

DRAFT



25-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

A Path for a New Era



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

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For more information, see <https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/requests-accommodation>.





OUR MISSION

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

Executive Summary

Fish and wildlife hold intrinsic and substantive value for Washington residents and sovereign tribal nations. They are a significant part of our history, culture, and our future. Fish and wildlife feed us, both with nutritional substance and potent inspiration. Their habitats clean the air and water and moderate impacts from flooding and droughts. They provide recreational opportunities and important industries that support our economy and society. Fish, wildlife, and their habitats provide a powerful aesthetic and intrinsic value locally, nationally, and internationally. All combined, these values underpin our biological, social, spiritual, cultural, and economic health.

The Department must demonstrate bold leadership in conservation, recovery, science, and management in order to better achieve its mission.

Today's Challenges

We recognize that human population growth, development pressure, spread of invasive species, and climate change are contributing to declines in animal abundance, species, and habitats. Business as usual will lead to insufficient habitat for lasting, viable fish and wildlife populations for our children and future generations.

Washington has a high population-to-area ratio (it is the smallest western continental state with the second largest human population) and more people are moving here every day. Residents are seeking natural beauty, diverse and accessible outdoor recreational opportunities, and a vibrant economy. As such, there is growing understanding and demand for the protection and restoration of nature in order to sustain the many benefits that we derive from it.





Though science funding and resources have not kept pace with contemporary issues, we know more today about what is impacting fish and wildlife than we did in the past. There is better scientific understanding of fish and wildlife needs, climate science, and the impacts and benefits of human actions. Laws and regulations have improved over time; however, are still insufficient for the realities we face today as we are still observing irreplaceable conversion of habitat at levels that are affecting overall watershed functions and the persistence of Washington's fish and wildlife species.

As a result, not only are some iconic northwest species being lost, but an abundance of animals, even common ones, are decreasing at alarming rates.

The Needs of Tomorrow

Fortunately, we know what needs to be done. If we act now, we can stem the rate of loss and change the current trajectory. Healthy fish, wildlife, and habitats safeguard our own existence into the future. People still receive significant value from enjoying opportunities and livelihoods supported by fish and wildlife, and there is a growing

movement for stronger connections with healthier and more local and natural food sources (locavore). It is becoming more universally essential to the public that we manage these public resources in a manner that serves both existing and future generations. Quality science and WDFW's conservation principles, per its conservation policy, must continue to drive management decisions. Decisions must also reflect that Washington's residents are evolving to hold more diverse values and interests related to our state's fish and wildlife.

People's ethical relationships with fish and wildlife are shifting over time and human connections

WDFW's Conservation Principles

Policy 5004

- a. We practice conservation by managing, protecting, and restoring ecosystems for the long-term benefit of people, and for fish wildlife, and their habitat.
- b. We work across disciplines to solve problems because of their connections among organisms, species and habitats.
- c. We integrate ecological, social, economic, and institutional perspectives into our decision making.
- d. We embrace new knowledge and apply best science to address changing conditions through adaptive management.
- e. We collaborate with our co-managers and conservation and community partners, to help us achieve our shared goals.

