

NEW HAMPSHIRE
FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT
STRATEGIC
PLAN*
(2017 – 2022)

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

Mission Statement

As guardian of New Hampshire's fish, wildlife, and marine resources, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department works in partnership with the public to:

Conserve, manage, and protect these resources
and their habitats;

Inform and educate the public about these resources;

Provide the public with opportunities to use and
appreciate these resources.

Mission Statement Definitions:

GUARDIAN - The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (Department) is the state agency having legal responsibility to oversee the wellbeing of fish, wildlife, and marine resources. It provides direction and guidance to anyone whose actions may affect these resources.

FISH - Species that typically have gills and fins and depend on aquatic ecosystems for their life cycles.

WILDLIFE - Refers to all species of mammals, birds, fish, mollusks, crustaceans, amphibians, invertebrates, reptiles or their progeny or eggs which, whether raised in captivity or not, are normally found in a wild state (RSA 207:1 XXXV).

MARINE - Species of finfishes, shellfish, lobsters, crabs, marine worms, other invertebrates and plants found in coastal and estuarine waters of the state (RSA 207:1 XV).

PARTNERSHIP NHF&G will strive to work closely with other agencies, groups and individuals to benefit the State's fish, wildlife and marine resources. Effective partnerships respond to the missions of each party involved and generate results common to all.

PUBLIC - All agencies, groups, NGOs and individuals who are interested in the fish, wildlife and marine resources of NH.

HABITAT - Places where wildlife finds its food water, shelter, and space needs in a suitable arrangement in each of its life stages.

PROTECT - Prevent or diminish the loss or degradation of fish, wildlife and marine species populations or their habitats, and adequately enforce unlawful exploitation.

MANAGE - To actively or passively influence naturally reproducing and propagated fish, wildlife, and marine populations and their habitats to achieve ecological and social objectives.

CONSERVE - Sustain fish, wildlife or marine species populations or their habitats.

INFORM AND EDUCATE - The development and implementation of a process designed to raise awareness about fish, wildlife and marine resources and the Department's activities resulting in

increased knowledge, skills, and responsible behaviors and attitudes.

USE - Public utilization and enjoyment of resources which are conserved, monitored, managed and regulated by the Department. Use includes, but is not limited to, hunting, fishing, trapping, off road recreational vehicle use, commercial harvesting, collecting, wildlife watching, and studying.

INFRASTRUCTURE - Any physical plant owned, maintained and operated by the Department, including: hatcheries, offices, education centers, boat accesses, wildlife observation platforms, buildings, dams and utilities.

New Hampshire Fish and Game Department
Values Statements:

As we manage all of New Hampshire's fish, wildlife and marine resources, we will aspire to conserve ecosystems and to protect and enhance species diversity.

The Department will remain committed to its long range vision when evaluating proposals, projects and decisions.

In response to diverse public needs, we will provide a balance of high quality programs, products and services. We will treat every person with respect and dignity by carefully listening to what he or she is saying, responding to questions and recognizing different points of view. We will strive to provide all people with an opportunity to share in the development and benefit of our programs and services.

Hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife watching provide economic benefit, outdoor recreation opportunities. These activities are rich traditions. The Fish and Game Department will support, encourage, preserve and manage these traditional uses as well as the resources they depend on. Through effective enforcement, public outreach and education the Department will safeguard these resources from unlawful exploitation.

Citizens and visitors receive both economic and intrinsic benefits from fish, wildlife and marine resources that significantly enhance their quality of life. Therefore, the Department will promote increased understanding of our mission, and the necessary funding needed to support it, among the broader public who do not buy licenses but benefit from Department programs.

The Department will provide services for the safety of outdoor recreational users with highly trained professional employees.

The Department will maintain high quality and cost effective programs, products and services. Quality implies that employees take pride in, and responsibility for, their actions.

The Department recognizes that good human relations are fundamental to maintaining a productive work environment and will foster cooperation, respect and consideration among employees.

The Department acknowledges that employees are its most valuable asset. It will train, equip, support and recognize employees to enable them to perform at their highest level of service.

