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A DISCUSSION OF THE RENEWABLE RESOURCES EXTENSION PROGRAM*
(P.L. 950306)

by

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I am pleased to have this opportunity to visit with you about the Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978. The purpose of this legislation is to provide for expanded and comprehensive Extension programs for forest and rangeland renewable resources.

The Extension programs of the Department of Agriculture and of each state are expected to provide useful and productive educational programs, for private forest and rangeland owners, processors, consumptive and non-consumptive users of the renewable resources produced from these lands. These educational activities are also expected to complement research and assistance programs conducted by the Department of Agriculture.

Although foresters and forestry interests played a strong role in the passage of this Act, it was the concerted and cooperative efforts of many interest groups that resulted in its final passage. This cooperation resulted in broadening the Act to include renewable resources such as fish, wildlife, forage, outdoor recreation, timber, and water as resources to be fully considered in designing programs for landowners, processors, and users.

As you may know, I come to the USDA, March 12, of this year. I came from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources where I retired as Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Renewable Resources Management which included forest management, fisheries, wildlife, and water access activities. As a longtime employee of a State Natural Resources Department, I am a strong believer in state's rights and strong State and county programs because that is where the action is.

I firmly believe that a national program in renewable resources extension; or anything else for that matter, should start in the states and work up.

Now, I would like to report on the happenings to date. The original Extension unit, formerly known as ANR (Agriculture and Natural Resources) was separated on March 12, the same date I joined the USDA.

When ANR was separated, two foresters were transferred (one of them had a heart attack a week later and was on sick leave until August 31 when he retired). Also, from Agriculture, came a man whose specialties are environmental affairs and water. He has

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had to spend much of his time involved in the Soil Conservation Service in the Resources Conservation Act process. The fourth professional, with expertise in land use and energy, was transferred from Community Development. That was the professional staff.

A secretary came with the two foresters. She resigned in early July. None came with the other two men and there was none for me.

A vacant position for a fish and wildlife program leader was also assigned. As I understand, this position had been vacant for 41 out of the last 44 years. We also received some old furniture, a couple of antique typewriters, and lots of unfiled papers.

For a few days, I felt like Harry Truman during his first days in Congress. For the first six months he wondered what the hell he was doing there. After that, he wondered what the hell the rest of them were doing there.

Now, on a brighter note, four full time secretaries are assigned, two of them reported in mid-July, the others in mid-August. They have been there full time, all day ever since and working hard.

The position of fish and wildlife specialist was filled on October 22. The incumbent is Mr. James Miller who, although coming after nine months of employment with the Fish and Wildlife Service, was a Forestry and Wildlife Extension specialist in the State of Arkansas for 11 years prior to his assignment to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

We have set up a Range Management program leader position; This position is being filled on January 13.

We expect to fill this position within the next couple of weeks. We are taking the necessary steps to fill the Forester's position vacated by the retirement I mentioned. The announcement should be out this week or next, I hope, if you have any candidates in mind, that you'll let me or them know about it. The position will be filled at the 13-14 level which means the starting pay could be something over \$27,000 with promotional potential as high as \$42,000.

We have a natural resources specialist on board who was filled by an IPA appointment. The incumbent is Andy Weber from North Carolina State University.

With the staffing level I have described, professional and support personnel will number twelve. I am not inclined to build a large Washington office staff. Twelve may be enough, but I am not sure. The legislation speaks to outdoor recreation, possibly the fish

and wildlife position should be split, considering the possibilities in aquaculture. Right now, the forester on the job has spent most of his time on unit budget matters, an important item, but doesn't help get forestry Extension done. Staffing still needs a little pondering.

We put in a budget amendment for \$5 million for FY 80 last May. It was based primarily on wood for energy, related wildlife habitat opportunities, and the need for a better informed citizenry in making resource management decisions. I am sorry to inform you that it did not get out of USDA. The reason given was OMB budget constraints.

However, one cannot expect program money to be appropriated without a program. As you know, the Act authorizes \$15 million annually, beginning in fiscal year FY 79 and for nine more fiscal years thereafter. To date, not one red cent has been appropriated nor even asked for during the regular budget process for either FY 79 or FY 80.

