

25-Year Strategic Plan Overview

A Path to an Improved Era for Fish, Wildlife and People

Fish and wildlife hold intrinsic and substantive value for Washington residents and sovereign tribal nations. They are a significant part of our history, culture, and our future. We recognize that human development and population expansion, the spread of invasive species, and climate change are contributing to declines in species and habitats. Not only are some iconic northwest species being lost, but an abundance of animals, even common ones, are decreasing at alarming rates.

The Department must demonstrate bold leadership in conservation, recovery, science, and management in order to better achieve its mission.

To do this, the Department will execute a 25-Year Strategic Plan. These strategies and action items will help us to shift how we do things now; making changes we see as pivotal to modernizing the agency, conserving the state's fish and wildlife, and positioning WDFW for success. Performance metrics will help the Department to continuously adapt our efforts toward the plan's vision and desired outcomes. To focus on these key areas the plan does not discuss all of the Department's work - work which must continue in order to achieve this plan's vision - yet, you can review a synopsis of our existing, essential work within the context of our full plan online.

We recognize that the Department does not have the ability nor authority to achieve the necessary change alone. It's going to take all of us working together. Local, state, federal, tribal governments, non-governmental, and conservation organizations, land managers, farmers, commercial industries, private landowners, hunters, anglers, and others of all ages and backgrounds must cooperate for a more resilient future for fish, wildlife, and people.

If we act now, and work in conjunction with our partners, we can change the current trajectory and realize the following vision:

- Healthy and sustainable fish and wildlife populations.
- A restored network of resilient habitats that that connects ecosystems across the landscape.
- Abundant recreation, stewardship, commercial industries, and educational opportunities available to diverse populations.
- Residents with a deep appreciation of the intrinsic value of nature and the benefits of fish and wildlife, who also have a strong sense of personal stewardship and environmental responsibility.
- A Department that reflects and connects with the diverse public we serve, and that is a model of great governance.



“ Focusing on conservation, public engagement, science, and operational excellence will allow us to better meet the varied needs of the public we serve to achieve mutual and significant benefits.”

— Director Kelly Susewind,
Washington Department
of Fish and Wildlife



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

**Proactively
address
conservation
challenges**

Near-term Actions

1. Lead a statewide fish and wildlife conservation road map in collaboration with partners to develop a collaborative approach to landscape-scale ecosystem recovery and fish and wildlife conservation. Build on past efforts from the Washington Biodiversity Council, the State Wildlife Action Plan, ecoregional assessments, etc.
 - Review data and products to assess the current state of conservation and identify the most significant needs and actions.
 - WDFW will publish a state of the state biennial fish and wildlife report.
 - WDFW will collaborate with regional, national, and international partners to:
 - Establish common conservation principles and priorities
 - Develop and implement an invasive species response plan
2. Vastly expand current efforts to manage and recover at-risk fish and wildlife species.
3. Implement a co-manager habitat workplan to improve salmon and steelhead populations that are limiting fishing opportunities.
4. Develop a Statewide Hatchery Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to adaptively manage programs to minimize risk to wild stocks.
5. Ensure that land-use planning and decisions are contributing to the conservation and recovery of fish and wildlife.
 - Pursue net ecological gain and/or additional authorities for land-use planning and smart growth.
 - Enhance the quality, quantity, and display of information within the Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) portal to ensure that land-use planners have the appropriate scale and quality of information to make informed decisions.
 - Increase our ability to deliver high-level technical expertise on species and habitats.
 - Pursue conservation and recovery goals through regulations and incentives regarding the financing of development projects.
6. Shape Washington's 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan to reflect this strategic plan's priorities.
7. Develop and implement a WDFW Climate Resilience Plan.
 - Identify species and habitats at risk to climate disruption.
 - Address actions for WDFW to make its work and investments more resilient to climate change.
 - Identify nature-based climate resilience solutions that can be used statewide to strengthen ecosystem resilience.
 - Align state de-carbonization advances with efforts to protect species biodiversity.

**Deliver science
that informs
Washington's most
pressing fish &
wildlife questions**

Near-term Actions

1. Develop, prioritize, and deliver a science/policy framework to include the following components:
 - Assess existing science - policy questions, on-the-ground management needs, funding, and processes.
 - Review predictive models and processes in consideration of emerging technologies.
 - Identify alternatives that improve cross-discipline science collaboration and that acknowledges indigenous knowledge.
 - Ensure that our science is supporting adaptive management.
 - Enhance and identify new opportunities for partnerships, including local universities, zoos and aquariums, and other organizations.
2. Implement science communication training/strategies.
3. Develop an agency-level data management system to provide better science for agency decision-making and constituent outreach. This will include:
 - Developing a system that allows for the intake and analysis of data from all programs.
 - Modernize and standardize technology to allow for integration and transparency of scientific data across the agency.
 - Identifying business needs and ensuring appropriate investments in the right tools
4. Pursue opportunities to increase community science in conservation efforts.

Engage communities through recreation & stewardship

Near-term Actions

1. Connect with youth and young adults - the next generation.
 - Staff engagement in meaningful natural resource education in schools (K-12).
 - Provide for emerging professional work experiences through internships and young adult employment programs.
2. Complete a plan to better recruit, retain, and reactivate anglers, hunters, and nature appreciators, emphasizing increased participation from diverse audiences. Vastly expand, promote, and offer incentives for all backyard wildlife habitat programs.
3. Create and promote education opportunities in WDFW wildlife areas, in urban centers, and on school grounds.
4. Make decision-making processes more transparent and easy to participate in.
5. Better understand and deliver on hunting and fishing customer service, including needs for predictability, as we continue to focus on maintaining healthy fish and wildlife populations.
6. Develop a plan (R3) to better serve anglers, hunters and outdoor enthusiasts.
7. Invest in and implement social science to understand how to effectively serve our public and tailor our services and outreach appropriately.
8. Drive community science that creates stronger awareness and stewardship of fish and wildlife while advancing agency goals.
9. Expand WDFW's volunteer program, in concert with our partners, to advance a broader range of Department goals.
10. Improve how we engage with advisory committees to more effectively implement our mission
 - Establish regional advisory groups to represent regional interests
 - Solicit expertise to identify how to eliminate unintentional bias and more effectively engage underserved communities.



Move WDFW towards operational & environmental excellence

Near-term Actions

1. Adapt decision making based on publicly shared performance goals and indicators.
2. Increase decision transparency to both internal and external audiences.
3. Expand ways for the Fish and Wildlife Commission to connect with residents.
4. Support the Department's internal Diversity Advisory Committee recommendations and track workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion measures.
5. Assess the need and identify actions to improve cross-program/region collaboration.
6. Develop measures for strengthening employee satisfaction and adopting best practices for staff retention and advancement.
7. Develop and implement a WDFW sustainability plan which includes actions to minimize our carbon footprint, maximize carbon sequestration, and to achieve more net ecological gain.
8. Develop a culture of safety with a focus on limiting risk and supporting employee health.

Moving Forward

25 Year Performance Goals

WDFW will work to identify and track performance measures to gauge our success.

- Increase in the number of acres of high value habitat conserved, restored, and connected on public and private lands.
- Number of populations with limiting factors identified and prioritized, through the State Wildlife Action Plan.
- Number of additional river miles and habitat accessible to salmon and steelhead.
- Number of agency actions which include an effective climate change component.
- Number of species of greatest conservation need with an increasing trend in abundance.
- Improved salmon productivity in all watersheds, with an emphasis on constraining stocks.
- Number of conservation hatchery programs meeting program goals.
- Number of watershed action plans approval with local and tribal support.
- Technical assistance tools receive improving marks from end users for their ability to inform decisions.

In this four-page summary, you will find some key elements of the Department's 25-Year Strategic Plan including: Strategies, near-term actions, and performance goals. Please know that a fully copy of the plan is also available to you, where you will also find: longer-term actions, performance indicators, a description of the process undertaken to develop this plan, and reviews of the Department's current challenges and opportunities.

The contents of this plan will function as a "living document". To help the Department stay focused on the strategic direction represented here, the Department will:

- Revisit this plan every two years, or more, as preparation for development of our proposed biennial budget. In the spirit of adaptive management, we will seek to examine where we are achieving our goals, where we fall short, when short-term goals need more time, or long-term goals must become more urgent.
- Form a series of agency webpages where strategies will be modified to recognize emerging realities.
- Track performance metrics in real time.

We hope you are inspired to learn more and join us in this effort. Please find more information and a full copy of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Strategic Plan at wdfw.wa.gov/strategicplanning.



Persons with disabilities who need to receive this information in an alternative format or who need reasonable accommodations to participate in WDFW-sponsored public meetings or other activities may contact Dolores Noyes by phone (360-902-2349), TTY (360-902-2207), or email (dolores.noyes@dfw.wa.gov).

For more information, see <https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/requests-accommodation>