

Nevada Department of Wildlife

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2027



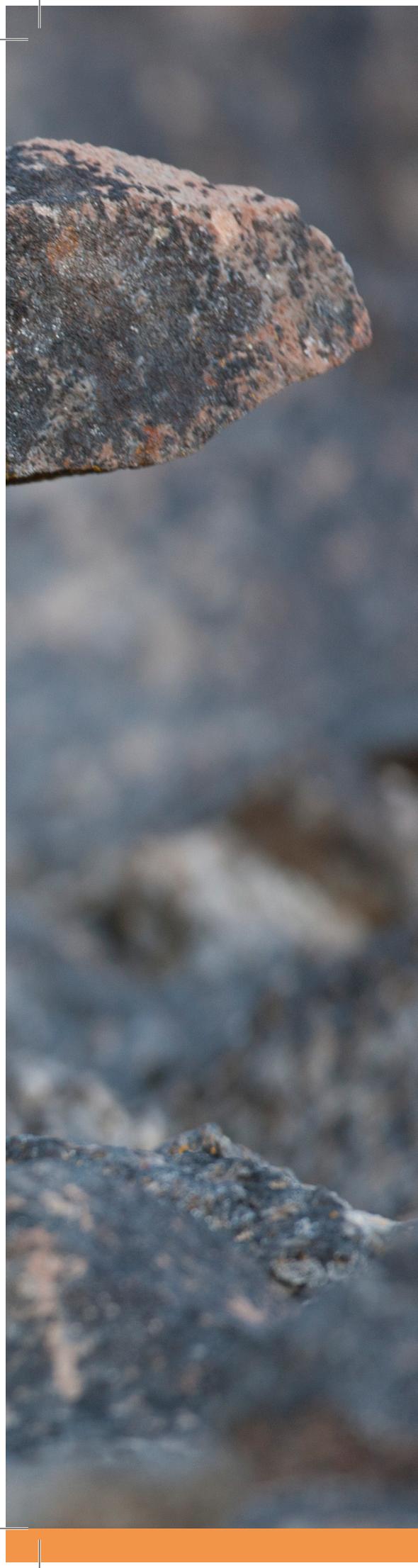
STRATEGIC GOALS

NDOW IN THE FUTURE

CONSERVATION TRENDS







NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	2
MISSION STATEMENT	4
CORE FUNCTIONS & PRIORITIES	6
PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE	8
CONSERVATION TRENDS, CHALLENGES, & OPPORTUNITIES	10
FY18-22 STRATEGIC PLAN SUCCESS STORIES	14
STRATEGIC GOAL 1	16
STRATEGIC GOAL 2	20
STRATEGIC GOAL 3	24
STRATEGIC GOAL 4	28
PLANNING PROCESS	32

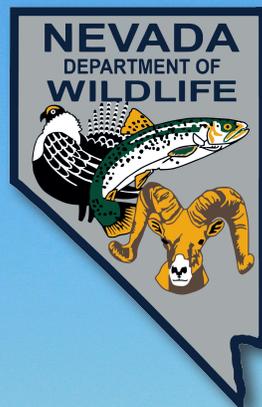
OVERVIEW

As the State’s primary government agency established to protect and conserve wildlife and its habitat, the Nevada Department of Wildlife (the Department or “NDOW”) is comprised of dedicated professionals working diligently to fulfill our mission and meet public expectations.

The Department is organized into seven Divisions (Data and Technology Services [DATS], Conservation Education [Con Ed], Law Enforcement [LE], Game Management, Fisheries Management, Wildlife Diversity, and Habitat) that each develop programs and projects under the direction of the Director’s Office.

These programs are implemented with over 260 full-time employees working across the state, which is divided into three regions. The Department operates 13 wildlife management areas (WMAs) totaling approximately 160,000 acres, four fish hatcheries, and eight major facilities including regional offices and headquarters.

Broad policy for the Department is established by the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners (Commission). This nine-member, governor-appointed board also sets seasons and regulations, reviews certain special reserve account budgets, and receives and considers wildlife-related input from the public and 17 County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife (CABMW). The Department serves the role of public



trust manager for Nevada’s wildlife and wildlife habitat resources. The Commission serves as trustees for these resources. When making decisions, the Commission considers biological science as well as social demands, which, at times, may conflict with one another.

Nevada’s population is rapidly growing while also experiencing significant demographic changes and shifting wildlife value orientations and priorities. Changing public views and perspectives further complicate wildlife management.

The Department is committed to providing the best-available biological science, information, and analysis in fulfilling our conservation mission. The FY23-27 Strategic Plan emphasizes several key priorities. The Department is focused on 1) serving Nevada’s public, 2) protecting, conserving and enhancing Nevada’s wildlife and habitat, 3) expanding funding and capacity, 4) investing in and engaging with staff. There is also a strong commitment to consistent, authentic communication between Department leadership, divisions, commissioners, County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife, and the general public.

The Department recognizes now, more than ever, that conservation and its broad societal benefits are of utmost relevance to everyone, and we are committed to serving all citizens.



