



Strategic Plan 2019-2023

Mission Statement

Conserve and promote fishing, hunting and wildlife resources through management, education and scientific research.

Vision

Conserving diverse, healthy populations of fish and wildlife while maintaining related outdoor opportunities for every generation to enjoy.

WRD Motto

Conserving Your Wildlife

Values

Customer Service • Professionalism • Sustainability • Dedication • Credibility
Honesty • Family • Ethical • Teamwork • Trustworthy • Stewardship
Accountability • Communication

Strategic Goals

Conserve fish, wildlife and habitats through sound management, monitoring, restoration and scientific research.

Monitor and manage populations of fish, wildlife and plants

- Document occurrences of invasive species and develop invasive species strategies as needed
- Conduct research and surveys of sportfish and game populations to guide management actions
- Use the current State Wildlife Action Plan to guide research, surveys, monitoring and conservation actions for species and habitats
- Monitor fish and wildlife diseases
- Monitor hunters/anglers and their harvest
- Set harvest regulations

Manage fish and wildlife habitats on public lands and waters

- Continue fish and wildlife restoration and enhancement projects on WRD-managed lands
- Cooperate with federal and state agencies that manage lands and waters
- Participate in large-scale conservation planning efforts
- Restore habitat to increase fish and wildlife populations
- Work toward future desired conditions as put forth in management plans

Acquire lands and waters to increase public access and secure important habitats

- Update and refine conservation prioritization maps as proposed in the State Wildlife Action Plan to better define land-conservation goals
- Secure funding for land acquisition and encourage participation in acquisition by conservation partners
- Pursue acquisition of sites containing high-priority habitats identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan as well as properties providing public access for outdoor recreation.

Promote habitat conservation and management on private lands

- Improve accessibility of information on the WRD website that will help private landowners manage land for fish and wildlife
- Provide technical support to private landowners to facilitate fish and wildlife conservation on private lands
- Increase engagement with existing incentive programs for private landowners
- Develop new habitat-conservation incentive programs for at-risk species on private lands
- Influence programs administered by other agencies to benefit fish and wildlife needs on private lands

Provide regulations effective for the management and conservation of wildlife for public benefit and use

- Facilitate/simplify regulations and licenses
- Maximize the use of technology to better communicate regulations to customers
- Use hunting/fishing regulations to disseminate conservation messages and promote outdoor recreation

Recruit, retain and reactivate (R3) more participants in hunting, fishing and wildlife-related activities.

Expand programs and enhance facilities for the public

- Improve, develop and staff shooting ranges
- Upgrade facilities on a regular maintenance schedule
- Increase and improve Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Public Fishing Area (PFA) access

Strengthen partnerships and sponsorships that increase awareness and public access to hunting and fishing opportunities

- Strengthen partnerships to expand outdoor recreation opportunities on/at existing facilities
- Develop sponsorships with businesses whose customers currently have lower participation in hunting and fishing

Improve customer service

- Sell license gift cards
- Ease barriers to selling licenses
- Create educational content to help customers use the license and quota systems

Strengthen recruitment and retention of hunters, anglers and wildlife watchers

- Improve communication to our current constituency and reach out to new constituents
- Increase the number of youth opportunities at optimal times (i.e. school breaks)
- Increase the number of recruitment and/or reactivation events for adults
- Evaluate the R3 needs of the Urban Wildlife Program
- Increase the number of Outdoor Adventure Days held annually
- Oversee the new contract for license and boat registration and assure it provides more customer service functions and integrated communications to our database of customers
- Develop specific surveys aimed at monitoring recruitments and retention metrics over the next 5 years

Increase awareness of the Wildlife Resources Division and the opportunities and services we provide

- Communicate available opportunities for outdoor activities

- Develop and expand the urban wildlife program to better meet the needs of constituents in the urban setting
- Continue innovative marketing and communications of what we do through general presentation tools, promotional stickers and materials, and videos
- Enhance relationships with media outlets, chambers of commerce and other private partners
- Continue to garner support for WRD programs by public recognition of the environmental and economic benefits of hunting, fishing, prescribed fire, Stream Team and boating access
- Keep WRD staff informed of cross-section opportunities to allow them to promote hunting and fishing opportunities to all constituents
- Develop R3 marketing materials for both hunters and anglers

Continue to develop and improve the Hunter Development Program

- Improve the Hunt and Learn program and increase first-time hunting opportunities
- Increase participation in NASP by partnering with the Georgia Department of Education
- Use available tools, such as the GO system, to track HDP efforts as they relate to R3
- Increase educational hunting and shooting opportunities at WRD shooting ranges

Improve capacity for wildlife conservation

Increase funding for fish and wildlife conservation, including through the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Act, Wildlife Conservation section and land acquisition

- Seek opportunities to increase license revenues to meet division responsibilities and customer expectations
- Seek opportunities to increase revenue from other funding sources including: license tag sales, tax checkoff, Weekend for Wildlife, donations, competitive grants and impending legislation such as the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act and Recovering America's Wildlife Act
- Work with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to increase funding for wildlife conservation
- Develop a bass license plate, perhaps through a partnership with B.A.S.S. or other organization

Foster proactive partnerships to better utilize resources and expertise and improve overall conservation outcomes

- Increase and strengthen relationships with other agencies, nongovernmental organizations and other conservation partners
- Regularly engage stakeholders to build support for conservation
- Cultivate stakeholder partnerships that meet conservation needs of at-risk species
- Continue enhancement of the division-wide volunteer program

Improve capacity for wildlife conservation through improved coordination, planning and policy development

- Develop a long-term plan to allocate additional resources to staff, land acquisition and programs
- Improve capacity to manage public lands by hiring additional staff in key regions and by completing and updating management plans on a timelier basis
- Improve coordination of management activities between sections and divisions through greater use of technology such as GIS
- Maintain/enhance WRD biodiversity databases to support state/regional/national conservation

Continue to educate legislators and other decision-makers on the WRD mission, operations, funding and other issues relevant to our work

- Invite public officials to interact with staff at the Legislative Field Day
- Engage local and state decision-makers through participation in WRD projects
- Highlight the economic impact of hunting, fishing and wildlife-related activities in Georgia
- Illustrate the economic impact of wildlife-related activities in Georgia, including tourism revenue, quality-of-life benefits and natural resource enhancements
- Highlight DNR's role in providing hunting, fishing and other recreation for citizens.
- Communicate the results of research and monitoring through publication in peer-reviewed journals
- Promote the protection and management of State Wildlife Action Plan high-priority species in addition to threatened and endangered species
- Highlight and provide information related to the positive impacts of a healthy fish and wildlife population from an economic and quality-of-life standpoint
- Provide the public with appropriate information to build support for our programs

Achieve excellence in conservation and outdoor education.

Continued conservation-focused education

- Identify the Urban Wildlife Program's educational needs and develop strategies to address those needs
- Consider the reach of each education center, identify gaps in coverage and strategize where to add additional centers
- Continue to implement WRD's coordinated education plan
- Create age-appropriate online activities for students (Kids' Corner/Teachers' Corner)
- Continue to improve wildlife education programs and activities for all age groups to utilize education as a conservation tool

- Improve environmental literacy, resulting in better-informed citizenry who can promote wildlife conservation
- Empower educators in their R3 roles

Develop and improve educational resources for hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts

- Increase the number of events offered, including Hunt and Learn, Fish and Learn, Beyond B.O.W., Landowner trapping classes, etc.
- Expand WMA/PFA maps as necessary or to meet objectives

Utilize technology to educate and inform our constituents and staff

- Continue to use an online database to capture information and education efforts (webinars, etc)
- Continue to develop and improve online hunter education tools and training
- Provide information about rare species to the public through the Georgia Biodiversity portal

Educate the public on the Wildlife Resources Division's role in wildlife conservation

- Initiate detailed communications campaigns related to specific conservation work by WRD

Foster professional learning to enhance our understanding of fish, wildlife and their habitats.

Facilitate a culture of staff improvement and development

- Provide training opportunities in video/media relations to selected individuals
- Develop a field-training program for new employees, including inter-section cross-training opportunities that would be voluntary for existing employees
- Continue the mentoring program and make it more intentional across sections
- Hire and retain quality staff
- Develop and improve the training database
- Develop an official onboarding process
- Increase staff attendance at external training opportunities and conferences
- Ensure that trainings are relevant to job duties

Improve customer service through staff support, training, retention and effectiveness

- Develop a structured and defined system for promotional opportunities and salary increases
- Develop training programs for staff

Increase staff access to scholarly research and literature

- Work with UGA to allow staff to have access to the Science Library
- Further develop scholarly relationships with universities