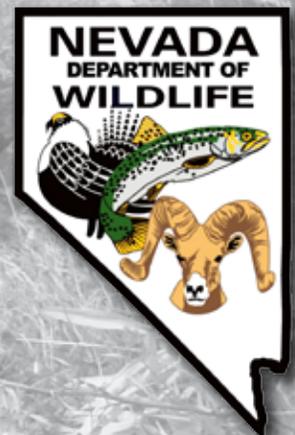


NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE



ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012



2012 ANNUAL REPORT
July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

The Nevada Department of Wildlife

The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) is the state agency responsible for the restoration and management of fish and wildlife resources, and the promotion of boating safety on Nevada's waters.

NDOW is organized into seven divisions (Conservation Education, Fisheries, Game, Habitat, Law Enforcement, Operations and Wildlife Diversity divisions) that develop and manage programs and projects, and three regions (Eastern, Southern and Western) that implement these programs.

The Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners, a 9-member, governor-appointed board, is responsible for establishing broad policy, setting annual and permanent regulations, reviewing budgets, and receiving input on wildlife and boating matters from entities such as the 17 County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife.

Mission

The Nevada Department of Wildlife protects, preserves, manages and restores wildlife and its habitat for its aesthetic, scientific, educational, recreational, and economic benefits to citizens of Nevada and the United States, and promotes the safety of persons using vessels on the waters of Nevada.

Protects Wildlife



Preserves Wildlife



Dear Citizen of Nevada,

The Nevada Department of Wildlife is committed to serving the sportsmen and the general public of the state. This 2012 annual report highlights how we've forged ahead during difficult fiscal times, to protect wildlife and their habitat, during a time when threats to wildlife could not be higher. We've used technology to increase efficiency and partnered with federal, state, and private agencies to leverage our dollars and focus resources. We continuously review our internal processes to ensure that our stakeholder receives excellent customer service, and we are ever mindful that you deserve the best bang for "your buck".

Wildlife is a treasured resource in Nevada. From a kid with his first crayfish in a trap, a senior enjoying the birds on a walk outdoors, to the committed sportsman, planning a trip, purchasing equipment, applying for a tag; all three evoke a passion for wildlife, an interest in wild places, and a concern that wildlife continues to have a place and holds a future in our tumultuous, chaotic, and often unwild world.

We recognize that there is an increasing demand to do more with less to "preserve, protect, manage and restore wildlife and its habitat for its aesthetic, scientific, educational, recreational, and economic benefits to citizens of Nevada and the United States, and to promote the safety of persons using vessels on the waters of Nevada." As you read our achievements for 2012, you will see for yourself that we are up to the challenge!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenneth E. Mayer".

Kenneth E. Mayer
Director, NDOW





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**State Board of Wildlife
Commissioners**

- Jack Robb, Chairman
- Jeremy Drew, Vice Chairman
- Karen Layne
- David McNinch
- Peter Mori
- Michael McBeath
- Scott Raine
- Grant Wallace
- Bill Young

Manages Wildlife

HOW IS NDOW FUNDED?

Most Nevadans believe that state taxes pay for the management of the state's wildlife resources, however less than 2% comes from the State General Fund.

The majority of NDOW's operating funding (83%) is generated by fishing and hunting licenses, hunting tags and stamp fees, and excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment.

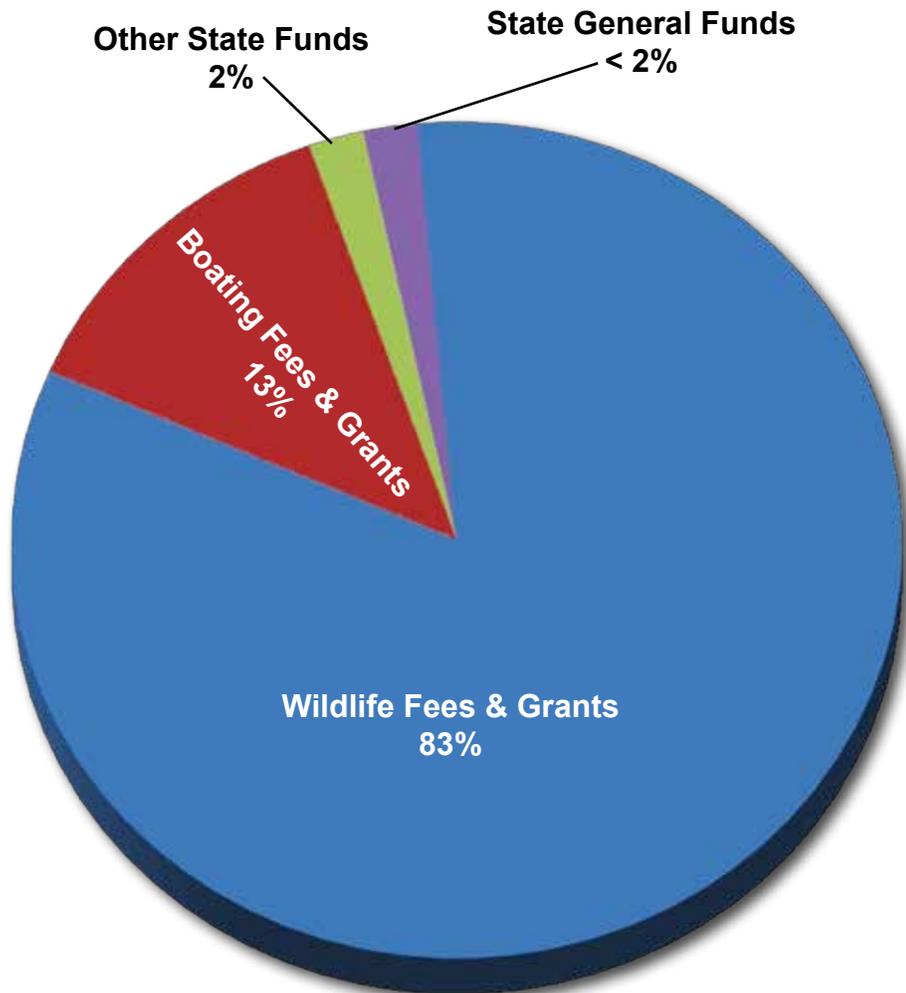


Boat registration fees, title fees and motor boat fuel taxes make up 13% of the operating funding while 2% is generated by other state sources, such as bond sales and interest revenue.

A recent increase has been seen in the number of citizens participating in fishing and hunting after a long, nationwide period of decline. The previous downward trend had resulted in decreased operating budgets for the agency. Although years of drought still impact fishing license sales, which represent a significant portion of NDOW's revenue, 2012 was a hopeful year with increased revenues overall.

The increasing cost of doing business (such as vehicles, fuel, insurance, utilities, and computers) coupled with decreasing revenues offers a challenge to maintain existing services.