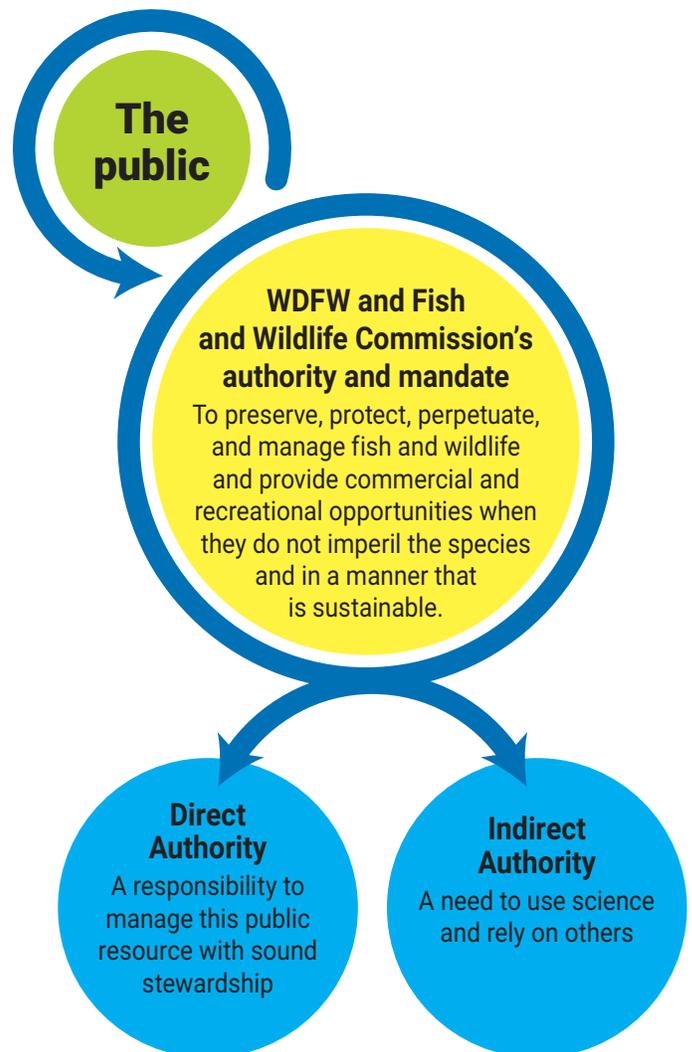
with nature, fish, and wildlife continue to change. More residents in Washington are expressing values which support co-existence with fish and wildlife, while many still hunt and fish for a healthy natural protein source. All of these values held by residents are important and must be figured into the stewardship and management of these public resources. The Department must also evolve if it is to reduce disruptive conflict deriving from these diverse values and interests as we work to put forward future policies, decisions, and actions. This evolution will require improving efforts to better understand the public’s values, increasing connection and participation, and increasing conflict resolution skills.

Finally, the Department acknowledges that to be more effective, it must improve how it makes and communicates decisions, engages with communities and youth, and provides sustainable opportunities for both outdoor recreation and natural resource-based industries.

Collaborative Conservation

The Department does not have the authority nor mandate to achieve the necessary change alone. We must therefore also invest in helping others to be successful in their efforts to preserve, protect, and manage fish and wildlife. Conservation at this scale can only happen through collaboration; building and strengthening partnerships, particularly with other natural resource agencies; and creating synergies.

It’s going to take all of us working together. Local, state, federal, tribal governments, non-governmental organizations, conservation organization, land managers, farmers, businesses, private landowners, hunters, anglers, and residents of all ages must cooperate and work towards a more resilient future for fish, wildlife, and people.





Purpose and Scope

This plan provides the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife with long-term strategic focus aimed at improving mission success.

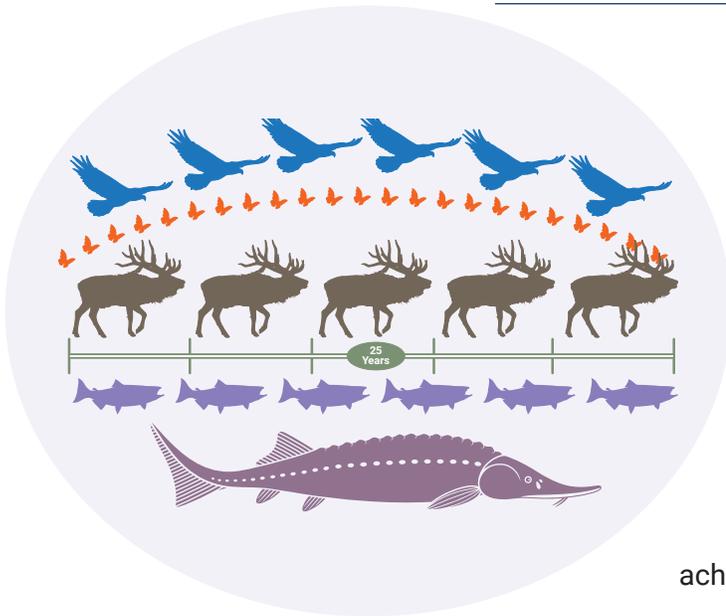
It is important to understand that this strategic plan does not discuss all the Department's work, such as conflict management, enforcement, hatchery production, and wildlife population management, which will continue to be detailed in our other working documents. There are many ongoing agency functions that are critical and essential. These critical existing efforts are not inventoried here, but management decisions must continue to support this work in order to achieve the plan's vision.

