

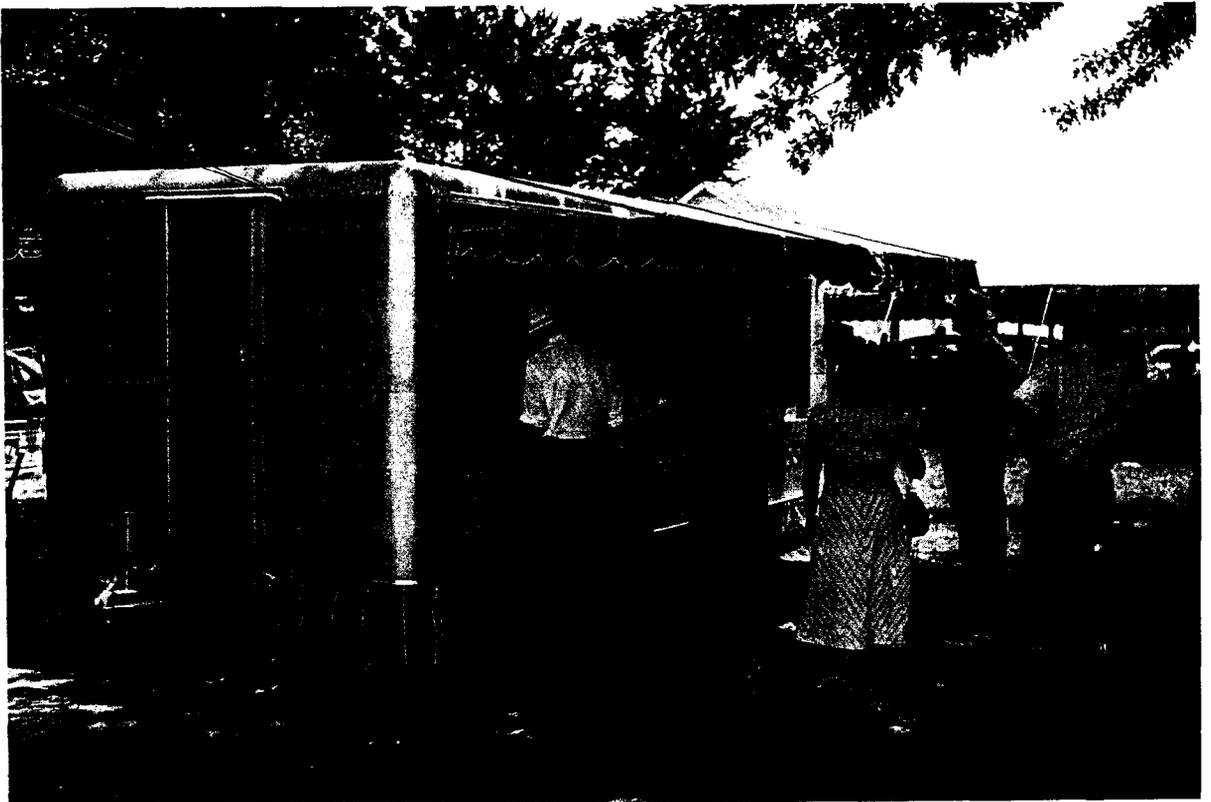
## Public Affairs Section

To an organization like the Department of Conservation a good public information program is a vital part of its overall aim, because public knowledge and support is necessary for any other program to succeed. This is even more true of an agency created by initiative, because citizens take a proprietary interest in their creation.

Public information work in Missouri conservation had its genesis in the administration of Keith McCause of the old Fish and Game Commission in 1925-1929. McCause hired the first director of public information, Neal Walker, in 1927. McCause initiated and edited Missouri *Game* and *Fish News*. This was a

digest type publication with good photographs and illustrations, but was published only erratically. In 1928, the first motion picture on Missouri wildlife, *The Outdoor Life History of Missouri*, was completed. It was also under McCause that fishing condition reports were first issued. McCause became so interested in the relatively new medium of radio that he left the Fish and Game Department to pursue a career in that field.

At the meeting with conservation experts from around the country, called by the Commission on September 25, 1937, one of the six recommendations made to the Commission was that it should conduct the activity



*In 1949, this mobile exhibit made the rounds of county fairs to introduce Missourians to their wild inheritance.*

of public relations, with particular reference to education and farmer participation in wildlife conservation.

In late 1937, Director Irwin T. Bode presented to the Commission a proposed table of organization that contained what he called an Information Service Division.

As proposed, there would be three sections: a general information section that would produce publications, exhibits, visual aids, and utilize radio and news releases; a future field service section whose duties would be contacting Federation clubs for program assistance (evidence of Bode's extension philosophy); and a future "junior education section, to prepare teaching materials in cooperation with the State Department of Education, and to work with 4-H and other youth programs.

He already had a publicity man, Eugene L. Preston, inherited from the old Fish and Game Department, but Preston left shortly after the Commission was formed. In his place Bode hired Townsend Godsey, who had been a publicity man for the Fish and Game Department from 1929 to 1933, losing that job when Wilbur Buford became director.

Godsey was the state's second conservation public information officer, hired in 1929, to assist the administration of Delph Simons and later, that of John Ross. He had a background in newspaper work in the St. Joseph and Kansas City areas before service with the Fish and Game Department. It was Godsey who began the use of radio in 1930, broadcasting about fish and wildlife topics via station WOS (later KWOS) from the Capitol rotunda. Godsey was a fine photographer and he produced three motion pictures on Missouri state parks and one on Lake of the Ozarks, before losing his job to a new administration. Godsey stayed in the Jefferson City area and was hired for occasional work by Buford during his administration.

