



Watchable Wildlife

Development of a Statewide
Wildlife Viewing Plan for Washington to
Increase Rural Tourism



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY,
TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Today's Objectives

- Explain the request for a Wildlife Viewing Plan for Washington
- What demographics tell us
- Highlights of the plan
- Highlights of reviewer feedback



Developers of the Plan

- Michael O'Malley, WDFW
- George Sharp, CTED
- Chuck Gibilisco, WDFW
- Betsy Gabel, CTED
- Michelle Reilly, CTED
- And Planning Committee



1. Wildlife Viewing Plan

- 2003 Washington Legislature Passes SB 5011

“The departments of Fish and Wildlife and Community, Trade, and Economic Development are directed to host a conference on wildlife viewing tourism, working with interested local governments, state agencies, and stakeholders.

“The objective of the conference shall be adoption of a strategic plan and specific implementing actions for promotion of wildlife viewing tourism in a manner that provides sustainable rural economic development and maintains wildlife diversity.

“A summary of conference recommendations must be submitted to the Legislature”



Washington Conference 9/03/03



Keynote Presenters

Jeff Koenings, Director, WDFW



Robin Pollard, former Director, Economic Development Division, CTED



Keynote Presenters



Senator Ken Jacobsen

Jim Mallman, Watchable Wildlife, Inc.



11 Working Groups

Strategic Wildlife Viewing Plan for Washington

Creating a shared vision for wildlife viewing development in Washington state.

- **Questions/Issues/Barriers - to wildlife viewing in your neck of the woods.**



Conference Findings

- **Lack of funding** - for campaign, staff, agency participation, signing, materials, future needs
- **Need a coherent vision** of what watchable wildlife is and how to project that to the public and agencies
- Need to **make it easy for others to get a program going**, need instructions, who to talk with, how is it done, what is the safe way to do the program both from site selection and public safety
- Need to develop methods to **help volunteers and keep them from being burned out**



Conference Findings

- Educate the public on what is being seen, develop the infrastructure to support sites
- How to develop local interest and support, emphasis on economic return on investment, how it promotes area, get sites into urban areas also
- Need government, political and business support for program



Wildlife Viewing in Washington

- Rich resource base, and let's keep it that way
- Active viewer participation and economic impact
- Growing community interest



Goals of Wildlife Viewing Programs

- Promote habitat conservation
- Promote sustainable economic development
- Build broad-based public support for wildlife conservation programs



Community Benefits

- Build unique community identity
- Promote historical significance
- Develop Pride of Place
- Conserving wildlife habitat, improve quality of life
- Provide positive marketing image
- Promote community cultural fabric
- Promote authentic indigenous community characteristics
- Create a story for the community



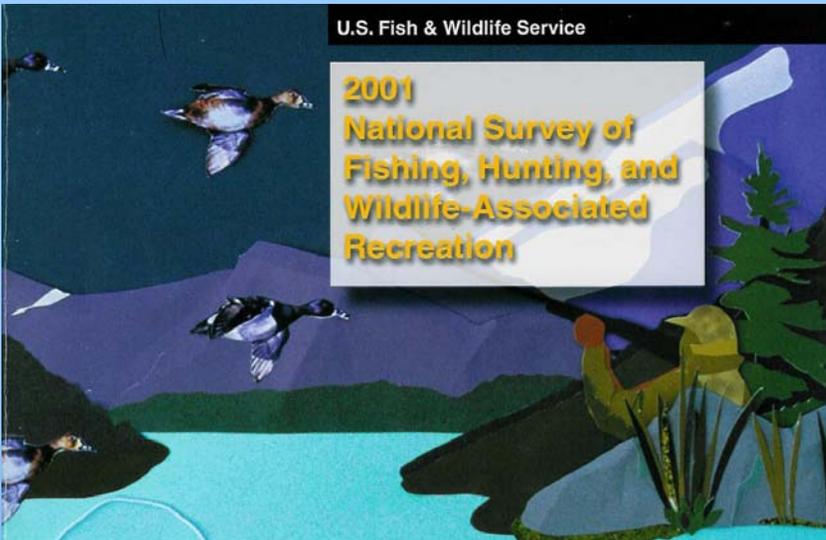
Natural Resource Benefits

- Heightened awareness of the value of natural resources and need to conserve irreplaceable assets
- Stewardship of assets
- Protection of community-determined sacred places



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation



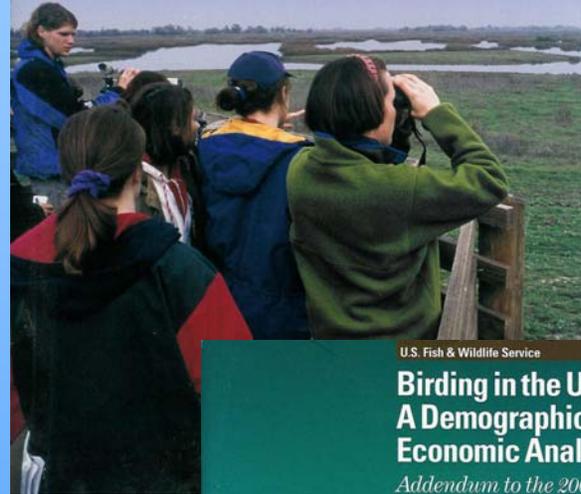
Washington

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

2001 National and State Economic Impacts of Wildlife Watching

*Addendum to the 2001 National
Survey of Fishing, Hunting and
Wildlife-Associated Recreation*

Report 2001-2

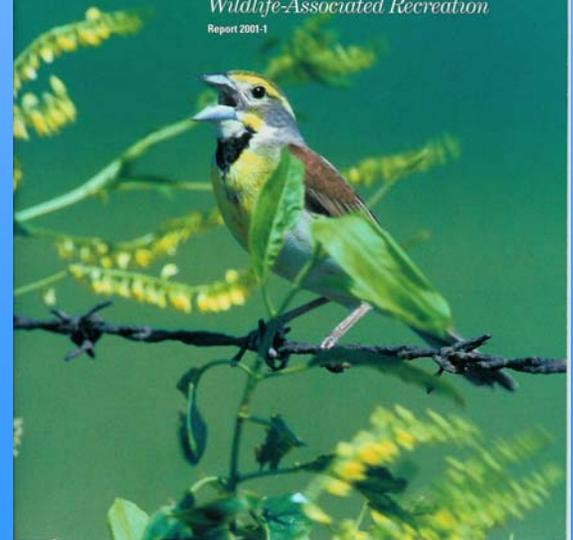


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis

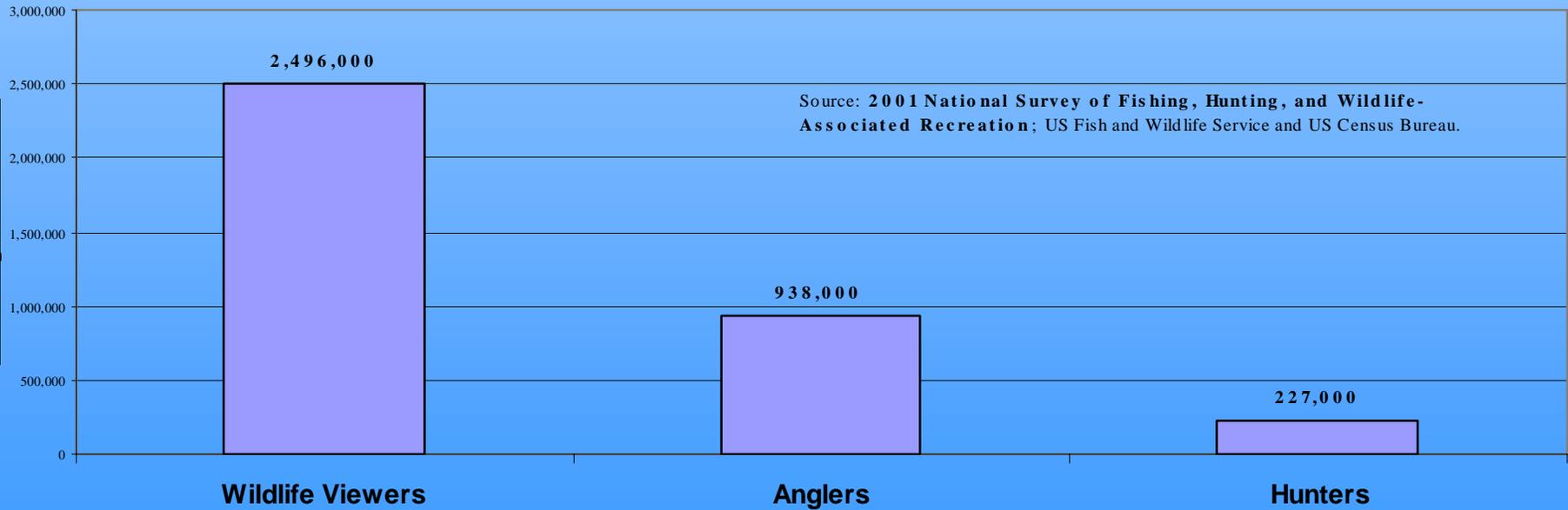
*Addendum to the 2001 National
Survey of Fishing, Hunting and
Wildlife-Associated Recreation*