This plan includes strategies that identify shifts in how we do things now; changes which we see as pivotal to modernizing the agency, protecting the state's fish and wildlife, and positioning WDFW for success. Each strategy includes near and longer-term actions, initial performance indicators, and 25-year desired outcomes. The strategies are:

- Proactively address conservation challenges;
- Build passionate constituencies through community engagement;
- Connect people to nature and conservation through recreation and stewardship;
- Deliver science that informs Washington's most pressing fish and Wildlife questions; and
- Move WDFW towards operational and environmental excellence.

While this plan includes initial performance measures, we recognize that the Department needs to monitor performance across the breadth of its work which is critical to achieving this vision. This plan will serve as an impetus for the future development of Department-wide performance measures that: are important to the public, help us see the whole picture, and prompt us to continuously learn and adapt our work accordingly.





This plan was built on a 25-year timeframe. This timeframe allows the Department enough time to build on its work within a slower-moving biological context, where results can best viewed across multiple generations. It also allows the Department to seek an ambitious vision, while near and longer-term steppingstone actions move us towards achieving our performance objectives.

Vision

The plan identifies a set of desired future outcomes for each of the five strategies – if we are successful at achieving the actions outlined in the strategy, what might be possible? In short, our desired future includes a Washington state where we see:

- Healthy and sustainable fish and wildlife populations.
- A restored network of resilient habitats which connects ecosystems across the landscape.
- Abundant recreation, stewardship, and educational opportunities available to diverse populations.
- Residents with a deep appreciation of the intrinsic value of nature and the benefits of fish and wildlife to people, who also have a strong sense of personal stewardship and responsibility for the environment.
- A Department that reflects and connects with the diverse public we serve, and that is a model of great governance.

In Conclusion

To forge a fresh path for a new era, the staff advances this plan with guidance from our Fish and Wildlife Commissioners, key decision makers, collaborators, stakeholders, partners, employees, and the public. If the Department is to achieve its mission, it must show bold leadership – necessary in these unprecedented times – in conservation, recovery, management, and in the implementation of this plan.

“Traditionally, hunters, anglers, and commercial fishers have carried the banner of fish and wildlife conservation. It’s time, now, to bring this together with the support of a much broader spectrum of our state’s population. Such an achievement will be good for nature; vastly improve fish, wildlife, and habitat outcomes; and best meet the needs of Washingtonians.”

– Jeff Davis,
WDFW Director of Conservation Policy



STRATEGY | Proactively address conservation challenges

The Current Challenge

WDFW has a critical and central role to play in ensuring that Washington residents enjoy connected, healthy, and resilient habitats that support robust fish and wildlife, and our own human health and wellbeing.

Outdoor recreation and commercial industry interests are being affected by the combination of human population growth and unsustainable land development, pollution, climate change, and invasive species, such that many fish and wildlife populations are declining. These declines are affecting the satisfaction of resident experiences, the economic stability of commercial industries, the health and wellbeing of people and communities, degrading ecosystem benefits, and threatening the credibility of the Department. As many fish and wildlife populations decline, there is a growing need for our species and habitat management work to become more precise, timely, and effective.

If we are to meet the needs and expectations of Washington residents, we must do better and be more proactive in advancing this fundamental part of our mission.

While we've seen promising success stories in species and habitat recovery, overall trends point to continued decline of native, healthy habitats and the status of species of greatest conservation need. As an organization we face the challenge of having a broad mandate, but limited direct authority and technical assistance capacity. Land use decisions (financing and permitting development, establishing open space, protecting critical habitats, etc.) represent opportunities to conserve and restore important habitats and maintain green open space while enhancing urban and rural vitality. Limited access to up-

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STRATEGY

Proactively address conservation challenges

to-date fish and wildlife information hinders the abilities of land use planners and decisionmakers to make recommendations or support regulations that achieve desired conservation outcomes.

In addition, the current regulatory system discourages landowners from growing and maintaining habitat for species of greatest conservation need. We must breakthrough our challenges to find a robust toolbox of incentives to encourage long-term fish, wildlife and habitat stewardship on private lands.

The Opportunity

By providing more leadership, investment, and commitment, WDFW can become a stronger collaborator and more effectively connect with decision makers to provide actionable information and solutions for better conservation outcomes, while achieving multiple human benefits. Ensuring that the values provided by healthy functioning habitats, such as outdoor recreation, commercial fisheries, and human health, are more effectively included in traditional economic analyses will further the understanding of these benefits and impacts.

Other agencies and the public are ready to work together with us. There are untapped opportunities to leverage our efforts with others' to improve synergies and accomplish better conservation outcomes across Washington. Success may depend on how well we bolster our efforts within aligned and affiliated work.

Providing enhanced support to local, state, and federal land use decision makers can help us to work in partnership towards a future of improved conservation and overall environmental improvement, or net ecological gains.



Proactively address
conservation
challenges

Near-term Actions

WDFW will seek policy and funding necessary to prioritize these actions over the next four years.

1. Lead a statewide conservation road map in collaboration with partners to strengthen synergy and expand action for a “One Washington” approach to landscape-scale ecosystem recovery and fish and wildlife conservation. Build on past efforts from the Washington Biodiversity Council, the State Wildlife Action Plan, ecoregional assessments, etc.
 - WDFW will review our and others’ data and products to assess the current state of fish and wildlife conservation and identify the most significant needs and coordinate actions.
 - WDFW will publish a state of the state fish and wildlife report.
 - WDFW will collaborate with our regional, national, and international partners to establish common conservation principles and priorities.
2. Develop and implement a WDFW Climate Resilience Plan.
 - Identify species and habitats at risk to climate disruption.
 - Address actions for WDFW to make its work and investments more resilient to climate change.
 - Identify nature-based climate resilience solutions that can be used statewide to strengthen ecosystem resilience.
 - Align state de-carbonization advances with efforts to protect species biodiversity.
3. Vastly expand current efforts to manage and recover at-risk fish and wildlife species.
4. Ensure that land use planning and decisions are contributing to the conservation and recovery of fish and wildlife.
 - Pursue net ecological gain and/or additional authorities for land use planning and smart growth.
 - Enhance the quality, quantity, and display of information within the Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) portal to ensure that land use planners have the appropriate scale and quality of information to make informed decisions.
 - Increase our ability to deliver high level technical expertise on species and habitat.
 - Pursue conservation and recovery goals through regulations and incentives regarding the financing of development projects.
5. Implement a co-manager habitat workplan as part of salmon recovery and improve salmon and steelhead populations that are limiting fishing opportunities.
6. Shape Washington’s 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan to reflect this strategic plan’s priorities.
7. Develop a Statewide Hatchery Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to adaptively manage programs to minimize risk to wild stocks.
8. Develop and implement a WDFW invasive species response plan.

Longer-term Actions

Longer term strategies may build on near-term actions or represent additional actions to be initiated with time. These may shift over time based on emerging information.

1. Longer term actions would largely be determined by the statewide conservation road map and the climate resiliency strategy
2. In collaboration with others, improve and develop more effective landowner incentives for conservation.
3. Work with partners towards the implementation and increase of net ecological gain
4. Work with other natural resource agencies, tribes, NGOs, collaborative partners, stakeholders, and businesses to leverage their expertise and secure new and stable fund sources to further enhance conservation work and outcomes in Washington.

Proactively address conservation challenges

Initial performance indicators

WDFW will work to identify and track performance measures to gauge our success.

- Increase in the number of acres of high value habitat conserved, restored, and connected on public and private lands.
- Number of populations with limiting factors identified and prioritized, through the State Wildlife Action Plan.
- Number of additional river miles and habitat accessible to salmon and steelhead.
- Number of agency actions which include an effective climate change component.
- Number of species of greatest conservation need with an increasing trend in abundance.
- Improved salmon productivity in all watersheds, with an emphasis on constraining stocks.
- Number of conservation hatchery programs meeting program goals.
- Number of watershed action plans approval with local and tribal support.
- Technical assistance tools receive improving marks from end users for their ability to inform decisions.

25-year desired outcomes

- State and federally listed species are recovering.
- The quality and/or quantity of harvest opportunities provided are sustainable.
- People recognize, prioritize, and take pride in the value of healthy species and habitats and their contributions to our health and quality of life.
- Climate resiliency and biodiversity conservation are key components in our everyday individual and Department actions.
- WDFW effectively conveys the agency's conservation priorities and influences land use decisions that help sustain the full array of Washington's species.
- Society is practicing net ecological gain in their land use actions and management.
- The public understands the status of species and habitat and why we must protect them.
- WDFW is recognized as a national leader in fish and wildlife conservation policy and management.
- Washington supports an increasing amount of quality fish and wildlife habitat that is well connected and providing unimpeded movement through critical migration corridors.
- WDFW is viewed as a leader in salmon recovery.
- WDFW operates hatcheries while minimizing risks to wild stocks.



STRATEGY | Build passionate constituencies through community engagement

The Current Challenge

WDFW has a long history of providing hunting and angling opportunities to the public and many people understand and appreciate these services. However, the residents' interests and values towards fish and wildlife continue to shift through time as fish and wildlife populations have declined. This has resulted in new work and an increasing need to connect more broadly with all residents. Yet, our ability to communicate and engage with residents has not kept pace.

The Department has made use of its limited resources to address immediate, reactionary needs. As a result, staff direction around engagement has, at times, been unclear and not adequately supported. People may not be familiar with the breadth of the Department's work beyond hunting and angling, or how these other efforts improve their quality of life. People also may not be aware of the importance angling and hunting have traditionally had in funding fish and wildlife conservation for many species.

At the same time, the Department may not understand how its work needs to adjust to meet the expanding expectations of the public. National surveys tell us people's connection to nature is changing and even waning, especially in urban centers. To effectively address these shifts, we need to learn more about the public, their needs, and their motivations. Fortunately, we have passionate constituencies – hunters, anglers, and nature enthusiasts – that want to see WDFW succeed and are eager to help.

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STRATEGY

Build
passionate
constituencies
through
community
engagement

The Opportunity

By investing in and building staff capacity to engage with allies, the Department will be better positioned to help our partners succeed, while also directly benefiting from that work. The Department will also be able to ensure that residents are well informed of opportunities to engage and be heard by the Department and Fish and Wildlife Commission.



Near-term Actions

WDFW will seek policy and funding necessary to prioritize these actions over the next four years.

1. Connect with youth and young adults - the next generation.
 - WDFW engages in meaningful natural resource education in schools (K-12).
 - Provide emerging professional work experiences through internships, and young adult employment programs.
2. Develop an R3 (Recruit, Retain, and Reactivate) plan to better serve anglers, hunters and outdoor fish and wildlife recreation opportunities.
3. Invest in and implement social science to understand how to effectively serve our public and tailor our services and outreach appropriately.
4. Prioritize methods and technologies that can increase the visibility of our work.
5. Make decision-making processes more accessible and transparent.
6. Drive community science that creates stronger awareness and stewardship of fish and wildlife while advancing agency goals.
7. Expand WDFW's volunteer program, with our partners, to advance a broader range of Department goals.

Longer-term Actions

Longer term strategies may build on near-term actions or represent additional actions to be initiated with time. These may shift over time based on emerging information.

1. Build capacity for facilitating public engagement in planning and resource stewardship.
2. Build our engagement with advisory committees and groups for more effective implementation of our mission.
3. Implement a R3 (Recruit, Retain, and Reactivate) plan.
4. Expand WDFW's influence in decision making around issues that impact our ability to achieve our mission (for example, participating in professional societies and on technical review boards).
5. Champion partner efforts to collaboratively achieve shared objectives.
6. Advance the implementation of existing conservation and natural resource state education requirements.

Build passionate constituencies through community engagement

Initial performance indicators

WDFW will work to identify and track performance measures to gauge our success.

- Number of youths reporting greater appreciation for Washington wildlife and ecosystems as a result of education and volunteer efforts undertaken by WDFW staff and partner organizations.
- R3 efforts are regularly measured against R3 plan goals.
- Number of schools/school districts working with WDFW and others to incorporate fish and wildlife conservation into their curriculum.
- Number of interns and young adult employment job participants.
- Increased investment in engagement technologies, staff, and/or services.
- The public reports higher trust rating for WDFW in public surveys.
- Department social media audiences reflect Washington state's diversity and interests

25-year desired outcomes

- WDFW better reflects the diversity of our mandate and has developed well-defined niches for engaging residents.
- WDFW is well recognized for contributing to residents' quality of life.
- A broader group of passionate and diverse constituencies work to support fish and wildlife.
- Wider recognition of the role fishing and hunting play as conservation tools for many species.
- A broader and diverse group of people are aware and have the opportunity and desire to engage with us in the stewardship of fish and wildlife, and are enjoying fish and wildlife-based recreation.
- WDFW is working together with a broader group of partnerships to engage future generations in conservation and stewardship.
- More communities feel pride in local and regional conservation initiatives.