Each employee's deeds, actions and statements will demonstrate integrity. People will be treated fairly and with respect; communication will be open and honest.

The Department is committed to education that develops awareness, increases ecological knowledge, builds skills, promotes responsible behavior and constructive actions concerning fish, wildlife and marine resources and their habitats.

The Department will maintain and upgrade its infrastructure and working environment for the safety and comfort of its employees and the general public, as well as increasing energy efficiency.

New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

Vision Statement

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT IN 2020

The following narrative is a vision of where the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department would like to be in the year 2020. It does not attempt to describe where we are today; it looks at where we want to be 6 years from now.

The State of New Hampshire is endowed with scenic beauty and abundant natural resources, which have shaped who we are today and will strongly influence who we will be in future decades. The presence of fish, wildlife and marine resources is

intricately linked to our quality of life and to our identity as citizens of New Hampshire.

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department is recognized by the public as a leader in conservation and constantly strives to be one of the most effective fish, wildlife and marine resource agencies in the country. The Department derives its strength and direction from its commission, director, employees and volunteers; and from the citizens of New Hampshire, who entrust us with the responsibility of fish, wildlife and marine resource management and protection.

Our work sustains healthy and diverse populations of fish and wildlife; as well as protecting and enhancing the habitats they depend on for survival. We accomplish this through sound scientific research, habitat and species management and protection, fair and judicious enforcement of conservation laws, a range of educational programs for all ages, and the participation and support of the public.

We provide excellent programs and opportunities for public use and enjoyment of New Hampshire's fish, wildlife and marine resources. We help all citizens develop a strong conservation ethic so that they become good stewards and advocates of these resources.

Fish and Game Department Strategic Plan

Note: To achieve the balance envisioned by this strategic plan, goals and objectives should be viewed in the context of the overall plan, not as isolated, unrelated targets.

I. Fish, Wildlife, and Marine Resources

Vision for the future: New Hampshire has healthy and abundant fish, wildlife, and marine populations, and the diversity of habitats they depend on for survival. As stewards of the state's fish, wildlife, and marine resources, we use sound science based management and judicious enforcement of conservation laws to ensure these resources will be sustained at desired levels for generations to come. Species whose populations were once considered threatened or endangered are restored and no additional species are in danger of declining to that status.

Habitat

Goal 1: New Hampshire has a wide range of naturally occurring habitats and healthy, naturally functioning ecosystems.

A. Continue to conserve and protect priority/critical habitat through fee acquisition and easements.

1.) Continue to refine definitions, map and analyze critical habitat in the 2015 revision of the NH Wildlife Action Plan.

2.) Work in partnership with State, Federal, and private agencies and organizations with similar objectives to develop and implement habitat protection strategies that include both ecological and recreational considerations, as well as taking into consideration vulnerability to climate impacts.

3.) Annually evaluate progress towards protecting the highest ranked habitats identified in the Wildlife Action Plan. Target the most critical habitat and community types lacking protection for acquisition or easement.

4.) Continue to establish, maintain and strengthen communication links with all interested parties, particularly regional planning commissions, town conservation commissions, planning boards, zoning boards, land trusts and watershed associations to inform them on the benefits of making habitat considerations part of their planning and decision making processes.

5.) Continue a strong education program for foresters, loggers, natural resource professionals, landowners, and others regarding methodologies to protect and enhance habitats.

6.) Participate in habitat related legislative, regulatory, and policy development processes where appropriate.

7.) Develop a sustainable "landowner incentive program" to help landowners protect and enhance wildlife habitat

B.) Maintain and/or enhance overall wildlife values of other significant lands and waters while providing appropriate access.

1.) By 2020, adopt statewide habitat composition goals.

2.) In cooperation with other State and Federal agencies, enhance efforts to manage existing State and Federal controlled lands and waters

C.) Manage and protect habitat for specific species as indicated by species management plans and the Wildlife Action Plan (WAP).

Populations

Goal 2: New Hampshire has abundant and varied fish, wildlife, and marine species at levels that ensure sustainable, healthy populations.

A. Generally

Achieve species population goals identified in the WAP and other species management plans using the best scientific methods and management practices available.

