

Partnering for a Prosperous Future



A 10-year Strategic Plan for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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**Governor Sonny Perdue
Commissioner Noel Holcomb
Deputy Commissioner Paul Burkhalter**

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Executive Summary

Georgia's natural and cultural resource heritage defines the state's economy and lifestyle. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the steward of that heritage, a responsibility it shares with Georgia's citizens, governments, businesses and visitors.

This is a time of change for DNR and for natural resource management. The development of a long-range strategic plan will ensure that DNR continues to deliver services efficiently and effectively, with excellent customer service as the cornerstone of our success.

This plan was developed with input from the Board of Natural Resources, DNR leadership and staff, and facilitators from the University of Georgia Fanning Institute. It incorporates public input received through a statewide attitude survey (available at www.gadnr.org/strategic) that assessed the priorities of the citizens of Georgia as well as through comments provided through a public review process. The resulting plan provides a department-level vision with goals, objectives and activities to guide DNR into the next decade.

This strategic plan focuses on ways in which DNR can improve efficiency through better internal coordination and communications; expand public-private partnerships to address critical natural and cultural resources issues; and provide high quality customer service to the citizens of Georgia. Its foundation lies in the department's three overarching goals: 1) to sustain natural resources; 2) to build a conservation ethic among the state's citizens; and 3) to create organizational excellence.

The plan builds on ongoing departmental activities and offers new ways of addressing the challenges and objectives that are at the heart of DNR's mission. It suggests ways of dissolving boundaries among the six different divisions of this agency and recommends ways that they can more effectively work together. It addresses five cross-functional areas that were identified by the strategic planning team as the most critical:

1. Resource Inventory and Monitoring
2. Natural and Cultural Resource Management
3. Public Use and Access
4. Public Education, Outreach and Communications
5. Regulatory and Non-Regulatory Integration

These five areas serve as the basis for the objectives and actions that will guide DNR's activities in the coming decade. Three implementation teams will oversee this process, recommending methods and procedures for putting ideas into action.

This long-range strategic plan provides a path to improving our understanding of Georgia's natural systems and the impact we have on them. It offers recommendations for managing our natural and cultural resources, for providing public access, for building a conservation ethic by educating the citizens of this state, and for continuing to leverage our accomplishments through partnerships with a variety of organizations. An annual review will evaluate progress and ensure that the plan remains relevant. The end

product is a dynamic document that provides a vision and strategy to guide the Department of Natural Resources for the next decade.

Commissioner's Statement

Georgia is blessed with natural forests, clear mountain streams and expansive coastal marshes. We have outstanding public recreation lands that offer people a chance to reconnect with nature, and we have unique historic resources that give our towns and cities their character. At the same time, Georgia is one of the fastest growing states in the country. While this growth contributes to our strong economy, it also creates stress on Georgia's natural, cultural and recreational resources.

Our challenge at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is to balance the demands of this growth with resource protection. We are the primary stewards of Georgia's natural and cultural resources, a responsibility that we take very seriously. We recognize that air, land and water are interconnected in sustaining life, protecting public health and providing the foundation for a sound sustainable economy.

The challenges that face us in the years ahead are going to require that state and local governments, businesses and industry, and private citizens work together to develop integrated approaches that address environmental, economic and social concerns. Accommodating the growth and prosperity we all enjoy while protecting the environment is a responsibility we all share, and partnerships are critical for a prosperous future. The Department of Natural Resources intends to be responsive and responsible as we make wise decisions for the common good, working to protect and conserve Georgia's natural and cultural resources for future generations.

Commissioner Noel Holcomb

DNR Strategic Planning Process

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process to identify natural and cultural resource issues of importance to DNR associates, stakeholders, and the public. This long-range strategic plan provides a framework for the stewardship of Georgia's natural and cultural resources for the next decade.

The DNR vision and mission statements developed in 2000 by the Board of Natural Resources guided the strategic planning efforts. The process began in April 2004 when the DNR Board approved a work plan developed under the direction of former Commissioner Lonice Barrett (Appendix 1).

This work plan reflects three long-term goals:

1. Sustain natural resources

Making Georgia's natural, cultural, and recreational resources better tomorrow than they are today

2. Build a conservation ethic

Making Georgians better environmental stewards at home, work, and at play

3. Demonstrate organizational excellence

Making Georgia DNR the best natural resource management agency in the nation

At a strategic planning team retreat in June 2004, Ralph Callaway, chair of the DNR Board's Strategic Planning Committee, charged the team with identifying issues that would improve departmental efficiency through innovative, science-based management. He stressed the need to do more with less.

Mr. Callaway and former Commissioner Barrett emphasized the importance of DNR's traditional constituents, those who support Georgia's hunting and fishing programs, while stressing the need to develop programs that address the recreation demands of the state's growing population.

Mark Duda, President of Responsive Management, provided an overview of public attitudes and knowledge about natural resources. This was followed by a discussion of a customer survey being developed to gauge Georgia citizens' knowledge and attitudes about the state's natural resources and their management.

The strategic planning team (Appendix 2) then reviewed the three long-term goals and significant issues related to achieving these goals. From these issues, five cross-functional areas were determined to be the most critical:

1. Resource Inventory and Monitoring
2. Natural and Cultural Resource Management
3. Public Use and Access
4. Public Education, Outreach and Communications
5. Regulatory and Non-Regulatory Integration

Five work teams were established to address these areas. Each team included a cross-section of members from nearly all of DNR's seven divisions (Appendix 3).

A briefing was provided to the DNR Board's Strategic Planning Committee in August 2004. Over the next six months, a comprehensive customer survey developed and administered by Responsive Management assessed the attitudes of Georgia citizens about the state's natural and cultural resources. Information was collected through written questionnaires to DNR associates and stakeholders and through a telephone survey of over 800 randomly selected Georgians. The work teams used this information to prepare draft objectives and actions. These were completed in December 2005 and were presented to the DNR Board's Strategic Planning Committee in January 2006.

The draft objectives and actions were posted on the DNR Web site (www.gadnr.org) for public review. In addition, three public meetings were held in February 2006 in Savannah, Albany and Atlanta to receive additional input from interested citizens and stakeholders.

Based on input from associates, stakeholders and citizens, the thirteen objectives in the draft strategic plan were prioritized, with five selected as those DNR needs to begin working on immediately:

1. Natural and Cultural Resources Management:
Objective #2 Actively manage habitats on DNR properties to provide restoration, enhancement, conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources; encourage similar activities on other public and private lands that protect these resources; and encourage public access and education.
2. Public Access and Use:
Objective #1 Provide safe, high-quality recreational opportunities on DNR properties and statewide.
3. Public Education, Outreach and Communications:
Objective #1 Build environmental and cultural resource awareness and responsibility.
4. Resource Inventory and Monitoring:
Objective #1 Coordinate applied research for inventory and monitoring to facilitate science-based decision making.
5. Resource Inventory and Monitoring:
Objective #2 Provide a comprehensive data management system that includes Web-based accessibility to information resources.

These objectives were assigned to three implementation teams who are responsible for recommending methods and procedures for putting the plan into action.

Department of Natural Resources Vision and Mission Statement

Developed and Adopted by the Georgia Board of Natural Resources
September 26, 2000

Vision

Georgia's natural, historic, cultural, environmental and economic resources will be...

- Better tomorrow than they are today.
- Abundant, diverse, clean, well managed and protected.
- Available for everyone to use and enjoy.

The people of Georgia should...

- Appreciate the importance of sustaining and enhancing the state's natural, historic, cultural, environmental and economic resources.
- Take an active role in the work of the department.
- See the department as a responsive and responsible agency working to protect and conserve Georgia's natural, historic and cultural resources and maintain a strong economy.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources will be widely recognized as a public agency that...

- Listens carefully and responds to the opinions of the people it serves to provide a balance of all factors.
- Makes wise decisions for the common good of the people.
- Uses its resources and spends tax dollars wisely.
- Enforces state laws fairly and vigorously.
- Manages the state's natural resources for the benefit of people, fish, game and non-game wildlife, and the economic well-being of present and future generations.
- Ever strives to improve the environment in which present and future Georgians live, work and play.

- Earns the trust and respect of the people of Georgia through its decisions and actions.
- Understands the importance of promoting the development of commerce and industry that utilizes sound environmental practices.

Mission

The mission of the Department of Natural Resources is to sustain, enhance, protect and conserve Georgia's natural, historic and cultural resources for present and future generations, while recognizing the importance of promoting the development of commerce and industry that utilize sound environmental practices.

Natural and Cultural Resource Management

As the agency charged with the management and protection of the state's natural and cultural resources, it is inherent in DNR's mission to protect the places that give us clear water to drink, clean air to breathe, diverse plant and animal populations, outdoor recreational and educational areas, cultural and historic sites, and critical wildlife habitats. But Georgia is one of the fastest-growing states in the country, and we face many challenges as a result of rapid population growth and increasing development.

Because DNR directly manages only a small portion of the state's land base and cultural resources, it is important that stakeholders responsible for land use planning are fully aware of the programs, data and technical expertise available from the department. With more than 90% of Georgia's lands in private ownership, achieving conservation and management goals today and in the future requires planned, objective-based management, innovative programs, and partnerships on public and private lands. By showcasing state-owned properties and facilities as demonstration areas, DNR can offer examples of management, restoration, and preservation methods. By offering guidance and assistance to landowners and land use planners throughout the state, DNR can help ensure consistent, focused and coordinated management priorities and actions.

Objectives and Actions

The objectives for natural and cultural resources management are designed to improve our knowledge and understanding of the state's resources and to ensure their long-term protection. Managing these resources requires the technical expertise of associates from throughout the agency. The process crosses division lines and creates a standard that all landowners – public and private – can emulate. By assessing the conditions of ecosystems throughout the state, by implementing management priorities and strategies that include resource protection and public access and education, and by building partnerships with stakeholders in the public and private sectors, DNR can conserve and protect our valued resources.

Objective 1: Integrate assessment and management of public and private lands.

Achieving ecosystem management goals requires a coordinated effort on public and private lands alike. An accurate understanding of the conditions of these ecosystems is essential to the success of management strategies.

Key Actions:

- Assess status of the major ecosystems throughout the state and identify areas of special concern.
- Maximize opportunities to work in partnership with public and private interests for land conservation and management to systematically improve the health of ecosystems, taking into account those areas of special concern.

- Develop indicators for long-term monitoring of ecosystem health.

Objective 2: Actively manage habitats on DNR properties to provide restoration, enhancement, conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources; encourage similar activities on other public and private lands that protect these resources; and encourage public access and education.

In rapidly growing urban areas, sprawl is destroying natural habitats at an unprecedented rate. In rural Georgia, economic pressures are forcing more landowners to sell their property, often to developers. By setting priorities for natural and cultural resources management on a department level and supporting activities that cross division lines, DNR can maximize successful management of state-owned lands and encourage appropriate management activities on privately held lands.

Key Actions:

- Establish priorities using inventory databases to identify resources, including cultural, recreational and natural communities.
- Evaluate and define uses, or potential uses, as current, future, desired, mandated, prohibited, primary or secondary.
- Develop a protocol for assignment of division responsibility for each property.
- Share cross-divisional technical expertise through management recommendations and actions, capital resources, and personnel to accomplish natural and cultural resource management.
- Expand DNR technical assistance support on habitat and cultural resource management and restoration.
- Identify and develop demonstration areas for resource management, restoration and enhancement.
- Target land planning and management efforts to support a variety of habitats and a diverse and healthy mix of native species.
- Target cultural resource management and efforts to support protection of a variety of cultural properties.
- Foster volunteerism across the state to manage and restore native habitats and cultural resources throughout Georgia.

Objective 3: Partner with federal, state, regional and local authorities to integrate natural and cultural resources information and techniques into the land use planning process.

DNR has a long and successful history of securing and managing important lands for public recreation and education as well as for safeguarding critical wildlife habitats. But there never will be enough funds for the state to buy all the lands that should be conserved and managed, so we must continue to seek partnerships with other organizations engaged in land use planning and management to ensure sound decisions involving our valued resources.

Key Actions:

- Identify and develop partnership opportunities with state, regional, and local authorities with land use planning responsibilities.
- Provide support and coordination to federal, state, regional and local authorities with compliance and technical assistance needs.
- Facilitate coordination among stakeholders in land use planning.

Public Access and Use

Providing safe and meaningful recreational and educational experiences is one of DNR's most important responsibilities.

A statewide survey about natural resource issues and opinions conducted by Responsive Management (www.gadnr.org/strategic) showed that tourist-related activities had high rates of participation among respondents, with a near majority having visited a Georgia state park for a day trip, picnicked, or visited a historic town, museum, or garden/park. Wildlife viewing was also very popular.

The economic impact of tourism is second only to that of agriculture in Georgia. Throughout the state, natural, cultural, and recreational resources attract millions of people – and generate millions of dollars in revenues – each year.

- On the coast, vast areas of unspoiled marsh, along with our 90-mile coastline and 14 barrier islands, support a \$500 million fishing industry and a tourist industry that brings in nearly a billion dollars each year.
- Hunters throughout the state spend more than \$1.06 billion each year on food and lodging, transportation, and other expenses associated with their hunting trips.
- Anglers spend more than \$250 million, and boaters more than \$176 million, each year.
- More than 10 million visitors to state parks and historic sites generate \$32,778,713 in revenues annually.

Many areas managed and operated by DNR are located in parts of the state that traditionally have not attracted significant private development. State parks and historic sites, wildlife management areas, boat ramps and other facilities help draw visitors – and their tourist dollars – to these places.

Throughout the state, partnerships with public and private interests will continue to help stimulate the growth of nature- and culture-based tourism and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and education to Georgia citizens.

Objectives and Actions

Georgia's diverse natural and cultural resources offer a variety of experiences for outdoor enthusiasts. Hunting, boating, hiking, wildlife watching, backpacking, cycling, freshwater and saltwater fishing, programs at state parks and visits to historic sites are just a few of the activities Georgians enjoy.

Through long-range planning and through partnerships with public and private landowners and organizations, DNR can help ensure that all Georgia residents and visitors will continue to enjoy high-quality outdoor activities and experiences.

