

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop Proceedings Wildlife Damage Management, Internet Center for

December 1975

4-H and Youth Related Programs

Major L. Boddicker

Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/gpwcwp>



Part of the [Environmental Health and Protection Commons](#)

Boddicker, Major L., "4-H and Youth Related Programs" (1975). *Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop Proceedings*. 179.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/gpwcwp/179>

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 Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop Proceedings by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

4-H AND YOUTH RELATED PROGRAMS

by

Major L. Boddicker
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado

The value of a youth oriented wildlife management program is obvious. Youth is an audience with an open mind, often not committed to old errors. With a proper and intensive education program, a strong future impact can be made on the acceptance and success of animal damage control programs. Programs of quality can change a youth's outlook on problem wildlife from one of apathy or intolerance to one of positive management and high damage tolerance.

Audiences which are obviously addressable are 4-H Clubs, FFA Chapters, and to a lesser extent, Boy and Girl Scouts and formal education. Access to these groups is not difficult to achieve if the proper chain of command is identified and it blesses the effort. The county extension director or 4-H agent is the key to setting up this transfer of education. Do not overlook formal education. Teachers are a primary audience for delivery of sound wildlife management concepts to their classes through the wildlife specialist.

Vehicles for delivery of wildlife education and skills are numerous, each having its own advantages and disadvantages. In Kansas and Colorado three major vehicles are presently being used: 1) Camping, 2) Field Days, and 3) Inservice Training Programs. Camps, where the prime objective of the camp was to teach the skills of furbearer management, were tested in 1975 at the Kansas 4-H Camp at Lake Perry. The result was great. During 1974 two enlarged camps were held at the Dane Hansen Boy Scout Reservation at Kirwin, Kansas, as well as Lake Perry. Approximately 100 youngsters and adults participated in some capacity. In 1975, 4 such camps were held in

Kansas with about 200 participants. The first Colorado camp was conducted at Fairplay in November. It has resulted in the scheduling of 4 camps for 1976.

The advantages of this method are; the undivided attention of the audience is maintained, an intense and quality transfer of skills takes place in the field, guided by experienced people. Everyone leaves the camp capable of completing all skills necessary to complete the job of managing furbearers. Furbearers are identified as positive critters, eagerly sought for a good end. They are not associated with, nor identified as, calf killers or lamb butchers. It logically follows that a person with a positive attitude and value for wildlife will work to perpetuate and properly manage wildlife. In my opinion, the Furbearer Management Camps do that, and furthermore provide to agricultural communities, people with skills who will willingly help and teach their neighbors to solve their own problems. Disadvantages to a camp format are: It takes time. It is somewhat expensive and requires a reasonable amount of coordination. Eventually the "aginers" get wind of them and put up a howl.

They are fun and speaking as an instructor, administrator and student of 4 of these camps, I have never done anything in Extension that was better received or evaluated as enthusiastically. I highly recommend the camping method for teaching fishing skills, acres for wildlife, mammal or bird study units or whatever. The camping format works.

Field Days in many ways are condensed camp programs shortened to accommodate cost and time restrictions. Amount of skills and concepts taught are reduced. It is difficult to provide the quality and atmosphere that a camp gives. It is a viable alternative but not as effective in producing qualified people or highly motivated people as camps are.

Inservice training programs to teachers and leaders entailing one to several hours is another method if a practical field demonstration compliments it. Any wildlife management program presented should include a local, hands on field experience that deals with a current and realistic subject. There

should be something meaningful for each participant to do. Local resource materials, equipment and resource people should be used. The subject matter should be presented at a teachable moment, ie., hold inservice training on wild bird management when migrating bird flocks present a problem and are highly visible.

Sell your programs, first to the people that count; the County Agents, the 4-H Office, Agents and Leaders, and the State Education Agency. Plan your delivery to fit a reasonable time frame. Center your activities on management species and issues of most immediate interest. Produce or procure the best printed and visual materials available to assist this program delivery. Schedule a kick-off workshop and most important, do it with quality, flair and enthusiasm. You can pump air into a dead horse but all you get back is bad gas. Select and use a live horse and put the spurs to it. Evaluate the program with the input coming from the participants, revise it to improve it, based on their evaluation and yours. If it gets you where you wanted to be and where the participants thought they should be, you made it. Schedule the next workshop.

There is no reason we have to approach teachers with dry lecture programs on the glories of hunting. Provide them with the materials and stories that present hunting in a positive light like Peter and the Wolf, Rolf in the Woods, or Where the Red Fern Grows. Nature study, conservation education, environmental education are successive movements which have strived to improve man's relationship to his environment. They have a history of ebb and flow, inconsistent in quality and impact. We can help improve both by taking an aggressive role.

Approaches to the business of wildlife damage vary with the individuals carrying the responsibilities. We use means which we find comfortable and can live with. The evaluations of our programs would probably show that we all do a creditable job. I've always wondered, though, if we as a group aren't prescribing bandages instead of attacking the cancers.

If we don't take an aggressive stance on wildlife issues and provide leadership to teachers and youth how much further in the hole will we be ten years from now? No one group has the resources to do a complete job in wildlife management education. But we can do much more than we are toward that end. Youth is a critical audience and we have an obligation to address it with intensity, quality and proportionality.

