Box 1, Folder 12: Speeches, 1985-1988. 1985-1988

[s.l.]: [s.n.], 1985-1988

Remarks by Mike Dombeck

WDNR/Forest Service Fish Meeting

Glidden 4/19/85 [WI]

When I was a District Biologist on the Hiawatha, I used to hear the Regional Office folks say that the Chequamegon's Fish program was one of the best in the Region. They felt the contract with the state was an efficient way to carry out business and that it provided good continuity with the DNR's fisheries management as well as a good relationship with the state.

I knew Chuck Johnson long before I knew what the Forest Service was all about. Like Bob Radtke and Bob Hollingsworth, Chuck always seemed pleased with the program and still does.

Just because we've got a good program doesn't mean that we shouldn't strive for improvement.

As a short timer here, I'd like to offer some thoughts concerning ways I think the fish program can be improved.

To Forest Service folks:

Make sure the contract covers all your needs, you are paying their salary.
Be sure Skip and Jeff know specifically what you expect of them.
Both the Districts and the Supervisors should utilize Skip's and Jeff's expertise concerning fisheries and riparian concerns. Because they work for the DNR and have desks in another office, it is easy not to consult with. Invite them out in the field to help them understand what you do, and how you do it and what your needs are. They are not Forest Service employees but they are expected to understand how both the Forest Service and DNR function. So help them work more efficiently and get to know them.

Rangers:

Use Skip as your fisheries specialist. That is what he is being paid for. At this year's Fisheries Work Planning Meeting three groups were proposing activities; DNR Area Managers, District Rangers, and Forest Service Fish Contract. Should it be just two DNR and Forest Service?

Skip and Jeff:

Invite the Forest Service folks out with you in the field every chance you get. They are not Fisheries Biologists and this type of informal training will not only increase their sensitivity to aquatic resource needs but help them understand what you do and why you do it.

Maintain a high visibility, project oriented program. We all understand the need for survey work. But with a shrinking budget, Forest Service management favors funding projects work over surveys.

Work to develop a backlog of projects.

Provide the Rangers with brief project plans 1, 2 or even 3 years in advance, so they can plan ahead for these projects.

You will accomplish more by working through the District's and will likely get strong support from the Rangers.

Let the Ranger handle part of the budget battle for the program. Rangers have more influence than you do.

During next year's Fisheries Work Planning meetings prepare a summary listing the following on the Chequamegon:

1. Fisheries activities to be carried out by the DNR.

2. Fisheries activities planned under the Forest Service contract.

3. Fisheries activities by other means, such as Forest Service Districts, volunteers, etc.

This will provide the Forest Supervisor a good overview and the information needed to go to bat for the program.

[16 SEPT. 1987]

RISE TO THE FUTURE: The Forest Service Fisheries Program 1/

INTRODUCTION

Demand for commercial, sport, and subsistence fishing in the National Forests is expected to increase by 90 percent over the next five decades. But without continued attention to habitat management the supply of fisheries resources could actually decline by 20 percent. Recent budget trends for Forest Service fisheries habitat management are down by 16 percent in the past five years. In 1985, an American Fisheries Society Report told the Forest Service that new efforts were needed to ensure the health of aquatic resources on National Forest System lands. To address these issues, the Forest Service chartered a National Fisheries Task Force. 2/

The Task Force used the recommendations prepared by the American Fisheries Society as the starting point in preparing its report to the Chief of the Forest Service. The Fisheries Task Force Report and Action Plan was approved by Chief F. Dale Robertson on March 16, 1987. Chief Robertson's commitment to implementing the Fisheries Action Plan is best summarized by a statement he made at the signing ceremony. "Ten years down the road I'd like to look back on the signing of this plan as a curve bending event, the first step of a major push for a successful and highly visible fisheries habitat management program in the National Forests and Grasslands." The following is a summary of Forest Service fisheries resources, policies and goals, and fisheries program action plan.