This past year (2012) was a hopeful year for NDOW with reserves increasing and the long term decline in participation possibly reversing.



GAME DIVISION

The Game Division is responsible for the management, protection, monitoring, and research of wildlife classified as game mammals, upland and migratory game birds and furbearing mammals. The Game Division has four major management program areas, avian and terrestrial game species management, predator management, wildlife health and disease monitoring and big game damage, depredation and compensation on private lands. Fiscal Year 2012 was a very busy year for the Division and while it is not possible to list all accomplishments, a few of the major highlights are listed below.

Sage-Grouse

Game Division expended significant efforts to monitor, map and attend planning meetings to conserve Nevada's sage-grouse resources and to try and eliminate the need for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Our staff biologist, a recognized expert in sage-grouse management, played a key role in addressing the conservation issue of the Bi-State Sage-grouse Distinct Population Segment (DPS) and provided input to the development of guidelines for a nationwide Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS) EIS effort to prevent the bird from being listed as threatened or endangered.

Division Headquarter's staff and regional biologists coordinated with NDOW's Geographic Information System (GIS) specialist to develop the "Nevada Sage-grouse Habitat Categorization Map" utilizing the most reliable, remotely collected vegetation data available, as well as sage-grouse lek (breeding ground) and telemetry locations, and biologist on-the-ground knowledge of bird-use areas. This map prioritizes sage-grouse habitats across the range of the bird, throughout the state. Habitats were ranked (or prioritized) based on closely defined criteria. This map was used by both the BLM to delineate "Preliminary Priority Habitat" and "Preliminary General Habitat" for interim management and by Governor Brian Sandoval's Sage-grouse Task Force.

Funding was secured for sage-grouse research and habitat improvement. Research identified key use areas and potential impacts with data to facilitate effective management recommendations. Habitat projects were designed to improve nesting and brood rearing habitat by removing pinyon and juniper trees that have encroached on sagebrush habitats specifically in the Bi-State and throughout the range of the Greater Sage-grouse.

In 2012 NDOW classified 2,014 wings to document sage-grouse population demographics. Statewide nest success rate were estimated at 52%, 1.43 chicks/hen and a ratio of 0.72 males/females. The ten-year average was 43% for nest success and 1.6 chicks/hen.

Mule Deer Management

Over the past biennium NDOW has directed significant resources to Nevada's mule deer. Approximately 800 mule deer have been captured, sampled, and collared in mountain ranges in Elko, Lander, Eureka, White Pine, Humboldt, Washoe, and Douglas counties. Biologists

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are gaining valuable information on disease, body condition, migratory corridors, survival rates, cause of death, DNA, and habitat use. The information is already being used to direct conservation activities for habitat, mine planning, additional disease screening, and harvest strategies.

Efforts directed toward mule deer over the last biennium represent the single largest expenditure ever directed toward mule deer in Nevada. Collars incorporating GPS technology are currently allowing biologists to track deer movements as frequently at a



location in 15 minute intervals or as seldom as once a day. A combination of these time intervals are providing valuable insight to fawning areas, feeding areas, hiding areas, migration paths, winter ranges, summer ranges, and numerous additional behaviors. All of this information is helping to improve conservation efforts for mule deer and focus future efforts toward mule deer in the most effective and efficient areas possible.

Wildlife Health

Biologists worked with veterinarian staff to identify pathogens associated with a disease outbreak in mule deer on a ranch near Baker Nevada. It is estimated 40 died and the remaining were in poor body condition. Necropsies showed severe pneumonia. *Mycoplasma bovis* was recovered from all affected deer. Additionally, veterinary staff documented the presence of an exotic louse on deer in three Nevada counties. It was the first time this exotic louse of fallow deer has been detected in Nevada.

In 2012, Division biologists and veterinary staff collected samples from both wild sheep and domestic livestock associated with big game disease events and potential events. A net-gun contractor captured bighorns from eight different locations within six different management units over two days. The objective of these captures was to determine presence or absence of disease agents and to document the possible spread of pathogens between adjacent bighorn populations.

During a follow-up of a summer bighorn die-off in the Snowstorm Mountains in Unit 066, two bighorns from a recent transplant to the adjacent Santa Rosa Mountains (Unit 051) were observed. These two translocated sheep moved approximately 30 miles into the Snowstorms where they were observed interacting with surviving sheep from the summer disease event. These two sheep were euthanized and tested for disease. Pathogen transmission and resulting disease was documented between wild bighorn sheep from different mountain ranges and with known and different disease pathogens.



Translocation and Restoration Projects

Translocation and research projects in the state resulted in more than 675 big game animals being handled and processed to monitor wildlife health. This included mule deer, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats. An all-time record of 271 bighorn sheep (Desert, California, and Rocky Mountain) were trapped and relocated within Nevada in the winter of FY 2012. Many of these animals were fitted with satellite, GPS and/or vhf radio collars to facilitate monitoring of migratory movements and use patterns. This activity is fundamental for restoring and conserving extirpated or reduced populations of game species in suitable or historic habitats.

In preparation for re-establishment of Rocky Mountain bighorns into Unit 101, 10 ewes and one lamb that survived the 2009-10 die-offs were captured and released in adjacent Unit 102. Four rams were also captured and sent a research faculty at the Washington State University in Pullman to be utilized in a research project to study the ecology and epidemiology of pneumonia in bighorn lambs.

In 2011, a cooperative project between the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Yakima Nation resulted in the capture of 100 pronghorn from northern Nevada that were transported to the state of Washington and released that same day on the Yakima Reservation. A local sportsmen's group in Washington also sponsored this conservation effort to re-establish antelope in an area where they were historically found.

In addition to big game, the Division worked cooperatively with the state of Washington's pygmy rabbit re-establishment program. A collection permit was issued and pygmy rabbits were captured in Elko and White Pine Counties. Two were placed with the Oregon Zoo to contribute to the 2012 captive breeding effort, and the rest were successfully released in large enclosures on the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area in Douglas County, WA.

Landowner Programs

The Division answered more than 400 inquiries and investigated more than 300 applications for the Deer/Antelope Compensation tag program. This included counting big game in alfalfa fields to document the minimum presence of 50 animals needed to qualify the applicant for a deer or antelope tag. Landowner compensation tags issued included 200 for deer and 53 for antelope. All elk damage issues were addressed. Elk incentive tag counts were made on private rangeland where an applicant can receive an elk tag based on total elk use of the property relative to the entire herd and available tags. In 2012 67 landowner elk incentive tags were issued from money collected as part of the elk application for damage. An elk exclusionary fence was constructed on private land in White Pine County. A damaged fence on private land in Lincoln County was rebuilt with elk jumpers designed to reduce future elk damage as well.

