

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

2009-2015
STRATEGIC PLAN





Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission oversees the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The commission consists of nine members, each serving six-year terms. Members are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate. Three members must reside east of the summit of the Cascade Mountains, three must reside west of the summit, and three may reside anywhere in the state. However, no two commissioners may reside in the same county.

While the commission has several responsibilities, its primary role is to establish policy and direction for fish and wildlife species and their habitats in Washington. The commission appoints and supervises the director and monitors policy implementation of the goals and objectives established by the commission. The commission also classifies wildlife and establishes the basic rules and regulations governing the time, place, manner and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife.

Commission Members

Chair: Jerry Gutzwiler, Wenatchee
Term of Office: 03/15/05 – 12/31/08

Vice Chair: Miranda Wecker, Naselle
Term of Office: 01/01/07 - 12/31/12

Dr. Kenneth Chew, Seattle
Term of Office:
01/01/05 - 12/31/10

Gary Douvia, Kettle Falls
Term of Office:
01/15/07 - 12/31/12

Conrad Mahnken, Bainbridge
Island
Term of Office:
11/04/05 - 12/31/10

Chuck Perry, Moses Lake
Term of Office:
01/01/07 - 12/31/12

Shirley Solomon, Mt. Vernon
Term of Office:
03/15/05 – 12/31/08

George Orr, Spokane
Term of Office:
08/08/07 - 12/31/10

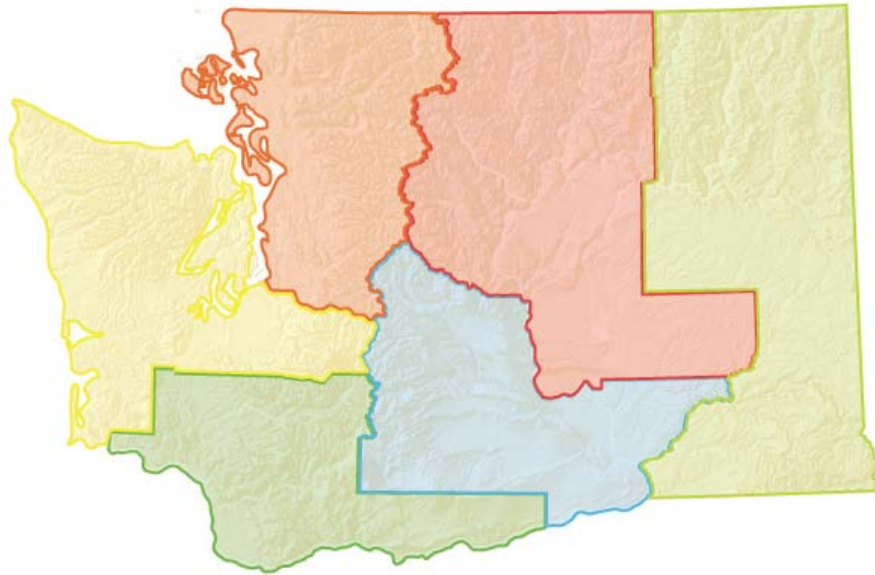
Western Washington - Vacant
Term of Office:
01/21/03 - 12/31/08

Susan Yeager
Executive Assistant

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Strategic Plan

2009 – 2015



Jerry Gutzwiler
Fish and Wildlife Commission Chair

Jeff Koenings, Ph.D.
Director



June 13, 2008



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Introduction

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is dedicated to preserving, protecting, perpetuating and managing the state's fish and wildlife resources. We do this by applying an underlying conservation ethic to our work while providing commercial and recreational opportunities that result in economic benefits to local communities and the citizens of Washington state. Our much-treasured quality of life in the Pacific Northwest depends on healthy and thriving fish and wildlife populations. As the steward of these resources, WDFW is committed to continue building a solid and sustainable foundation that supports both resource and human needs now and in the future. To fulfill this commitment and achieve our mission, WDFW will continue to:

- ❖ Identify, seek funding and fix ailing facilities and infrastructure.
- ❖ Focus on developing partnerships with other agencies and organizations, tribes and citizens that make us effective and efficient.
- ❖ Educate youth and adults to foster a stewardship ethic toward fish and wildlife.
- ❖ Seek policy support and stable funding to manage the increased demands placed on fish and wildlife resources in the state.

To help achieve these goals in increasingly challenging times, the department has undergone several administrative changes. The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission is providing more oversight and playing a key role in setting department policy and direction.

WDFW's executive leadership team has also expanded from a one-deputy to a two-deputy structure to sharpen responsibilities and promote the changes that are necessary to increase the effectiveness of the department. The new positions, which report to the director, include the deputy director of Resource Policy and the deputy director of Operations. As members of the leadership team, they are accountable for department performance at all levels.





Mission Statement

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) serves Washington's citizens by protecting, restoring and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, while providing sustainable and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities.

Legislative Declaration

As defined in Chapter 77 RCW, WDFW is Washington's principal agency on species protection and conservation.

Legislative mandate (RCW 77.04.012):

“Wildlife, fish, and shellfish are the property of the state. The commission, director, and the department shall preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish in state waters and offshore waters.

The department shall conserve the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish resources in a manner that does not impair the resource. In a manner consistent with this goal, the department shall seek to maintain the economic well-being and stability of the fishing industry in the state. The department shall promote orderly fisheries and shall enhance and improve recreational and commercial fishing in this state.

The commission may authorize the taking of wildlife, food fish, game fish, and shellfish only at times or places, or in manners or quantities, as in the judgment of the commission does not impair the supply of these resources.

The commission shall attempt to maximize the public recreational game fishing and hunting opportunities of all citizens, including juvenile, disabled, and senior citizens.

Recognizing that the management of our state wildlife, food fish, game fish, and shellfish resources depends heavily on the assistance of volunteers, the department shall work cooperatively with volunteer groups and individuals to achieve the goals of this title to the greatest extent possible.

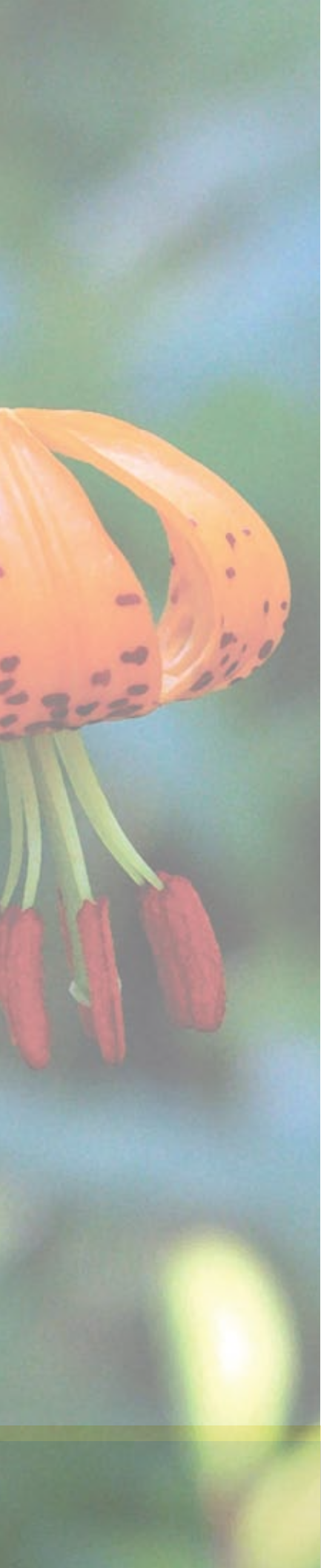
Nothing in this title shall be construed to infringe on the right of a private property owner to control the owner's private property.”

Department Goals

To achieve its mission, WDFW will continue to focus its activities on the following six goals:

- I. Achieve healthy, diverse and sustainable fish and wildlife populations.
- II. Ensure sustainable fish and wildlife opportunities for social and economic benefit.
- III. Ensure effective use of current and future financial resources in order to meet the needs of the state's fish and wildlife resource for the benefit of the public.
- IV. Implement processes that produce sound and professional decisions, cultivate public involvement and build public confidence and agency credibility.
- V. Promote development and responsible use of sound, objective science to inform decision-making.
- VI. Create an environment that nurtures professionalism, accountability, enthusiasm and dedication in order to attract, develop and retain a workforce that can successfully carry out the mandate of the department.





Working on Statewide Initiatives

WDFW supports Governor Chris Gregoire's initiatives to provide economic vitality and environmental quality that will help create a sustainable and prosperous future for Washington state.

As the steward of the state's fish and wildlife populations, WDFW is a strategic partner in several important statewide initiatives aimed at restoring and protecting these resources.

Recovering salmon and steelhead populations

As icons of the Pacific Northwest, salmon and steelhead are integral to the region's ecological, commercial, recreational and cultural identity. The health of our native salmon and steelhead reflects the health of our ecosystem. Stocks of both species are now listed as endangered or threatened, requiring the combined efforts of organizations and individuals to ensure their recovery. One example of WDFW's role in restoring our wild fish is the development of a focused, long-term approach called Salmon and Steelhead in the 21st Century. The key objectives are to:

- ❖ Protect and restore Washington's wild fish populations.
- ❖ Protect and restore habitat and ecosystem functions necessary for salmon survival and recovery.
- ❖ Manage fishery and hatchery programs to support rebuilding of wild populations and sustainable fisheries.
- ❖ Conduct tribal co-management efforts in a cooperative environment with identified goals.
- ❖ Create an internal support network that ensures multi-disciplinary, cross-program coordination, effective communication and decision-making.
- ❖ Create an external support network to enhance WDFW's ability to recover wild populations and maintain sustainable fisheries.

WDFW also plays an important role in the development and implementation of salmon recovery plans at the watershed level. Through a collaborative process, WDFW watershed stewards and area habitat biologists provide technical assistance to develop and implement on-the-ground projects that restore habitat and remove fish passage barriers.

Addressing climate change

Increasing evidence shows that global warming and climate change are significantly impacting the earth's environment, adding to the current threats on fish and wildlife species and their habitats. The results of climate change are expected to include increased water temperatures in streams, rivers and lakes; loss of freshwater and wetland habitats; inundation of coastal habitats; increased temperatures; drought; increased wildfires; and expansion of invasive species, pests and diseases. Due to these wide-ranging impacts, natural ecological systems may lose their resiliency and become unable to support a number of fish and wildlife species.

The state is taking action to respond to anticipated environmental impacts associated with climate change. One significant step taken by the Legislature was the passage of the state's Climate Change Act in 2008. At WDFW, an internal planning process is in place to assess the impacts on fish and wildlife and their habitats and to develop a strategic response. WDFW is pursuing strategies that incorporate climate change considerations with the aim of:

- ❖ Maintaining healthy and sustainable fish and wildlife populations.
- ❖ Ensuring that climate change effects do not push at-risk species closer to extinction.
- ❖ Maintaining healthy ecosystems to prevent the loss of critical ecological functions, such as protective cover and wildlife forage.
- ❖ Following sound science to make resource management decisions in regard to climate uncertainty.

During the 2009-11 biennium, WDFW will continue to work with the state Department of Ecology and other partners to implement a comprehensive research and preparation program to ensure that fish and wildlife impacts are addressed as the state prepares climate change solutions.

The statewide plan identifies research and monitoring requirements and addresses protection of ecosystems, biodiversity, threatened and endangered species and species of economic importance. Implementation will likely require additional resources if recommendations include major research initiatives or broad-scale changes to existing monitoring programs. Funding also will be required if specific infrastructure modifications are necessary to improve department facilities.





In the long term, WDFW must ensure that fish and wildlife are protected and preserved and that their needs are addressed in statewide climate research, preparation and adaptive management efforts. We must increase our knowledge and understanding about the risks to ecosystems and species to help develop policy, direction and action plans that will guide the future management of fish and wildlife during changing and uncertain times.

Mapping the future of Columbia Basin's water supply

Changes in the climate, along with an increasing demand for water, are compromising the state's ability to effectively manage its water resources in key areas of the state. To address this situation, the Legislature and Governor Gregoire established the Columbia River Basin Water Management Program, which directs the Department of Ecology to develop new water supplies through water storage, conservation projects, voluntary regional water management agreements and other methods. The goal is to allow access to the river's water resources while providing adequate protection for endangered salmon and other wildlife species.

WDFW participated on Ecology's implementation team to help shape policy alternatives and ensure an appropriate balance of in-stream and out-of-stream water use. In addition, WDFW staff will develop and review environmental documents, forecasting methods and implementation options. The department also will provide baseline biological information and conduct research to help define program costs and benefits to fish and wildlife.

With the passage of the bill, one-third of all newly stored water is now allocated to support stream flows for fish; two-thirds will be available for new out-of-stream uses, such as farming, industry and municipal growth.

Restoring Puget Sound

WDFW plays a major role in preserving and restoring the health of Puget Sound's ecosystem, from providing scientific guidance to reviewing applications for hydraulic project permits. WDFW area habitat biologists issue Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) permits to property owners for construction projects in or near water where fish are affected. WDFW is actively involved in salmon recovery efforts led by local watershed groups who acquire and restore habitat and remove fish passage barriers in waters connected to Puget Sound. Wildlife biologists conduct research and provide expertise on many of the area's wildlife species, from marine mammals to threatened sea birds.

Staff members also work closely with government agencies, tribes, organizations and citizens on numerous projects to preserve estuaries and nearshore habitat, while WDFW employees contribute to the efforts of the Puget Sound Partnership, a state agency established in 2007 by Governor Gregoire to help restore this unique body of water.

Preserving biological diversity

Washington is rich in natural diversity, which provides the state with many benefits, including economic returns from agriculture, forestry, fishing and recreation. However, due to habitat degradation, expanding population, land development, invasive species and climate change Washington risks losing much of its native plant communities and wildlife species. Recognizing the state's declining environmental health, the Legislature established a statewide biodiversity planning effort in 2002 to safeguard the state's natural heritage. The Washington Biodiversity Council, whose members represent a variety of interests across the state, was formed in 2003 to create a long-term conservation strategy and implementation plan. As a voice on the council, WDFW plays a key role by providing expertise and knowledge on the state's fish and wildlife species and their habitats. Since its inception, the council has completed the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy that incorporates biodiversity protection within a multitude of programs including land-use planning, landowner conservation incentives and funding programs.





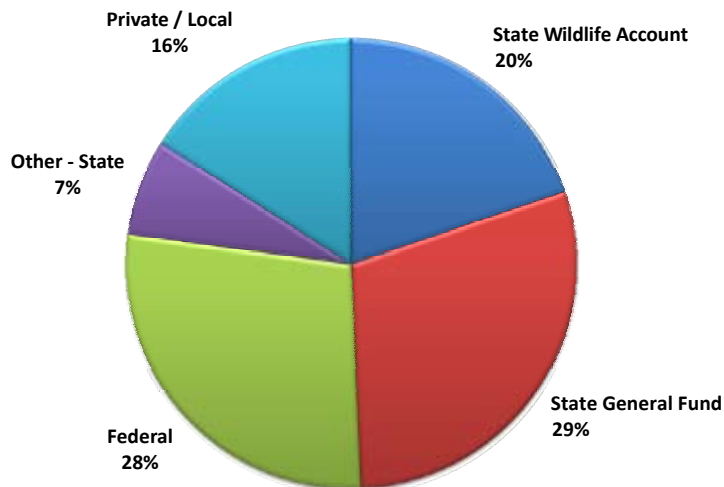
Assessment of Internal Capacity

WDFW employs approximately 1,600 to 1,800 people (depending on the time of year) with a 2007-09 biennium budget of \$347 million in operating funds and \$78 million in capital funds. WDFW maintains six regional offices located in Montesano, Spokane Valley, Ephrata, Vancouver, Yakima and Mill Creek, while the department's headquarters is located in Olympia. Additionally, WDFW sells recreational hunting and fishing licenses through a network of 554 private vendors located in communities throughout the state.

Investing in WDFW and outdoor recreational activities provides economic benefits to Washington's rural communities as urban and suburban fishers, hunters and wildlife enthusiasts pursue outdoor activities across the state. On average, recreational activities provide \$101 in economic benefit for every \$53 of investment in WDFW. The financial health of the department is partially dependent on the ability of the state to provide ample hunting, fishing and viewing opportunities to the recreational user. Other factors that influence the department's financial health are the overall state of the economy and the funding expectations in the state budget.

Financial health

The WDFW budget for the 2007-09 biennium is \$425 million (\$347 million in operating funds and \$78 million in capital funds), and consists of five major funding sources including the State General Fund, the State Wildlife Account, federal funds, private / local funds and multiple state-dedicated accounts. This chart shows the department's 2007-09 expenditure plan broken out by these five major funding sources.



Funding challenges

Within the five major funding categories, WDFW manages 22 different funds as well as another 49 dedicated sub-accounts. While there is flexibility for use of the State General Fund and part of the State Wildlife Account, other funds and dedicated sub-accounts are appropriated for specific purposes and must conform to the authorizing statute and/or contract controlling the account. Furthermore, because 70.6 percent of WDFW's funding comes from federal, private and local sources and recreational license sales, which can vary from year to year, the department does not have a stable revenue stream.

While WDFW strives to fulfill the needs of its stakeholder groups by providing recreational and commercial opportunities, the department has limited resources to meet all of these needs. And although the WDFW budget is larger than in previous years, it must also provide for increased costs related to cost of living increases, federal and state court decisions, species protection, fuel for department vehicles, legislative provisos, and other initiatives.

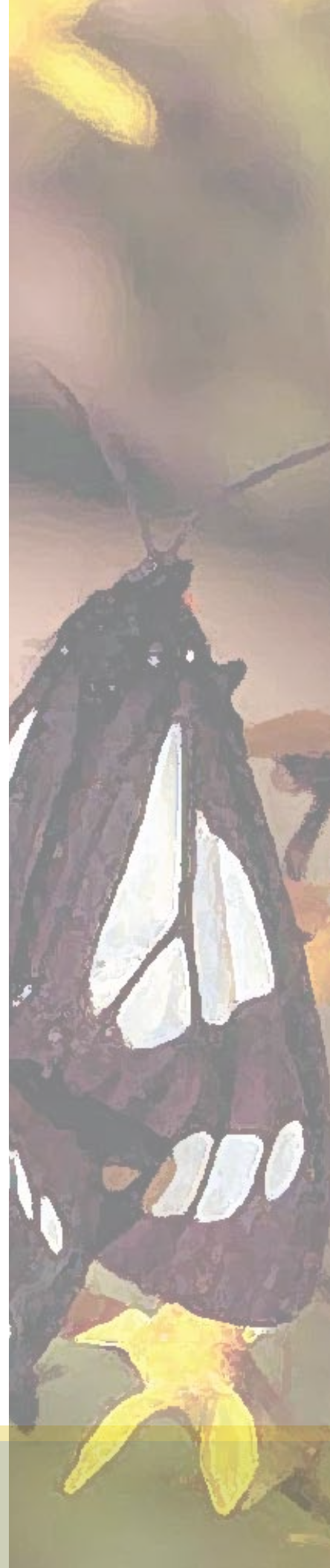
These challenges limit WDFW's ability to meet all operational needs, expand existing programs or implement new initiatives. In the coming biennium, the department will be expected to do more with less and to fund initiatives within existing resources.

The department maybe facing significant budget challenges in State Wildlife Account, State General Fund and federal funding levels.

State Wildlife Account

The State Wildlife Account is subject to volatility. Fund revenues depend on recreational license sales that fluctuate due to weather, habitat conditions and numerous other factors. The majority of this account's revenue is collected from license sales in April, May and June — the last three months of the fiscal year. If the amount of revenue from license sales is not adequate, there is little time to recover at the end of the fiscal year, or at the end of the biennium.

Additional analysis has been undertaken to account for and manage the dedicated and non-dedicated amounts within the overall account. Dedicated amounts are funds with a specific, statutorily defined use while non-dedicated funds can be used for any purpose authorized by the account. Sixteen dedicated sub-accounts are included within the overall State Wildlife Account balance.





Since the 2001-03 biennium, the fund balance within the State Wildlife Account has been reduced significantly. Based on current revenue projections and budget assumptions, the State Wildlife Account is expected to be at or near zero balance at the beginning of the 2009-11 biennium. The projected balance may be insufficient for the department to manage future activities at current staffing levels.

State General Fund

A goal of the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission and WDFW is to have secure and stable funding to meet the department's core mission. With the state potentially facing a general fund deficit of \$2.4 billion (current projection), WDFW is at significant risk of losing funding for many critical programs. WDFW received roughly \$110 million from the State General Fund for the 2007-09 biennium. This funding is critical for implementing department operations and supports both commercial and recreational fishing throughout the state. While \$110 million is a considerable amount of money, it should be noted that WDFW's funding combined with all other natural resource agencies (Department of Ecology, Washington State Parks, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, the Recreation and Conservation Office, the Puget Sound Partnership), makes up only 1.4 percent of the entire state general fund budget (\$460 million out of more than \$29.7 billion).

Federal funding

Federal funding for programs and services will be variable during the 2009-11 biennium. For instance, President Bush's proposed budget for fiscal year 2009 reduces the appropriation to the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) from \$67.5 million (fiscal year 2008 appropriation), to \$35 million. As recently as fiscal year 2006, PCSRF was appropriated \$90 million. Appropriations for Mitchell Act hatchery facilities continue a long-term decline.

Funding for other programs, such as the Puget Sound Nearshore Project and a variety of landowner stewardship programs has remained stable, while funding for the Puget Sound Partnership and important formula funding programs has increased.

Strategies to respond to funding challenges

WDFW is responding to financial challenges by undertaking the following:

WDFW revenue study

The department is analysing the current licensing and permit fee structure to determine changes required to stabilize revenues and prevent further erosion of buying power. Additional ideas for enhancing revenues are also under review.

Efficiency of existing expenditures

Existing expenditures are being scutinized to prioritize activities and determine savings through efficiency, consolidation and streamlining.

Strategic budget planning

WDFW requests for new funding are being focused on several specific areas for the 2009-11 biennium including salmon and steelhead recovery, WDFW land and habitat improvements, and human/wildlife conflict management.

Consultant recommendations

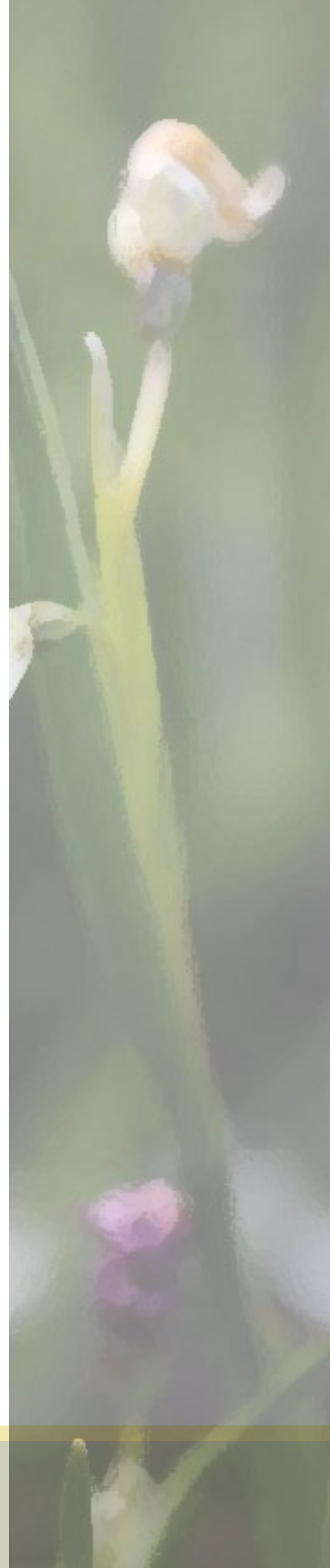
A new capital program plan is being implemented based on the results of an independent study by Berk & Associates that reviewed WDFW's capital budget development and execution and monitoring processes. Through this process, WDFW discovered that engineering staffing and operational activities did not always align with the department's needs. The department is in the process of implementing recommendations from the analysis and realigning staff to better meet funding and work demands.


Information Technology

Information Technology (IT) provides the infrastructure, data management and business support applications that allow WDFW to effectively deliver electronic information to the public and department employees. These IT tools and methods enable WDFW to carry out its mission across all goals and objectives.

Consistent with Washington's 2008-2014 State Strategic IT Plan, WDFW's strategic direction for information technology focuses on:

- ❖ Investing in IT systems that are consistent with state standards.
- ❖ Promoting data sharing with other agencies and partners.
- ❖ Using common practices and standards within WDFW and other agencies.
- ❖ Improving user experience through better integration.





Additional strategies for WDFW include:

- ❖ Improving communications through network and web site improvements.
- ❖ Improving IT services for staff, including remote users.
- ❖ Continuing to implement better IT systems for capital programs, commercial licensing, environmental permitting and resource management.
- ❖ Improving geographic and land information systems applications and interagency processes for sharing and developing data.
- ❖ Implementing a more structured approach to improve department data management standards.

In fiscal year 2009, WDFW will complete the agency migration to the state Enterprise Active Directory, the state Exchange email system and access to state data center facilities. WDFW also will continue to work with the state's Department of Information Services (DIS) to identify actions that improve the use of common systems.

While WDFW is moving forward with applications that are coordinated with other agencies by using common architecture and data stores, additional work is needed to further integrate applications and improve data management practices.

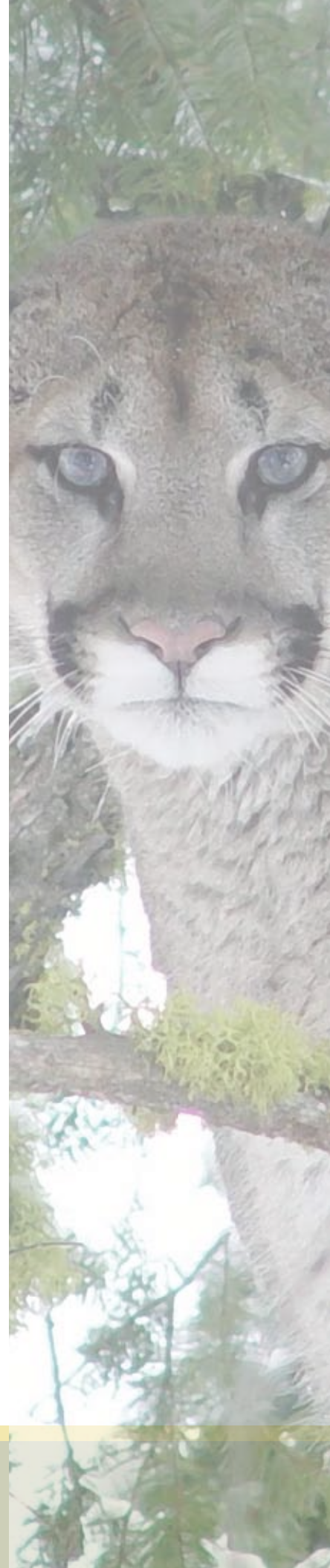
WDFW will continue to cooperate with DIS to evaluate department systems and architecture, consistent with long-term DIS direction. However, the department may need major funding to convert its application architecture. WDFW also will evaluate overall management of electronic data to ensure that retention meets state archive standards. It is likely that the new rules from the State Archives Office for managing electronic information will have a major impact on agency practices.

Strategic Direction

The department has created the following 11 objectives aligned with the department's six goals:

- ❖ Protect and restore wild fish populations.
- ❖ Protect state waters by managing aquatic invasive species.
- ❖ Protect and perpetuate wildlife species through sound wildlife management.
- ❖ Protect and restore habitat and ecosystem functions.
- ❖ Improve regulatory permitting processes and outcomes.
- ❖ Protect and promote commercial and recreational wildlife-related opportunities.
- ❖ Continue the Capital Project Improvement Process.
- ❖ Improve public involvement and appreciation of fish and wildlife.
- ❖ Use the best-available science.
- ❖ Hire and promote the best candidates.
- ❖ Provide a safe and healthful work environment.

WDFW works to reach these 11 objectives through related strategies and activities outlined on the following pages. Performance measures are also listed for individual strategies. Quantitative milestones for each performance measure are included in the department's work plans and reviewed in department progress reports or GMAP discussions.





Goal I: Fish and Wildlife

Achieve healthy, diverse, and sustainable fish and wildlife populations while supporting their habitats

Objective: Protect and restore wild fish populations.

Strategy: Complete the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead framework and start implementing key actions.

Activities:

- ❖ Determine population status and define goals.
- ❖ Compile and define “All-H” (habitat, hatchery, harvest and hydropower) integration actions.
- ❖ Support coordinated implementation of local salmon recovery priorities and land-use planning.
- ❖ Monitor habitat status.

Performance Measures:

- ❖ Percentage of salmon populations in key selected sites that meet recovery goals.
- ❖ Percentage of ESA-listed salmon and steelhead major population groups monitored to assess the ESA de-listing criteria: abundance productivity.
- ❖ Compliance rate for all North of Falcon wild fish release regulations.
- ❖ Number of enforcement hours directed toward anadromous and native resident salmonids.

Strategy: Increase understanding of marine fish species conservation techniques and habitat needs.

Activities:

- ❖ Design and implement a rockfish research plan that will enhance the understanding and management of depleted rockfish species (such as yelloweye rockfish).
- ❖ In cooperation with NOAA Fisheries and constituency groups, explore the potential benefits and risks associated with artificial enhancement of lingcod in Puget Sound consistent with the Fish and Wildlife Commission's Marine Fish Enhancement Policy.
- ❖ Working with the Puget Sound treaty tribes and our constituents, complete a Puget Sound Rockfish Conservation and Recovery Plan.
- ❖ Initiate site fidelity and patterns of ocean yelloweye residency and habitats study.

Performance Measures:

- ❖ Conduct one remotely operated underwater vehicle (ROV) pilot survey of coastal yelloweye habitat to determine optimal survey design.
- ❖ Number of sub-basin ROV surveys of rocky habitat in Puget Sound to determine quality/quantity of rockfish habitat.
- ❖ Complete a Puget Sound rockfish conservation and recovery plan.
- ❖ Provide the Fish and Wildlife Commission with an annual update of the rockfish research plan activities every August.

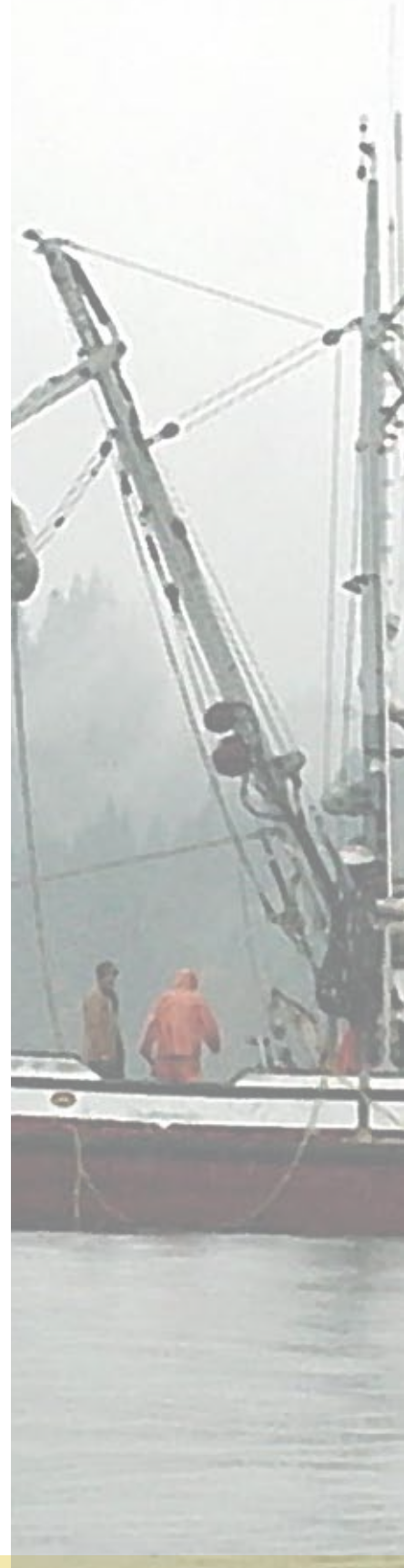
Strategy: Ensure that native resident fish and freshwater shellfish populations are healthy, stable and self-sustaining.

Activities:

- ❖ Manage native resident fish and freshwater shellfish to ensure conservation objectives are met, specifically focusing on bull trout, native trout species, native non-game fish, freshwater shellfish and sturgeon.
- ❖ Develop a plan, including actions and timelines, priorities, and costs, to peer review management of native resident fish populations.

Performance Measures:

- ❖ Percent of bull trout populations with healthy status.





Strategy: Modernize hatchery practices.

Activities:

- ❖ The department will develop and implement a 10-year plan to complete hatchery reform measures consistent with the Hatchery Scientific Review Group's (HSRG) recommendations.
- ❖ Ensure that 100 percent of the genetically integrated chinook, coho, and steelhead hatchery programs in Puget Sound and along the Washington coast will incorporate natural-origin broodstock where returning natural-origin fish are available and can be identified.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Percentage of chinook, coho, and steelhead intended for harvest that are marked.
- ❖ Percentage of genetically integrated hatchery programs achieving benchmarks for implementation of the HSRG's guidelines for broodstock management.
- ❖ Number of hatchery facilities meeting inspection and maintenance schedule for emergency response systems (pumps, alarms, generators).
- ❖ Percentage of hatchery programs operated in a manner consistent with ESA requirements.
- ❖ Percentage of hatchery facilities renovated to meet instream flow standards.
- ❖ Percentage of hatcheries that modified fish trap and intake screen system replacements to ensure fish passage compliance.

Strategy: Increase the percentage of mass-marked salmon and steelhead.

Activity:

- ❖ Ensure that 100 percent of the chinook, coho, and steelhead out-planted or released from WDFW or cooperative facilities for fishery harvest are marked with an adipose fin clip (except as modified by tribal agreements).

Performance measures:

- ❖ Percentage of fall chinook externally marked and released on the Washington coast.
- ❖ Percentage of fall chinook externally marked and released in Puget Sound.
- ❖ Percentage of salmon and steelhead marked and released in Columbia River.

Strategy: Increase the number of selective fisheries.

Activities:

- ❖ Fully implement the five-year Puget Sound Selective Fishery Plan.
- ❖ Assess the estimated mark rates and develop regional selective fishery plans for the coast and the Columbia River accordingly.
- ❖ Work closely with the treaty tribes and stakeholders during implementation of current plans, including acting in a manner that is consistent with the 1997 federal court's mass marking and selective fishing stipulation.
- ❖ Expand the current membership of the Selective Fishery Cabinet and work with the appropriate members of the cabinet in developing the two new regional plans.
- ❖ Test and monitor new means for selective harvest to reduce impacts on wild fish.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Percentage of Puget Sound marine areas with mark-selective fisheries.
- ❖ Number of ESA populations that meet fishery conservation objectives.
- ❖ Number of additional selective fishery methods developed.





Objective: Protect state waters by managing aquatic invasive species.

Strategy: Pro-actively manage aquatic invasive species and enforce related state statutes.

Activities:

- ❖ Coordinate and work with other state and federal agencies to avoid the introduction of aquatic invasive species into state waters, including efforts to manage ballast water discharge.
- ❖ Continue to enforce state statutes and regulations designed to prevent the introduction of invasive species.
- ❖ Implement ballast water management program to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species from unexchanged or untreated vessel discharges.
- ❖ Implement the recreational and commercial watercraft pathway management program to prevent the introduction or spread of aquatic invasive species from infested watercraft transported over land or by water.
- ❖ Implement the tunicate management program to prevent the introduction of new populations, contain established populations, and control or eradicate established populations in marine waters.
- ❖ Implement the Atlantic salmon assessment program by surveying freshwater streams for the presence of juvenile or adult Atlantic salmon.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Percentage of qualifying vessels entering Washington waters inspected for ballast water compliance.
- ❖ Number of inspections of watercraft for aquatic invasive species.
- ❖ Inspect 90 percent of high-risk vessels entering Washington waters for ballast water compliance.
- ❖ Inspect at least 200 boats per month (per seasonal FTE) for both animal and plant aquatic invasive species at high-use boat launches and fishing tournaments.
- ❖ Number of civil or criminal citations for violations of aquatic invasive species statutes and rules.
- ❖ Begin surveying 145 marinas for the presence of invasive tunicates.
- ❖ Attempt eradication of invasive tunicates at Pleasant Harbor or other marinas.

Objective: Protect and perpetuate wildlife species through sound wildlife management.

Strategy: Manage game species to support healthy populations and sustainable recreational opportunities.

Activities:

- ❖ Develop research proposals to identify factors limiting growth of elk herds not meeting population objectives.
- ❖ For Blue Mountains and Colockum herds, develop action plans and timeframes to meet herd population goals identified in their respective plans.
- ❖ Develop a plan, with timeframes and actions defined, to improve habitat on Mount St. Helens elk winter range for Mount St. Helens' elk herd.
- ❖ Complete the white-tailed deer species plan, including incorporation of independent biological peer-review recommendations.
- ❖ Maintain elk populations through the winter and reduce elk damage to private lands.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of wildlife species recovery and management plans completed.
- ❖ Percentage of elk herds that meet population objectives.
- ❖ Tons of feed used per year.
- ❖ Number of deer and elk samples collected that are screened for chronic wasting disease.
- ❖ Wild bird samples screened for avian influenza or West Nile virus.





Strategy: Develop Wildlife Action Plans for each eco-region to implement the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy.

Activities:

- ❖ Continue to re-examine and redefine the relative priority of wildlife species and associated habitats.
- ❖ Coordinate multi-agency land acquisition for wildlife habitat with other state and local agencies through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).
- ❖ Accelerate coordinated planning for species and habitat conservation among federal and state land management agencies.
- ❖ Complete local habitat assessments and develop new and better databases and mapping products for local governments to use in growth management planning.
- ❖ Better integrate management of marine and aquatic ecosystems with terrestrial ecosystems, both within WDFW and among state and federal agencies.
- ❖ Incorporate identified species and habitat conservation priorities into operational work plans within WDFW and other conservation partners.
- ❖ Incorporate specific conservation actions into WDFW's cost accounting systems to help develop and monitor project budgets and priorities.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of key activities in the endangered species recovery plans implemented.
- ❖ Number of native species status reviews completed.
- ❖ Percentage of threatened and endangered wildlife species showing increases in population numbers.

Objective: Protect and restore habitat and ecosystem functions.

Strategy: Identify and repair barriers to fish passage.

Activities:

- ❖ Inventory and corrections of stream obstructions, fish passage barriers and unscreened diversions.
- ❖ Salmonid habitat assessment.
- ❖ Statewide fish passage and screening database updates.
- ❖ Surface water diversion fish screening consultation.
- ❖ Fishway inspection and maintenance consultation.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of fish passage barriers in Washington state corrected by agencies and landowners.
- ❖ Number of fishways opened for fish passage on WDFW lands.
- ❖ Number of WDFW fishways inspected.
- ❖ Number of new miles of streams opened annually by removing man-made barriers statewide.
- ❖ Number of fish screens fabricated and/or installed by the agency to meet state fish protection standards.





Strategy: Restore habitats through restoration and enhancement projects.

Activities:

- ❖ Solicit and evaluate proposals for habitat restoration projects, consistent with an adaptive management approach and regional ecosystem restoration planning.
- ❖ Develop and oversee contracts to implement these projects.
- ❖ Evaluate project performance to inform future solicitation and contracting activities.
- ❖ Identify opportunities and direct project-based learning to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of restorative treatments.
- ❖ Coordinate outreach and education that support high-quality project implementation.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of technical assistance requests regarding salmon recovery that were met from watershed groups, Lead Entities, Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEs), project sponsors, and others.
- ❖ Number of watershed planning units that receive instream-flow science, data and technical assistance.
- ❖ Number of project contracts successfully executed.
- ❖ Acres and linear feet of habitat restored.

Strategy: Maintain and enhance department lands.

Activities:

- ❖ Create a strategic plan, in consultation with the WDFW Lands Management Advisory Council and other affected interests, that addresses the operation and maintenance of department owned/managed lands.
- ❖ Develop maintenance standards (for vehicle parking, restrooms, boat launch facilities, signs, roads, etc.) for all access sites and provide site evaluations to measure annual access-site improvements and stewardship.
- ❖ Initiate monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity for all WDFW owned and controlled lands.
- ❖ Define operational excellence standards for all owned and managed habitat lands, incorporate them into wildlife area management plans and add them to WDFW's proposed Habitat Conservation Plan for wildlife areas.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of wildlife area management plans incorporating operational excellence standards.
- ❖ Acres (in thousands) of noxious weeds controlled on WDFW owned/managed lands.
- ❖ Number of acres of important habitat for all species protected through conservation easements or land acquisitions by the agency.
- ❖ Number of corrective action projects completed for the state's "Forest & Fish" road maintenance and abandonment plans.





Objective: Improve regulatory permitting processes and outcomes.

Strategy: Develop new business methods for processing Hydraulic Permit Approval (HPA) permit applications.

Activities:

- ❖ Develop a web-based application program for processing HPA permit applications.
- ❖ Participate in the “Integrated Project Review and Mitigation Tools Initiative” with federal, state and local governments.
- ❖ Work with multiple local, state and federal agencies to develop an easily understood Joint Aquatic Resources Application process, in concert with the Governor’s Office of Regulatory Assistance.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of HPA projects monitored for compliance with conditions.
- ❖ Number of HPAs checked per year or the number of officer hours spent on HPA compliance.
- ❖ Customer satisfaction rating of the HPA permitting process.
- ❖ Number of days to issue or deny an HPA permit.

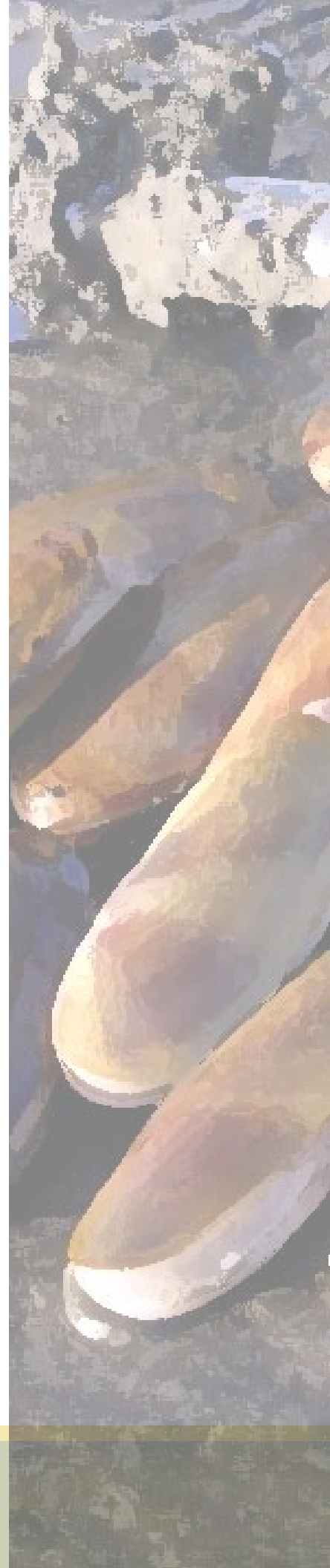
Strategy: Provide technical assistance associated with environmental regulatory processes.

Activities:

- ❖ Develop technical guidance documents.
- ❖ Train for fish passage and screening inventory and habitat assessment, culvert design for fish passage and integrated stream bank protection guidelines (ISPG).
- ❖ Consult, inform and educate people within and outside the department on restoration and protection of aquatic habitats.
- ❖ Increase fish and wildlife protection by commenting and providing department expertise through regulatory processes and requests for reviews of technical documents, and other issues involving environmental engineering.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of on-site visits in order to provide technical assistance with HPA projects.
- ❖ Number of hydroelectric projects receiving technical assistance for relicensing.
- ❖ Number of wind power projects properly sited.



Goal II: Public Benefit

*Ensure sustainable fish and wildlife opportunities
for social and economic benefit*

Objective: Protect and promote commercial and recreational wildlife-related opportunities.

Strategy: Expand hunting opportunities.

Activities:

- ❖ Maximize general hunting season opportunities; identify and propose strategies to the Fish and Wildlife Commission for expanding hunting opportunities where wildlife populations are robust and problem situations warrant.
- ❖ In cooperation with tribes with off-reservation hunting rights, develop regional hunting management agreements that will maintain healthy game populations and ensure sustainable hunting opportunities for all Washington citizens.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of total participation days for hunting per year.
- ❖ Number of pheasant hunters.
- ❖ Number of acres made available for hunting, through WDFW agreements with private landowners.
- ❖ Dollars of hunting license revenue per quarter.

Strategy: Develop, update and implement fishery management plans.

Activities:

- ❖ Implement the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan and regional/watershed steelhead management plans (Puget Sound, Willapa Bay, Grays Harbor) including implementation strategies for each geographic area.
- ❖ Develop and implement a new Columbia River Management Plan that includes commitment by the parties to develop an abundance-based fall chinook harvest framework to achieve ESA, recovery, and conservation goals.
- ❖ Renew and implement state-tribal shellfish resource management plans as required.
- ❖ Improve catch accounting for the recreational harvest of Puget Sound Dungeness crab.
- ❖ Complete Lower and Mid-Columbia River Fish Management Plan.
- ❖ Complete State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review of lower, middle- and upper Columbia River fish management plans.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of total participation days (in millions) for sport fishing per year.
- ❖ Number of recreational fishing days for razor clams.
- ❖ Number of sport limits generated for clams and oysters.
- ❖ Number of trout planted in state waters annually.

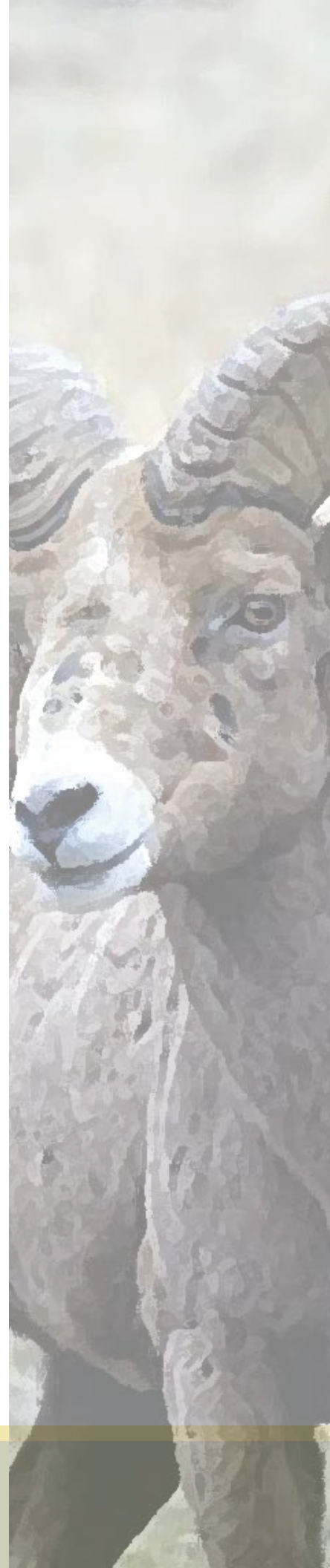
Strategy: Increase opportunities for non-consumptive fish and wildlife activities.

Activities:

- ❖ Develop a plan designed to increase opportunities for non-consumptive fish and wildlife activities.
- ❖ Conduct ongoing outreach efforts to minority groups.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of wildlife-viewing sites.
- ❖ Number of wildlife festivals actively supported by WDFW.





Goal III: Funding

Ensure effective use of current and future financial resources in order to meet the needs of Washington state's fish and wildlife resources for the benefit of the public

Objective: Continue the Capital Project Improvement Process.

Strategy: Ensure that correct, effective and durable capital management processes are implemented.

Activities:

- ❖ Prioritize and align strategic initiatives with asset-management program principles and commitments.
- ❖ Develop a plan to expand use of processes developed in the Capital Program Action Plan.
- ❖ Address Capital Plan milestones associated with:
 - ⦿ Hiring project managers
 - ⦿ Procuring necessary project management software
 - ⦿ Developing a new master work schedule
 - ⦿ Redeploying staff resources

Performance measures:

- ❖ Condition of WDFW facilities as measured by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) facility condition index.
- ❖ Percentage of facilities in new asset management program.

Objective: Stabilize the Wildlife Account

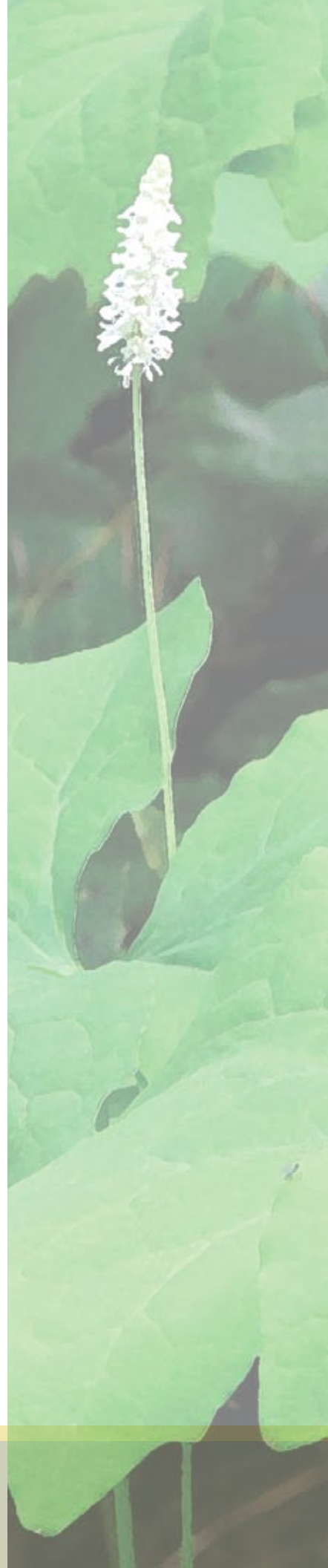
Strategy: Develop new funding strategies and ensure accurate forecasting and accounting of the fund balance

Activities:

- ❖ Ensure that the State Wildlife Account has a positive balance by the end of each biennium and into the future.

Performance Measures:

- ❖ Monthly State Wildlife Account cash balance.
- ❖ Percent of budget variance achieved for state funds, by fiscal year, for each department program and for the entire department.



Goal IV: Outreach

Implement processes that produce sound and professional decisions, cultivate public involvement, and build public confidence and department credibility

Objective: Improve public involvement and appreciation of fish and wildlife.

Strategy: Develop a strategic communication and outreach scoping document that identifies actions to increase the visibility of the department and the benefits of fish and wildlife resources.

