

Wildlife 2012

The Arizona Game and Fish Department's Strategic Plan for the Years 2007–2012



**Arizona Game and Fish Department
2221 West Greenway Road
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Disclaimers

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Preface

This strategic plan, *Wildlife 2012*, identifies the management direction that the Arizona Game and Fish Commission has provided to the Department for the next six years. The plan discusses the most important issues facing the Department, including the recruitment and retention of hunters, anglers and shooting sports participants, and explains how the Department plans to respond to those issues.

This plan is built around four “strategic themes.” Under each theme, one or more topics are discussed. For each topic, this plan identifies strategic issues affecting that topic, and goals, objectives and strategies to address the strategic issues. The strategic themes are central to this plan. They will become the driving force behind the Department’s operational plans and implementation plans.

Prior strategic plans focused on just one of the programmatic areas for which the Department is responsible; for example, *Wildlife 2006* was solely a wildlife strategic plan. In contrast, *Wildlife 2012* provides strategic guidance for all programs within the Arizona Game and Fish Department. It emphasizes wildlife management, which is the Department’s primary focus. However, *Wildlife 2012* also addresses off-highway vehicle and watercraft recreation beyond their impacts to wildlife resources, as well as the administration of the Department.

Previous strategic plans were detailed, down to the level of day-to-day Department operations. In contrast, *Wildlife 2012* has a broader more strategic perspective. We developed the plan this way to make it more accessible to the public, believing that people are more likely to get involved in the planning process if the plan itself is more user-friendly. The day-to-day details will not be lost, but will instead be described in operational and implementation plans. The Department develops biennial budgets and operational plans that will focus on stepping down from the strategic plan to the actual budget cycle, and implementation plans that will focus on more immediate priorities (tiered from the operational plans).

Public involvement in the development of *Wildlife 2012* is important. Everyone has a stake in the continued health and diversity of wildlife populations and a role to play in ensuring wildlife for tomorrow. At the same time, the Department desires to convey both the short- and long-term nature of the Department’s mission to the public, including the conflicts inherent in managing resources for a public that is diverse in its needs and desires.

The following constituents were invited to participate in the development of this strategic plan: the general public; private landowners; hunters, anglers, off-highway vehicle enthusiasts, and boaters; conservationists and wildlife conservation associations and organizations; state, federal, regional and local governments; fishing, hunting and shooting sport manufacturers; and employees of the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

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Organizing Principles

Introduction

To understand the environment within which *Wildlife 2012* will be implemented, it is important to understand the Department's statutory authority, mission and vision, as well as the principles that guide the Department's work. This section also includes a brief profile of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the organization charged with carrying out *Wildlife 2012*.

The Department has a long tradition of providing recreational opportunities for the hunting and angling public and supporting other types of wildlife recreation. We also have a rich and successful history of wildlife conservation. Recreational use of watercraft and off-highway vehicles continues to increase in Arizona, and the Department is committed to encouraging safe and responsible use of these vehicles. We maintain and enhance programs for conservation of wildlife resources, and for hunters, anglers, wildlife watchers, photographers and other recreational users of wildlife and for all of those who take pleasure in enjoying that wildlife exists.

Statutory Authorities

The Department has statutory authorities related to wildlife, watercraft, and off-highway vehicles.

Wildlife: Arizona Revised Statutes Title 17 directs the responsibility for maintenance and management of the state's wildlife resources to the Commission and Department.

A.R.S. 17-102: Most wildlife in Arizona is the property of the state.

A.R.S. 17-231: Through the Commission, the Department may:

- Establish policies and programs for the management, preservation and harvest of wildlife.
- Establish hunting, trapping and fishing rules and prescribe the manner and methods that may be used in taking wildlife.
- Enforce laws for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat.
- Develop and distribute information about wildlife and activities of the Department.

Watercraft: Arizona Revised Statutes Title 5-311 directs the responsibility for watercraft recreation, safety and enforcement to the Commission. Through the Commission, the Department may:

- Make rules and regulations required to carry out in the most effective manner all the provisions of this chapter.
- Administer the law enforcement and boating safety program on the state level, and accept federal grants for the purpose of boating safety and related enforcement.

Off-highway Vehicles: Arizona Revised Statutes Title 28-1176 establishes the Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Fund, which is apportioned between the Department and Arizona State Parks Department. With its portion of the fund, the Department shall:

- Provide an informational and educational program on off-highway vehicle recreation and law enforcement activities relating to state off-highway vehicle laws and enforcement to protect wildlife habitat (A.R.S. Title 17 Article 4).

