me. The traditional Chinese believe also that if ‘yin’ and ‘yang’—the male counterpart to yin—were thrown out of balance that it would lead to illness. Furthermore, they believed that the interaction of

yin and yang maintained the harmony of the universe. Both men and women have soft ‘yin’ and hard ‘yang’ parts of their personality, which is what keeps harmony in every relationship, partnership, working-group, organization, etc. It may be that we need the soft “bunny huggers” of the world to exist if only to balance out the hard “bunny clubbers” of the world.

From THE PROBE Editorial Assistant: I appreciate Nicole Frey's measured, intelligent response. I'm from an older generation, not in the natural resource field, but a woman who is in another occupation largely dominated by men (ordained clergy). Frankly, I was appalled at Dexter Oliver's article and am quite surprised that there haven't been more negative reactions. Essentially he said that the entrance of more women into the field "dumbed down" the profession. The assumptions he made were based upon huge stretches of logic. Perhaps Mr. Oliver might consider that societal changes have influenced the focus/emphasis of both male and female wildlife professionals.

For what it's worth, Rev. Pamela J. Tinnin



Send Your Articles!

THE PROBE wants your input! Send your articles to the editor Lawrence Sullivan at the address listed in the lower lefthand corner of page 2. This is your newsletter—be a part of it!

In Memoriam

Death of Gary Oldenburg

It is with sadness I must report that Gary Oldenburg unexpectedly passed away this weekend from natural causes. He lived alone, but had family in the Olympia area, including two married children and several grandchildren. He also had family in Portland, including his mother and a married son and his family. Gary had suffered from diabetes for most of his life but had stayed active in his retirement and had not been ailing prior to his death. He was 62 years old.

Gary became the Washington State Director for ADC in 1986. He was known for his direct manner and no nonsense approach. Under his leadership, the program grew to include four states; Washington, Alaska, Hawaii, and Guam. Gary retired in 2001.

*Roger A. Woodruff
State Director, Washington, Alaska
USDA, APHIS, Wildlife Services*