



2013-15 Strategic Plan



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

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

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

The department is overseen by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, whose nine members are appointed to six-year terms by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. At least three commissioners must live in Eastern Washington and at least three in Western Washington. No two may live in the same county. The members' service overlaps so that three commissioners complete their terms every two years.

The commission's most important responsibilities are to:

- Appoint and supervise the WDFW Director;
- Establish policy and direction for the management of fish and wildlife species;
- Set seasons and other regulations governing fishing and hunting; and

- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of its policies and goals.

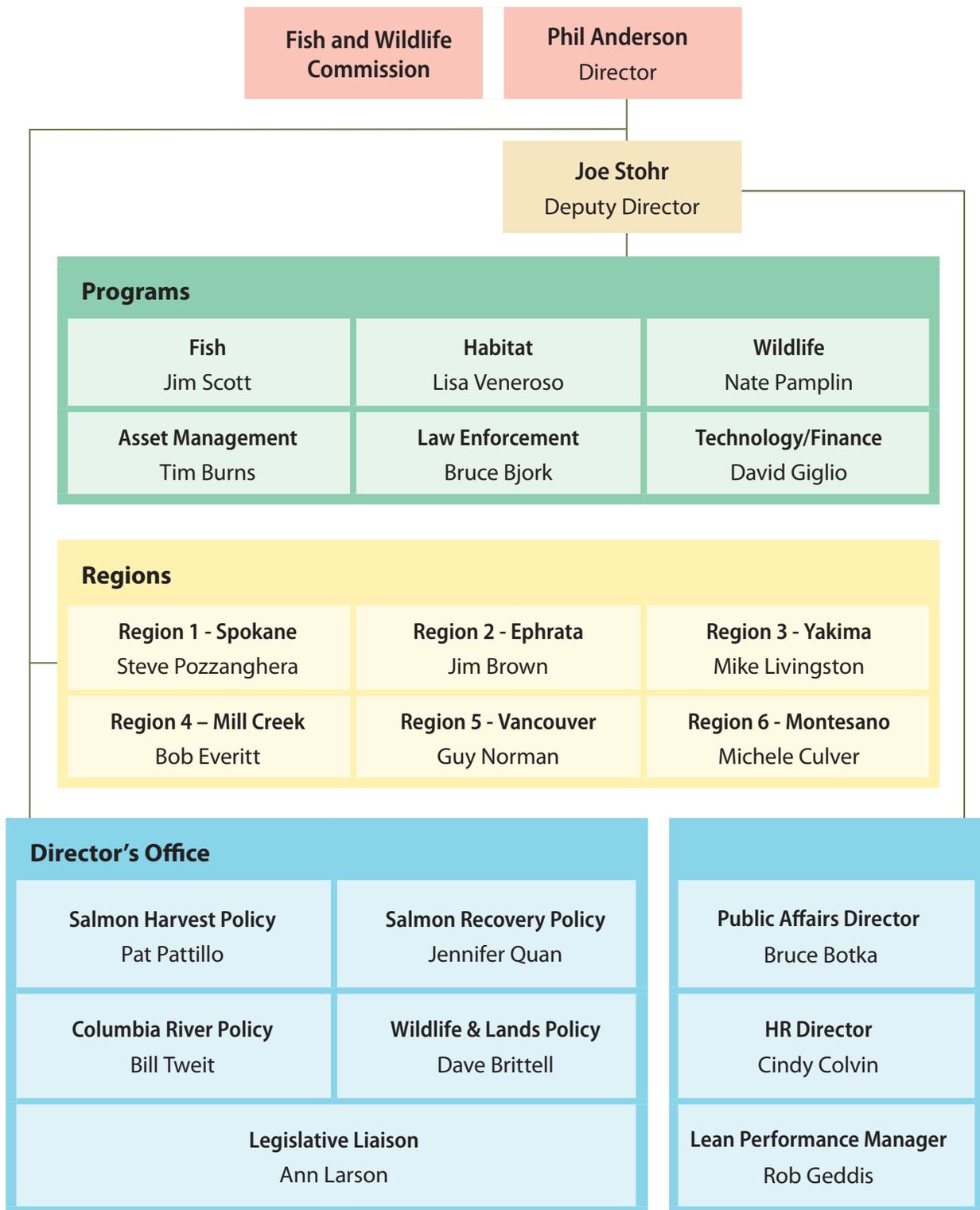
The Commission's authority was spelled out in Referendum 45, approved in 1995 by the Legislature and the voters of Washington State. The referendum was developed by the Legislature following the 1994 merger of the former departments of Fisheries and Wildlife.