Mission

To conserve, enhance, and restore Arizona's diverse wildlife resources and habitats through aggressive protection and management programs and to provide wildlife resources and safe watercraft and off-highway vehicle recreation for the enjoyment, appreciation and use by present and future generations.

Vision

Recognized and respected as *the* leader in progressive management and professional stewardship of wildlife for tomorrow.

Principles

We are an organization dedicated to excellence. The culture of the Arizona Game and Fish Department is one of stewardship, scientific integrity, continuous improvement, teamwork, and partnerships. This culture is supported by our core values, which guide our behaviors and decisions:

- Trust
- Reliability
- Empowerment
- Accountability
- Respect
- Civility

The Department also recognizes and promotes the following principles:

- We are responsive to our customers: We strive to provide courteous and efficient service to the public and each other.
- We are one Department: We are integrated and work together as a team with a common mission, mutual respect and professionalism.
- We rely on sound information to make decisions: We apply the best methods available to develop biological, social and economic data to achieve our mission.
- We build successful and productive partnerships: We understand that wildlife conservation and recreation; and watercraft and off-highway vehicle recreation are but a few of the activities of an intensively committed landscape, and we will strive to recognize their rightful place in the multiple use ethic that drives public lands management.
- We keep the public informed and involved: We engage in dialogue and seek public input to develop and to encourage participation in programs and services.
- We foster strong, effective leaders: We develop leaders who are committed to excellence in all aspects of their work.
- We value employees: We foster a safe and creative work environment where all employees have an opportunity to reach their full potential.

Profile

Introduction

Arizona Game and Fish Commission

The Department carries out its mandates under the direction of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. The Commission meets in accordance with public meeting laws. During Commission meetings, public comment is taken. The Governor appoints the five-member Commission to staggered five-year terms, with Senate approval. The Department's Director is appointed by and reports to the Commission.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department

The Department is part of the executive branch of Arizona state government. State law mandates that the Department protect Arizona's wildlife resources, regulate watercraft use and enforce OHV laws. We do this by implementing rules and policies; developing cooperative partnerships (throughout this strategic plan the term partners and partnerships refers to private individuals, for profit and non-profit organizations, and all political subdivisions and agencies within and adjacent to Arizona's borders); taking actions to conserve, preserve, manage and enjoy wildlife; and enforcing laws that protect wildlife, public health and safety.

Wildlife and habitat cross many boundaries and political subdivisions. To influence regional management of wildlife the Department is an active member of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Management, and works in cooperation with other States and Nations. Department staff are involved with national programs such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies (Wildlife Action) Plan to shape management decisions outside of Arizona's political boundaries that can impact Arizona's wildlife resources and habitat.

General Responsibilities

Through the Commission the Department is responsible for:

- Developing partnerships and advising partners and the public on laws, rules and policies that affect wildlife, and off-highway vehicle and watercraft recreation
- Working with partners to improve and preserve wildlife habitat, minimize impacts to wildlife resources, and promote safe and responsible OHV and watercraft recreation
- The recruitment and retention of hunters, anglers and shooting sports participants.
- Informing and educating the public about their wildlife resources, wildlife-associated recreation and off-highway vehicle and watercraft recreation
- Collecting and making management decisions based on species and population data
- Collecting, interpreting and using data on public participation, values and opinion
- Enforcing wildlife, off-highway vehicle and watercraft laws
- Developing and providing access for wildlife-associated and watercraft recreation
- Regulating wildlife management and recreation activities
- Managing wildlife populations, including enhancing, stocking and restoring populations
- Helping the public minimize conflicts with wildlife
- Administering the sales of hunting and fishing licenses and watercraft registrations
- Managing wildlife areas, fish hatcheries and other facilities

- Administering grant programs whereby government agencies can compete for funds to finance eligible projects
- Managing public funds responsibly

Department Organizational Structure

The Department has four divisions that, along with the Director's Office, work to accomplish the Department's mission.

Field Operations Division (FOD) is comprised of six regional offices, the Law Enforcement Branch and aviation support. The division implements program objectives that pertain to wildlife resource and habitat management, watercraft and OHV activities, including outreach and education. The regional offices are located in Pinetop, Flagstaff, Kingman, Yuma, Tucson and Mesa.

Wildlife Management Division (WMD) is comprised of the Fisheries, Game, Habitat, Nongame and Research branches. This division supplies program direction and provides assistance for the Department's wildlife programs. When developing wildlife management programs, the division considers the management history of the state's wildlife resources, the current and future needs of the resources and public, the effects of a rapidly expanding and outdoor-using human population on wildlife and wildlife habitat, and the necessity of sound scientific techniques to facilitate obtaining the data needed to manage the variety of wildlife found in Arizona.