Big Game Recommendations and Harvest

The Game Division prepared big game season and quota recommendations for State Board of Wildlife Commission (Commission) meetings. Significant time was spent in meetings of the Bear Sub-Committee, Wildlife Commission and County Wildlife Advisory Boards to discuss the 2011 bear season and the 2012 bear population assessment and recommendations.



Division Biologists and staff assessed and analyzed big game harvest and survey data and developed computer models for more than 100 individual big game unit or unit-group populations. This included the classification of 27,031 deer post season, 25,237 deer in the spring, 11,379 pronghorn, 3,665 desert bighorn sheep, 952 California bighorn sheep, 111 Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, 193 mountain goats, and 10,354 elk. Nevada's current big

game population estimates include approximately 112,000 mule deer, 28,000 pronghorn, 8,600 desert bighorn sheep, 1,900 California bighorn sheep, 220 Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, 290 mountain goats, and 15,100 elk. Quota recommendations were higher for all species with the exception of black bear and mountain goat. Most Department recommendations were adopted by the Commission.



Cooperative Research Activities

The Division is coordinating with the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) to assist in the completion of a mountain lion ecology study for Western Nevada. A quarterly update was provided by the PhD candidate conducting the study. She collected over 40,000 Global Positioning System (GPS) locations on 37 lions in western Nevada from Esmeralda County, NV to Modoc County, CA. She visited over 1,050 potential prey kill sites, located remains of over 660 predation

events and completed DNA extraction and genetic analysis of over 800 tissue samples collected from hunter harvested mountain lions statewide. Final data analysis and peer reviewed journal submission will take place in summer, 2013.

Nevada's first highway wildlife crossing project was monitored by research collaborators at UNR's College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources (CABNR) using remote cameras on U.S., Highway 93, north of Wells, NV. More than 70,000 photos were analyzed to document approximately 3,000 deer using the overpass and an additional 600 deer using two attendant underpasses during the fall, 2010 migration period. In the next migration period (spring, 2011) approximately 3,500 deer were documented using the wildlife crossing structures. At least 7,000 deer were kept off the roadway in the first year of operation. Nevada's first wildlife overpass for a divided highway (Interstate 80) is expected to be included in a freeway reconstruction project near Silverzone Pass near Wendover.

Migratory Waterfowl

Division personnel worked cooperatively with personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), UNR and volunteers to band 3,221 migratory game birds. Included in that number were 1,000 mourning doves, 350 Canada geese and 1,871 ducks banded in 2012.

Biologists coordinated follow-up and carcass collection for a botulism outbreak on a private gun club adjacent to significant waterfowl areas located in Lahontan Valley including Carson Lake and the Stillwater Refuge. Some birds were delivered to a "duck hospital" but 2,590 dead waterfowl and shorebirds were collected. Stagnant ponds on the hunt club could not be drained and the outbreak continued until cold weather stopped the spread of the disease.

Successful youth waterfowl hunts were documented in Lahontan Valley. At Carson Lake 37 youth hunters harvested 121 ducks and two coots for 3.3 birds/hunter. At Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area 27 youth hunters harvested 53 ducks for 2.0 ducks/hunter.

FISHERIES DIVISION

The Fisheries Division is responsible for management of all fish and aquatic wildlife species and their habitat in Nevada. Major program areas involve sport fish, native fish, amphibians, mollusks, and crustaceans, threatened and endangered aquatic species, and fish production.



Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) have become a major issue for Nevada and many other western states, impacting both aquatic resources and water delivery infrastructure. The Fisheries Division substantially increased capacity to address AIS needs in 2012, including training and outreach to affected publics and filling a new position in late 2011 to implement state-wide management, containment and monitoring strategies.

Fisheries Management

In 2012, the agency's 16 fisheries biologists actively managed over 600 lakes, ponds, reservoirs and rivers. Each water is managed under an approved management concept that describes basic sport fish management direction. NDOW's stream survey teams surveyed 200 miles on 29 streams, examining habitat conditions and trends as well as monitoring native trout distribution and abundance. NDOW in cooperation with the National Park Service and State of Arizona continues to implement the Lake Mohave Aquatic Habitat Development project with over 250 underwater habitat modules installed to date to improve fish habitat. Monitoring has shown extensive benefits to all game fish species during seasons when little natural cover is available in the reservoir.

The Fisheries Division latest Mail-in Angler Questionnaire data from 2011 found 77,184 anglers fishing 592,613 days and capturing 1,636,224 fish for an average of 2.76 fish per angler day. The majority of angler days are expended in the Southern Region at lakes Mead and Mohave and the Western Region in the Truckee River and Lake Tahoe. Important Eastern Region angling waters include Wildhorse and South Fork reservoirs.

Fish Stocking

A total of 1,248,964 trout were planted in Nevada reservoirs, lakes and streams during FY 2012 along with 31,851 catchable warm water species and 2,313,000 fry including wipers, bass and catfish. Our annual average stocking of approximately 1,000,000 trout was exceeded due to stocking of smaller fish in select locations. Rainbow trout continue to be the



mainstay of fish culture activities in our three state-operated facilities. Nevada continues to raise brown, tiger and cutthroat trout, as well as triploid or sterile rainbow trout for some of our recovery waters having threatened or endangered trout species.

The Fisheries Division stocks and manages 17 urban ponds around the state and urban fisheries continue to build in this program. New ponds since 2011 include Mitch Park Pond in Gardnerville, Baily Fishing Pond in Carson City, and Beatty Pond in Beatty. Negotiations are ongoing to develop an urban pond in Winnemucca.

Native Aquatics Program

Management actions were continued for statewide recovery of threatened, endangered and priority native game fish species. These include Lahontan cutthroat trout, Bonneville cutthroat trout, Yellowstone cutthroat trout, redband trout and bull trout. Primary work includes removal of undesirable nonnative fish species in native game fish habitats, habitat restoration, and addressing issues with fish migration barriers. Native fish species are then reestablished back into their historical streams. Removal of undesirable fishes eliminates competition with native fishes, while construction of physical migration barriers excludes upstream movement of undesirable species into native fish habitat.

Recovery efforts for Nevada’s 22 threatened and endangered non-game fish species



and other rare fishes identified as State protected continue, with the objective of removing fishes from Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed status and avoiding additional ESA listings. These fishes naturally occur in a variety of habitats statewide ranging from the Colorado River to isolated desert springs, with the majority of species occurring in NDOW’s Southern Region. State led recovery implementation teams meet semi-annually to identify priority recovery activities and coordinate actions with other recovery team partners. Major threats to these species include introduced exotic species (crayfish, largemouth bass,

released aquarium fishes, tilapia, etc.) and habitat loss or degradation.

Activities focused on addressing these major threats and developing or enhancing partnerships with private and public landowners, and local municipalities. In addition to the completion of important recovery projects for Moapa Dace in the Muddy River and desert dace and Wall Canyon suckers in northern Nevada, NDOW assisted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Duckwater Shoshone Tribe with ongoing habitat rehabilitation and restoration efforts at Big and Little Warm Springs in Railroad Valley, and continued working with Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) for conservation of ESA listed desert pupfish species.