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/.

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<p>Robert Kehoe</p> <p>At-large position King County</p>	<p>Conrad Mahnken, Ph. D.</p> <p>At-Large position Kitsap County</p>	<p>Roland Schmitten</p> <p>Eastern Washington Chelan County</p>
<p>Bradley Smith (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Western Washington Whatcom County</p>	<p>Miranda Wecker (Chair)</p> <p>Western Washington Pacific County</p>	<p>Vacant</p> <p>Eastern Washington position</p>

Organization Overview



A message from the Director

This Strategic Plan outlines new strategies the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will employ in the 2013-15 biennium to meet its long-term goals.

Since 2007, state general fund support for the department has declined by 47 percent, requiring careful prioritization of a growing number of pressing needs. To be useful in guiding the department's operations, our Strategic Plan must be pragmatic as well as visionary.

Many of the new initiatives included in this plan are based on the following principles:

- Support healthy ecosystems: Resource managers have increasingly recognized the value of management strategies that benefit whole ecosystems, not just a single species. While at-risk populations and game species always require special attention, the draft plan supports efforts to protect and restore critical habitats across a broad landscape.
- Maximize the impact of limited resources. Poor habitat conditions are a common condition for fish and wildlife populations listed for protection under state and federal endangered species laws. Projects that support healthy ecosystems can help to avoid the high cost of managing listed species by “keeping common species common.”
- Consider public values. Any successful approach to resource management requires the support of Washington's growing human population, which plays a dominant role in ecosystems throughout the state. This plan includes a variety of initiatives to increase public involvement in decisions affecting the management and stewardship of our state's fish and wildlife resources.
- Anticipate uncertainty, respond to change. This principle is critical to an agency like WDFW, which must plan for climate change, fluctuating salmon runs and other highly variable issues. Using adaptive management, the department plans to make significant changes in several areas, including its process for correcting salmon-blocking culverts.
- Improve internal processes. Cross-program collaboration will become increasingly important as WDFW takes on more projects designed to benefit multiple species and entire ecosystems. The Conservation Initiative, a collaborative effort by department managers, is working to meet that challenge.

The job of managing Washington's fish and wildlife is changing, and WDFW is changing with it. This Strategic Plan lays the groundwork for those changes in the years ahead.



Phil Anderson

Director

Mission

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

<p>Goal 1 Conserve and protect native fish and wildlife</p>	<p>Healthy Fish and Wildlife</p>
<p>Goal 2 Provide sustainable fishing, hunting, and other wildlife-related recreational and commercial experiences</p>	<p>Sustainable Outdoor Experiences</p>
<p>Goal 3 Promote a healthy economy, protect community character, maintain an overall high quality of life, and deliver high-quality customer service.</p>	<p>Integrating Social Values</p>
<p>Goal 4 Build an effective and efficient organization by supporting our workforce, improving business processes, and investing in technology.</p>	<p>Pursuing Operational Excellence</p>

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)*

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Introduction

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) 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.

Popular hunting and fishing activities managed by WDFW support \$5.7 billion in economic activity each year and tens of thousands of jobs across the state. Wildlife watching produces billions of dollars more in economic benefits each year.

WDFW's total operating budget in the 2011-13 biennium was \$367 million, including a variety of state, federal and local funds. Budget reductions approved since 2009 have reduced State General Fund revenues to only 18 percent of WDFW's total operating budget, down from 32 percent in the 2007-09 biennium. Since then, an increase in license fees has boosted Wildlife Account revenues by 20 percent, but those revenues are dedicated to maintaining fishing and hunting seasons and are not available to fund other management priorities.

The department directly employs nearly 1,500 employees in communities across the state.