The Information and Education Division (IED) has two branches. The Information Branch is responsible for all aspects of public communication, license sales, media relations and one-to-one customer communication; primary communication vehicles include a bimonthly magazine, 13-week television series and the Department Web site, azgfd.gov. The Education Branch is responsible for all aspects of public and environmental education, including the coordination of classes in hunting, fishing, shooting sports and boating safety. Education Branch also coordinates the Department's hunter recruitment and retention efforts. The division operates and assists shooting ranges statewide as part of its responsibility to promote the safe and responsible use of firearms, and produces K-12 curriculum and provides instructor resources to educate Arizona youth and adults about wildlife, wildlife habitats and wildlife management.

The Special Services Division is comprised of four branches: Development, Finance and Accounting, Information Systems and Support Services. The Development Branch is primarily responsible for managing programs for water development, habitat improvement and maintenance, boating access and improving public access to state, federal, and private lands for recreational opportunities. The Finance and Accounting Branch provides finance and accounting support, provides financial and cost statements, oversees watercraft registration, license dealers and big-game draws. The Information Systems Branch provides data processing capabilities, including systems analysis and design. In addition, they also provide support for the Department's computers, phone systems, and network connections to a variety of agencies on a statewide basis. The Support Services Branch is responsible for procuring goods and services, maintaining the Department's vehicles, disposing of surplus property and providing warehousing and mail and courier services.

Key Areas of Emphasis

Introduction

The Department's activities fall under four key areas of emphasis. The first three correspond to the Department's statutory authorities to manage wildlife, watercraft and off-highway vehicles. The fourth, business administration, is derived from the Department's authority to operate as a unit of state government.

Key Area of Emphasis: Wildlife Program

The goals of our wildlife management program are: to conserve and preserve wildlife populations and habitats; to provide compatible public uses, while avoiding adverse impacts to habitat; and to promote public health and safety; and to increase public awareness and understanding of wildlife resources. Wildlife means all wild mammals, wild birds and their nest or eggs, reptiles, amphibians, mollusks, crustaceans, and fish, including their eggs or spawn. Wildlife management is funded through fees charged to hunters, anglers and trappers for licenses, permits, stamps and tags, a federal excise tax on hunting and fishing equipment, Arizona state lottery (Heritage Fund), tribal gaming (Wildlife Conservation Fund), a federal program for State Wildlife Grants; nongame wildlife state income tax checkoff and other sources. The wildlife management program is divided into three subprograms: game management, nongame management and sportfish management.

Game Management Subprogram

The purpose of the Game Management subprogram is to protect, restore and manage game populations and their habitats to maintain the natural diversity of Arizona, and to provide wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities for present and future generations. This includes big game, small game, fur-bearing animals, predatory animals, upland game birds and migratory game birds. This subprogram's projects include game management (administration, general game management, habitat management and translocations), game survey (population sampling, survey, census and estimation), and hunter survey (harvest questionnaire, responsive management and harvest checks).

Nongame Management Subprogram

The purpose of the Nongame Management subprogram is to protect, restore, preserve and maintain nongame and endangered wildlife as part of the natural diversity of Arizona and to provide opportunities for the public to enjoy nongame and endangered wildlife without detriment to those resources. "Nongame wildlife" is all wildlife except game mammals, game birds, furbearing animals, predatory animals and game fish. "Endangered wildlife," are those species listed by the Department as Tier 1a of *Species of Greatest Conservation Need* or by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as endangered, threatened, or a candidate for such status. This subprogram's projects are: crustaceans and mollusks, birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles, native fishes, urban and support (GIS and Statistical/Planning).

Sportfish Management Subprogram

The purpose of the Sportfish Management subprogram is to protect and manage sportfish populations and their habitats, while also working to preserve the natural diversity of Arizona. Sportfish management also provides fishing opportunities for present and future

generations. “Sportfish” means fish that are pursued by anglers, including cold-water fish (such as trout) and warm-water fish (such as largemouth bass). The Department also maintains water quality staff to help ensure the quality of our fishing waters. This subprogram’s jobs include sportfish investigation (limnology, fish surveys and angler creel), sportfish management (administration, habitat management, fish stocking, angler access, education and outreach), water quality, hatchery management, and urban fishing.

Key Area of Emphasis: Off-highway Vehicle Program

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is the primary OHV law enforcement, education and training agency for the state. Its purpose is to manage OHVs in a manner that protects Arizona’s wildlife and wildlife resources, to educate people about responsible and ethical OHV use opportunities, to facilitate OHV recreation and to promote safe, responsible and ethical OHV use. To accomplish these, the Department concentrates on public information and education, law enforcement, and habitat damage assessment. The Department relies on the OHV Recreation Fund, administered jointly between the Department and Arizona State Parks, to accomplish these diverse OHV efforts statewide.

