



Wildlife Division

Department of Game, Fish & Parks



Perpetuating the Outdoor Heritage of South Dakota

Working together to chart the path to 2020

Principles of Resource Management in South Dakota

This document details the principles and philosophical foundation of resource management of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks Division of Wildlife. It is intended to provide strategic guidance to every program, planning process and policy decision. It is also intended to guide the daily activities of every Division of Wildlife employee.

This document communicates our Mission and our Vision for the future and it identifies the Values that guide the delivery of Division of Wildlife's programs and services. It also identifies some of the Opportunities and Challenges currently facing the Division of Wildlife and provides a prescription for Professional Excellence necessary to strive towards our Mission under the umbrella of our Agency Values and Guiding Principles.

Planning processes are more important than the actual planning documents. In addition, strategic planning documents are of little value without strong commitment to implementation. Successful planning and implementation requires collaboration with all of the various stakeholders and interested publics. Our planning processes will emphasize effective delivery of services and will utilize meaningful measures of performance and we will work cooperatively to achieve outdoor heritage goals of mutual benefit with our sister division, Parks and Recreation.

Two questions that we must continually ask ourselves in the course of self-evaluation are:

1. Are we doing the right things?
2. Are we doing things right?

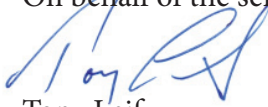
Public involvement plays a critical role in answering the first question. Our programs and services must conform to our management responsibilities and they must be consistent with our Mission, Vision and Values. Properly designed and effectively implemented programs and services will support healthy aquatic and terrestrial wildlife populations and provide outdoor recreational opportunities for both current and future generations.

While public sentiment guides the answers to the first question, application of sound science must be the foundation of our efforts to answer the second question. Our programs and services must maximize efficiency and effectiveness of available financial and human resources. Answering the second question requires a well-designed process of evaluation that leads to appropriate adjustments in the programs and services we provide.

Although the management responsibilities of the Division of Wildlife originate in state statute, our actions are motivated by the dedication of our staff in managing the rich outdoor resources of South Dakota and in our desire to serve the citizens of South Dakota and our state's visitors that share in the use and enjoyment of these outdoor resources.

The senior leadership in the Wildlife Division provided the input necessary to construct this document with the insight and recommendations from several Division of Wildlife staff and we accept the responsibility to disseminate and implement the philosophies and provisions herein.

On behalf of the senior leadership team,



Tony Leif

Director - Division of Wildlife, SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks

MISSION STATEMENT

The Division of Wildlife will manage¹ South Dakota's wildlife and fisheries resources and their associated habitats² for their sustained and equitable use, and for the benefit, welfare, and enjoyment of the citizens of this state and its visitors³.

OUR MISSION MOTTO: SERVING PEOPLE, MANAGING WILDLIFE

¹ **“Manage”** includes many statutory references to the acts of conserving, protecting, restoring, propagating, controlling, harvesting, preserving, distributing, transporting, and disposing of the public's wildlife. This includes the acquisition and management of land and water for the protection of fish and wildlife and advocating public policy that benefits wildlife. It also refers to seasons, rules, and enforcement actions necessary to regulate hunters, anglers and commercial users in order to manage harvest in ways that maintain healthy and sustainable wildlife populations.

² **“Wildlife and fisheries resources and their associated habitats”** include virtually all publicly owned wild animals from deer to minnows, eagles to crayfish, earthworms to insects. Under the state endangered species act, wild plants are also identified as being of public concern and under jurisdiction of both the Department of Game, Fish and Parks and the Department of Agriculture. Jurisdictional exceptions include domesticated wildlife that are regulated by the Animal Industry Board, and weeds and pests that are under the authority of the Department of Agriculture. Jurisdiction over migratory wildlife like ducks, geese and songbirds; and federally threatened and endangered species is shared with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service who has primary authority over these creatures.