Report 2001-1

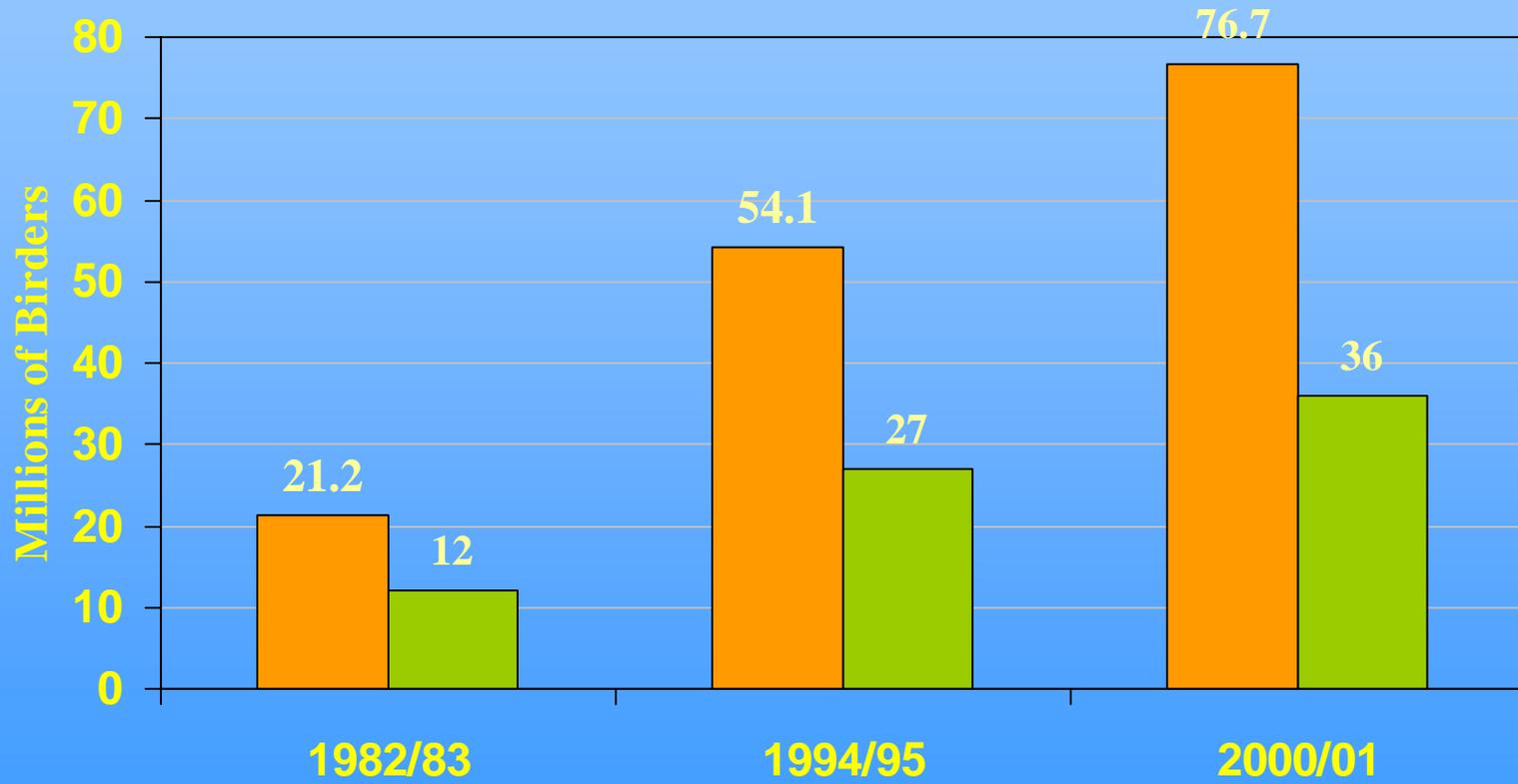


Great Interest in Wildlife Viewing

Participants in Fish and Wildlife Recreational Activities



Increase in Birding-Nationally



■ Number of Participants (millions) ■ Percent of U.S. Population

Sunset Magazine

Wings over the West

Believe it or not, bird-watching is the hottest hobby in America. Here's *Sunset's* complete guide to its pleasures

By Lora J. Finnegan and Jim McGaughland

Many years ago, I walked down to our family's basement and discovered a bird book from the 1930s. It was tattered and dogeared, and its margins bore notes in my mother's gishish hand. When I asked my mother about it, she explained that it dated from her childhood in Seattle. She told me it had been an important book because, for her, birding had been no idle hobby.

At age 12, my mother had been stricken with polio. She spent most of a year confined to bed. That year, the birds my mom could glimpse from her bedroom window were her link to the larger world. She doesn't claim that bird-watching sped up the healing process. But daily observations of chickadees and warblers taught her something: about patience, persistence, endurance. Those



A brace of cranes glides into New Mexico's Bosque del Apache refuge.

WHAT'S OUT THERE
Our Western Aviary

20 of our favorite easy-seen birds



Tundra swans.



Downy woodpecker



On the California coast, terns, the waterways of the Klaskanin Basin National Wildlife Refuge are thronged by snowy plovers.

NORTHWEST

Skagit Valley, Washington

A significant stop on the Pacific Flyway, the Skagit River draws birds by the tens of thousands and harkens by the hundreds. Waterbirds, shorebirds, and birds of prey crowd the Skagit delta; look for snow geese and swans in farm fields from the Skagit Wildlife Area at Fir Island north to Samish flats near Edison. To see black brant, harlequin ducks, canvasbacks, hawks, eagles, gulls, and songbirds, walk both the 3/2-mile upland trail, which takes off from Brezalee-Padilla Bay Interpretive Center (10-5 Wed-Sun), and the nearby 2 1/2-mile shore trail. Fall eagles congregate on gravel bars in the Cascade foothills to feast on spawning salmon. **WINTER:** From 1-5 at Conway, take Fir Island Road west 1 mile to Fir Island, which lies between the north and south forks of the Skagit River. Padilla Bay is at the north end of the delta, 1/2 mile north of Bay View. The best eagle-watching is be-

tween Rockport and Marblemount; try the viewpoints at the Howard Miller Steelhead Park and Sutter Creek Rest Area. **CONTACT:** For delta birding: Skagit Wildlife Area (360-445-4441) or www.wa.gov/wdfw/handy/risktaget.htm or Brezalee-Padilla Bay Interpretive Center (360-428-1558 or <http://infocent.gcol.sc.edu/PDR3>). For eagles: U.S. Forest Service (360/856-5700, ext. 515).

MOUNTAIN

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Utah

Situated where the Bear River feeds into the Great Salt Lake, this refuge gets so many migrating waterfowl that they can darken the skies. Up to 600,000 gather here—gadwall, pintails, Northern shovellers, teal. But the big draw here is in December: the snowy white tundra swan, with its elegant neck and charming call. This is the most important wintering ground in the West for this swan,

which numbers up to 30,000 here. Drive the 12-mile auto tour route for the best viewing. **WINTER:** The refuge is off I-15, 15 miles west of Brigham City. **CONTACT:** (435) 725-5987.

SOUTHWEST

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico

Covering 57,000 acres on and around the Rio Grande, this is the premier winter birding spot in the Southwest. Vast flocks of Canada geese, sandhill cranes, snow geese, and shorebirds make this look like a nature mosaic. Eagles, hawks, and owls hunt from the air, while crows try to grab geese on the ground. Look for pheasants, quail, roudainters, and turkeys while you're here. **WINTER:** The refuge is 20 miles south of Socorro on State 1. Start your tour at the visitor center (7:30-4 Mon-Fri, 8-4:30 Sat-Sun). **CONTACT:** (505) 855-1928 or www.friendsofthecosmo.org.

Seven birding basics

How do you start bird-watching? It's simple: purchase binoculars and a field guide, and you're on your way. But the following advice will help you become a much better birder faster.

1 Use a checklist. Many good field guides (including most of those listed here) supply visitors with checklists of local birds to help you distinguish one bird from another. If you have a checklist, you can put up bird checklists for many National Wildlife Refuges at www.pwn.usgs.gov/resources/fieldcheck/birdcheckcard.htm.

2 Get to know one pocket-size field guide well. Area notes in it and check off birds in the index as you see them—there are more than 8000 species in North America, so without a list, you'll never

remember what you've seen. Choose field guides: *Birds of North America* by Roger Kaufman (Houghton Mifflin, New York, 2000, \$20) and *A Field Guide to Western Birds* by Roger Tory Peterson (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1999, \$18).

3 Be patient. If you stay in one habitat, you'll see a handful of birds most of those will be common ones like crows, pigeons, and mallards. But if you sit quietly for 20 minutes, you'll probably see (in this that amount, including some of the shy, rare, and unusual birds that make birding fun.

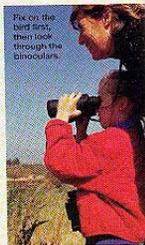
4 Listen for more than bird calls. A noisy "troupe" of crows will often lead you to a nesting hawk, owl, or eagle. Rustling leaves might

reveal a fox sparrow or spotted towhee searching for food. Listening for chattering helps you zero in on woodpecker.

5 Look for more than field marks. Birds are beautiful, but the real cooperation lies in discovering how they live. Watch how songbirds start up their trunks in search of dinner. Or watch a birdcatcher to see not just song and nest-building birds but the hawks and owls that hunt them.

6 Head out with a birder. An enthusiastic mentor can help you sort out difficult groups like gulls or sparrows faster than a book ever could.

7 Join a birding organization. The National Audubon Society (www.audubon.org) is extremely helpful at the local chapter level. The American Birding Association (www.americanbirding.org) is where you'll end up if you become very serious about the pastime.