Key Area of Emphasis: Watercraft Program

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is the primary coordinating watercraft law enforcement and boating safety agency for the state of Arizona. The watercraft program’s purpose is to educate the boating public about safe use, facilitate watercraft recreation and promote safe and responsible watercraft recreation. To accomplish these, the Department enforces watercraft laws, maintains aids to navigation, registers watercraft, and provides information materials and education opportunities to the public. The Department relies primarily on watercraft registration fees and U.S. Coast Guard grant funding for these activities.

Key Area of Emphasis: Business Administration Program

The Business Administration Program supports the financial, physical, and information systems infrastructure that allows the Department to accomplish its many goals. This program includes specific processes, strategies and objectives for the systematic management of the Department’s financial and physical assets (facilities, information systems, infrastructure support, etc.), human resources and outreach and marketing efforts. Business administration supports the entire Department, and as such is funded through all the Department’s funding sources.

Arizona's Environment

It is important to understand the current natural and societal environments in Arizona to direct future management actions.

Wildlife

Arizona has a rich biological diversity of wildlife and wildlife habitats, ranking in the top five states in the nation for the number of native bird, reptile, and mammal species, and in the top ten for overall diversity of vertebrates. Many animals have been present for a long period of time, while others have only appeared in recent years. Some of the newly arrived species were established intentionally as is the case with rainbow trout, while others have arrived as unwelcome or invasive species, and yet others appeared as they expanded their range. Some are forever gone, as they are extinct. Others, like the Mexican gray wolf, were once extirpated but are being re-established through aggressive reintroduction programs, and some are unlikely to ever return due to loss of suitable habitat. The numbers below reflect the total number of species that can potentially be found in Arizona, including transient, casual, and rare species that occur unpredictably. Non-native species that are not established and do not regularly breed in the state are not included, such as Barbary sheep and feral hogs. With the exception of mollusks and crustaceans, invertebrates are also excluded.

<u>Taxonomic Group</u>	<u>Total # of Species (Not Including Subspecies)</u>
Amphibians	29
Birds	534
Fish	69
Mammals	140
Mollusks & Crustaceans	83
Reptiles	<u>112</u>
Total:	967

The Department sometimes manages these wildlife resources at the sub-species levels. The numbers below reflect the total number of both species and sub-species that are effectively managed in Arizona. Resident nonnative species are included, but again species that occur unpredictably are not. Thus the number of bird species that the Department manages is far fewer than the total number that have been found in Arizona, and the number of amphibians listed below is greater than the total species numbers because some are managed at the subspecies level.

<u>Taxonomic Group</u>	<u>Total # (Including Subspecies)</u>
Amphibians	32
Birds	297
Fish	72
Mammals	164
Mollusks & Crustaceans	86
Reptiles	<u>145</u>
Totals	796*

More information on Arizona's wildlife resources can be found on the Department website, azgfd.gov, and in the Department's "Arizona Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) 2005–2015." The CWCS provides a vision for managing Arizona's wildlife and natural habitats, with its primary focus on identifying and managing the "wildlife and biotic communities of greatest conservation need."

Each of these species has specific habitat needs—shelter or cover, food and water, and materials and locations for nesting or raising young. Some species require very specific conditions that exist in only a few localized sites (for example, springsnails with narrow tolerances of spring water quality). Other species are more generalists, existing in or ranging across a variety of habitats (for example, coyotes, which are found statewide). Some wildlife species, like migratory birds and bats, change their habitat requirements depending on season or life history stages. Taken all together, Arizona's wildlife depends on many resources at different scales in both space and time.

Habitat

The state of Arizona contains approximately 73 million acres with a large range of topographic and geologic diversity. Elevations range from about 75 feet above sea level (near Yuma) to 12,643 feet (San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff). Generally, elevation increases moving from west to east and from south to north. Precipitation ranges from less than 3 inches to over 30 inches per year depending on elevation and location.

Variability in climates, elevations, landforms, vegetation communities, watercourses and soil types creates many different environments throughout Arizona. These environments range from the hot, dry deserts of southern Arizona, through grasslands and woodlands in mid-elevations, to the cold, moist, montane and alpine forest environments in the higher elevations.