Activities:

- ❖ Update and improve the department's website.
- ❖ Publicize fishing, hunting and wildlife-viewing opportunities.
- ❖ Increase communication and collaboration with advisory groups.
- ❖ Participate in a marketing initiative developed by the national Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation focused on "lapsed" recreational fishers. This effort will include coordination with 20 other states that have agreed to participate in the marketing program.
- ❖ In consultation with other western states and natural resource agencies, conduct an analysis of the costs and staffing requirements for an agency quarterly publication.
- ❖ Gather input on other state fish and wildlife agencies' strategic communications and outreach planning.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number (in thousands) of youth participating in youth sport fishing events.
- ❖ Number of WDFW website visits.
- ❖ Number of hours spent meeting with stakeholder groups.

Strategy: Maintain/improve existing relationships that engage volunteer organizations and fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing advocate communities.

Activities:

- ❖ Enhance participation in community events.
- ❖ Develop outreach to promote volunteer opportunities.
- ❖ Utilize volunteer partnerships on department lands enhancement efforts.
- ❖ Find additional funds to purchase or develop new volunteer database.
- ❖ Highlight volunteer partnerships through annual newsletter.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of hours of WDFW volunteer activities.
- ❖ Provide breakout of hours by WDFW-supported partnerships such as RFEs, Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA), Watchable Wildlife, etc.
- ❖ Incorporate volunteer organizations into the department strategic initiatives by region.

Strategy: Promote hunter safety awareness, knowledge and skills.


Activities:

- ❖ Educate first-time hunters by training a statewide network of volunteer instructors and provide hunting classes statewide.
- ❖ Train first-time trappers.
- ❖ Provide advanced hunter education, bowhunter education and a home study or online alternative to the basic hunter education course.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of statewide Hunter Education classes given.
- ❖ Number of active instructors in Hunter Education.
- ❖ Number of persons successfully completing Hunter Education certification.
- ❖ Number of hunting incidents per year.





Strategy: Enhance public involvement in the North of Falcon salmon season-setting process.

Activities:

- ❖ The department will work with the treaty tribes and its stakeholders to improve the North of Falcon process by enhancing public involvement to make it as open and transparent as possible while recognizing and respecting the government-to-government relationship between the treaty tribes and the state of Washington.
- ❖ The department will use the best scientific information available in formulating fishing seasons and management measures that prioritize the support of conservation of wild stocks and maintain and enhance fishing opportunities.
- ❖ Keep North of Falcon web site link up to date with meeting dates, process timeline and map to represent most recent agreed to fishery plan.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of visits to the North of Falcon webpage.
- ❖ Number of stakeholders that participate in meetings.
- ❖ Number of wild stocks meeting fishery conservation objectives.

Strategy: Recruit new wildlife-related participants through active outreach and education.

Activities:

- ❖ Provide outreach and education services.
- ❖ Conduct 500 or more individual projects such as youth fishing events, Salmon in the Classroom annually.
- ❖ Participate in state, regional and county fairs, sportsmen's shows and boat shows.
- ❖ Continue marine outreach program for beach walks, beach clean-ups and marine-oriented classroom presentations.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of schools participating in WDFW citizen-science projects.

Strategy: Pro-actively address human/wildlife interactions

Activities:

- ❖ Develop new statutory language for damage, nuisance and dangerous wildlife laws.
- ❖ Develop an agriculture damage assessment process based on an outside scientific peer review. Assessment work should include development of common definitions and include a recommended compensation value table. Expand the Wildlife Conflict Specialist Program.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of verified complaints for bear and cougar per 100,000 citizens.
- ❖ Percentage of targeted animals taken under public safety cougar removal permits.
- ❖ Ratio of damage claims to total deer and elk damage complaints.
- ❖ Percentage of elk harvested under Landowner Access Permits.
- ❖ Number of special trapping permits issued.
- ❖ Percentage of deer and elk damage claims solved by cooperative solutions
- ❖ Dollars paid for deer and elk damage claims per year.





Goal V: Science

Promote development and responsible use of sound, objective science to inform decision-making

Objective: Use the best-available science.

Strategy: Develop scientific tools and knowledge to support effective management of fish and wildlife.

Activities:

- ❖ Develop a scientific peer-review plan for critical science components needed to manage and conserve fish and wildlife populations. The plans shall include a process description, timelines, priorities, and costs.
- ❖ Develop a research agenda to address data gaps and develop seven additional white papers on the potential impacts from hydraulic projects as part of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) process.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Number of species and/or populations with improved scientific understanding of limiting factors and ecological requirements.
- ❖ Number of scientific research projects in progress.
- ❖ Number of species and/or populations with genetic baseline information.
- ❖ Number of published papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Goal VI: Employee Competence

Create an environment that nurtures professionalism, accountability, enthusiasm, and dedication in order to attract, develop, and retain a workforce that can successfully carry out the mandate of the department

Objective: Hire and promote the best candidates.

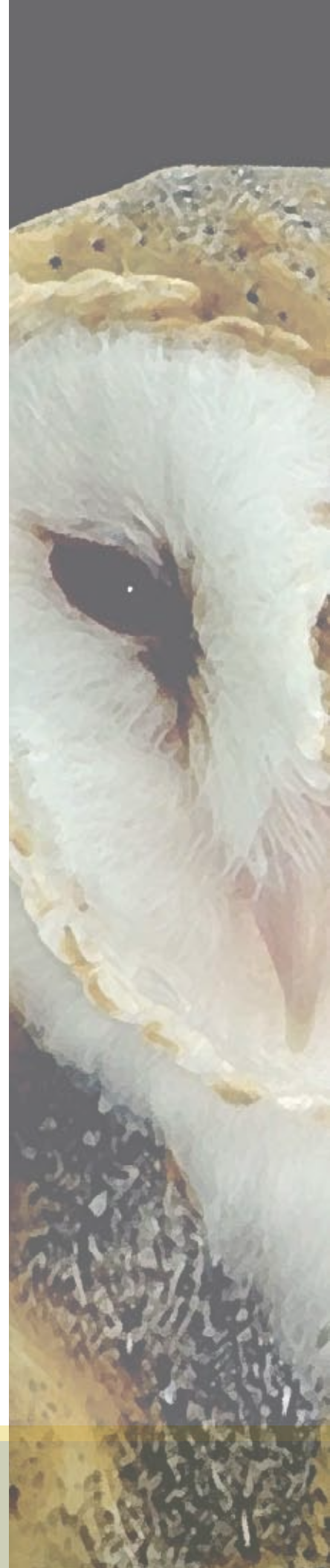
Strategy: Align individual qualifications and expertise with position functions, roles and responsibilities.

Activities:

- ❖ Review hiring practices, ensuring a broad solicitation of qualified applicants.
- ❖ Promote a diverse and professional department workforce.
- ❖ Align individual qualifications and expertise with position functions, roles and responsibilities.
- ❖ Conduct a law enforcement allocation and staffing study that determines law enforcement workload by function and geographical area and the number of officers needed to address the workload, and identifies and considers alternative staffing options.

Performance measures:

- ❖ Percentage of employees with current position/competency descriptions.
- ❖ Average number of days to hire for job vacancies.
- ❖ Percentage of employees with current performance evaluations.





Objective: Provide a safe and healthful work environment.

Strategy: Incorporate safety values into agency activities through proactive safety leadership.

Activities:

- ❖ Ensure required safety training is completed.
- ❖ Enhance WDFW Safety Committee effectiveness.

Performance Measures:

- ❖ Percentage of WDFW staff whose evaluations address safety training needs.
- ❖ Percentage of WDFW Safety Committees that perform annual inspections.
- ❖ Incident rate (number of recordable injuries per 100 FTEs).

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