

Wildlife

Transition Team Committees were asked to identify the top five priority issues in their topic areas by identifying what they believe to be the biggest challenges the State of Alaska needs to address. There were many ideas that were brought forward and categorized and debated. The top five priorities for the Wildlife working group are:

- 1. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game should adopt an innovative business model.**
- 2. Cooperation between agencies (both Federal & State) and departments within the agencies.**
- 3. Manage for abundance and sustained yield by expanding and improving intensive management.**
 - a. Focus management on the wildlife and not people, manage for abundance.**
 - b. Expand intensive management aspects, not just predator control.**
- 4. Improve public relations and engagement.**
- 5. Promote a constitutional amendment for a rural preference.**

The following were identified as stakeholders in Wildlife Management and considered in the priority actions, resolutions, and success:

- Private landowners
- State of Alaska – Dept of Natural Resources (DNR), Dept of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Dept of Public Safety (DPS), Dept of Transportation (DOT), Board of Game (BOG), Dept of Commerce (DOC)
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game divisions: Habitat, Subsistence, Administration, Wildlife Conservation
- Tribes and ANCSA Corporations
- Local Governments
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Fed Soup – Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), National Park Service (NPS), US Forest Service (USFS), US Dept of Agriculture (USDA), US Geological Survey (USGS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Dept of Defense (DOD), Federal Subsistence Board (FSB)
- University of Alaska
- Industry (Guides, Transporters, Tourism)
- Public / Non-Consumptive User
- Hunters – Resident & Non-Resident

- Subsistence User
- Legislature
- Rural / Non-Rural Alaskan Residents

For each of the priority issues, committees were tasked with identifying what success or resolution to the issue would look like and what actions would lead to that success. The committees also discussed what barriers to achieving success would be and what actions might be taken to resolve those barriers. Below are the recommendations for achieving success or resolution for each of the five priorities identified by the Wildlife committee:

1. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game should adopt an innovative business model.

The Department of Fish and Game should be run more like a business: not only increased revenues, but looking for efficiencies, look for a return on investment (are we getting benefit from the cost). Develop a business plan with goals and objectives, manage programs and departments to that plan.

Success elements considered to be agreeable to most Alaskans:

- “wildlife is an asset and should be managed accordingly” and,
- increase and diversify revenue

Possible Actions to Success:

- Change the philosophy of ADF&G to run more like a business (innovative thinking)
 - Use Return on Investment to evaluate programs, are we getting the benefit for the cost.
 - Business Planning – clearly identify goals and objectives
 - Build Public-Private partnerships to reach goals/objectives and leverage funding
 - Expand Constituency
 - Audit Programs – why and how are we spending money
- Funding:
 - Leverage Funds (federal, industry, carbon credits, NGOS, etc.)
 - Partnership marketing (industry, tourism, etc)
 - Implement a license fee (permit and tags) increase
 - Seek alternative sources of funding
 - Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) funding
 - Pittman-Robertson Act Funding

- Private lands wildlife management implemented (co-management)-take advantage of Farm bill and NRCS funding
 - Recognize value (\$) of wildlife
- Establish an Advisory Committee or Blue Ribbon Commission (Economic Development wildlife managers, economics and business professionals) to review and make recommendations for changes.
- Bring in a CFO/business development expert/financial analyst
 - Can be employee or consultant (or on loan from another department)
 - Answers direct to Governor/Administration
 - Advises on business/financial aspects of projects and programs
- Develop ADF&G business plan with clear goals and objectives
 - Audit existing programs
 - Develop a procedure for analyzing new programs and projects
 - Include financial and social values
- Assess current capacity and research success stories (what works in other places)
 - From this assessment determine max ROI and/or target ROI
 - Use this assessment to plan and prioritize specific programs and products. Examples: Increase funding, public–private partnerships, funding matches
- Evaluate roles/responsibilities to use for maximum potential looking to improve efficient use of resources.
 - Are we getting the most from our money (Leverage money)
 - Create / Renew Partnerships
 - Licensing/permitting
 - Alternative sources of funding – CARA concept, etc.
 - Private lands wildlife management (co-management)
 - Recognize value of wildlife (\$) – it is a resource much like the PFD
 - Define as a food source
 - Utilize carbon credits as conservation tool
 - Better use of federal funds (e.g. climate change \$)
 - Big game commercial services moved from Commerce to ADF&G (currently under Commerce for licensing.)