For planning purposes, the Department classifies these environments into six ecoregions. Ecoregions are wide, regional collections of species and the resources upon which they depend. Ecoregions are an ideal scale for broad conservation efforts. Throughout Arizona, aquatic systems and associated riparian areas play a major role in maintaining biodiversity. Riparian communities along rivers, streams and lakeshores provide wildlife with vital travel corridors. All in all, the complexity of the Arizona landscape creates many habitats that support some of the most diverse wildlife communities in the United States.

The Commission and Department have management authority for the wildlife of the state, but share the management responsibility for wildlife habitat with many partners. A multitude of state, federal, tribal and local agencies and private landowners manage Arizona's land areas. Arizona also shares a border with the states of California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado, and an international border with Mexico. Wildlife populations obviously do not recognize these political boundaries. The Department therefore partners with these entities on wildlife, land and water management projects on lands that they administer.

Trends Affecting Wildlife

Although Arizona supports a tremendous diversity of wildlife, it faces a variety of challenges and opportunities for wildlife conservation.

Arizona's growing human population presents significant challenges to wildlife management. For the past two decades, population growth in Arizona has been among the highest in the nation, increasing 40 percent from 3.6 to 5.1 million between 1990 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). Using data from 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that Arizona's population will exceed 9.5 million residents by the year 2025. While the desert urban centers of Phoenix and Tucson continue to expand, development is also increasing rapidly in what are now rural areas.

This growth presents a number of challenges to the Department's Mission, including:

- Habitat loss due to development
- Habitat fragmentation and degradation from networks of roads and utility lines
- Diminished or prohibited access to public and private lands
- Water quantity and quality issues
- Increased demand for already limited water resources and diminished availability of water
- Introduction of non-native plants and animals
- Increased and diversified recreational demands

In addition to population growth, the demographics of Arizona are changing. Attitudes and perceptions among residents relating to wildlife management and wildlife, OHV and watercraft recreation are changing, too. Monitoring changes in public opinion allows the Department to predict, plan for and better serve constituent desires.

Periodic drought is a normal component of Arizona's climate. Arizona has experienced drier than normal conditions for the past several years, and some climatologists expect this condition to continue for the next several years (the life of this strategic plan). Dry conditions affect wildlife, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities through various means. Dry conditions can increase species' competition for limited water resources; increase the susceptibility of forests to insect outbreaks and pathogens; decrease the abundance of wildlife; increase the possibility of large-scale wildfires; and leave boat ramps above the water's edge reducing recreational opportunities. Climate changes and weather conditions present unique challenges for wildlife management planning because predicting their occurrences is uncertain. However, the known and likely effects of these events are understood and have been incorporated into management and policy plans.

Strategic Themes

Introduction

In this plan we identify four broad “strategic themes” that help organize and manage the challenges of accomplishing the Department’s mission. Within each theme are one or more specific topics for which the Department has identified strategic issues, goals, objectives and strategies.

The four themes, and the specific topics within each theme, are:

- Wildlife (resource management, recreation)
- People (public awareness, support and involvement; customer diversity; partnerships)
- Business Management (financial services, physical assets and process management)
- Staff (human resources)

Strategic Theme: Wildlife

(Topics: Resource Management, Recreation)

1. Strategic Issues Affecting Resource Management

Arizona’s varied habitats support a great diversity of wildlife. However, direct loss, fragmentation and continued threats to the health and diversity of these habitats through development associated with population growth, introduction and expansion of invasive species, increased demands from the public, wildland fires, habitat damage caused by illegal immigration traffic, homeland security efforts and long-term drought create challenges for the Department’s wildlife management efforts.

Resource Management Goal

Conserve, preserve, enhance and restore wildlife populations and their habitats.

Resource Management Objectives

Within the next six years:

1. Conserve, preserve, enhance and restore Arizona’s wildlife habitat and resources while balancing resource needs with recreational and multiple use.
2. Maintain or improve the quality and connectivity of habitats to support a diversity of wildlife species.
3. Minimize the negative impacts of invasive species on wildlife and their habitats.
4. Improve the status of wildlife listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need.
5. Provide sustainable use of wildlife by people.

Resource Management Strategies

- Assess the status of wildlife populations, habitats and resources to help prioritize wildlife management programs and activities.
- Establish guidelines for the management of wildlife populations and their habitats that balance the uses of lands and waters of Arizona with the values of the public to ensure sustainability of wildlife populations.

- Use available and develop new tools and resources to conserve and preserve wildlife habitats and populations.
- Collect and analyze scientific information for use in decision-making.
- Coordinate with partners to manage wildlife populations and their habitats.
- Manage wildlife with consideration of social and economic factors.