1.) Species status will be monitored using the best available methods as specified in species management and recovery plans. Methods will be revised as necessary during plan revisions.

2.) Revise management and recovery plans periodically, using the best available science.

3.) Regulate controllable mortality for each managed species at a level that will maintain population goals.

4.) Use stocking when deemed appropriate by the Department, to maintain agreed upon population goals.

5.) Continue to develop and implement recovery plans for listed threatened or endangered species with guidance from NH's Wildlife Action Plan and Federal regulations.

6.) Continue to develop a monitoring program for nongame species identified in the Department Wildlife Action Plan in order to prevent additional species from reaching endangered or threatened status.

7.) Implement appropriate legislation and rules that enable the achievement of population goals.

8.) Maintain compliance with laws and regulations related to fish, wildlife and marine resources management and protection.

9.) Undertake cooperative research projects with universities, conservation agencies and organizations when necessary to achieve population goals.

10.) Continue to develop and implement programs as resources allow, in conjunction with state and federal partners, to prevent, control, or manage invasive species that threaten native fish, wildlife, marine species and their ecosystems.

B. Fish

Protect, restore and enhance healthy aquatic ecosystems that support the full array of New Hampshire's fish communities, including both resident and migratory species.

Sustain, monitor and improve fish populations at a level providing diversified angling opportunities to multiple user groups.

Protect, restore, and enhance healthy coastal and estuarine ecosystems that support the full array of New Hampshire's marine resource communities, both resident and migratory.

Sustain, monitor, and improve marine resource populations at a level providing satisfactory and diversified harvesting and use opportunities to multiple user groups.

C. Wildlife

Species identified in Department management and recovery plans including the Big Game Plan and the Wildlife Action Plan, will continue to be the focus of management and recovery efforts as guided by their respective plans. Plans will be revised at least every ten years.

Biological and social sideboards established during game management planning will serve as the bounds for population goals. These sideboards will be revisited during plan revisions. Sociological considerations will also be taken into account in species recovery plans.

Wildlife/Human Interaction

Goal 3: New Hampshire has fish, wildlife, and marine populations that support desirable levels of hunting, trapping, fishing, and wildlife viewing. Maintain an overall high satisfaction rate among the various users of New Hampshire's fish, wildlife, and marine resources.

A. During management plan revisions, reassess as necessary desired public satisfaction as it relates to resource viewing and consumptive use. The Department will continue to pursue game population goals in an effort to satisfy public desires relative to viewing, harvest and conflict.

1.) Implement management strategies to balance public desires and biological potential.

2.) Continue to use stocking and/or population supplementation where deemed appropriate by the Department to achieve and/or restore desired population levels.

3.) At least every five years, evaluate Department efforts to provide the public with opportunities for diverse recreational activities through satisfaction, observation, and harvest data.

4.) At least every ten years, evaluate public understanding and attitudes toward Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration programs.

Goal 4: Human activities and land uses are compatible with desired population and recreational goals for fish, wildlife, and marine species and the ecosystems that sustain them.

A. Monitor large scale land and water use activities affecting fish, wildlife, and marine resources and recreational opportunities.

1.) Continue to identify environmental impacts on species and habitat and work with all interested organizations and individuals to implement resource enhancement and mitigation strategies subject to the Department authorities. Attempt to mitigate adverse impacts of land and water use activities that affect fish, wildlife, and marine resources and recreational opportunities.

2.) Continue to evaluate the processes by which the Department participates in the review of projects that have environmental impacts to ensure that criteria and procedures are in place for appropriate Department input.

3.) Oppose large scale land and water use activities that have a significant adverse impact on fish, wildlife, and marine resources and recreational opportunities.

B. Endeavor to increase the public's acceptance of a variety of interactions between people and New Hampshire's fish, wildlife

and marine species, while reducing undesirable effects on people and their property from these interactions.

1.) Continue to pursue species population levels consistent with management and recovery plans while applying localized controls as necessary to mitigate undesirable impacts on people and their property from fish, wildlife, and marine species.

2.) Through education and outreach, improve the public's capacity to avoid and/or manage wildlife conflicts.