Under Bode, Godsey was given four and one-half percent of the Department's budget for his information program; his staff consisted of himself and two clerks. He utilized the motion picture medium to produce a film

series, *Conservation Newsreel*, which was distributed to motion picture theaters. At Sydney Stephens urging he produced the first feature motion picture, *Back to Missouri*, which cast the Commission in the role of vital link between landowners and sportsmen. The film was in 35 mm format and was a great hit when shown widely in theaters over the state.

In July, 1938, Godsey began publication of the *Missouri Conservationist*. He set up the Department's film library for loan of motion pictures, and began issuing a weekly news release on Department and conservation topics to all news outlets. Department personnel also began appearing on radio under Godsey's guidance.

The Fish and Game Department had been involved for a number of years in exhibit work at the State Fair, and in 1936, that department had exhibited for the first time at a St. Louis sports show. Godsey was to continue this.

In June, 1938, Bode hired Wallace Gray as a Field Service agent, initially assigning him to the Information Division, but Bode later transferred the field service function to the Fish, Game and Forestry Division. Writing in the Federation's publication, *The Conservationist* in July, 1938, Bode said, "This full-time field man will devote his time to the educational and informational program, especially assisting conservation groups in organizing local programs and to development of farmer-sportsmen cooperative activities. It was the beginning of the field service program of the Department.

A significant public information effort, begun in 1939, was Forestry Division's Showboat, a van equipped with a portable generator that was sent into the Ozarks to show motion pictures about forest fire prevention and related conservation topics. Though not a part of the formal Information program, it is typical of the ecumenical approach to conservation information and education that has been a hallmark of the Department, where every employee is expected to be an apostle for its programs.

<sup>1</sup> Title was later changed to *Missouri Wildlife* to avoid confusion with the Department's *Missouri Conservationist* magazine.



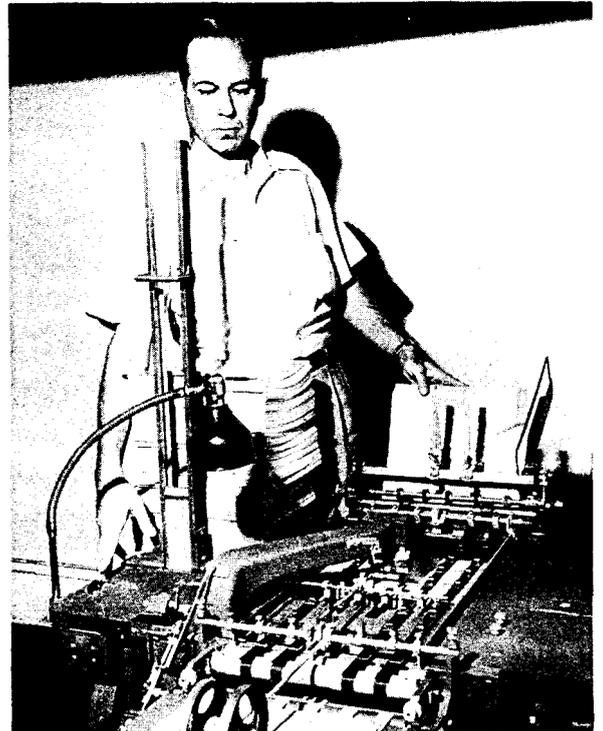
*Schoolchildren sat with rapt attention when the Showboat showed conservation filmstrips in 1946. For many, these were the first films they had ever seen.*

When Godsey resigned in 1941, Information still was a one-man show, but he had established all of the functions of an information section but one—television. He had started a vigorous publications program, turning out leaflets, circulars and bulletins. He had started the *Conservationist* magazine, although at this stage it was only in tabloid format and issued quarterly. He sent out a weekly news release to all media. He had begun a motion picture program with a film lending library. He had involved the Department in radio work, and strengthened the exhibit program. All these activities were useful in keeping the public informed of programs and services available to them, and seeking its continued support. In addition, he had begun the Department's first educational effort, the Nature Knights. (He had conceived the program in 1932, prior to leaving the old Fish and Game Department, but was unable to put it into effect under the political conditions of the time.)

His successor, Harold Clover, started the Department's photo files when he hired a full time photographer, Rex Gary Schmidt. The

burgeoning publications program and the magazine created a need for many more photos than were currently available. Clover changed the *Conservationist* format from a quarterly tabloid to a monthly magazine with the April, 1943, issue. He began use of two colors, and the magazine became a more powerful vehicle in wildlife and forestry information as circulation increased.

When it was first issued, the *Conservationist* carried a statement by Syd Stephens on the first page explaining that the new publication was an experiment and that it would be continued if Missourians welcomed it. The experiment was greeted so enthusiastically that there was never any doubt after the first issue that it would be continued. The magazine rapidly became the most "visible" effort of all the Department's programs. The circulation—and the expense—grew so fast that it frightened Godsey, who suggested placing a twenty-five cent fee to help cover the postage cost. This was approved, but became so cum-



*Francis Mertens applies address labels to 1953 editions of the Missouri Conservationist.*



Information Secretary Barbara Bales kept track of *Conservationist* subscriptions and labeled them with an addressograph in 1952. *Conservationist* circulation rose from 10,000 in 1943 to over 450,000 in August, 1987.