2. Strategic Issues Affecting Recreation

Arizona's human population has been increasing at a far greater rate than the national average. This growth is likely to continue throughout the life of this strategic plan. A growing human population places increasing demands on wildlife populations, in part because of shrinking wildlife habitat due to human development. Increasing human population and decreasing wildlife habitat also result in loss of areas in which to recreate, concentrate human activity in existing recreation areas, increase human-wildlife conflicts, increase density of watercraft and off-highway vehicles, and may reduce the quality of habitat available for wildlife as a result of these competing uses.

Arizona's increasing human population is more urban and less rural. Perceptions among residents regarding traditional uses of wildlife differ. Although Arizona's population is increasing, the number of licenses sold has remained relatively stable over the past few years. In order to ensure the future viability of these activities, it is essential to recruit new and retain existing hunters, anglers and shooting sports participants. In addition, assessing the desires of Arizona's diverse human population is essential to implementing appropriate management direction.

The increasing use of recreational vehicles like watercraft and off-highway vehicles often results in conflicts among user groups and requires balance between recreational management and protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat. Compliance with regulations becomes a greater challenge as recreational participants increase and often compete for limited space and resources. Increased emphasis must be placed on human safety, not only in recreational situations, but also in human-wildlife conflicts in both rural and urban areas. Educational efforts must address all Arizonans and target diverse user groups to provide the necessary information to ensure compliance, reduce conflicts among users and with wildlife, and encourage sustainable enjoyment of Arizona's diverse wildlife resources.

The demand for access to public and State Trust lands for recreation has increased. About 18 percent of Arizona is privately owned and these lands can provide recreational opportunities and access into public and State Trust lands. However, as more Arizona landowners exercise their right to deny access to or through their private lands, access to public and State Trust lands has become difficult. Many times, collaboration with private landowners results in improved wildlife habitat in exchange for short-term or perpetual access agreements. These efforts must continue to address the underlying reasons for denial of public access, such as vandalism, trespassing, littering, off-road activities, disruption of landowner operations, liability, undocumented immigrants and drug trafficking.

Recreation Goals

Increase the opportunity for the public to enjoy Arizona's wildlife resources and the shooting sports and to use off-highway vehicles and watercraft responsibly, while maintaining and

improving wildlife resources. In addition, address the underlying reasons for denial of public access across private lands by providing technical and financial assistance to private landowners.

Recreation Objectives

Within the next six years:

1. Increase opportunities for use and enjoyment of wildlife.
2. Increase participation in wildlife-oriented recreational activities and the shooting sports.
3. Provide public access across private lands.
4. Encourage continued compliance with regulations governing wildlife, watercraft, OHV and shooting sports recreational activities.
5. Promote public safety during wildlife, watercraft, OHV and shooting sports recreation activities.
6. Improve the quality of the OHV recreational use experience.

Recreation Strategies

- Identify, assess, develop and promote recreational uses of wildlife in Arizona.
- Implement efforts to increase hunter and angler recruitment and retention.
- Develop and maintain statewide shooting ranges.
- Identify, assess, develop and promote watchable wildlife recreational opportunities.
- Develop and maintain strong partnerships with private landowners and land management agencies to increase recreation opportunities.
- Provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners for wildlife habitat improvements in exchange for short-term or perpetual access agreements.
- Inform and educate the public on factors influencing recreational opportunity and public access across private lands.
- Inform and educate the public on responsible recreational use, including impacts on wildlife resources, courtesy toward other recreationists and respect for private property rights.
- Minimize obstacles that prevent diverse publics from participating in wildlife-oriented recreational activities.

Strategic Theme: People

(Topics: Public Awareness, Support and Involvement; Customer Diversity; Partnerships)

1. Strategic Issues Affecting Public Awareness, Support and Involvement

An informed and educated public can better participate in decisions that affect wildlife and choices related to safe, responsible and ethical uses of watercraft and OHV. Public and partner involvement in Department policy and decision-making processes can be enhanced by providing accurate information to the public and partners in a variety of formats. The Department will maintain robust efforts to provide all segments of the public with opportunities to participate in programs, services and decision-making.

The Department will continue to pursue ways to integrate wildlife information, environmental education; and safe, responsible and ethical use of watercraft and OHV messages into public education. Partnerships with civic groups, the private sector and educational institutions will help

the Department reach new constituent groups, and the use of new communications technology will improve customer access to this information.

Public Awareness, Support and Involvement Goal

Maintain an informed and supportive public that recognizes its ownership and stewardship responsibilities for wildlife resources and helps to disseminate and act upon watercraft safety and responsible OHV use messages.