Angler Outreach and Incentives

The Mail-in Angler Questionnaire Survey and Angler Recognition Program are also important Fisheries Division elements. New this year to the Angler Recognition Program is the Native Fish Slam, whereby anglers are recognized for catching the six native sport fish from Nevada which include Lahontan, Bonneville, and Yellowstone cutthroat trout, inland redband trout, bull trout, and mountain whitefish. Additionally, anglers are now recognized for catching their first fish from Nevada.

Angler information guides provide information about 76 of our most popular waters. Angling information is updated annually and anglers can obtain information from our website, Regional Offices, or the many sub-offices scattered throughout the state. Other information

includes a brief history of the water, sport fishes present, size of fish expected to catch, best angling techniques, stocking that may occur, camping facilities, fishing regulations, a map, and the biologist's forecast on how good fishing can be.

The Fisheries Division also coordinates with the Conservation Education Division on the Department's "Trout in the Classroom" program. This is a program brought to 5th grade classes at over 50 schools, providing an aquarium, chiller to keep the water at 50°F, and aerator. Up to 100 trout eggs are stocked in an aquarium for school children to watch and learn about their development. Once they hatch out, the school children release the trout fry into a nearby natural stream or pond.

HABITAT DIVISION

In general terms, the Habitat Division of the NDOW is tasked with managing, monitoring, conserving and, in some cases, playing a role in the recovery of deficient wildlife habitats throughout the State of Nevada. Those tasks are accomplished through a variety of programs that function within the Division. A brief description of those programs and the major accomplishments within those programs for 2012 include:

Wildlife Management Areas

NDOW owns and/or manages 11 designated Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) as well as three other areas with significant wildlife habitat values located in various parts of the State. In total, those areas comprise approximately 155,000 acres of land with most of the areas being composed primarily of wetland habitat and managed with a priority toward wetland management and recreation. In 2011, a total of 2,105 acres of land was purchased at the north end of Mason Valley for annexation onto the Mason Valley WMA. The land was purchased from a private developer and was done in partnership with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. In 2012, two parcels of land totaling 795 acres were annexed onto the Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area. The land was donated to NDOW by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and will be managed for the upland bird and mule deer habitat that exists on the property. In 2012, the purchase of 466 acres of land was completed with that property being annexed onto the Bruneau River WMA. Plans were developed for doing pond leveling projects at the Overton, Key Pittman and Kirch projects. The leveling work, which should begin in 2013, will allow for more efficient use of water supplies and for production of better moist soil vegetation that provides food for wetland dependent species.

Technical Guidance Section

The Technical Guidance group provides initial protection for fish, wildlife and their habitat through review and comment of project proposals and agency planning processes identifying anticipated impacts and developing sufficient mitigation and project alterations to minimize project or planning effects. Project proposals that are reviewed typically include a variety of projects or land management actions that may include the enlargement of an existing mine or development of a new mine, the construction of a renewable energy (wind, geothermal or solar) project, the construction of an electrical transmission line, the amendment of an agency's Resource Management Plan and other activities of that nature. The review process involves developing a trusted working relationship with the land management agencies, special interest



Restores Wildlife

groups and the general public and participating in coordination activities and programs. The group also provides expertise on habitat protection and enhancement to agencies and the public while participating in habitat reclamation or enhancement efforts. During the past year, the group reviewed and provided comments and recommendations on a total of 446 non-mining related project proposals and 91 mining related project proposals. In addition, the group was party to a total of 3,288 contacts which includes attendance at meetings, communication with other agencies and phone calls related to various project proposals. This group is also responsible for administering the “Fund for the Recovery of Costs” which allows the Department of Wildlife to collect reimbursement costs from proponents of energy related projects to offset the expenses incurred while evaluating and providing feedback on the impacts to wildlife of those projects. To date, NDOW has processed applications from six renewable energy related companies who are proposing projects in Nevada. This portion of the Habitat Division was actively involved in coordination with the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service to implement range rehabilitation work on critical wildlife habitats that were severely impacted by wildfires during the summer of 2012. The wildfires burned in excess of 800,000 acres of land with much of the acreage being composed of critical sage – grouse and mule deer habitat. A significant percentage of the total acreage burned is composed of critical sage - grouse habitat and Initial recovery efforts will focus on those areas.

Nevada Partners for Conservation Development

Nevada Partners for Conservation and Development (NPCD), is a wide-view landscape scale and habitat restoration initiative formed in 2009 to leverage diverse interests including: government entities, NGO’s, industry, citizens, and other like-minded organizations to mitigate and improve ecological health across Nevada’s diverse landscape. During 2012, the NPCD continued implementation of meadow restoration, pinyon-juniper (PJ) thinning, post-fire re-vegetation and riparian focused projects across northern Nevada. In Elko, White Pine, Lincoln, Lyon, Douglas, Churchill, Washoe and Mineral counties, PJ thinning projects were started and are aimed specifically at restoration of sage-grouse habitat. Several of the PJ projects fall within the Bi-State sage-grouse population management areas. Most of the PJ project work falls on public lands and, where possible, private land project work is added to the total acreage treated. NPCD staff has also been actively gathering pre and post treatment data to help determine the effectiveness of treatments that have already been completed or will be completed in the near future.

Industrial Artificial Pond Permit and Mining Assessment Fee Program

Developers of “artificial” or man-made industrial ponds are required to obtain an Industrial Artificial Pond Permit (IAPP) issued by NDOW. These permits include a number of measures intended to help prevent and minimize waterbird and terrestrial wildlife mortalities in the ponds. Some of the IAPP permit holders also pay Mining Assessment Fees that vary depending upon how much material is processed at their mines. During the last year, NDOW maintained permit records for eighty six such operations and field staff periodically inspected different operations to ensure compliance with the terms of the permit.



Water Development Program

NDOW locates, installs, repairs and maintains over 1,600 water developments (or guzzlers) statewide. Two water development crews - one based in Winnemucca and the other based in Las Vegas- conduct this work with the assistance of hundreds of volunteers that belong to such sportsmen organizations as the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited, Nevada Chukar Foundation, the Pershing County Chukar Club and others. In northern Nevada, a total of five new big game guzzlers were constructed and major reconstruction was accomplished on 12 others. A total of three small game guzzlers were rebuilt and fences were replaced at 6 others. Simple to moderate maintenance procedures were performed on a total of 345 big and small game guzzlers. In addition, 16,520 gallons of water were hauled to various guzzlers to benefit animal populations that were at risk due to drought related water shortages. In southern Nevada, a total of five small game guzzlers were built and four others were reconditioned. A total of 204 small game guzzlers were inspected with minor to moderate repair work accomplished during the inspection. In many cases, the access ramps that fit inside the small game guzzlers have become worn and are systematically being replaced. A total of 90 large game water developments were inspected and maintained during the course of the year. Due to extreme drought conditions, the southern Nevada guzzler crew was required to organize two emergency water hauls to areas where bighorn sheep populations had exhausted the water supplies and were in danger of perishing from lack of drinking water. Because of the remote nature of the guzzler sites, a helicopter and sling bucket was needed to complete the projects.