Strategic Plan goals

WDFW's Strategic Plan is based on four main goals, each with strategies designed to help the department achieve its long-term objectives. The department's goals are:

Healthy fish and wildlife populations

The department is developing new strategies for protecting and restoring native fish and wildlife populations as the state's growing human population displaces an increasing number of species. The plan outlines strategies for managing specific species such as salmon and gray wolves, as well as systematic efforts to preserve and restore the ecological integrity of entire ecosystems. This approach, known as "ecosystem management," has been shown to be a cost-effective way to address the needs of multiple species and "keep common species common."



Sustainable outdoor experiences

WDFW 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. This plan is designed to maintain and increase those benefits with strategies that range from developing new commercial fishing gear to opening more public and private lands to hunting and fishing.

Support a strong economy and social values

Washingtonians have a keen interest in the state’s fish and wildlife resources, whether for recreational, commercial, or aesthetic reasons. This plan includes new strategies to involve citizens – and whole communities – in decisions that affect their future and that of the state’s other living resources. It highlights 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, WDFW is also working to engage more citizens in that important work.

Pursue operational excellence

WDFW 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 a new licensing system that will expedite customer service for 2.5 million licensing transactions each year. Plans also call for deployment of a new system for processing hydraulic project permits that will – for the first time – allow the public to apply for permits, make payments and track their applications online. In addition, Lean management will be used to improve a number of WDFW’s business processes, including hiring, purchasing and capital budget development.



Goal 1:

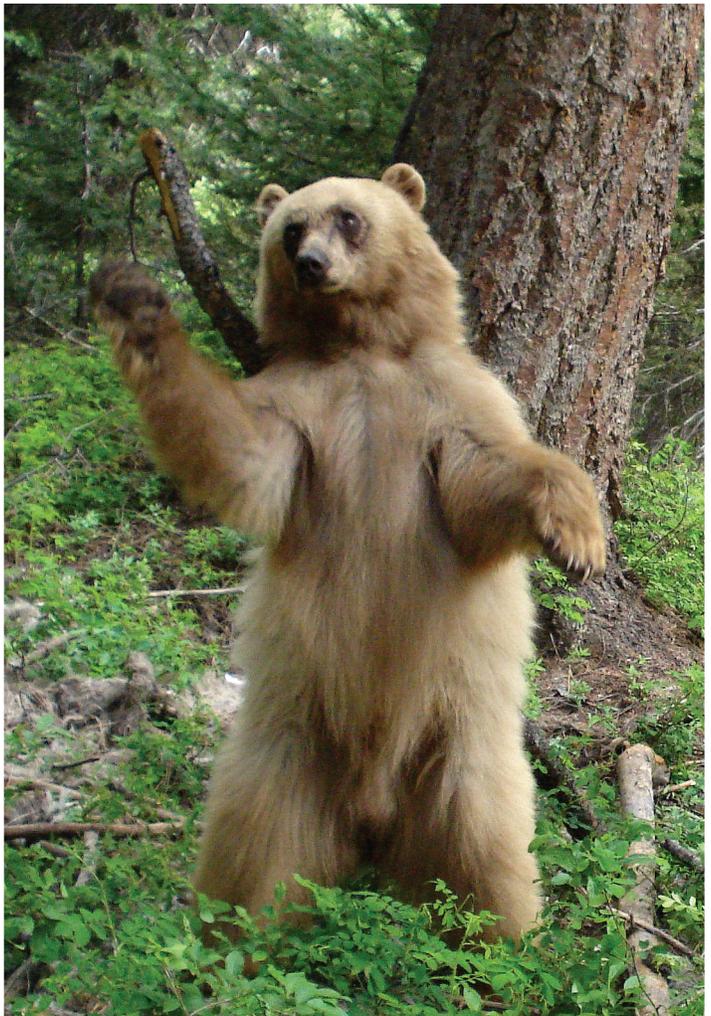
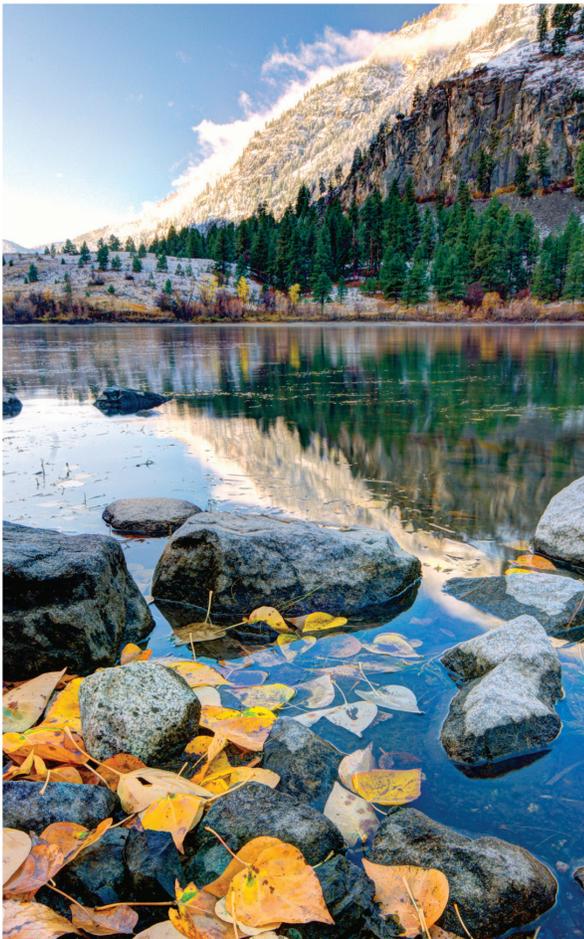
Conserve and protect native fish and wildlife