Barriers to Further Success

- Lack of priority: the financial situation tends to shift focus.
- Lack of buy-in by ADF&G staff
- Need applied science rather than academic research (Need to focus on applied)
- To maximize money leverage - state needs to dialogue/coordinate with ANCs and private landowners
- To increase revenue via license fees, tags, permits or alternative sources, need buy-in from those affected, Governor and Legislature.

Actions to Address Barriers

- Lack of priority: money situation tends to shift focus
 1. Need a Directive from leadership to all agencies
 2. Initial efforts should bring back financial recommendation and business case
- Lack of buy-in by staff in ADF&G
 1. Update and educate staff on fiscal policy and success stories and other states
 2. Focus performance metrics to include ROI and related functions
- Applied science versus academic research (Need to focus on applied)
 1. Add our ally and business/financial analysis to program/project decision-making. Projects will be successful and breed success.
- To maximize money leverage – the State needs to start a dialogue/coordinate with ANCs and private landowner, and federal agencies
 1. Include private landowner in federal/state cooperative discussions
- Alternative money and license = Buy-in from Governor, Legislature, user groups
 1. Education with examples from business community
- Program leadership must have experience with public-private partnerships

2. Improved Cooperation between agencies (e.g. federal) and departments within agencies

It was felt by Wildlife committee members that there is room for vast improvement in cooperation between the State and Federal agencies and within the State departments itself. Through cooperation and collaboration we can have a more cohesive management plan, create efficiencies and make funding go farther.

Success Elements Considered to be Agreeable to Most Alaskans

- Provide opportunities to share perspectives and find common ground
- Avoid frivolous lawsuits
- Improved relationships between the Board of Game /Subsistence Resource Commissions/ Rural Advisory Committees/ the Federal Subsistence Board, and federal agencies
- The ADF&G voice should be equal to other agencies within the state government, all departments must be heard independently, not just from or through DNR on resource issues
- Tribal consultation
- Local engagement

Possible Actions to Success on Agreed Success Elements

- Provide opportunities to share perspectives and find common ground
 1. Create a summit (state, federal and public) to improve relationships among the government agencies and the public
 2. Consider returning to one regulatory body/one system (eliminate dual management)
 3. Leveraging other solutions: example rural constitutional amendment
- Avoid frivolous lawsuits
 1. Review and prioritize cases–
 2. Save money– it can be better used on management
- Improved relationships between be BOG/SRCs/RACs/FSB
 1. The summit will help with this.
- ADF&G voice is equal to other departments
 1. Change policy so ADF&G have the opportunity to provide professional input into permits and other resource issues that cross departmental jurisdiction
- Tribal consultation- consult with tribes, seek their involvement
- Local government involvement-public outreach/education
- Private landowners involvement- recognize land ownership
- NGOs involvement
- Incorporate university personnel/students to research wildlife history/needs– including relationships with intensive management
 1. New leadership needs to emphasize cooperation with universities

Barriers to Further Success

- Entrenched attitudes and inflammatory rhetoric
- Endangered Species Act diminishes State authority and expertise
- Poorly defined state and federal authorities for wildlife management and access - congressional fixes are needed (this needs to be solidified)
- There is an imbalance between state and federal funding and staffing of federal land management agencies in areas – creates frustration and workload

Actions to Address Barriers

- Leadership in all camps must “walk the talk” and set an example. State leaders must take the initiative to make changes. Leadership must be willing to seek to understand and respect others perspectives, and needs, limitations. Seek common ground; this must be ongoing.
- For ESA, state should continue/increase funding for research on broad array of species (“Wildlife Diversity”). Keep common species common.
- Defining state/federal authorities hinges on the first two bullets above being accomplished. (Review MOA’s and other non-statutory agreements)
- Build collaboration on common objectives at the field level. Consider federal attributes as positive opportunities. Requires discussions and seeking common objectives.
- Wildlife know no boundaries - work together.

