

HABITAT PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT
FOR WILDLIFE

Paper Presented
by:

D.R. Hurn
Assistant Director
Habitat Protection
Fish and Wildlife Branch
Ministry of Recreation and Conservation
Provincial Government of British Columbia
Victoria, B.C.

HABITAT PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT FOR WILDLIFE

The utilization of renewable or nonrenewable natural resources by modern industrial methods invariably upsets the equilibrium of natural systems of which wildlife is a part. For this discussion, I will consider wildlife to mean terrestrial and aquatic animals and their environments. To set the stage for my comments a statement of the objectives and principles guiding the Fish and Wildlife Branch is in order.

Objective 1 - to attempt to ensure that the wildlife resources and their uses within management units are identified, measured and evaluated.

Objective 2 - to attempt to ensure that the methods of resource extraction are respectful of the resource base - the land and the water, its vital associations and its wildlife productivity.

Objective 3 - to attempt to modify the activities of resource extraction so as to reduce the invariably disruptive effects on the animal populations and the uses thereof.

Objective 4 - to attempt to monitor and regulate an array of other pressures on the resource base and/or animals themselves, arising from but secondary to the activities of the prime resource user.

Objective 5 - to attempt to develop restorative or enhancement prescriptions which may, following prime resource extraction, return the resource base to a new productive optimum in wildlife.

Objective 6 - to uphold the provisions of the Fisheries and Wildlife Acts and their regulations.

Your symposium, so far, has touched on the technologies of exploration, extraction, marketing, reclamation, and even politics. Most of

these aspects have developed considerably during the last decade, and there is little I can add to your existing knowledge. However, I wish to share with you some thoughts about a critical element of resource management related to mining; that of the legislative, regulatory and planning systems of government - a vehicle upon which the economic future of this province is based. Within these government systems the technology is weakest, and in spite of considerable gains in recent years, these systems may constitute the most serious impediment to the realization of wide base benefits to the people of this province. Obviously you must know and share your various mine related sub-technologies, likewise you must appreciate the fast-working institutional technology. Despite a few persistent Victorian notions, the affairs of government as co-managers in resource use are no longer to be tolerated as the exclusive and private preserve of the public servant operating from "little cloisters" of control. Put simply, it is not a matter of whether a mine goes into production but HOW!

Our government has given a clear statement to the public, to industry, and its resource managers, that the mineral industry in general, and coal and petroleum sectors in particular, are both necessary and desirable for the economic well-being of the people of this Province. This mandate, together with those supporting other resource economies, is increasingly conditioned by requirements that prime resource uses will be projected and executed with due regard for other resource values and socio-economic realities. To those of you in the private sector resource development represents an opportunity, while safeguarding socio-economic factors is likely seen as a cost. But how is the conditioned mandate viewed by the line resource agency which, by legislation, policy and procedure, is charged with administration of the mandate? What is the status of the management

planning technology which now requires a horizontal rather than a vertical rendition of responsibility and for which there are few models, fewer terms of reference and virtually no legislation? In short, the historical position of the line agency of government performing singularly at the interface with its industrial, commercial or private "public" is almost extinct or at best, endangered. What we now see is an apparent plethora of pre-planning, planning and even managerial systems which are characterized by:

1. Their interdisciplinary nature - representation of other resource agencies.
2. A notable lack of over-riding legislation to commonly guide the conduct of resource managers.
3. A standard process by which the relative values of competing or affected resource values may be objectively examined.
4. A peculiar mix of centralized and decentralized resource agencies.
5. No common forum or level of decision-making.

While that may appear a litany of ills which foretells of failure, quite the opposite is true. It is beginning to work and work well to the common good over the long haul. Why?

Firstly, our legislation and our management institutions were designed and brought into practice in the people-thin, resource-thick hours at the dawn of the century. But as the people demand grew and the resources diminished, those institutions were increasingly incapable of dealing with the concomitant conflict. Secondly, many of the resources now valued were then uncosted and unsung and commonly in such excess as to have been thought limitless. Others have achieved social and economic value by changes in social attitudes.

This society requires more from less, and the managers know that they must, with public involvement, develop better ways.