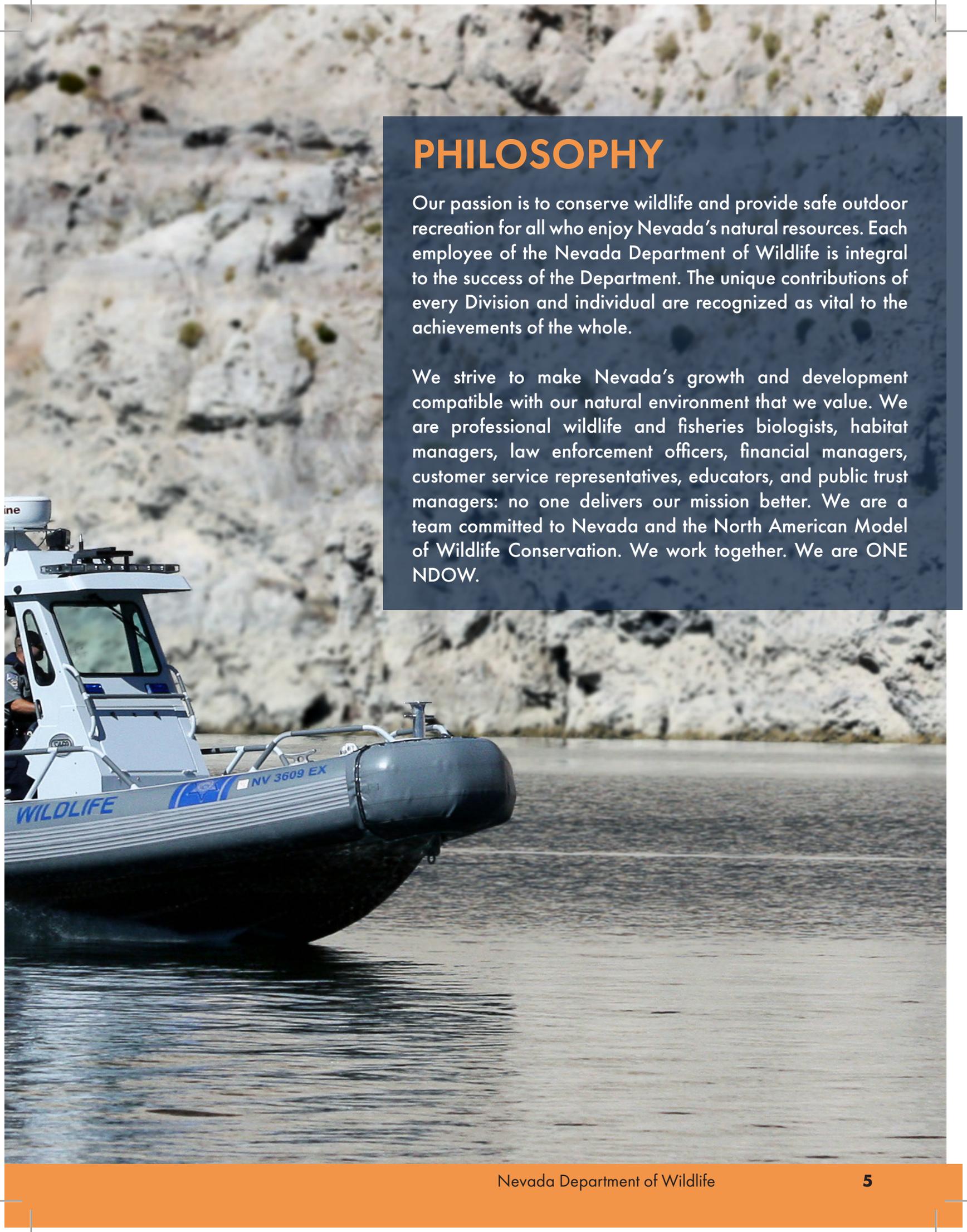
MISSION STATEMENT

To protect, conserve, manage and restore wildlife and its habitat for the 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.

VISION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Conserving Nevada's wildlife and wild places is essential, meaningful, and relevant to residents and visitors because wildlife adds value to human health and well-being. Enhancing conservation is what drives the Department of Wildlife employees today and will provide a greater quality of life for generations to come. Every strategy, every goal, every action the Nevada Department of Wildlife pursues will strengthen our ability to protect and conserve Nevada's wildlife.





PHILOSOPHY

Our passion is to conserve wildlife and provide safe outdoor recreation for all who enjoy Nevada's natural resources. Each employee of the Nevada Department of Wildlife is integral to the success of the Department. The unique contributions of every Division and individual are recognized as vital to the achievements of the whole.

We strive to make Nevada's growth and development compatible with our natural environment that we value. We are professional wildlife and fisheries biologists, habitat managers, law enforcement officers, financial managers, customer service representatives, educators, and public trust managers: no one delivers our mission better. We are a team committed to Nevada and the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. We work together. We are ONE NDOW.



Core Functions and Priorities

SERVING NEVADA'S PUBLIC:

First and foremost, the Nevada Department of Wildlife is committed to fulfilling our statutory responsibilities to manage and conserve all of Nevada's wildlife and their habitats, in trust for current and future citizens, and in promoting boating safety. We strive to provide every Nevadan and visitor with quality assistance and access to all the services we provide. The Department is charged with ensuring the safety of everyone on Nevada's waterways and ensuring that hunters are trained how best to safely pursue animals in the field. We work to provide Nevadans with access to exceptional wildlife education programming through clinics, seminars, community events, wildlife education centers and webinars. Educators engage with school districts and administrators to share resources that fit well into K-12 standards and curriculums. The Department also works to integrate a variety of learning styles and use innovative technologies to make sure materials are both engaging to students and easily implementable for educators.

PROTECT, CONSERVE AND ENHANCE NEVADA'S WILDLIFE AND HABITATS:

The Nevada Department of Wildlife protects our natural environment, manages habitats, manages wildlife populations, and conserves ecosystems for the benefit of wildlife and all Nevadans. Resource divisions are responsible for several program areas, including Fisheries, Habitat, Game, and Wildlife Diversity. The Department's Law Enforcement Division is responsible for enforcing Nevada's regulations and laws that protect our wildlife and natural resources. Each Division contributes to the management and conservation of the nearly 900 species that call Nevada home.

EXPANDED FUNDING AND CAPACITY:

The Nevada Department of Wildlife sees the need to build a larger, more diverse workforce better able to serve the public. To accomplish this our narrow funding model as currently constructed needs to be broadened and diversified. Hiring a larger, more diverse workforce through new funding mechanisms would give many Nevadans the opportunity to learn, earn, and live well.

STAFF INVESTMENT AND ENGAGEMENT:

The Nevada Department of Wildlife is dedicated to creating and maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and efficient workforce. We promote an environment where all employees have the opportunity for continual learning and career advancement, while prioritizing a healthy work-life balance.



Public Trust Doctrine

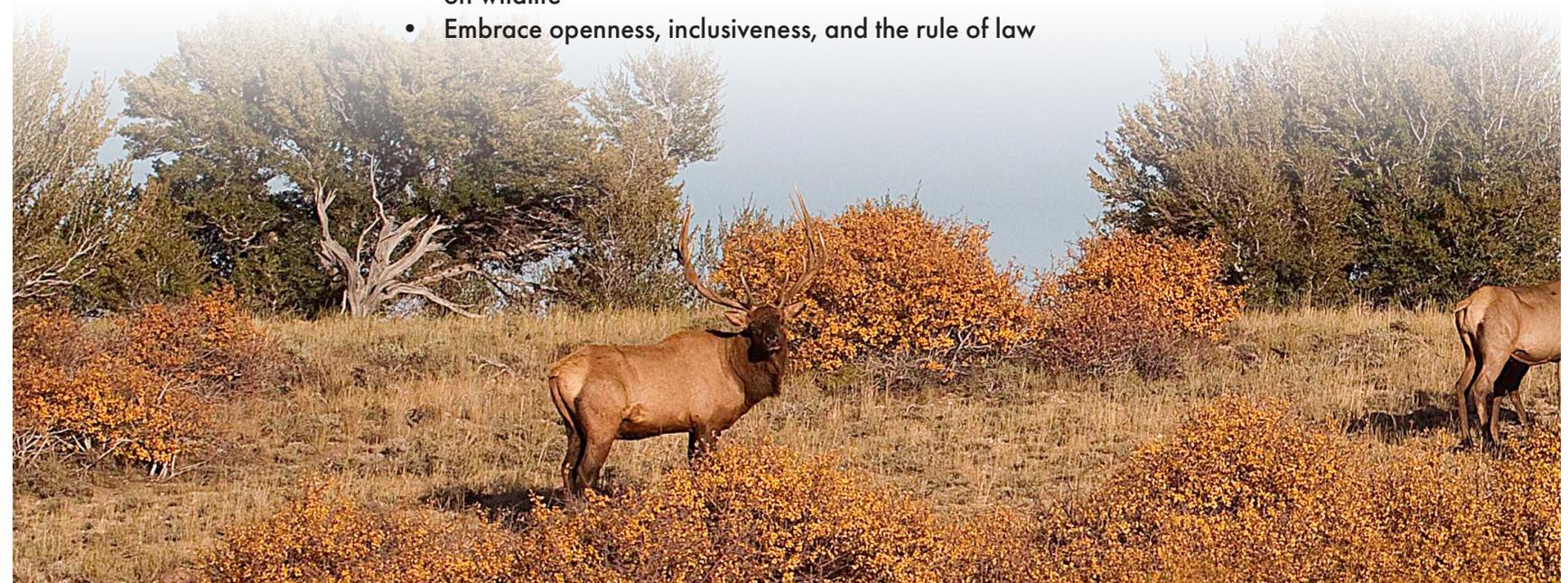
According to Public Trust Doctrine and tenets of the North American Model of Wildlife Management, wildlife agencies act as trustees, conserving and managing wildlife, fish and waterways, on behalf of current and future citizens.

The Department, along with other wildlife agencies, believes the Public Trust Doctrine establishes the core principles central to the North American Model of Wildlife Management—the notion that ...

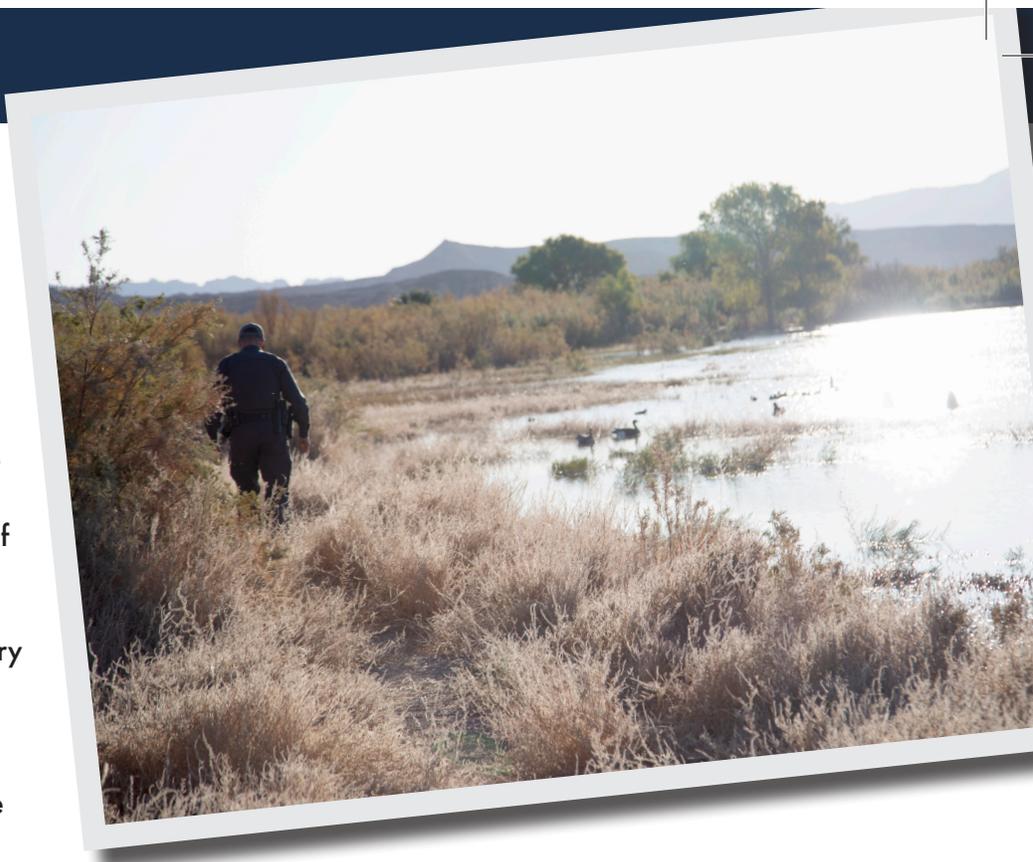
Wildlife is a public resource, managed for the common good, and held in custodianship by a cadre of trained professionals who serve as trustees and are held accountable by the beneficiaries: the public.

To fulfill our public trust responsibilities, NDOW embraces the concept of sound governance while serving our purpose of wildlife management and public safety. The following commitments embody the collective priorities developed throughout the strategic plan and incorporate principles of consistency, transparency, accountability, trust, and fairness. The Department is an inclusive organization that strives for innovation and provides a space for staff to develop. Expectations of NDOW employees will always include:

- Govern with integrity – which includes being honest, accountable, and fair
- Insist on accountability and transparency
- Respect and serve all citizens and their diverse views on wildlife
- Embrace openness, inclusiveness, and the rule of law

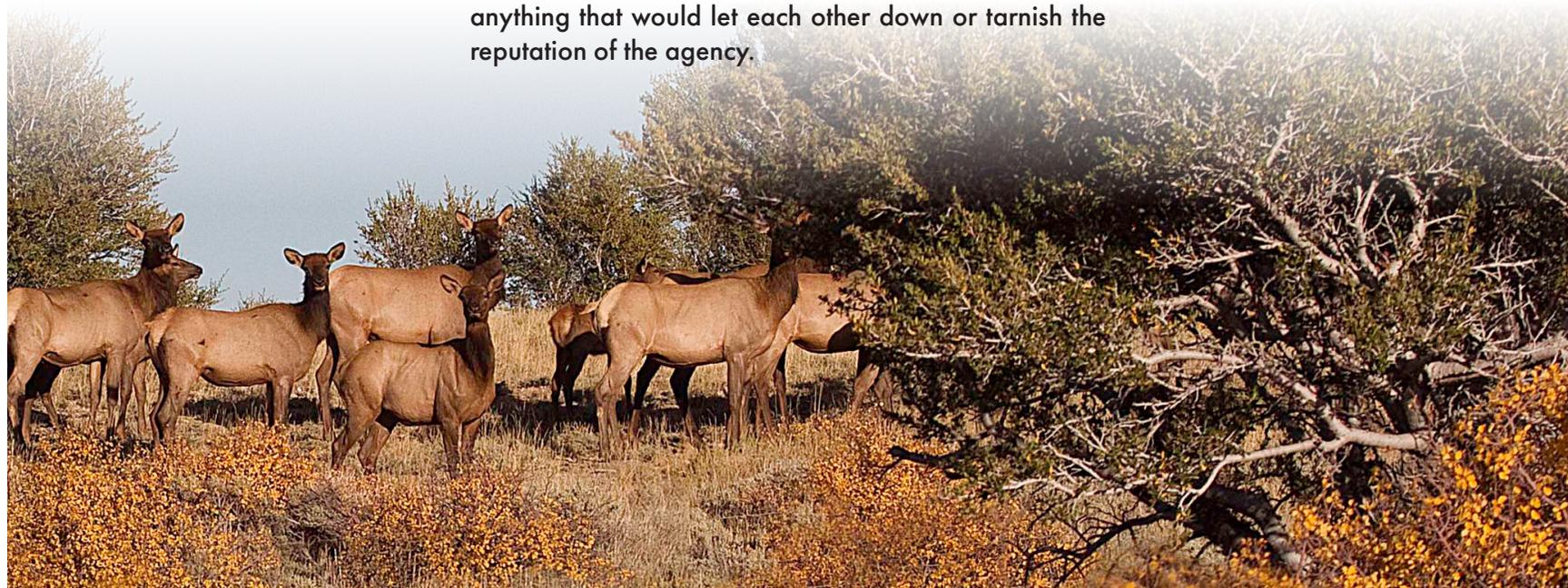


- Empower leadership, coordination, innovation, and use of sound science
- Value and strive for a diverse and inclusive workforce that represents the diversity of the state
- Maximize the engagement of citizens in collaborative processes and partnerships
- Review and utilize contemporary literature and science
- Govern with humility and empathy
- Recognize and commit to the collective goals of the Department



Ethics laws help to govern employees' scope of authority, benefit, privilege, and compensation. Abuse of position violates the public's trust of the individual and the agency they serve.

Personal integrity promotes trust. Choices to uphold standards of sound governance not only strengthen the integrity of the system but also encourage others to do the same. Personal integrity means doing what's right and living up to our high standards even when nobody is looking. It means having each other's backs, upholding one another's good names and reputation, and not doing anything that would let each other down or tarnish the reputation of the agency.



Conservation Trends, Challenges, & Opportunities

The Department recognizes that there are significant challenges that wildlife conservation faces in relation to shifting societal values, demographics, and economics. To address these challenges, which are not unique to Nevada, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies developed the Relevancy Roadmap. This document identifies barriers wildlife agencies face, including agency culture, agency capacity, constituent culture, constituent capacity and political and legal constraints. The Roadmap also provides strategies and actions to address these barriers, many of which the Department has incorporated into this strategic plan.

POPULATION GROWTH AND DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT:

Nevada's population continues to grow and diversify. With that comes changing wildlife values along with other societal challenges.

Challenging Factors and Trends:

- Increased urban wildlife conflicts
- Dramatically shifting wildlife values
- Increased urban expansion and habitat fragmentation
- The NDOW workforce does not reflect the diversity



of Nevada's population

- Lack of staff capacity to adequately respond to the rapid pace of development across the state in both urban and rural areas to effectively ensure wildlife resources are conserved.
- Increased urbanization that further disconnects residents from Nevada's wildlife.
- Nevada is the 7th largest state (109,781 square miles), and yet compared to its size, the Department has a relatively small number of game wardens.

Opportunities:

- When reviewing development activities, the Department will advocate for wildlife conservation and protection.
- Agency staff will be cognizant of shifting wildlife values and will work to engage with a variety of audiences.
- The Department will strive to be inclusive and will work towards staffing a workforce that is more reflective of Nevada's diverse population.

ECONOMIC:

Economic cycles affect the public's discretionary spending on fishing, hunting, and boating, which can negatively affect funding available for mission specific activities.

Challenging Factors and Trends:

- Identifying and acquiring critical, non-federal funding sources, is necessary and often required to match federal grants.
- Technological advances drive new efficiencies, but the cost of adopting new technologies may present fiscal and administrative challenges.
- Housing and the cost of living in many parts of Nevada have made it difficult to recruit and retain employees.
- Federal excise tax apportionments and grants that we are heavily reliant upon vary annually, while the cost of business continues to rise, creating challenges to effective, durable conservation.

Continued on page 12



Opportunities:

- The Department will identify and pursue unique funding sources.
- The Department will employ innovative ways to attract applicants with diverse backgrounds to fill open positions.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Nevada is made up of a diverse population that uses a variety of communication styles and mediums to stay engaged with wildlife-related information.

Challenging Factors and Trends:

- Communication tools are constantly evolving, and the Department needs to be adaptable and flexible in responding to new technologies (platforms, mediums, systems) to engage the public we serve.

Opportunities:

- The Department will become more innovative in finding ways to deliver our messages in an increasingly crowded marketplace.
- The Department will use multiple communication channels to connect people to Nevada's wildlife resources.

ENVIRONMENT:

Changing environmental conditions, emerging disease, and habitat degradation create challenges for the conservation of Nevada's wildlife.

Challenging Factors and Trends:

- Wildlife disease and transmission of disease between domestic animals and wildlife are difficult to manage.
- Climate change exacerbates drought, wildfire, and invasive species that degrade habitat suitability and connectivity, reduces forage availability, and water resources vital for wildlife populations.
- Drought conditions throughout the Western United States have had dramatic effect on boating participation, which is significantly declining.
- Most Nevada ecosystems that are in a degraded state are slow to recover, therefore restoration projects will require a significant amount of time for desired outcomes to be fully realized.
- Nevada is a leader when it comes to renewable energy development on public land with proposed projects increasing at an unprecedented rate. Renewable energy development can pose significant



risks to wildlife if projects are poorly planned without wildlife concerns being fully addressed. The Department lacks the capacity to thoroughly review projects and make recommendations to avoid, minimize or offset wildlife related impacts.

Opportunities:

- The Department will use science and high-quality data to address potential impacts and make recommendations that protect wildlife and habitat.
- The Department will seek opportunities to increase capacity in order to adequately review projects.
- The Department will work cooperatively with all partners to ensure wildlife needs are considered and mitigated in project development.

OTHER CHALLENGES:

- Expanding populations of free-roaming horses and burros on private, public, federal, state, and military lands are impacting the future of Nevada’s wildlife.
- Input on National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses for projects on federal lands requires an

inter-Divisional approach that stresses capacity for each division. As a state with over 85 percent public lands, the Department struggles to keep up with the number of projects proposed that may result in impacts to wildlife.

Opportunities:

- The Department will further enhance an already effective partnership with federal agencies and conservation organizations to address these challenges.
- The Department will continue to inform policy makers and the public on conservation challenges and ongoing efforts to mitigate climate change.
- The Department will prioritize inter-Divisional cooperation in response to NEPA analysis and project development.

DID YOU KNOW

Each year, NDOW works on habitat restoration projects that impact more than 80,000 acres. These projects are critical to wildlife and preserving wildlife habitat!



FY18-22 Strategic Plan Success Stories

As Nevada's state wildlife agency, NDOW faces the challenge of having a broad mandate for the restoration and management of fish and wildlife resources, but with limited staff capacity. We have seen promising success stories come from the previous strategic plan. The Department attributes these successes to our dedicated staff, constituents, and guidance from the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners. The following list is comprised

of projects/actions the Department has identified as success stories from the previous 5-year strategic plan or successful projects we have partnered with other groups which were not identified in the plan. Though these projects are listed as "success stories" we remain committed to continuing these efforts although they will no longer be called out in the current Strategic Plan.

- **Department Newsletter:** Distributed an internal newsletter on a quarterly basis (NDOW TRACKS) to build cohesion and improve communication.
- Partnered with Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe to reintroduce Bighorn Sheep to the Lake range.
- **Internal Communication:** Developed and implemented an internal communication plan that addressed and improved inter-Divisional communications via shared calendars, newsletters, periodic coordination meetings, regular staff updates and opportunities for input and feedback from staff.
- **Mobile Website:** Developed and launched a mobile friendly website.

- **Fishing Regulations:** Reviewed and updated fishing regulations to simplify requirements and improve customer experience consistent with management needs.
- **Hunter and Angler Outreach:** Grew hunter and angler participants on par with population growth, through educational programs, social media, and digital marketing platforms in an effort to increase base license sales by 2% by 2019.
- **Public Sector Marketing:** Leveraged a digital marketing platform built for public sector organizations, to implement license renewal emails, auto-renew options, and thank you e-mails.
- **Habitat Project Database:** Created a Habitat Project data application available to all partners to view, evaluate and track proposed, implemented

or completed projects.

- **Industrial Artificial Pond Database:** Created an industrial artificial pond data application to provide an online interface to submit, view and report industrial artificial pond permit related items.
- **Information and Data Tracking Technology:** Improved Operation Game Thief (OGT) reporting options via mobile friendly website and TTY (Text Telephone for the deaf and hard of hearing) by 2020. Improved tracking of evidence, case files, citation dispositions, warnings, arrests, and unlawfully killed big game reports.
- **Habitat Division Strategic Framework:** Completed a strategic framework to focus the Habitat Division efforts to enhance and restore priority habitats.



- **First Come First Serve:** A first come first serve-based tag program was implemented in order to allocate tags which were returned to the Department within two weeks of the season start date. Historically, these tags were unable to be re-allocated due to restrictions in NAC.
- **Tag Transfer and Deferment:** The 2019 and 2021 Legislative Sessions implemented statutory changes authorizing the Commission to create a program allowing the transfer and deferment of

big game tags under certain circumstances.

- **Urban Ponds:** Two urban ponds were fully developed between 2018 and 2022; one in Gardnerville and one in Winnemucca. Five other urban ponds are currently in the process of being developed; two in Spanish Springs, one in Gardnerville, one in Elko, and one in Ely.
- Improved Hatchery Fish Production
- Enhanced Native Fish Augmentation
- Enhanced Aquatic Invasive Species Program

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

SERVING NEVADA'S PUBLIC

The Department works to serve Nevada's public by conserving Nevada's wildlife and habitat on behalf of our citizens. Although the Department is sometimes perceived as the agency that only manages hunting and fishing opportunities, we strive to provide access to wildlife through a variety of recreational and educational opportunities.

NDOW has identified a number of priorities that will help accomplish these goals, including improved constituent outreach, broader citizen engagement, increased educational efforts, greater availability and application of scientific data in decisions, and additional programs and services to increase the public's connection to nature statewide. To fully realize these goals, the Department will need to be adaptable, flexible and open to change.

FY23-27 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

CREATE AND SUSTAIN EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS:

NDOW recognizes that effective partnerships enhance and expand the agency's ability to deliver programs and engage our constituents. NDOW will ensure access and availability to wildlife and outdoor recreation with a desire to create a better understanding of conservation by all constituents and strengthen our ability to fulfill their needs.

STRATEGIES:

Share Successes and Challenges: Celebrate our successes through newsletters, press releases, video,

social media, signage, and other media outlets on a regular basis. Increase public awareness of novel challenges facing the Department, wildlife, and Nevada's habitats.

Community Partnerships: Seek partnerships targeting a broader constituency to promote wildlife education and citizen connection to nature. Continue to grow and maintain current partnerships where public education and wildlife conservation programming are conducted on city, federal, and non-governmental organizations' properties. Provide educational and promotional materials to a variety of partners.

School Outreach: We want to ensure all youth have access to high quality wildlife education programming. The Department will continue to develop high-quality, standards-based wildlife education programming

for classrooms around the state. The goal of these programs is to expose students to Nevada's wildlife, foster stewardship, and meet science standards through wildlife conservation content. The Department will work with school districts, administrators, and others to use the most current technologies to share content with as many schools as possible. We want these materials to be accessible to those in public schools, charter schools, private schools, and for those who are homeschooled. These materials will be shared in an easy to digest format for educators and the Department will increase capacity in the form of increased recruitment and training of volunteer instructors for these programs. The Department will work to serve our youth regardless of their learning environment, or preferred language and will develop programming to be taught using a variety of learning styles to make sure we are effectively engaging our youth.

Continued on page 18



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Increase wildlife viewing, hunting, angling, boating and outdoor recreation participation from all citizens.

STRATEGIES:

Wildlife Discovery: Share engaging wildlife viewing materials that highlight locations throughout our state that provide excellent wildlife viewing opportunities. Additionally, develop engaging conservation learning opportunities at WMAs, hatcheries, and other NDOW locations that are inclusive of all wildlife. Continue to support nature tourism endeavors and provide programming that increases knowledge and understanding of the conservation challenges Nevada's wildlife faces.

Angler Opportunities: Maintain and expand angler opportunities in both urban and rural areas. Engage underserved communities by working to make angling opportunities more accessible. Establish partnerships

with community businesses, conservation organizations, municipalities, and other stakeholders for informational resources/videos and mentorships.

Hunter Opportunities: Maintain and expand hunting opportunities throughout the state. Improve hunting opportunities by working with conservation partners to determine limiting factors for game species and working to address those challenges. Engage underserved communities by working to make hunting more accessible. Seek to increase participation for primitive weapon hunting opportunities by utilizing modern platforms (webinars, seminars, social). Establish partnerships with community businesses, conservation organizations, and other stakeholders for educational and informational resources/videos and mentorships.

Boating Safety Education: Continue to expand the boating education program through focused statewide communication campaigns including specific outreach



geared for the Hispanic audience. Create new opportunities by partnering with local boating groups, private businesses and expand education for the paddle sport community.

Access Opportunities: Pursue opportunities to improve access to Nevada's wildlife resources in situations where current access does not exist or is limited.

Volunteer and Community Science Opportunities: Provide opportunities and training for volunteers to help with community science projects such as inventory, habitat improvement, and educational programming. These opportunities are mutually beneficial. Citizens can engage with wildlife and habitat resources in meaningful ways, help build much needed capacity within the Department, and provide the Department with critical in-kind match.

Outdoor Connection Plan: Connect people from a diversity of backgrounds to nature, engage and serve broad constituencies and enhance conservation in Nevada by implementing NDOW's Outdoor Connection Plan.

Public Information: The Department will provide Nevada's citizens with authentic, engaging information, delivered through multiple platforms to better reach diverse audiences.

PUBLIC INFORMATION:

STRATEGIES:

Data Access: Maintain data access platforms for the public such as the GIS Open Data Portal, Habitat Conservation Project Portal, FishNV app, and HuntNV app.



Record Requests: Increase the accessibility of Department data by efficiently processing both public records requests and GIS data requests.

Online/Media Presence: Utilize various social media, television, Department website, and radio platforms to share conservation stories and challenges. The Department will also commit to maintaining and updating the website for improved customer access and updated content. Develop new engaging tools to connect the public to their natural resources, such as a Wildlife Viewing App.

Public Input: Make the public aware of the public scoping process and communicate opportunities for engagement. Policy recommendations from the Department go through the County Advisory Board process with public input and are approved by the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners. Encourage public participation in County Advisory Board and Commission meetings.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

PROTECT, CONSERVE AND ENHANCE NEVADA'S WILDLIFE AND HABITAT

The Department has legislative authority for conservation and management of the state's wildlife resources and is charged with preserving, protecting, managing, and restoring Nevada's wildlife and habitat. To accomplish this broad mission the Department uses best available science, rigorous survey methods, and generates strong and reliable data to conserve and protect wildlife resources. This core work of the Department is done in trust of the citizens of Nevada.

Nevada citizens have different views in how wildlife should be managed based on their values. These wildlife values will shift over time and navigating shifting social values is difficult. Balancing management decisions with competing values, creates both challenges and opportunities for the Department. As the trustees of Nevada's wildlife, the Department and Commission combine good governance with the public trust doctrine by considering the interests of all potential beneficiaries and weighing the tradeoffs. It is important for the Department to help people understand the variety of factors limiting Nevada's natural resources. Staff will encourage participation and provide opportunities for the public to equitably access all perspectives.

