

The Effects of Domestic Security on Fish and Wildlife Agencies across the United States

Andrew Krause

Abstract

The role of many fish and wildlife, natural resource, and other types of conservation agencies have evolved over the last 50 years. No longer are these agencies only responsible for the protection of the nation's fish and wildlife populations. Since the terrorist events of September 11, 2001 many resource agencies are often asked to take an active role in the protection of the nation's sea ports, nuclear power plants, water supplies, and other vital assets. Additional personnel are not made available to carry out these added responsibilities. Additional responsibilities related to domestic security present new challenges of budget, equipment, training, and other needs for leaders of conservation agencies across the country.

Introduction

Research Problem

The traditional roles of many state fish and wildlife, and other natural resource related agencies changed after the terrorist attacks aimed at the United States of America on September 11, 2001. With the sudden increase in domestic security activities, law enforcement personnel within these agencies were tasked to take an unprecedented and ever increasing role. Many law enforcement leaders embraced the challenges that came with their elevated involvement. As time has elapsed, some leaders in the law enforcement arena must justify the need for their continued involvement. Unfortunately, very little data exists illustrating the role fish and wildlife agencies have undertaken across the country. Without this information, it is more difficult to explain to legislators and even members within an agency the need for continued involvement.

Background

September 11th, 2001:

At 8:45 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, a hijacked passenger jet, American Airlines Flight 11 out of Boston, Massachusetts, crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York City, tearing a gaping hole in the building and setting it afire. At 9:03 a.m., a second hijacked airliner, United Airlines Flight 175 from Boston, crashed into the south tower of the World Trade Center and explodes. Both buildings are burning. At 9:43 a.m., a third hijacked plane, American Airlines Flight 77, crashed into the Pentagon, sending up a huge plume of smoke. A fourth aircraft has

crashed in Pennsylvania killing all on board. Both north and south towers of the World Trade Center collapse (2001, Chronology of terror).

Responses to the incidents of 9/11 were swiftly put in place. Law enforcement officials scrambled to secure the nation's government buildings, water supplies, nuclear power plants, airports and ports of entry. In New York, officers with the Environmental Conservation Police responded along with other law enforcement personnel within hours after the attacks. One official is quoted as saying "As you can imagine we are responding with everything we can at this moment. From our officers in Long Island to Buffalo and all along the Canadian border we are responding with 4WD vehicles, ATVs and our two hands."(Drury, 2001).

Many natural resource departments, fish and wildlife commissions, parks and recreation agencies, state water patrols, and departments of environmental protection are well acquainted with altered routines as the focus on homeland security has generated additional duties for their personnel. These additional duties range from operating all-terrain vehicles in remote areas and escorting cruise ships to conducting water-based patrols around nuclear power facilities and bridges, and protecting air force bases and seaports (Hermes, 2004).

An example occurred after the terror attacks of 9/11 when Florida's state conservation officials began looking at what role they could play in homeland security. They immediately zeroed in on the division's unique assets – 700 law enforcement officers who use boats, planes, swamp buggies and pickup trucks to patrol the state's woodland areas, oceans, interior lakes, rivers and canals. The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission's Law Enforcement Division, whose usual mission is arresting persons who violate the state's fish, wildlife and boating laws, has even developed a Special Operations Group that can help defend the state from terrorist threats on land and sea. (Schweb, 2004)

Purpose

This research examines the resource agencies involved with domestic security efforts taking place across the United States. The effect of domestic security efforts on agency budgets, equipment, personnel training needs and primary missions is also examined. The research will also discuss how agency operations could change in the future and what can be done to prepare for these changes.

Methods

An online survey was developed to get an overall sample of the entire country,. The survey questions targeted six major areas of interest including; general information, training, equipment, budget, legislative, and a miscellaneous section.

The general information questions determined which states were involved in domestic security efforts and to what extent and how their stakeholders and employees were affected. In the training section, an effort was made to ascertain how much training, if any, each agency has undertaken and how much time is spent training,

including the estimated costs involved. The equipment section questions domestic security's impact on equipment and what type of equipment has been or is going to be purchased. In the budget section, the questions attempted to determine the effects of domestic security on each agency's law enforcement division budget.

The survey also established which agencies have received additional funding, either from their state legislature or from the federal government, to assist with domestic security enforcement efforts. The legislation section was included to clarify the extent of state's involvement with domestic security legislative issues. A miscellaneous section was included to address issues that did not fit into other categories. A majority of the questions required open-ended responses.

After developing the survey, it was placed on the Internet and made available to each state's fish and wildlife enforcement agency. A cover letter was sent to the law enforcement director of each fish and wildlife agency with a login name and password to allow access to the survey. Once the respondent completed the survey, a copy of the response was sent directly to the author electronically.

After making the survey available online and receiving the responses, a spreadsheet was used to gather the data generated. The spreadsheet assisted with the compilation of related data making it more manageable.

Additional information for this research was obtained through an extensive literature review of available data relating to domestic security efforts of fish and wildlife agencies. Several documents were obtained, mainly from trade publications regarding the efforts of fish and wildlife agencies and their involvement in domestic security issues.

Results

General Information

Forty one of the 50 states responded to and completed the survey (82%). Results from the survey were placed in an Excel Spreadsheet and sorted into categories, then grouped into similar responses.

Of the responding agencies, 37 (74%) have been or are currently involved with domestic security. The remaining four report that they have not been involved in domestic security efforts. Of the 37 involved agencies, 29 are presently active in domestic security efforts and eight expect to become involved in the future.

Some respondents only completed portions of the survey. Nine states did not respond to written and electronic requests to complete the survey.

The diversity of domestic security issues undertaken by conservation law enforcement agencies is illustrated by the list of survey responses shown below. Although the majority of responses centered on maritime related security this was far from the only area of responsibility. Responses were sorted and grouped into similar categories as follows:

- Security for Nuclear Power Plants
- Security for Hydro-Electric Dams
- Security for Government Buildings

- Security for Military Installations
- Security for Oil Pipelines
- Security for Political Events
- Security for Rural Aqueduct Systems
- Security for Bridges
- Security for Sporting Events
- Security for Entertainment Events
- Border Security – Both Maritime and Wilderness Borders
- Maritime Escorts for Passenger Cruise Ships
- Maritime Escorts for Liquid Petroleum Gas Carriers
- Maritime Escorts for Military Ships
- Vessel Exclusion Zone Enforcement
- General Port Security
- BOLO for Suspicious Persons or Activities
- Agriculture Based Security

When asked how domestic security issues have affected each agency's primary responsibilities, the research showed that most agency leaders reported that the affect was minimal. This is due in part to the locations where most of the security activities are being conducted. For example, maritime escorts are primarily performed in seaports. Most fish and wildlife enforcement officers are already responsible for patrolling these areas, so redirecting their activities required minimal effort. Several of the agency leaders did express a concern for the shifting of manpower from "resource type" patrols to other responsibilities. Others stated that most impacts were felt when the Department of Homeland Security elevated the Threat Level to anything above a "Yellow" level, largely because their agency's responsibilities increased in regards to security related patrols.

Respondents were asked if their stakeholders were aware of changes in agency responsibilities. Eighteen stated their stakeholders were aware of the changes in their agency's responsibilities and seventeen responded that their stakeholders were not aware of any changes. In addition, they were questioned how their stakeholders responded to these changes. Most respondents stated their stakeholders understood and were positive and supportive of the need for change and for the welfare of the citizens of their state. Several respondents stated about half of their constituents agreed with the enforcement efforts.

When asked how their employees responded to the changes in responsibilities, the majority stated their officers responded positively. They stated their employees understood the need and embraced the efforts made by each of their departments. They also indicated a better awareness of domestic security issues. A few employees expressed concern because of the reduced number of resource related patrols.

It must be noted that none of the agencies polled have received any additional personnel to assist with their added domestic security duties.

Training

When asked if domestic security efforts have changed how the agencies train their personnel, 76% responded that it has. Nine agencies reported no effect on training. Some of the additional training topics that agencies are tasking their personnel with are listed below:

- Automatic Rifle
- Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Workplace Security
- Personal Protection Suit
- Incident Command System
- Domestic Security Awareness
- Man-Portable Air Defense System
- Commercial Vessel Boarding
- Special Operations Group Tactics
- Anthrax Awareness

The amount of time spent training personnel varied from zero to 150 hours per officer annually. The average time spent was approximately 16 to 40 hours per officer each year.

Most respondents were unable to supply the exact dollar amount their agencies had spent to conduct additional training. Agencies that did respond reported significant costs incurred for salaries, travel, and per diem related to training.

Equipment

To determine the impact domestic security issues have had on an agency's equipment and to establish whether or not each agency had purchased additional equipment, several questions were asked. When asked what impact domestic security issues had on existing equipment, the majority of the respondents stated the effect was minimal. Although, many of the same respondents stated the number of hours and additional miles on patrol vehicles did increase.

Each agency was asked what type of equipment, if any, was acquired to assist with domestic security issues. Twenty of the respondents stated that they had purchased, or were in the process of purchasing special equipment. Twenty-six of the respondents stated they expected to make purchases in the future to address some of their agency needs. The following list identifies the variety of equipment that has been or will be purchased:

- AR-15 Assault Rifles
- Haz-Mat / Personal Protection Suits
- Mid-range Patrol Vessels 27' to 33'
- Cabin Style Vessels

- Airboats
- Handheld Radios
- Gas Masks
- Navigation Radars
- Night Vision Goggles
- Generators
- Binoculars
- Underwater Cameras
- Mountain Top Radio Repeaters

Budget

When respondents were asked about the overall impact that domestic security has had on their budgets, many stated the financial effects were absorbed into their existing budget. An issue that intermittently arose was the additional costs involved with operating existing equipment. Another issue was an increase in overtime causing salary problems due to increased patrols. A unique problem one agency faced with its budget was a mandate that their budget could only be used for the enforcement of fish and wildlife laws and could not be spent on domestic security efforts. Because this particular agency is involved in domestic security, it applied for and received a federal grant that they are in the process of utilizing to fund the efforts.

Seven agencies had asked for additional funding from their state legislature. Two of the seven were successful in receiving additional funds. Twenty-nine agencies stated they had not asked for, or received, any additional funding to perform added responsibilities. Of the two agencies receiving funding from their state legislature, one received \$730,000 in reoccurring funds. The other received \$1.08 million to conduct waterborne security patrols during a major sporting event.

Twenty-four states responded that they asked for or received federal grants to assist with domestic security issues. Diverse grants ranging from \$1.67 million to \$21,000 were awarded to state fish and wildlife agencies. Some of this money was obtained to purchase specific equipment and other portions of the federal grant dollars were used to pay salaries and overtime pay.

Legislative

Only 10 of the responding state's fish and wildlife officials were involved in passing legislation that addressed domestic security issues. Legislative issues included laws that allowed state and local law enforcement officers to enforce federal vessel exclusion or security zones created by the U.S. Coast Guard or to create their own vessel exclusion or security zones. One agriculture producing state was involved with legislation that addressed bio-terrorism related to food crops. Responding agency personnel spent from no personnel hours to 500 personnel hours per year working on legislative issues.

Miscellaneous

When asked if domestic security issues have enhanced relationships with other agencies, 31 of the 36 respondents reported that it had. The overwhelming majority stated that communications with federal agencies were vastly improved. These agencies include Federal Bureau of Investigations, U. S. Secret Service, U. S. Coast Guard, National Park Service, and the United States Military. Several other respondents recognized an improved relationship with their State Police and Fire and Rescue Departments. A note of interest, nearly half the agencies are now actively involved as members of their state's Domestic Security Task Force.

Surprisingly, 28 of the responding agencies stated domestic security efforts had not enhanced their relationships with the general public. This became evident, based on explanations, due to of a lack of understanding or knowledge by the general public of the efforts these agencies are engaged in. Of the seven agencies that did see enhanced relationships, many were encouraged because their efforts gave the public an opportunity to see some of their responsibilities which are not normally seen. One respondent stated that "this gave the public an understanding of the immeasurable ability and willingness of most fish and wildlife enforcement officers to perform law enforcement functions outside their normal resource responsibilities."

The positive outcomes from involvement in domestic security issues include recognition from other agencies and the public, better coordination and information sharing between agencies, better radio communication abilities, the ability to apply for federal grants and recognition as being the experts in the wilderness and water environment.

Discussion

It is apparent from the responses to the online survey that many fish and wildlife and other natural resource agencies have been affected by their involvement in domestic security efforts. Even with the extra responsibilities, officers with most of these agencies recognize the need for their efforts and have responded well to the new security details and continue to patrol parks and forests and enforce fish and game laws during the busy seasons (Camejo, 2001-02).

The research suggests the traditional roles of many fish and wildlife agencies are changing. Presently, to survive and progress as a law enforcement agency, leaders and employees alike need to be able to adapt to change. The old adage "This is the way we always did it" is no longer acceptable. When the attacks of 9/11 occurred, the effect on law enforcement agencies was immediate and widespread. No longer can law enforcement leaders sit back and passively react to incidents. Leaders must take a proactive approach with enforcement efforts and encourage their officers to do the same.

Fish and wildlife officers across the country are being asked to perform duties that at one time were considered beyond the scope of their abilities. An instance occurred when the Free Trade Area of the Americas Summit took place in Miami, Florida in November of 2003. During the event, officers with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission were not only asked to help perform security duties,

they played a major role in coordinating logistics for the detail. Miami Mayor, Manny Diaz, is quoted as saying, "This should be a model of homeland defense." The security operation brought together more than 40 law enforcement agencies, from the FBI to the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Klein, 2003).

While some agencies are involved in domestic security on a daily basis, others become involved when threat levels are increased, when a unique event occurs, or when other branches of law enforcement are overwhelmed. An example where this is evident is with The Nebraska Game and Parks Department. Their officers' general duties have not been greatly affected. However, even in that state, the Bureau of Reclamation has requested that their officers be alert to any suspicious activity on or around the state's dams and impoundments (International Game Warden, 2001-02).

A concern that consistently arose from respondents throughout the survey was the struggle to not minimize or ignore resource related activities. Most agency leaders seem to recognize this as an issue and continue to balance the demands placed on their staff. The same leaders have also expressed their understanding of why their state's natural resources are so important and to ignore them could lead to failure or criticism from the public.

Another concern that should be addressed by agency leaders is the lack of knowledge of constituents regarding domestic security efforts the agencies have undertaken. Often the success of many organizations depends on public perception. Fish and wildlife agencies often struggle to "sell" their agency's mission or efforts. Domestic security efforts should be publicized as often as possible, without disregarding security concerns, to facilitate positive effort recognition.

Equipment and training are always imperative to be a successful law enforcement organization. Based on responses from the survey, those agencies that are most active with domestic security efforts have been proactive in obtaining additional equipment and training their personnel. As agencies become more diverse, leaders should be attentive to the continued need to be open to training opportunities and the equipment needs of their officers. Officers who have the necessary equipment and training will be better prepared to provide the professional services required to complete diverse missions.

Although most states have not received additional funds from their state legislatures to assist with efforts, the federal grants that have been administered have helped to offset the cost of domestic security. Unfortunately, most grant monies have limitations specifying how they can be used. For example, several states received federal grants for equipment, but they were unable to use the money for reimbursement of salary costs. Another unfortunate side effect with federal grants is that they are not recurring and agencies often are competing with other agencies for the same money.

To be truly successful, leaders need to aggressively seek out alternative funding sources to help with additional duties and responsibilities. Sitting back and accepting the legislative dollars without being involved in the budgetary process is no longer acceptable. Agencies have to "sell" their involvement and explain how vital their role is with the domestic security process. As federal grants become available, agencies must assertively educate themselves on the grant writing process to help funding efforts.

Conclusion

As outside agencies recognize the many abilities and diverse equipment capabilities of resource agencies the requests for involvement will increase. By knowing that domestic security missions will increase in frequency, agency leaders can develop strategic plans to balance these issues with existing resource missions. To survive in today's resource law enforcement environment, agencies must be able to adapt to change and accept responsibilities that in the past were unheard of. By accepting roles in the domestic security arena, resource law enforcement personnel will help keep citizens safe from unwarranted terrorist attacks. Fish and wildlife leaders can never forget the primary responsibilities of their agency, but, due to the violent nature of the world we live in, leaders have to evaluate how the everyday business of their law enforcement personnel is conducted.

Captain Andrew Krause began his career in 1986 with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission as an officer in Marion County. Currently he is the Investigation Supervisor for the Commission's Southwest Region. In 1995 he received the agency's officer of the year award. He was instrumental in the agency's initial response for the protection of Tampa Bay assets, including MacDill Air Force Base, after the terrorist events of 9/11.

References

- Camejo, R., Healy, R. (2001-02). Connecticut COs provide security. *International Game Warden, Winter*, 5.
- Drury, C. (2001). NY officers involved firsthand. *International Game Warden, Fall*, 9-10.
- Hermes, K. (2004, September/October). States play vital role in homeland security. *Small Craft Advisory*, 19, 9-11.
- Klein, N. (2003, November 26). America's enemy within: armed checkpoints, embedded reporters in flak jackets, brutal suppression of peaceful demonstrators. Baghdad? No, Miami. *The Guardian*, p. 2.
- Nebraska security update. (2001-02). *International Game Warden, Winter*, 6-7.
- Schwed, M. (2004, June 26). Florida conservation officers double as anti-terror squad. [Electronic version]. The Palm Beach Post.
- September 11: Chronology of Terror. (September 12, 2001). Retrieved January 15, 2005, from <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/chronology.attack/>

Appendix

Survey Questions:

I. GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. Has your agency been involved with domestic security since the attacks of September 11, 2001?

Yes___ No___

2. Is your agency currently involved in domestic security efforts?

Yes___ No___

3. If not, do you anticipate your agency will become involved in domestic security efforts in the future?

Yes___ No___

4. What types of domestic security issues does your agency face?

5. Do you anticipate your agency will continue to dedicate resources toward domestic security efforts?

Yes___ No___

6. How have these issues affected your primary mission?

7. Are your stakeholders aware of these changes?

Yes___ No___

8. How have your stakeholders responded to these changes?

9. How have your employees responded to these changes?

10. Have you acquired additional personnel to assist with these changes?

Yes___ No___ Explain_____

II. TRAINING:

1. Have these issues affected how your agency trains?

Yes___ No___

2. What training is your agency implementing to address domestic security issues?

3. How much time each year is spent conducting this type of training?

4. What are the estimated costs involved with this type of training?

III. EQUIPMENT:

1. What impacts have these issues had on your existing equipment?

2. Have you acquired additional equipment to assist with these issues?

Yes___ No___

3. If so, what type of equipment?

4. Do you foresee your agency purchasing additional equipment to assist with domestic security issues?

Yes___ No___

5. If so, what type of equipment?

IV. BUDGET:

1. What overall impact has domestic security issues had on your division budget?

2. Have you asked for or received any additional funding to address these issues from your legislature?

Yes___ No___ Explain_____

3. Have you asked for or received any additional funding from the federal government?

Yes___ No___ Explain_____

V. LEGISLATIVE:

1. Has your agency been involved in passing legislation that addresses domestic security issues?

Yes___ No___

2. If so, what type of legislation?

3. How much time does your staff expend on domestic security related legislative issues?

VI. MISCELLANEOUS:

1. Has your agency's role in domestic security issues enhanced your relationships with other agencies?

Yes___ No___

2. If so, how?

3. Has your agency's role in domestic security issues enhanced your relationships with the general public?

Yes___ No___

4. If so, how?

5. What has been the most positive outcome of your agencies involvement in domestic security issues?

6. Do you feel your agency efforts have created a safer environment for the state's citizens?

Yes___ No___

- VII. Would you mind if I contacted you to conduct a phone interview concerning this subject matter?

Yes___ No___

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:
