



2015-17 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’*

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.

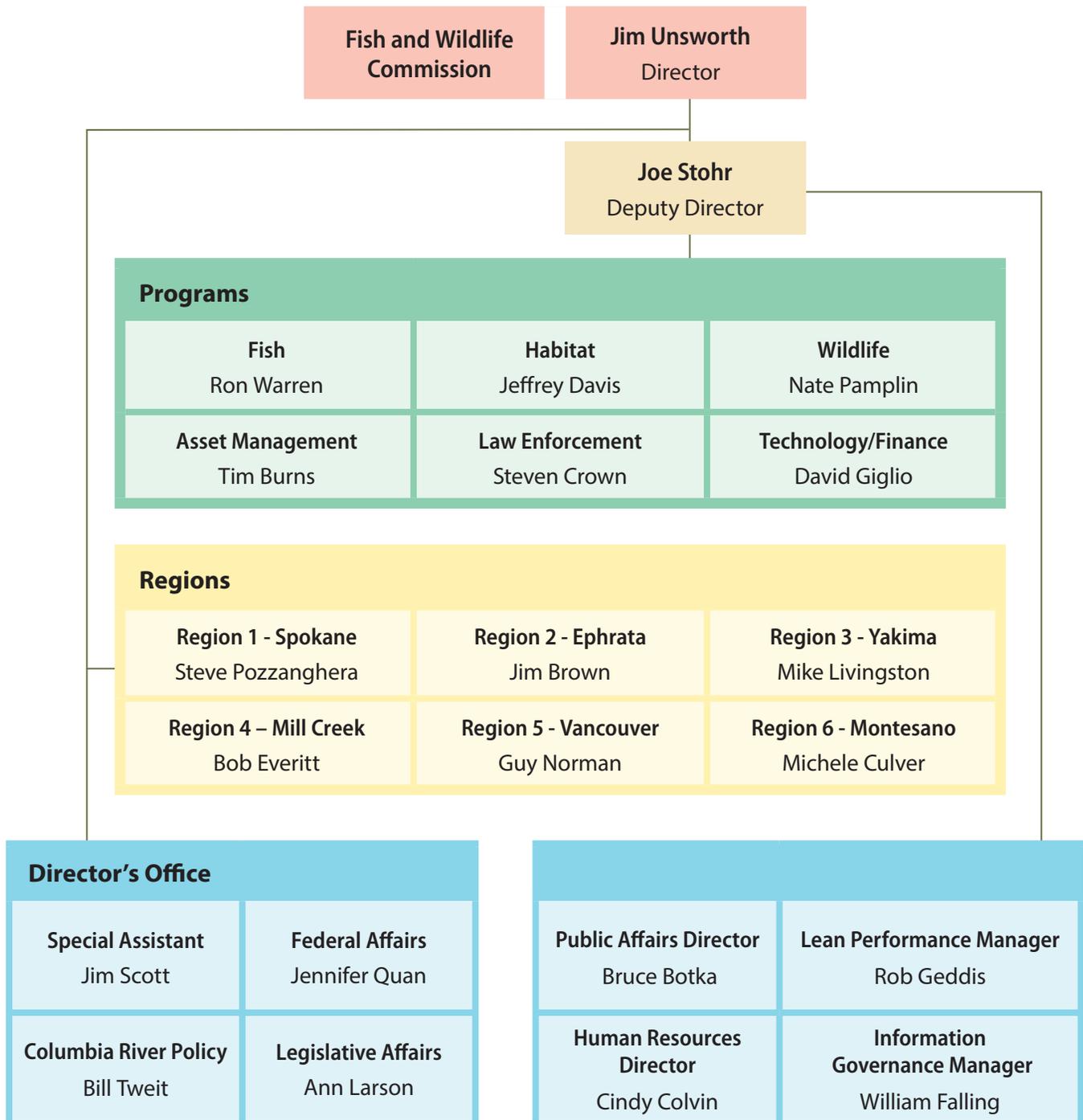
The Commission conducts regular meetings, public hearings and informal workshops around the state, providing many opportunities for citizens and stakeholder groups to actively participate in the management of Washington’s fish and wildlife. More information is available at wdfw.wa.gov/commission/.

