

FOREST CONSERVATION ESSENTIAL TO GAME CONSERVATION.

(Paper read by GEORGE D. PRATT, at Sixteenth American Game Conference.)

As President of the American Forestry Association, I am naturally concerned about the forestry conditions of the country, the need for the acquisition of more forest lands, more effective fire preventive measures and aggressive educational programmes which will spread the story of forest needs and progress, but in the very nature of things, an interest in the forests must include a growing concern for the wild life which once lived here in such abundance. In fact, it was my interest in big game hunting that led me into conservation work many years ago.

There are three phases of outdoor life which are very closely related, forests, game, and recreation. Without the forests many specimens of game could not exist, and unless the game animals are in the forests, thousands of people would feel no incentive to go there. The angler finds relief from the grind of every day living when he enters the woods to fish, but unless fish are in the streams he is unlikely to go. In other words, our forests lose much of their attractiveness and usefulness when they are without the presence of wild life.

Game laws, necessary as they are, would be of little avail unless forest conservation and restoration is carried out. Take the disastrous change brought about in fish life due to the pollution of our streams and altered stream flow, which are the direct results of the burning or cutting of the forest cover. Streams that once had their birth in the protected areas of abundant forests have become sluggish and scanty of flow because they have been robbed of the benefits of the forest cover. In many cases soil washed from unprotected slopes by violent storms has choked the rivers and in other cases the streams have overflowed because of the rush of waters which, had the forests been in their natural state, would have been diverted to the forest bed.

It is not hard to imagine the chaos wrought in the life habits of the wild duck which feeds and nests upon the lower reaches of a stream when destructive floods or faminishing droughts rob it of its home and food.

Certain fish, such as the black bass, depend on the live food in the streams for their subsistence, and when we cut and denude our forests, we have in part at least destroyed their food supply.

It goes without saying that a large toll of wild life is taken in every big forest fire. That is inevitable, and here again forest