3.) Continue to refine and implement the Department's Wildlife Control Operator program for private nuisance wildlife control agents.

4.) Continue to work cooperatively with commercial agricultural interests to mitigate wildlife conflicts.

5.) Continue to maintain a strong collaborative partnership with USDA Wildlife Services in minimizing and responding to wildlife human conflicts.

II. Public

Vision for the future: We are responsive to the people we serve. We maintain and enhance the public's access to New Hampshire's land and water resources for a wide range of activities. We instill a strong conservation ethic among residents and visitors by providing high quality information, education, and safety programs that foster understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the outdoors.

Public Access

Goal 5: Access to New Hampshire's public and private lands and waters is maintained and enhanced to provide appropriate opportunities for recreational and commercial use of the state's fish, wildlife, and marine resources.

A. Public Waters

Continue to coordinate the development of access sites on lakes and rivers with the Public Waters Access Advisory Board (PWAAB), as well as prepare a needs assessment plan to define the number of access sites needed. Work with the public, partners and the legislature to increase funding for construction, maintenance and patrolling of sites.

Continue ongoing retrofitting of access facilities with amenities for individuals with disabilities.

Reconstruct 2 to 3 boat access facilities per year which includes: Planning, Environmental Permitting, Installing concrete boat ramp, delineated parking, floating dock (where appropriate), signs, informational kiosk, and wooden stair terrace (for car top access) so that people will have a friendly safe environment.

The Department provides technical assistance to other state agencies, towns and cities that own boating access facilities for public use.

Develop and implement a plan to improve shore bank access to public water bodies through private land.

B. Public Land

Continue to invest resources to ensure that all Department lands are appropriately managed, publicized, accessible, and have suitable amenities, consistent with their ecological values and capacities.

Acquire additional lands to meet well defined objectives.

Continually generate maps and web site information regarding the location of Department lands easily available to the public.

Improve and increase access to water bodies through public land and encourage other government agencies to provide access to water bodies through their properties.

C. Private land

Continue to work with landowners to increase public access to private lands.

1.) Maximize public access to private lands beginning with lands that are in the State's Current Use program or were procured through LCIP purchases and easements. Explore additional incentives to owners to provide public access.

2.) Maintain and improve landowner partnership programs.

3.) Continue and expand efforts to encourage outdoor enthusiasts to treat private landowners and their lands with respect.

4.) Implement a program to improve the image of the outdoor enthusiast who participates in fish & wildlife related activities in the minds of private landowners and the larger public.

D. Overall

75% of survey participants are "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the access provided or facilitated by the Fish and Game Department.

The Department is making informed choices in prioritizing, designing, and siting its water access facilities.

Minimize conflicts with concerned individuals, lakes associations and abutters to public access sites.

The Department maintains cooperative relations with other State agencies relative to land and water access.

By 2020, people in search of access sites can find the information they need on the Fish and Game website or through mobile applications.

1.) Adequate roadway signage is provided to all Department managed access facilities.

2.) Update the Department's documents and/or website with public access information as needed describing location, amenities, and expectations regarding all public access facilities and continue to make it readily available to the public.

Public Input

Goal 6: The public's desires and concerns are collected, understood, and integrated into the Department and Commission's decision making.

A. Develop and implement an ongoing process for gathering and utilizing information from the public to help guide the Department and Commission's planning and decision making as well as tracking public satisfaction.

- 1.) Make available to staff and convey to Commission members comprehensive summaries or recordings of testimony from public meetings and written comment.
- 2.) Help the Commission in its two way communication with the public by ensuring that Commissioners are kept well informed about Departmental programs and activities.
- 3.) To prevent bias toward specific interest groups, conduct surveys to determine the general public's desires and satisfaction level regarding fish, wildlife, and marine resources and Department activities. At a minimum, conduct surveys every 10 years.
- 4.) Implement an ongoing process for reviewing and utilizing the best available data on pertinent sociological, economic and political trends.
- 5.) Continue to improve responsiveness to verbal, written, and electronic communication from the public on a timely basis.
- 6.) Continue to provide training for Department teams on integrating public input into the decision making process.
- 7.) Make greater effective use of the Department's decentralized regional offices to make strong local connections with the public.