FISHERIES RESOURCES OF THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM

The 191 million acres of National Forest System lands in 43 states contain about 128,000 miles of streams and rivers; 2.2 million acres of ponds, lakes, and reservoirs; and 16,500 miles of coast and shorelines. They provide a tremendous annual harvest of fish for sport, commerce, and subsistence. In addition to hundreds of nongame species, game fish in the National Forests include salmon, trout, catfish, pike, muskellunge, bass, walleye, and sunfish.

1/ Remarks delivered by Mike Dombeck, National Fisheries Porgram Manager, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090 at the Winston-Salem, North Carolina 117th Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society, September 16, 1987

2/ Fisheries Task Force members were: Mike Barton, Regional Forester, Alaska Region (Leader), Paul Brouha, Deputy Director, American Fisheries Society, Glen Hetzel, Director of Range, Wildlife, Fisheries, and Ecology, Rocky Mountain Region, Forest Service, Phil Janik, Director of Wildlife and Fisheries Management, Alaska Region, Forest Service, Tom Kovalicky, Supervisor, Nez Perce National Forest, Ron Marcoux, Associate Director, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, Robert Nelson, Director of Wildlife and Fisheries Management, Forest Service, Carl Sullivan, Executive Director, American Fisheries Society, Dave Unger, Director of Watershed and Air Management, Forest Service, and Steven Wright, Commissioner, Vermont Department of Fish and Game.

Fish production in the National Forests is substantial. For example, in California, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington, over 50 percent of the spawning and rearing habitats for salmon and steelhead trout are found in National Forests, on about 15,000 miles of streams. In Alaska, approximately 27 percent of the freshwater habitat for salmon and steelhead is in the National Forests, on about 30,000 miles of streams.

Sport fishing is the second most popular nation-wide outdoor recreation activity in America. Over 53 million anglers engage in some type of sport fishing annually. In 1980 they spent over 850 million days and over $17.3 billion in pursuing their sport. Demand is expected to increase 90 percent by the year 2030.

As access to private land declines, particularly near urban centers, the National Forests will provide one of the best opportunities for increased public angling. This is especially true for cold and warm water fishing in the Southwest, Rockies, Northeast, Midwest, and South. Current fishing use throughout the National Forest System is estimated at 46.5 million angler days annually with a net economic value of $1.21 billion. Aquatic habitat protection and restoration in concert with well-designed habitat improvement projects can increase habitat productivity and angling opportunities. For example, an estimated 25 percent increase in angler use from access development and habitat improvement would amount to an additional 11.6 million angler days and $303 million of fishing related expenditures. Many such opportunities have been identified in Forest Plans and coordinated with State Fish and Wildlife Agencies as part of their Comprehensive Plans developed pursuant to the Sikes Act.

In addition to recreational uses, the annual harvest of salmon and steelhead spawned and reared in National Forests is over 118 million pounds, with a commercial value of $123 million. The capability exists to increase this harvest through economically sound habitat improvements to 190 million pounds with a direct value of $229 million. Typical projects include construction of fishways past barriers to fish movement, improvement of spawning and rearing habitat, lake fertilization, and acid neutralization to increase productivity.

FISHERIES POLICIES AND GOALS

The USDA Forest Service's responsibility for managing fish habitats dates back to the Organic Administration Act of 1897. This Act instructed that the resources within Forest Reserves (later called National Forests) be protected for "... securing favorable conditions of water flows and to furnish a continuous supply of timber ...". Since that time, additional legislation, policy, and agency direction have clarified that responsibility. The National Forests are now managed for multiple values and uses. This requires balanced consideration of all resources during planning and land management. Productive fisheries are dependent on the healthy riparian areas and aquatic ecosystems that result from that balance.

The protection and enhancement of fisheries on National Forests are specifically prescribed by the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and the National Forest Management Act of 1976. Habitats are managed to recover threatened or endangered species, maintain viable populations of all native and

desired non-native fish, and produce game and commercially valuable fish to meet public demands for use. Specific objectives are developed through Forest planning, with fish as integral parts of overall multiple use goals. These objectives address both legal mandates and opportunities to meet State goals for fish use. Schedules for management activities and monitoring of fish habitat conditions and trends are developed and carried out in partnerships with the States and other cooperators.