Each line agency, still armed with single purpose legislation and internal delivery systems, must now perform as a planning head to an interagency body of advisors. Then, having got the input to a plan, they must make the first line judgements on the relative resource values and make allocations in the context of public interests. Finally, they must provide, monitor, and enforce operational guidelines in that public interest. Few, if any of us, were trained in such complex large-group planning systems, and in the relative lack of multi-disciplinary planning expertise, the only real hope is the freedom to explore, innovate and value.

You heard about THE RECLAMATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE from Mr. Jake McDonald better than I could describe it. But in the context of my thoughts, I'll venture some observations about any of the referral or co-planning arrangements which have recently evolved on the resource scene.

Technological shortfall - Many of the resource agencies whose resources are accommodated in a given utilization plan, are themselves unknowledgable about managerial options of the prime industry and are therefore not able to project, for the prime manager, the possible conditions by which to mitigate or compensate for "his" resource. If they can't, who will? Frequently, this lack of understanding of the other guy's ways leads him to the graveyard route - be so restrictive that reasonable and economic means of accommodation are denied. This is a rejection of the mandate. We must free the various managers to innovate and apply management solutions without penalty.

Economic shortfall - In a conflict between the use of land area for (say) forest production and water storage, with the other values of agriculture and wildlife and recreation, the challenge of developing a co-management position is often impeded by the more visible economic pervasions of the proponent, stalwartly countered by not so equal economic rhetoric of the defender. In want of solid economic validation of cost and benefit, cause and effect, we have seen and still suffer from past allocation decisions.

To come to the co-planning table, to assist the prime manager to generate a plan for the multiple use of resources, one must bring equivalent inventories of resource, with up-to-date evaluations of use and potential. In this regard, the hard resources of forests, water and minerals lend themselves more readily to measurement than do the extensive or soft resources such as wildlife, recreation and aesthetics. Yet the line manager is taxed with accommodating these hard and soft values in a management plan and administrative matrix to ensure that the mandate is served, consistent with the retention of other resource options and economic viability. He must manage "chalk and cheese". We must make the top priority the design and execution of resource inventories which will bring forth comparable resource data to the planning and decision tables.

A great number of examples have already been developed in the preplanning, multi-disciplined resource game in which the line manager was unable, unwilling or unauthorized to make the ultimate allocative decisions. Most commonly, the breakdown occurred at levels superior to himself. What is now starting to evolve is a system of upward referral of macro-judgements which will be

economically reasonable, technically feasible, socially acceptable and politically saleable. The key is not so much the forum and participants in the final allocation decision so much as the need to place the exploration of planning options and management solutions at the working level - on the ground, in public visibility and in the stimulating climate where the action is.

Finally, planning races are often just that; with some contestants hobbled by staff inadequacies, others by inappropriate professional equipment. The handicaps are weird, and there appears to be numerous starting lines with only one fuzzily perceived finish.

These are some of the difficulties faced by the prime resource planner in streaming the needs of other resources into a management prescription for resource extraction. Yet the systems are proving productive as this symposium attests.

What then is the challenge in the immediate future? What parts must the various components play in sharpening the act? The industrial sector will be compelled by the vigors of the market to always seek less costly ways of realizing a return to the investor. But the investor and his industry must also insist that the activities of the government planning system are equally cost effective in terms of the mandate from government. The manager in government must be given freedom from the narrow strictures of his own legislation in order to be able to fully participate in the co-planning process. He must be counselled by a wider variety of in-house expertise which reflects the dispersed resource and social values being accommodated. And he must have, together with his industrial partner, a clear understanding of a stable decision-making process.

I shall not apologize for failing to deliver a technical paper for I have dealt in part with one of the most salient technologies which we are now employing in resource management. The wide portfolio of investments which the people of this province have in natural resources and their beneficial uses is the best assurance for our future as a society; and the effort which goes into portfolio management will, as with the individual person or corporation, dictate the investment return. All partners must be effective in the common husbandry of resources.

In conclusion, it is not whether there shall be reclamation, but how and to what ends shall it deliver.

DISCUSSIONS RELATED TO D.R. HURN'S PAPER

Time did not permit discussion about this paper.