Public Knowledge and Action

Goal 7: Participants in outdoor recreation activities are knowledgeable about safe, skilled, and ethical enjoyment and use of the state's fish, wildlife, and marine habitats and resources.

A. Endeavor to improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes among participants in Department sponsored outdoor recreation related educational activities.

- 1.) Evaluate Department education programs to determine knowledge, skills and attitudes. Conduct needs assessments and incorporate the needs of the public into existing education and outreach programs. Determine best assessment and evaluation tools for measuring education and outreach impact of Department education and outreach programs.
- 2.) By incorporating best practices in education programs based on literature reviews and established state and national

standards, work to improve skills, knowledge and attitudes of the public regarding the state's fish and wildlife resources.

B. Increase the number of New Hampshire residents and visitors who participate annually in one or more of the Department's outdoor recreation related educational activities.

1.) Assess current levels of participation.

2.) Participation in Department sponsored programs and activities should reflect state demographics.

3.) Where appropriate, utilize the latest technology and methods to deliver information, outreach and education opportunities to the public.

4.) Continue to enhance the Department's educational and outreach facilities that offer hands on, skill based activities.

C. Continually work to increase the number of people who annually receive outdoor recreation related information from the Department.

- Utilize alternate delivery systems and formats, such as the web site, mobile technology, online learning, social media, home study and other technologies as they become available.

Goal 8: New Hampshire residents and policy makers understand, support, and act to benefit the management of fish, wildlife and marine resources and their habitats.

A. Effectively communicate to the public about the mission, goals, funding and activities of the Fish and Game Department and the positive aspects of hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife watching, OHRV riding and other activities the Department provides or supports.

1.) Continue to foster key media relationships in television, radio and other media providing television programming and electronic media to inform the public about New Hampshire's fish, wildlife and marine resources.

2.) Continue strengthening use of mass communications techniques to reach appropriate audiences through new technologies.

3.) By 2022 implement ongoing evaluation and assessment practices to inform and revise the Department's communications strategies annually, as needed.

4.) By 2022 use internal and external evaluation techniques to strengthen the focus of Department education programs to support the Department's priorities, programs and initiatives.

5.) By 2022, develop methods to train staff in persuasion and communicating Department priorities for fish, wildlife and marine resources in the state to the public at large.

6.) Make effective use of the Department's decentralized regional offices to make strong local connections with the public.

7.) Maintain and enhance current visitor centers and consider developing new centers where appropriate as funding permits.

B. By 2022, 25 percent of New Hampshire schools will utilize Fish and Game education programs and materials focused on fish and wildlife resources that are aligned with the State Department of Education's curriculum framework.

1.) Provide high quality professional development to teachers on content and techniques that support Department education programs about the state's fish, wildlife and marine resources and the management of those resources.

2.) Review every 5 years the implementation of educational programs for diverse audiences based on the 21st Century Skills Initiative, state curriculum frameworks, common core and Best Practices in Conservation Education.

3.) To avoid duplication of effort, make programming decisions and form partnerships based on inventories of natural resource education providers and resources.

C. By 2022 increase by 25% the number of adults participating in one or more Department sponsored programs.

1.) Maintain the Department's wildlife viewing sites.

2.) Continue development of volunteer programs that teach and promote department priorities as they relate to fish and wildlife stewardship activities.

D. Continually work to increase the number of people who have received information on fish, wildlife, and marine management from the Department on an annual basis.

1.) Using all available media, provide expanded information on actions individuals can take to preserve and enhance wildlife habitat.

2.) Through internal review, research data, surveys and change initiative information, identify new audiences that impact fish, wildlife and marine resources and/or benefit from those resources. Use this information to develop positive connections with these audiences.

Enforcement and Public Safety

Goal 9: Protect the State's fish, wildlife and marine resources from unlawful exploitation.

A. Maintain compliance with fish, wildlife, and marine resource related laws to achieve desired population and recreation goals. Apprehend individuals involved in violation of wildlife regulations.