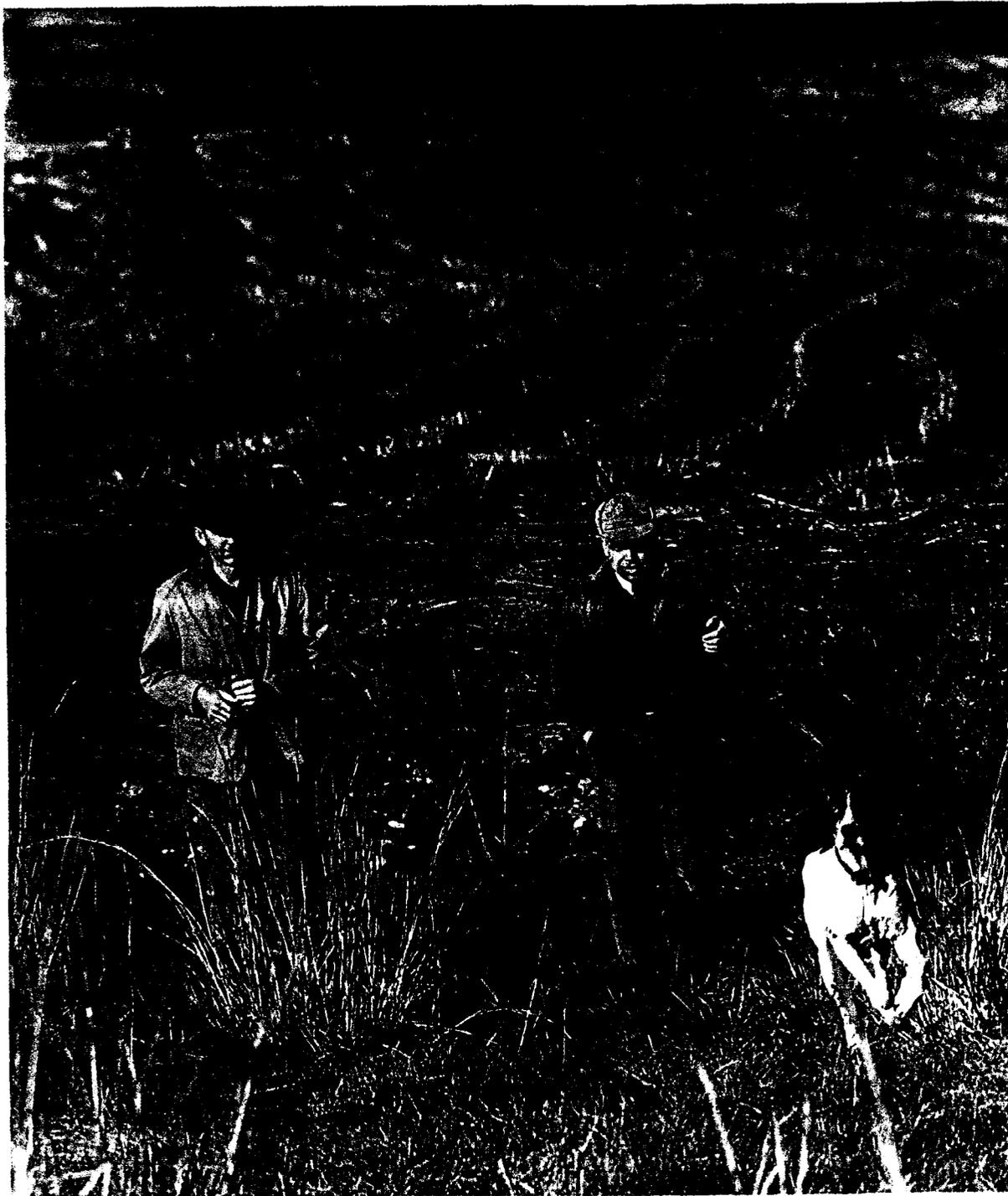
bersome to collect that it was soon dropped. The *Conservationist* remained free to Missouri subscribers and the Commission often opined that spending money on it was probably the best thing they did.

Clover left the Department for military service during World War II, and Charles Callison served temporarily as Information chief and editor. He had able assistance from Charles W. Schwartz (who was developing his artistic skills) and W. O. Nagel. Both were transferred from the Fish and Game Division during the war to help the Information effort.

After the war, Clover returned only briefly, leaving for good in 1948 to start his

own motion picture company. Dan Saults was his replacement. After returning from military service, Saults had tried his hand at free-lance writing without notable success and was looking for a job when Clover hired him as a writer in 1947.

Although Harold Clover was the one who changed the magazine into a more professionally presented publication, his main strength lay in photography. It was Dan Saults who brought the *Conservationist* to editorial heights. Saults had been publisher of the Knob Noster *Gem* before entering military service in World War II. As editor of that country weekly he had written vigorous editorials that attracted national attention. He



*Charles Callison, right, joined Dorris Frazier in a 1946 quail hunt. Callison served as editor of the Missouri Conservationist from 1943 to his resignation in 1947. He went on to head the National Audubon Society in Washington, D.C.*

brought that same vigor to the pages of the *Conservationist*, with the full support of Sydney Stephens. While Bode recognized the worth of the magazine in the Department's programs, he never had the feel for public relations that Stephens had. It was Stephens who supported Saults in his editorials, which were winning the hearts and minds of readers for conservation.

Bode was reorganizing education and information about that time. An Education Section was created in 1942, attached to the Administrative Division; Information existed as a separate division. Most conservation agencies in the country had combined these two programs and Bode followed suit by creating an Information and Education Division in 1948, with F. Olin Capps as chief, Harold Clover as head of the Visual Section and Dan Saults as head of the Publications Section. When Clover left, Saults was made chief of an Information Section, combining the Visual and Publications sections. This organization continued until 1958, when Director William Towell abolished the Information and Education Division, assigning Education Section to the new Field Division, and attaching Information Section to the director's staff. Dan Saults was promoted to assistant director, and James F. Keefe was named to head the Information Section.

Under Keefe the magazine's editorial policies begun by Saults were continued. But Saults so loved to write editorials that he continued to do so until he finally left the Department in 1964. He had served as editor of the *Missouri Conservationist* for nine years and continued to write most of the editorials for another seven years.