STRATEGY | Connect people to nature and conservation through recreation and stewardship

The Current Challenge

Outdoor recreation, including hunting, angling, and wildlife viewing, adds to the public's quality of life. Unfortunately, the quality and access to these opportunities, in too many cases, has declined as our population grows and competition for land increases. Access to private lands that provide or support these outdoor recreational opportunities continues to decline. This can create management challenges on public lands and on public resources, while also building conflict, or tensions, between user groups.

Even the approximately one million acres of public lands managed by the Department for conservation and recreation opportunities are not as welcoming to the public as we would want them to be.

In addition, the Department and its partners can do a better job attracting the youth and young adults (future generations) of our state. Furthermore, some segments of our communities have traditionally had less access to outdoor recreation (primarily in urban areas) and participation is currently underrepresented.

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STRATEGY

Connect people to nature and conservation through recreation and stewardship

The Opportunity

One primary opportunity to overcome these challenges is to better engage the public – both in conservation, recreation, and individual stewardship opportunities. We need to continue providing access for fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching as well as wider recreation, such as hiking, biking, and camping.

Land stewardship and recreation need each other. We wish to provide access to public and private lands and waters to connect people to memorable experiences, and motivate continued care. We can also make choices and opportunities, together with partners, that support ecologic integrity and preserve natural and cultural resources.

The Department further must serve and connect with residents that may not have a desire or ability to participate in outdoor recreation. Therefore, we can help residents connect with nature and learning in their existing – urban and rural – places. To do this, we'll seek stronger partnerships with the many organizations that exist across our state that are doing some of this work.



Connect people to nature and conservation through recreation and stewardship

Near-term Actions

WDFW will seek policy and funding necessary to prioritize these actions over the next four years.

1. Ensure that implementation of the WDFW Recreation Strategy provides for a broad spectrum of diverse outdoor opportunities, in a sustainable manner.
2. Develop and expand partnerships to promote recreational and stewardship opportunities on all lands, including urban areas.
3. Vastly expand, promote, and offer incentives for backyard wildlife habitat programs, those sponsored by WDFW as well as others.
4. Create and promote education opportunities on our wildlife areas, particularly those in urban centers, and on school grounds.
5. Expand and improve public access opportunities.

Longer-term Actions

Longer term strategies may build on near-term actions or represent additional actions to be initiated with time. These may shift over time based on emerging information.

1. Develop a robust volunteer recognition program for stewardship and education achievement.
2. Develop and implement an interpretative program for wildlife and wildflower viewing experiences.

Connect people to nature and conservation through recreation and stewardship

Initial performance indicators

WDFW will work to identify and track performance measures to gauge our success.

- The number of implementation actions accomplished on time in accordance with the recreation plan.
- The number of partners that are actively promoting opportunities in partner with our agency.
- The number of participants and level of interest in backyard wildlife programs.
- The number of acres involved in backyard wildlife programs.
- The number of students and adults participating in our education opportunities.
- The number of schools and school districts working with WDFW and our partners with backyard habitat programs to restore habitats in school yards and incorporating these as outdoor classrooms.

25- year desired outcomes

- Diverse populations are enjoying access to public and private lands for outdoor recreation and have improved connections with nature.
- People are working together to implement and maintain sound fish, wildlife, and habitat stewardship actions that build and sustain an effective habitat network that supports sustainable fish and wildlife populations.
- Finding and participating in recreation, stewardship, and conservation activities is easy.
- WDFW lands have been restored where necessary and offer high quality, functioning ecosystems that support our state's biodiversity.
- Local and state elected officials and diverse interest groups have an appreciation and pride in the value of their local wild places, including WDFW lands.



STRATEGY | Deliver science that informs Washington's most pressing fish and wildlife questions

The Current Challenge

WDFW is a science-based agency; unbiased, trusted, and actionable science is critical to our decision-making processes. As a state agency with limited resources, we must prioritize and fund science aligned with Washington's highest needs. There is tremendous opportunity to be more efficient and effective in how we collect, manage, and share our data by modernizing our data systems.

At times, WDFW's science has been developed in silos; one challenge is to move to interdisciplinary approaches that cross programs and are integrated, for example, with the social sciences. We recognize that many people and organizations depend on DFWs science and that good science grows public trust.



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STRATEGY

Deliver science
that informs
Washington's most
pressing fish and
wildlife questions

The Opportunity

Strategically prioritizing, funding, and delivering science products that are tied to policy and management questions, will ensure that we effectively use state resources as we develop timely and effective fish and wildlife management solutions. Federal, state, and tribal governments, non-profit organizations, and the general public rely on WDFW's science to build upon their own scientific understandings, policies, and actions. In addition, many of our science endeavors are integrated across various agencies, tribal governments, academia, and non-profits - pointing to the continued opportunity for collaboration.

Shifting WDFW's focus to collaborative cross-program, cross-agency approaches, and aligning science to policy and management needs, will improve the credibility of decision making. In addition, integrating social science will help the Department be best poised to inform some of our most pressing questions.

The agency must also become adept at communicating science across disciplines and to decision makers and the public. Investing in effective science communication will help ensure that the findings reach target audiences, inform decisions, and contribute towards desired outcomes.

Finally, participating with non-profits and community science programs to gather important fish, wildlife and habitat data connects people to nature in tangible ways. Such efforts could deepen relationships and improve the Department's relevancy and credibility with residents and partners.



Deliver science that informs Washington's most pressing fish and wildlife questions

Near-term Actions

WDFW will seek policy and funding necessary to prioritize these actions over the next four years.

1. Develop, prioritize, and deliver a science agenda, to include the following components:
 - Assess existing science - policy questions, on-the-ground management needs, funding, and processes.
 - Identify alternatives that improve cross-discipline science collaboration.
 - Identify opportunities for partnerships, including our local universities.
2. Implement science communication training/strategies.
3. Develop a robust data and analysis system/plan that modernizes data architecture for internal users and moves towards easier access to relevant science to inform current decision making and/or high-profile questions.
4. Pursue opportunities to increase community science in conservation efforts.

Longer-term Actions

Longer term strategies may build on near-term actions or represent additional actions to be initiated with time. These may shift over time based on emerging information.

1. Expand opportunities for community science.
2. Better communicate (be more transparent) the role of science in agency resource management decisions.

Deliver science that informs Washington's most pressing fish and wildlife questions

Initial performance indicators

WDFW will work to identify and track performance measures to gauge our success.

- Number of new science hires with science communication or outreach expertise as part of their portfolio.
- Number of Department-lead science initiatives with direct ties to stated policy or management priorities.
- Number of Department-lead science initiatives that demonstrate principles of actionable science and co-production.
- Number of community science projects, or backyard habitat program agreements.
- Number of collaborative science projects with partners, universities, or other organizations.

25-year desired outcomes

- We have clear science priorities, and we're applying our resources to the highest policy needs.
- We have a process that assesses the effectiveness of our science in informing policy and management outcomes.
- Our science communication results in the greater use of our science to effect conservation outcomes.
- The public trusts our science.
- There is effective coordination between science, policy, and management functions.
- Our science agenda has strengthened working relationships across programs.



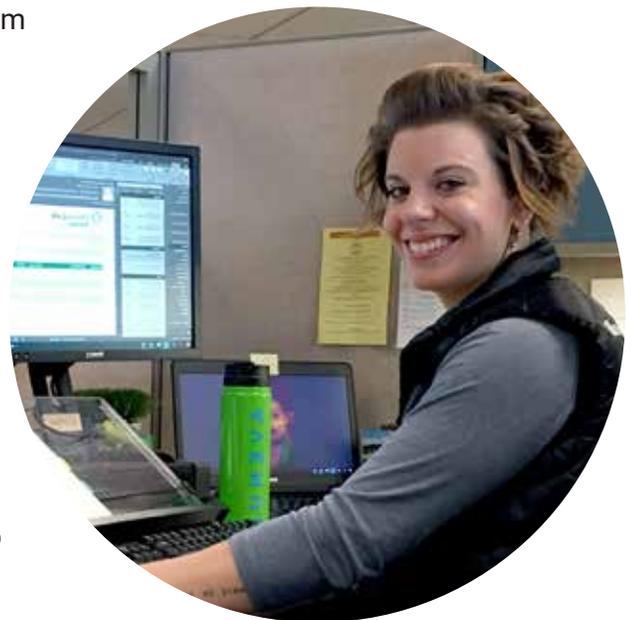
STRATEGY | Move WDFW towards operational and environmental excellence

The Current Challenge

Our internal processes, tools, resources, and culture figure large in terms of how much we can achieve as an organization. Achieving our mission while living our values is critical to our effectiveness, credibility, and public support.