Restricted Reserve Projects Program

The Habitat Division administers four user fee generated funds that are used to accomplish a wide variety of habitat improvement and wildlife research projects. The user fees include Duck Stamp, Upland Game Bird Stamp, Habitat Conservation Fees, and Mining Assessment Fees. During the last year, a large number of beneficial wildlife projects were funded through these fees including but not limited to the development of a statewide wildlife health database, a mule deer migration study, multiple sage-grouse habitat improvement projects, a project that will remove abandoned mine claim markers that are a hazard to cavity-nesting birds, improving waterfowl habitat at NDOW-managed Wildlife Management Areas, and developing aquatic resource habitat at Lake Mohave in southern Nevada. Beginning in July, 2012, a total of 25 projects were funded with Duck Stamp funds for a total of \$127,945; a total of 23 projects were funded with Upland Bird Stamp funds for a total of \$325,150; a total of 35 projects were funded with Habitat Conservation Fee funds for a total of \$949,714 and a total of 16 projects were funded with Mining Assessment Fees for a total of \$453,511.

Implementation of Sage Grouse Initiative

NDOW currently shares three Habitat biologist positions with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Pheasants Forever. The positions are currently located in Reno, Elko and Ely and are tasked with helping to implement the NRCS's Sage-grouse Initiative which is intended to employ strategies that will enhance and conserve critical habitat for the Greater sage-grouse and the Bi-State sage-grouse populations. Since a substantial amount of quality Sage-grouse habitat lies on private property, the primary task of the positions is to reach out to private landowners and make them aware of the many assistance

programs that are available through the NRCS for doing wildlife habitat improvement work on private properties. If a landowner expresses interest, then the biologists provide assistance in signing the landowner up for one or more of the programs. During the last year, the three biologists have enjoyed moderate success in getting landowners interested in the assistance opportunities and will continue to build on those relationships. The biologists are also engaging with Local Area Working Groups which are composed of personnel from various agencies, conservation groups and private landowners and are attempting to identify habitat improvements projects that can be accomplished in various regions of the state

LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

The Division of Law Enforcement has made great strides over the past few years. This division is responsible for protecting Nevada's Wildlife Resources and Boating Public. To accomplish this daunting task, our law enforcement division has 32 field game wardens covering 109,894 square miles of land and 385,000 surface acres of water. This equates to



3,139 square miles of land per game warden and 11,000 surface acres of water per game warden. To support these field officers and agency personnel assigned to other divisions we have a statewide dispatch center, radio communications experts, administrative personnel, education/public outreach personnel, and of course our lieutenants and captains. Even with these resources we realize that quality law enforcement is about serving communities and people.

To serve the citizens, sportsmen and boaters of Nevada, the law enforcement division has integrated the following programs. Wildlife Protection, Operation

Game Thief, Major Wildlife Crimes, Dispatch, Communications, Boating Enforcement, Boating Education, Human Wildlife Conflicts, Guide Program, Regulation Adoption, Officer Recruitment, Retention and Training, Community Relations, and Boat Access.

In the realm of wildlife protection, game wardens have received more self reported violations than before. This credit goes to our game wardens as they have built and earned the public's trust, to the extent that when they break a law by accident or through negligence that many turn themselves in knowing that they will be treated fairly. Our game wardens routinely contact over 50,000 people per year and encounter over 3,500 violations annually.

Operation Game Thief

Our Operation Game Thief (OGT) program is similar to secret witness and has been bolstered with new members added to the OGT Citizens Board and an overall energizing of our OGT Program. Over the years this program has transitioned from receiving most reported violations through a 1-800 number to a program where sportsman report many violations directly to a game warden in the field or when they see them in town. With the large areas we patrol effectiveness is only as good as our relationships with the sportsmen.



Major Wildlife Crimes

In the Major Wildlife Crimes arena we continue to identify and target those cases that have the biggest impact on our wildlife resources. We are working cases that involve the internet sales of wildlife in multiple states and Canada, using stolen or altered documentation to give the appearance that the wildlife being sold is indeed legal.

Nevada Department of Wildlife dispatch center covers not only our state game wardens but also our biologists and other non-sworn personnel. In addition NDOW receives additional funding by providing law enforcement dispatch services to Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service law enforcement agents. Our dispatch center has converted to a computer aided dispatch system to enhance efficiency and record keeping. With this new system our calls for service will be tracked a little differently than in the past. But our dispatch center has had over 90,000 radio calls most years.

NDOW's communications is housed under the law enforcement division. NDOW has a statewide repeater system that does an outstanding job of covering our state, especially when one considers that Nevada is the most mountainous state in the union. We have met the federal mandate to narrow band our radio system by January 1, 2013. In addition we took that opportunity to replace several antiquated radios in our patrol vehicles and patrol boats. There is still work to be done as the narrow banding requirement has reduced radio coverage on some of our mountain top repeaters.

Boating Enforcement Program

Our boating enforcement program is as robust as it ever has been. We have incorporated a new computerized boat accident reporting system to streamline efficiency for our game wardens as they investigate boat accidents and ensure maximum compliance with U.S. Coast Guard reporting requirements. Nevada's boat education program is second to none. We have committed two boating educators to teach the boating public about laws and regulations that apply to Nevada's waterways and boaters. But more importantly we provide our boaters with educational tips that keep them safe on the water. This is depicted with Nevada only having seven boating related deaths over the previous two years. We have also facilitated the completion of a new boat ramp in Laughlin and enhanced our law enforcement office located in Laughlin. Several other boat access related projects have been completed as well, which include both private and public areas. We have also assisted Nevada State Parks in funding improvements at South Fork Reservoir. In the private sector we have worked with Forever Resorts to purchase a vessel to pump sewage from vessels moored at their facilities, replace a fuel dock and pump out facility at Callville Bay on Lake Mead which was damaged by flood waters, and update their facilities on Lake Mohave at Cottonwood cove which included a new fueling facility, pump out dock and overnight docking facility.



Guide Program

Our guide program serves over 300 master and subguides operating in Nevada. We have reallocated staff time to better address the administrative licensing of our guides and the investigation of illegal guides.

Regulations

Our law enforcement division continues to streamline regulations where possible in order to make the sportsman's recreational experience more enjoyable. This is a challenge when

different groups want opportunities and accompanying regulations specific to their interest. We have processed over 30 regulations this past biennium for not only our law enforcement division but for all of NDOW.

