

National Waltonian

Editorials

Aug. 1935

A Better Place to Live

When the leaves turn red and the autumn of life approaches, the lover of nature has an inborn desire to make the old home a better place in which to live. This is a doctrine born of the uplifting influence of fields, forests and streams. It is a sound creed based upon the wholesome effect that the outdoors has upon human life.

The current of conservation flows steadily on. Looking back through the years, one recalls the gatherings where clubs were formed to battle for the betterment of the outdoor things we love. If it's a local problem, it may be solved. If it centers about an energetic personality, he may have passed on. However, it has all added to the stream of opinion that flows steadily on toward national achievements.

The movement of our people today is free and easy from state to state and across the wide stretches of our land. Strangers are no longer strangers but neighbors. The conservation problems to be solved are no longer regional; they are national and have become of interest to all.

The forests that were cut and not replanted, the streams that eroded the soil and the floods that swept away wealth and life may seem local, but they are of nationwide concern. Federal funds have been called into use. Waterfowl like people move freely here and there. Federal laws have been summoned to halt destruction. Fish resources are a national food supply and thousands of streams are valuable sources of recreation. Pollution is a nationwide menace.

Throughout the land, a vast population is concentrated in the cities and striving for a livelihood. In every occupied area from the Atlantic to the Pacific are many engaged in the commercial use of land and water resources. Often without thought, the use of one destroys a second resource of equal or lesser value. Since a comparative few are striving for the economic use of natural resources for the people as a whole, a unified program is most important.

The gifts of nature which have been bestowed upon our country are not encumbered with debt. Their value to the public is that no general taxes need be levied for the upkeep. As the power of the army and navy protects our country, it is our national organization, viewing and studying conservation as a whole, that can direct the units and gain victory on various battle fronts.

The Izaak Walton League with its many chapters has done more than any other group to clean up the streams of our country. Now is the time to advance on all fronts, developing public sentiment and installing sewage systems in towns and cities to take care of human filth in a practical, hygienic way.

The federal government has \$4,000,000,000 to spend in useful employment. These constructive and beneficial projects are at the top of the list as most satisfactory for the employment of hand labor. Those who can furnish funds to finance or give time and energy to this national campaign are the builders of a most lasting monument to conservation.

This is one of the many phases of constructive effort open to League endeavors and the force available is directly dependent upon the number of members giving active support to it. For that reason we may well acknowledge membership activities as a vastly important contribution to the cause of conservation since it supplies the unified strength against which individual effort has little force in comparison.

Our League fully recognizes the value of every other national and local group in various lines of conservation. It realizes the importance of immediate action against a common enemy. Now is the time for a unified movement to make every town, county and state a better place in which to live.

William L. Finley