Public Awareness, Support and Involvement Objectives

Within the next six years:

1. Increase the percentage of the public that identifies the Department as the state agency responsible for wildlife management in Arizona.
2. Promote the widespread use of the *Focus Wild Arizona* environmental education curriculum in public, private, charter and home schools.
3. Improve media and e-newsletter communication.
4. Increase participation in hunter education, aquatic education, boating safety education and shooting sports programs.
5. Increase public awareness of the need for safe, responsible and ethical watercraft and OHV use.
6. The Department will continue to work with interested user groups and agencies to protect existing funding and acquire new funding sources dedicated to promoting and enhancing safe and responsible OHV use.
7. Increase the use of volunteers.
8. Increase public awareness and support of the North American Model of wildlife management. The North American Model asserts that wildlife is held in public trust – not owned by any one person or entity, regardless of whether the animal is on public or private land or water. Professionals manage wildlife based on the overall public good.

Public Awareness, Support and Involvement Strategies

- Create a broader range of venues for public participation in Department management direction.
- Publicize and actively market use of the *Focus Wild Arizona* curriculum through use of the Web and other communication techniques.
- Expand public awareness and acceptance of the shooting sports as a leadership and recreation opportunity for young people.
- Expand informational, educational, and interpretive outreach opportunities to culturally, economically and ethnically diverse constituencies.
- Increase the recruitment and retention of hunters, anglers, shooting sports participants and volunteers.
- Use a wide variety of techniques to communicate more effectively with OHV and watercraft groups to promote safe, responsible and ethical use.
- Provide additional Hunter Education training options.
- Expand operating under the influence (OUI) watercraft enforcement efforts

2. Strategic Issues Affecting Customer Diversity

Providing opportunities for people to learn outdoor skills and participate in wildlife recreational activities helps build new and supportive relationships. These relationships will be critical to the

future of the Department. Creating opportunities to reach out to culturally, economically and ethnically diverse audiences is important to increasing participation in wildlife activities. The Department must seek to discover the interests and address the needs of a changing Arizona population.

Customer Diversity Goal

Increase customer diversity to better reflect the demographics of Arizona.

Customer Diversity Objective

1. Increase the diversity of Department customers (culture, ethnicity, sex, age, income and ability).

Customer Diversity Strategies

- Identify the wildlife, watercraft and OHV-related education or service needs and desires of the public.
- Identify underrepresented groups and develop programs to increase their participation in or understanding of the Department's services and wildlife management mission.
- Establish and maintain partnerships with a broad range of organizations.
- Increase the number of classes, communication or other services provided to underrepresented or minority communities.

3. Strategic Issues Affecting Partnerships

Private landowners, other state agencies, the federal government and tribal nations are the primary land managers in Arizona. The Department manages less than 0.5 percent of Arizona's land base. Thus, partnerships with land managers are crucial to ensuring protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats. The Department also partners with private individuals, for profit and not for profit organizations, and political subdivisions to cooperatively work to conserve, preserve, maintain or enhance Arizona's wildlife habitat and resources.

Partnerships Goal

Maintain and develop effective partnerships that enable the Department and its partners to reach mutual goals.

Partnerships Objectives

Within the next six years:

1. Enhance the Department's ability to manage wildlife resources and promote responsible OHV and watercraft recreation through partnerships.

Partnerships Strategies

- Identify common wildlife interests and goals of current and potential partners.
- Effectively communicate the Department's goals to partners.
- Develop new and maintain effective partnerships
- Establish partnerships to promote research and management actions needed to support wildlife resources and stable wildlife, and responsible watercraft and OHV recreation.

Strategic Theme: Business Management

(Topics: Financial Services, Physical Assets)

1. Strategic Issues Affecting Financial Services

The Department is not a general fund agency, although the State Legislature still appropriates certain Department funds. The Department receives funding from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, tags, and stamps. The Sportfish and Wildlife Restoration funds are derived from an excise tax on certain hunting, shooting, fishing and watercraft products. Other federal funds such as State Wildlife Grants and federal contracts also provide substantial funding for Department activities. Funds are also provided through the Arizona State Lottery (Heritage Fund), Tribal Gaming (Wildlife Conservation Fund), watercraft registrations, private donations and Arizona Income Tax Check-off, and a gas tax that funds some of the Department's OHV management efforts. However, the cost of administering the agency and funding its activities continually increases. The cost of postage, vehicle fuels, and employee-related benefits (such as health insurance and retirement contributions) is expected to increase over the life of this plan. Therefore, a leading objective of the Department is continued growth of its revenue base to meet public expectations for services.

Financial Services Goal

Attain and maintain the Department's financial stability commensurate with needs.