Objective 1: Provide safe, high-quality recreational opportunities on DNR properties and statewide.

As Georgia's population grows, so does the demand for outdoor recreation. By anticipating needs, establishing effective partnerships and offering guidance and assistance to partners, DNR can help provide ample opportunities for meaningful outdoor experiences.

Key Actions:

- Develop a long-range outdoor recreation management plan for Georgia in cooperation with federal, state, regional, and local organizations and citizens.
- Identify state, regional and local needs based on changing demographics.
- Partner with public and private interests.
- As appropriate, promote multiple uses on state lands and encourage multiple uses on private lands.
- Recognize historical land uses and acquisition sources and remain committed to maintaining and enhancing traditional recreational uses such as hunting and fishing that are funded by these constituencies.
- Provide technical assistance to non-DNR managed activities.
- Develop partnership opportunities with other agencies, non-governmental organizations and user groups on recreation activities.
- Research other jurisdictions on promotional and economic benefits for recreation (benefits-based programming).

Objective 2: Foster economic development through nature- and culture-based tourism.

DNR's mission is managing "the state's natural resources for the benefit of people, fish, game and non-game wildlife, and the economic well-being of present and future generations" as well as "promoting the development of commerce and industry that utilizes sound environmental practices." Expanded tourism opportunities can go hand-in-hand with providing outdoor experiences and education to Georgia residents and visitors.

Key Actions:

- Quantify economic impacts of nature- and culture-based tourism.
- Encourage nature- and culture-based tourism through partnerships.
- Work with public and private interests to identify local and regional opportunities.

Resource Inventory and Monitoring

Central to the mission of the Department of Natural Resources is the charge “to sustain, enhance, protect and conserve Georgia’s natural, cultural and historic resources.” DNR cannot fulfill this mission without strong inventory and monitoring programs.

A comprehensive and accessible inventory of Georgia’s natural and cultural resources will provide a foundation for science-based decision making. Long-term monitoring will assess the effectiveness of programs and policies and help ensure that our natural, cultural and recreational resources are properly managed and protected.

All DNR divisions collect, manage and use inventory and monitoring data to track natural and cultural resource trends, to make management recommendations and to implement policies and programs. The department traditionally has conducted these activities with little communication or coordination among divisions. Data are located in numerous programs across DNR in a variety of formats, ranging from electronic databases to written files. Integrating this information into a state-of-the-art data management system will provide DNR staff with improved access to more comprehensive information and will aid in management recommendations and decisions. Coordination of future research, inventory and monitoring needs will allow the agency to make sure it is collecting and using information efficiently and effectively.

DNR stakeholders and the public also have an interest in accessing data maintained by DNR. Consolidating information and making it accessible to others outside of the agency when appropriate will allow for increased public awareness and involvement and for more informed decision-making.

Objectives and Actions

The objectives for resource inventory and monitoring are designed to improve communication and cooperation among the divisions and to improve communication with the public. A coordinated effort that combines the knowledge, skills and resources found throughout the department will strengthen DNR’s ability to gather and use information efficiently and effectively. Work groups operating across division lines will help ensure that the wide range of research and monitoring programs within the department is fully represented. Improved access to this information by the people who work for the agency and by all of the citizens of Georgia will lead to better understanding and management of our natural, cultural and recreational resources.

Objective 1: Coordinate applied research for resource inventory and monitoring to facilitate science-based decision making.

Each division of the department gathers information and makes decisions based on the best available data. However, greater coordination is needed among DNR associates and with the many local and statewide organizations working to manage our natural, cultural and recreational resources. By coordinating research efforts within the department and by working in concert with groups outside the agency, DNR will improve the base of information on which to make decisions about the state's valuable resources.

Key Actions:

- Identify and catalog all mission-critical past and present projects, programs, contracts and summaries of findings and results.
- Evaluate performance measures.
- Identify, categorize and prioritize future data and information needs.
- Identify opportunities for coordination between divisions for collecting inventory; monitoring data; and leveraging projects, programs and contracts to maximize return of investments.
- Identify opportunities for partnering between divisions and with external stakeholders.

Objective 2: Provide a comprehensive data management system that includes Web-based accessibility to information resources.

A majority of Georgia citizens know little or nothing about DNR's activities, and many DNR associates know little about programs and policies outside their own areas of expertise. The development of a state-of-the-art data management system will allow divisions to share information in an efficient and effective manner. Making this information available through a Web-based system will help improve the public's knowledge and understanding of important natural, cultural and recreational resource issues.

Key Actions:

- Research existing data management systems with Web-based accessibility.
- Research best practices.
- Perform needs assessment for internal priorities and for providing public access to appropriate information.
- Identify structure/architecture of data management system, including interactive features and access controls.

- Develop and maintain an integrated database or suite of databases using state-of-the-art technology.
- Provide Web-based access to data, documents, files and other inventory and monitoring information.