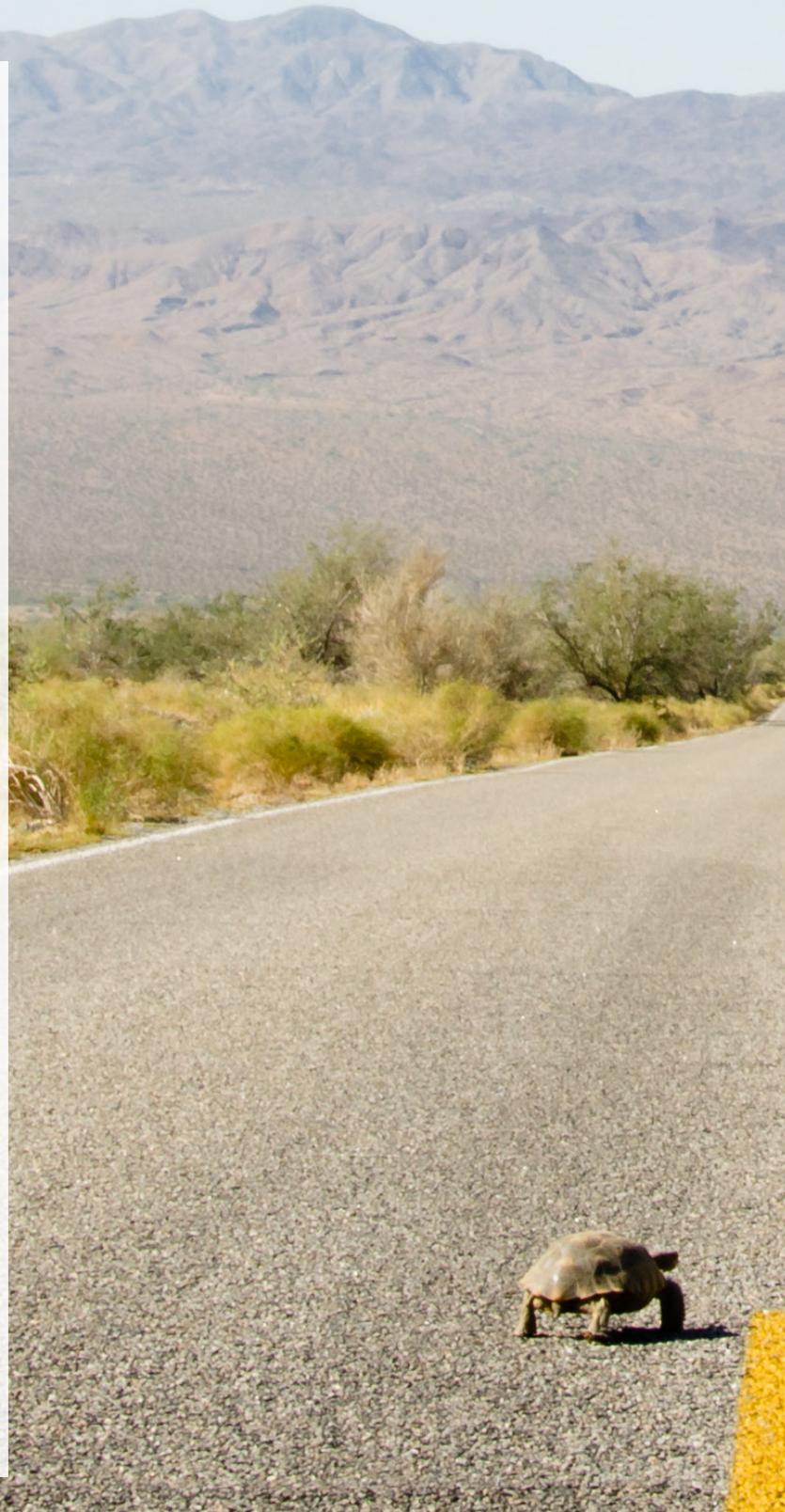
FY23-27 Objectives and Strategies

WILDLIFE:

Maintain healthy and thriving populations of wildlife.

STRATEGIES:

- **Wildlife Action Plan:** Implement the Nevada Wildlife Action Plan goals and objectives for species of greatest conservation need and critical habitats.





- **Sound Science and Management:** Use rigorous and defensible science, well-defined goals, and priority actions that further conservation for the entire state.
- **Species Surveys and Actions:** Conduct species surveys and implement management actions as needed to increase knowledge of species distributions, population sizes and demographics, and habitat utilization. This is done to facilitate informed management recommendations, direct land-use planning decisions, and monitor population health. Much of this work is not based on a single species but is focused on assemblages of species and the entire ecosystem. Survey techniques will be continuously evaluated and refined when such improvements would enhance species conservation and management.
- **Invasive Species:** Mitigate the introduction of invasive species through effective strategies for education, prevention and containment, and eradication. Make documentation and mapping of invasive species available to the public.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with government partners, tribal nations, non-governmental organizations, businesses and industry, private individuals and landowners. Create new partnerships with non-traditional partners whenever possible.
- **Native Aquatic Species:** Maintain and enhance native aquatic species assemblages and mitigate threats from all sources.
- **Sport Fish:** Manage sportfish populations within their biological and regulatory constraints to maximize angler participation and satisfaction for all anglers.
- **Wildlife Management:** Manage wildlife populations within objectives established by the Department and Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners, management plans, and agreements.
- **Permit Compliance:** Ensure Department's Special License, Application and Permit (SLAP) program compliance, and pursue and implement all opportunities to mitigate impacts from industrial development activities through appropriate habitat conservation strategies. SLAP permits and all other permitting will be consistent Department-wide.

Continued on page 22



HABITAT:

Enhance habitat for the nearly 900 wildlife species in Nevada.

STRATEGIES:

- **Fish and Wildlife Habitats:** Maintain, enhance, and protect priority aquatic and terrestrial habitats.
- **Wildlife Action Plan and Nevada Habitat Conservation Framework:** Through collaboration with a diverse array of stakeholders, establish the Nevada Habitat Conservation Framework. As part of this framework, develop a comprehensive Sagebrush Habitat Plan and Wildlife Connectivity Plan.
- **Water Sources:** Cooperatively protect, enhance, and maintain both natural and artificial water sources across all land ownerships.
- **Wildlife and Habitat Partnerships:** Proactively collaborate with all interested partners through the Nevada Partners for Conservation and Development to efficiently and effectively direct restoration funds and efforts across public and private lands. Further develop the Private Lands 4 Wildlife Program to consistently incorporate efforts on private land.
- **Wildlife Management Areas:** Maintain, protect, and enhance wildlife habitats on wildlife management areas (WMAs) and all state lands managed by the Department by applying the best available science and best management practices through the implementation of active Comprehensive Management Plans and annual work plans.
- **Industrial and Development Review:** Develop standardized methods and documents for conducting and providing comments on technical environmental review and mitigation guidance.
- **Water Development Data Application:** Create a water development data application to provide an interface to view and report on water development program actions, increasing data availability and accuracy, and maximizing personnel efficiency.

WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT:

Protect wildlife resources through comprehensive enforcement of wildlife laws and regulations with the intent of achieving 100 percent compliance. Accomplish our mission by enabling our game wardens to patrol the mountains, deserts, and waterways of Nevada.