Supporting employees remains central to our work. The speed of technological and societal change has sometimes moved faster than WDFW's ability to adapt to new opportunities or upgrade dated tools.

Public service and environmental sustainability must form a strong core of how we do our work, to include supporting communities' environmental sustainability efforts, reducing WDFW's carbon footprint, building a modern workforce that can work from anywhere, and a willingness to adapt to new circumstances.



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WDFW Values

Accountability

We hold ourselves and each other responsible for acting consistent with our values and mission.

Service

We add value to Washington communities and seek to improve the public’s experience.

Professionalism

We serve in a manner that reflects positively on the Department and on ourselves

Integrity

We are consistently open, honest, ethical, and genuine in our actions.

Respect

We treat each other with dignity.

Empathy

We take time to understand and appreciate others.

The Opportunity

Strategically investing in improving our internal operations could have huge payoffs. Living our agency values – through education, training, accountability to actions, and transparency will result in greater trust internally and externally.

We can modernize our work through better use of technology enterprise wide, and intentionally tackle the need to account for, and dramatically reduce, our carbon emissions and environmental impacts. We can prepare staff for advancement/leadership roles and establish a culture in WDFW which embraces diversity. Support for staff can also come through: empowered decision making, training excellence, communicating priorities, and setting benchmarks at multiple scales so that all staff understand how they contribute to the mission.

Finally, we have an opportunity to codify the contribution of the Department through performance measures that promotes confidence and understanding of our work within the broader community.

STRATEGY

Move
WDFW towards
operational and
environmental
excellence

Move WDFW
towards operational
and environmentally
sustainable excellence

Near-term Actions

WDFW will seek policy and funding necessary to prioritize these actions over the next four years..

1. Commit to adaptive management through the use of performance measures and sharing results with the public for major projects.
2. Increase decision transparency within WDFW with new digital tools, use of video updates, and other tools developed with staff guidance.
3. Enact additional methods for the Fish and Wildlife Commission to build networks and relationships, and hear directly from constituents and the public.
4. Support and implement recommendations of the Diversity Advisory Committee and continue to track data within the Human Resources system to improve diversity, equity and inclusion at all levels in our work force.
5. Develop an implementation plan for advancing agency values.
6. Identify actions to improve cross-program/region synchronization and deployment of staff resources.
7. Develop best practices for staff retention and preparing staff for advancement/leadership roles.
8. Consolidate data platforms across programs to facilitate future needs.
9. Develop a comprehensive WDFW environmental sustainability plan which could include actions to: minimize carbon footprint, maximize carbon sequestration, reduce environmental impacts, change office space/use to better support staff, review fleet practices, and move towards greater environmental sustainability.

Longer-term Actions

Longer term strategies may build on near-term actions or represent additional actions to be initiated with time. These may shift over time based on emerging information.

1. Continued implementation of an environmental sustainability plan.
2. Seek further methods to strengthen employee satisfaction.

Move WDFW towards operational and environmental excellence

Initial performance indicators

WDFW will work to identify and track performance measures to gauge our success.

- Robust environmental sustainability plan with goals and targets.
- Deployment of tools that increase transparency in decision making and document progress towards performance measures: internal and externally facing.
- Positive trend in specific questions in the employee engagement survey that speak to the implementation of agency values.
- The percentage of electric and/or hybrid fleet vehicles.
- Reduction in commute trips: to and from work, to and from meetings, deployment of telework, other remote technology deployment.
- The number of near-term actions advanced to OFM as part of the 21-23 budget.
- Number of cross- or multi-program collaborative initiatives or actions.

25-year desired outcomes

- Staff and the public see the Department is living its values.
- Department operations are synchronized across programs and regions.
- Department operations take advantage of technology.
- Department operations set the example for environmental sustainability among state agencies with a reduced carbon footprint.
- WDFW's skilled and increasingly diverse workforce is well equipped to serve Washington residents.
- WDFW is an employer of choice with higher employee retention.



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A Road Map to Washington's Future, completed in 2019 by The University of Washington's William D. Ruckelshaus Center through the visionary support of the 2015 Washington State Legislature.

Washington's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy: Sustaining our natural heritage for future generations completed by the Washington Biodiversity Council in 2007.

The 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan for Eastern Washington produced by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources in 2017.

The 2017 Washington Wildlife Leaders Forum Report, Toward a Wildlife Future for Washington State, which was informed by environmental, recreation, governor, tribal, and state agency representatives.

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