Keefe, in addition to administering the Department's Information Section, served as magazine editor for twenty-eight years, taking it from a monthly circulation of 20,000 to nearly 400,000 from 1957 to 1985, when he retired as editor.<sup>2</sup> During those years the magazine won many honors. It was recog-

<sup>2</sup> Not enough recognition is given the managing editors of the magazine, who handle the day-to-day production work. Past managing editors include Charles H. Callison (1943-44), who also was wartime editor (1944-1947), W. O. Nagel (1944-1945), Glenn Hensley (1947), Raleigh A. Ward (1948), Ralph Pogue (1949-1951), Darrell S. Meyer (1951-1953), Wilfred R. Nunn (1953-1955) James F. Keefe, editor (1957-1985) and managing editor (1955-1961), Malcolm K. Johnson (1962-1985). Johnson has been editor of the *Conservationist* since July 1, 1985.



*Werner O. Nagel was a creative force in the formation of early Department philosophy and goals. Nagel created the character of Cy Littlebee, whose homespun wisdom and humor educated thousands of Missourians about conservation.*

nized three years in a row by the Association for Conservation Information as the best conservation magazine in the country. Its influence over the years has been profound and it continues to be the single most visible program of the Department. Articles deal with programs and philosophies of the Department, blending facts with humor in a mix attractive to readers.

In 1983, a journalism student surveyed the *Conservationist* readership and found that readers had received the magazine an average of nine years, and that over one million Missourians read at least a part of each issue. Twenty-five percent of the survey respondents were women and almost half the households receiving the magazine had children who also at least looked through it. Ages of subscribers ran from six to ninety-nine years. Out-of-state subscribers, who paid for their



*Information staffers in 1949 were, left to right: Don Wooldridge, photographer; Ken Wood, writer; Dan Sauls, Information chief; Ralph Pogue, associate editor; and Bill Gamble, radio and exhibits.*

subscriptions, amounted to over eleven thousand. The state with the largest number of subscribers was Illinois, with California second.

Among the nation's conservation magazines, Missouri's *Conservationist* has the largest circulation, reaches the greatest percentage of the population, and is envied and imitated by the others. Although many fine writers, artists and photographers have contributed to its pages, it remains largely staff written and illustrated. Excellent wildlife photographs and artwork are a major feature, and it was through the magazine that Donald E. Wooldridge won national acclaim with his wildlife photography. Charles W. Schwartz' artistic talents were first launched in its pages. But a host of other Department writers, pho-

tographers and artists have contributed to its success.

The Department enjoyed generally favorable press relations in its early years, with few exceptions. But any department largely administered by technicians is occasionally misunderstood by the public and the press, and the temperament of technicians is such that they are often unable to utilize the news media to best advantage. Sometimes the result can be small pockets of bad press because of minor misunderstandings.

It wasn't until the 1950s that professional press people were hired by the Department to handle press relations. They have been candid and open with the media, openly courting the press's understanding and co-

operation. This has resulted in a good climate of press relations. Field personnel are given basic training in working with newspapers, radio and television stations, and urged to make themselves available to the media.

Under Bode, who was distrustful of the news media at first, such contacts were discouraged and any news release a local agent wanted to make had to first be sent to the Central Office for clearance. When it was pointed out that these men had authority to make decisions in the field on other matters concerning the Department, some of them even with the power of arrest, the policy was relaxed. By training field men in basic news elements, they could be relied upon to speak

locally in behalf of the Department with few problems. From then on, field people were urged to work closely with the local media.

In order to recognize field employees who do an exceptional job in working with the media, the Commission authorized an employee communication contest, conceived by Joel M. Vance, in 1984. Field people can win prints of waterfowl or trout stamps for excellence in radio broadcasts or television programs, or newspaper columns. It has become an incentive for field personnel to develop local media programs.

The news release or press handout is the mainstay of most information programs, and Missouri's is no different. For many years the



*Readers of the Conservationist and articles circulated to news outlets statewide enjoy the clarity and humor of Writer/Publicist Joel Vance. Since joining the Department in 1969, Vance's writing about the outdoors has informed and entertained Missourians and won national acclaim for the Department.*



Author Keefe joined the Department in 1951; he served as Information chief and *Conservationist* editor before taking a year to research and write *The First Fifty Years* in 1986.

Department has issued a regular weekly news release package-initiated by James F. Keefe-that is widely used by both the press and broadcast news services.<sup>3</sup> There are several reasons for its acceptance. It is professionally written and presented, and editors like a release that needs a minimum of editing. Editors can depend on its availability, week-in and week-out. It contains hard news and features, not publicity puffs. Each week two screened photos relating to the subject matter are included, adding to the utility of the release. It also deals with a subject that is of interest to a great many readers. Surveys of newspapers have shown that more than twenty-five percent of subscribers regularly read outdoor news or columns. Besides being accepted by the news media of Missouri, the Department's news program is consistently ranked

<sup>3</sup> Since 1961, Joel M. Vance has taken the weekly release to new journalistic heights with features and photographs that consistently win both state and national awards.

first or second in international competition of the Association for Conservation Information.

In a report that covered the period 1937-1939, there were eight printed bulletins and circulars, plus a few mimeographed items listed as available from the Department. As programs in education, wildlife, fisheries and forestry grew and expanded, and as research brought new facts to light, the number of publications expanded rapidly. By 1967, there were over three hundred different printed items. The number of publications and other printed matter has grown steadily in the years since. Of course, the *Conservationist* magazine and the *Wildlife Code* are the Department's biggest publishing endeavors. Over a million copies of the Code are printed each year.



The Department proclaims its message with a wealth of words-carefully edited, designed, illustrated and printed by Public Affairs staffers.