Public Education, Outreach and Communications

In a report titled *Environmental Literacy in America*, the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation found that awareness of simple environmental topics is generally high nationwide. There is also a strong national belief in the value of environmental education. According to the report, they found that while the simplest forms of environmental knowledge are widespread, public comprehension of more complex environmental subjects is very limited. “The average American adult fails to grasp essential aspects of environmental science, important cause/effect relationships, or even basic concepts such as runoff pollution, power generation and fuel use, or water flow patterns.”

The report also found there is “little difference in environmental knowledge levels between the average American and those who sit on governing bodies, town councils, and in corporate boardrooms, and whose decisions often have wider ramifications on the environment.”

The Foundation report also cautions that the low levels of knowledge about the environment could be a signal that members of the public will be unprepared for increasing environmental responsibilities in the coming years. “As environmental topics and problems become more complex and pervasive, our decades of reliance on trained experts with the private and public sectors will lessen.” According to the Foundation, in the future many leading environmental problems, ranging from water quality to ecosystem management, will require the efforts of more skilled non-experts acting as individuals, through small businesses, or as community leaders.

Objectives and Actions

In Georgia, many of the individual behaviors that negatively impact the state’s environment and economy are difficult to regulate. To conserve and preserve natural and cultural resources, citizens must understand the value of these resources and how their actions impact them. To make the best decisions regarding the stewardship of natural and cultural resources, DNR must make public involvement at every level a high priority.

Building a conservation ethic within the people who work for the department and all of the citizens of Georgia will require a greater natural and cultural resource awareness, understanding and responsibility.

Objective 1: Build environmental and cultural resource awareness and responsibility.

Each division of the department incurs the direct cost of an under-informed public every day. Damage to historic buildings and public lands, heightened levels of pollution and poaching are just a few examples.

Strong education, outreach and communications programs within each division and beyond the department strive to build environmental and cultural resource awareness and responsibility. However, to be successful, greater coordination is required among DNR associates and the many local and statewide agencies and organizations working to inform and educate the public about these issues. By enhancing the department's Web site and developing work groups that operate across division, department and government lines, DNR will be more effective in educating the public about the behaviors that impact cultural and natural resources, and more efficient in its use of human and financial resources to accomplish the goal.

Key Actions:

- Further develop partnerships with other agencies and organizations (i.e., the Department of Education, non-governmental organizations) to work jointly on education and communications efforts for natural and cultural resources issues.
- Provide high-quality educational opportunities through direct programming at education and visitor centers, historic sites, state parks and other natural resource areas in support of resource and agency goals.
- Ensure consistent and complementary educational and marketing messages throughout the department.
- Promote department-managed resources, facilities and services, such as curriculum and training for teachers, interpretive programs for the general public and technical assistance for local governments.

Objective 2: Ensure public involvement in decisions impacting natural and cultural resources.

It is the responsibility of DNR staff to involve all citizens in decision-making at appropriate levels. Although the agency has made a commitment to public involvement, the staff is not always sure when and how to do it. By establishing clear procedures for engaging stakeholders and valuing their input, the department's policies and decisions will be more effective in addressing key cultural and natural resource issues.

DNR values public involvement and has adopted the recommendations of the Public Involvement Task Force as described in its December 2005 Board of Natural Resources' resolution.

Key Actions:

- Train key department staff in public involvement processes and procedures.
- Increase public involvement opportunities, processes and procedures.

Objective 3: As appropriate, educate DNR associates about the mission, responsibilities and programs of other divisions (internal education).

An informed and educated DNR workforce is critical to accomplishing the department's mission. Highly trained DNR associates will best represent the wide spectrum of services provided by the department and use sound education and communication strategies to achieve and measure natural and cultural resource outcomes.

Key Actions:

- Train all department staff to provide excellent customer service.
- Build environmental and cultural resource awareness and responsibility.
- Build awareness and understanding of the work and interrelationships of the divisions.
- Train employees to be ambassadors for the department as a whole.
- Train appropriate employees in program marketing, social marketing and education and communications strategies.

Regulatory and Non-Regulatory Integration

The regulatory framework established over the past 35 years has proven very successful in dealing with acute natural and cultural resource challenges. A series of checks have been put in place at the national and state levels to prescribe how businesses and individuals must comply with these laws and regulations.

But long-term protection of Georgia's natural and cultural resources cannot be accomplished by rules and regulations alone. As regulatory programs have matured and moved into a maintenance mode, federal and state agencies have begun to explore strategies that prevent environmental problems rather than simply correcting them after the fact.

A growing interest in improving environmental performance and management of natural and cultural resources has led to new approaches that support cooperation, collaboration, and innovation. Non-regulatory programs motivate businesses and organizations to become better stewards by encouraging them to go beyond just complying with the rules. These programs provide incentives, recognition and encouragement for organizations that exceed minimum regulatory requirements and significantly reduce their impacts.