1.) Disrupt illegal activities involving commercialization of wildlife species.

2.) Increase cooperation with state and federal partners on information sharing and investigations.

3.) Provide outreach and education to the public to increase voluntary compliance with wildlife regulations.

4.) Recommend and maintain laws and regulations that are understandable, enforceable, have broad support, allow science based management plans to be effective and have adequate penalties. Effectively communicate these laws and regulations to the public.

5.) Reorganize and simplify hunting and fishing regulations where appropriate.

6.) Expand and enhance the Law Enforcement Division's covert program during peak activity times.

7.) Improve the public's ability to contact Conservation Officers during peak activity times.

Goal 10: Provide adequate enforcement and education for snow machine and Off Highway Recreational Vehicle (OHRV) users.

A. Develop and implement enhanced snow machine and OHRV details to target and apprehend irresponsible riders and illegal behaviors.

B. Continue to work with appropriate user groups, clubs, organizations, associations, Bureau of Trails, local police departments and legislators to develop safety initiatives, promote safe and responsible operation and offer adequate Responsible Rider Safety Education classes.

Goal 11: Provide search and rescue services and increase the safety of outdoor recreational activities in the state.

A. Provide cost-effective, highly trained and high quality search and rescue personnel and safety services.

1.) Partner with federal and state agencies and volunteer search and rescue organizations to implement and deliver the hikeSafe program.

2.) Effectively implement search and rescue procedures and tactics for land and underwater searches and recoveries.

3.) Continue to be an integral component of statewide search and rescue and Homeland Security organizations for planning, assessment, evaluation and allocation of resources.

4.) Communicate the importance and benefits of complying with safety related laws and regulations.

5.) Continue to provide high quality safety education through programs like Hunter Education, OHRV, HikeSafe and the Let's Go Fishing Program.

6.) Continue development and implementation of OHRV safety initiatives, prosecution of OHRV violations, and enhanced DWI detection techniques.

Public and Government Relations

Goal 12: The public, government officials, and relevant organizations understand, support, and cooperate with the Department and Commission and its activities.

A. 75% of people surveyed have a "good" or "excellent" impression of the Department and 10% of people surveyed are able to answer questions about the Department's "key messages".

1.) Develop and provide consistent key messages.

2.) Determine and utilize sources of information for target audiences and most effective media formats.

3.) Maintain and enhance relationships with local, state and regional media, the tourism community and partner organizations etc.

B. Increase the number and diversity of opportunities for volunteers to participate in Department activities.

1.) Provide a variety of volunteer activities in various divisions.

2.) Provide recognition and rewards for volunteers.

3.) Where possible and beneficial, work to coordinate volunteer efforts among divisions.

C. Increased communication with elected officials.

Public Use

Goal 13: The public makes optimal use of New Hampshire's fish, wildlife, and marine resources.

A. Develop partnerships in the state that achieve a 50% participation level in fish, wildlife, and marine resource related recreation through a variety of education and outreach activities (based on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Survey).

1.) Facilitate and manage a diversity of recreational opportunities for the public based on survey data.

2.) Provide information on how and where to take part in recreational opportunities. Foster positive images and experiences of outdoor recreational activities.

3.) Provide information to the public regarding the positive aspects of fishing, hunting, trapping, and other outdoor recreation activities.

4.) Support legislation to prohibit harassment of hunters, anglers, and trappers.

5.) Regularly evaluate efforts to provide the public with access to and opportunities for diverse recreational opportunities.

6.) Work cooperatively with other State agencies and the public sector to facilitate the appropriate use of New Hampshire's resources.

B. Increase hunting license sales.

1.) Promote and facilitate a diversity of hunting opportunities, especially for youth.

2.) Provide information on how and where to hunt.

3.) Provide skills training and outreach opportunities for people interested in hunting such as apprentice licenses as a mentoring opportunity for first time hunters.

C. Increase fishing license sales.

1.) Facilitate a diversity of fishing opportunities.

2.) Provide information on how and where to fish.

