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Utah State University's Berryman Institute for Wildlife Damage Management

Robert H. Schmidt
Michael R. Conover

In 1990, the College of Natural Resources at Utah State University established a program dedicated to research, education, and extension in wildlife damage management (Schmidt et al. 1992a). This program was initiated with funding from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Animal Damage Control (ADC) program and Utah State University. Its mission included:

Developing increased appreciation for the scope and role of wildlife damage management throughout the wildlife profession;

Providing personnel trained in the principles and practices of wildlife damage management for employment by the ADC program and by state and local agencies and organizations; and

Creating better public understanding of the role of wildlife damage management in meeting the needs and promoting the values of the American people.

This mission was developed through four distinct objectives. The first was to incorporate wildlife damage management as a full partner in all appropriate courses in all curricula in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. Faculty began to incorporate wildlife damage examples in their various classes when appropriate. Guest lectures

were given by departmental specialists in wildlife damage management when invited. This program also utilized visiting wildlife damage professionals to give seminars and lectures to students and faculty on topics related to wildlife damage management.

The second objective was to offer specific courses and an undergraduate degree option in wildlife damage management. Courses offered to date, in addition to traditional wildlife biology-related classes, include:

Urban Fish and Wildlife Management
Principles of Wildlife Damage Management
Techniques in Wildlife Damage Management
Wildlife Damage Management Policy
Management and Ecology of Exotic Species
Predator Management and Ecology
Environmental Ethics, Resource Management, and Animal Rights
The Role of Gender in Natural Resource Management

In June, 1992, the requirements for a major in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife were revised. Undergraduate students now have an opportunity to select an area of special interest out of five emphasis areas: wildlife management, fisheries management, wildlife damage management, conservation biology, and wildlife and fisheries law

enforcement. The suggested elective classes, in addition to required departmental and college core classes, include wildlife damage principles and techniques, field ornithology, mammalogy, and range wildlife relations.

The third objective of the wildlife damage management program was to offer graduate courses and advanced degrees, including research, in wildlife damage management. Current graduate student projects cover a wide range of wildlife damage-related topics on species such as coyotes, mule deer, sandhill cranes, gray wolves, feral cats, and red-winged blackbirds, and on systems such as bird predation in hatcheries and birds at airports. Three projects involve sociological surveys. In general, graduate students are entwaged to consider the field of wildlife damage management in the broadest possible terms, that is, all situations in which wild animals conflict with the interests of some humans.

The fourth objective of the USU wildlife damage management program was to provide for continuing education and extension services in wildlife damage management including developing shortcourses for managers already on the job. This is being accomplished by developing continuing education programs for ADC employees and others, developing wildlife damage-related shortcourses, and identifying stakeholders for the extension effort and determining the needs of these stakeholders.

The Beryman Institute for Wildlife Damage Management

As a continuation of USU's developing programs in wildlife damage management, the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife has developed an Institute of Wildlife Damage

Management. Its primary mission is to enhance wildlife-human relations by increasing human tolerance of problems caused by wildlife sad by producing and disseminating the knowledge required to solve problems caused by wildlife, while enhancing communication among wildlife professionals, natural resource managers, and all segments of society with an interest in wildlife damage management.

The Institute has been named the Berryman Institute to honor Jack H. Berryman for his long-term involvement and distinguished career with the wildlife damage management profession, the State of Utah, and Utah State University. Mr. Berryman was an Associate Professor and Wildlife Extension Specialist at USU from 1959 to 1965, and served as Chief of the Division of Wildlife Services in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for many years. He was also selected by his peers to be President of The Wildlife Society. Mr. Berryman is currently Counselor Emeritus for the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Aøencies

The Berryman Institute is dedicated to nine objectives:

- It will provide educational opportunities for future professionals in wildlife damage management through a fellowship program for graduate education. These competitive fellowships will be available to both currently practicing professionals and new students of wildlife damage management.

It will provide educational opportunities

- for current professionals in wildlife damage management through nationally-advertised shortcourses and workshops.

The Institute will provide a conduit of communication among all those people professionally engaged in wildlife damage management.

The research branch of the Institute will be directed toward developing and testing innovative techniques to alleviate wildlife damage problems that are more effective, more humane, and more socially acceptable than current methods.

It will develop, evaluate, and publicize innovative methods of enhancing the positive aspects of wildlife while minimizing wildlife problems.

The Institute will recognize professional excellence in wildlife damage management through an annual awards program, highlighting professionalism, publications, graduate education, and innovative research.

- It will provide a forum for the discussion of all policy issues related to wildlife damage management.
- The Institute will utilize its resources to help recruit minorities into the field of wildlife damage management.
- Finally, the Institute will provide a mechanism for accepting monetary and equipment donations from individuals, organizations, agencies, or associations interested in wildlife damage management.

Initial funding for the Berryman Institute was provided by Utah State University and USDA -APHIS-Animal Damage Control. The two initial Berryman Institute fellowships were funded by ADC. In

addition, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has endorsed the Institute, and is assisting in attempts to secure additional funding.

There is no doubt that the formation of a complete academic program in wildlife damage _ management, as well as the formation of the Berryman Institute of Wildlife Damage Management, will complement the evolving professionalism within the wildlife damage management profession (Schmidt et al. 1992b).

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