Taken together, strong environmental regulations, effective enforcement, and innovative non-regulatory solutions can encourage superior management of Georgia's natural and cultural resources. Integrating regulatory and non-regulatory approaches can help move us toward long-term protection of these resources and toward a healthy and sustainable environment.

Objectives and Actions

Improved communication and cooperation across all divisions and with stakeholders will allow DNR to better integrate regulatory programs with education, technical assistance, incentives and mentoring. Recognizing that the current regulatory system will serve as the foundation of DNR's cultural and natural resources strategy, the agency will use incentives, recognition, and leadership to encourage superior environmental performance.

Objective 1: Meet current regulatory responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

Regular evaluations of existing regulatory programs will help DNR enhance environmental performance and outcomes by identifying rules, regulations, and policies that need modification or improvement.

Key Actions:

- Conduct periodic regulatory reviews focusing on efficiency and improved resource outcomes.

- Define regulatory enforcement priorities that are aligned around natural and cultural resource goals.
- Provide greater use of regulatory flexibility to encourage superior resource management performance.
- Provide quality service delivery to customers regarding regulatory mandates including the issuance of hunting and fishing licenses, boat registrations and other permitting activities.

Objective 2: Lead by Example on Environmental Stewardship

DNR will serve as a leader in reducing the inefficient use of natural resources, in supporting sustainable business practices, and in building a conservation ethic among its workforce, stakeholders, and the general public.

Key Actions:

- Encourage sustainable construction of new buildings and reuse of historic buildings.
- Support commuter assistance programs.
- Encourage environmentally preferable purchasing.
- Minimize energy and water consumption.
- Develop an in-house solid waste reduction and recycling program.

Objective 3: Encourage Sustainable Economic Development

By supporting sustainable business development through technical assistance and collaboration, DNR can help ensure that economic development is accomplished in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Key Actions:

- Highlight the business case for environmentally sustainable business practices tied to environmental and economic development priorities.
- Assist existing and new businesses in becoming environmentally sustainable.

DNR Strategic Plan Implementation

The DNR strategic planning team recommended prioritizing issues at the *objective* level rather than the *key action* level. In making their determination, they considered the following questions:

- Where is DNR most likely to see success over both the long term and the short term?
- What are the underlying objectives upon which everything else is built?
- Where does DNR currently have momentum?
- Where is DNR currently lacking?
- What initiatives would be most likely to receive funding from the legislature and other sources?

Five objectives were identified as the ones to work on over the next three to five years. They recommended creating three implementation teams to develop methods and procedures for implementing these objectives and suggested some critical information for these teams to consider as they move forward.

Implementation Team One: Resource Inventory and Monitoring

Objectives:

- Coordinate applied research for inventory and monitoring to facilitate science-based decision-making.
- Provide a comprehensive data management system that includes Web-based accessibility to information resources.

Critical Information:

- Identify past and present DNR programs that collect natural and cultural resource data.
- Identify the following attributes of resource inventory and monitoring programs:
 - Administration
 - Funding
 - Management
 - Expansion needs
 - Manpower per initiative
 - External data sources

Implementation Team Two:

Building Natural Resource and Cultural Resource Awareness and Responsibility

Objective:

- Build natural and cultural resource awareness and responsibility.

Critical Information:

- Describe the current delivery network, including target audiences, budgets and staffing.
- Identify mandated education programs, participation, and other trends (such as hunter education and hunting statistics since the program's inception).
- Identify areas of overlap, ways to create synergy or opportunities for improvement for existing efforts.
- Identify successful strategies to deliver educational messages.
- Identify current and potential partnerships.
- Consider the best opportunities for creating outdoor experiences for the public, and how to target them.

Implementation Team Three:

Actively Manage Habitats and Provide Recreational Opportunities

Objectives:

- Actively manage habitats on DNR properties to provide restoration, enhancement, conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources; encourage similar activities on other public and private lands that protect these resources; and encourage public access and education.
- Provide safe, high-quality recreational opportunities at DNR properties and statewide.

Critical Information:

- Identify state properties without personnel assigned to them and without a formal management plan.
- Identify how state-owned lands are being managed (prescribed burns, activities) and the level of implementation of management plans.
- Identify lands that are cooperatively managed.
- Identify attendance statistics for state lands and their uses.

By building on ongoing activities, working across boundaries among its six operational divisions, and implementing new ways of addressing the challenges of managing this state's resources, DNR will continue its important mission of working to sustain, enhance, protect and conserve Georgia's natural, historic and cultural resources for present and future generations, while recognizing the importance of promoting the development of commerce and industry that utilize sound environmental practices.