STRATEGIES:

- **Voluntary Compliance:** Encourage voluntary compliance with fish and wildlife laws and regulations. Recognize that voluntary compliance is encouraged not only through the existence and knowledge of laws, but also through visibility of Game Wardens, to deter violations and help inform the public in real-time.
- **Wildlife Crime:** Violators who intentionally commit wildlife crime and take resources from the law-abiding public will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Law enforcement recognizes that not all violators commit wildlife crime intentionally. In all cases, fairness and accountability should remain the constant. Strive for a proactive wildlife law enforcement model to maximize the protection of wildlife and the public in the State of Nevada.
- **Outreach:** Continue to improve public outreach efforts by utilizing all available media resources, career days, and school outreach, to share the importance of protecting wildlife and natural resources. Share information with the public to make them more aware of how instrumental they can be in helping to protect wildlife resources and increasing overall public safety. Pursue opportunities to encourage careers in wildlife law enforcement.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Ensure public safety by reducing watercraft, hunting, and angling fatalities, and injuries through both education and proactive enforcement.

STRATEGIES:

- **Hunting Safety Patrols:** Maximize hunting patrols to inform the public and achieve zero hunting/firearms related injuries and fatalities.
- **Watercraft Safety Patrols:** Maximize watercraft patrols to eliminate watercraft collisions and watercraft related injuries and fatalities.
- **Watercraft Collision Analysis:** Continue investigation of watercraft collisions, their causes, and analysis of trends, with special attention paid to fatal events and how they can be avoided in the future.

- **Proactive Impaired Boater Detection:** Maximize detection and apprehension of motorized watercraft operators who are under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substances.
- **ADA Accessibility:** Make all state-managed WMAs, fishing piers, and boat ramps ADA accessible, dependent upon water levels and other challenges.
- **Safe Infrastructure:** Provide and ensure safe state-owned or managed buildings, facilities, and residences statewide.
- **Communications:** Ensure that all radios and dispatch equipment are functioning efficiently and effectively. Ensure all employees are properly trained on how to use radios.
- **Wildlife Encounters:** Provide education and training to employees and the public on how to interact with potentially dangerous wildlife encounters.
- **Wildlife Human Attack Response Training (WHART):** Ensure the Department has regional response teams identified, equipped, with annual training for all possible wildlife encounters, including attacks on humans.
- **Fish and Wildlife Disease:** Pathogens can be a naturally occurring component of healthy ecosystems and may help to maintain diversity and health of wildlife populations across all terrestrial and aquatic species. Introduced diseases, and changes in disease dynamics due to environmental disturbances may be detrimental to wildlife and their long-term conservation.
 - Department personnel will receive appropriate education about communicable wildlife diseases across all species and respond to reports of disease or mortality events in a timely manner.
 - Maintain and improve wildlife health within habitats and Department facilities in a manner that results in robust and productive wildlife populations.
 - Enhance efforts to prevent the introduction and proliferation of novel wildlife pathogens through legal restrictions, public outreach, and surveillance.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

EXPANDED FUNDING AND CAPACITY

ENABLE EMPLOYEES TO BE AS PRODUCTIVE AS POSSIBLE THROUGH STEADY FUNDING SOURCES AND ADEQUATE STAFFING CAPACITY.

The Department is dedicated to establishing and maintaining diversified funding sources to enable efficient operational execution of Department goals and objectives. The Department maintains stable funding sources from federal grants, matching grant sources, and revenues associated with hunting, angling, and boating. Opportunity exists to broaden novel partnerships, extend the Department's constituency base, and secure new sources of funding, which is anticipated to improve and accelerate the achievement of the Department's mission, objectives, and short-term initiatives.

The Department will strive to maximize Divisional and Regional communication and coordination to foster improved collaboration. This will allow the Department to protect and conserve wildlife and habitat, while enforcing regulation to ensure safe participation in outdoor recreation.

FY23-27 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

FEDERAL FUNDING:

Identify and secure additional opportunities for federal funding sources, as they become available.

STRATEGIES:

- **Annual Fiscal Training:** The Department will train grant managers annually on internal processes and procedures for securing federal funds and the nuances that come with federal funding.
- **Federal Partnerships:** Seek out federal partnerships to secure more federal funds as well as increased funding towards current or new Department projects. Employees should prioritize matching funds as soon as they seek new funding.

- **Basic Grants Management/Project Leaders Training:** Each employee seeking out federal grants will be required to attend relevant training on managing grants. The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) program provides a Basic Grants Management and Project Leaders course.

MATCHING OPPORTUNITIES:

The Department will pursue acceptable opportunities to provide more matching funds for federal grants.

STRATEGIES:

- **Volunteer Match Program:** Divisions will prioritize using volunteers on projects and promote volunteer opportunities. Biologists/project leads will work with the volunteer coordinators as soon as they become aware of a project need. The Department will ensure employees are trained on the proper procedures for using volunteer time as match.

Continued on page 26

- **Wildlife Trust Fund:** The Department will partner with industry, other governmental entities including tribal nations, NGOs and special interest groups as possible funding sources for the future. Maximize NGO donations by working with them on projects important to them and provide information on how we use their donations.
- **Restricted Reserve Funding Management:** Enhance the Restricted Reserve Account funding (duck stamp, trout stamp, habitat conservation fee, upland game stamp, heritage funds, Conservation Bond Program, mitigation, etc.) application, reporting and management process through the development of a web-based application to make the process easier for applicants.

IMPROVED EFFICIENCY: The Department will ensure best practices are followed and will use resources efficiently to complete daily tasks.

STRATEGIES:

- **Vehicle Efficiency:** Improve vehicle use efficiency by reducing the repair and maintenance costs for Department owned vehicles. There are multiple strategies through which this could be achieved, including purchasing more economical vehicles, encouraging shared vehicle use and managing the Department vehicle fleet through the fleet manager position. The Divisions will support the fleet program manager's efforts. The Department will invest in a fleet management program to track all vehicle maintenance, mileage and associated costs.

- **Specialized Equipment:** Improve the shared use of specialized equipment to maximize efficiency, reduce equipment acquisition needs and create centralized locations for this equipment. Facilitate coordination and create a system for employees to check out specialized equipment.
- **Resource Teams:** The Department will become more efficient and create transdisciplinary teams in specific geographic areas. Each team will also have adequate and appropriate administrative staff to support their efforts.

INCREASED CAPACITY:

The Department's mission fulfillment is dependent on increasing capacity through a variety of resources. The Department is committed to bolstering the volunteer program and will continue to promote and advertise upcoming opportunities. With adequate funding, the Department will increase the number of FTE positions within each division. Until adequate funding is identified, the Department will prioritize partnering with those who have manpower to immediately expend funds on shovel-ready projects.

STRATEGIES:

- **Volunteer Infrastructure:** Invest in the required skills and technical infrastructure to manage and grow the number of volunteers and instructors.
- **Partner Organizations:** The Department will foster new partnerships and build on existing partnerships with conservation organizations and other groups to add capacity.
 - **Staff Capacity:** The Department has unprecedented need and opportunity to build a larger workforce better able to fulfill our mission and serve the public.



DID YOU KNOW

NDOW works to provide wildlife in the driest parts of the state with much needed water by using manmade waterholes called guzzlers? With help from our many partners NDOW hauled more than 167,000 gallons of water to 30 different guzzlers in Nevada in 2020.



STRATEGIC GOAL 4

STAFF INVESTMENT AND ENGAGEMENT



NDOW believes in creating and fostering a learning culture that engages and supports employees and is committed to continuing to build a diverse workforce that values different perspectives, experiences, cultures, ethnicities, gender and races. From leadership to seasonal staff, each Division and Region will improve communication, knowledge-sharing, best-practices, and skill development to work cooperatively across the Department to enhance our conservation and management of wildlife and their habitats. Supervisors will prioritize, encourage, and support cross-divisional training and projects.

