

COYOTE SYMPOSIUM SUMMARY – FROM THE PRIVATE INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

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To summarize the symposium from a Private Industry perspective, all I can say is “Wow!”

My goal coming to the Conference, and being involved with the Wildlife Damage Management Working Group, with The Wildlife Society (TWS), and with all the other professional associations, is as a “sponge”: to attend, to soak up the information, and to bring it back to members of National Wildlife Control Operators Association (NWCOA) and the private industry. Perhaps a better analogy is that I’m serving as a “translator”. From that perspective, it has been a great success. It’s going to take me weeks to take the information from today’s presentations, as well as the hand-out materials, and sort it out, and translate it, and figure out how it can best be used in our industry to help educate and inform our members on how to be the messengers of this information to clientele in need. We have played with the idea of having a specific, industry-driven coyote training class, translated to the operator-level needs. Our industry is not dealing with predator management at the population level; rather, we are dealing with the individual animals that are the exception to the rule, and they are the problems. We need the larger picture, the research currently in progress, and we need friends in this field to help us digest and apply the relevant information to our specific situations.

As a summary of the session, all I can say is that it has been a big success. I would like to thank Bob Timm for including us in the organization of the coyote symposium, and Art Smith and others in TWS as a whole for getting the private industry involved with the Conference.

I would like to let you know about the goals of the private industry sector, in broad terms, concerning our involvement in these forums. I have listed 4 general goals.

Because the private sector deals with specific wildlife problems, one of our roles is as a messenger. We convey information from sessions such as these to the general public, often in one-on-one interactions. In doing so, we change public perceptions. And that is why earlier I raised the questions of whether there is research that measures the effects of this information transfer. We notice it, I do, and so do the other industry people here. It is a big change; it is a small, slow change, but it results in a large change over time. When you affect a very influential person in a neighborhood, it spreads like wildfire. If it becomes socially acceptable to control the wildlife in your backyard, then others think “we want to do that, too”. The attitude then spreads. One-on-one does have an effect. I do think we can change public perception, and in doing so, it can help us employ the methodologies we need to use. The resistance to doing needed control work is not as much as you might think.

Another goal was to meet with Wildlife Services, to help with a cooperative effort in reducing what I might call 'theoretical conflicts,' but which actually are communication problems. They can be resolved quickly, and conferences like this can help us do that. I have been able to meet with Bill Clay and others, and as NWCOA's representative, we will meet soon to discuss these situations about our own human dimensions issues in the wildlife damage arena. We are both interested in finding solutions, not in pointing fingers and finding fault for what has happened in the past. Personal contact can resolve these problems, and this Conference has helped make that possible.

Another item is that NWCOA is going to renew our commitment to providing support for this Conference, as a private industry. The private sector needs to be a part of this, along with public agencies and organizations such as Extension, Wildlife Services, the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, and so on. We need to be involved, as appropriate.

One last goal— please get our name right: we are the National Wildlife Control Operators (not "Nuisance"). I suspect no one noticed this error on the signs and programs except us. Pick up a copy of the issue of *WCT Magazine* that contains an article I wrote as NWCOA President two months ago (Julien 2007). It describes some of the things we are currently doing in order to train and inform our operators.

Thank you.

LITERATURE CITED

JULIEN, T. 2007. National Wildlife Control Operators Association (NWCOA) President's Message. *W.C.T. – Wildlife Control Technology* 14:30-31.