THE FISHERIES PROGRAM ACTION PLAN IN BRIEF

The purpose of this action plan is to integrate fish habitat management into the overall multiple use goals on each unit of the National Forest System.

1. Enhance program identification by increasing the awareness of fish habitat management throughout the Forest Service and among fishery users and cooperators.

   * Clearly identify the expected results of the fisheries program at National, Regional, Forest, and District levels.

   * Ensure that fisheries is included in the staff or job titles of all personnel having fisheries responsibilities.

2. Use the best management technologies to increase habitat management efficiency and effectiveness.

   * Develop, implement, and refine cumulative effects analyses to identify both positive and negative effects of land management on fisheries resources.

   * Develop and implement aquatic classifications and inventories to improve predictive models and determine proper investments.

   * Identify, schedule, and budget research needs and studies.

3. Communicate fish habitat improvement and access needs and market fishing opportunities.

   * Publish and distribute materials that highlight the fisheries program and fishing opportunities in the National Forests.

   * Invite the news media and interested groups on "show-me" trips.

   * Hold briefings to explain fisheries opportunities, needs, and accomplishments.

4. Strengthen partnerships with States, Federal Agencies, Tribal Governments, conservation groups, and publics to share in fisheries management.

   * Review and update Memoranda of Understanding with States to improve fisheries management partnerships.

* Develop cooperative agreements with other Agencies, Tribal Governments, conservation groups, and interested publics to strengthen partnerships and improve fishing.

* Encourage participation of volunteers in fish habitat improvement projects.

5. Use valid economic techniques to determine fishery values, supplies, and demands in the decision making process.

   * Publish a summary of best methods for determining ecomonic values of fisheries resources.

   * Require inclusion of fisheries values with the values of other resources in decision making.

6. Maintain a highly skilled workforce with strong managerial, analytical, and technical skills.

   * Utilize cooperative education programs, internships, and summer employment for students to provide advanced training for students and prospective employees.

   * Implement entry-level and mid-career training programs to improve career-long employee efficiency and effectiveness.

   * Ensure that fisheries biologists are qualified for other resource management jobs.

7. Implement a program of activities and develop budgets to accomplish the above goals.

   * Develop a fisheries workload analysis procedure and conduct the analyses to determine staffing needs.

   * Include fisheries projects in Forest Plan implementation schedules that are used to develop annual budgets.

   * Use programs such as the Challenge Grant Program to expand fisheries funding opportunities.

For additional information contact: USDA Forest Service, Wildlife and Fisheries Management, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090.

CAN WE MAKE OUR VISION A REALITY

remarks by
Mike Dombeck, National Fisheries Program Manager
Forest Service Program Managers Workshop
Sellers Lake, Florida, 2/25/88

For the first time our fisheries program has a clearly defined vision, a central focus. It's called RISE TO THE FUTURE.

RISE TO THE FUTURE is our strategic plan, our road map. At the National level RISE TO THE FUTURE is packaged at four levels of complexity. Just having the Forest Service fish program clearly described is a major step forward. RISE TO THE FUTURE has put the Forest Service fisheries program in the fore-front on the Washington scene. It has rallied a lot of support from our constituencies. For example, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife agencies pledged their support with the unanimous passage of a position statement. Conservation groups have applauded it. Many of the Agency's critics are behind us on this one. And even the U.S. Congress pledged support for RISE TO THE FUTURE with a $1.4 million add-on this year.

And now each Region has its own RISE TO THE FUTURE action plan that has generated new support.

Now that we have our National and Regional road map, we need to monitor our progress. We need be sure RISE TO THE FUTURE is making a difference where it counts, on the ground.

How can we we measure progress or success? As program managers we are all very concerned about having the dollars and fisheries biologists to do the job on the ground. But dollars and people are to means to getting to the bottom line.