3. Manage for abundance and sustained yield by expanding and improving intensive management aspects

There are many aspects to the Intensive Management Program, none of this discussion suggests that predator management should NOT be used as a management tool. The focus was how to improve management through implementing these other methods and/or means.

Success Elements Considered to be Agreeable to Most Alaskans

- Improve habitat management
 1. Fire management
 2. Forestry
 3. Eco-typing and inventory of habitat types
 4. Mechanical
- Transplant and reintroduction
 1. New populations
 2. Supplement populations
 3. Identify suitable habitats
- Evaluate the return on investment (ROI) of predator control program
 1. What is the effectiveness on populations and increase in harvest
 2. Availability for harvest --How accessible is the resource?
 3. Cost of programs
- Manage wildlife and not people – Promote wildlife conservation and stewardship
 1. Focus on wildlife population and habitat management
 2. Improved relationship between public and Fish & Wildlife Protection
 3. Increased population surveys and increased eco-typing land for habitat improvement
- BOG needs to reflect all users
 1. Hunters
 2. Subsistence users
 3. Tourism industry
 4. Photographers
 5. Commercial industry
 6. Urban
 7. Non-hunters
 8. The public
 9. Improved public perception of diversity on BOG
 - Appointment process: Governor considers applicants with cross-section of support

Possible Actions to Success on Agreed Success Elements

- Habitat management:
 1. Maintain fire management plan with in ADF&G and DNR– NGOs (apply state-wide)
 2. Integrate pre-commercial thinning
 3. Minimize old growth for timber harvesting
 4. Implement mechanical habitat manipulation
 5. Continue to gather information such as eco-typing and inventory of habitat, while considering climate change, for use in management planning.
- Transplant and reintroduction
 1. Assess opportunities to create new populations of wildlife, e.g. bison & elk, as habitat allows
 2. Assess opportunities to supplement low-level populations, as habitat allows
- Predator control programs
 1. Conduct population surveys to determine if population objectives are being met
 2. Evaluate harvest status to see if harvest objectives are being met
 3. Assess harvest and population objectives to ensure they are realistic and achievable
 4. Assess access availability prior to implementing IM
 5. IM program and evaluate/implement alternative approaches. Harvestable surpluses
 6. Conduct a cost/benefit analysis on each program
- Focus on wildlife and habitat management
 1. Increase focus on surveys to support population management to increased yield
 2. Incorporate subsistence division studies in wildlife management plans
 3. Inventory habitats in cooperation with the Division of Forestry and USDA (ecotyping), DOT and ADF&G and NGOs
 4. Identify forest succession due to climate change

Barriers to Further Success

- Habitat management
 1. Rural residents – (Fire mgmt.)
 2. Industry (Forestry) – SE Alaska, not elsewhere
 3. Funding
- Transplant/reintroduction
 1. Bureaucratic
 2. Oil and gas industry
 3. Local residents
 4. Ecological compatibility
- Return on Investment (ROI) on predator control
 1. Staffing

- 2. Money
- 3. Outside interest groups
- Focus on wildlife and habitat management
 - 1. Interdepartmental resistance
 - 2. Money