The Department is committed to fostering a culture in which staff communicate transparently, are meaningfully engaged in their work, engaged with each other, and



encouraged to better themselves in a physically and emotionally safe environment. NDOW will prioritize employee safety and will increase trainings and a variety of safety resources to better equip employees to do their jobs safely.

NDOW invites and rewards innovation, creativity, novel problem-solving and experimentation. Rooted in our purpose and loyal to our belief that wildlife conservation is best served by engaged staff, NDOW encourages staff to: Be yourself; Take risks; Learn from mistakes; Identify problems; and Ask questions.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife will foster a safe space where staff are encouraged to share their perspectives, thoughts, and concerns candidly without fear of retribution or judgement. As a Department, we will hold ourselves accountable to commitments, to sound governance, and to each other so that we can most effectively fulfill our mission. Our agency is only

fully engaged when we are willing to communicate transparently with each other at all levels and when we are willing to provide and accept feedback openly and respectfully.

To help foster a learning environment in which employees are encouraged to better themselves, the Department will further strengthen staff by offering opportunities for them to grow both personally and professionally. This will be achieved by investing in both professional and personal staff training, driving collaboration through cross-division projects and initiatives, transparent two-way communication, and improved approaches to identifying, hiring, and retaining a highly qualified diverse workforce. Long-term planning and budgeting will also be a priority to accomplish these initiatives. Some strategies may include forming an Employee Engagement Committee or alternative role.

Continued on page 30

FY23-27 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:

The Department will strive for transparent two-way communication at all levels. Staff will be made aware of how decisions are made, and that all are equally accountable. Every employee is vital to the agency's success and contributes collectively to the conservation of our wildlife and habitats. Employees are encouraged to bring their full self to work. The following initiatives are designed to improve cohesiveness and collaboration and to increase efficiency of the Department to meet its mission.

STRATEGIES:

- **Intranet:** Develop and maintain an internal intranet or platform which will hold a variety of communications including various project updates. Employees will be trained on how to use the platform to increase engagement.
- **Department-Wide and Cross-Divisional Projects:** Create a platform for each Division to enter upcoming projects, events, or other opportunities to increase participation Department-wide. Increase information dissemination of cross-Divisional project opportunities and coordination of participation in projects. Employees will participate in at least one project each year developed by another Division.
- **Cross-Divisional Training:** Increase cross-divisional training, such as technical environmental review, survey methods, customer service and data management, to broaden staff expertise and build cohesion through appreciation for work performed in other Divisions.
- **Post-Project Follow-up:** Employees will provide project updates including but not limited to lessons learned, project proponents and pictures or videos to inform the Department of ongoing conservation efforts and to celebrate successful projects.

RECRUITING AND ONBOARDING:

NDOW believes a diverse workforce is essential to our ability to conserve and manage Nevada's wildlife and wild places. We recognize that our employees are experts in their chosen field. We will provide opportunities to experiment, try new technologies, research, and techniques. In return, we expect staff to be honest with their time, productivity and contributions. The following initiatives are designed to recruit, train, and retain a diverse and talented workforce by promoting Department jobs in multiple arenas and in a variety of ways.

STRATEGIES:

- **Staff Recruiting:** Continue to seek the most qualified applicants through national job postings and promoting well-qualified employees from within the Department whenever possible. The Department will find creative and innovative ways to attract candidates to both urban and rural areas.
- **Orientation:** Develop a new-hire orientation process to help familiarize employees with Department policies, procedures, conservation efforts and stakeholders.
- **Onboarding:** The Department strives to be a welcoming organization. An onboarding or mentoring program and team will be created to familiarize new employees with their duty station and day-to-day agency functions within each division. Onboarding teams should consist of one member from each division to familiarize new employees with Department priorities. The Department encourages desk manuals or standard operating procedures to be created and updated and to utilize overlap positions in the case of long-tenured retirements.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts:** Identify opportunities to recruit and retain employees representing underrepresented groups at all staffing levels and adopt policies and procedures to ensure diverse opinions and voices are heard at all levels of decision-making.



PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

The Department will invest in staff by identifying and providing various trainings to support professional and personal development and growth. The Department will also provide opportunities for staff to identify and report safety concerns and will expand safety training to ensure the safety of all staff beyond normal divisional trainings.

STRATEGIES:

- **Volunteer Training:** Continue to provide volunteers with training and Department safety policies in an effort to achieve zero accidents.
- **Field and Facility Safety:** Implement safety procedures and ensure all staff have received proper safety training and safety equipment for all field work to eliminate exposure to work-place accidents, including maintaining and implementing safety plans for specific field activities. Develop and implement facility (hatcheries, WMAs, offices, etc.) safety plans and incorporate safety briefings into standard operating procedures. Provide air operations safety briefings and trainings to all staff that participate in air operations. Ensure Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) information is easily accessible.
- **CPR/Wilderness Aid:** Provide CPR courses for employees and coordinate a wilderness first aid course for interested employees.
- **Employee Evaluations:** The Department will provide guidance on better utilizing the State Evaluation Form and the Work Performance Standards form to provide more consistency between supervisors and divisions. Prioritize and conduct yearly employee performance evaluations so that employees can receive feedback on how to better themselves and the Department. By consistently conducting employee evaluations staff have an opportunity to receive constructive feedback to improve their performance.
- **Training and Development Opportunities:** Ensure all employees are afforded access to training and development opportunities. Training can include personal and professional development from both external and cross-divisional sources. Encourage all employees to participate in at least one personal development training and one professional development training each year. Employees are strongly encouraged to attend professional development opportunities, such as conferences, to share ideas and gain perspectives with counterparts across the country.

Overview of the Planning Process

The FY23-27 Strategic Plan was developed over the course of a year by an internal team. The team consisted of approximately 16 individuals spread across the state. These individuals held a wide variety of positions including division administrators, fiscal staff, biologists, GIS staff, law enforcement, and conservation education staff. The team met throughout the year to discuss and develop the FY23-27 Strategic Plan. To incorporate staff perspectives the team also developed and distributed two surveys to request staff feedback. Survey responses were used to gain additional feedback from supervisors and field-level staff. The team also traveled to each office in the state to hold a workshop informing staff on the planning process, the goals the team developed, and to receive input from each employee.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Clear understanding of the Department's Strategic Plan and how each Division seamlessly links to it and is supported by respective Divisional Plans.
- Represent the voice of all staff.

- Connection between Department's Strategic Plan and existing performance measures used for performance-based budgeting. Keep the Strategic Plan front and center to drive an agency cultural shift.
- Present something new and unique compared to what has been done previously to help guide the Department by identifying specific actions to take, resulting in meaningful change.
- Staff needs to see, understand, and visualize how they each fit into the plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

The model the Department is using to implement this Strategic Plan is structured to both directly cascade to Divisions and engage the organization in cross-functional execution. To accomplish both of those purposes, each employee needs to see themselves as a proponent of this plan. Supervisors and Division Administrators will allow for and promote opportunities supported in this plan. An Implementation Team will be developed to track and coordinate the progress of this plan on a yearly basis. The Implementation Team will also be available to help promote cross divisional opportunities to promote cohesiveness throughout the Department.





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