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CONSERVATION EDUCATION IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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DEFINITIONS

The word "conservation" appears to have undergone a considerable change in use and meaning during the twentieth century from the original narrow meaning of "guarding or protecting;" for today we use the word "Conservation" to indicate both the study and the management of the whole complex network of man's natural environment (3). Dr. Paul B. Sears Director of Yale University's Conservation Program defined conservation as "Man's attempt to come to terms with his environment" (2). After spending more than twenty years attempting to teach young men, rather than subject-matter of college courses, I can fully agree with Dr. Firman E. Bean when he said "Conservation is a way of thinking," and, "It begins with man himself" (1).

Education is a process of mental development that begins with birth and ends at death; and it results in knowledge, abilities, and attitudes which govern our code of action in our relationships with our natural environment, our fellowman, and with our creator. Education is not confined to the formal training of schools, colleges, and

universities; but it is a continuing process, for we learn from all that is about us. The educated man may wear out; but he will never rust out, because education whets the mind and polishes the soul.

I consider myself a conservationist by interest and avocation rather than by profession, and I consider this meeting a delightful opportunity to present some views on "Conservation Education In Colleges and Universities." Many of these views will be my own, and they may not agree with the views held by some of you; however, we are stimulated in our thinking when confronted with either new ideas or opinions that differ from our own.

Responsibilities of Colleges and Universities

Let us now consider some of the responsibilities of colleges and universities in the field of conservation education. I consider institutions of higher education to have at least four areas of responsibility in the realm of natural resource conservation. Let us briefly consider each of these areas of responsibility:

1. To awaken and to stimulate an interest in the wise use and management of our natural resources of soil, water, forest, grass,

and wildlife; and in the preservation of areas of scenic beauty, and natural facilities for recreational purposes.

The rapid urbanization of our population is creating changes in the interests and attitudes of our people, and I detect an increasing number of our college students with knowledge of or interest in resource conservation. Man is by nature an exploiting and destructive being; and it is only by the development of interest, knowledge, and attitudes that he becomes conservation minded. This offers a challenge to all education systems from the kindergarten to the university, and each has a responsibility that must be efficiently met in developing responsible citizens.

3. Each institution of higher education, whether public or private, has a responsibility in setting examples of good natural resource conservation in the management of their own land and facilities. I do not desire to comment further on this point except to say that wide variations are observable in the management of institutional properties.

3. Colleges and universities have major responsibilities in providing their students with the undergraduate training and educational experiences essential in the development of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes preparatory to employment in the chosen profession and for responsible citizenship. Also, where adequate facilities and capable personnel can be economically provided, graduate programs are desirable.

It is my personal opinion that general resource training would give the undergraduate student a considerable knowledge of our natural resources and that of the supporting sciences, as well as some understanding of man's responsibilities and attitudes towards the management of his environment; however, I am fearful that the B.S. graduate of such a program might find himself unemployable in the field of conservation—at least for the present.

Men and women are presently employed in the profession of conservation as foresters, soil scientists, soil conservationists, hydrologists, wildlife manager, etc.; therefore, the undergraduate student must be given sound, up-to-date, and thorough professional training in a particular discipline if he is to be employable as a professional conservationist. I must hasten to add that training in communication skills, economics, and psychology; as well as training in the humanities, including government and sociology, etc., are equally important. Donald A. Williams (4), Administrator of the Soil Conservation Service, believes (and I quote) "Speciality training can begin early in a college curriculum, and develop with increased intensity during the ensuing four years. It should never be permitted, in the beginning, however, to displace basic training in the humanities."

To provide the desirable broad basic education along with the essential training-in-depth in a technical discipline continues to be a dilemma for curriculum makers.

Those charged with the responsibility of developing college curricula are aware of the fact that conservationists will likely be working more with people than with natural resources per se; however, course hours must be kept within prescribed limits, prerequisites must be met, and there is usually resistance to change. The interdisciplinary approach may be followed by cooperating departments, but difficulties in administration and schedule conflicts are not conducive to easy "cross-fertilization."

College curricula should not attempt to provide the undergraduate student with all the knowledge, skills, and experiences desirable for a professional conservationist, rather, the college should concentrate on providing the basic tools for self-study, propagate an inquiring mind by cultivating the desire for knowledge, and expect the employing agency or firm to provide for continuing the educational processes. Many firms and agencies

are presently providing excellent post-employment training opportunities for employees. Universities that provide graduate training, either in technical areas related to conservation or in public administration, are rendering valuable assistance in increasing the capabilities of experienced conservations.

4. The fourth, and the last responsibility for colleges that I will discuss, is that of discovering and guiding capable and suitable undergraduates into resource conservation activities.

The most satisfactory method of accomplishing this objective, that I have observed, is to induce students to qualify for the student trainee program now being utilized by the Soil Conservation Service, the Forest Service, and some other agencies. This is a program that I would like to see expanded by those now in operation, and I believe other agencies and firms could profit by following these examples.

Each college department, offering a discipline related to any phase of resource conservation work, should have one or more interested staff members constantly looking for promising prospective conservationists. Most of us here today owe a debt of gratitude to someone, probably a college professor, who lit the torch and pointed the way to our own trail of work experience. Each capable college freshman deserves like consideration.

Conclusions

As our urban centers expand with the explosion of population, certain areas of resource conservation becomes more complex and difficult; and the needs for programs of conservation education become more acute.

I believe that the future will need and demand more, and better trained, conservationists than we have today. Who will be responsible for directing them into their life's work? It is a rewarding and challenging experience to play some part in guiding another individual into an area of service to

mankind. I solicit your assistance in this worthy cause.

So long as our forests are ravaged by fire, or they suffer from other mismanagement by man; so long as our streams run red with the very life blood of our farm lands, or they are polluted with waste of industry or man; or so long as we face critical shortages of water for man, industry, or wildlife; you and I have a job to do in conservation education, but what a gratifying experience we are having as we work at the job.

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A STUDY OF THE FUTURE FUNCTIONS OF THE SOUTHEASTERN OHIO REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Origin of the Study

During 1961 the members of the Southeastern Ohio Regional Council developed a concern with the program of the Council in area development. During 1960 and 1961 several small area development committees became active, regional development programs extended into the Council area, and county-wide Area Redevelopment Administration committees were formulated. These activities resulted in some confusion as to the role of the SEORC. As a result, the Council engaged the College of Commerce of Ohio University to determine the future functions of the Council.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine how the SEORC can best fit into the pattern of groups currently engaged in activities to encourage the economic development of the area represented by the Council. Economic development is defined as rising income for the people of the region, including profits for the region's business and industrial firms. A second purpose is to recommend to the Council activities that will enable the Council to become more effective in achieving its goals.

Methods and Procedures

Official records of the Council were examined and analyzed. The investigator had a great deal of difficulty in this task. Records are incomplete. They are not kept in one place nor maintained in good order. No official membership list was found. The investigator was unable to find minutes for any meeting of the Trustees or general membership except for a few meetings in the early history of the Council.

The second step involved interviewing various persons involved with economic development activities in Southeastern Ohio. The interviews were conducted in the given order with representatives of: Ohio Department of Industrial and Economic Development, Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Agricultural Extension Service, area development departments of public utilities, regional organizations, county development organizations in each county, and SEORC members.

During each interview the interviewee was briefed on the organization and history of the SEORC. The interviewee was asked to describe the role his organization played in area development in Southeastern Ohio or any other area. The interviewee was then asked to indicate the functions he thought the SEORC should assume and what procedures he would recommend for the SEORC to follow in area development.

The ideas and suggestions of the interviewees were compiled and analyzed. On the basis of this compilation and analysis and with consideration for the basic objectives

of the SEORC as expressed in its Constitution and early records, possible functions of the SEORC are given and procedures to accomplish these functions and activities are recommended.

Possible Functions of the Council.

1. Coordinate the activities of all groups in the area interested in redevelopment.
 - a. Coordinate efforts of local Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade, Community Development Groups, etc.
 - b. Coordinate efforts of government agencies.
 - c. Stimulate county ARA and OEDP committees.
2. Become a resource group for the area. Compile area resources, determine needs of the area, study specific problems of the entire area and take steps to solve them.
3. Serve as a promotional agency for the area.
 - a. Promote Southeastern Ohio obtaining the active cooperation in this program of all groups, organizations, and individuals in the area.
 - b. Be an active lobby group for Southeastern Ohio.
 - c. With the help of cooperating groups, continuously publicize both within and outside the area, the advantages and resource of Southeastern Ohio.
 - d. Promote Southeastern Ohio economically by:
 - (1) Encouraging tourist trade through:
 - (a) Assisting in developing recreational projects, private and public.
 - (b) Helping to further develop the farm vacation program.
 - (c) Conducting formal and informal seasonal beauty tours.
 - (2) Encouraging the development and expansion of home grown businesses and industries.