Recruitment

NDOW continues to recruit highly motivated, professional officers. These new officers complete a Category 1 Nevada Peace Officers, Standards and Training academy. We have revamped portions of our officer training and our Field Training Officer program. The changes made are to enhance officer safety and provide our officers with a broader range of knowledge before they are certified to patrol on their own. Investing in our game wardens “up front” pays long term dividends by creating officers that can work independently to enforce Nevada’s wildlife and boating laws and ensure the public’s safety.

Community Relations

Our game wardens continue to attend County Advisory Board meetings and sportsman meetings whenever possible. This is yet another opportunity to receive feedback from the public as to how we are performing in relation to their expectations of our Law Enforcement Division.

Officer Reserve Program

The Division of Law Enforcement has recently implemented an officer reserve program. The goal is to provide additional law enforcement and public outreach coverage at nominal cost, by utilization of well qualified and trained volunteers. We are starting with two reserves and will expand as we identify and resolve any unforeseen issues.

Human-Wildlife Conflicts

Game wardens continue to serve the public by responding to request for service when wildlife threatens the safety of our state’s citizens, whether it be a bear in a house at Lake Tahoe a mountain lion in downtown Reno, or coyotes at a school yard. These urban wildlife issues have become so prevalent they are impacting our officer’s ability to patrol and protect our critical wildlife resources and the boating public. We encourage using self help tips provided on NDOW’s website for those situations which do not pose a threat to the public. The unfortunate reality is that our public expects a physical response to virtually all the situations when the reality is that we often times are challenged to respond to life threatening calls as the nearest game warden may be up to five hours away. We are fortunate to have law enforcement partners throughout the state assist or often provide the initial response in these life threatening situations.

Rest assured your Law Enforcement Division is strong. Every day we incorporate new and exciting technologies, training and improvements in operating procedures. We are ready to tackle any current or future law enforcement functions with the professionalism and grace with which we have proven ourselves capable. No matter what changes lie ahead, law enforcement remains about people and communities, and we are ready to serve.



WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

The Wildlife Diversity Division is dedicated to the protection, management and restoration of Nevada's diverse wildlife heritage. Through sound science, data management, innovative partnerships and implementation of Nevada's Wildlife Action Plan, the Division is working to maintain healthy, diverse populations and habitats.

To be proactive in dealing with conservation issues, the Wildlife Diversity Division has established multiple programs and plans identified below.

The Wildlife Action Plan

The Wildlife Diversity Division coordinates implementation of Nevada's Wildlife Action Plan – a strategic blueprint for achieving comprehensive wildlife conservation across the state. This plan is the result of a collaborative effort by biologists, sportsmen and conservation organizations, and the general public. By targeting species of the greatest conservation need and the habitats upon which they depend it works to avoid additional formal protections for the species. The plan complements traditional game and sport fish management programs and builds on wildlife conservation projects already underway in the state which has led it to being considered one of the best in the country. NDOW and our conservation partners have been in the process of revising Nevada's Wildlife Action Plan to address the potential impacts of emerging and expanding stressors including accelerated energy development, invasive species and climate variability and change on Nevada's fish, wildlife and habitats.



Endangered Species Act Listing Prevention

NDOW supported and funded efforts are the primary, and in many cases, the only, active conservation efforts for Species of Conservation Priority in Nevada. These efforts are the State's primary defense against efforts by third parties to petition the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for protection under the Endangered Species Act which could result in listing as threatened or endangered. Through our species conservation efforts, listings are avoided. The listing of species and the resulting federal regulatory control would have significant implications at a landscape-scale affecting NDOW management of hunting and fishing programs, the State's current and future resource users and resource development, private landowners, and a variety of other potential effects.

Endangered Species Management and Regulation

The Wildlife Diversity program also ensures state involvement in endangered species management discussions through species-based and habitat-based conservation planning as well as the design of conservation strategies that have broad-based support across the nation. We contribute to conservation initiatives designed to keep common species common and off endangered species lists, including the Nevada Partners in Flight Plan, Nevada Bat Conservation Plan, and Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Plan.

The Division is also involved in regulation activities related to the sport of falconry and the scientific collection of migratory birds. We also participate in recovery work for several federally listed species with federal USFWS Section 6 Endangered Species funds. For example, we participate in Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan implementation in southern Nevada and breeding bird surveys for endangered southwestern willow flycatchers.

Protects Wildlife

Improving Wildlife Knowledge

American pikas are small, rabbit-like animals that inhabit rocky, mountainous areas in Nevada. In summer 2009, the species was petitioned for endangered species listing under federal laws due primarily to their apparent vulnerability to rapid climate warming. During this time, NDOW personnel had just documented the presence of pika in previously unknown areas of the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. These low elevation sites opened up a completely new search area in habitats that had been historically overlooked. When the USFWS requested input into the status review on a petition to list American pika, the State was able to draw on its own body of scientific knowledge derived from on-going monitoring and survey work. Department personnel provided the USFWS with a compendium of data gathered by field staff which assisted the USFWS in its decision. Ultimately, it was determined the species did not warrant protection at this time under the Endangered Species Act. Ongoing pika monitoring and research throughout the state has provided NDOW with critical information on how to best manage this species of conservation priority.

Geographic Information System

A major component of the Wildlife Diversity Division is the Geographic Information System (GIS) group which provides a centralized system for long-term storage, analysis, and management of wildlife resource data maintained by the Department. GIS is an essential tool for the modern wildlife resource manager to make well informed management decisions. GIS staff work with personnel across all Divisions to ensure data is available and can be utilized effectively. The GIS group also provides interactive mapping services to Department staff and members of the public and responds to external requests for information. Over the past year the GIS staff has successfully completed the Department Greater Sage-grouse Habitat Categorization Map, the updated game management unit map and the updated Water Development Atlas.

Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program

The Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) is a long term plan encompassing hundreds of projects and programs designed to improve the environment at Lake Tahoe. The Nevada-Tahoe Resource Team (NTRT), made up of NDOW, Divisions of State Parks, State Lands and Forestry is charged with leading EIP projects within the Nevada portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin. As part of this interagency team, NDOW has implemented wildlife and habitat improvement projects including aspen rejuvenation and natural riparian enhancement on state-owned lands.

Private Lands-Landowner Incentive Program

Nevada's Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) provides federal dollars from the USFWS to NDOW to assist private landowners with the restoration and protection of habitats to benefit sensitive and endangered wildlife. Over the past several years, LIP has assisted landowners



with financial and technical assistance to restore habitat to benefit a variety of species. Practices include revegetation with native plants, invasive plant control, and riparian and spring restoration. The LIP program is vital to the protection of sensitive species on private lands in Nevada and is an integral component of Nevada's Wildlife Action Plan. The Private Lands Program also provides coordination with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to assist in the implementation of important Farm Bill programs for wildlife.

