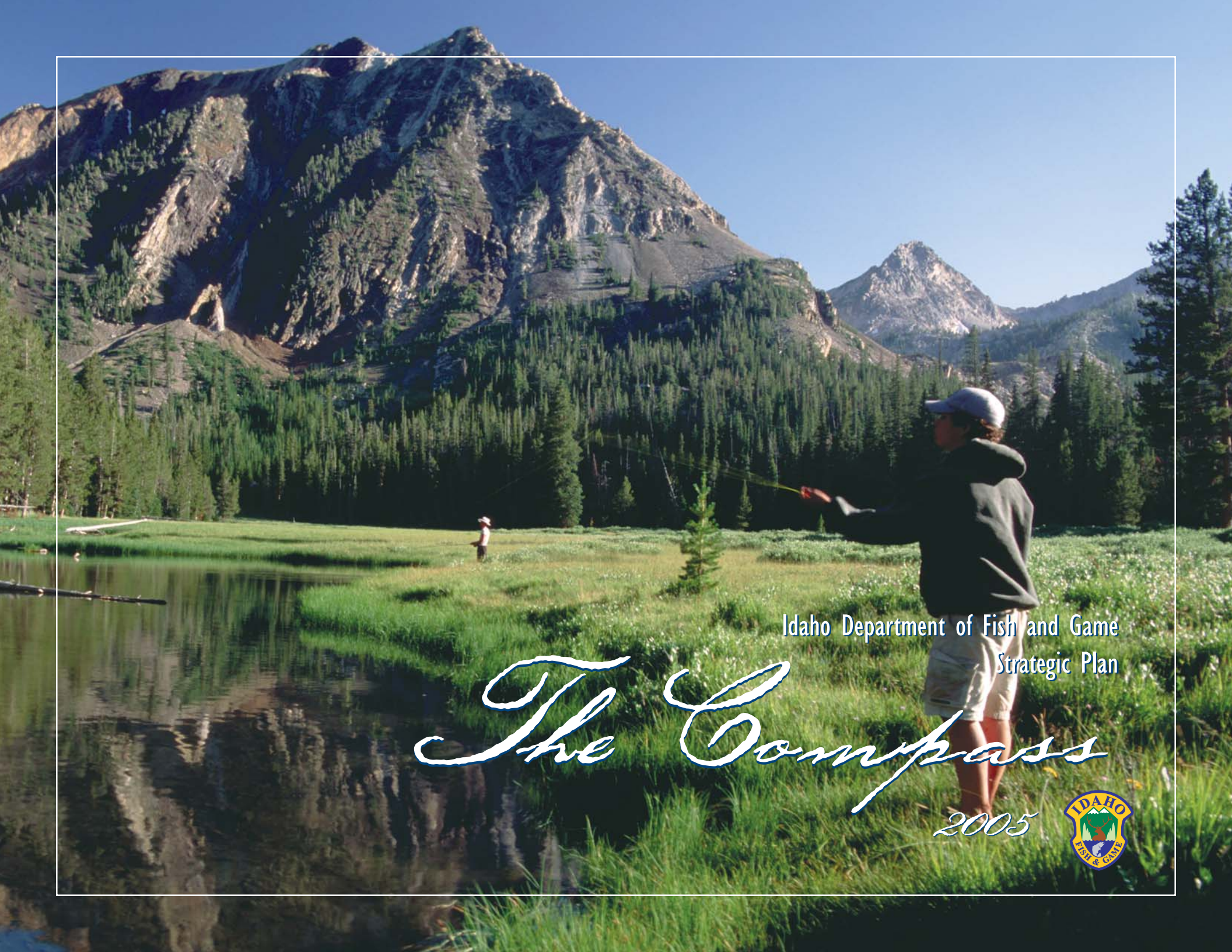

Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Strategic Plan

The Compass

2005

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Welcome to The Compass

A Message from the Director

Since 1938, the Idaho Fish and Game Commission and Department have diligently fulfilled their charge to "preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage" Idaho's cherished wildlife resource. With the support of Idaho hunters, trappers, and anglers, they have done an outstanding job. That must continue.

But a lot has changed in the last 60 years. Growth, development, and technology have changed the land and the way people use it. People's attitudes have shifted, and while the vast majority still deeply care about fish and wildlife, they value fish and wildlife differently. Our stewardship has to be responsive to these changes if the Department and Commission are to remain one of the top fish and wildlife agencies in the nation. But one thing that isn't going to change is our commitment to Idaho's hunters, anglers, and trappers.

In recent years, rare species protection has taken many wildlife issues off the sports page and put them on the front page. New demands have strapped the staff, while new funding sources have not emerged. Sportsmen are concerned that their license and tag fees should not be diverted to pay for rare species protection and wildlife diversity programs. We agree and are committed to finding new sources of money for these programs.

The strategic plan that follows—our Compass—will guide us toward excellence in maintaining our fish and wildlife heritage and providing services to people. This plan establishes the major directions for the future and describes what successful fish and wildlife management looks like. This plan also describes *how* we will work toward excellence: by providing for public input and feedback to help us make course corrections as we move forward. After all, the same thing can be said for a good strategic plan as for a rewarding life: it is not the destination, but the manner of traveling.

Steven M. Huffaker

The Four Cardinal Directions

This document was prepared for the following people:

- Idaho hunters, anglers, and trappers
- Idaho citizens
- State, local, tribal, and federal governments
- The Idaho Fish and Game Commission and Department

A Useful Tool

This plan is intended to:

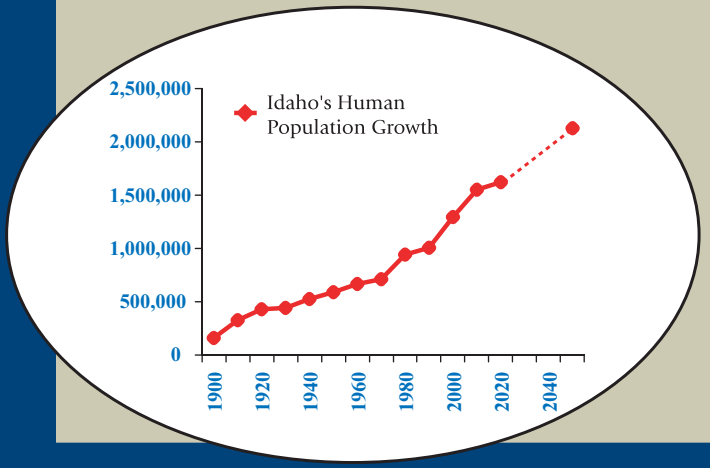
- Clearly convey the Department's management goals and how they will be achieved.
- Assist the Fish and Game Commission in developing policies, priorities, and direction.
- Provide overall direction to Department staff in developing and implementing fish and wildlife programs.
- Assist others in developing plans and implementing programs that are compatible with fish and wildlife conservation and management.
- Encourage a cooperative approach in addressing fish and wildlife issues in Idaho.

Ground Truthing

Why We Developed *The Compass*

Developing *The Compass* was about more than simply writing a strategic plan. Strategic planning is a *process* that is as important as the written document. The Department embarked on the strategic planning process to accomplish the following:

- Align Department programs and actions with the values, needs, and expectations of Idaho hunters, anglers, and citizens as a whole.
- Involve the public in deciding what the Department will attempt to accomplish in the next 15 years.
- Enable the Department to respond to the anticipated changes in the physical, biological, and social environments.
- Initiate business practices that link strategic and action plans to the budget, evaluate progress toward goals, and employ adaptive management.



How We Developed *The Compass*

Idahoans throughout the state were involved in developing *The Compass*. The planning process included the following:

- Thirty-five different focus groups were held around the state with hunters, anglers, landowners, people with nonconsumptive interests in fish and wildlife, and people with commercial interests in fish and wildlife. Nearly 400 Idahoans participated.
- Personal interviews were conducted with 12 state legislators, all 7 members of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission, and 14 upper-level Department staff. Interviews were summarized and evaluated in a report called, *Issues and Challenges Facing the IDFG*, March 2002.
- Results of focus groups and interviews were used to identify 13 strategic issues. The issues were analyzed for biological, economic, social, and legal aspects and used by the public to develop goals at strategic planning workshops.
- Seven public strategic planning workshops were held around the state in March and April 2003 to actively engage stakeholders in helping the Department develop goals to address the strategic issues. Nearly 150 Idahoans participated. The workshops produced over 1,000 goal statements that were used to develop the Goals, Objectives, and Strategies section of *The Compass*.
- The *2002 Idaho Citizen Survey* was mailed to 7,700 randomly selected households. Over 3,000 individuals responded. A similar questionnaire was completed by Department employees and Fish and Game Commissioners so comparisons could be made.
- Three planning workshops were held to involve the Idaho Fish and Game Commissioners in the planning process and develop a vision statement.
- Small group exercises were conducted with all Department employees to identify key issues facing the Department in the next 15 years.
- Nine strategic planning workshops for employees were held around the state to actively engage employees in helping the Department develop goals to address two strategic issues that directly impact employees.
- The results of the employee, Commission, and public surveys, interviews, and focus groups were synthesized in a final report, *Idahoans' Views of Fisheries and Wildlife Management*, September 2003.

Magnetic North

Our Mission

(*Idaho Code* Section 36-103)

All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall only be captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner, as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.

Our Vision

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game shall work with the citizens of Idaho in providing abundant, diverse fish and wildlife and ensuring a rich outdoor heritage for all generations.

Our Core Values

Public Service

We believe in having open, two-way communication with the public, facilitating understanding and participation in management decisions, and providing diverse fish- and wildlife-based recreational opportunities and educational experiences.

Science

We believe that scientifically developed knowledge and information are the foundation of fish and wildlife management and that we are obligated to develop, use, and share such knowledge and information.

Sustainability

We believe our management responsibility is to foster solutions to fish and wildlife issues that are ecologically viable, economically feasible, and socially acceptable.

Ecosystem Management

We believe productive habitats and healthy ecosystems are essential in sustaining diverse fish and wildlife and Idaho's communities and economies.

Credibility

We believe that we maintain credibility by achieving the highest level of employee and agency objectivity, expertise, professionalism, and effectiveness.

The Landscape—Strategic Issues

Strategic issues were developed from information gathered in the focus groups, interviews, surveys, and from analysis of existing information. These issues form the foundation upon which *The Compass* was developed and are summarized on the following pages.

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Fish and Wildlife Habitat

The existence of fish and wildlife depends on habitat: they need adequate amounts of quality habitat that is arranged effectively to provide food, water, cover, and space throughout all of their life stages. When habitats are altered or lost—from human activities or natural processes—the distribution and abundance of fish and wildlife, and the associated recreational opportunities they provide, can be significantly impacted. Most changes tend to happen slowly over long periods of time, making it difficult to reverse the trend. For example, invasive plants, such as cheatgrass and yellow starthistle, have been spreading throughout Idaho for years and are significantly affecting wildlife habitat. Habitat losses may eventually lead to severe declines in fish and wildlife and eventual listing under the Endangered Species Act. Because it does not control most of the state's habitat for fish and wildlife, the Department must work with other agencies and private landowners to improve habitat.

Fish and Game for Fishing and Hunting

Fishing, hunting, and trapping are traditional Idaho activities and part of Idaho's culture, lifestyle, and economy. A primary responsibility of the Department is to provide "continued supplies" of fish and wildlife "for hunting, fishing, and trapping" (*Idaho Code* 36-103). The vast majority of Department funding, programs, and activities directly or indirectly support this function.

In managing for abundant fish and game the Department must consider people's tolerance for, or competition with, fish and wildlife. People's use of land and water can negatively impact fish and wildlife and their habitats. Conversely, wildlife can damage private property and crops and compete for land and water resources used by people or domestic animals. The challenge for fish and wildlife management is to balance the public's desire for hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities with the conflicts between fish and wildlife and people.

Communication with the Public

Managing Idaho's fish and wildlife is more effective when the Department clearly communicates with the public. Successfully communicating with Department stakeholders means understanding what information and services they want, developing products and services to meet those needs, and effectively delivering those products and services. The Department must provide for two-way communication with the public.

Involving Department Stakeholders

The Department manages the fish and wildlife of Idaho in trust for the people of the state. Therefore, Department programs must be aligned with the needs, desires, and expectations of Idaho citizens. Understanding citizens and involving them in decision making can improve management decisions, as well as agency effectiveness and credibility. Not involving citizens weakens public support and agency credibility and may lead to challenges to management such as ballot initiatives, legislative mandates, and legal actions.

Access for Fish- and Wildlife-Based Recreation

Even though the majority of Idaho's land is publicly owned, some of the state's best fishing and hunting, as well as quality habitats, are on privately owned lands. Often, private lands are located in valleys along rivers and streams, and access to public land and waters can be gained only through private holdings. Legally, private landowners are well within their rights to regulate public access to and across their private property, and some choose to prohibit public access. Landowners close their lands to public access for a variety of reasons. Some access is lost when new owners buy land for their exclusive recreational use. Lack of access to private land and lack of access across private land to public land are problems for fish and wildlife recreationists throughout the state.

Rare and Nongame Animals and Native Plants

In addition to game animals and fish, the Department is responsible for managing all wildlife and native plant species. Nearly 85 percent of Idaho's animals are "nongame" (not hunted, fished, or trapped). More information is needed to conserve nongame and native plant species including their population size and trend, life history, and where they are found. Conserving rare species and their habitats ensures their continued presence in Idaho for future generations and keeps them off the Endangered Species list. The Department needs to have adequate programs to conserve nongame and native plants but receives limited funding for these programs, primarily from the sale of wildlife license plates, federal grants, and donations. New financial resources other than hunting and fishing license revenue are needed.

Public Support for Fish- and Wildlife-Based Recreation

Idaho has an abundance of fish and wildlife for people to enjoy in various ways. Idaho has a rich heritage of hunting, fishing, and trapping, but some sportsmen and women are concerned that traditional harvesting is at risk. Although the percentage of Idahoans hunting has decreased slightly, public support for legal hunting is high and anti-hunting sentiment is low. Promoting ethical conduct and fair chase practices toward fish and wildlife are essential to maintaining public support for hunting, fishing, trapping, and "nonconsumptive" wildlife recreation—such as viewing and photographing wildlife.

In addition to promoting the public's ethical conduct around wildlife, the Department must also consider ethics in its management actions. The public's support for hunting and fishing is based, in part, on people's acceptance of Department management actions such as hunting regulations, predator control, research methods, and wildlife capture and transplanting activities.

Diverse Fish- and Wildlife-Based Recreation

The Department currently accommodates diverse experiences such as trophy and catch-and-keep fisheries, nonmotorized and motorized access during hunting season, controlled and general hunts, youth hunts, and hunts of various methods of take. Providing diverse fish- and wildlife-based experiences requires that the Department understand the different needs, preferences, and values of the public and then develop opportunities to accommodate them, while also taking into account fish and wildlife populations and addressing the impact of recreational use on fish and wildlife.

Idahoans and visitors to the state seek wildlife-based recreation in nonconsumptive ways (for example, viewing, photographing, and learning about wildlife). Including nonconsumptive opportunities in addition to traditionally emphasized hunting and fishing increases recreational opportunities, tourism, and economic benefits to local communities.

Funding

The Department's main funding source comes from one segment of the population—hunters and anglers—primarily through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. This money has been—and will continue to be—used to manage fish and wildlife for hunting and fishing. Hunting and fishing license fees need to be adjusted periodically to keep pace with the increasing cost of managing hunting and fishing programs.

The Department will not use hunting and fishing license fees to meet all the desires of the public, other agencies, and local governments for managing fish, wildlife, and native plants. Funding sources other than hunting and fishing license fees are needed to meet the demand for nongame, wildlife viewing, and native plant programs.

Department programs for game animals and fish often benefit all citizens of the state. Hunters and anglers pay nearly the entire bill for these programs. Broadening the funding base beyond hunting and fishing licenses would mprove both game and nongame programs and more fairly distribute the costs to all people who benefit from the Department's activities.

Collaboration

Fish and wildlife management in Idaho is complex—and becoming more so—because fish and wildlife issues and Department responsibilities overlap with those of other state and federal agencies, tribal governments, nongovernmental organizations, private landowners, and businesses. This overlap has increased the need to coordinate, collaborate, develop partnerships, and, in some instances, share responsibilities for fish and wildlife management. It has also resulted in the need to consider a greater diversity of views and interests when making management decisions. Because views and interests of the public often conflict, collaborative decision making is essential for developing lasting solutions that benefit fish, wildlife, and people.

Fish and Wildlife Diseases

Fish and wildlife diseases can impact free-ranging fish and wildlife populations, farmed fish, farmed elk, domestic livestock, and humans. Both native and exotic diseases have the potential to harm Idaho's fish and wildlife and domestic animals. Disease introductions are likely to increase in the future due to a number of factors including increased global movements of people and animals, increased fish and game farming, and feeding of wildlife. Preventing and controlling disease is important from a biological, economic, and recreational perspective.

Workforce

To be an effective agency, the Department must hire and retain qualified employees. The workforce also needs to be the right size to fulfill the mission and meet the public expectations for service and stewardship of fish and wildlife. Agency performance is best when employee morale is high and employees feel that their efforts are valued.

Infrastructure

Facilities must be safe, provide an efficient work environment, and support good customer service. Facilities in some locations are not adequate to meet the expanding responsibilities of the Department. In the past 10 years, information technology has become crucial to fish and wildlife management, and the Department must take full advantage of advances in information management systems to improve efficiency and service to the public.

The Trail Ahead—

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

The following section sets out the goals, objectives, strategies, and desired outcomes. The goals identify what the Department is trying to achieve. The objectives contribute to achieving the goals. The strategies describe what the Department will do to meet the objectives. The desired outcomes are the future condition we are striving for as a result of achieving the goals.

The goals, objectives, and strategies are broad, general, and encompass all the Department's current and future activities and responsibilities. They will be implemented through action plans that spell out in more detail how the Department intends to make progress towards accomplishing goals. Action plans are described in the concluding section of *The Compass*.

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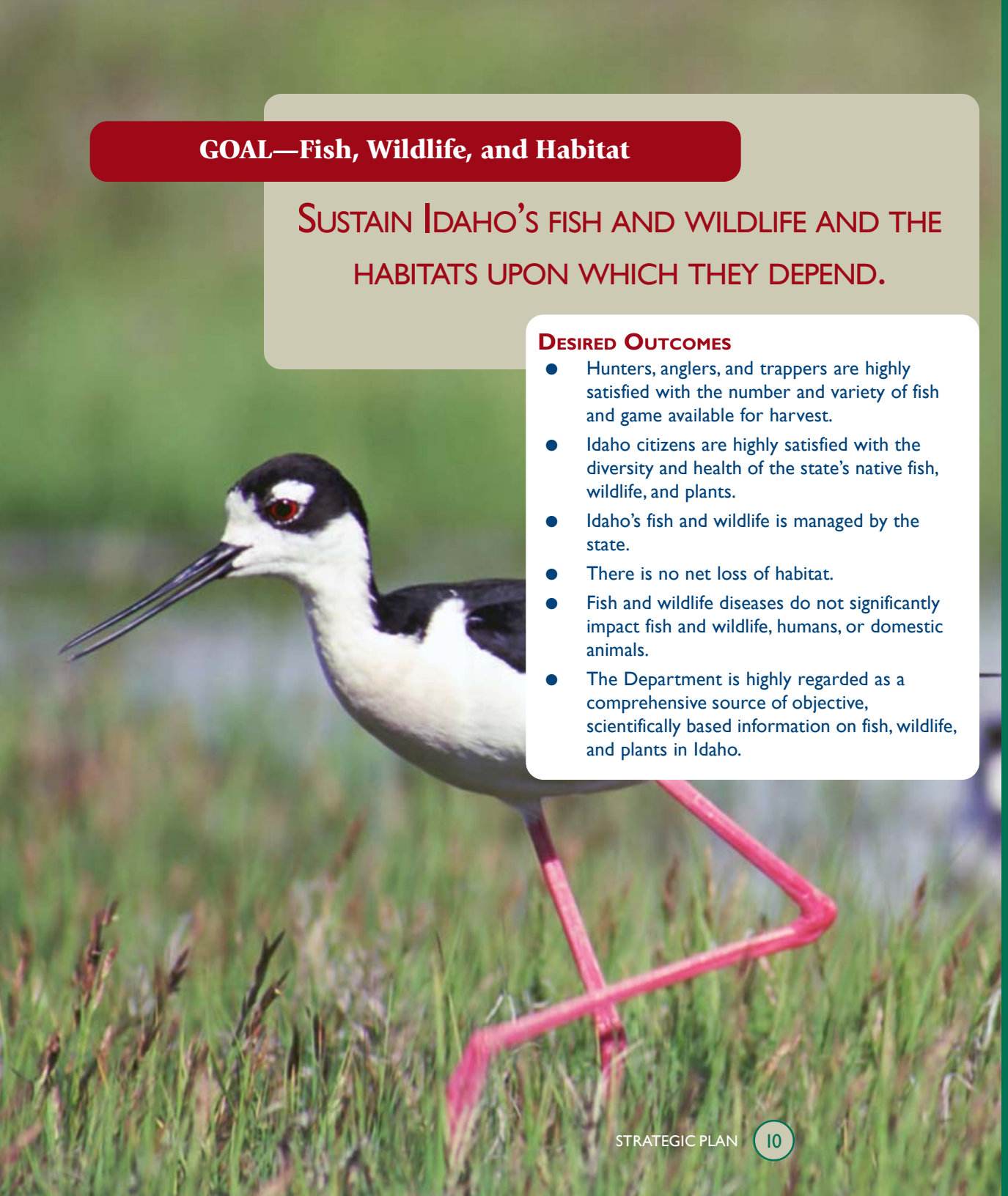

GOAL—Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat

Sustain Idaho's fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend.

Desired Outcomes

- Hunters, anglers, and trappers are highly satisfied with the number and variety of fish and game available for harvest.
- Idaho citizens are highly satisfied with the diversity and health of the state's native fish, wildlife, and plants.
- Idaho's fish and wildlife is managed by the state.
- There is no net loss of habitat.
- Fish and wildlife diseases do not significantly impact fish and wildlife, humans, or domestic animals.
- The Department is highly regarded as a comprehensive source of objective, scientifically based information on fish, wildlife, and plants in Idaho.

Objective

Maintain or improve game populations to meet the demand for hunting, fishing, and trapping.

Strategies

- Develop measurable and achievable management objectives for game species.
- Set harvest rules and regulations to achieve long-term sustainability of populations and habitat.
- Enforce fishing, hunting, and trapping regulations.
- Use artificial propagation, stocking, and translocation where appropriate and cost effective.
- Alleviate wildlife damage to agriculture and compensate landowners for unavoidable losses as provided by law.
- Manage predation to achieve a balance between game and predator populations.
- Intentionally introduce non-native fish and wildlife only if they do not pose genetic, competitive, or predatory risks to native or desirable fish and wildlife.
- Regularly inventory, analyze, and report on game populations and habitats.
- Assess game populations and harvest numbers and adapt regulations to achieve recreation and population objectives.
- Collaborate with tribes, private landowners, and agencies to manage populations and harvest for long-term sustainability.

Objective

Ensure the long-term survival of native fish, wildlife, and plants.

Strategies

- Inventory, monitor, and assess the status of native fish, wildlife, and plants and the habitats upon which they depend.
- Identify species with the greatest need for conservation action.
- Restore native species where they have declined or disappeared.
- Provide information on the distribution, abundance, and conservation of native fish, wildlife, and plants.
- Assist public and private landowners in the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of native fish, wildlife, and plants.
- Collaborate with interested and affected parties to develop and implement plans to recover threatened and endangered species and conserve native fish, wildlife, and plants.

Objective

Increase the capacity of habitat to support fish and wildlife.

Strategies

- Develop measurable and achievable management objectives for fish and wildlife habitat.
- Assess and prioritize habitats for protection, restoration, or enhancement.
- Provide information, analysis, and recommendations to improve fish and wildlife habitats and reduce impacts from land and water use and development.
- Seek mitigation for adverse impacts to fish and wildlife.
- Provide incentives and assistance to landowners to improve habitat on private land.
- Acquire interest in property where Department management can provide exceptional benefits to fish and wildlife and associated recreation.
- Work in cooperation with other agencies and local governments to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.
- Develop partnerships with landowners, land management agencies, and others to restore, enhance, and conserve fish and wildlife habitats.

Objective

Eliminate the impacts of fish and wildlife diseases on fish and wildlife populations, livestock, and humans.

Strategies

- Monitor fish and wildlife populations for disease.
- Prohibit the importation of fish and wildlife that pose an unacceptable disease risk.
- Ensure that propagation, stocking, and translocation of fish and wildlife do not contribute to the introduction or transmission of diseases.
- Reduce or eliminate high concentrations of wildlife that pose significant disease risk.
- Enhance and enforce laws to protect fish and wildlife populations from disease.
- Reduce or eliminate the risk of transmission of disease between captive and free-ranging fish and wildlife.
- Develop risk assessment, public information, and response strategies for fish and wildlife disease threats.
- Collaborate with other agencies and educational institutions on disease control, prevention, and research.

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GOAL—Fish and Wildlife Recreation

Meet the demand for fish and wildlife recreation.

Desired Outcomes

- Hunters, anglers, trappers, and wildlife viewers are highly satisfied with fish and wildlife recreation opportunities.
- Landowners allow access for fish and wildlife recreation.
- Recreation opportunities are abundant and well distributed around the state, while conflicts between recreationists are few and far between.
- Hunters, anglers, trappers, and wildlife viewers enjoy broad public support for their recreational activities.
- There is broad recognition and support in Idaho for the economic and social benefits of fish and wildlife recreation and management.

Objective

Maintain a diversity of fishing, hunting, and trapping opportunities.

Strategies

- Provide opportunities and experiences based on demand, Idaho's landscapes, and fish and wildlife resources.
- Provide opportunities specific to the needs of beginners, youth, people with disabilities, and families.
- Stock and transplant fish and wildlife where appropriate and cost effective.
- Develop regulations that increase opportunity and variety while reducing conflicts between user groups.
- Assess participation, demand, and satisfaction with hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities. Adjust management to achieve objectives.

Objective

Sustain fish and wildlife recreation on public lands.

Strategies

- Collaborate with land management agencies to provide a variety of recreational opportunities, manage access, reduce impacts and conflicts, and achieve objectives for recreation and fish and wildlife populations.
- Collaborate with outfitters and guides to promote sustainable fish and wildlife recreation, reduce conflicts, and achieve objectives for recreation and fish and wildlife populations.
- Protect the public's right to use public waters for hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing.
- Obtain public access across private lands to public lands.
- In partnership with land management agencies, provide information on fish and wildlife recreation opportunities and access on public land.
- Improve management of motor vehicles and enforcement of rules on state and federal lands through partnerships with state and federal agencies and local governments.
- Provide fish- and wildlife-based recreation on lands owned or managed by the Department.
- Provide specialized access opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Assess participation, demand, and satisfaction with fish and wildlife recreation on public land. Adjust management to achieve objectives.

Objective

Increase opportunities for wildlife viewing and appreciation.

Strategies

- Promote and publicize wildlife viewing opportunities.
- Provide wildlife viewing opportunities on lands managed or owned by the Department.
- Partner with other agencies, local communities, and others to develop wildlife-viewing facilities, opportunities, and materials on other land ownerships.
- Assess participation, demand, and satisfaction with wildlife-viewing and appreciation opportunities. Adjust management to achieve objectives.

Objective

Increase the variety and distribution of access to private land for fish and wildlife recreation.

Strategies

- Assess opportunities to access private land.
- Provide incentives and services to landowners who allow public access.
- Collaborate with landowners and commercial operators to provide public recreation opportunities on private lands.
- Assess participation, demand, and satisfaction with access opportunities on private land. Adjust management to achieve objectives.

Objective

Maintain broad public support for fish and wildlife recreation and management.

Strategies

- Enforce hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations.
- Emphasize ethics, safety, and fair chase in hunting, fishing, trapping, and other wildlife education programs.
- Expand opportunities to take mandatory hunter and bowhunter education classes.
- Support mentoring programs for new hunters and anglers.
- Provide information on proper wildlife-viewing techniques and behavior.
- Restrict the use of technological advances in fish and wildlife recreation when they compromise fair chase and management objectives.
- Promote hunting, fishing, and trapping as legitimate uses of fish and wildlife and compatible with the conservation of all wildlife.
- Publicize the social and economic benefits of hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-based recreation.
- Monitor public support for fish and wildlife recreation and management.

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GOAL—Working With Others

Improve public understanding of and involvement in fish and wildlife management.

Desired Outcomes

- A broad spectrum of the public participates in and supports management decisions.
- Idaho citizens are well-informed and knowledgeable about fish and wildlife resources and the Department's management role.
- Fish and wildlife management is based on sound science and is responsive to the needs and expectations of Idaho citizens.
- Information related to Idaho's fish, wildlife, plants, and ecosystems is easily accessible in a variety of formats.

Objective

Improve citizen involvement in the decision-making process.

Strategies

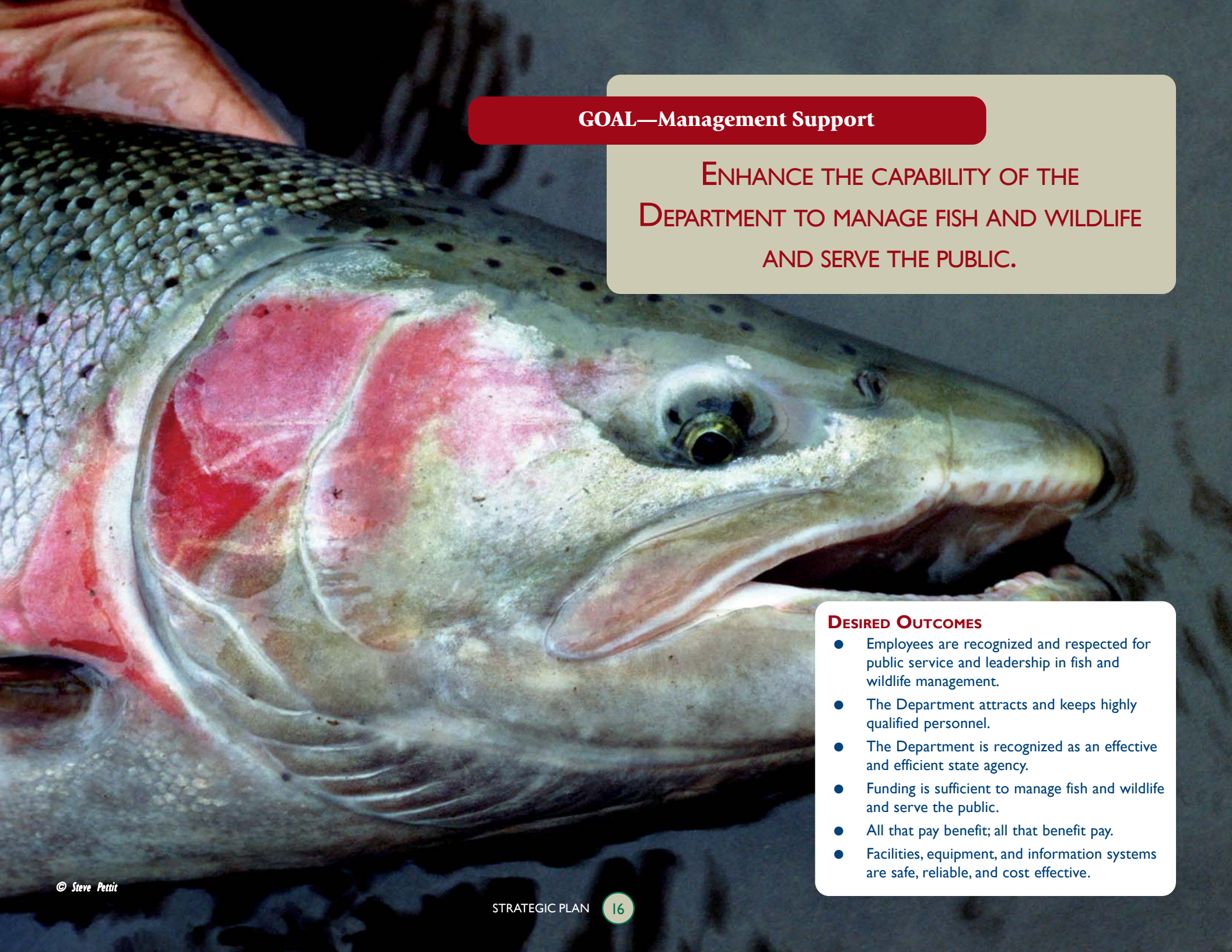
- Publicize the Department's public involvement and decision-making processes.
- Ensure that interested and affected parties are notified of opportunities to participate in decisions and that all voices are heard.
- Improve the variety and convenience of opportunities for citizens to be involved in Department decisions.
- Provide quality and timely response to input from citizens and include rationale for decisions.
- Assess and report on the values, attitudes, and opinions of citizens regarding fish and wildlife.
- Improve coordination, effectiveness, and quality of public involvement efforts.
- Assess participation in and satisfaction with public involvement processes. Adjust programs to improve performance.

Objective

Increase public knowledge and understanding of Idaho's fish and wildlife.

Strategies

- Provide user-friendly regulations and information.
- Provide timely and accurate information on recreation opportunities, management actions, and important news related to fish and wildlife.
- Publicize resource management issues and Department programs that address them.
- Develop effective partnerships with resource management agencies, schools, universities, civic organizations, interest groups, businesses, and individuals to inform and educate the public.
- Develop effective methods for conveying and distributing information about fish and wildlife.
- Evaluate education, information, and outreach efforts and determine the needs, expectations, and interests of the public. Adjust programs to meet objectives.
- Improve internal communication and knowledge of the Department's programs and activities.
- Promote the use of Department facilities for fish and wildlife education opportunities.
- Provide a variety of "how to" hunting and fishing classes as well as other fish and wildlife education opportunities.



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GOAL—Management Support

Enhance the capability of the Department to manage fish and wildlife and serve the public.

Desired Outcomes

- Employees are recognized and respected for public service and leadership in fish and wildlife management.
- The Department attracts and keeps highly qualified personnel.
- The Department is recognized as an effective and efficient state agency.
- Funding is sufficient to manage fish and wildlife and serve the public.
- All that pay benefit; all that benefit pay.
- Facilities, equipment, and information systems are safe, reliable, and cost effective.

Objective

Attract and retain a diverse and professional workforce.

Strategies

- Reward leadership, integrity, competency, professionalism, and innovation.
- Require training in supervision, performance evaluation, and leadership for all supervisors.
- Promote and provide training and continuing education opportunities.
- Recruit and train volunteers to assist Department employees.
- Seek competitive compensation when developing recommendations for state employee compensation.
- Provide career development, promotional opportunities, and relocation assistance.
- Improve recognition, celebration, education, and wellness programs that value employees.

Objective

Provide equipment and facilities for excellent customer service and management effectiveness.

Strategies

- Maintain and upgrade facilities and equipment.
- Design and locate offices for customer service and convenient access.
- Partner with other agencies to combine offices where feasible.
- Provide a safe, pleasant, and well-equipped work environment.

Objective

Improve information management and business systems.

Strategies

- Develop and implement a long-term plan for information technology and management.
- Improve tools for entry, storage, retrieval, reporting, and dissemination of biological and business data.
- Develop cooperative efforts to gather and exchange information on fish, wildlife, and plants.
- Develop and implement standardized sampling and data collection protocols.
- Provide access to and training in the use of information management systems.
- Implement an electronic licensing system that is reliable, adaptable, user friendly, and cost effective.
- Continually review, adapt, and improve business practices to enhance effectiveness and accountability.
- Devise and implement ways to enhance teamwork, internal communication, and decision making.

Objective

Improve funding to meet legal mandates and public expectations.

Strategies

- Continue to use revenue generated by hunters, anglers, and trappers for programs that benefit hunting, fishing, and trapping.
- Develop a funding mechanism to adjust license fees to keep pace with the cost of managing hunting and fishing programs.
- Obtain funding through grants and partnerships that support the Department's mission.
- Develop new funding for fish and wildlife programs that benefit all Idaho citizens.
- Seek efficiencies and cost savings in all programs.
- Use research and marketing to enhance license sales.

Destination: Excellence

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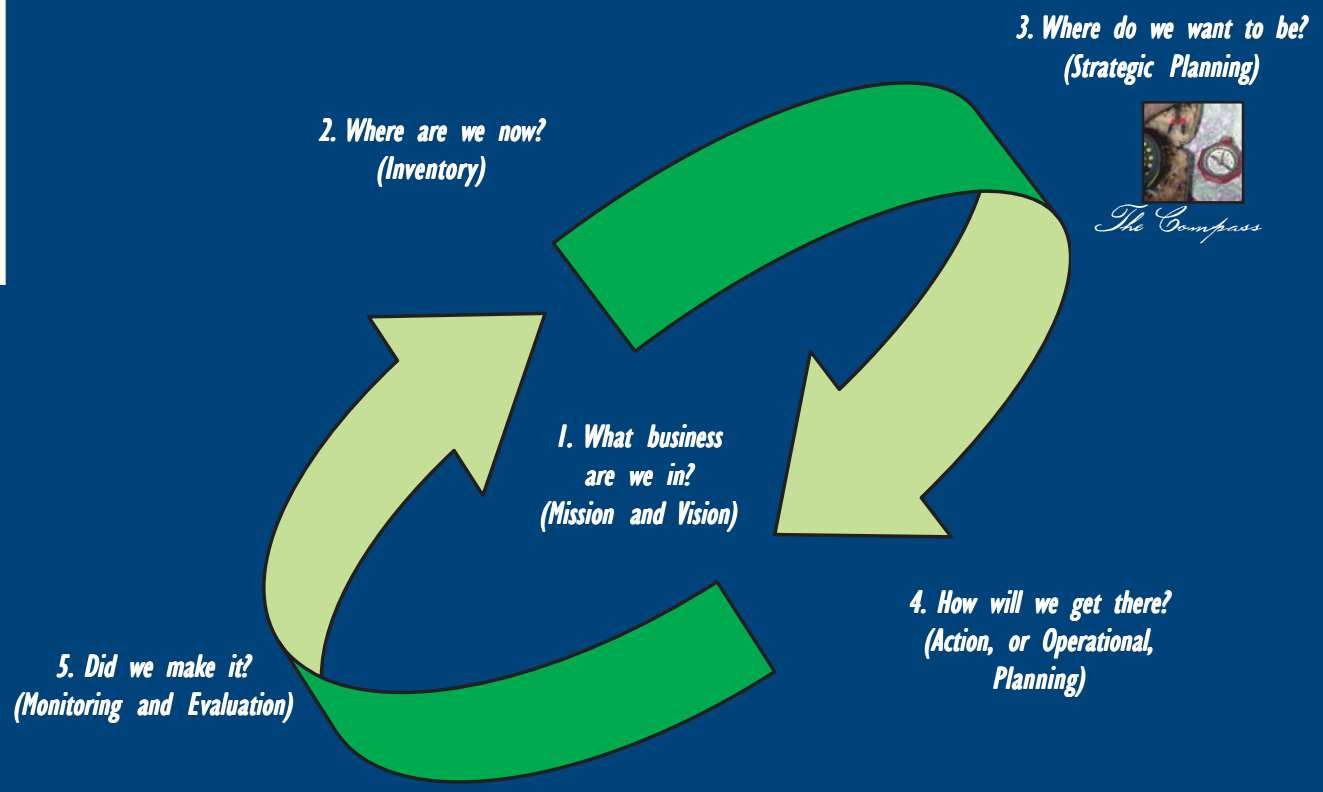
The Journey—Comprehensive Management Systems

The Compass, the Department's strategic plan, is a long-range, big picture document that describes where the Department wants to be in the future and how, in general terms, we intend to get there. *The Compass* is part of a "comprehensive management system" that links together all aspects of our work as a fully-functioning whole. A comprehensive management system is an adaptive process that tends to self-correct and improve performance over time by cycling around five main elements:



Setting Out On the Journey —Converting Plans Into Action

The Compass by design contains no details; it is broad in scope. The details of how strategies in *The Compass* will be implemented to achieve the goals, objectives, and desired outcomes will be described in actions plans, often called operational plans. Such plans are illustrated as element 4 in the diagram of comprehensive management systems (previous page). Monitoring and evaluation, element 5 in the diagram, will determine whether strategies were implemented and whether they achieved the goals, objectives, and desired outcomes.

Action Planning

Action plans provide specific details about how the Department will attempt to achieve identified goals. Such plans need not be long or involved, but they must describe the Department's programs, projects, and activities in terms of how much will be accomplished over a specified period of time, what specific methods will be used, what resources are needed (personnel, equipment, funding), and how progress toward or attainment of goals will be measured. Action plans are the link between *The Compass*, the budget, and the activities of Department employees. Goals, objectives, and desired outcomes from *The Compass* and action plans will be incorporated into budget requests and employee performance evaluations.

Action plans also serve a number of other purposes. They present information about Department programs and projects to the public and provide an opportunity for interested and affected people to comment. Action plans clearly state goals and how progress will be measured, thereby holding the Department accountable to the public and elected officials. Action plans will be monitored and evaluated to determine if programs and projects are "working," that is, achieving the desired goals.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Essential to adaptive management, the monitoring and evaluation component measures the performance of the Department's programs, projects, and activities. Over time, monitoring and evaluation result in self-correction, improvement of performance, and accountability.

The biological and social systems in which the Department operates are complex, and because of that complexity, the results of management actions are often difficult to predict. In an adaptive management approach, management actions are intentionally set up as experiments, with expectations described in advance in the action plans. Measuring progress and performance determines whether the strategies were implemented and whether they achieved the desired results. The resulting information is evaluated to compare the expected results with the actual results. These comparisons lead to greater understanding and adjustment of action plans to better achieve desired outcomes.

Plan Review and Revisions

The Compass is a "living" document. It is subject to change based on new information or circumstances. *The Compass* will receive an in-depth review by the Commission at least every five years to ensure that the Department is aligned with the desires and expectations of stakeholders. The Department will annually review and report to the Commission progress towards the goals in *The Compass*.

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