



# *Direction 2006*

Issues, Accomplishments, & Priorities



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# *The Director's Message*



*Direction 2006* is a link between our strategic plan, *The Compass*, and the work that you – Department employees – do. It helps guide your **work planning** for the upcoming year and **budget development** for the next fiscal year.

*Direction 2006* is organized into two main sections. First is a short list of issues that will influence what we will do this year. These issues include specifics that were alluded to in *The Compass*, they may be unforeseen circumstances, new legislation, or simply the way things are now. Second is a list of highlights the Department has accomplished during the last year and a guide to what our priorities are for this year. This section is organized by the four goals in *The Compass*.

***Direction 2006* does not mention the more routine, but no less important, activities this Department has done and will always do.** We could not and would not fulfill our mission without looking after these everyday tasks. We all understand that each day Fish and Game employees listen to the public, monitor populations, provide technical assistance on projects impacting wildlife, stock fish, conduct research, enhance habitat, enforce regulations, train teachers, answer questions, and educate and work with the public on all things fish and wildlife in Idaho.

2006 will bring both challenges and opportunities – I am sure we will meet these challenges and capitalize on the opportunities.

*Steven M. Huffaker*

# *The Landscape 2006: Timely Issues*

- **DEVELOPMENT**—Poorly planned growth is impacting wildlife habitat and movements, public access, and human-wildlife interactions.
- **IDAHO WILDLIFE CONSERVATION STRATEGY**—Implementing the Idaho Wildlife Conservation Strategy with new federal funding will require additional matching funds and broader stakeholder involvement.
- **WOLF MANAGEMENT**—The increased role of the State of Idaho in managing wolves brings controversy and increased duties to the Department.
- **ACCESS**—Private lands – once open to public access – are being closed to public access for hunting and fishing and fees are being charged for the privilege to hunt on some private lands.
- **DISEASES**—Fish and wildlife borne diseases may threaten human health, livestock, and healthy wildlife populations.
- **OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES**—The use of off-highway vehicles has increased dramatically in the last decade, creating new challenges for wildlife and public land managers.
- **TECHNOLOGY**—Technological advances in hunting and fishing equipment are changing the sport, the idea of fair chase, hunter ethics, and how seasons and populations are managed.
- **CUSTOMER SERVICE**—Customers want more from the Department, they want different things, and they want it faster.



## *Our Vision*

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

# GOAL—Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat

SUSTAIN IDAHO'S FISH AND WILDLIFE AND THE HABITATS UPON WHICH THEY DEPEND.

## 2005 Accomplishments

- Continued Mule Deer Initiative efforts to protect and improve mule deer habitats, populations, and hunter satisfaction.
- Initiated Idaho's largest-ever project on deer and elk survival.
- Started a ground-breaking nutrient enhancement program in the Kootenai River to help increase the number of trout, white sturgeon, and burbot.
- Protected wildlife habitat and improved public access on over 7,500 acres through conservation agreements, easements, and acquisitions.
- Completed the Idaho Wildlife Conservation Strategy to guide actions for species in greatest conservation need and to receive federal funding for managing these species.
- Supported efforts to delist the wolf and Yellowstone grizzly bear and return management authority to the State of Idaho.
- Collaboratively developed a draft Idaho Sage Grouse Conservation Plan with hunters, ranchers, state and federal agencies, conservationists, and the Governor's Office.
- Implemented the Regional Investigator Program to focus law enforcement on habitual wildlife criminals, including those involved in the illegal commercialization of fish and wildlife.
- Continued efforts to work with the USDA Forest Service, private timber companies, and sportsmen to improve elk populations and habitat in the Clearwater country, resulting in 46,000 acres of treatments in 2005.





## **2006-2007 Priorities**

- The Mule Deer Initiative will remain a top priority and will focus on habitat conservation and restoration in southeast Idaho.
- Work toward full delisting of wolves and implement depredation control, population monitoring, and population management.
- Initiate and implement Enforcement Action Plans addressing regional resource priorities.
- Provide input to the USFWS on listing and delisting petitions under the federal Endangered Species Act.
- Cooperatively implement the Idaho Wildlife Conservation Strategy with a focus on expanding monitoring efforts and seeking additional help from “citizen scientists”.
- Revise the Idaho Fisheries Management Plan for 2007-2012.
- Participate in all 29 Cooperative Weed Management Areas in Idaho and lead statewide coordination efforts.
- Collaborate on fish and wildlife disease prevention, control, and research.
- Continue Lake Pend Oreille kokanee recovery by reducing lake and rainbow trout populations.
- Explore options for repositioning the Department’s land assets for more effective fish and wildlife conservation.
- Develop conceptual area plans to prioritize land conservation for fish and wildlife and associated recreation.
- Improve elk populations on the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests.

# GOAL—Fish and Wildlife Recreation

MEET THE DEMAND FOR  
FISH AND WILDLIFE RECREATION.

## 2005 Accomplishments

- Created public access to over 347,000 acres of private lands and 430,000 acres of public land under the Access Yes! Program.
- Held the first salmon fishery in the Upper Salmon River since the late 1970s.
- Re-established the perch fishery in Cascade Reservoir in the Southwest Region.
- Established a new trout fishery in the recently-constructed Deer Creek Reservoir in the Clearwater Region.
- Completed the first-ever inventory and assessment of the Department's fishing and boating access facilities and developed a five-year plan for fixing/improving these facilities.
- Placed mobile hunting blinds, sponsored by Anheuser-Busch, in the Southeast and Panhandle Regions for disabled hunters.





## 2006-2007 Priorities

- Expand the Access Yes! Program and seek new ways to provide access to private lands for hunting and fishing.
- Begin implementing the 2006 recommendations of the Five-Year Statewide Fishing/Boating Access Facilities Plan 2005-2009.
- Evaluate the use of mobile blinds by disabled hunters. If successful, secure funding for additional blinds in other regions.
- Trap and transplant additional adult perch into Cascade Reservoir and continue to reduce pike minnow populations.
- Explore options for repositioning the Department's land assets to provide additional public hunting areas.
- Develop a priority list and timeline for developing new fishing waters.
- Promote public use of the Idaho Birding Trail and develop an interactive website to allow people to build their own travel itineraries for viewing birds.
- Work with the USDA Forest Service in developing their Travel Management Rules.
- Increase enforcement of OHV rules, particularly during hunting seasons.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and hunter satisfaction with the Department's motor vehicle restriction rule.

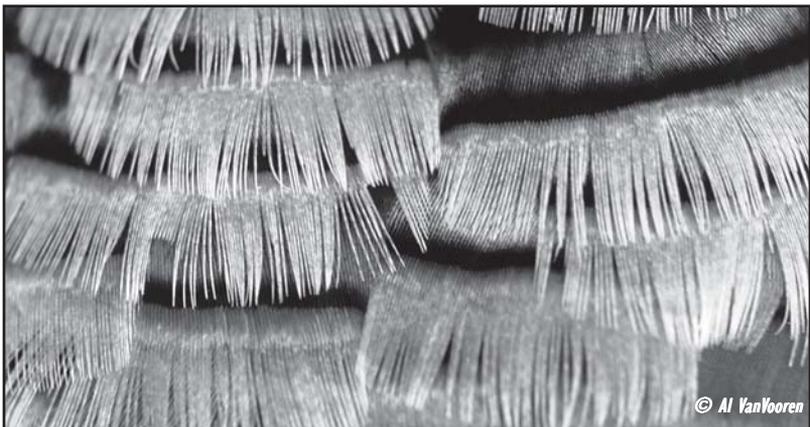


# GOAL—Working With Others

IMPROVE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF AND INVOLVEMENT IN FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT.

## 2005 Accomplishments

- Increased public outreach by sending informational emails to 5,016 subscribers using a new email delivery system.
- Encouraged OHV users to “stay on trails and use their power responsibly” through the Idaho Interagency OHV Coordinating Committee campaign.
- Launched the *Idaho Hunt Planner*, an internet-based search engine providing one-stop shopping for sportsmen wanting information on regulations, travel, services, drawing odds, printable maps, hunt boundaries, and more.
- Launched a new newsletter, *Idaho Fish and Game News*, providing readers with in-depth information on fish and wildlife issues, management activities, recreational opportunities, research projects, and volunteer activities.
- Received 75,000 hours of volunteer time – worth an estimated \$1 million – to educate hunters, improve habitats, help with check stations, and more.
- Completed the survey and report of angler spending and economic impacts for all of Idaho’s counties and waters.
- Increased media attention and involvement of the public on Mule Deer Initiative efforts in southern Idaho.





## 2006-2007 Priorities

- Enhance the public's knowledge of Department activities, goals, and management programs. Every employee needs to assist with this effort.
- Promote the Department's public involvement processes, how citizens can get involved, how Department decisions are made, and the rationale behind management decisions. Every employee needs to assist with this effort.
- Improve the public's understanding of how technological advances in hunting and fishing equipment can affect harvest, hunting and fishing opportunities, and public support for these activities. Every employee needs to assist with this effort.
- Enhance Mule Deer Initiative public involvement and outreach, including a quarterly newsletter. Every employee needs to assist with publicizing the efforts.
- Enhance OHV users' understanding and compliance of motorized vehicle restriction rules.
- Develop a program to better involve stakeholders, to measure public response and demands to aid Commission and Department decision-making, and to improve the Department's conflict resolution efforts.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of on-line hunter education courses.
- Continue to improve consistency across all regulation booklets.
- Foster and create opportunities to bring together diverse sportsmen's and other wildlife interest groups.
- Increase awareness of the economic benefits of fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing to wide audiences of policy and business leaders.
- Equip two additional enforcement display trailers (Citizens Against Poaching) for public education and information.
- Inform the public about the Idaho Wildlife Conservation Strategy and involve them in its implementation.



# GOAL—Management Support

ENHANCE THE CAPABILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT TO  
MANAGE FISH AND WILDLIFE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC.

## 2005 Accomplishments

- Leased new regional offices in the Salmon, Magic Valley, and Clearwater Regions – improving customer service, public meeting spaces, and employee space and facilities.
- Improved administrative efficiencies by eliminating the separate Department payroll process and moving to I-Time.
- Installed Citrix computer application to provide field and traveling employees high speed use of all Department computer systems, applications, and networks with full security.
- Provided wireless-enabled computer access in all offices, allowing use of the network and internet without costly office retrofits.
- Simplified the Department's activity-based accounting system, reducing the number of transactions by 40%.
- Obtained a 10% license fee increase to help offset the rising costs of normal operations.
- Increased the number of applicants for conservation officer positions by developing a new recruitment strategy with the Division of Human Resources.





## 2006-2007 Priorities

- Align existing plans with *The Compass*, develop performance measures, and synchronize the work planning and budget development processes.
- Award contract for a new automated licensing system, install the system, and train license vendors on how to use it.
- Continue to upgrade facilities that will improve customer service and employee work environments.
- Continue to improve strategies for recruiting job applicants and retaining the workforce.
- Continue to adjust the Fleet Management system to maximize performance and minimize costs.
- Actively describe the Department's revenue and budget system and the effects of rising business costs on services, management, and activities. All employees need to assist with this effort.





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