Fix on the bird first, then look through the binoculars.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST Hotspots

■ **Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge, Washington**

■ **Fern Ridge Wildlife Area, Oregon**

■ **Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, Washington**

■ **Sauvie Island/Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge**

■ **Tillamook Bay/Cape Meares National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon**

■ **Yachats National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon**

■ **Yoncos National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon**

■ **Zachary Taylor National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon**

dropping down to the beach. The refuge shelters thousands of geese (especially brant) and a mixed lot of goldeneyes, harlequin ducks, loons, mergansers, and scoters. Look for black-capped chickadees, skinks in the trees, and dunnies and killdeers on shore. **WINTER:** Just northwest of Sequim. **CONTACT:** (360) 457-8451.

Fern Ridge Wildlife Area, Oregon

Waterfowl heaven, the refuge's reservoir is also a good spot for great egrets and white-tailed kites. Walk the 1-mile trail from Orchard Park (access from Clear Lake Rd.) across Fern Ridge Dam, from which you'll see huge flocks of dabbling ducks and Canada geese. Look for eagles, hawks, and tundra swans in the fields around the dam and near water. You can pick up a checklist and map at the refuge's headquarters (call for seasonal hours; 26069 Carroll Rd.), where 10 miles west of Eugene via State 126. **CONTACT:** (541) 955-2591.

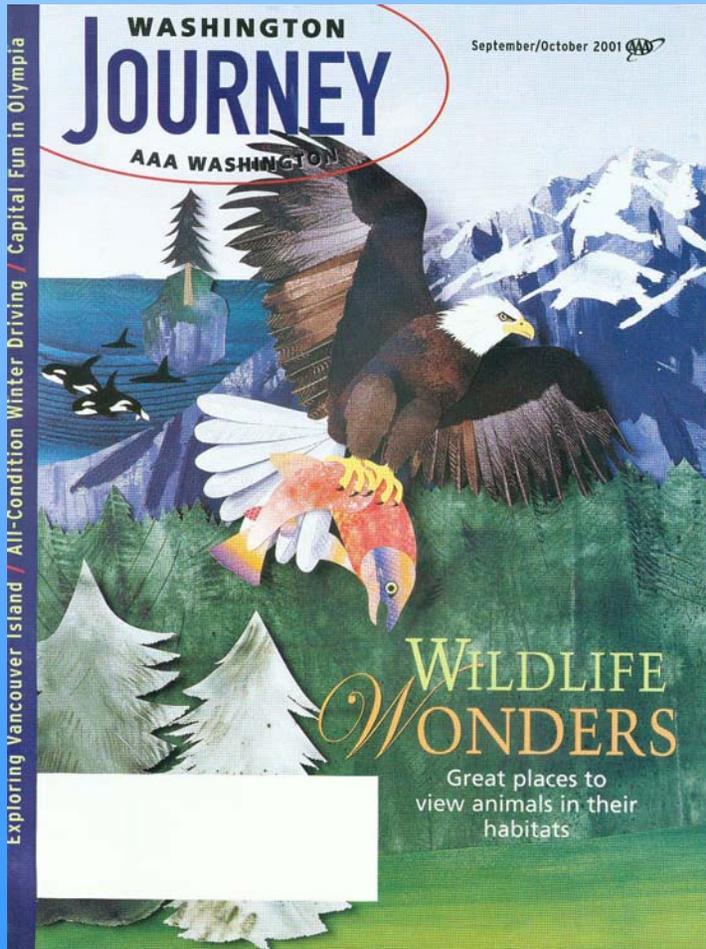
Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, Washington

Though the adjacent state land allows hunting, 7 miles of federal refuge trails gain you access to birds that are beyond guns' reach (for safety reasons, 3 miles of trails adjacent to the state land are closed to the public in hunting seasons). Look for cackling Canada geese and ralls of ring-necked ducks, eagles, falcons, and hawks float overhead as Northern harriers make faster. Lower passes at field mice: where I-5 exit 114 between Tacoma and Olympia.



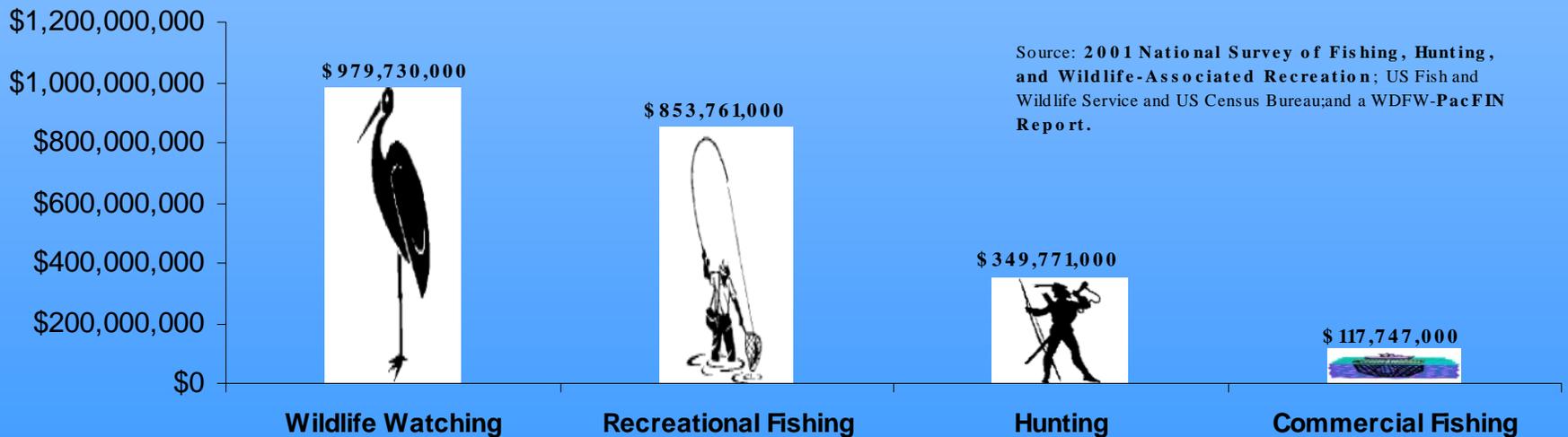
Canvasback

AAA Washington



\$1 Billion Business

Fish & Wildlife Related Recreational Expenditures & Ex-Vessel Commercial Revenue in WA



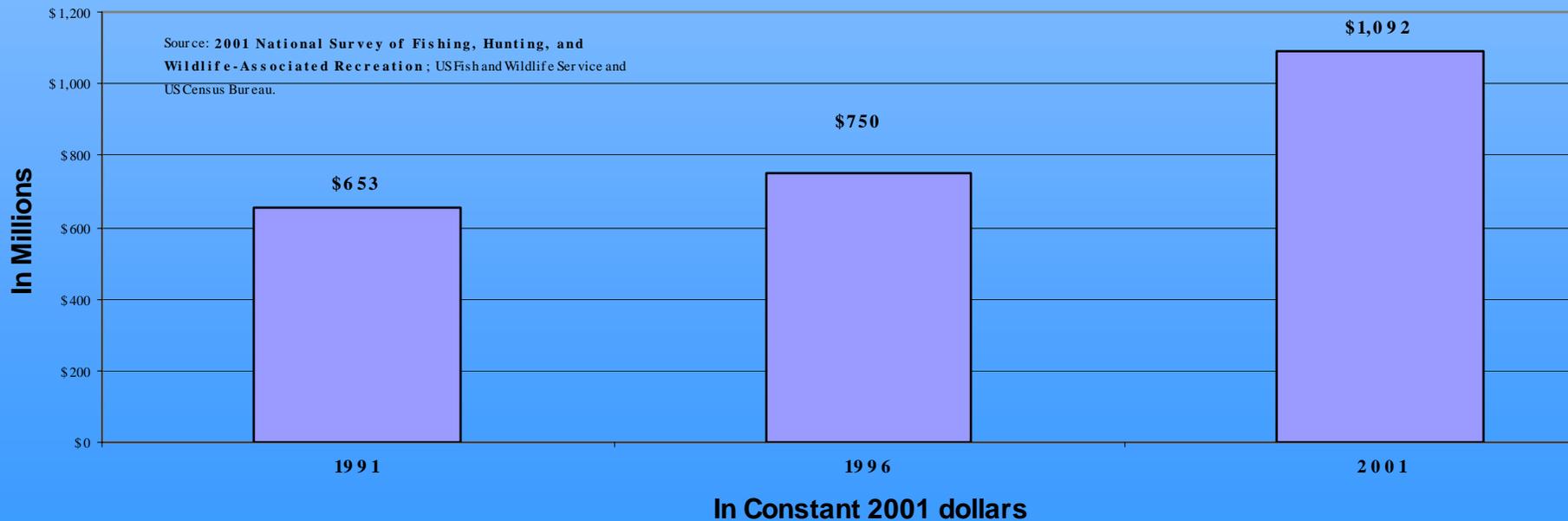
Equipment and Travel Expenses



- Equipment expenditures include binoculars, spotting scopes, cameras, film and developing, bird and other wildlife food, bird houses, packs, tents, vehicles, magazines and books, membership dues and contributions and plantings.
- Travel-related expenditures include accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, air and ground transportation, recreation, retail sales and food stores.

