



2017-19 Strategic Plan

DRAFT

*'To preserve, protect and
perpetuate fish, wildlife and
ecosystems while providing
sustainable fish and
wildlife recreational and
commercial opportunities'*



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

Dear Fish and Wildlife Enthusiast:

Typically, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Strategic Plan identifies the goals, objectives, and initiatives that will guide our work during the upcoming biennium. The plan reviews the agency structure and outlines the primary values and principles we will use to achieve our mission to conserve fish and wildlife in Washington and provide sustainable recreational and commercial opportunities.

The plan is an important statement of the department's goals and priorities, and it focuses primarily on new initiatives and areas that need improvement – activities that have not been a part of the department's responsibilities in the past. For that reason, it is only one of the documents that help to focus our day-to-day operations. Others include:

- Business plans developed by each WDFW program (Fish, Wildlife, Habitat, Enforcement, Capital Asset Management, and Business Services) that describe the key work they intend to accomplish in the biennium;
- The WDFW director's performance agreement with the state Fish and Wildlife Commission, which spells out the commissioners' priorities for the director;
- Program-specific plans such as the game management plan, herd plans, species recovery plans, hatchery genetic management plans, wildlife area plans, and
- Job descriptions and performance expectations for every WDFW employee, which connect their individual responsibilities to the department's strategic direction.

This year, we have departed slightly from our normal approach. For the 2017-19 biennium, which began July 1, we have retained the goals and objectives from past plans, but our primary initiative will be to respond to direction that the Legislature provided in June in the state operating budget. Specifically, lawmakers directed

WDFW to "...evaluate and implement efficiencies to the agency's operations and management practices," and "...develop a plan for balancing projected revenue and expenditures and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency operations..." The specific initiatives associated with these directives appear after the goals and objectives in this plan.

Further, we learned through our Wild Future initiative that we need to communicate with the public and respond more effectively to your suggestions, complaints and ideas for improvement. We need to improve our relationships with customers and constituent groups, and increase public participation in our decision-making. Therefore, as we fulfill the legislative requirements mentioned above, we'll also develop a planning framework for the 2019-21 Strategic Plan that embraces public participation and partnerships to improve our effectiveness and responsiveness in the years ahead.

We welcome the opportunity to review our organization's effectiveness and make improvements. The challenges facing fish and wildlife conservation and management will only continue to increase as our population grows and habitat shrinks, and we are fully committed to continuously improving the department to meet these challenges.

Sincerely,



Brad Smith, Ph.D.
Chairman, Fish and
Wildlife Commission



James Unsworth, Ph.D.
Director, WDFW

Introduction

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is the state’s principal steward of fish and wildlife resources. State law directs the Department to conserve native fish and wildlife and their habitat, while also supporting sustainable fishing, hunting and other outdoor opportunities for millions of Washington residents and visitors. Hunting, fishing and wildlife-watching opportunities managed by the Department contribute to the State’s outdoor recreation culture, which generates \$22 billion in economic activity each year and almost 200,000 jobs across the state.¹

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

The nine-member Fish and Wildlife Commission is a diverse Governor-appointed body responsible for establishing policy direction for the management of fish and wildlife, setting seasons and regulating fishing and hunting, and monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of its policies and goals.

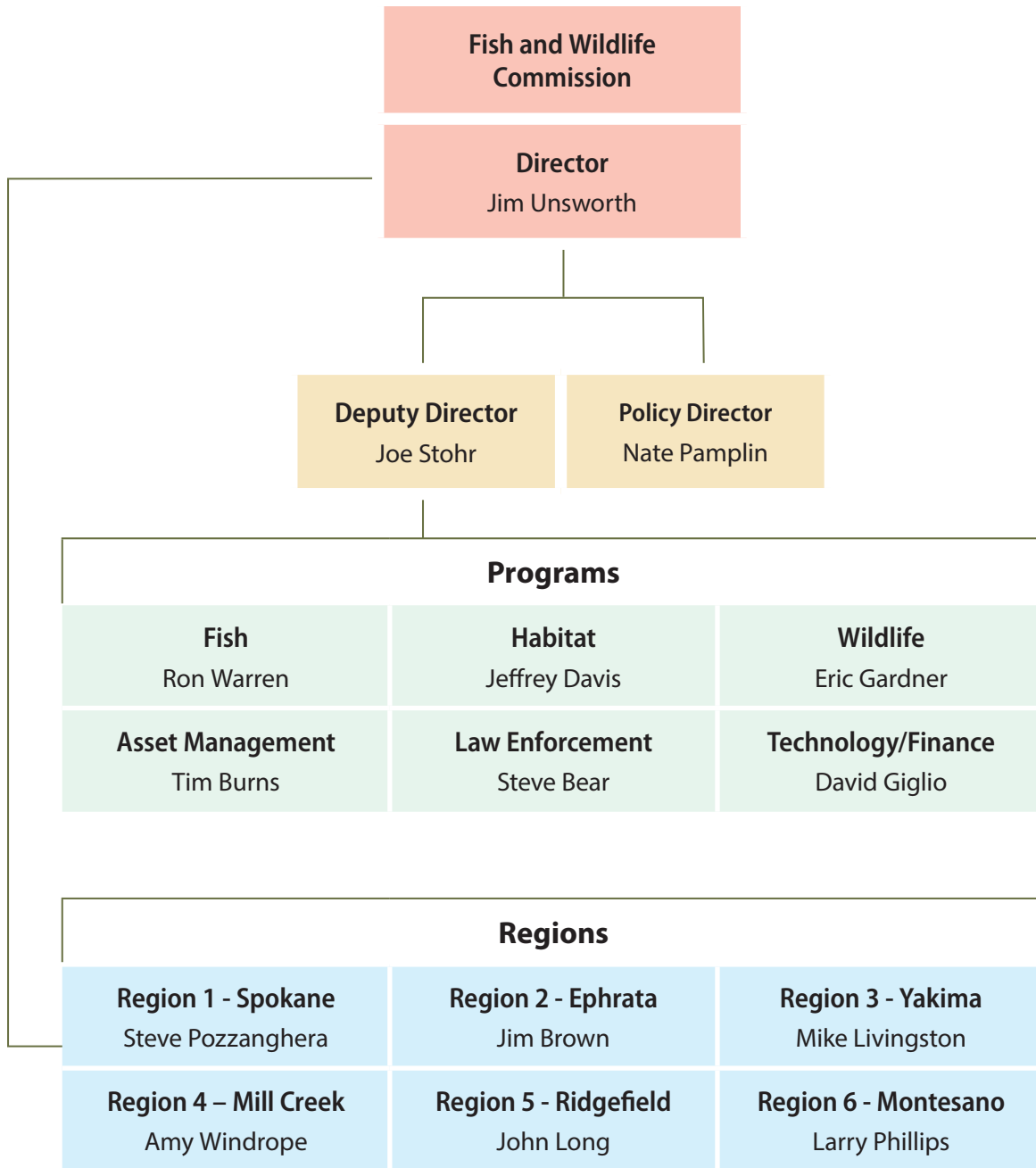
The Commission conducts regular meetings, public hearings and informal workshops around the state, providing many opportunities for citizens and stakeholder groups to actively participate in the management of Washington’s fish and wildlife. More information is available at wdfw.wa.gov/commission/.

<p>Bradley Smith, Ph. D. (Chair)</p> <p>Western Washington Whatcom County</p>	<p>Larry Carpenter (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Western Washington Skagit County</p>	<p>David Graybill</p> <p>Eastern Washington Chelan County</p>
<p>Jay Holzmilller</p> <p>Eastern Washington Asotin County</p>	<p>Jay Kehne</p> <p>At-large position Okanogan County</p>	<p>Robert Kehoe</p> <p>At-large position King County</p>
<p>Barbara Baker</p> <p>At-Large position Thurston County</p>	<p>Kim Thorburn</p> <p>Eastern Washington Spokane County</p>	<p>Don McIsaac</p> <p>Western Washington Clark County</p>

¹“Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State.” January 2015, by Earth Economics for Washington Recreation and Conservation Office.

Organization Overview

The department directly employs up to 1,900 employees in communities across the state.



Conservation Principles



State law established the Department as the steward for the State's fish and wildlife. In pursuit of this work, the Department will apply the following conservation principles— both internally across programs and externally in cooperation with other governments, organizations, and citizens – to better maintain healthy ecosystems for the benefit of all species and Washingtonians

- **PRINCIPLE 1** – Practice conservation by managing, protecting and restoring ecosystems for the long-term benefit of people and for fish, wildlife and their habitat.
- **PRINCIPLE 2** - Be more effective when managing fish, wildlife and their habitats by supporting healthy ecosystems.
- **PRINCIPLE 3** - Work across disciplines to solve problems because of the connections among organisms, species and habitats.
- **PRINCIPLE 4** - Integrate ecological, social, and institutional perspectives into decision-making.
- **PRINCIPLE 5** - Embrace new knowledge and apply best science to address changing conditions through adaptive management.
- **PRINCIPLE 6** - Collaborate with conservation and community partners to achieve shared goals.

Mission

Preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.



Conservation. Protection, preservation, management, or restoration of natural environments and the ecological communities that inhabit them; including management of human use for public benefit and sustainable social and economic needs. *(Adapted from The American Heritage® Science Dictionary Copyright © 2005)*

Goals | Objectives

Goal 1:

Conserve and protect native fish and wildlife

The Department is developing strategies for protecting and restoring native fish and wildlife populations in the face of changing environmental conditions, human population growth, and urban development. Our plans outline strategies for managing specific species, such as salmon and gray wolves, as well as preserving and restoring the ecological integrity of broader ecosystems.

Objectives

- A.** The ecological integrity of critical habitat and ecological systems is protected and restored.
- B.** Washington’s fish and wildlife diversity is protected at levels consistent with ecosystem management principles.
- C.** Threatened and endangered fish and wildlife populations are recovered to healthy, self-sustaining levels.

Goal 2:

Provide sustainable fishing, hunting, and other wildlife-related recreational and commercial experiences

The Department is committed to providing sustainable fishing, hunting and wildlife-viewing opportunities throughout the state. These popular outdoor activities are a “quality of life” issue for millions of Washingtonians, and generate billions of dollars in economic benefits for local businesses and communities each year. Our plans are designed to maintain and increase those benefits with strategies that range from better access to better catch accounting.

Objectives

- A.** Fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and other outdoor activities are enhanced and expanded.
- B.** Hatcheries and public access sites are safe, clean, and effectively support people’s use and enjoyment of natural resources.
- C.** Tribal treaty coordination and implementation is achieved with adequate resources.

Goal 3:

Promote a healthy economy, protect community character, maintain an overall high quality of life, and deliver high-quality customer service

Washingtonians have a keen interest in the state’s fish and wildlife resources, whether for recreational, commercial, or aesthetic reasons. Our plans include strategies to involve citizens – and whole communities – in decisions that affect their future and that of the state’s other living resources. They highlight the importance of responding quickly and effectively to citizens’ concerns, and encourages collaborating with stakeholders to maximize the economic benefits of fish and wildlife. Recognizing the vital role hunters and fishers have played as stewards of those resources, the Department is also working to engage more citizens in that important work.

Objectives

- A.** Conservation of fish and wildlife is widely supported by communities across Washington.
- B.** The economic benefits of fishing, hunting, and other wildlife-related jobs are supported by and linked to the Department’s activities.
- C.** The Department’s decisions support communities through valuing, understanding, and evaluating input from stakeholders.
- D.** The Department responds to citizens and customer needs in a timely and effective way.

Goal 4:

Build an effective and efficient organization by supporting the workforce, improving business processes, and investing in technology

The Department recognizes that a skilled, diverse workforce and efficient business processes are essential to effectively manage fish and wildlife and serve the public in the 21st century. Plans for staff development include additional training opportunities and more collaboration among programs throughout the Department. Technological improvements include developing a web-based IT Services Management System and developing a web-accessible employee work plan database. In addition, Lean management will continue to be used to improve a number of the Department’s business processes.

Objectives

- A.** The Department has a diverse, robust workforce with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet future business needs.
- B.** Employees are energized, engaged in agency priorities, and empowered to continuously improve their productivity.
- C.** Achieve operational excellence through effective business processes, workload management, and investments in technology.
- D.** Work environments are safe, highly functional, and cost- effective.

State Legislative Directives

- 1. By May 1, 2018**, in consultation with the Office of Financial Management, the Department must consult with an outside management consultant to evaluate and implement efficiencies to the agency's operations and management practices. Specific areas of evaluation must include:
 - a. Potential inconsistencies and increased costs associated with the decentralized nature of organizational authority and operations;
 - b. The Department's budgeting and accounting processes, including work done at the central, program, and region levels, with specific focus on efficiencies to be gained by centralized budget control;
 - c. Executive, program, and regional management structures, specifically addressing accountability.
- 2. By May 1, 2018**, the Department must develop a plan for balancing projected revenue and expenditures and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of agency operations including:
 - a. Expenditure reduction options that maximize administrative and organizational efficiencies and savings, while avoiding hatchery closures and minimizing impacts to fisheries and hunting opportunities;
 - b. Additional revenue options and an associated outreach plan designed to ensure that the public, stakeholders, the commission, and legislators have the opportunity to understand and impact the design of the revenue options; and
 - c. Prioritized options (from a. and b., above) by impact on achieving financial stability, impact on the public and fisheries and hunting opportunities, and on timeliness and ability to achieve intended outcomes.
- 3. By the date of submission for the 2019-2021 biennial budget (Fall 2018)**, the Department, in cooperation with the Office of Financial Management shall conduct a zero-based budget review of its operating budget and activities. Information and analysis shall include:
 - a. A statement of the statutory basis or other basis for the creation of each program and the history of each program that is being reviewed;
 - b. A description of how each program fits within the strategic plan and goals of the agency and an analysis of the quantified objectives of each program within the agency;
 - c. Any available performance measures indicating the effectiveness and efficiency of each program;
 - d. A description with supporting cost and staffing data of each program and the populations served by each program, and the level of funding and staff required to accomplish the goals of the program if different than the actual maintenance level;
 - e. An analysis of the major costs and benefits of operating each program and the rationale for specific expenditure and staffing levels;
 - f. An analysis estimating each program's administrative and other overhead costs;
 - g. An analysis of the levels of services provided; and
 - h. An analysis estimating the amount of funds or benefits that actually reach the intended recipients.

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