<p>Bradley Smith (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>Conrad Mahnken, Ph. D.</p> <p>At-Large position Kitsap County</p>	<p>Kim Thorburn</p> <p>Eastern Washington Spokane County</p>	<p>Miranda Wecker</p> <p>Western Washington Pacific 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

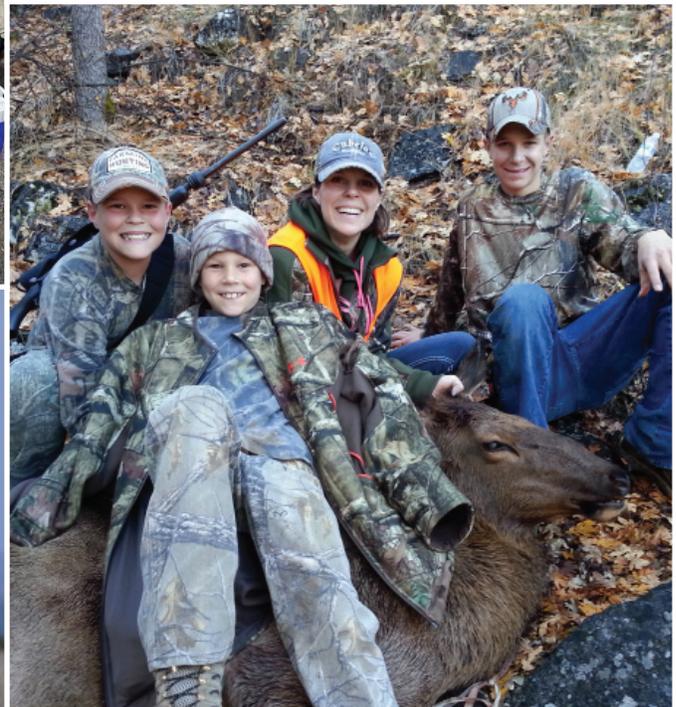
State law established the Department as the steward for the State's fish and wildlife, and this strategic plan highlights the Department's key initiatives for Fiscal Years 2015-17. In pursuit of these initiatives, the Department will apply the following conservation principles— both internally across 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

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. The plan outlines strategies for managing specific species, such as salmon and gray wolves, as well as preserving and restoring the ecological integrity of broader ecosystems.

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. This plan is designed to maintain and increase those benefits with strategies that range from better access to better catch accounting.

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. This plan includes 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, the Department is also working to engage more citizens in that important work.

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 land information 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, including hiring, land management, and permitting.

Objectives and Initiatives

In July of 2015, the Department began an initiative called “Washington’s Wild Future: A Partnership for Fish and Wildlife”, to listen to the public about where the Department should focus its efforts. The results will likely reveal necessary adjustments to the following objectives and initiatives, and the Department will update these plans accordingly.

Goal 1:

Conserve and protect native fish and wildlife

Objectives | Statements describing what the Department wants 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.
- C.** Threatened and endangered fish and wildlife populations are recovered to healthy, self-sustaining levels.

Initiatives

1. Increase the percentage of Endangered Species Act-listed salmon and steelhead populations at healthy, sustainable levels from 16% to 25% by 2022.
2. Demonstrate increasing trend in Puget Sound Chinook populations from one in 2010 to five by 2016.
3. Manage drought and climate change impacts.
4. Puget Sound Chinook and steelhead - Stop the Decline: Cooperative Habitat Strategy with Tribes.
5. Implement improved broodstock management for hatchery programs consistent with the goal of achieving the Hatchery Scientific Review Group broodstock standards for all hatchery programs by 2015.
6. Work with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and tribal co-managers to evaluate and approve Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans for all state salmon and steelhead hatcheries.
7. Provide a report on at-risk stocks of wild steelhead, limiting factors, recommended management actions, and implementation of the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan.
8. Evaluate alternative approaches and develop an improved approach for the management of Puget Sound Chinook under the Endangered Species Act.
9. Develop a sustainable grazing plan to manage grazing leases on the Department’s lands.
10. Complete species status reviews for 25 state-listed species.
11. Utilizing the Wolf Advisory Group, implement the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan.
12. Provide technical assistance and pursue cost-share agreements with livestock operators to avoid and minimize wolf-livestock conflicts.