D. Increase the number of trappers above the current level of 400.

E. Increase participation of New Hampshire residents and visitors in wildlife-watching and connecting people with the outdoors. Monitor changes in participation using USFWS hunting, angling and watchable wildlife participation surveys every 5 years.

F. Where appropriate, create a system for the orderly management of non-harvest commercial ventures so that their activities do not adversely impact New Hampshire's fish, wildlife, and marine resources and their habitats (e.g. moose watching, kayak wildlife tours, etc.)

Goal 14: The public makes optimal use of Fish and Game's products and services.

A. By 2022, double the 2017 revenue from Fish and Game merchandise continually providing a line of products for sale linked to the Department and conservation, reviewing the program biannually during the budget.

III. Fish and Game Department

Vision for the future: The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department is an efficient and effective organization, staffed by highly skilled employees guided by the Department's mission, vision, and values. All divisions and employees communicate effectively and work cooperatively to achieve Department goals. Our work environment emphasizes integrity, honesty, and respect for fellow employees. Everyone's opinion is valued. Staff development programs are readily available to ensure continued growth and excellence in job performance.

Planning, Decision Making, and Implementation

Goal 15: We achieve our mission through planning, a well-defined decision making process, teamwork, and continual assessment and evaluation. Priorities are chosen and resources are allocated based on agreed upon criteria.

A. The Fish and Game Department is guided by a comprehensive strategic plan.

1.) Bring diverse interests from within and outside the Department together to attempt to develop informed consent on issues and directions for the Department.

2.) Evaluate and Update the Department strategic plan every 5 years and use the strategic plan and associated criteria as guidance in allocation of financial resources during each two year budget cycle.

3.) By July 1, 2022, complete operational plans based on the strategic plan.

4.) Evaluate and review priorities and operational plans every 2 years, congruent with the budget biennium.

5.) Continually assess and evaluate the impact of Department actions on fish, wildlife and marine resources and their habitats.

B. Department decision making is based on the best technical and professional information available, consideration of public opinion, and a broad range of input from Department staff. The Wildlife Action Plan provides a comprehensive assessment of the health of the state's wildlife and habitats and identifies strategies and actions to address threats to their condition.

1.) Maintain the Wildlife Action Plan Implementation Team to evaluate Wildlife Action Plan progress and adapt to changing conditions (e.g. climate change).

2.) Revise the Wildlife Action Plan at ten year intervals and involve stakeholders, conservation partners, and interested members of the public in its development and implementation.

3.) The Department and each division will annually assess the long and short term information needed to make decisions and develop strategies to obtain it.

4.) Gain support for the data and information gathering necessary for decision making by educating relevant audiences of its value.

C. The Department will solve problems and resolve issues through interdisciplinary teams in accordance with strategic plan values.

- The Department's leadership promotes and supports a collaborative approach to inform decisions on vision, professional management, communications, practices and human dimensions strategies; Department leadership also continually demonstrates a commitment to a team philosophy and approach.

Internal Communication

Goal 16: The Fish and Game Department has efficient and effective internal communication.

A. Continue to communicate Department and Division goals to staff at regular meetings, District Meetings and various Block training Programs.

- Every individual in the Department is informed about the Department's mission, vision, values and strategic direction, thereby each is able to communicate a consistent messages regarding important and timely topics.

B. The Commission and the Department are communicating effectively.

- Within six months of Strategic Plan adoption, develop and implement a program to foster trust, teamwork and understanding between Department personnel and the Commission, including various forums for discussion among staff and Commissioners.

C. Each division is aware of the goals, objectives, and major strategies and activities of the other Divisions within the Department.

1.) All Department Divisions continue to work cooperatively to promote Department goals and objectives.

2.) Operational plans are distributed Department wide.

3.) Publicize and invite participation in divisional and team meetings by representatives of other divisions and teams.

4.) Create a standard format for divisional and team meeting minutes and make them available throughout the Department.

Human Resources

Goal 17: The Fish and Game Department promotes employee productivity and fulfillment, provides appropriate staff development opportunities and an efficient working environment to achieve the Department's goals.

A. Develop an overall human resources plan, including a recruitment/retention plan for a diverse work force, providing opportunities for advancement.