Appendix 1
Recommended Approach and Activities (Work Plan)
(Approved by Board of Natural Resources – April 2004)

The State Board of Natural Resources and the Department of Natural Resources desire to create a Strategic Plan that looks forward and provides clear and thoughtful direction for the efforts of all involved. This will be a thorough and wide-reaching process that involves members of the Board's Strategic Planning Committee, DNR staff members, and outside consultants. The process of developing the plan will utilize a significant amount of public involvement that is representative of the citizens of Georgia, and also takes into account the priorities and perspectives of the stakeholder groups.

The plan will be developed for the next ten years. The plan will look to develop priority initiatives, actions steps and required resources for a one-year plan, and more general objectives for the years two through ten. The detail of each year's plan will be content loaded in the first years, and will graduate downward to more general concepts for the later years of the plan.

Actions

1. Form DNR Working Group. Identify an internal working group for DNR. This group would take a key role by participating in the overall plan development, and then the detailed development of the plans for the divisions.
2. First Meeting of DNR Working Group. Group will convene for a 1-2 day meeting. In the meeting the group will review the existing planning documents to determine all of the issues that the plan now addresses, and to determine any areas and issues that the document does not adequately address. The second part of the session would be dedicated to identifying the areas where more general research is required.
3. Information Gathering. The output of the previous step would be used to drive the efforts of information gathering. This process would involve:
 - a. Focus Groups. Up to four groups would meet to obtain input from employees, stakeholders and Georgia residents. The groups will provide feedback about DNR's strategic direction, priorities of employees, stakeholders and the general public, the perceived effectiveness of the DNR in carrying out its mission and activities, as well as the challenges that the department faces in the future.
 - b. DNR Mail Survey. Create a mail survey to the same or similar audience, obtaining feedback on the same issue as the focus

groups. We will attempt to reach 2,000 individuals through this effort.

- c. Comprehensive Telephone Survey. The effort will target to complete a minimum of 800 surveys to access similar information. The survey will be structured to be time-efficient and concise to gather adequate information in this communication medium.
4. Situation Assessment Document. The output of these efforts will be used to create a situation assessment document. This document would summarize and analyze the data gathered in the previous step and would be utilized at the next planning phase.
5. Second Meeting of DNR Working Group. The DNR work team, interested board members, and consultants would convene for an off-site strategic planning retreat to review the situation assessment document and use it as a tool for identifying the key issues and opportunities, and brainstorm a set of strategic initiatives to address them.
6. Initiative Teams Meetings. Teams would be formed for each initiative to develop a document outlining the implications of undertaking the initiative (i.e., its ability to address a key issue/opportunity, buy-in of key stakeholders, high-level resource requirements, high-level action steps to pursue). The teams would be given a standard template of information to collect, which would then be presented at a second meeting.
7. Initiatives Review Meeting. At this meeting the teams would present their findings and make recommendations to the group about whether to further pursue the initiative in question. In the discussion of these options, the group would work to narrow down the initiatives by eliminating duplicity, reassessing priorities, and reaching a consensus.
8. Update Strategic Planning Committee. The product of the initiative review meeting would be presented to the DNR board, Strategic Planning Committee, for review and input. The length and extent of this review would need to be considered in order to plan the forum. It may be required that as much as half a day be allotted to accomplish this effort.
9. Initiative Detailed Plans. The assigned teams would next be responsible for developing more detailed plans that outline the specific implications of pursuing the selected initiatives, including financial and manpower planning implications. Once the implications are clarified, the product would be again presented to the board.
10. Public Comment. Once the strategic initiatives have been developed, we would make the information available on the DNR web site. In this step, we would list the initiatives and some summary detail of the implications,

both in terms of the delivery of services to Georgia, and the resources required to implement the idea.

11. Draft Strategic Plan. Utilize the initiatives to develop “wildly important goals,” objectives and policies, performance measurement criteria, and metrics.
12. Public Review and Comment. Make the plan available to the public for review and comment.
13. Working Group Review of Public Input. The working group will review the input provided by the public review and form recommendations for incorporation into the plan.
14. DNR Board Considers Plan. The DNR Strategic Planning Committee considers the draft plan and revisions, and approves or amends for passage to the full board.
15. Finalize And Publish Plan.
16. Division Implementation Planning. At this point, the initiatives should be developed to a level of detail that they may be passed on to the divisions for implementation planning. That would involve:
 - Creating methodology for design of the plans. We have considered this, and are thinking to use a commonly recognized method of regionalizing the state. One such concept is division by river basin.
 - Conduct training session for division-level personnel responsible for planning.
 - Consider obtaining feedback from key stakeholders or focus groups to get their input on the initiatives under consideration.

Several of the divisions of DNR have strong strategic planning efforts already underway. It is likely that some of the elements of those plans will make their way into the DNR plan. Some of the ideas will form the basis of a more general concept that will be used by other divisions. As existing plans are revised and as new plans are formed, the influences of the DNR strategic plan will be obvious, as it becomes the framework for the individual division planning efforts.