³ **“Sustained and equitable use, and for the benefit, welfare and enjoyment of the citizens of this state and its visitors.”** The quality of life in South Dakota is enhanced by having abundant and diverse wildlife populations. The Division of Wildlife strives to provide fair and equitable opportunities for wildlife users through regulations and programs that ensure viable wildlife populations for current and future generations, and enforces these regulations in a fair and impartial manner. Uses include not only hunting, fishing and trapping but also other activities like bird watching and wildlife photography. The Division also provides public services like wildlife damage management, education programs, hunting and boating safety instruction, publicizing and promoting outdoor activities and resources, and certain community law enforcement activities. All these services are intended to inform, assist, and protect the people of South Dakota, their visitors and their property.

South Dakota Division of Wildlife
OUR VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Wildlife enhances the quality of life in South Dakota.

Therefore we believe ...

- in providing for and sustaining the diversity of our wildlife heritage for present and future generations
- in the ability of the public to use and enjoy wildlife resources in a fair and equitable fashion
- the future of wildlife depends on a public that appreciates, understands and supports wildlife
- in educating and involving youth and adults in wildlife and wildlife-related activities
- in providing quality customer service



Wildlife is a public trust resource.

Therefore we believe ...

- wildlife must be managed for all citizens and visitors
- reasonable regulations are necessary for equitable distribution of the benefits of wildlife and to promote ethical and safe behavior
- the costs of wildlife management should be shared by all who benefit
- in the right of the public to participate in decisions related to wildlife issues

Hunting, fishing and trapping are highly coveted recreational activities and important tools of wildlife management.

Therefore we believe ...

- the heritage of hunting, fishing and trapping in South Dakota must be preserved
- in fair and impartial wildlife regulations and enforcement that serves and protects the natural resources and the public interest
- in the management of wildlife in accordance with biologically sound principles
- in professional and well trained staff who are competent, accountable and empowered

Partnerships with private landowners are essential to effective wildlife management.

Therefore we believe ...

- the stewardship role played by landowners in South Dakota is critical to the future of wildlife and deserving of recognition and respect
- wildlife benefits and economic development may be compatible
- legal access to private land is essential to the use and enjoyment of outdoor resources
- in people sharing in the responsibility for this resource
- wildlife damage management is a cooperative responsibility of state, federal and private interests
- cooperative management programs enhance the use and enjoyment of outdoor resources by hunters, anglers, trappers and other recreationists.

South Dakota Division of Wildlife
VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Every individual sees things through their own eyes. Each sees the future according to their own set of values, the environment that surrounds them, and their personal goals or dreams.

The Division of Wildlife is comprised of many individuals. Collectively, we are responsible for managing wildlife resources that belong to all citizens of our state. Every citizen has a stake in how we manage wildlife resources.

Through the many eyes of individuals within the Division of Wildlife, and on behalf of the citizens to whom we are responsible, we envision a future in which:

- The South Dakota landscape contains habitat of sufficient quantity and quality to support a wide diversity of wildlife at population levels that meet the desires of our citizens and visitors in proper balance with other uses of the land and water
- Strong public sentiment exists that wildlife is a public trust resource that is highly valued by South Dakota society and that hunting, fishing, trapping, and other wildlife-related activities are vital parts of South Dakota's heritage, economy and quality of life
- Outdoor recreationists measure their satisfaction first upon the intangible qualities of their outdoor experience that include appropriate elements of "fair chase" and secondly on the quantity and quality of game and fish harvested
- The Division of Wildlife is a highly-respected agency that is known locally and nationally for:
 - dedicated staff who are committed to the mission and values of the Division of Wildlife;
 - reaching out and connecting to stakeholders to both learn and educate;
 - implementing strategically planned management programs and policies that are developed with stakeholder input and firmly based in science;
 - prompt and cordial service to all stakeholders and resource management partners; and
 - continually striving to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.



South Dakota Division of Wildlife
**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES of
Serving People, Managing Wildlife**

The Department of Game, Fish and Parks' Division of Wildlife has two very important jobs. One is the legal responsibility to manage wildlife and fisheries resources in South Dakota. The other is to provide efficient, effective service to the many users of these resources.