13. Increase the recovery rate of current state-listed species from 28% to 35% by 2020.
14. Increase the number of successful wolf breeding pairs from 5 to 15 by 2020.
15. Increase the 5-year running average of statewide sage-grouse population from 1,000 to 1,100 by 2017.
16. Facilitate the development of an Environmental Impact Statement for grizzly bear recovery in the North Cascades.
17. Complete 8 new wildlife area plans.
18. Complete a Wildlife Area Habitat Conservation Plan with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service.
19. Complete Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances for fisher and Greater sage-grouse in Washington.
20. Develop 8 citizen science projects for monitoring wildlife species.
21. Assess ungulate populations to see if additional monitoring is needed and/or they trigger predator/prey management guidelines.
22. Assess geographic scope, survival, and prevalence of elk hoof disease in Southwest Washington.
23. Provide leadership to further salmon recovery in specific geographic areas.
24. Improve internal coordination on agricultural objectives.
25. Develop education and outreach materials for habitat conservation.
26. Identify and prioritize fish passage barriers for correction. Coordinate the implementation of the resulting barrier removal strategy.
27. Adaptation strategies to climate change are developed for the future sustainability of Washington's fish, wildlife, and ecosystems.
28. Increase the miles of stream habitat re-opened to salmon and steelhead access from 350 to 450 miles by 2016.
29. Increase the number of fish passage barriers corrected per year from 375 to 500 by 2016.
30. Reduce the rate of loss of priority habitats from 0.4% to 0.1% by 2016.
31. Increase the hydraulic project approval compliance rate to 90% by 2016.
32. Reduce the annual rate of conversion of marine and freshwater riparian habitat in Puget Sound from 0.13% to 0.10% by 2016 and provide mitigation to ensure maintenance of today's habitat functions.
33. Increase the acreage of Puget Sound estuaries restored in the 16 major rivers from 2,260 acres between 2006 and 2012 to 5,028 by 2016.
34. Strengthen nationwide networking capabilities related to wildlife trafficking.
35. Improve gravel-to-gravel protection for Endangered Species Act-listed aquatic species.
36. Increase the efficiency of Aquatic Invasive Species inspections.
37. Improve the clarity and enforceability of natural resource laws and rules.
38. Provide effective and timely response to dangerous wildlife incidents.
39. Increase consumer protection through seafood marketplace inspections and education.

Goal 2:

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

Objectives | Statements describing what the Department wants 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.

Initiatives

1. Increase fishing access sites.
2. Develop, with other state agencies and the tribes, a strategy to improve the effectiveness of catch accounting in tribal and state-managed fisheries that includes a scoping assessment of the need, feasibility, and cost to implement an electronic fish ticket system for all commercial fisheries and an electronic, certification tagging system for tracking shellfish.
3. Complete a statewide inventory of fishing access site use.
4. Develop a recreation management plan for Department lands.
5. Improve the hunt-by-reservation system to include a drawing component.
6. Improve the hunter harvest reporting compliance rate.
7. Increase number of west side pheasant release sites.
8. Maintain acreage of hunting access on private lands at least 1.3 million acres and pursue partnerships to access public lands.
9. Increase technical assistance to local governments and project proponents to conserve game habitat.
10. Improve shellfish traceability and electronic catch accounting.
11. Increase boating safety enforcement and education.
12. Increase the number of individual fishing and hunting licenses issued per year from 2,020,475 to 2,123,540 by 2018.

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 the Department wants 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.

Initiatives

1. Develop a fishing rules smart phone App.
2. Improve the effectiveness and transparency of the North of Falcon process by providing a web page for public comment and the posting of fishery performance information (including treaty/non-treaty sharing of impacts).
3. Engage stakeholders and the public in the implementation of fisheries reform policies in Puget Sound, the Columbia River, Grays Harbor, and Willapa Bay.
4. Develop and implement internal policies for wildlife conflict and expand partnerships.
5. Develop an advanced hunter education curriculum.
6. Develop a hunter recruitment/retention plan.
7. Build/increase volunteer engagement to conduct Ecological Integrity Monitoring on Department lands.
8. Develop a standard kiosk for all Department lands and access sites.
9. Develop a roadkill salvage permit system.
10. Improve the commercial fishing license suspension/revocation process.
11. Reduce illegal activity on agency and other public lands.
12. Protect commercial shellfish industry through increased investigations of illegal markets and trafficking.
13. Establish a Department marketing team to work with the Director to establish agency-wide priorities and adopt strategies and performance measures.

Goal 4:

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

Objectives | Statements describing what the Department wants 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.

Initiatives

1. Address issues raised as a result of the employee survey, including a Department training and career development program that improves employee knowledge, skills, and abilities and supports succession within the Department.
2. Develop and implement a succession plan for key leader positions.
3. Identify landscape conservation priorities and strategies and integrate them into staff work plans.
4. Complete a Lands Information System to better inform customers about Department-managed lands.
5. Develop a fire program plan and outline staff roles/certifications.
6. Develop a game survey and harvest database.
7. Support agency revenue bill development.
8. Have enough annual revenue in the Wildlife Account by 2017 to support existing levels of activities through 2021.
9. Maintain routine communication and coordination with programs/regions for planning, design, and construction of capital projects.
10. Align the capital budget with Department priorities.
11. Facilitate Lean projects on selected processes to improve performance (timeliness, quality, cost, ease of use, and/or available choices) by 50%.
12. Provide introductory Lean training to all supervisors/managers. Explain Lean efficiency improvements to the Commission and public.
13. Implement an electronic asset management tool in order to track costs, replacement intervals and surplus of assets that have met their lifecycle.

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For more information contact:

Lean Transformation Office
Office of the Director

Rob Geddis

360.902.2241

robert.geddis@dfw.wa.gov

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Website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/>

Jim Unsworth, Director, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Bradley Smith, Chair, Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission.

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