Financial Services Objectives

1. Enhance the Department's annual financial base
2. Ensure that budget/planning management information is prepared and systematically monitored to ensure compliance with federal and state statutes and regulations.
3. Maintain appropriate flexibility in managing financial resources.
4. Develop and implement a cost accounting system that meets Department management needs.
5. Increase public and partner understanding of the Department's budget process.

Financial Services Strategies

- Update and maintain financial and planning management systems to ensure funds are available to sustain planned activities and provide the agility to address unexpected opportunities or new priorities.
- Develop and monitor short-term (less than two years out) and long-term (four years out) spending plans aligned with the Department's strategic plan.
- Administer and revise as necessary the Department's fiscal/budget policies, procedures and business processes.
- Utilize the Department's three-tiered planning processes to enhance management of the Department.
- Provide management with timely, consistent, uniform and accurate financial reports to assist in effective management decisions.
- Find significant new funding mechanisms.
- Inform the public and partners on how the Department's budget is developed and the budget approval process.

2. Strategic Issues Affecting General Services

As of 2006, the Department maintained more than 270 facilities within its building and infrastructure system across the state, totaling over 542,000 square feet. Facilities range in age and type from historic structures constructed in the 1930s to newly built residences and operational facilities at the Department's fish hatcheries. Estimated replacement costs exceed \$47 million.

It is critical that the Department develops and executes a comprehensive cyclic maintenance program that includes scheduled replacement or renovation of major building systems and other infrastructure components, preserving the overall value of these assets, circumventing costly repairs and maintaining the useful life of facilities.

The Department values excellence in customer service, and strives to provide customers with ever-increasing quality in both products and services. This includes ensuring continuous service to critical customers and outreach efforts to better promote current programs, while developing new products and services to meet changing customer preferences.

Physical Assets Goal

Achieve a well-developed technical and administrative support structure that provides quality, responsive service to internal and external customers.

General Services Objectives

1. Ensure cost-effective and timely maintenance of the Department's facilities.
2. Complete construction of new headquarters.
3. Sustain and improve internal and external business functions.
4. Improve efficiency and delivery of customer services.

General Services Strategies

- Optimize the use of iPlan, the state's Web-based strategic planning tool, to capture and manage a detailed account of facility and building conditions to support short- and long-term capital improvement planning and scheduled maintenance and renewal projects.
- Implement capital investment opportunities to increase energy efficiency, improve accessibility and enhance health and safety.
- Conduct efficiency reviews and best practices evaluation of internal and external programs and implement strategies that will confer efficiency and value.
- Invest in technology (such as motorpool and information systems) to upgrade the infrastructure to provide support to internal and external customer services.

Strategic Theme: Staff

(Topics: Human Resources)

1. Strategic Issues Affecting Human Resources

Arizona's population has been increasing at a rate above the national average. This growth has resulted in continued urbanization and significant changes in the overall demographics of the state. The Department's mission and values demand a professional and well-trained work force that reflects the diversity of Arizona. Although the Department has traditionally had a low

turnover rate, many of the Department's leaders are expected to retire in the next several years. Turnover at all levels of the Department's work force is also increasing.

Human Resources Goal

A diverse, satisfied and highly effective work force that is recognized for its integrity and professional expertise.

Human Resources Objectives

1. Increase diversity of the workforce.
2. Develop and maintain a satisfied and highly motivated work force
3. Ensure leadership continuity.
4. Maintain a competent and well-trained work force.

Human Resources Strategies

- Revise and implement the Department's diversity plan with emphasis on developing mentoring programs and partnerships with schools to increase awareness of natural resources career opportunities to underrepresented groups.
- Continue to provide diversity awareness training to new employees and develop supervisory training that fosters understanding of and commitment to the value of a diverse work force.
- Address pay issues, by seeking market-based compensation for all employees.
- Provide training that incorporates core competencies to ensure leadership continuity.
- Increase the use of volunteers.
- Develop and implement a systematic approach to leadership skills and attitude development, including an employee-mentoring program.
- Recognize employees for their contributions throughout the year.
- Improve recruitment strategies.

Comment Instructions and Form

Comment on this Wildlife Strategic Plan may be submitted on this form to the Arizona Game and Fish Department at any time, via mail, fax, or e-mail to:

Wildlife 2012, c/o Funds & Planning
Arizona Game and Fish Department
2221 West Greenway Road
Phoenix, Arizona 85023-4399

Phone: (602) 789-3500
Fax: (602) 789-3926
E-mail: Wildlife 2012 Plan

Comment may also be submitted in a separate document

Comment:

Please keep my name on the Department's Strategic Plan mailing list.

Please remove my name from the Department's Strategic Planning mailing list.

Name:

Title:

Agency/Organization:

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip: