



# 10-YEAR RECREATION STRATEGY

FOR WDFW-MANAGED LANDS

Enhancing recreation opportunities while  
protecting natural, cultural, and tribal resources



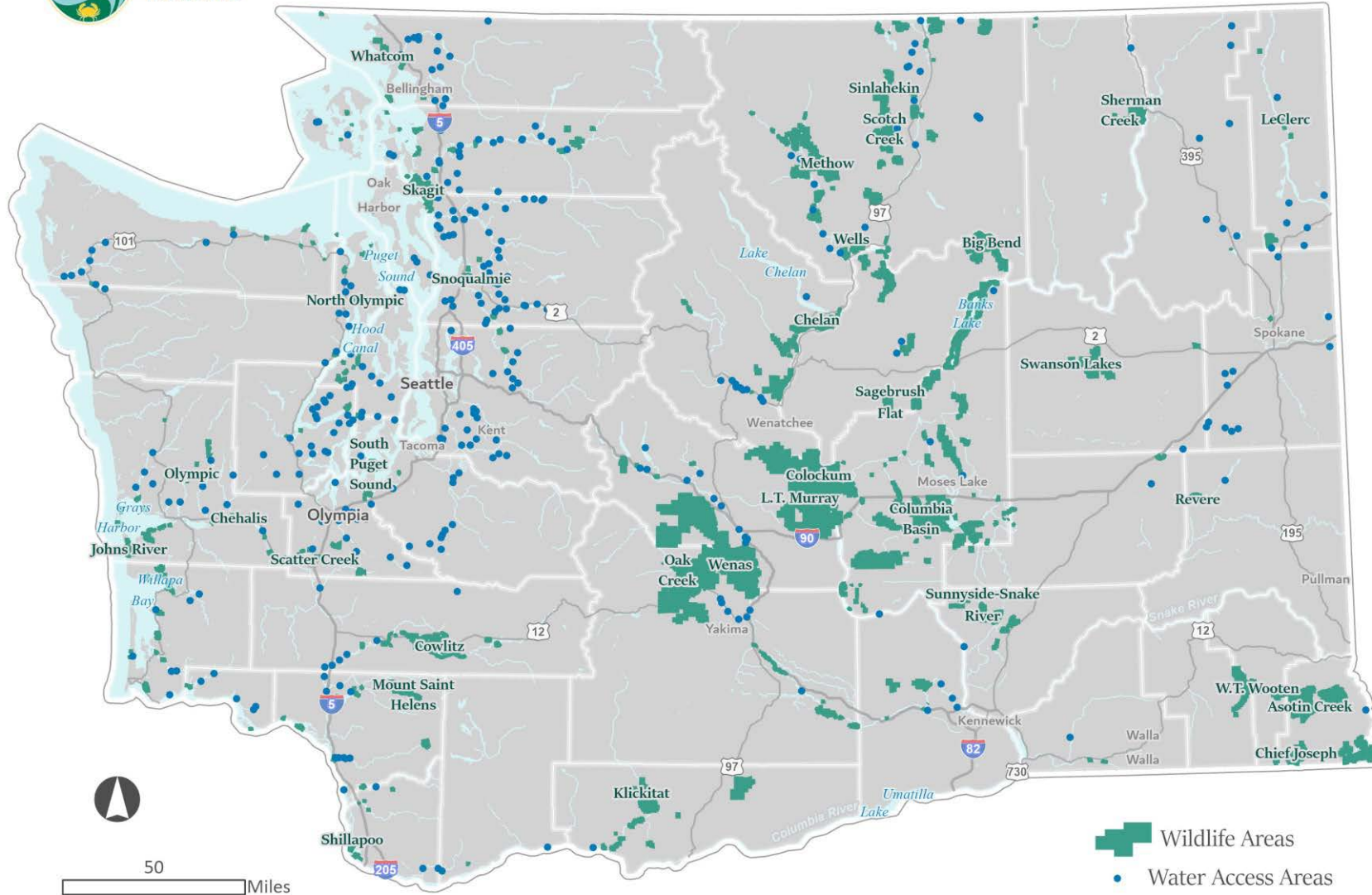
“Enthusiasm for outdoor recreation reached new peaks during the pandemic and shows no signs of slowing in the years to come. This is wonderful, but also poses a challenge.”

- Kelly Susewind, Director





# WA Department of Fish and Wildlife Managed Lands







# WDFW-managed Lands: Protecting Land and Water for Wildlife and People

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*Our vision is a Washington where fish and wildlife thrive in healthy habitats, and where people experience and enjoy our state's natural gifts for generations to come.*

*By Actively Managing Lands, WFDW:*

- Provides access for fishing, hunting, and other wildlife related recreation
- Fosters experiences and exploration
- Preserves natural and cultural heritage



# Goals

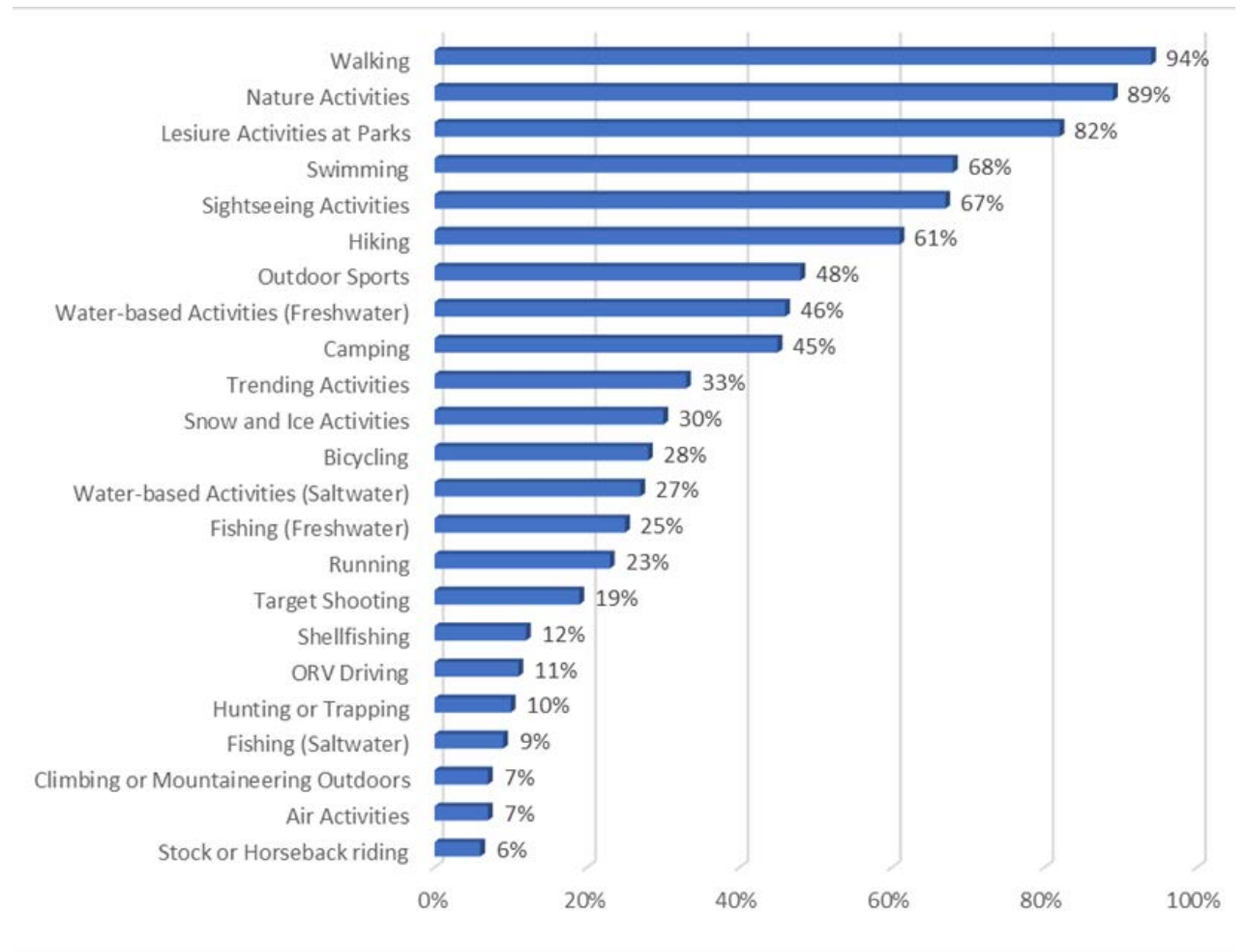
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1. Protect Natural and Cultural Resources
2. Enhance Recreation
3. Strengthen Relationships



# Changing Landscape

- Population growth and demographic shifts
- Shifts in recreation preferences
- Shifts in participation frequency
- Recreation during COVID
- Climate change



(Jostad et al 2017)



# Approach

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- Collaborative
- Data and science supported
- Adaptive and iterative
- Targeted and sensible





# Strategic Initiatives

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1. Recreation Planning
2. Education and Engagement
3. Use and Impact Monitoring
4. Rulemaking
5. Travel Management
6. Capacity and Funding



# Recreation Planning

*Plan to accommodate outdoor recreation where it is compatible with conservation goals and other management priorities.*

1. Define recreation use levels and buffers to guide development and management.
2. Plan at the regional and local scales in response to current and emerging recreation demands.

# Education & Engagement

*Engage targeted populations in planning and managing recreation and encourage the development of a stewardship ethic in visitors to WDFW-managed lands.*

1. Engage tribes in recreation planning and program development.
2. Engage underrepresented communities in recreation planning and program development.
3. Implement R3 Plan for fishing and hunting on WDFW-managed lands.
4. Develop a statewide interpretation program.
5. Engage volunteers in supporting recreation needs.
6. Equip local managers to manage conflicts.
7. Educate visitors on how and where to recreate responsibly.



# Use & Impact Monitoring

*Develop and manage data systems that support recreation planning and management decisions.*

1. Track visitation levels, visitor demographics and recreation use preferences.
2. Monitor recreation impacts on wildlife, habitat, and recreation facilities.



# Statewide & Local Rulemaking

*Regulate recreation uses of WDFW-managed lands to protect the health and safety of fish, wildlife, habitat, department personnel, neighbors, and visitors.*

1. Statewide rules reduce regulatory uncertainty on recreation-related uses.
2. Area-specific rules manage access and use of specific wildlife areas, units, and water access areas.



# Travel Management

*Develop a sustainable multimodal travel management program that addresses the designation, development, decommissioning, maintenance and monitoring of roads and trails on WDFW-managed lands.*

1. Establish clear guidance for managing travel networks on WDFW-managed land.
2. Inventory and assess the uses and condition of travel routes and networks.
3. Monitor and manage travel networks.

# Capacity and Funding

*Develop the tools, workforce, and sustainable funding to deliver on the vision of the 10-year Recreation Strategy for WDFW-managed Lands.*

1. Increase statewide capacity for leading and supporting regional recreation planning and management.
2. Increase regional capacity for recreation planning and management.
3. Develop sustainable funding to support WDFW Statewide Recreation Strategy implementation.



# Near Term Actions

- Learn by doing.
- Make WDFW-managed lands more welcoming.
- Collect and analyze data.
- Curtail illegal activity.
- Ramp up capacity.



# SEPA Process

- Determination of Non-significance: 1/10/22
- Public comment period: 1/10 to 2/28/22
- External engagement
  - Spanish translation of strategy draft
  - Media engagement
  - Paid ads on English and Spanish social media
  - Outreach to partner organizations
  - Briefing for WDFW advisory committees, including all Wildlife Area Advisory Committees
  - 2 public meetings





# Public Comment Highlights (599 comments)

- Do not expand or open additional areas for recreation until existing impacts are mitigated. Include rigorous monitoring of impacts.
- Taxpayers should have unfettered access to public lands. Do not restrict public access.
- Continue to allow dispersed use of WDFW-managed lands for camping, hunting, fishing, gathering, hiking, and horseback riding.
- Prioritize hunting and fishing on WDFW-managed lands.
- Include stakeholders in planning decisions. Expand collaboration and improve opportunities for volunteers.

# Early Progress

- Visitation study
- \$5 million proviso
- Partnership with Parks and DNR
- Early pilots: Methow Wildlife Area, Region 4 Access Area Planning
- Rulemaking: pack goats, definitions
- Ecological Integrity Monitoring decision package





# Next Steps

- Media engagement
- Distribution of strategy to partners and lawmakers
- Implementation (near-term actions)