Sometimes the two jobs are easy. People who use these resources are aware of their value to the quality of life they enjoy. As such, they are more than willing to work with the Division of Wildlife to protect and sustain them.

Sometimes the two jobs are difficult; there are many user groups, and each group can have different priorities and objectives. These differential priorities can sometimes be at odds with each other and result in tough choices in how best to proceed with wildlife management.

This section identifies some of the primary opportunities and challenges facing the Division of Wildlife. Classification of the issues, challenges and opportunities is quite difficult because many of the topics are related. Also, these topics are not easily grouped under our program structure, but instead often cut across many programs. To be an effective agency in the future we need to continuously react to today's issues and challenges while seizing opportunities of the future in a proactive manner.

SERVING PEOPLE:

Primary objective: Establish proper resource management goals and objectives

- Manage for wildlife population levels that provide sufficient opportunity for use and enjoyment by outdoor recreationists while staying within social tolerances
- Recognize and respect divergent public opinions of management alternatives
- Incorporate traditional hunting, angling and trapping interests as well as wildlife diversity interests
- Distribute public trust outdoor resources in a fair and equitable fashion
- Incorporate public input into setting goals and objectives
- Recognize the high regard for private property rights in South Dakota in balance with public trust resource management obligations
- Identify and consider emerging demographic trends
- Provide access opportunities for outdoor recreationists to enjoy South Dakota wildlife
- Build strong stakeholder involvement in program development and management decisions



MANAGING WILDLIFE

Primary objective - Proper implementation and evaluation of management programs and policies:

- Allocate human and financial resources appropriately while recognizing:
 - Landscape changes that will impact wildlife
 - Agricultural economics
 - Invasive species
 - Wildlife diseases
 - Extreme weather conditions
 - Climate change
 - Wildlife population monitoring
 - Wildlife research
- Advocate for and employ appropriate levels of regulation necessary for fair allocation and safe use of outdoor resources
- Maintain sufficient financial resources for division operations
 - Investing in programs that encourage participation
 - Maintaining sufficient habitat and access opportunities on public and private lands
 - Recruitment and retention of hunters, trappers and anglers
- Maintain a strong collaborative partnership with the Game, Fish and Parks Commission
- Form and maintain cohesive collaborations with state, federal, tribal and non-governmental entities
- Advocate for federal laws and policies that have local, statewide and national importance
- Recognize how advancements in technology impact natural resources and the management of these resources
- Develop and provide information tools that assist in the use and enjoyment of outdoor resources
- Assist private property owners when and where wildlife conflicts arise



South Dakota Division of Wildlife

COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

Our strategic commitment to professional excellence is:

To encourage, foster and maintain an agency that achieves the Division of Wildlife mission through professional excellence.

Ensuring an internal culture of professionalism and trust that instills public confidence requires:

- Hiring and retaining the right people with the right knowledge, skills and abilities
- Instilling a strong commitment to public service
- Providing proper training for employees
- Providing career and personal development opportunities throughout employees' career path
- Empowering employees and fostering opportunities that enable them to strive towards professional growth and successful careers
- Recognizing the importance of personal growth and development for professional success
- Recognizing that the contributions of every employee are integral to the success of our agency
- Having a proper logic for decision-making that begins at the grass roots level of our agency
- Seeking an appropriate level of staff involvement on important decisions
- Providing staff with proper feedback and explanation on important decisions
- Recognizing that all employees are essential members of the Wildlife Division team

Success will be attained when:

- Goals and objectives of the Wildlife Division are reached
- Division staff fulfill their professional aspirations for rewarding careers
- Division staff fulfill personal aspirations

***Wildlife Division staff define the identity of the
Wildlife Division – both individually and collectively***



Division of Wildlife

Program Structure

For the purposes of this document a Program is defined as: “A logical grouping of goals and objectives that can be managed toward a common good (i.e., accomplish our mission). Agency programs are often defined by species, species groups, habitats, ecotype, support service, client or activity. Collectively, programs form a structure that defines an agency’s product or service line.”

The following is the list of Division of Wildlife programs:

FISHERIES

- **BLACK HILLS:** Includes all rivers, streams, small impoundments, and reservoirs within the Black Hills
- **WEST RIVER:** Includes all rivers, streams, small impoundments, and large reservoirs west of the Missouri River and outside of the Black Hills
- **MISSOURI RIVER:** Includes the four mainstem Missouri River reservoirs and river reaches below Fort Randall and Gavin’s Point Dams
- **EAST RIVER:** Includes all rivers, streams, small impoundments, reservoirs, and natural lakes east of the Missouri River



GAME

- **BIG GAME:** Includes white-tailed deer, mule deer, pronghorn, elk, wild turkey, bighorn sheep, mountain goat and mountain lion
- **SMALL GAME:** Includes ring-necked pheasant, gray partridge, bobwhite quail, sharp-tailed grouse, greater prairie chicken, sage grouse, ruffed grouse, cottontail rabbit, and tree squirrel
- **MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS:** Includes duck, goose, tundra swan, Sandhill crane, mourning dove, snipe, crow, and coot
- **FURBEARER and OTHER GAME MAMMALS:** Includes bobcat, marten, muskrat, beaver, weasel, coyote, skunk, fox, raccoon, badger, opossum, jackrabbit, prairie dog, ground squirrel, and other mammals

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY: Includes the management, conservation, inventory, and protection of all native South Dakota wildlife species and their habitats as well as state and federally listed threatened and endangered species

WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT: Includes programs and services designed to limit crop, livestock, and property damage by predators, big game, waterfowl, and other wild animals

HABITAT MANAGEMENT and ACQUISITION

- **PRIVATE LAND HABITAT and ACCESS:** Involves all wildlife habitat programs on private land. Various projects will include the Wildlife Partners Program, Walk-In Area Program and Wetland and Grassland Habitat Program. Private land habitat projects will emphasize high quality wildlife habitat and public access

- **PUBLIC LAND HABITAT and ACQUISITION:** Includes all existing Wildlife Division lands and other state and federal land managed by the Wildlife Division as Game Production Areas. Division land projects will be designed to achieve optimum wildlife management potential and provide public access to fish and wildlife recreation opportunities. Future land acquisition projects will be developed based on a publicly supported, state-wide, long-term acquisition plan

WILDLIFE ADVOCACY: Activities that influence and advocate public policies to benefit South Dakota's wildlife resources including environmental review and interagency coordination

CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT: All law enforcement activities pertaining to hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, and other laws and regulations for which the department has specific authority. Also, includes management of the TIPs program, law enforcement training, boating safety and education, special permits and regulatory services, ethics and compliance education, and special operations/investigations

COMMUNICATIONS

- **INFORMATION SERVICES:** Coordinates communication and informational effort and produces or coordinates media products and services for the division (e.g., hunting & fishing guides, Conservation Digest, radio/television spots)
- **EDUCATION SERVICES:** Coordinates project WILD, aquatic resource education, and other education activities pertaining to wildlife in South Dakota
- **THE OUTDOOR CAMPUSES:** Teaches environmental education and basic fundamentals of outdoor skills for a variety of activities in South Dakota through classes, seminars, programs, displays, exhibits and by providing other related Information and Education materials
- **HUNTING SAFETY:** Coordinates hunter safety and bowhunter education

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES: Manages grants administration, leadership, and employee development, harvest surveys, human dimensions, licensing, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), databases, public involvement and planning



Division of Wildlife
Game, Fish and Parks
Administrative Structure

Operations

Region One (western SD)
Region Two (central SD)
Region Three (southeast SD)
Region Four (northeast SD)
Law Enforcement Administration

Terrestrial Resources

Management and Research
Habitat and Access
Wildlife Damage

Aquatic Resources

Management and Research
Fish Production and Stocking
Habitat and Access

Administrative Services

Communications/GIS
Education
Constituent Surveys
Federal Grants

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