

New Soils Building  
August 13, 1934

Mr. William Schuenke  
Fish and Game Commission  
Des Moines, Iowa

Dear Bill:

I have read the "Guide" with much interest.

Since you invite comment, I will say that in my opinion this kind of a venture will be immensely valuable, or nearly worthless, depending on who writes its contents, and how.

This first number is at least promising. The curse of official conservation "house organs" is that they tend to degenerate into uncritical booster-sheets whose obvious purpose is to sanctify all actions of the Department (viz: Pennsylvania Game News) or else sob-stuff (perhaps Minnesota Conservationist). Your paper so far avoids most of these errors, but the force of gravity works night and day. It all depends on you, Bode, and your staff.

May I suggest the following criteria of quality?

- (1) Does each item admit, at least tacitly, that there are both pros and cons in every possible question, and in the action thereon? (See crow photograph, which is typical uncritical propaganda of the worst sort.)
- (2) Does each article admit, at least tacitly, that the Department can't do anything without the landowner? (You are 100 per cent on this in Issue #1.)
- (3) Do you occasionally admit mistakes, miscarriages, and disappointments? (Too early to tell.)
- (4) Do you occasionally criticize the holy public? (Your own article does, by inference.)
- (5) Is there in each issue some elucidation of research findings and techniques, implying the insufficiency of present methods? (O.K. in No. 1, except that the attempt to explain Errington's paper is obscure and heavy.)
- (6) Is there in each issue an implication that the conservationist must study as well as smote and pay? (O.K.--see list of books.)

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- (7) Does each issue admit dependence on other administrative agencies? (Conservation Board, etc.) And other fields of conservation?
- (8) Are unpleasant, troublesome, and insoluble questions freely discussed? (Viz: chinch-bug clean-ups, etc.)
- (9) Don't hope to attain attractiveness by forced jazz. (O.K. so far.)

These things may indicate my line of thought. The best house organ I know of is California Fish and Game, but it falls down on 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8. Most of the sporting magazines and association periodicals fail on most of these points.

I am taking the liberty of sending a copy of this to Jay Darling and Paul Errington.

Yours as ever,

P. S. In addition to these "don'ts", you will, of course, need some forceful writing, but there is no way to define this. Parts of your own article (I don't mean the quotes) have force. A.L.