

REMARKS FOR
CONSERVATION HALL OF FAME

WALTER E. SCOTT
April 22, 1995

Walter was my friend. Walter was everyone's friend. Walter Scott acted as the Department's conscious, to sort of keep everyone on track. His energy was boundless, no resource issue escaped his scrutiny and his interests included all things related to the natural resource arena: the past, the present, and the future of the resources.

Nothing got by his eagle eye. He used an ink fountain pen, usually green ink, for notes and messages including: Have you seen? Did you hear? Thought you'd like; This is up your alley; and on and on. Walter was the Department's one person information distribution center—history, old maps, surveys, water rights, prairie chickens, bald eagles, terns, cranes, navigable waters, irrigation wells, pesticides, herbicides, trout waters, highway construction. But, the policies, the future, where we were going, was a major concern of his.

For some 20 years I had the opportunity to work, converse, exchange ideas and thoughts and disagree on any and all issues, but most of all, we must learn from what we have done. History—the past, the hardships, the logging, Riparian rights, Rotenone, pesticide wars, deer wars, goose wars.

As I recall, Walt began his career as a warden in the Wisconsin Conservation Department in the 1930's, probably 1936. He witnessed the sparing between Harley MacKenzie and Ernie Swift during his early years and he eventually worked for both of them as Conservation Department Director.

Walter was a game manager also, but his major contributions to the state included his keen desire to research and record the history of resources. Many of his contributions are recorded in various publications including *The Wisconsin Academy of Arts, Letters and Science*, *Natural Resources Council of State Agencies*, and *The Conservation Bulletin*, a monthly publication of the Wisconsin Conservation Department from 1936 to 1968, and others.

Much of this was done when he was a staff member of the Bureau of Information and Education. He was the early coordinator or liaison with the Wisconsin Conservation Congress and nurtured that organization during its formative years. The deer wars of the 1940's to early 50's were well underway. Again with Walter Scott as the liaison. I guess not much has changed these past 50 years.

From his duties as a writer, editor, and researcher in the Bureau of Information, he was asked to assist the directors, Ernie Swift and later Les Voigt. I'm guessing here, but according to published articles, this transition was in the late 1940's.

Even before this time in Walter's career, numerous articles appeared under authors names such as Ernie Swift, compiled by Walter Scott. *Public Parts in Conservation History*, June 1948—which appeared in the centennial issue of that year.

You've heard much of this before so permit me to relate some of Walter's major concerns and contributions I personally witnessed.

1. ^{DDT} The Department of Transportation Hearings - about 18 months long at the Hill Farms State Office Building. Walter was everywhere; meeting witnesses at airports, intense and unyielding in his convictions and beliefs.
2. Goose problems—Horicon - (political cartoon, Lyndon Baines Johnson).
3. Reorganization - From Wisconsin Conservation Department to Department of Natural Resources—pages and pages of notes, always the recorder trying to make sense of the fights, the wrangles, the investigations by the Senate, the rebuttals. Those were the days.
4. Natural Resource Council of State Agencies - A Group of State agencies—Wisconsin Conservation Department, Department of Public Instruction, University of Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Extension, Department of Transportation, Department of Vocational Education, Department of Agriculture—and yes, again Walter was the recorder. For some 20 years, this organization was active, productive and one based on mutual distrust. Every agency showed up to see what the others were up to. Walter loved it.

5. Wisconsin Academy of Arts, Letters & Science - Walter was completely at ease with the academia, never yielding an inch and always concerned about the real world, the rough and tough give and take in the political and legislative arena. I admired him for his stance.
6. Citizens Natural Resource Council - CNRA - Walter was instrumental in the organization in 1950. This was truly an organization of citizens with clout. This organization was probably one of the first environmental organizations in the state. Yes, Walter was involved. Walter Grange was the first chairman.
7. Wisconsin Society for Ornithology or WSO - Passenger pigeon publication edited by Walter and Trudi for years.

Well, enough of that. Let's see what we recall of Walter's day to day activities. Walter was bald, did not even have a fringe of hair around because his military carryover ingrained a short hair cut. "Red hair wig"

~~DOT~~ hearings — ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~.
DDT

1. **Grasshoppers** - you know what they are. No not a six-legged, jumping insect in this case. It is ice cream and creme de menthe. You see, when Walter and Trudi were married, that was one rule in their lives, no alcohol. Well, some in the Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Conservation Department, academia and probably the DNR board members led Walter astray. Yes, he did enjoy them.
2. **Valentine's Day** - Walter was thoughtful. Walter was kind. Walter was considerate. He brought valentines to the office staff. These kind, thoughtful acts are remembered to this day.
3. **Flowers** - Nearly every day he picked flowers from their garden to share at the Pyare Square Building. This was Walter.
4. **Hickory Hill Herald** - Walter and Trudi's Christmas card. A one to five page chronology of all birds observed at their home. Well written, humorous and factual. Walter and Trudi enjoyed sharing.

5. **Walter's love for history** - First editions, particularly natural history, early surveys, diaries of surveyors, Native American treaties involving resources, Riparian rights on waters of Wisconsin, Devil's Lake cottages and squatters, deer population on Chambers and Madeline Islands, flag deer yard, Aldo Leopold's chair. Nothing escaped his scrutiny or peaked his interest more than these types of issues.
6. **Information and reporters** - Walter bought every Wisconsin newspaper he could find and clipped or noted each conservation article. He kept all informed and was highly supportive of news reporting and writers always knew "if you want the truth, get hold of Walter Scott."
7. **Education** - Education is the key to an informed and supportive citizenry.
 - 7A. **Reorganization** - Kellet Committee, Senate investigations, subpoenas for questioning. Wow, those were the days. Sentinel rip-off, white papers, woodpecker club, road to nowhere.
8. **Department of Natural Resource's Watchdog** - Nixon administration. (When in a pickle, call Hickel - Department of Interior.)
9. **Gertrude** - "Trudi" - Walter told me he was in hot water once. That was when he married the director's secretary, Gertrude. Walter was a lucky and fortunate man to make that wise decision, but again, Trudi made the final decision by accepting that proposal. She was a proper, well-mannered person, and yes all rules dictated married women do not work outside the home so she and Walter both worked, Trudi doing the typing, assisting with all research, correcting English and still the output of two employees.

A couple years ago, Mully Taylor was inducted into the Hall of Fame. Again his wife, Billie, provided support for that honor. The same is true here. Many of Walter's accomplishments are the result of Trudi's support, research, and organized approach.

Trudi Scott, we are indebted to you for sharing Walter, supporting Walter, and I'm sure, in some cases, leading Walter. Of all the things I've done in my life, this introduction of Walter E. Scott is one accomplishment and honor that is the best.

It is a real privilege and an honor to formally nominate, introduce and induct Walter Scott for this recognition into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame.

Yes folks, Walter was my friend.

Thank you,

Robert O. Ellingson