Our bottom line is providing our customers the quality fishing opportunities they demand. We do this through our stewardship responsibility. The stewardship it takes to maintain the quality resource condition needed to produce fish. I'll talk more about this later, but for now lets take a look closer at our customers .

How well do we know our customers? Who they are? And what they want?

We know that fishing is the fastest growing outdoor recreation activity in the USA:

*more females are fishing then ever before
*more kids are fishing
*more older folks are fishing
*more people from urban areas are fishing
*a larger proportion of the fishing public are well educated and have good incomes
*fishing demand is increasing fastest near large urban areas and in the sunbelt.

In 1985, U.S. waters supported nearly 1 billion angler days. These anglers spent over $28 billion dollars going fishing. And all this fishing supported over 600,000 jobs. National Forest fish habitats are very important. One in every twelve acres of freshwater in the U.S. excluding the Great Lakes are in the National Forests, and 50% of our trout streams and 50% of the salmon and steelhead spawning and rearing habitat in the Pacific Northwest, and about 30% of the salmon and steelhead spawning and rearinr habitat Alaska.

Consumption of fish is also on the rise. It reached an all time high of 14.5 pounds per person in 1985 and continues to increase. The Pacific Northwest and Alaskan commercial salmon fisheries provide lots of jobs and lots of dollars to the economy.

Lets get back to the bottom line, customer satisfaction. How do we measure our progress. Thats the tuff part. But I'd like to toss out some ideas of what we can and should be measured:

1. Numbers of partnerships
2. Number of cooperative projects
3. Number and diversity of cooperators
4. Number and tone of press releases and media coverage
5. Number of angler days (FUD's)
6. Awards from outside groups
7. Trends in appeals and litigation
8. Customer support for budgets
9. Results of studies and creel census

And I'm sure there are many more. I'd appreciate any other ideas you have on ways to measure customer satisfaction. But first I like to say a little about resource condition.

Measuring the success of RISE TO THE FUTURE in terms of resource condition or trends is more clear cut, but that doesn't mean it' easier. Some of the things we need to measure are:

1. Numbers or pounds of fish produced
2. Habitat capability
3. Miles of streams restored of enhanced
4. Acres of lakes restored or inhanced
5. Number of populations recovered or improved

We measure habitat conditions and trends through research and studies, through our fish habitat relationships systems, through area analysis, and project evaluations, and through monitoring our Forest Plans.

Why do we need these basic measures of success? We've got to show to our customers that we are producing the product they want, and we've got to document trends in aquatic resource condition. We've got to prove that we are putting the dollars where they are doing the most good. We've got to prove that we have the capacity to deliver the vision. We've got to prove that RISE TO THE FUTURE is making a difference on the ground.

Its up to us to make RISE TO THE FUTURE a reality on the ground, to deliver the product our customers want. Its up to us to create the organizational environment for this to happen. This is why the Forest Service is paying us.

The other day I was reading about how to bring about organizational change. A model presented by Professor Roberts fit RISE TO THE FUTURE to a tee:

1. We need a vision, we have that.
2. We need the organizational capacity and resource to do the job, we have that.
3. We need the authorizing environment, which permits or empowers us to deliver the vision. This is where lots of work needs to done. To gain the support for our fisheries program to become reality on the ground. Support from Congress, support from line officers, support throughout the agency, support from the States, support from anglers. The authorizing environment is the organization, the budget, the manpower it takes to deliver the vision.

As managers we must creatively reach out and build internal and external support for our program. We must reach out and build a credible fisheries program based on science. We have a good fisheries program, we have many of the best fish habitat managers and researchers in the country or even the world. But we can do even better.

What does it takes to bring about organizational change, to make the vision reality.

We must:

1. Be totally committed to the vision.
2. Articulate the vision in very simple terms.
3. Be responsive to customer demands and expectations.
4. Be persistent.
5. Keep it simple.

Lee Iacoca did it. We can too.