Habitat Restoration

Wildlife Diversity Division personnel provide key technical support and coordination leadership for a broad array of habitat restoration projects in concert with NDOW's Habitat Division and other sister agencies across the state including the rehabilitation of sagebrush following wildfire, the enhancement of aspen and riparian habitats in the Carson Range and eastern Nevada, the restoration of willow and marsh habitats in southern Nevada, and the restoration of other key habitats identified in Nevada's Wildlife Action Plan. Species identified in the Wildlife Action Plan that benefit from these conservation projects include mule deer, greater sage-grouse, northern goshawk, sage sparrow, Brewer's sparrow and many others.

Aspen stands are a priority habitat in Nevada's Wildlife Action Plan but across the Sierra Nevada these habitats are declining – conifers are out-competing and replacing aspens due to the absence of regular disturbances like fire. Wildlife Diversity staff have worked to restore 45 acres of aspen stands in the Tahoe Basin, and are now working on another 50-acre habitat enhancement project to improve forest health in the Sierra. While the area treated is small, the benefit is large. Over the long-term, this work will promote aspen regeneration and a diverse understory of riparian shrubs. Dozens of species of breeding birds rely on aspen stands in healthy riparian zones for nesting. So do black bears, mule deer, and many small and medium-sized mammals. Through our restoration efforts, breeding bird richness is beginning to improve, wildlife corridors are being restored, and scenic value enhanced.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION DIVISION

Public Information and Media Communication

The Conservation Education Division has a varied and active statewide media/public relations program. Each NDOW administrative region (Eastern, Southern and Western) has a Public Information Officer (PIO) who oversees media communications within their area with coordination from NDOW headquarters in Reno.

Due to heavy public interest, the Department of Wildlife public affairs staff continually fields media inquiries on a variety of topics relating to the agency. In addition to responding to the media, the public affairs program provides proactive outreach through weekly radio programs on nine stations statewide and weekly five minute segments on two television stations.

Over the last biennium the Conservation Education Division:

- Distributed over 150 press releases to local, regional and national media
- Produced over 100 radio programs for statewide distribution
- Aired over 200 weekly television segments in two Nevada markets

Last year, the Conservation Education Division began a partnership with Nevada Magazine to feature a wildlife species in each of its bimonthly editions.



Manages Wildlife

Outdoor Education - Hunter Education

Anyone born after January 1, 1960 is required to provide proof of Hunter Education in order to purchase a Nevada hunting license. Public interest in hunter education and participation in courses has been increasing and the Conservation Education Division has continually provided courses to suit the needs of sportsmen and remove barriers to hunting.

Over the past biennium the Hunter Education program has:

- Graduated 4,445 students
- Held 287 hunter education classes
- Benefited from \$330,981 in value of instructor hours and donations

Outdoor Education - Advanced Hunter Education

In order to increase interest in shooting sports and recruit individuals to hunting, in 2011 the Southern Region pioneered a new live fire shooting sports program. These live fire classes consist of shotgun (trap class), a muzzleloader class (using percussion cap, inline and flintlock rifles) and an Introductory to Rifle Shooting using a single shot bolt action .22 rifle.

Instructors for the classes are NRA certified as range safety officers and are registered as the primary instructor for a class in which they provide their expertise. Students sign the risk assumption agreement; acquire safety glasses and hearing protection as well as instructions before proceeding to the range in every class. Classes are limited to 20 shooters (10 at a time) except for shotgun, which is only five at a time.

The Division began with only three classes in 2011, one of each, and increased the number to three of each in 2012 with a special beginning rifle class offered in late December. The program continues to offer three of each class for 2013.

Classes	Shotgun	Muzzleloader	Beginning Rifle
2011	1	1	1
2012	3	3	4
2013	3	3	3

Outdoor Education - Angler Education

In order to recruit and retain anglers throughout Nevada the Conservation Education Division holds a variety of angler education classes and workshops throughout the state each year.

Introductory and Three-day Fly Fishing Clinics

The Southern Region holds introduction to fly fishing workshops on a monthly basis. These classes are intended for beginning fly fishers.

The Western Region hosts three-day fly fishing clinics. The first day of the three-day class covers fly casting, equipment and knot tying. The second and third day of class are on the



water, which requires each participant to purchase a fishing license for each day on the water. The second day of class covers reading water, entomology, nymph fishing and dry fly fishing, while the third day covers float tube safety, kayak safety how to fish still water and limnology.

Spin Fishing Clinics

These classes are generally held over a two-day period. The first day of instruction includes proper equipment, preferred knots and fishing techniques. The second day requires the purchase of a fishing license and covers still and moving water tactics.

Carp Clinics

The Carp Clinics take advantage of an under utilized resource and presents a great opportunity to get kids onto big fish. Licenses are required for these events as well. The Carp Derby at Lahontan State Park has participation around 80 to 100 anglers each year. Various sponsors such as Cabela's, Scheels, Mark, Fore and Strike and Sportsman's Warehouse have donated items and helped with this event. Staff conducts an additional Carp Derby at Little Washoe Lake. Both of the events work cooperatively with Nevada State Parks.



Outdoor Education - Archery Education

During the past biennium, NDOW made it a priority to create a robust Archery Education program which began by piloting the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) in Clark County. The NASP program achieved amazing success in Clark County where it set a record for adding the most new schools in the first year. The program has expanded to several other Nevada counties including Lyon, Douglas, Carson, Churchill, Storey and Elko. This program has reached impressive milestones in a very short duration including:

- 36 schools actively participating in NASP in seven Nevada counties
- 466 students registered to participate in this year's state-wide tournament, an increase of over 160 students over last year
- 171 school teachers trained as Basic Archery Instructors (BAI)

General Wildlife Education

A host of general wildlife education programs are offered to adults and children statewide on an ongoing basis. In Clark County, Project Wild, a program that trains teachers on how to educate students about wildlife, certifies about 80 teachers annually. In the Western Region over 5,000 students annually visit the two local interpretive sites. The students that attend the Wildlife and Aquatic education programs at the Oxbow and Verdi Nature Centers are taught about local wildlife, local entomology, plant identification, and the meaning of "place" in the environment.

Events and Shows

The Conservation Education Division participates in a variety of events and shows as an avenue to connect directly with our constituents to convey information about the Nevada Department of Wildlife, our programs and services. Events are chosen carefully to meet the critical need to optimize agency resources, highlights include:

International Sportsmen’s Expo

The Conservation Education Division led the charge for NDOW to participate in the International Sportsmen’s Expo held in 2012 in Las Vegas for the first time. The Expo was the most major event of the year and NDOW staff and volunteers from hunter and angler education, fisheries, game and law enforcement interacted with over 4,000 event participants. NDOW was a major participant and sponsor, hosting the youth camp and kids fishing area for the duration of the show. Preparations are underway for the 2013 event.

