

REFLECTIONS
BY
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More than a quarter century has passed since I called to order the First Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Conference on March 1st, 1962. It is now my pleasure to welcome you to the 17th in the long series of Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Conferences and in this opening statement I should like to very briefly reflect on how it all began. In 1962 when the first conference was held, Tall Timbers Research Station was scarcely two years old, however the philosophy of the meeting had a long gestation period. Out of the Cooperative Quail Investigation and within its official report, *Bobwhite Quail: Its Habits, Preservation and Increase* (1931), the author-naturalist Herbert L. Stoddard wrote, "While the immediate and direct effect of burning an area is, of course, always apparent, the general effect of long-continued annual, or irregular but frequent, burning upon the vegetation of an area, and its indirect effect on the animal life, present a complex problem, one that would require years of careful research on the part of the personnel of a well-equipped experiment station to work out . . . for fire may well be the most important single factor in determining what animal and vegetable life will thrive in many areas." The foundation for fire ecology and wildlife management resides in these thoughts as does Tall Timbers' philosophy of land management, guided by ecological investigation.

Conference discussions were concerned primarily with the ecological effects of fire on plants and animals in most of the United States and the provinces of Canada. However, international representation included 23 countries from Asia, 13 from South America, 30 from Africa, 11 from Central America, and 11 from Europe and Mediterranean countries. The scientific work contained in the proceedings of these conferences clearly indicates that fire has been an important ecological factor in the natural history of many plants and animals worldwide, underscoring the importance of Stoddard's 1931 statement.

We meet today to discuss High Intensity Fire in Wildlands: Management Challenges and Options. By the end of this conference we should have increased our knowledge about the ecology of high-intensity fire and will, hopefully find the wisdom necessary to manage, use, or tolerate such fires.