Securing printing outside the Department was, and still is, a tedious process. Once an item was written and checked, a request for sealed bids was made through the Office of Administration's purchasing department. When a bid was received and approved, copy

was sent to the printer, who set the type and secured illustration. The item was sent back for proofing and returned to the printer for corrections. Then a dummy copy was made, from which it was printed. This took months. It required planning well ahead for needed publications, and ordering enough copies so as not to run out before having to go through the process again. Often, the large orders resulted in printed matter becoming obsolete before it could all be used.

When the Department's printing and mailing services were assigned to Information Section for administration in 1958, publications took a quantum leap forward. Information was able to increase the personnel and equipment to handle the increased demand for printed matter.<sup>4</sup> With modern phototype-setting, offset printing and binding equipment, the Department has been able to do all these operations in-house. Today all type is set on modern phototypesetting machines. Editors,

with the assistance of a photography and art staff, design, illustrate and lay out the publication. A well-trained printing and binding staff takes the item to completion. It is sent to the public through the mailing unit, which also handles thousands of other mailings for the Department.

Except for major printing jobs, such as the *Wildlife Code*, book-length manuscripts, the *Conservationist* magazine, and extremely long-run items, most publications can be produced within the Department. This has meant a savings in time and convenience, and less loss through obsolescence of printed matter in storage. Today only enough copies are printed to fill short-term needs, and a new publication can get into print when needed, rather than months later.

The first hardcover book published by the Commission appeared in 1944, and grew out of research work by Charles W. Schwartz on prairie chickens. Entitled *The Prairie Chicken*



The print shop prints or reprints over 3,000 brochures, booklets, leaflets or signs a year.

<sup>4</sup> The Department's printing program's success is largely attributable to the expertise and administrative ability of Wilburn E. Hoskins, printing and mailing supervisor since 1980, who initiated a vigorous printing program beginning in 1962.



Staff artists render the conservation message for all **sections** and divisions of the Department. Above, Dave Besenger creates the preliminary sketch for the fiftieth anniversary poster.

in *Missouri*, it was a beautiful book, illustrated with Schwartz' fine photographs of Missouri prairie and prairie chickens. But the volume had limited distribution and was never very popular, although today it has become a collector's item.

*The Rivers of Missouri*, issued in 1949 for twenty-five cents a copy, was a paperback with articles on twelve of the more noted rivers in the state. Most of the articles were reprints from the *Conservationist* magazine, and the intent was to focus attention on plans for damming or otherwise altering the streams of the state and the significance of such actions. It was an extremely popular book.

In an effort to document its origins, the Commission hired Charles Callison to write a history of the Conservation Federation and its campaign to create the nation's first non-political game, fish and forest management agency. *Man and Wildlife* in Missouri was published by the Stackpole Company in 1953, with financial assistance from the Love Foundation. The Department has since reprinted the book on its own.

The Department's next book publishing

venture was a paperback book authored by Werner O. Nagel entitled *Cy Littlebee's Guide to Cooking Fish and Game*. The Department felt that utilization of the products of field and stream was important as a conservation measure, hence the decision to publish a fish and game cook book. Nagel, who was a fine amateur chef, compiled the book from his own recipes and those sent in by readers of the *Conservationist*. First appearing in 1959, it has gone through ten printings—some 70,000 copies—and still remains a popular item.

The same month the cook book appeared, *The Wild Mammals of Missouri*, by Charles W. and Elizabeth R. Schwartz, was issued jointly by the Department and the University of Missouri Press. The Commission approved contracting with the Press in 1957 to jointly publish the book, which the Schwartzes had been working on for a number of years. It has gone through several editions and revisions since, and is one of the Press' most popular sellers.

In 1965, the Department brought out the paperback *Missouri Ozark Waterways* by Dr.



Artist Charles Schwartz gets a firm grasp of the details of bat anatomy in this 1959 photo.



The collaboration of Elizabeth Schwartz, above, with her husband Charles produced the classic book on Missouri wildlife, *The Wild Mammals of Missouri*, first published in 1959.

Oz Hawksley. It was a book of maps of twenty-two major float streams in the state, with descriptive narrative, floating tips and even travel hints alongside. Hawksley had offered the manuscript to the State Division of Commerce and Industrial Development, but it was not interested in the manuscript, nor did it have authority to charge for copies. That agency brought Hawksley's work to the Department and offered to provide cartographic assistance if the Department would publish the book. Like the cookbook, *Waterways* has been through many editions and is also a best seller with over 172,000 copies distributed.

Werner O. Nagel took on the assignment of updating the Bennitt and Nagel study, *A Survey of the Resident Game and Furbearers of Missouri*, first published in 1937. Director William E. Towell thought that a new book, dealing with the strides made since the Conservation Commission came into existence, would be of considerable interest to conservationists. Nagel wrote *Conservation Contrasts*, sub-titled "Three decades of non-political management of wildlife and forests in Missouri,"

which was published in 1970. In it he not only updated the earlier work with respect to game animals and furbearers, but included chapters on the other activities of the Department during the years 1937 to 1970.

Retired Union Electric Company executive Edgar Denison appeared in the Department's office one day in 1971, with a cigar box full of flower pictures and an offer to write a Missouri wildflower guide. There was considerable interest in such a book on the part of the public and the Commission approved its publication. *Missouri Wildflowers*, by Edgar Denison appeared in 1972, and has gone through several revisions and printings since. Nearly 70,000 copies have been sold.

In 1974, the Department issued *Missouri Hiking Trails*, by Ramon Gass. A forester and enthusiastic hiker himself, Gass devoted the book to hiking possibilities on Department lands. Some 40,000 copies have been printed. The following year, 1975, the Department published Dr. William Pflieger's *The Fishes of Missouri*, an authoritative work on all species of fish known to exist in the state.

Following adoption of the conservation sales tax and the *Design for Conservation* in 1976, the book publishing program was



Books provide detailed information about the state's wild resources, from bats and butterflies to trees and waterways.

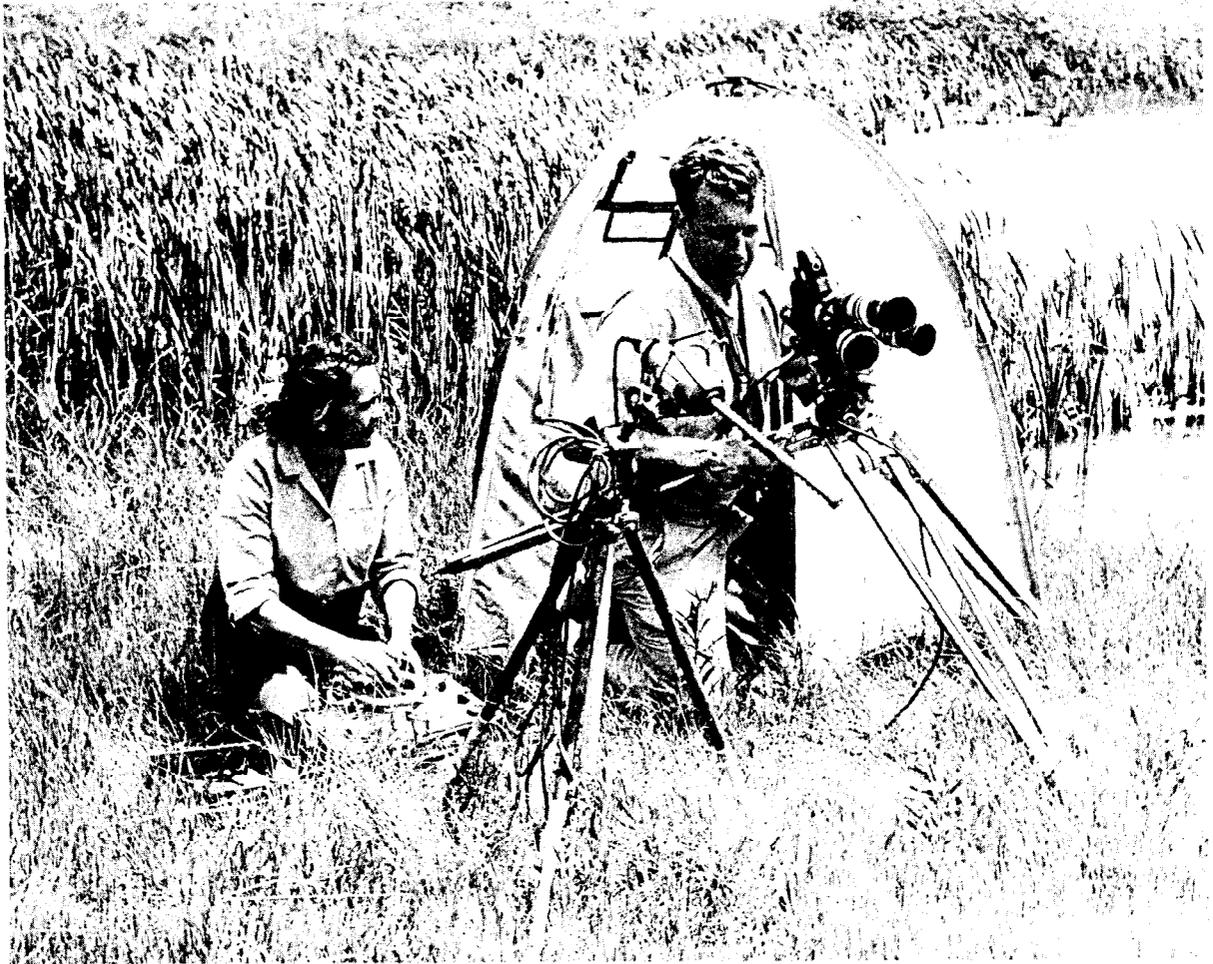
put on a systematic basis. Its intent is primarily to publish high quality books about the wildlife, flora and environment of the state, but also to consider publishing significant scientific literature which, because of limited commercial potential, might not otherwise be published. Books are priced as closely as possible to recover publication costs.

Three books were published in 1980: *Wild Edibles of Missouri*, by Jan Phillips, *Wildlife Drawings*, by Charles W. Schwartz, edited by Michael S. McIntosh, and *A Key to Missouri Trees in Winter*, by Jerry Cliburn and Virginia Klomps. In 1981, *Missouri Orchids*, by Bill Summers was issued.

*A Field Guide to Missouri Ferns*, by

James S. Key, and *Missouri Conservation Melodies*, by Dixie Calvert Fine appeared in 1982. A guide to the freshwater mussels of Missouri, *Missouri Naiades*, by Ronald D. Oesch, was published in 1984. In 1986, the Department brought out a pictorial guide to Missouri mosses, liverworts and lichens entitled *Walk Softly Upon the Earth*, by Lisa Potter Thomas and Dr. James R. Jackson.

Following Godsey's production of the motion picture *Back to Missouri*, filmed by a hired motion picture company, the Department began its own production of films. The team of Charles and Elizabeth Schwartz, trained biologists, undertook the job. Charles had developed his artistic and photographic



Biologists *Charles and Elizabeth* Schwartz combined *their* skills to *produce* Department films. *Their* movie *Bobwhite Through the Year* won the *CONI Grand Medal* at the *International Sports Film Festival* in *Rome* in *1952*.