The legislation calls for the development of a national five year plan. However, as I told you earlier, I was a long time state employee and do not necessarily believe that the federal government knows how to do things better than the states. Consequently, to develop the national plan we asked the State Extension Directors' and Administrators for preliminary plans for a broad renewable resources extension program based on four levels of funding. We asked that these plans be sent to us for analysis by July 1. A few were late, but we expected that because I was late in getting the request out.

Input came from all fifty states, all the territories except the Virgin Islands (they chose not to submit anything) and from the District of Columbia. The states were kind enough to loan us, through the IPA process, four men for three months to review, analyze, evaluate, aggregate, and help put together a national five year plan which is due to Congress on March 31, 1980. My target date was October 1.

These men reported for duty on July 9, landed running and ran all the time they were on the job. They were Jack Artz, range management, Nevada; John Slusher, forester, Missouri; John Kelley, natural resources, New York; and Andy Weber, fish, wildlife, and forestry, North Carolina. I appointed Andy chairman of the group. He is the one who will continue with us as an IPA for at least another year.

I hope you note that I tried to get regional and also discipline representation. The reason I did this was because I did not want someone squawking in a bar that they didn't get fair treatment or were left out.

When I gave the IPA's their charge I told them I wanted them to think and act as ecologists in program development, and that I expected a balanced plan and program with all renewable resource areas appropriately represented. I believe they have done just that in completing the draft national plan. A reason was that the states did a good job in preparing their input. We saw balance in the major program areas and in identification of priorities. The plans appear to be both comprehensive and realistic.

I mentioned earlier that we asked the states to respond to four levels of funding. Current, under the Smith-Lever Act, and at \$7½ million, \$15 million of new money plus the money needed for a total program as they saw it.

From the information we received, about \$12 million is being invested in natural resource extension programs nationwide. This includes federal, State, and county money. The federal investment is 31 percent, which is interesting because most agriculture extension programs involve an investment of about 42 percent federal money. Putting more State and county money into a natural resources program indicates the high priority that is placed upon these kinds of activities by the States.

The draft plan, which is done now in second draft and out for review, displays three levels of funding. Current, under the Smith-Lever Act, plans for a \$15 million level which is the authorized level and the \$43 million level which the states have indicated is needed for a full renewable resources program.

I might add this latter figure reinforces the comments of Dr. Henry Wadsworth, Extension Director, Oregon, when he testified in favor of a \$40 million funding level on February 2, 1979, before a House Subcommittee. One of the problems with the current authorized level of \$15 million is that, although the Act was broadened to include more than forestry extension activities, the funding level remained the same as that assigned to the original forestry extension act.

During the last two weeks in August we held four regional meetings to review the planning process with the State Extension Directors and their planning personnel. We met in Salt Lake City, St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Atlanta.

At these meetings I stressed the need for broad public involvement in the planning process because the states are required by section 4(d) of the Act to appoint and use one or more advisory committees comprised of forest and range land owners, professionally trained individuals in fish, wildlife, forest, range, and watershed management, and related fields as appropriate and other suitable persons.

I would remind you that our plan is still in draft form. Some will criticize the plan or its brevity and the other things that people criticize. It may not be the best, although I believe it is, but it will probably be the most inexpensive plan ever produced by the federal government. Currently, we have spent in the neighborhood of \$60,000 and probably the total expenditures will be less than \$100,000. If you consider that the Soil Conservation Service during fiscal 79 has spent internally an excess of \$9 million in the RCA process and the Forest Service, over the past several years, in excess of \$100 million in the RPA process, this makes our plan quite economical.

There will be a national meeting for additional public exposure for the Five-Year Renewable Resources Plan on January 24-25, at the Sheraton National Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. It is expected that representatives of interests groups, landowners, user groups, the administration, and the Congress will play a strong part in this meeting.

I am very pleased and enthusiastic about the whole situation. I can hardly wait until the plans and program are tied together so we can submit the supplemental I told you about to get things rolling. Although \$15 million was authorized, authorization is not appropriation.

Do not be disappointed if USDA and OMB do not approve. That can happen. Remember, Congress are the people that appropriate money.

I would hope that implementation of Public Law 95-306 will see greatly improved cooperation between fish and wildlife agencies, Extension people, the Soil Conservation Service, state foresters, and all research and management organizations interested in all products of the land. No one can achieve this job alone. Cooperation, not confrontation, will help achieve the end result--that of better managed private non-industrial forest lands for the many resource benefits they can provide.