Wild Sheep Foundation Youth Wildlife Conservation Experience

In January 2012 Conservation Education staff helped organize a memorable Youth Wildlife Conservation Experience for more than 500 students from Washoe County schools.



This event featured fly tying, wildlife education utilizing hides and skulls, laser shot, archery shooting and an Operation Game Thief Crime Scene Investigation activity.

Nevada Bighorns Unlimited Mason T. Ortiz Outdoor Camp

Nevada Bighorns Unlimited and Safari Club International used funds from a private donation to develop a camp for underprivileged youth who may not have the opportunity to hunt or fish. NDOW staff now help organize the hunter education volunteers and with the overall program during the

camp.

Volunteer Coordination

Volunteers are used in many facets of NDOW programs. Volunteers assist with Angler, Hunter and Wildlife Education Programs and the Volunteer Program. Major events are in part staffed by volunteers and events such as Free Fishing Day, the International Sportsmen’s Expo, wildlife captures, guzzler repairs and youth fishing derbies would not happen without volunteers. Conservation Education Division is responsible for the coordination of all agency volunteers.

In addition, volunteer hours are counted as match to the agency’s federal grant requirements and therefore are an essential part of NDOW’s financial picture. Over the last biennium volunteers logged over 9,000 hours and over 171,000 miles at a value of nearly \$724,000.

Seizing opportunities: technology/marketing/outreach

The NDOW website, www.ndow.org, is undergoing a full-scale redesign and redevelopment and will be converted to a new content management system that will enable constituents to better interact with the agency. The existing website has seen an ever increasing amount of traffic as the internet becomes the primary source of information for constituents.



The Nevada Department of Wildlife has been very active in the use of social media as a tool to directly reach agency constituents. The department primarily uses Facebook and Twitter as social media platforms but has recently branched out to include YouTube, Google+ and Pinterest.

Focusing outreach efforts through Facebook, NDOW uses this platform to interact with constituents in a two way communication model. Assigned staff members post informational updates, links, photos, hot topics and other items to our page to proactively engage followers. By selectively choosing the information that we push to our Facebook we engage customers on topics we would like to highlight.

The Conservation Education Division is using a new e-mail system to communicate directly with sportsmen, anglers and wildlife enthusiasts. Direct communication on topics such as the Conserve Wildlife license plate, Big Game Tag application workshops, Nevada's specialty tags such as the Silver State Tag and Dream Tag, and big game tag application periods have been delivered directly to user's inboxes.

Use of technology based information sources dramatically increased over the biennium:

- Unique visitors to NDOW.org increased over 40 percent
- Facebook followers doubled with an increase slightly over 100 percent
- Over 600,000 direct email marketing messages were distributed

OPERATIONS DIVISION

The Operations Division provides the bulk of the support services to the Department, and is the agency's focal point for key business processes—licensing, processing of game tag applications, and boat registration and titling. Other key support functions of the Division include information technology, engineering, facility maintenance, and air operations for wildlife survey inventories. The division's objective is to provide high quality, cost-effective customer service and support, for both internal and external customers, which is efficient and responsive, and contributes to the Department's ability to meet its mission and objectives.

Through the Nevada Wildlife Data System (NWDS), which is administered by the Division and supported by contract, over 156,000 licensing privileges (licenses, stamps) were sold in FY2012, equating to over \$7,000,000 in revenue. A variety of avenues were used for such sales—customers access our consumer website, they can visit one of our seven customer service locations, or through one of our 160 license agents (e.g., Walmart, Bass Pro Shops). Also processed through NWDS, over 51,000 boats were registered in Nevada, amounting to almost \$2,000,000 in revenue.

The Application Hunt System (AHS) is the Department's means for accepting and processing tag applications for various game tag drawings throughout the year. The Division oversees the contracted vendor who conducts seven to nine drawings annually. The largest and most publicized of the annual random draws, Nevada's big game draw, saw over for 159,000 applications submitted for the 2012 big game season. Total revenue for applications, tags and other related fees exceeded \$5,000,000 in FY2012.

Established last year, customers conducting business with the Department via NWDS and the AHS now have access to a brief online customer satisfaction survey intended to



Manages Wildlife

Restores Wildlife

measure satisfaction regarding ease of use of these two systems. Over 5,000 AHS users responded during the big game application period with a satisfaction rate of 93%, and over 3,000 users of NWDS have responded with a satisfaction rate of 94%.

Two significant regulatory changes occurred this year related to licenses and tags. Nevada introduced a new Interstate Boundary Waters license for our nonresidents. Those sportsmen and women wishing to limit their fishing to Nevada's boundary waters (Lakes Tahoe and Topaz, and the Colorado River system) now have access to a reduced-cost license.

Also new as a result of statute and regulation changes is the Nevada Dream Tags program. This program was established by the Nevada Legislature in the 2011 session. This year Dream Tags were awarded to five lucky ticket holders for mule deer, antelope, desert (Nelson) bighorn sheep, California bighorn sheep and elk. The Legislature named the Community Foundation of Western Nevada to administer the Dream Tags Charitable Fund, which is where proceeds from the raffle are deposited.

Wildlife habitat rehabilitation projects are likely to be awarded competitive grants by the Nevada Dream Tags Fund. Projects may include fire restoration for large areas of the



state that have been ravaged by wild fires, water availability for increased herds, and other projects deemed critical by the Nevada Dream Tags advisory committee. The inaugural year of this well-received program saw more than 72,000 raffle tickets purchased, garnering more than \$360,000 for wildlife.

Our engineering and maintenance team continued to work on improvements throughout the state, ranging from improvements for holding pond facilities, to major fish hatchery work on aeration systems and replacement of fresh water production wells. The division, in coordination with the Habitat and Fisheries Divisions, is vigilant on improving and maintaining the 24 state

residences for our on-site employees. This year many improvements were brought to these residences, to include major efforts such as asbestos abatement and major remodels. The team's efforts also brought about new security and safety improvements for our Las Vegas complex, which is co-shared with Division of Forestry and Division of Parks employees.

Our Information Technology team was also instrumental in bringing improvements to the joint complex in Las Vegas. New fiber-optic service at this office complex is now available to the employees of all three state agencies. Similar fiber-optic service was also installed at our headquarters facility in Reno. Our Information Technology team was also important to our efforts to introduce credit card services to our seven state-wide customer service locations. This new service has been well received by our walk-in customers.

Finally, our two helicopter pilots, with the assistance of a talented fixed-wing contracted pilot, delivered over 1,000 hours of invaluable wildlife survey flight time to the biologists of our Game and Diversity Divisions. Critical aerial surveys for all of Nevada's big game species, as well as waterfowl, raptors and shore birds are instrumental for wildlife management. Of note this year was the joint Bi-State sage-grouse survey efforts between NDOW and California Fish and Game Department. The majority of our survey work is accomplished with two well-maintained Bell Jet Ranger helicopters.