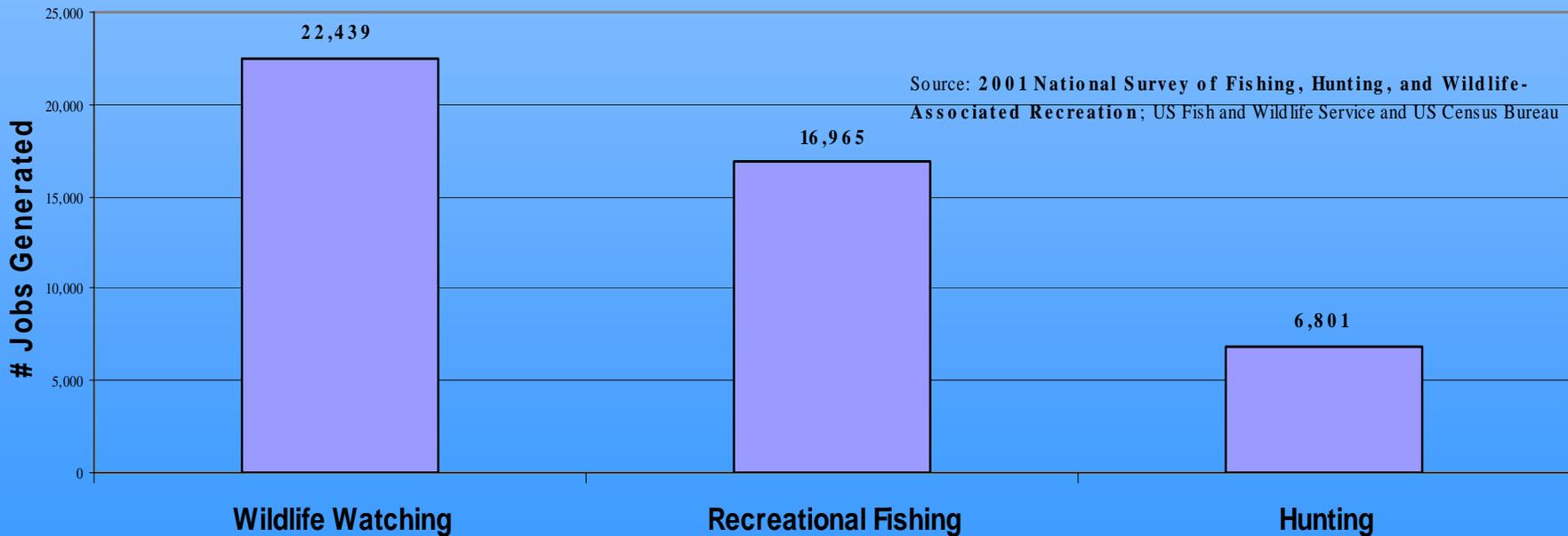
Expenditures Grow

Expenditures by Washington Residents on Wildlife Viewing



Creates Jobs

Jobs Generated in Washington 2001



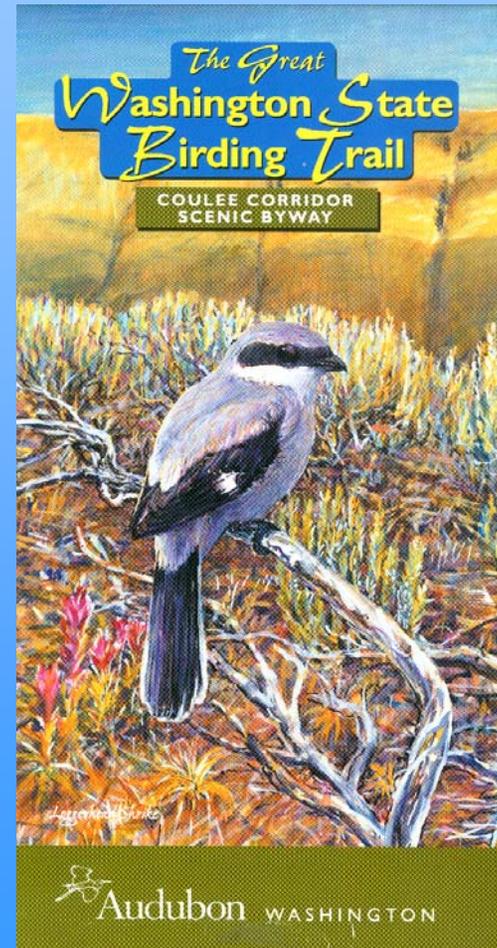
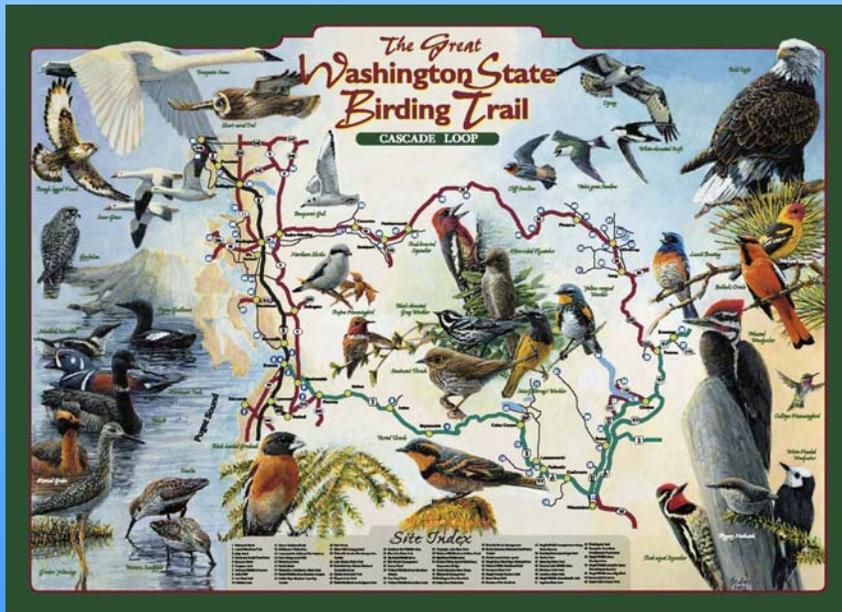
Community Interest Grows

- Wildlife festivals and events are increasing
- Scenic highway planning stimulates interest
- Washington State Great Birding Trails project sparks ideas