Objectives | Statements describing what we hope to achieve in the future

- 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, established in the Conservation Initiative.
- C.** Threatened and endangered fish and wildlife populations are recovered to healthy, self-sustaining levels.

Strategies

- Implement Wolf Conservation and Management Plan to recover wolves while addressing wolf-livestock and wolf-ungulate conflicts.
- Implement actions to reduce risks to native salmon and steelhead from operating hatcheries.
- Improve effectiveness of the Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) Program to protect fish life.
- Ensure impacts to native fish from fisheries are consistent with conservation goals.
- Increase WDFW leadership and participation in conducting restoration activities in the Columbia Basin.
- Correct fish passage barriers on county and city lands and implement provisions from U.S. v. Washington case.
- Establish Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) as the agency's primary tool that identifies habitats and species to protect.
- Establish desired ecological conditions on WDFW Wildlife Areas and evaluate their status using ecological integrity assessments.
- Prepare for future conditions that will result from climate change.
- Enhance laws and regulations to improve the implementation of aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention standards to prevent the spread of AIS in Washington.



Goal 2:

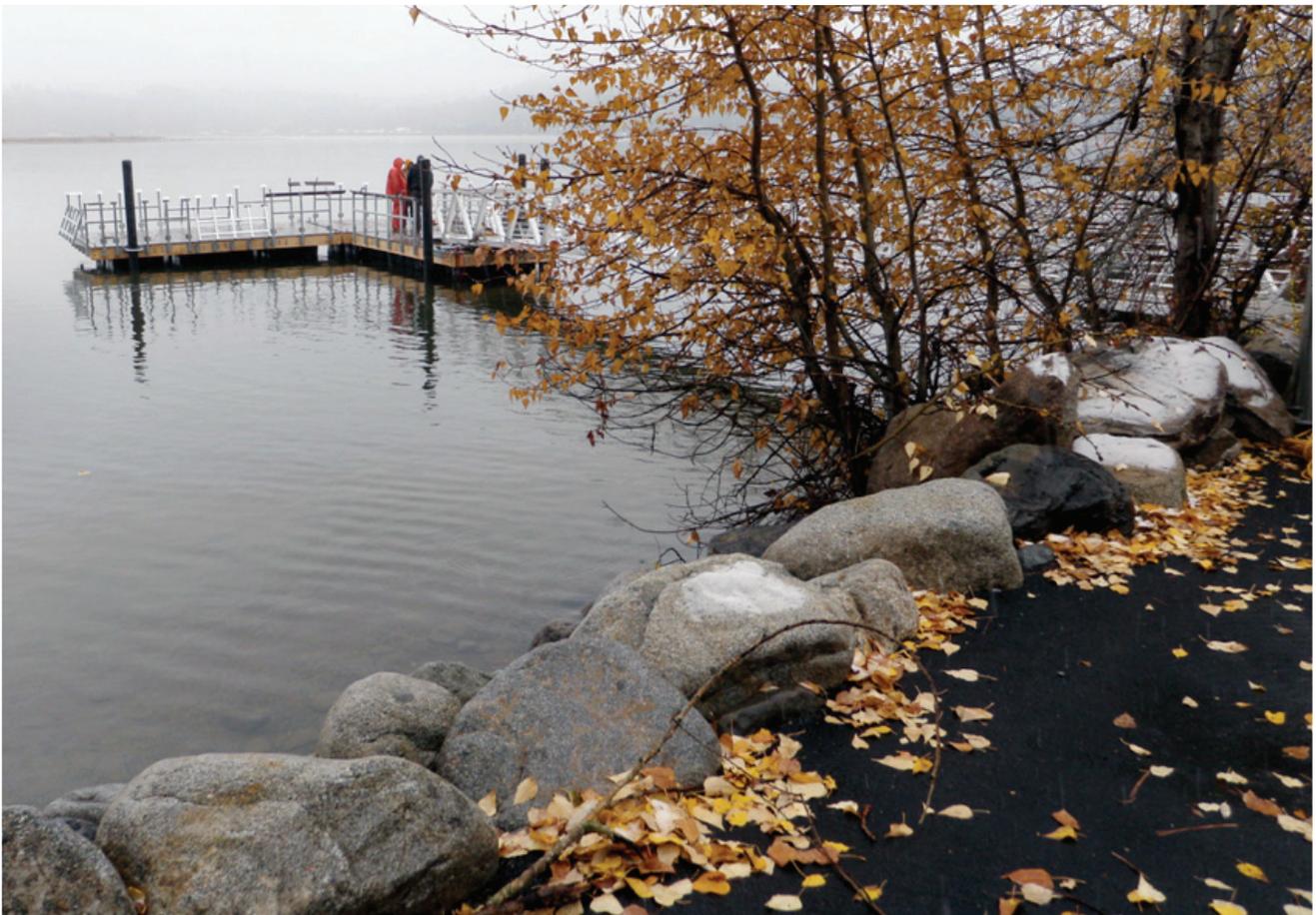
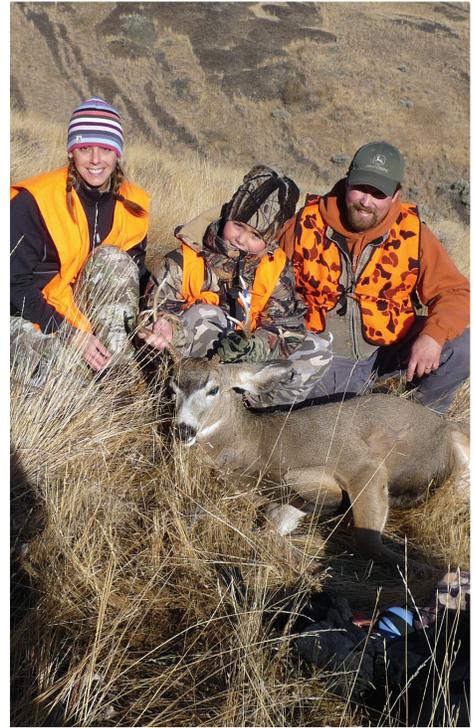
Provide sustainable fishing, hunting, and other wildlife-related recreational and commercial experiences

Objectives | Statements describing what we hope to achieve in the future

- 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.

Strategies

- Advance implementation of mark selective fisheries by focusing on alternative commercial fishing gear in the Lower Columbia River.
- Find innovative ways to improve access to public and private lands to enjoy fishing, hunting and other outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Prevent the illegal taking and trafficking of fish and wildlife species.
- Improve methodology of estimating status of fish and wildlife populations and harvest modeling.
- Advance the Habitat Strategic Initiative in response to the white paper "Tribal Treaty Rights at Risk."