B. The Department promotes high morale among employees.

1.) Promote a climate of open communication, fairness, trust, flexibility, and cooperation.

2.) Promote formal and informal staff recognition.

3.) Provide frequent and timely feedback on employee performance in addition to required annual performance reviews.

C. The Department's staff will participate in high quality training and professional development opportunities.

1.) Dedicate sufficient funding to staff development (**Pending additional resources becoming available**), determine staff development costs in time to be included in budget preparations.

2.) Develop and implement an orientation program for new employees.

3.) Create an agreed upon Department wide training curriculum, with initial emphasis on building team skills.

4.) Encourage each employee to develop and begin implementing an individual professional development plan.

D. Develop intra-divisional cross-training processes to promote higher productivity, a broader skill base and better understanding among Department staff.

Data Management

Goal 18: The Department has an efficient and convenient process for archiving, handling, retrieving, and sharing accurate data and information.

A. Work with the Department of Information Technology to work toward this goal as funding allows.

B. By July 2017, establish and maintain a functional storage and retrieval system for large scale plans and documents.

Financial and Other Resources

Goal 19: The Fish and Game Department has sufficient funding from a variety of sources and adequate staffing to carry out all of its statutory responsibilities, complete priority programs and projects, and maintain and manage its infrastructure, lands, buildings and fleet. The Department makes the most efficient and effective use of all of its resources.

A. Increase annual revenues to cover the costs of intensified programs, needed staff, and increasing expenses, as well as to cover the costs of routine maintenance of existing Department infrastructure and the Fish & Game fleet.

1.) Review recommendations of the Comprehensive Funding Team 1995 Report as approved by the Commission.

2.) Continue the Comprehensive Funding Team work; evaluate and update progress on an annual basis. Work with the Fish & Game Sustainability Commission set up by the Legislature.

3.) The Commissioners, Director and Division Chiefs will work to aggressively seek additional revenues.

4.) Develop funding mechanisms that provide the opportunity for all constituents benefiting from Department programs to contribute. This could include the sale of a donor license and facilitation of online contributions.

5.) Increase revenues from as many sources as possible, including, but not limited to the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative ("Teaming with Wildlife"), the Wildlife Heritage Foundation of New Hampshire. New licenses, private foundations, corporations, private donations, State funding mechanisms such as the conservation license plate and implementing the ability for online donations to the Department.

6.) Analyze the cost of administration prior to pursuing new revenue programs.

7.) Review and revise overall marketing plan.

B. Continually maintain adequate staffing levels to achieve Department goals.

C. The Fish and Game Department makes the most efficient and effective use of its financial and other resources.

1.) Budgeting will be based on the review process and priorities established by the Department's comprehensive plan.

2.) Implement a system that allows project by project cost accounting.

3.) Set up interdisciplinary teams to review administrative processes within the Department to improve efficiency. Look at Lean Process Improvement.

4.) Implement procedures to address the findings of the audit and HB671 study team.

5.) Continue to explore avenues to increase the efficiency and reduce the cost of issuing licenses and OHRV registrations.

6.) Promote reciprocal assistance and equipment sharing within and between divisions.

D. More effectively collaborate with the Department's non-profit partners.

Infrastructure

Goal 20: The Fish and Game Department develops new facilities and maintains existing facilities in a modern and attractive condition, fully compliant with all applicable safety and functional standards.

New facilities and infrastructure are carefully planned and designed to provide adequate service based on current and future needs, with minimum maintenance and efficient energy demands.

Visioning

Goal 21: Employees collaborate on visioning for the current and future Strategic Plans to improve and enhance the Department's capacity and effectiveness in fulfilling its public trust responsibilities and protecting and managing the state's fish and wildlife (strategic "thinking" as opposed to responding to the barrage of frequent unplanned changes and day to day emergencies).

A. Teams work on emerging concerns and issues.

1.) Adapting to Change processes are integrated into future planning.

2.) Engage stakeholders in the Department's strategic vision process.

3.) Support, track, provide metrics to confirm strategic plan goals are being met or, if not, what and where there are problems.