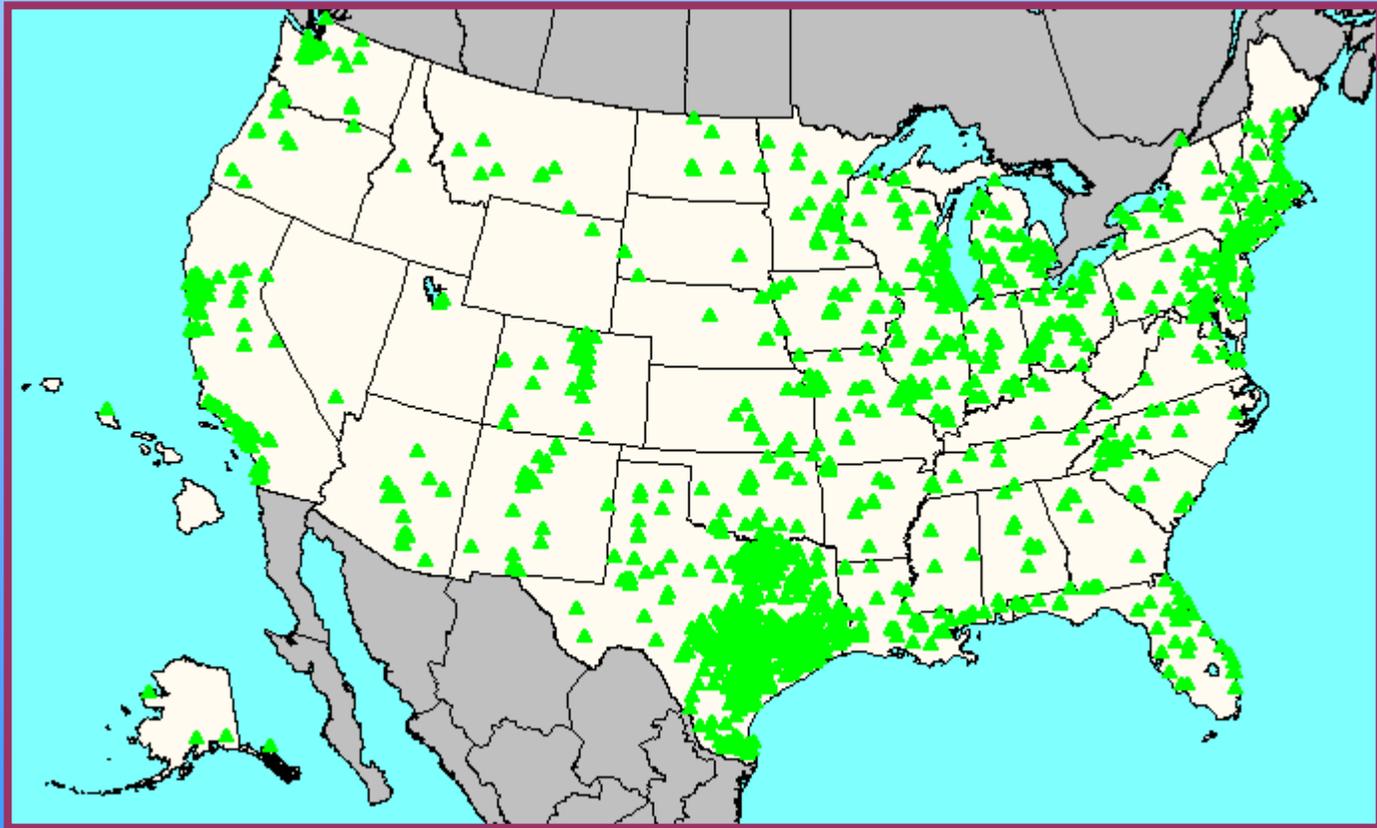
Birding Trails

North Cascades Loop



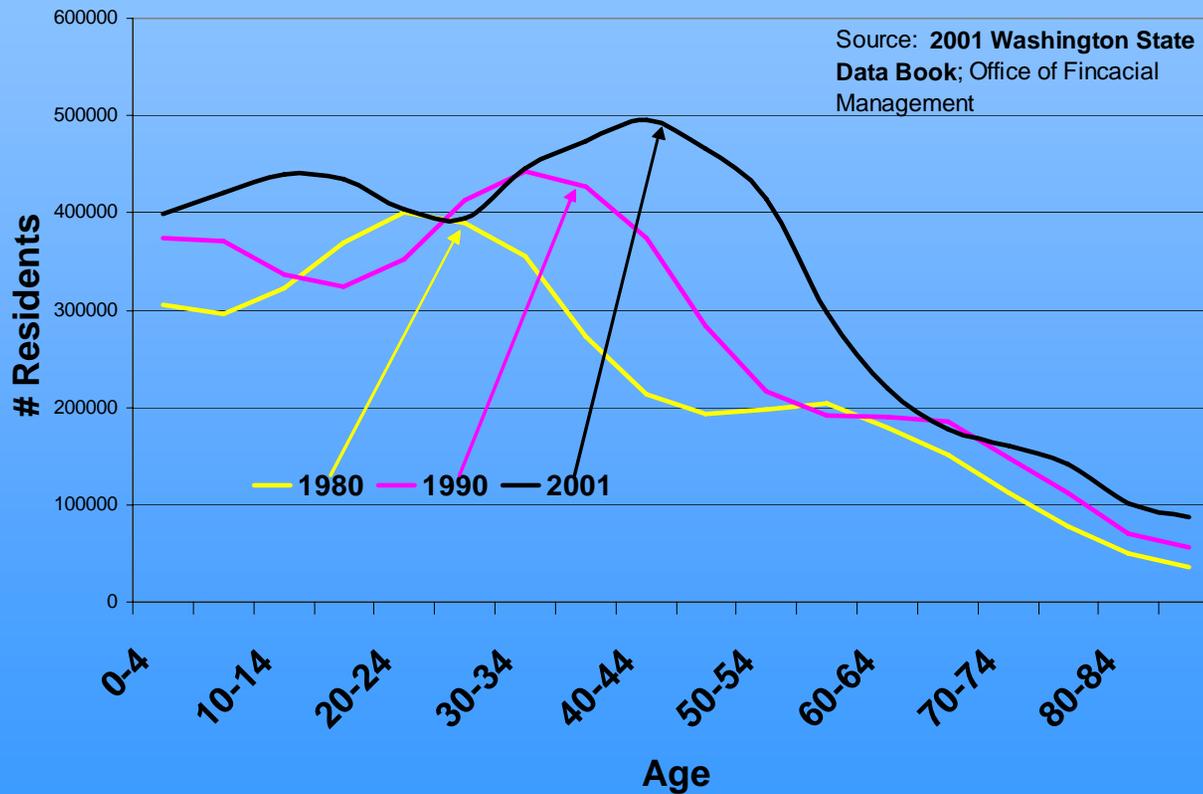
New Coulee Corridor Trail

Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail - Visitors



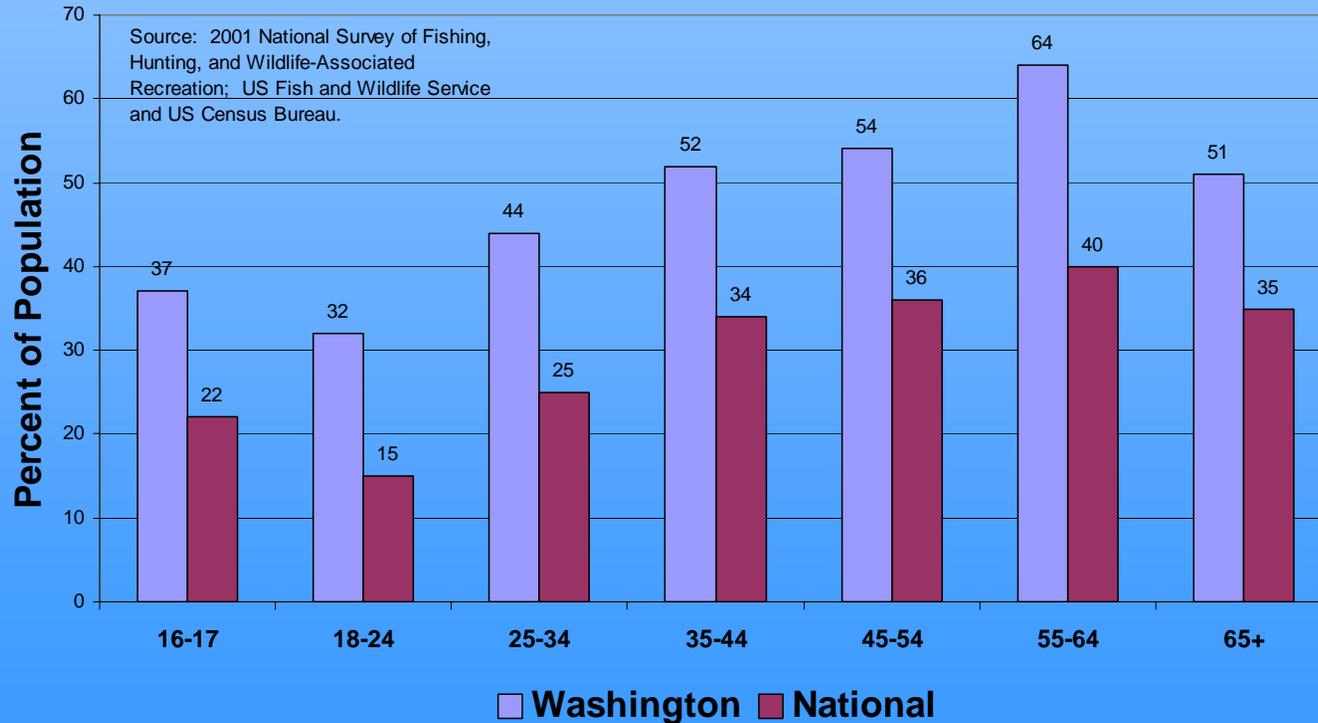
What Demographics Tell Us

Washington's Aging Population



Percentage of Age Groups

Portion of Population that Participates in Wildlife Viewing



Gender of Participants

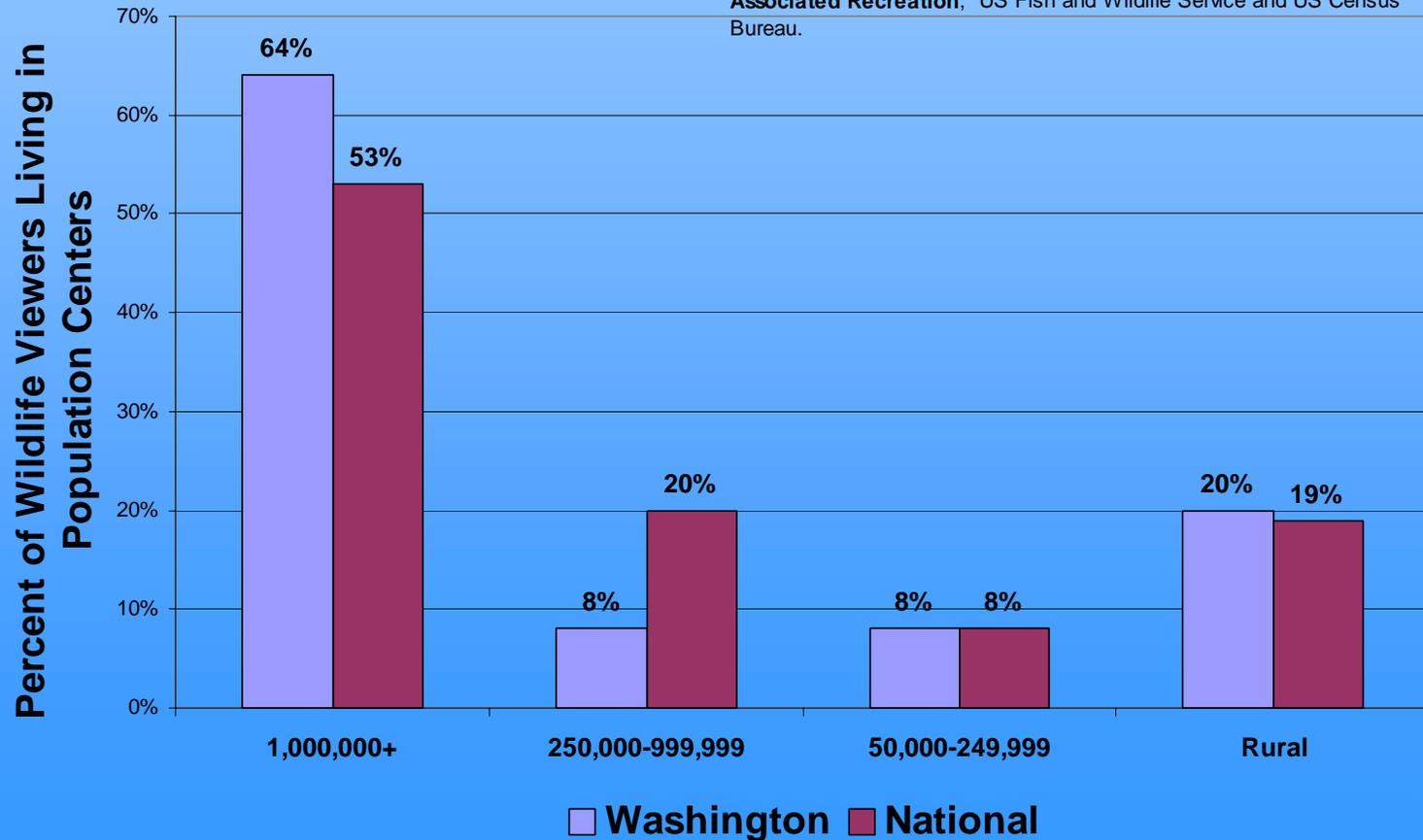
Fish and Wildlife Related Activity Participation in Washington by Gender