Goal 3:

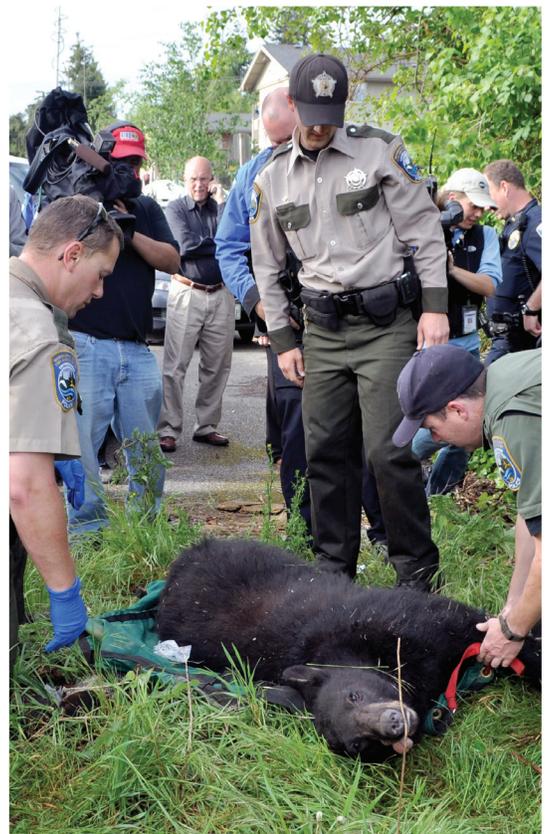
Promote a healthy economy, protect community character, maintain an overall high quality of life, and deliver high-quality customer service

Objectives | Statements describing what we hope to achieve in the future

- 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.

Strategies

- Increase recruitment and retention of customers by improving the marketing of fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching opportunities.
- Timely and effective measures are provided in response to wildlife-related conflicts.
- Increase WDFW outreach to key stakeholders and the public to improve citizen engagement and participation in the Department's decision-making processes.
- Promote the value and economic benefits of WDFW-managed programs by expanding communication with local community and business leaders.



Goal 4:

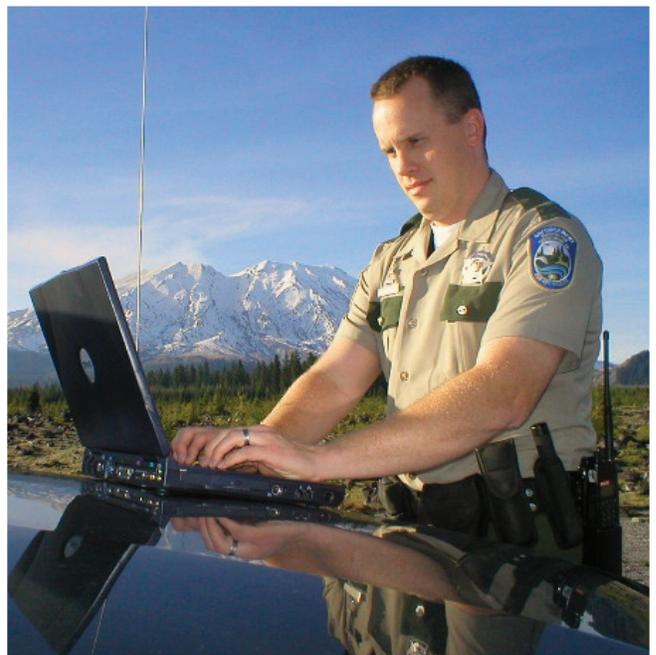
Build an effective and efficient organization by supporting our workforce, improving business processes, and investing in technology

Objectives | Statements describing what we hope to achieve in the future

- 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.

Strategies

- Engage senior staff early in development of agency priorities and budget.
- Improve workload balance by creating a comprehensive approach to align available resources with agency priorities.
- Improve internal communications to foster collaborative relationships across programs and regions.
- Increase workforce satisfaction and productivity by investing in a comprehensive agency training program and career development process.
- Improve agency processes by creating a Lean culture.



2013-15 Strategic Plan



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