

Stream Pollution Main Discourse at Sportsmen's Meet

McMinnville, July 31.—Stream pollution became one of the major problems for discussion as the state Izaak Walton league convention opened here today. Virtually every speaker on the morning program touched on it.

M. F. Corrigan, president, said the resolutions committee would be asked to comment. C. W. Reynolds, representing the state planning board, declared that every stream must be considered in relation to all resources not one alone.

Portland was represented on one poster shown by him as "the city beautiful with an open sewer running through it." William L. Finley, Portland, vice president of the National Izaak Walton league, declared that if people in a given area died in great numbers, the cause would be corrected, but when fish die because of stream pollution the only move is to propagate more.

He called attention to a bill being prepared for the next legislature which would put an end to pollution by municipalities and industries. Speakers representing state and federal conservation agencies are on the program to be concluded Sunday with competitive sports events and a fly casting exhibition at Hirters park near Newberg.

Wild Life Talk Planned Tuesday By Dr. W. Finley

Dr. William L. Finley, naturalist, will lecture on "Woods, Waters and Wildlife" Tuesday night at 8 o'clock

in the auditorium of Benson Polytechnic school, under auspices of the Library association. The lecture will be open to the public.

Dr. Finley recently toured the eastern states and Canada lecturing on wildlife resources of the northwest. In Toronto he appeared before the Royal Canadian institute. At Ottawa his lecture was given under the patronage and in the presence of Lord Tweedsmuir, governor-general of Canada. He was a dinner guest at the White House, and spent more than an hour discussing western conservation problems with President Roosevelt.

Dr. Finley will illustrate his lecture with five reels of motion pictures.



W. L. Finley

MARTIN'S STAND ON FISH TARGET

W. L. Finley Claims Polluted Streams Injurious

Recent statements by Governor Charles H. Martin about replenishing streams with game fish and making Oregon a game paradise so as to attract a greater tourist traffic were questioned yesterday by William L. Finley, Portland naturalist.

"Governor Martin and the game commission have been touring the state," said Mr. Finley, "and the press has announced that their aim is to speed up hatchery operations and increase the number of fingerlings to turn loose in our streams.

"The success of restoring fish life in our public waters is based on simple business principles, which are to lay a permanent foundation and build from the bottom up and not try to build from the top down. The ordinary rules of nature apply to fish the same as to the human race. Fish cannot live without something to eat and oxygen to breathe.

Pollution Kills Insects

"Some of the finest streams in Oregon, like the Willamette, have been turned into open sewers," said the naturalist. "The first effect of this pollution is to kill aquatic insects on which fish feed, and fingerlings turn belly up and die.

"Senator Byron G. Carney introduced a bill in the last session of the Oregon legislature aimed to clean up the streams of the state. It passed the senate and the house by a good majority, but was vetoed by Governor Martin.

"The game commission announces that it will release 35,000,000 fingerlings in our streams this year. Governor Martin suggested the liberation of 70,000,000 for 1938. As a matter of fact, sportsmen and conservationists are more concerned in the fish harvested from the rivers rather than a paper report of the fry planted. The value of a ranch is not in the millions of kernels of wheat plowed under the soil, but in the bushels of grain harvested.

"Oregon has a program of inviting more tourists to come in from all parts of the country so as to fill its cash register with tourist dollars. In return the state plans to furnish unusual recreational advantages, such as angling for trout, camping along clean streams, also swimming and boating, under conditions which are not a menace to health. This is sound business similar to a hotel advertising for new customers, providing the toilets of the institution are sanitary and the bathtubs are clean."

What's the Matter With Fishing?

In reply to Governor Martin's proposal that plantings of trout be doubled next year, William L. Finley, our internationally known naturalist, declares that it is the duty of Oregon to attack stream pollution and prepare our rivers for fish before the state undertakes an ambitious restocking project. Yet to a sportsman on the fence, and perhaps with a none too heavily laden fish basket, it would seem that both the governor and the naturalist are to be commended in this matter. The time approaches wherein the problem of pollution no longer can be neglected, but, meanwhile, we must rear fish for our streams, the greater number of which are unaffected by pollution. This statement is not an endeavor to carry water on both shoulders.

The trout and salmon streams of the Willamette watershed discharge themselves into the greater river of Sam Simpson's haunting poem. Of late years the Willamette has been called, without denial of the charge, an open sewer. Pollution in the lower Willamette has attained to such ugliness that during the period of summer low water there is said to be an insufficiency of dissolved oxygen, for a stretch of eleven miles, to sustain the life of game fishes. Since the greater number of trout, and all salmon, are anadromous, and must employ this waterway if they were spawned anywhere in the watershed, it is a warranted conclusion that perhaps slowly, yet surely, pollution is robbing the region of its birthright. Here is an instance to which Mr. Finley's spirited remarks undeniably apply.

Probably it is true that if toll were taken of our fish life only by anglers, there need be no alarm over the future. But other factors are constantly and increasingly at work, and foremost among these is the depletion of small streams for irrigation purposes, together with common refusal adequately to screen irrigation ditches. The loss of trout and salmon fry by reason of such causes is incalculable. Nor is it such loss as can be remedied at once by obedience to the law which commands that irrigation ditches be screened. Often the waters of the smaller streams are exhausted by irrigation demands, save in the higher reaches, until the course itself is dry and barren in summer or early autumn. When this occurs the normal migrations are interrupted and denied, with heavy loss of fish life, but the end is not yet. The restoration of the stream, by fall and winter rains, finds its long-arid channel utterly devoid of those lesser forms of aquatic life which sustain fishes. You may imagine, if you will, the sorry plight of a migration of trout, ascending from the sea to this barren water.

Some few years ago the legal catch of trout was considerably larger than it is today. Obviously we have been losing ground—or water, if you choose. Thus the governor is right when he asserts that we must increase our plantings, and Mr. Finley, too, is right when he declares that we must cleanse our streams. As for the state game commission, it would like nothing better than to restore the higher catches that were lawful in other days. Some day it hopes to.

This problem of how to increase our fishing is not insoluble. The factors of decrease are readily identified, the means of rehabilitation are in our own hands. The practice of conservation in the broader sense should restore to us the heritage that has been gradually slipping away.