*Filming the phenomena of nature takes an eye for form and movement-and plenty of patience. Here Motion Picture Specialist Lorna Domke is on location for her 1987 wildflower film, Blooming Secrets.*

skills, and Elizabeth was an excellent researcher and sound technician, capturing natural sounds of the wild for the films. Several short pictures were made, but they hit the bigtime in 1952 with the feature motion picture, *Bobwhite Through the Year*. That film won an international award, the CONI Grand Medal, at the International Sports Film Festival in Rome, where it had been entered by the U. S. State Department. Their life history film, *Cottontail* also won honors there.

In the years following, the Schwartzes produced movies on mourning doves, mallards, wild turkeys, Canada geese, songbirds, life in an Ozarks headwaters stream, the enjoyment of free-flowing streams, wildflowers, prairies, predation, wildlife habitat and box turtles.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Biologist Glen Chambers worked with the Schwartzes in motion picture production for several years, before resigning to become a Ducks Unlimited representative.

<sup>6</sup> Script writers for Department motion pictures include W. O. Nagel, J. F. Keefe, J. M. Vance and J. H. Auckley.

Cinematographer Thomas J. Troughton has produced films on fishing small lakes, squirrel and deer hunting, the Department's natural areas, and trout and catfish rearing. Gary Griffen produced films on the work of professional conservationists in protecting and preserving the environment, and problems of wildlife on Missouri farms. Lorna Domke produced a film on Missouri's wildflowers. In all, over thirty motion pictures have been produced by Department employees, helping immeasurably to inform and educate Missourians about their resources. Most of those films have won honors for the Department in various competitions, and are eagerly sought by other conservation departments across the nation.<sup>6</sup> All films now are converted to videotape as well, for use by schools, organizations and individuals.

Besides motion pictures, the section has developed slide and filmstrip shows on dif-



*Thousands of rolls of film are processed in the Public Affairs photo lab. All sections and divisions make use of photography staffers expertise and get able assistance from Dawn Drainer, above.*

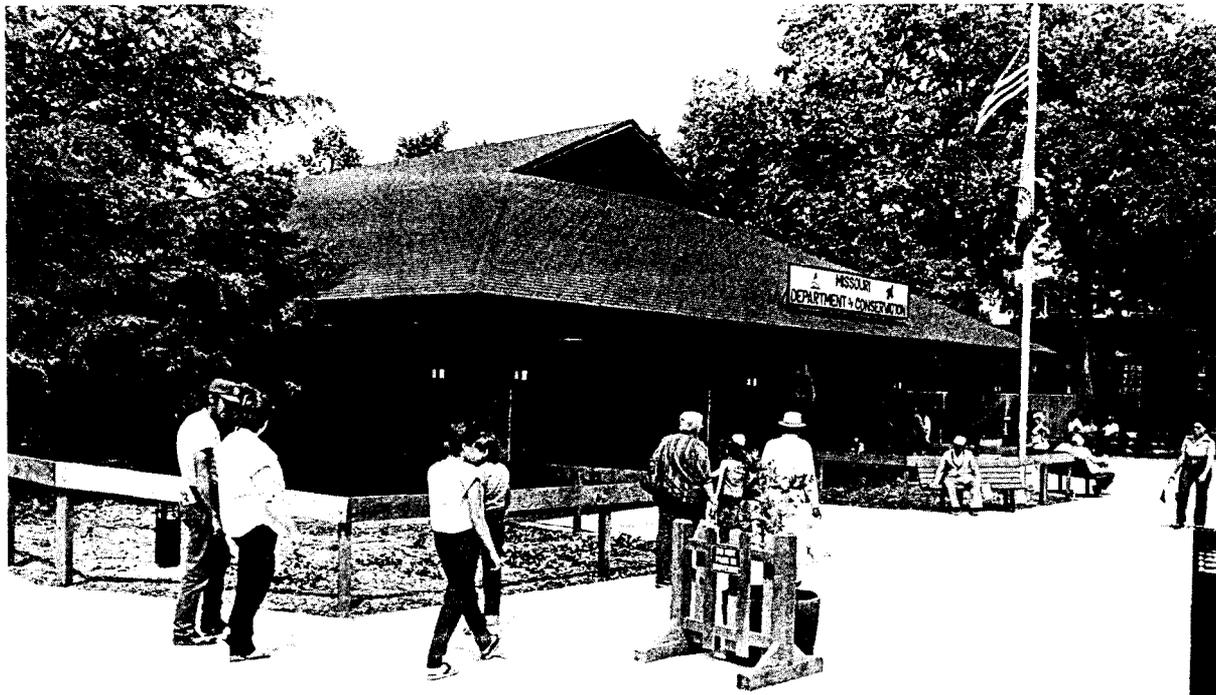
ferent aspects of conservation, to be used in training employees and educating the public. They are on loan through the section's film loan library. Working with the Education Section, copies are provided free of charge to schools.

The use of exhibits to explain Department programs and inform citizens about their resources has vastly increased since the early days, when exhibits were limited to the State Fair and an occasional sports show. During the war years, travel restrictions curtailed exhibit efforts, but after World War II *the* Department outfitted a trailer exhibit that toured small county and regional fairs with good results. But with the advent of television, local fairs went into a decline for a few years and exhibits went into the doldrums, too.

Exhibits at the State Fair pavilion of the Department<sup>7</sup> continued, but the trailer was retired. Then fairs began a comeback. The Department entered into agreements with several regional fairs, where permanent display buildings were constructed to house Department exhibits. Springfield, Bethany, Cape



*Public Affairs exhibits still make the rounds of regional fairs like this one in Cape Fair where a youngster admires a 1963 version of Smokey the Bear.*



*The State Fair Pavilion at Sedalia draws tens of thousands of visitors a year to see exhibits of fish, forestry and wildlife. The pavilion was extensively renovated in 1986 to create a 100-seat auditorium for viewing programs, slide presentations and films.*

<sup>7</sup> This structure of Missouri granite was built by WPA labor in 1934; it replaced an earlier wood pavilion.