Actions to Address Barriers

- Habitat management
 - 1. Engage rural residents in fire management planning/implementation
 - 2. Include forestry and forest products industry
 - 3. Habitat manipulation.- partner with NGOs for mechanical and natural habitat manipulation
 - 4. Leverage funds, include private sector, Non-Government Organizations
 - Seek federal funding
- Transplant and reintroduction
 - 1. Identify appropriate species and habitats
 - 2. Focus on species that do not have federal listings
 - 3. Involve local residents
- ROI on predator control
 - 1. Focus on small and targeted control actions
 - 2. Prioritize staff for management
 - 3. Analyze effective yield of management programs
 - 4. Implement alternative approaches (identify “harvestable surplus” and maximize harvest opportunity under existing laws and regulations to minimize use of predator control and include public participation)
- Focus on wildlife and habitat management
 - 1. Regular meetings between ADF&G, DNR, DOT focused on wildlife habitat.
 - 2. Partnerships – (State, federal, private, NGO’s)
 - 3. Include Subsistence Division in management planning

4. Improve public relations and engagement

Perception goes a long way; sometimes it’s not what you say but how you say it. This is a category was created as a catch-all to improve public relations in a variety of areas. The Wildlife committee felt that this was important enough to be include to improve relations across the State with the public, industry, and agencies.

Success Elements Considered to be Agreeable to Most Alaskans

- Board of Game diversification – The Board of Game should reflect all users; consider including representation of non-consumptive users (there is a perception that it does not)
- Simplify the regulations

1. A comprehensive review of current regulations by ADF&G for simplification
 2. There should be a two-year cycle process to amend regulations; with Advisory Committee input/coincide with BOG process. (This has gone out of cycle)
- Improved Fish and Wildlife Protection (FWP) relationships
 1. Explore & relocate physical and/or administratively to ADF&G (focus on conservation and not just enforcement)
 2. Prioritize education and outreach in schools and public events by FWP
 3. FWP participate with ADF&G in conservation projects and implementation
 - Non-resident education – meat care/wanton waste
 - Expand hunter education to include conservation principles
 - Minimize the negative human–wildlife interactions and impacts
 - Integrate social considerations when developing intensive management programs

Possible Actions to Success on Agreed Success Elements

- Ask the Governor to appoint a diversity of conservation interests to the Board of Game to achieve greater balance of perspective representing the wildlife-related interests of the citizens of Alaska
- Intensive Management program and evaluate/implement *alternative* approaches. Harvestable surpluses.

Barriers to Further Success

- Turnover time for BOG/ADF&G appointments
- Entrenched attitudes and inflammatory rhetoric
- Need for money for public outreach and education
- Interdepartmental resistance to change and money for FWP
- Internal budgetary battles

Actions to Address Barriers

- Make timely new leadership appointments
- Governor revoke Executive Order that forces ADF&G to provide input only through DNR and diminishes ADF&G role and purpose, especially in critical habitat areas
- Governor's office – announce new day – reflect work of wildlife transition group
- Toot our own horn– celebrate successes! The ADF&G needs to publicly share successes.
- Rapidly seek non-General Funds, e.g. Pitman– Robertson funds, increased license fees, farm bills, foundations, etc.
- Attitude changes are free
- Top-down direction for cultural change within Fish & Wildlife Protection (Enforcement should emphasize education and not confrontation.)

5. Promote a constitutional amendment for rural preference.

In an effort to reduce or solve the subsistence issue and eliminate the dual management system, a rural preference amendment should be sought to comply with the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).

Success Elements Considered to be Agreeable to Most Alaskans

- A constitutional amendment for a rural preference.

Possible Actions to Success on Agreed Success Elements

- Comprehensive review of dual management
- Develop proposition
 1. Two thirds vote legislation
 2. Public vote
- Public outreach

Barriers to Further Success

- Urban people
- Rural people – distrust of State
- Legislature

Actions to Address Barriers

- Organize a Summit, to discuss subsistence and the rural preference for the purpose of provide education and outreach to public and legislature
- Highlight State's role of IM in rural areas
- Governor announced new day on tribal relations