Residence

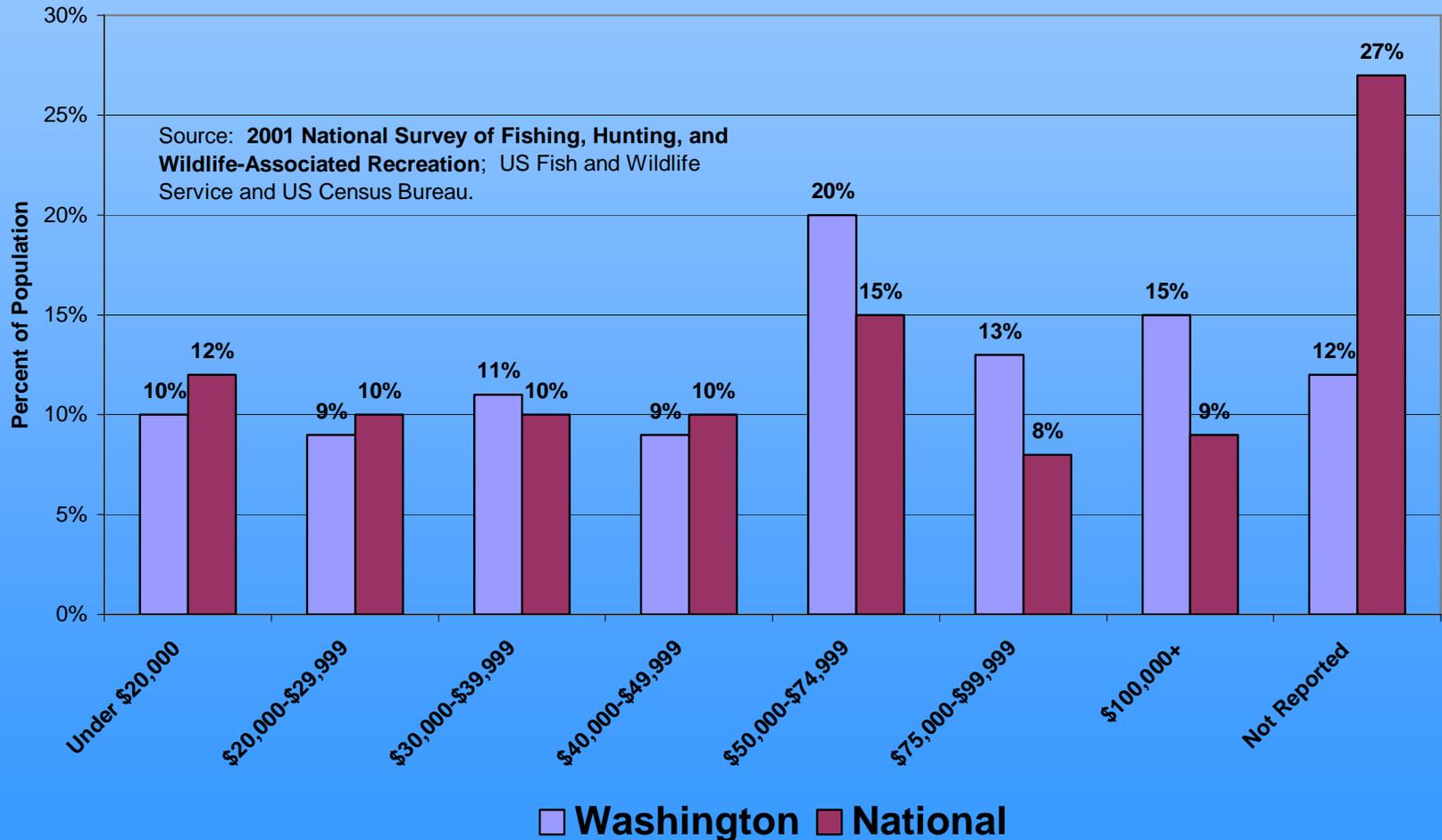
Where Wildlife Viewers Live

Source: 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation; US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau.



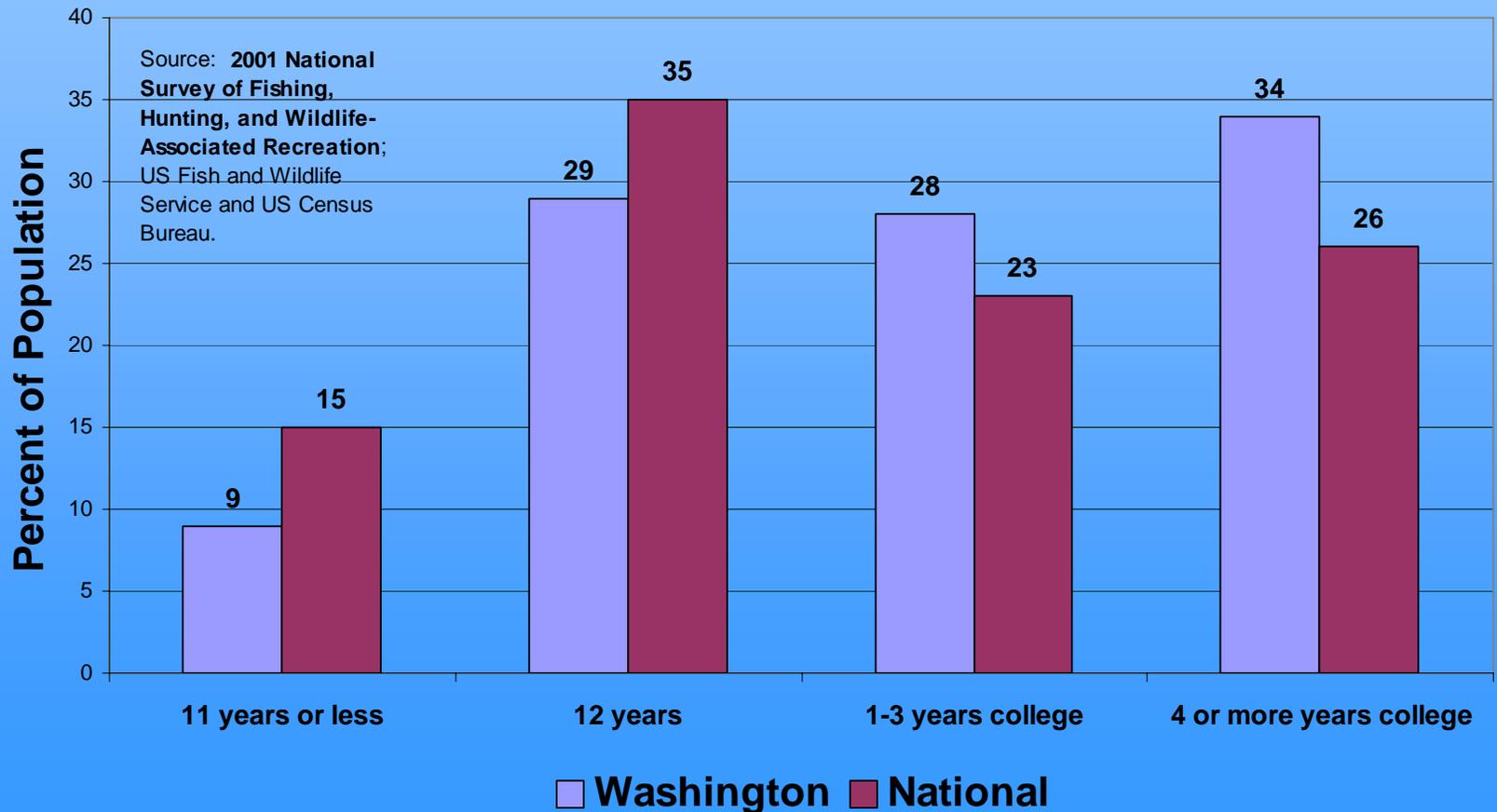
Income

Income Levels of Wildlife Viewers



Education

Education Levels of Wildlife Viewing Participants



Highlights of Draft Plan

- **Research and Marketing**
- **Technical and Financial Assistance**
- **Site Development**
- **Partnerships**

Detailed on pages 10-13; summarized on page 14



Guiding Principles and Tasks

Market the state as a premium national and international wildlife-viewing destination, to increase travel to wildlife viewing locations throughout the state.

Research and Marketing

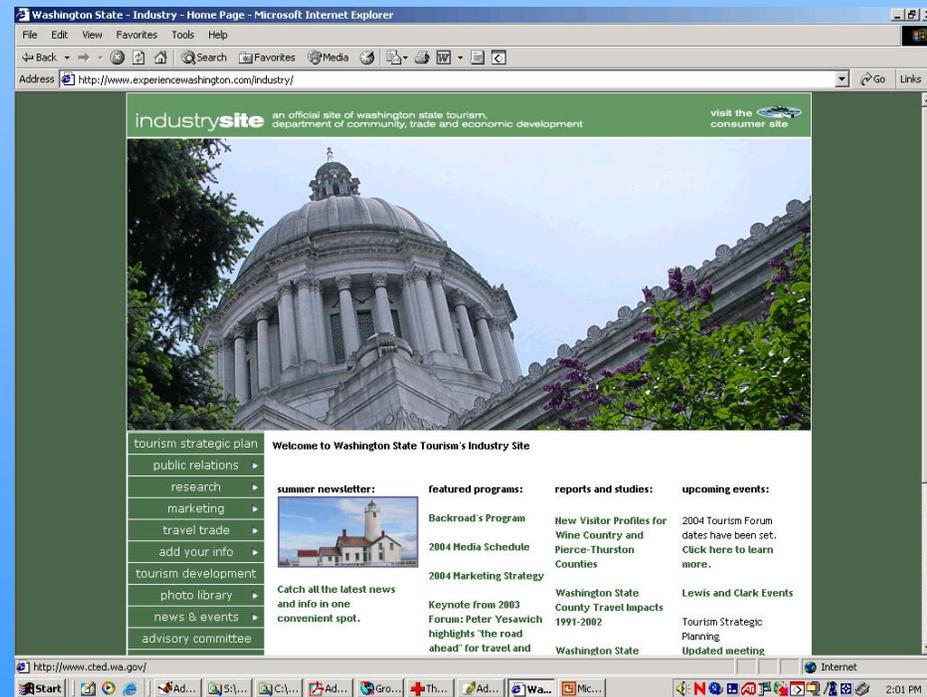
- Expand Ad exposure in key metro markets - CTED
- Advertising ROI - CTED
- Media Blitz - CTED



Guiding Principles and Tasks

Collect valid, reliable and credible measurements of the economic impact of wildlife viewing activities in Washington along with continued monitoring of the impacts of viewing activities on the wildlife being viewed.

- Economic impact research - CTED
- Consumer Research - CTED



Guiding Principles and Tasks

Identify needs and opportunities to provide premium wildlife viewing recreational opportunities, ensuring participant safety, conservation and protection of the wildlife being viewed; while not diminishing existing hunting and fishing opportunity.

- Wildlife site database - WDFW
- Interactive Web Wildlife Map - CTED

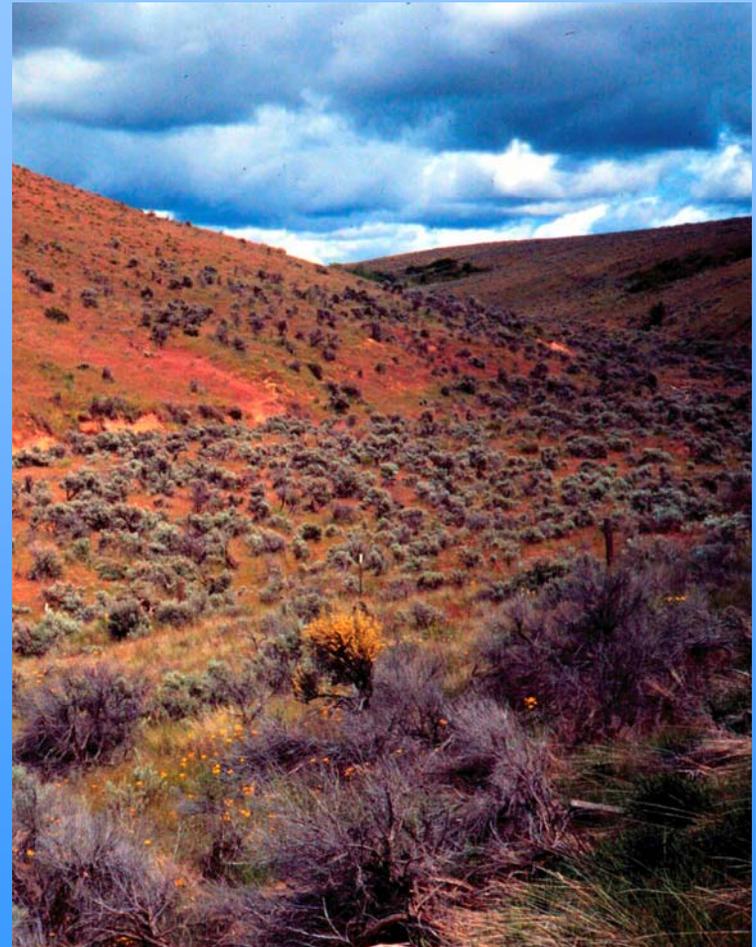


Guiding Principles and Tasks

Develop sites to safely accommodate viewers and wildlife, with appropriate amenities such as viewing blinds, restrooms, parking, fencing and habitat improvements that attract wildlife.

Site Development

- WDFW Sites
- O&M Increase for WDFW Wildlife Viewing Areas
- Matching grants for local capital projects



Guiding Principles and Tasks

Utilize interpretation and development activities for wildlife sites to inform and educate visitors, communities and vendors on ethical viewing activities, viewing practices that ensure sustainability of the wildlife on which the species depend.

- WDFW Watchable Wildlife Specialist – Eastern Washington



Guiding Principles and Tasks

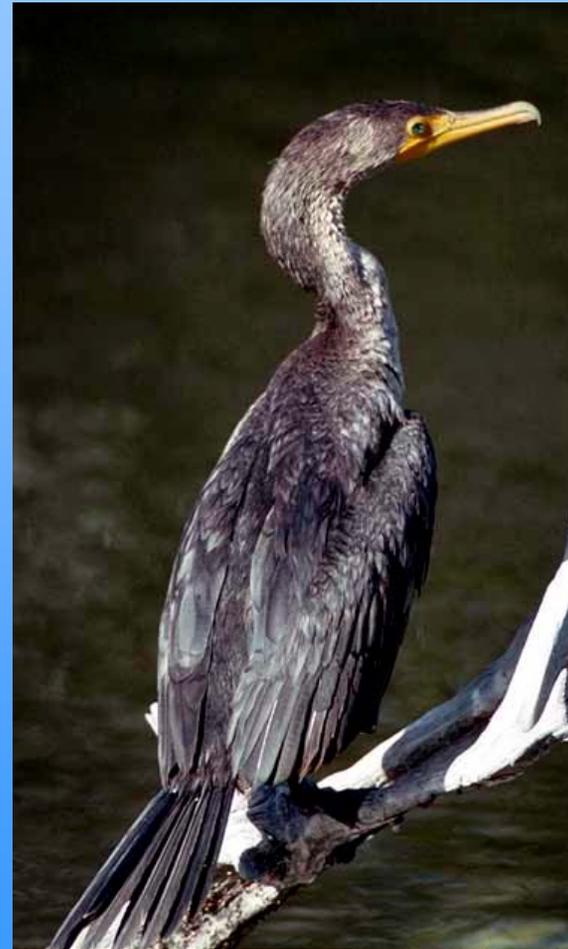
Maximize limited budgets by creating strong, sustainable partnerships with all appropriate public and private agencies to leverage public funds and to create involvement and multi-ownership in wildlife projects by all potential partners.

Technical and Financial Assistance

- Professional/Financial Assistance Specialist - CTED
- Small Matching Grants for operations

Partnerships

- Wildlife Viewing Conference – Bi-annually
- Watchable Wildlife Coalition
- Birding Trail Matching Funds - AW



Why Partnerships?

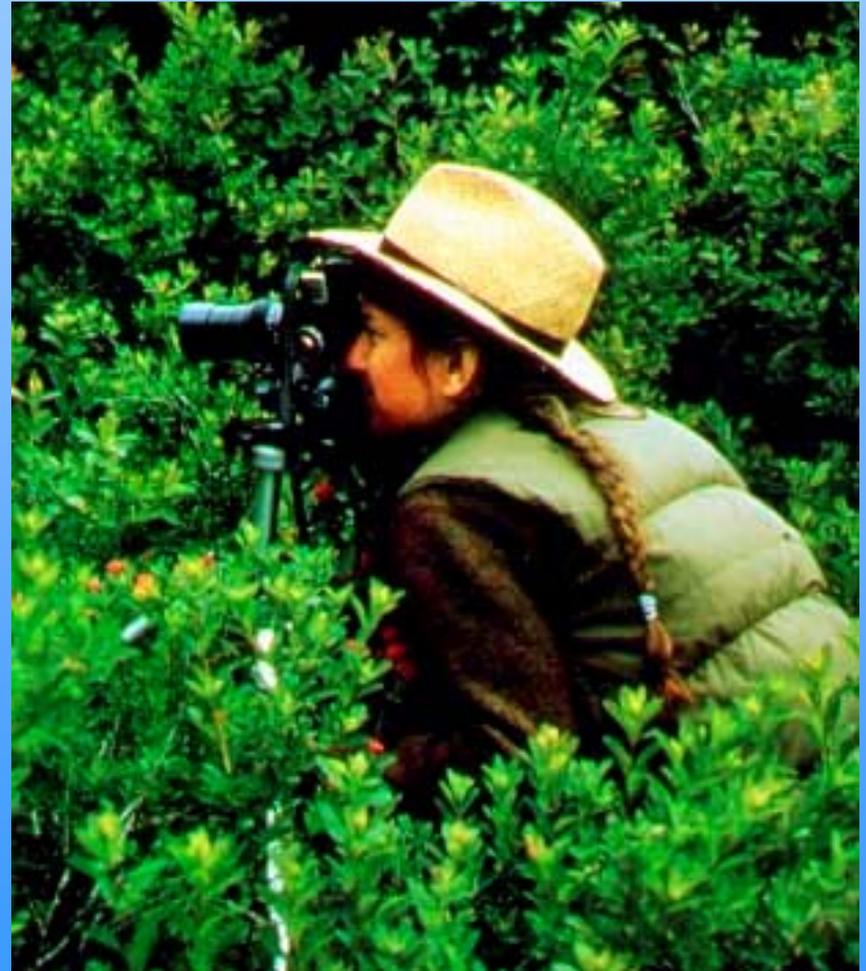
- The problem is too big and too complex to be solved by any other means.
- Partnerships command attention, resources, and new partners.
- Partnerships stimulate and energize win-win solutions. Partnerships create intellectual synergy.



Partnership Agencies Involved

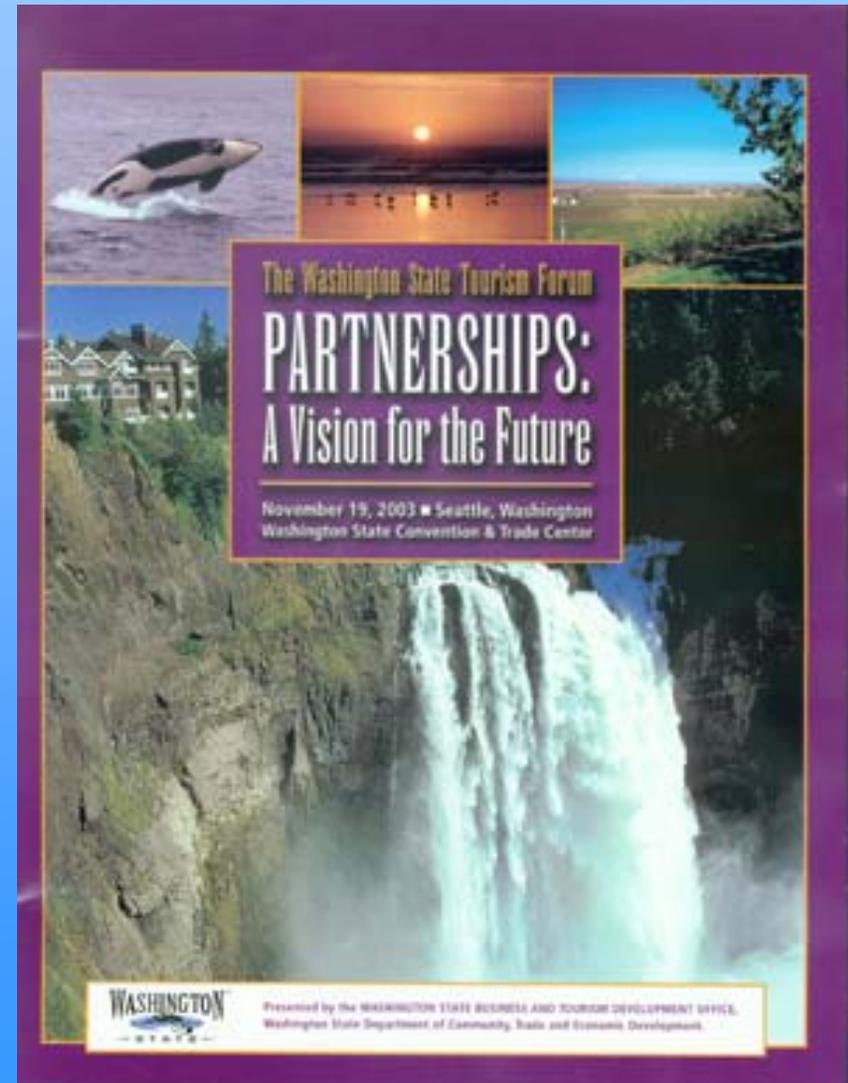
- **Washington State Parks Commission**
- **Washington Department of Natural Resources**
- **Washington State Department of Transportation**
- **Washington Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC)**
- **US Forest Service**
- **US Fish and Wildlife Service**
- **US Bureau of Reclamation**
- **NOAA/ Marine Fisheries Service/Marine Sanctuaries**
- **National Park Service**
- **US Army Corps of Engineers**
- **Tribes**
- **Industrial Forest Companies**
- **Audubon Washington**
- **Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation**
- **People for Puget Sound**
- **Professional Association of Diving Instructors**

Detailed in Appendix E



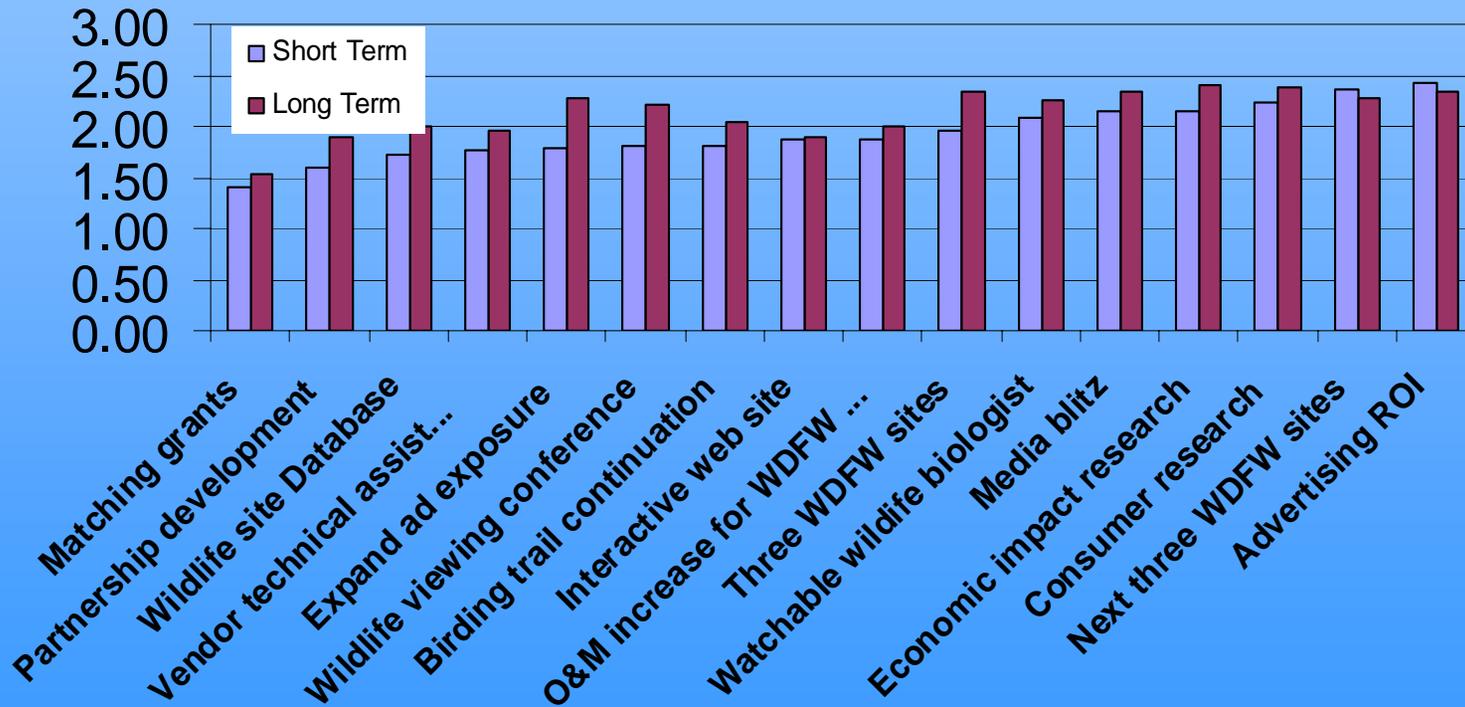
Reviewer Feedback

- Presentation to Washington State Tourism Forum, November 19
- General public release January 2004
- Feedback forms provided
- Requested letters on letterhead with thoughts on a Statewide Wildlife Viewing Plan for Washington



What Did We Hear?

Combined Input from All Reviewers



The lower the number the higher the preference

All feedback included in Appendix F

Main Points of Feedback

- Don't forget the marine environment and divers
- Don't reduce hunting and fishing opportunity
- Support existing (struggling) efforts before creating new ones
- Provide expertise and \$\$ to locals



Ongoing Activities

- Great tips on WDFW Web site “A Community Guide to Nature Tourism”
- <http://www.wa.gov/wdfw/wlm/tourism/index.htm>



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window displaying the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's "A Community Guide to Nature Tourism" website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://www.wa.gov/wdfw/wlm/tourism/index.htm>. The website features a navigation menu with links to "What is Nature Tourism?", "Why Nature Tourism? The Benefits", "GO! Create a Community Nature Tourism Site", and "Nature Tourism in Washington State". The main content area includes a section titled "Why Nature Tourism? The Benefits" with a sub-section "Nature Tourism?" that defines the concept and lists resources for community leaders. A sidebar on the left provides a "Five-Step Process for Creating a Community Nature Tourism Site" and other related information. The taskbar at the bottom shows several open applications, including Washington State and Watchable Wildlife websites, and the system clock indicates 3:14 PM.

Washington Department of FISH AND WILDLIFE

A Community Guide to Nature Tourism

[What is Nature Tourism?](#) | [Why Nature Tourism? The Benefits](#) | [GO! Create a Community Nature Tourism Site](#) | [Nature Tourism in Washington State](#)

Why Nature Tourism? The Benefits

Nature Tourism?

Nature tourism is the travel through and enjoyment of the natural world, its seasonal cycles and events, carried out in a manner that promotes the protection of natural and human communities and consideration for those who will inherit our world.

Community leaders, public officials, agencies, and others who are interested in sustainable nature tourism will find tools to get started and links to other helpful information.

Why Nature Tourism? The Benefits

- The Business of Nature Tourism
- Who are the Nature Tourists?
- Nature Tourist statistics, demographics

Five-Step Process for Creating a Community Nature Tourism Site

Assessing your community
Envisioning a plan
Drafting a plan
Building
Evaluating your success

Nature Tourism in

What's Next

- Build legislative support
- Seek funding from a variety of sources



Wildlife Viewing Decal



What's Next

- Continue building a wildlife viewing coalition
- Support efforts of partners
- Continue working relationship with CTED
- Conduct annual wildlife viewing conferences
- Capitalize on 2010 Winter Olympics

Thank You



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY,
TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**