*Skilled carpenters create attractive exhibits for use statewide in school programs, hunting and fishing day events, and fairs. Charles Robinson is shown above with a white-tailed deer exhibit.*

Girardeau and West Plains regional fairs now host Department displays. Exhibits, formerly handled as a side line by one of the Information staff, soon grew too big. In 1970, the Department hired a full-time staffer to construct its own exhibits rather than buying them commercially.

Today, the exhibit program includes a three-man staff and shop that turns out exhibits for use at the State Fair pavilion (completely renovated in 1985), regional fairs and nearly a hundred smaller fairs and shows each year. Exhibits are prepared for special meetings as well, such as agricultural field days, educational meetings, and special events like Prairie Days, Wildlife Week and National Hunting and Fishing Day.

Radio began to be more fully utilized as an informational tool in the 1950s, when field men (especially conservation agents), field service agents, educational advisors and foresters were freed to use the medium. They were given basic instruction in broadcast techniques and provided with scripts to help them get started. They became so proficient at it that they soon developed their own

material—as many as fifty might be conducting programs over local radio stations at any time.

About the same time, the Department again began distributing radio shows of thirteen-week, fifteen-minute programs devoted to forest fire prevention. These were developed by Herschel P. Woody Bledsoe, who began his career with the Department as a lookout towerman and went on to run the Showboat for the Forestry Division. He was eventually transferred to Information Section where he demonstrated a showman's flair, playing the guitar and singing songs that country folks could identify with. Mixing songs with gentle folksy chats on the destructiveness of woods fires Bledsoe, as Woody, the Singing Forester, won a large following over the state—and not just in the Ozarks. In 1962, he changed the programs from forest fire prevention, which had largely been accomplished, to wildlife habitat improvement for upland game.



*Hershel P. Woody Bledsoe was hired as a lookout towerman in 1942. He found fighting fires with a guitar as Woody, the Singing Forester reached a lot more people.*

Television came along in the 1950s and, in the days before strong network program-

ming, stations were glad to have outdoor shows conducted by Department personnel. Paul G. Barnickol, then superintendent of fisheries research in Columbia, and Bill T. Crawford, his counterpart in wildlife research, jointly hosted an outdoor show for several years over KOMU-TV. Conservation Agent Clarence Salty Daniel also conducted an outdoor show over KODE-TV in Joplin. Herschel Bledsoe had a long-running weekly program over KRCG-TV in Jefferson City. These were popular with viewers but eventually were dropped, either by the stations or the participants, because of other job pressures.

Department personnel appear as guests on various television programs, some of them regularly. Cable company stations especially like having Department personnel and programs in their local origin broadcasts. Television public service spots have been prepared and issued from time to time, which receive good use by stations.

In 1984-1985, an expanded Department television program was launched by Deborah Rogers. Growing out of a monthly television show over KOMU-TV in Columbia, it utilizes the services of a professional crew to videotape outdoor features for use on the program. The videotapes are then distributed to stations and local Department personnel for use. By mid-1986, they were being seen regularly on a number of commercial TV stations. In some cases features are transmitted to stations by satellite up-link. The magazine-type format, using short features on various conservation activities, lends itself well to such programming.

In 1982, the Commission requested a study be made of all Department public information efforts and Dan Forrestal, author of a definitive public relations handbook and long-time public relations head of Monsanto Inc., undertook the job. After studying all aspects of the program, he concluded that only minor adjustments were needed. He suggested dropping a logo used on *Design for Conservation* activities as needlessly confusing. He also suggested upgrading the appearance of the *Conservationist* magazine by going to a better grade of paper. He recommended a motion picture be made on the work of professional conservationists-its relation to the

public and impact on the environment. His most ambitious recommendation was for the Department to employ media specialists in Kansas City and St. Louis. Nearly all of his recommendations were adopted, though a media specialist position has not been implemented in Kansas City because a job change there freed up the metropolitan services coordinator to handle media relations.

Beginning in 1986, Jonathan D. Powers has had overall responsibility for the section which is organized in three units: publications, visual and news services. The publications unit is headed by Malcolm K. Johnson, supervising the magazine, other publications, art, typesetting, and printing and mailing. The visual unit is headed by Mark H. Sullivan, supervising photography, motion pictures, multimedia production, film loan library, radio and television and exhibits. Joel M. Vance handles the writing/news services program.



*Malcolm K. Johnson joined the Information staff in 1961 as managing editor of the Conservationist and supervisor of Department publications. He became the magazine's editor in 1985.*

The Information Section was re-named the Public Affairs Section in 1986, but its mission remains the same: to inform the public of Department programs and services,

and to solicit citizens support through all available media.

The success of information efforts is shown in the Department's successes in forestry, wildlife, fisheries and other endeavors. But those successes are not the Public Affairs Section's alone.

Over the years there has evolved in the Department a policy that every employee is obligated to explain programs and enlist public support of them. This is implicit in the change of title from game warden to conservation agent. It is implicit in creation of the field service agent positions. It is implicit in the establishment of the metro-services

offices in St. Louis, Kansas City, Springfield and elsewhere. Biologists, foresters and administrators are expected to take part in public meetings, to make personal appearances on radio, television, at press conferences-whenver the opportunity arises. Every new employee gets training in basic informational techniques, and many get occasional refresher courses. Each is expected to be acquainted with the operations of the Department and have some familiarity with what other arms of the Department are doing. In this way, the formal information effort is magnified many times, to the success of all the Department's efforts.