

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A question I hear frequently is, "Why isn't the Federation more active in conservation matters?" or "Why doesn't the Federation do something about conservation?" These queries imply that the Federation does nothing about conservation, that it doesn't do enough, or that it doesn't concern itself with the proper issues. Within the question and its implications lies a basic problem for which I feel the Federation must find a solution. Briefly stated, the problem is, "What should be the nature and scope of the conservation interests of the Federation?" There are some who would have us confine ourselves to bird watching and listing; there are some who in addition would have us act in conservation matters where birds are involved; and there are those who would have us take a stand on conservation issues in the broadest sense — all aspects of our environment — not only local but national and even world-wide. The purposes of the Federation as defined in our By-laws are broad enough to encompass any of the above concepts.

Over the past years our Conservation Committee, the Council, individual clubs and members have taken action in various ways to influence the outcome of many local, state and national ecologic issues but, so far as I know, no guiding conservation concept or principle has ever been formulated for the Federation itself.

It is my feeling that agreement on a set of principles or guidelines for the Federation to follow as a conservation ethic or action policy would do much toward improving our effectiveness and in resolving much of the uncertainty and questioning. No matter what the decision may eventually be as to which way we should go, not everyone will agree or be satisfied, but a basis for decision and action would be established. (I am not talking about the individual clubs — they should be free to act as they may decide.)

With this in mind, I propose that a major item of business for the 1974 Council meeting shall be an open discussion of this whole question. Hopefully, a decision can be reached. I urge that between now and that meeting, each of our member clubs consider carefully what they feel the Federation's conservation policies should be. The delegates should come prepared to express the views of their clubs.

Let me caution that mere adoption of a statement of policy will not solve our problem. There are the ancillary problems of methods of im-

plementation, manpower, financing & tax exempt status. All of these must be kept in mind when considering what the policies should be — they have been limiting factors in the past. The most well-intended, high-principled statement will be merely words if it cannot be translated into action.

May I urge that the president of each club come as a delegate to the Council. By such personal participation they can best learn about the Federation, contribute to conducting its business and solving its problems, and enjoy the fun and fellowship of a Federation gathering.

I'll see you in Fredonia — October 18-20.

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