Once the divisions have completed and/or revised their “wildly important goals,” and initiatives, the following steps will take place.

- A. Division Resource Planning. Each division will take output from the Initiative Detailed Plans to determine division priorities for manpower and other resources.
- B. FY 2007 Division Budgets. Divisions will submit their revised budgets to the DNR Budget Office. The divisions will consider their base budget and determine additions and reductions based upon initiatives.
- C. DNR Board Considers FY 2007 Budget.
Governor Considers DNR FY 2007 Budget Request.

DNR Strategic Plan Time Line

<i>Number</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
1	Form DNR Strategic Planning Team after DNR Board Strategic Planning Committee Approves Plan	April 19, 2004
2	First Meeting of DNR Strategic Planning Team	June 17-18, 2004
3	Information Gathering and Customer Survey	June-September 2004
4	Development of Situation Assessment Document	October 2004
5	Second Meeting of DNR Strategic Planning Team	Mid October
6	Inter-departmental Initiative Team Meetings	November- January
7	Inter-departmental Initiative Review Meeting	February 2005
8	Planning Team Update to DNR Board's Strategic Planning Committee	March 2005
9	Development of Detailed Inter-departmental Initiative Plans	April 2005
10	Public Review and Comments on Detailed Initiatives	May 2005
11	Draft Strategic Plan	June 2005
12	Public Review and Comments on Draft Strategic Plan	July 2005
13	Working Group Considers Public Input and Makes Recommendations	August 2005
14	DNR Board Considers Final Draft of Plan	September 2005
15	Finalize and Publish Strategic Plan	October 2005

16	Division Implementation Planning		November 2005-April 2006
	A.	Division Resource Planning	May 2006
	B.	FY 2007 Division Budgets Due to DNR Budget Office	July 2006
	C.	DNR Board Considers FY 2007 Budget.	August 2006
	D.	Governor Considers DNR FY 2007 Budget Request.	September 2006

Appendix 2 DNR Strategic Planning Team

Commissioner's Office

- Beth Brown, Director of Communications
- Steve Friedman, Chief of Real Estate
- Becky Marshall, Communications Program Manager

Coastal Resources Division

- Spud Woodward, Assistant Director for Marine Fisheries
- Brad Gane, Assistant Director for Ecological Services

Environmental Protection Division

- Marlin Gottschalk, Senior Policy Advisor
- Gail Cowie, Senior Policy Advisor
- Deron Davis, Environmental Education Coordinator

Historic Preservation Division

- David Crass, State Archaeologist
- Karen Anderson-Cordova, Manager, Planning and Local Assistance Unit

Parks and Historic Sites Division

- Paul Nelson, Assistant Director
- David Freedman, Chief Engineer, Engineering and Construction Section
- John Thompson, Chief of Operations
- Kim Hatcher, Public Affairs Coordinator

Pollution Prevention Assistance Division

- Bob Donaghue, Director
- David Gipson, Assistant Director

Program Support Division

- Jim Laine, Personnel Director
- Bill Boyd, Systems Specialist
- David Benoist, Chief Information Officer

Wildlife Resources Division

- John Biagi, Assistant Chief of Fisheries
- Homer Bryson, Assistant Chief of Law Enforcement
- Chris Canalos, Coordinator, Geographic Information Systems
- Todd Holbrook, Assistant Director
- Terry West, Chief of Law Enforcement
- Mark Whitney, Chief of Game Management

Appendix 3 Department Issue Teams

Resource Inventory and Monitoring

Marlin Gottschalk, EPD, Chairman
Bill Boyd, PSD
Chris Canalos, WRD
David Crass, HPD
Spud Woodward, CRD
David Gipson, P2AD

Natural and Cultural Resource Management

Mark Whitney, WRD, Chairman
John Biagi, WRD
Chris Canalos, WRD
Karen Anderson-Cordova, HPD
David Crass, HPD
David Freedman, PHSD
Brad Gane, CRD
Marlin Gottschalk, EPD
Todd Holbrook, WRD

Public Access and Use

Detrick Standford, PHSD, Chairman
Beth Brown, Commissioner's Office
Homer Bryson, WRD
David Freedman, PHSD
Todd Holbrook, WRD
John Thompson, PHSD
John Biagi, WRD
Mark Whitney, WRD

Regulatory and Non-Regulatory Integration

Bob Donaghue, P2AD, Chairman
Marlin Gottschalk, EPD
Gail Cowie, EPD
David Gipson, P2AD
Brad Gane, CRD
Homer Bryson, WRD
Todd Holbrook, WRD

Public Education, Communication and Outreach

Deron Davis, EPD, Chairman
Beth Brown, Commissioner's Office
Karen Anderson-Cordova, HPD
Bob Donaghue, P2AD
Spud Woodward, CRD
John Thompson, PSHD
Kim Hatcher, PSHD
Becky Marshall, Commissioner's Office

